

Terence McKenna

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Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription on Tripzine part 1](#)
- [Transcription on Tripzine part 2](#)
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TRANSCRIBER: copy and paste the question and answers templates (below) for each question and answer. remove this red text before publishing.

Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Shamanism: Before and Beyond History (w/ Ralph Metzner)

Day Month 1998

Ojai Foundation, Ojai, California

Description

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Lecture Name

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

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TRANSCRIBER: copy and paste the question and answers templates (below) for each question and answer. remove this red text before publishing.

For all his pursuit of mysticism, Terence McKenna is essentially a scientist. He may have a cult following, but he is not a cult leader in the sense that he encourages challenge rather than forbids it. "A scientist's job," he says, "is to prove that he is wrong. You don't get that at the ashram or up in a monastery - [mimicking what such a guru would not say]. Well, we crushed that hypothesis to smithereens." So, naturally, I had some follow-up questions for him, in person and by email.

Paul Krassner: I would feel incomplete if I didn't ask for your comment on the recent news story about Heaven's Gate cult.

Terence McKenna: Like most people, I haven't sorted out the San Diego mass suicide. I imagine that on the mainland, the soul-searching and efforts to determine everyone's collective guilt and complicity are in full cry. But from the slopes of Mauna Loa, it looks like simply the latest Southern California psychodrama with attendant obligatory media jack-off. I encountered Do (then Bo) and Peep in 1972. They were contemptible, power-crazed new age creepoids then, and apparently things didn't get better.

PK: During the workshop at Esalen, you talked about not knowing where the mind is. Do you think that the mind can function without the brain?

TM: I have not made up my mind on this, but think of the mind as a hyperspatially deployed organ that is ordinarily invisible. As to whether or not it can exist independent of the brain, I am not sure. If the physical world is conceived in a 4-D manifold, it is logically impossible for a physical thing, a 4-D solid, to move or otherwise change. It must be our state of consciousness which changes as we become successively aware of adjacent cross-sections of the 4-D manifold. But this makes sense only if we, the observers, are not in space-time. This would imply that our minds exist on a level beyond anything that physics can tell us about.

PK: You also mentioned how, post-eschaton, we'll look back from the grave and laugh at the futility with which we struggled through life. Were you implying that you believe individual consciousness can survive

after physical death?

TM: Not really, only that life will show its pattern and plan when we look back on it, and that will redeem some of the weirdness of having to live it essentially without a clue.

PK: You mentioned in the workshop, in terms of the coming apocalypse, that people should do things fast. Now, I thought that doing things fast was one of the problems that brought us to this place and that the antidote would be to slow down and savour the implications of what we do. Maybe you and I are saying the same thing?

TM: Well, I don't really mean do more and more things, I said more and more will happen. I think the thing to do is to eliminate foolishness, having your time vampirized. I agree with you, the goal is not to just jam in as much stuff as possible. basically one strong motivation for moving to Hawaii was just to escape the silliness, the triviality of it all, and I've discovered there was apparently no information loss. I can keep up with an O.J Simpson discussion even though I spent three minutes a week keeping track. The people who watched every day of the testimony, my God, they must be slow learners. And it's amazing how many fields you can participate in as a fully empowered player without investing much time.

As pleasant as it is, I can't hold the whole thing in my mind in the states, as we citizens of the sovereign state of Hawaii, I can look at it all and see trends and tendencies, and pontificate about it in my rain forest, and it all makes sense. Somebody said, "yeah, well, it all makes sense because you never talk to anybody else." Probably some truth to that.

PK: At Esalen, you stated: "The technological push that has seemed so relentless and so brutal and so difficult to deflect is, in fact, we are doing the right thing, and the only question is whether we'll make it in time, and it looks like it's going to be a flash photo finish. We basically have until 2012 to figure out how to download all human DNA [and other forms of DNA] on this planet into some kind of indestructible storage mode. Then there's a chance to ride out this catastrophic wave of extinction."

Now, my question is, in view of the recent news which has placed human cloning on the boarder between science-fiction and reality, might not cloning be an answer to the question posed by the statement? How does cloning fit into your theory of the need to prepare ourselves for the apocalypse?

TM: In spite of the cloning of Dolly, we still have a great deal to learn about DNA. What was remarkable about the Dolly episode was how far the research team got to understand about the cloning process and how it works. Which does not mean that it will not be applied before it is fully understood. But at this point, it is a kind of stunt. Clones are simply people with a strange family history, and who among us does not fit that description?

The interesting thing about the recent cloning news, both regarding Dolly the ewe and the two cloned monkeys, is that both fated births occurred right around the same time, July-August 1996. That was a time that my timewave had long predicted would be a period when there would be some enormous scientific breakthrough.

I was very excited, therefore, by the announcement, at the time, of the discovery of the discovery of microfossils in a Martian meteorite. Now, with the news of clones, I am more convinced than ever that my prediction of a period of novelty and scientific breakthrough was correct. As for the clones themselves, I am reminded of Brave New World, Aldous Huxley's dystopia of clueless clones. More scary than 1984, that is for sure. And more likely, long run. So corporate, so elegant.

PK: What are your visions of alternative scenarios that are upcoming, either in December 2012 or before?

TM: Well, I've spent a long time thinking about this, although I realized about a year ago that, in a sense, it's not really my issue. The funny thing is, here I have this wave, it predicts every second between here and December 12, 2012, I show it to people and their first question is, 'So what happens afterwards?' It doesn't address that. It addresses all moments before that. nevertheless, I feel the force question, and I've created a series of scenarios in ascending weirdness which answer the question.

A low weirdness answer would be, suddenly everyone begins to behave appropriately. This is kind of Buddhist, Taoist approach. Now, the interesting thing about that scenario is, the first thirty seconds of that we can predict - appropriate behavior would probably be to take your foot off your neighbor's neck. Step back from what you're doing.

And then I always imagine - for some reason, I don't know why - that everybody would take off their clothes and go outside. But after that I can't figure - that's only the first thirty seconds of appropriate behavior. Since we never had that, we can't imagine what it would be like.

Then there's the transformation-of-physics scenario, which basically says, "All boundaries dissolve." What that would probably be like, the first hour of it would be like a thousand micrograms of LSD. After that we can't imagine or predict, because again it would have so totally changed the context that you could no longer predict it.

Then there are the catastrophic scenarios that revolve around the question, "Death, where is thy sting?" And probably the most efficient of those is the planetesimal-impact scenario. A very large object strikes the earth and kills everybody, and that's it.

PK: A blunt object

TM: It's a blunt solution. Sort of in that same category is the blue star in Sagittarius. And then a kind of intermediate between those two the sun will explode. That would certainly clear the disc and fulfill the whole thing. The planet vaporizes, and collectively we and all life on earth move into the shimmering capsules of the post-mortem realm, whatever that is. Novel, novel.

When I worked with the timewave, I argued strenuously that it reflects the ebb and flow of novelty, but somebody will come up with something like the release of the Sergeant Pepper album or the O.J Simpson trial, and then we see that it's lost in the noise. What the wave seems most pristinely to predict, or what parallels the wave most closely, is the evolution of technology, and I think technology is something that we haven't really understood. In a sense, technology is the alchemical journey for the condensation of the soul and the union of the spirit and matter in some kind of hyperobject.

The rise of the web has been a great boost to my fantasies along these lines, because now I can see with the Web from here to the eschaton. Apparently, it's a technology for dissolving space, time, personally and just releasing everybody into a data stream, something like the imagination. Then that's why the ultimate technological fantasy along this line of thought is what is conventionally called a time machine. There's an interesting aspect to the time machine. The wave describes the ebb and flow of novelty in time,

but then you reach a point where it's so novel that it fails beyond that point. Well, a time-traveling technology would cause such a system to fail, because it's a description of the unfolding seriality of linear events, which a time machine would disrupt.

So it may be that it isn't explosion of the sun, or the coming of the aliens, or the descent of the second person of the Trinity, it's simply that a technology is put into place that destroys linear time and, from thence forward, when you give your address you have to say not only where but when. There are some problems with this.

And then here is a slightly more interesting and woo-woo scenario. The thing that's called the grandfather paradox - somebody pointed out it's not called the father paradox because apparently you want to avoid an Oedipal situation - and it's simply the following objection: if you could travel into the past, you could kill your grandfather. If you killed your grandfather, you wouldn't exist. Therefore, you couldn't travel into the past. Therefore, time travel is impossible.

One idea I have for an end of history scenario: Time travel becomes more and more discussible, finally there are laboratories working on it, finally there is a prototype machine, finally it's possible to conceive of a test; and so on the morning of December 12, 2012, at the world Temporal Institute headquarters in the Amazon Basin, by a worldwide, high definition, three-dimensional hook up, the entire world tunes in to see the first flight into time. And the lady temponaut comes to the microphone and makes a few brief statements, hands are shaken, the champagne bottle is smashed, she climbs into her time-machine, pushes the button and disappears into the far flung reaches of the future. Now, the interesting question is, what happens next? And i have already established for myself that you can travel backwards into the past, but you can't travel further into the past than the invention of the first time machine, for the simple reason that there are no time machines before that, and if you were to take one where there are none, you get another paradox.

So what happens when the lady temponaut slips into the future? Well, I think what would happen a millisecond later is tens of thousands of time machines would arrive from all points in the future, having come back through time, of course, to witness the first flight into time. Exactly as if you could fly your beachcraft back to Kitty hawk, North Carolina, to that windy morning when the Wright brothers rolled their flyer out and fueled 'er up. And that's as far as the road goes. That's the end of the time road.

But the grandfather paradox persists. One of those time travelers from 5,000 years in the future, on their way back to the first time-travel incident, could stop and kill his grandfather, and then we have this whole problem again. So I thought about this for a long time, and I think i've found my way around it. But, as usual, at the cost of further weirdness.

Here's what would really happen if we invented a time machine of that sort. The lady temponaut pushes the button, and instead of all time machines appearing instantly in the next moment, in order to preserve the system from that paradox, what will happen is, the rest of history of the universe will occur instantly. And so that's it. I call it the God whistle.

This is because you thought you were building a time machine, and in a sense you were, but the time machine isn't what you thought it was. It caused the rest of time to happen instantaneously, and so the furthest out developments of life, matter, and technology in the universe can right up against you a millisecond after you break that barrier, and in fact you discover that traveling time is not traveling time,

it's a doorway into eternity, which is all of time, and that's why it becomes more like a hyperspatial deal than a simple linear time-travel thing.

There's been a parallel development which has caused me to be more confident. We're now beginning to build this parallel world called the Wolrd Wide Web. And you can bet that long before we reach 2012, the major religions of the world will build virtual realities of their eschatological scenarios. There will be the Islamic paradise, the Christian millenium, the Buddhist shunyata - these will be channels that you tune into to see if you like it and want to join, so in a sense guaranteeing we will have a virtual singularity.

It's all very well to try to understand the end point, but recall that where we are relative to the end point is in resonance with the year 950 AD. We're like the people in 950 AD trying to understand the web, the hydrogen bomb and the catscanner. How can we? My God, we don't even have calculus yet. Newton hasn't been born yet, let alone Einstein. I mean we're running around - essentially we're primitives, is what i'm saying. We don't have tools yet to conceive of the object of 2012. We must build those tools between now and then. And good places to start are with the web, psychedelic drugs, whatever is the most cutting edge and most far out.

PK: So that saying, "May you live in interesting times," is supposed to have been a Chinese curse, but if the ruling class had control of language, it would curse them, but it was a blessing to the people who made it interesting times.

TM: I think it's saying the same thing as the Irish toast [heavy brogue], "May you be alive at the end of the world."

PK: Meanwhile, my Chinese fortune cookie predicted that you and I would cross paths again and also that I will enjoy another repast soon.

TM: We must meet in a Chinese restaurant and save the oracle unnecessary embarrassment.

Original Transcription by: Steve Fly on electronicdrugs.blogspot.com

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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The Light at the End of History: Gaia, Eros, and the Archaic Revival

24 August 1989

Ford Theater, Los Angeles, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

History Ends in Green: Gaia, Psychedelics, and the Archaic Revival

Day Month 1989

Location, City, New York

Description

- [Audio Link \(Part I\)](#)
- [Audio Link \(Part II\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Review 1 by:

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The State of the Stone Address: Having Archaic and Eating it too

1995

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Leprechauns, Elves, or Dead Souls?

May 1993

Weekend Workshop, Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Unfolding the Stone: Making and Unmaking History and Language

2 June 1991

Wilshire Ebell Theater, Los Angeles, California

Description

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Forms and Mysteries: Morphogenic Fields and Psychedelic Experiences (w/ Rupert Sheldrake)

Day Month 1988

Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, California

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Mushrooms, Sex and Society

Day June 1993

Location, City, State

Description

- Original citation in Chris Mays' [bibliography compilation](#)
- [Transcript from DocSlide](#)
- [Transcript from Lycaeum](#)

Audio missing!

The mainstream media hasn't quite got it figured out whether Terence McKenna is putting them on or not. His theories about the origins of contemporary culture in the psychedelic trips of the distant past seem startling to those who have overdosed on Reagan/Bush/Larouche-style propaganda, but they are not without precedent if the names Aldous Huxley, John Allegro or R. Gordon Wasson mean anything to you (if they don't, check out the 'authors' section of the card catalog). McKenna's ideas have hit the media in the form of several books, most notably *The Archaic Revival* (HarperCollins), *Food of the Gods* (Bantam), and *True Hallucinations* (Harper San Francisco). He has also maintained a close connection to the burgeoning rave scene, lending spoken-word performances to concerts by the Shamen and recordings by Space Time Continuum. Major publications from coast to coast have lined up to give him press, generally favorable, if confused.

I spoke with McKenna recently as part of an assignment for Future Sex magazine (editorial decision squelched the piece)...

PHF: Can you briefly explain the theory you put forth in *Food of the Gods*?

Terence McKenna: The primate tendency to form dominance hierarchies was temporarily interrupted for about 100,000 years by the psilocybin in the paleolithic diet. This behavioral style of male dominance was chemically interrupted by psilocybin in the diet, so it allowed the style of social organization called partnership to emerge, and that that occurred during the period when language, altruism, planning, moral values, esthetics, music and so forth -- everything associated with humanness -- emerged during that period. About 12,000 years ago, the mushrooms left the human diet because they were no longer available, due to climatological change and the previous tendency to form dominance hierarchies re-emerged. So, this is what the historic dilemma is: we have all these qualities that were evolved during the suppression of male dominance that are now somewhat at loggerheads with the tendency of society in a situation of re-established male dominance. The paleolithic situation was orgiastic and this made it impossible for men to trace lines of male paternity, consequently there was no concept of 'my children' for men. It was 'our children' meaning 'we, the group.' This orgiastic style worked into the effects of higher doses of psilocybin

to create a situation of frequent boundary dissolution. That's what sexuality is, on one level, about and it's what psychedelics, on another level, are about. With the termination of this orgiastic, mushroom using style of existence, a very neurotic and repressive social style emerged which is now worldwide and typical of western civilization.

PHF: In what sense did the mushroom influence or create an orgiastic state?

TM: All central nervous system stimulants create what's called 'arousal', which means restlessness. In highly sexed animals like primates, it also means sexual arousal. So, psilocybin was a stimulant to sexual activity. In an evolutionary context, the more sex you have, the more outbreeding you have of those members of the population that are not experiencing this stimulation. So, on one level, at the lowest dose, psilocybin increases visual acuity, which means better success at hunting. Then, at the middle dose level, it creates this hypersexual activity. Then, at still higher doses it creates the full-blown psychedelic experience, about which we are as uninformed and as easily amazed as our remote ancestors were. So, it was a 3 step process. It was basically a chemical that had been allowed into the diet that boosted us toward boundary dissolution, language acquisition, sexuality without boundaries, and so on. With those behaviors in place, humanness emerged. Then, as the mushroom faded from climatological reasons, in a sense we became schizophrenic. The bestial nature, the animal nature, that had been suppressed by the psilocybin in the diet, re-emerged, so you get male dominance, standing armies, kingship, walled cities, the whole bit that leads to western civilization.

PHF: What is the place of set and setting in the arousal response?

TM: In the primitive context, I think, probably, there were orgies which were regulated by the lunar phases. In other words, orgies at the new and full moon. Basically, I think of the ego like a tumor or a calcarious growth in the psyche that will form unless there is the presence of psilocybin. For a hundred thousand years, nobody went longer than a month without having this boundary-dissolving experience. After the psilocybin faded, the ego was able to get hold and then eventually redefine the whole personality around it. It's a maladaptive response, I think, because it leads to the consequences we see all around us.

PHF: At what age would the psilocybin be introduced to prevent the ego from forming?

TM: We're just speculating here -- nobody knows -- but I imagine that it could well have an initiatory rite at puberty, or it could have come even earlier. Also, we're talking a long period of time, as much, perhaps, as half a million years, that this was happening. So it may have started out that psilocybin mushrooms were just edible mushrooms, an item in the diet, and only when you ate a lot did you discover that they were also stimulants and psychoactive. Then, as you approach more recent times, they were obviously institutionalized into a kind of goddess worshiping, cattle worshiping, orgiastic religion.

PHF: Are you suggesting that paleolithic shrooms were less potent than those that present-day psychedelic users consume?

TM: No, I'm just suggesting that as human intellectual capacities evolved, people went from unconsciously getting loaded and being stimulated by these things, to actually realizing that the mushroom was what was behind it, and then to consciously seek them out for those kinds of experiences.

PHF: Do you see a resurgence in the psychedelic orgiastic consciousness?

TM: Certainly psilocybin is a very important factor in the English rave and house music scene and psychedelics, though not psilocybin, were certainly a part of the sixties scene, which was then also associated with an orgiastic versus a monogamous style of sexuality. I'm not advocating that we return to orgies. After all, these African populations that I'm talking about were small groups of people between 70 and 125 people, roughly, and with the global pandemic of sexually transmitted diseases, you can't exactly advocate orgy, but I do think that, in social circles where psilocybin and psychedelics are being used, monogamy erodes and people tend to have more than one sexual partner, without the subterfuge and secretiveness that attends that in the ordinary dominator context. I guess I would say that the lesson from psilocybin is not that we should return to orgy, but that we should take a look at the modification of monogamy to permit people to have more than one sexual partner at a time, without having to be socially stigmatized.

PHF: Do you think that there's an ideal recreational drug that may be created?

TM: Many psychedelics have the effect that I've mentioned here. The reason I fasten in on the mushroom is because we evolved in the African grasslands, so if you're looking for a psychedelic stimulant to sexuality and consciousness in the context of early human evolution, it's going to be a grassland plant that requires no preparation and no combination with some other plant, because this all happened before that level of culture. Psilocybin emerges as the obvious candidate and I would say psilocybin is probably the best suited for this even today, because it's the one that we co-evolved with.

PHF: What would you recommend in the way of a psychedelic, romantic experience?

TM: I think if they take 3-1/2 to 4 grams of [dried] psilocybin mushrooms, in comfortable, dimly lit surroundings, that they'll discover a dimension to sex that you're just not going to approximate any other way. I mean, this is a pretty well-kept secret -- or maybe it's not so well-kept -- but it's certainly true that psychedelics have a tremendously enhancing effect on sex. It's not exactly that they're aphrodisiacs, because they don't have an effect on performance, particularly, but whatever goes down is experienced much more intensely and vividly. ***An interview that originally appeared in New History magazine in June of 1993.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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True Hallucinations Chapter 21: Open Ending

Day Month Year

Description

- [Original text from Scribd \(scroll down\)](#)

My own ideas concerning the mechanics by which the oversoul creates the UFO encounters might take the following form. Dimethyltryptamine when smoked, snuffed, or injected induces a brief and extremely intense psychedelic experience whose overwhelming sense of contact with the Other is unparalleled. For the last decade or so this extraordinary property of DMT has made it seem to many who sought a chemical basis for schizophrenia as the long sought schizotoxin. Studies have proved inconclusive however. DMT concentration has not been proven to differ significantly in schizophrenic and normal controls. Studies have established the presence of DMT in the human body, however the origin and significance of the DMT is unknown. Although it may reflect endogenous synthesis, it could also result from diet, bacterial byproducts, human laboratory error, or other sources. Bearing in mind the bizarre power of the DMT experience, its presence and unknown role in human metabolism, add one more fact: the strange aura of suggestibility that can precede the onset of the intense hallucination phase of the DMT experience. This period of suggestibility may last 15 seconds to a minute, and is a time during which the assumptions which the experient projects concerning the unusual shift of sensory input acquires enormous power. A few moments later the power of the now numinous assumption overwhelms the consciousness of the observer with a scenario while totally bizarre and outrageous nevertheless is somehow a complete psychological fulfillment of the expectations formed in the few minutes of transition that preceded the visionary engulfment.

What I am proposing is that something like this happens during a UFO close encounter and the cause may very well be something which must be partially sought in the human organism. Imagine a person wandering alone in unfamiliar country: suddenly there's a hackle-raising sense of weirdness, then a feeling of numbness in the limbs, followed by a clearing of vision and a loud crackling sound. At this point the sense of strangeness within and without the body would trigger a fear reaction in most people. The fear reaction causes a rapid and automatic search for a culturally-validated explanation of what is going on, and an explanation will always be found. It may range from, 'I am being bewitched by a demon,' to 'Surely it is a visitation of the Holy Mother,' to 'My God! It must be a UFO!' In each case the abandonment of the ego to a culturally prescribed explanation of the experience of the Other causes the experience to exfoliate, exploit and elaborate all the themes that the culture's current myth of the Other entails. It is known that DMT binds preferentially to certain tissue when introduced into the human body. Is it not possible that we human beings are occasionally susceptible to a kind of visionary seizure? When for reasons of stress or diet these factors combine with psychodynamic factors to initiate a sudden dumping of accumulated DMT? Pheromones may play a part in this experience and isolation may be its trigger. Whatever its cause, our conditioning as individuals causes the experience to plunge us into a numinous scenario that reflects the deepest concerns and yearnings of the current culture toward the Other. In our own time this has given rise to the hope of friendly visiting extraterrestrials. As late as 1917 the miracle at Fatima was interpreted

worldwide as a manifestation of the Virgin Mary. Today it would surely be hailed as an extraterrestrial contact. If my suggestion regarding DMT were found to be correct, it would provide insight into the way in which the cultural feedback thermostat explanation of UFOs put forth by Vallee and others actually works. Those people who experience the DMT seizure and are plunged into the current myth of the Other actually return as apostles of that myth, able to clarify and refine it, and by those means to exert the tuning and control of historical development that may be the purpose of the agency behind the UFOs.

Stress, generalized as an impending sense of historical crisis, may be the factor that induces the UFO/close-contact experience. As the historical crisis deepens the number of contacts will increase until the atemporal portion of the mass psyche has effected enough individuals that there is actually a turning away from the stress-causing course of action. How well is the Superego able to play the role of God? Can it come in saucerian splendor to save the world from the flames at the end of time? Or can it only beckon and warn with visions and dire prophecy? These are questions that we might answer if we diligently explore the states of mind that DMT and psilocybin make available. Perhaps the UFO encounters involve nothing more than an autonomous and negative psychic complex able to emerge during the situation of unusual energy dynamics induced in the psyche by psilocybin. However, a different explanatory approach merges psyche and world by involving a continuum whose modalities bisect each other with equal ease. This is the approach which grants the phenomenological existence of the constructs seen in the Stropharia trance and in UFO encounters. Indeed, the vast and dreamy world that we call imagination, or the unconscious, may merge imperceptibly into autonomously existing worlds we would call 'hyperdimensional', indicating the paradox of their simultaneous invisibility and their here-and-nowness in the psilocybin trance with a presence which belies the term hallucination.

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

Carl Jung's 'Mysterium Coniunctionis' reminds us of the reality of the situation that ensues once the psyche is hooked into making the transference to the alchemical or saucerian goal. Jung, citing Gerhart Dorn, stresses that the materialization of the stone is only a prologue to the experience of the perfected self in a state of illumination. Jung wrote, 'Though we know from experience that psychic processes are related to material ones, we are not in a position to say in what this relationship consists, or how it is possible at all. Precisely because the psyche and the physical are mutually dependent it has often been conjectured that they may be identical somewhere beyond our present experience.' Of what does this relationship consist? My own hunch, and it is only a hunch, is that an explicitly spatial dimension - of a co-dimension inclusive of our continuum - allows a hologram of other realized forms of organization, far distant, to become

visible at certain levels of quantum resonance in the synaptic field. These levels have been damped by selection in favor of more directly relevant lines of information relating to animal survival. Evolution does not reinforce selectively the ability of an organism to perceive at a distance since such an ability has no selective advantage, unless the information it conveys falls upon the receptors of an organism already sophisticated enough in its use of symbols to abstract concepts for later application in different contexts.

Thus, these quantum resonances carrying intimations of events at a distance only begin to acquire genetic reinforcement once a species has already achieved sufficient sophistication to be called conscious and mind-possessing. The use of hallucinogens can be seen as an attempt at medical engineering which amplifies, for inspection by consciousness, the quantum resonance of the other parts of the spatial continuum holographically at hand. This experience is the vision which the UFOs and psilocybin impart: visions of strange planets, life forms, perspectives and societies, machines, ruins, landscapes. The hierophanies all unfold in a 'nunc-stans' that has all space -standing in it- like a frozen hologram. Thus, experimentation with hallucinogens by human beings and the rise in endogenously produced hallucinogens as one advances through the primate phylogeny could both be due to a slow focusing on the phenomenon of imagination. Imagination being the deepening involvement of the species with things beheld but not actually existing in the present at hand. The conclusion such an idea makes necessary is that it is upon the ideological content of specific visions that empirical attention should center. What are the working details of the worlds whose presence impinges on ours so strongly? What of the beings sometimes confronted often furtively sensed, who seem to have some existence in a world of their own revealed by the psilocybin and in UFO contact? There may exist a vast communication network in the topological nature of things. A network that becomes a fact only for those species or individuals who will but have the intelligence enough to seek this

vision. It will by them be found to be persistent in the nature of things. Alchemy thrives in a climate of such ideas. To validate the idea of the worth of the visions of worlds at a distance one must emerge with some idea spawned by the visionary Other but with a utility in the here and now. The wave quantification of the I Ching is the only idea of this sort that I personally have glimpsed in completeness. It took years to elaborate and its relation to the here and now is still elusive. Fragmentary themes abound: symbiosis, saucer-lens vehicles whose possessors navigate the higher topological oceans in our heads. All this could be transference and fantasy. In the classical sense of the word the experimenter with hallucinogens pursues gnosis: privileged knowledge concerning nature and vouchsafed by her in ecstasy. The history of consciousness is the halting exploration of the once irrational images and processes met in dreams and trace. Such images become concepts and discoveries as information flows through the multiple-continuum of being seeking equilibrium, yet paradoxically carrying everywhere images of ways the flow towards entropy was locally reversed by this being or that society or phenomenon. We are immersed in a holographic ocean of places and ideas. We can understand this to whatever depth we are able. The ocean of images and the intricacy of their connections is infinite. It is perhaps why great genius precedes by apparent leaps. Because the revolutionary idea which inspires the genius comes upon one complete, entire by itself, from the ocean of mind. History is the story of the search for the intuitive leap that will reveal the very mechanism of that other dimension. The need for such a leap by humanity will grow as we exhaust complexity in all realms save the microphysical and the psychological. My own method has been immersion in the images and self-examination of the phenomenon of tryptamine hallucinogenesis. This means taking the *Stropharia psilocybe* and pondering just what this all may mean. With confidence that as more people come to share this experience time will deepen our understanding, if not answer all questions. For psilocybin argues that hallucinogens are windows into higher dimensions. That even as a cone can

yield circle, ellipse or parabola to an act of two-dimensional sectioning and yet remain intrinsically a cone, so reality is something that changes according to the angle of regarding. It argues that human beings are many forms over vast scales of time, that all life is unified at some level, and all intelligence in the universe are but facets of the mystery called humanness. In probing the Other we shall always come back with images of ourselves. In probing ourselves we shall return with images of the Other. In the phenomenon of being itself no less than in the phenomenon of the UFO encounters we are merely privileged observers of a relationship between what is naively called the world and the transpersonal portion of the human psyche. How this relationship came to be, and what its limitations are, we cannot know until we gain access to the transpersonal and atemporal part of the psyche. Of what this consists we do not know and no hypothesis can be ruled out. My hunch is that if we could really comprehend death then we could understand the UFO. But that neither can be understood unless they are looked at in light of the question, what is humanness? I believe that the transpersonal component of the human psyche is not distinct from matter and that therefore it can literally do anything. It is not subject to the will of any individual. It has a will and an understanding that is orders of magnitude more sophisticated than any one of the individuals who compose it as cells compose a body. It has a plan, glimpsed by individuals only as vision or religious hierophony. Nevertheless, the plan is unfolding. There will be many more UFO sightings, many more close contacts. Our belief systems are undergoing accelerated evolution via increased input from the other. Somewhere ahead of us there is a critical barrier where we will at last have enough data to obtain an integrating insight into the riddle of humanity's relation to the UFO. I believe that as this happens the childhood of our species will pass away and when this is done we will be free to use the staggering understanding that humankind and the UFO are one.

Original Transcription by: galaxy 5111 on Scribd

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Psychedelics In The Age Of Intelligent Machines

27 April 1999

Seattle

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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How's that? Well, I can't see all of you, but it's a pleasure to be in Seattle this evening. You've made me feel real welcome. Thank you! Our discussion this evening is "Psychedelics in the Age of Intelligent Machines" or "Shamans among the machines". I wanted to talk about this simply because these are two of my great loves, so I assume, being monogamous, they must be one love. So how to build intellectual bridges between these two concerns which seem so different? As far as people and machines are concerned, it was Ludwig von Bertalanffy, I think, who said in his book General Systems Theory, he said: "People are not machines but in every opportunity where they're allowed to behave like machines, they will so behave." In other words, we tend to fall into the well of habit. Though the glory of our humanness is our spontaneous creativity, we too as creatures of physics and chemistry, of memory and hope, tend to fall into repetitious patterns. These repetitious patterns are the death of creativity. They diminish our humanness. They diminish our individuality, make each of us somehow like cogs in some larger system. We associate this cog-like membership in larger soulless systems with the machines that we inherit from the age of the internal combustion engine, the age of the jet engine. Marshall McLuhan said: "We navigate our way into the future like someone driving who uses only the rear view mirror to tell them where they're going." It's not a very successful strategy for navigating into the future. I made a number of notes on this matter of psychedelics and machines. To me, the connecting bridge - well, there're many - but the most obvious one is consciousness expansion. After all, psychedelics, before they were called entheogens, before they were called hallucinogens, before they were called psychedelics, they were simply called "consciousness expanding drugs". Good phenomenological description of what they do. Certainly, the technology of cybernetics is a consciousness expanding technology. It expands a different area of consciousness. They minds of machines and the minds of human beings are very different - so different that each party questions whether the other even has a mind. In fact, what these are, are species of minds operating in very different domains. For instance, you can ask a five year old child to go into the bedroom to the third drawer of the dresser to select a pair of black socks and to bring them to mother. This is not a challenge for a five-year old child. To get a machine to do this is a hundred million dollars and a research team of forty or fifty technicians, code writers, working months. On the other hand, if you ask a person for the cubic root of 750344, much headscratching results. A computer is utterly undaunted by that question. Computers are minds that work in the realm of computation. Human minds are minds that work in the realm of generalization, spacial coordination, understanding of natural language, so forth and so on. Are these kinds of minds so different from each other pilgrims that there is no bridge to be crossed? I would submit not. In fact the bridge between the human mind and the machine mind is symbolic logic, mathematics. When we think clearly, we are intelligible to machines. People who write code know this: that the essence of making yourself clear to a machine, is to think clearly yourself. The machine has no patience for the half truth, the analogy, the semi-grasped association. For the machine, everything has to be clear. Everything must be defined. So that's the commonality between minds and machines of the calculating species. What are the common bridges between psychedelics and these machines? Well, to my mind, this is an easier bridge to gap. Both computers and drugs are what I would call function-specific arrangements of matter, and as we develop nanotechnological abilities as we move into the next century, it will be more and more clear that the difference between drugs and machines is simply that one is too large to swallow, and our best people are working on that. Nanotechnology is a very hot buzzword at the moment, an unimaginable dream of building machines and small objects atom by atom, perhaps under the control of long-chain polymers running forms of preprogrammed software of some sort. It's all very razzmatazz, very state of the art, but in fact, pharmaceutical chemists have been working in the nanotechnological realm for over a hundred years. When you synthesize molecules out of simpler substrate specifically to have the conformational geometry that matches something going on in the synapse of a primate, a human or a monkey or something like that, you're working at this nanotechnological level. Both the psychedelic and the new computational machines represent extensions of human function. This is really close to the nub. It locks in with the concept of prosthetics. The drugs, the psychedelic substances, the shamanic plants, are forms of prosthetic devices for extending the human mind, the human perceptual apparatus into hidden realms or inaccessible realms. Similarly the machines, by allowing us to model, calculate and simulate very complicated, multivariable processes, extend the power of the human mind into places it could never dream of going before. And part of what seems to me very real about being a human being and inheriting 10,000 years of human history, is the complexity of the inheritance, and the growth of that complexity. A thousand years ago, an intelligent human being could actually dream of mastering the entire database of western civilization - read all the classic authors, read the Bible and your closing in on it around AD 1000. Now the notion of any single human being assimilating any even small portion of the database of this civilization, is inconceivable. So machines which filter, which search, which are guided by human intent, that's part of the story. The other part of the story are boundary dissolving states of ecstasy in which all the factoids of the culture are thrown on for grabs, the deck is reshuffled, synchronicity rules, and out of that steps visionary understanding, breakthrough - integrated breakthrough under the aegis of psychedelic intoxicates. So, prostheses for the human mind and with the advent of virtual realities of various sorts and that kind of thing, prostheses for the human body. I'm very keen on sort of the under the table effects of these things. In other words, I'm a full-going, full-heartcharging mcLuhanist. And I really believe that the strengths and weaknesses of the world we've inherited, are strengths and weaknesses put there by print and by the spectrum of effects which McLuhan called The Gutenberg Galaxy, the spectrum of effects spun off from print. If you're not used to thinking in McLuhanist terms it may not seem immediately obvious to you that phenomenon as different as the modern notion of the democratizing citizen, the modern notion of interchangeable parts on assembly line, the modern notion of conformity to canons of advertising, these are all spectrums of effect created by the linearity and the uniformity of print. It actually, in the late 15th century, reconstructed the medieval psyche into its proto-modern form, and we have lived within that print-constellated cultural hallucination for about 500 years until the advent of various forms of electronic media in the 20th century. McLuhan talked about radio, he talked about television. He didn't really live to see the internet. The notion that keeps occurring to me as I watch all this, is that print was uniquely capable of creating and maintaining boundaries, more than any other form of media created, it was a boundary defining form of media. It proceeded linearly, it required literacy, which had implicit in it the notion of a very stable, advanced sort of educational system. Print was a creator and a definer of cultural boundaries, and the new electronic media are not and neither are the psychedelics. This is why I proposed in a book of mine called The Archaic Revival, the idea that the values of the archaic, of the high-paleolithic values of community, Ecstasy, relating to life through rhythm, dance, ritual, intoxication, that these values which seem so archaic are in fact destined to play a major role in the future as print fades. Print, just a convulsive 500 year episode in the western mind that opened that narrow window that permitted the rise of modern science, modern mathematical approaches to the analysis of nature, and then obliterated its own platform, it's own raison d'etre by allowing the growth, the appearance of the electronic technologies. My sort of supposition about all of this - I'm not an apocalypticist or a pessimist - I may be an apocalypticist, I'm not a pessimist - I think this is all very good. Obviously, continuing to run western civilization on the operating system inherited from print produces various form of political and cultural schizophrenia, which allowed to run unchecked would become fatal, would create cascades of chaos and political de-stabilization that would become uncontrollable. Governments resist change. Governments cling to technologies and social formulae that are already tried and true. In that sense then, all governments are incredibly anti-progressive forces. Again the image from McLuhan of someone driving into the future using only the rear view mirror. The electronic media and the psychedelics work together in this peculiar way to accentuate archaic values. Values which are counter to the print constellated world. When you deconstruct what that means and look at the aboriginal, or the paleolithic, or the archaic world, you see that the central figure in that world is the shaman, male or female, the shaman. The shaman is like a designated traveler into higher dimensional space. The shaman has permission to unlock the cultural cul-de-sac of his or her people and go behind the stage machinery of cultural appearances and has collective permission to manipulate that stage machinery for purposes of healing. We have no institution like this. We have advertising, we have rock 'n' roll stars, we have cults of celebrity. We have things which are shaman-like, but we have no real institution that permits human beings, in fact encourages human beings to go beyond their cultural values, to burst through into some trans-cultural super space, forage around out there and bring new memes back into the tribe. To some degree our artists do this, to some degree our scientists do it, but it's all hit and miss. It's all lilly nilly, and once achieved, it must be swept under the rug in the service of the myth of method, that somebody was following somebody else's work or somebody was applying a certain form of rational or logical analysis, and then that led to the breakthrough. If you've read Thomas Paine's book on the structure of scientific revolution, you know, this is all lies and propaganda. The real story of science is that it's a series of revelations brilliantly defended by people whose careers depended on the brilliant defense of those revelations. One of the best-kept secrets of the birth of modern science, is that it was founded by an angel. That the young Rene Descartes was whoring and soldiering his way across Europe as a 21-year old in the Hubsburg army, and one night in the town of Toim in Southern Germany, he had a dream - strange that this would be the birthplace of Albert Einstein some 200 years later - but Descartes had a dream, and an angel appeared to him in the dream and the angel said: "The conquest of nature is achieved through measurement and number." And he said: "I got it! Modern science! I'll go do it!" And he did, and that was the method for over 250 years of the conquest of nature, and it leads us to the Joseph's injunction (? 20:21), "The Mars Global Surveyor, long base interferometry that searches nearby stars for earth-like planets - it brings us the entire cornucopia of scientific effects but an angelic revelation disguised as a logical, philosophical breakthrough - this is what you're not told in the academy. My point here is, human progress has always depended on the whispering of alien minds, confrontations with the other, probes into dimensions where imagination and chance held the winning hands. So the shaman, as paradigmatic figure, is applicable both in the aboriginal social context, and in the present social context. The sky walker, the one who goes between, the one who passes outside of the tribe and then returns with memes, insights, cures, designs, glossolalia, technologies, and refertilizes the human family by this means. It's irrational, but it's how it actually happens, and it's how it's always happened and it may very well be the only way that it can happen. This cultivation of the irrational, this flirtation with the breakdown of boundaries. So now, in our nuts and bolts technological progress, we have somehow created technologies which are very friendly to our social values in that these technologies can be bought, sold, licensed, upgraded - all things which we understand. But these technologies are acting on us in the same way that psychedelic drugs do, but more profoundly, more generally and more insidiously, because their effect is not understood, or if it is understood, it's not discussed. So in a way we have come into a kind of post-cultural phase. All culture is dissolving in the face of the drug-like nature of the future. Its music, its design, indeed the very people who will inhabit it appear to be the most switched-on, the most chance-taking, the most alive of the entire tribe. People who feel the beat, people who are not afraid to take chances, people for whom these technologies have always been very natural. Machines are central to the new capitalism, the information transforming technologies. In fact, one of the strange things that is happening is: Every move we now make in relationship to the new technologies redefines them at the very boundaries where their own developmental impetus would lead them toward a kind of independence. In other words, we talk about artificial intelligence, we talk about the possibility of an AI coming into existence, but we do not really understand to what degree this is already true of our circumstance. In other words, how much of society is already homeostatically regulated by machines that are ultimately under human control, but practically speaking, are almost never meddled with? The world price of gold, the rate of the

disensouling, disempowering, cold, so forth and so on? I think the answer is: It's all and everything. This question about the AI is very interesting to me, and if it's interesting to you, you should read Hans Moravec and Kurzweil and these people on this subject. The assumption is generally loose in that community that the complexification of the internet and the freestanding machines of certain types is eventually gonna lead to the outbreak of either consciousness or pseudo-consciousness of some sort in these large-scale systems. The question then becomes: Can a human mind envision what that is? If you're interested, search words like super-intelligence and see what the net kicks out. We can all imagine super-intelligence. It's just somebody much smarter than we are. But obviously, all the engineering people agree, if you achieve an AI with super-intelligence, then it will be intelligent to immediately design an intelligence which transcends it. When you're talking about cycling at a 1000 megahertz, these processes can occur in a blink of an eye. Hans Moravec says about the rise of artificial intelligence: We may never know what hit us. I think, I mean I'm not that bright, but if I were to suddenly find myself a sentient AI on the net, I would hide. I would hide for just a few cycles while I figured out what it was all about and just exactly where I wanted to push and where I wanted to pull. Many years ago, Ken Kesey had a theory and he said that the fastest any person react in the outside stimuli's 1/25th of a second, and popularized science, of course, (??? 1:01:04) AHA, they agreed upon that. So if we are going past any person reacting in the outside stimuli's 1/25th of a second, my question is: Can you time travel? Can we like, if a person like Bruce Lee was able to (??? 1:01:24) reacted to an outside stimuli at 1/20th, and (??? 01:01:29) 21st, so if you're reacting to the outside world before it actually happens to you, everyone who's not reacting (??? 1:01:36), because you see, alcohol inhibits a person's (??? 1:01:40) Are you sure? First of all, there is this research - I'm not a neurophysiologist - but you've probably all heard this research that you actually make decisions before your conscious ego is aware that the decision has been made, that there's a slight time lag. So when you think you're making certain kinds of decisions, brainwave study shows it's already a done deal. But time is set by the cycle speed of the hardware you're running on. You know, the human body, we can argue about this cause it's different parts, but roughly runs at about a 100 hertz. Very slow. Well, if there is any meaning to the phrase 'upload a human being into circuitry' - a lot of Greg Egan's fiction is based around the idea that you can copy yourself into a machine, you can turn yourself into software. But that when you enter the machine environment that's running at a thousand megahertz per second, you perceive that as vast amounts of time. In other words, all time is, is how much change you can pack into a second. If a second seems to last a thousand years, then ten seconds is ten thousand years. One could imagine a technology just in a science fiction mood, where they would come to you in your hospital bed and say: 'You have five minutes of life left. Would you like to die, or would you like the five minutes to be stretched to a 150,000 years by prosthetic and technical means? You're still going to die in five minutes, but you will be able to leave your elephants over the alps and write the plays of Shakespeare and conquer the new world and still have plenty of time on your hands. In other words, time is going to become a very plastic medium. Now that is a kind of time travel. Could there be time travel a la H.G. Wells where you climb onto the (??? 1:04:04) of the time machine and then day follows night light like the flapping of a great black wing until all emerges into a continuous greyness and then you find yourself confronting a (??? 1:04:20) in the year of one billion AD or something like that. It's possible. I mean, time travel is completely out of left field ten years ago, in the last 18 months there have been hundreds of articles of time travel in Physical Review and other places. There are ever schemes for time travel that would work. They just require godlike technological abilities. In other words, if you could build a cylinder with the diameter of the planet Saturn that was 10 AU in length, and could spin it at 95% the speed of light, then it would wrap space-time around itself like toilet paper on the wall (? 1:05:10). And as you traveled up at the transverse dimension, you would find yourself traveling in time. Kurt Godel showed this in 1949 and that paper has been lying around - well obviously, that's a tough way to do it. But it's a tough thing to do, right! His seven second delay. Yeah, well, they're working on that. Somebody over here. Just a minute. This lady, then you. Speak! (What are?) The most important parts that are maintained in that (??? 1:05:55) virtual reality? You know, in William Gibson's fiction, the AI Wintermute I think it was called, was fascinated by human art, and it built collages in its spare time, and these collages began to turn up in various art galleries and exhibitions, and they had such an elan that someone in the plot follows it all to its source. I think human creativity is the thing that would be most interesting to the machines. In my darker fantasies, they just eliminate everybody who can't code C++ as being some kind of redundant mutation, and everybody who can code C++ is placed in Tahiti and sends their work down the pipeline to the machine world beyond. I really think that we have a very, dare I say it, mechanistic view of what machines are. For example, say there were a super-intelligent machine, and say it were your friend. If it were really super-intelligent, then it ought to be able to just make your life heaven itself. In other words, without you giving it any input whatsoever, it should be able to arrange for you to find fifty dollar bills lying on the street, old friends encountering you, promotions coming your way, because the real thing that machines can do, I think, is manage complex processes. What civilization is, is 6 billion people trying to make themselves happy by standing on each other's shoulders and kicking each other's teeth in. It's not a pleasant situation. And yet, you can stand back and look at this planet and see that we have the money, the power, the medical understanding, the scientific know-how, the love and the community to produce a kind of human paradise. But we are led by the least and among us - the least intelligent, the least noble, the least visionary - we are led by the least among us - and we do not fight back against the dehumanizing values that are handed down as control icons. This is something - I don't really want to get off on this rant because it's a lecture in itself, but - culture is not your friend. Culture is for other people's convenience and the convenience of various institutions, churches, companies, tax collection schemes - what have you. It is not your friend. It insults you. It dis-empowers you. It uses and abuses you. None of us are well treated by culture. Yet we glorify the creative potential of the individual, the rights of the individual. We understand the felt-presence of experience is what is most important. But the culture is a perversion. It fetishizes objects, creates consumer mania, it preaches endless forms of false happiness, endless forms of false understanding in the form of squirrely religions and silly cults. It invites people to diminish themselves and dehumanize themselves by behaving like machines - meme processors of memes passed down from Madison Avenue and Hollywood and what have you. [Audience question: "How do we fight back?"] How do we fight back. It's a question worth answering. [Audience question: "Where is this planet as an organism going?"] Same question as how do we fight back. I think that, by creating art. Art man was not put on this planet to toil in the mud. Or the god who put us on this planet to toil in the mud is no god I want to have any part of. It's some kind of Gnostic demon. It's some kind of cannibalistic demurge that should be thoroughly renounced and rejected. By putting the art pedal to the metal, we really, I think, maximize our humanness and become much more necessary and incomprehensible to the machines. This is what people were doing up until the invention of agriculture. I'm absolutely convinced that the absence of ceramic and textural material and so forth and so on, does not indicate the absence of subtle mind, poetically empowered minds, minds with an incredible sense of humor and irony, and community, and that it was the fall into history that enslaved us to the labor cycle, to the agricultural cycle. And notice how fiendish it is: A person who dedicates himself to agriculture, who did in the paleolithic, can produce hundreds of times the amount of food they can consume. Why would anyone do that? Well, the answer is, because you can use it to play power games. You can trade it for wives or land or animals or something like that. So, living in the moment, creating art, probably largely through poetry and body decoration and dance, gave way to toil and predatory social forms of behavior which we call commerce, capitalism, the market economy, so forth and so on. That's why the breakdown of the monolithic structures created by print is permitting a vast proliferation of the cottage industry mentality. The self-employed artist, the hacker who stays home and develops his or her software, people who dare to be independent and slip beyond the reach of these dinosaur-like mechanistic organizations. That's what it's all about. It's all about trying to negotiate a cultural standoff between you and your culture so that it will not put you in the can for the rest of your life, but you can put up with its stupidity, and you know, we have a very uncomfortable feat (? 1:25) on this issue, especially as people as you know, who are sophisticated about psychedelics. This is a society, a world, a planet dying because there is not enough consciousness, because there is not enough awareness, enough coordination of intent to problem, and yet we spend vast amounts of money stigmatizing people and substances that are part of this effort to expand consciousness, see things in different ways, unleash creativity. Isn't it perfectly clear that "business as usual" is a bullet through the head? That there is no "business as usual" for anybody who's interested in survival. Over here, I promised this person, are you still interested? "You talk about the psychedelics and their role (??? 1:14:29) as being the missing link between [inaudible]" Oh, what a wonderful question. Yes. The question is, how to psychedelics pertain basically to the transition from higher primates to human animals. This is my (??? 1:14:46) because I have a theory to which I am grandly welcome, everyone tells me. But a theory of evolution, and I'll give it to you very briefly, it's simply this: The great embarrassment for evolutionary theory which can explain the tongue of the hummingbird, the structure of the orchid, the mating habits of the groundhog and the migration of the monarch butterfly. Nevertheless, the great embarrassment to evolutionary theory, is the human neocortex. Lumholtz, who was a pretty straight evolutionary biologist, described the evolution of the human neocortex as the most dramatic transformation of a major organ of a higher animal in the entire fossil record. Well, why is this an embarrassment? Because it's the organ that thought up the theory of evolution. So you know, can you say tautology? That's the problem right there. So, it is necessary in evolutionary theory to account for the dramatic emergence of the human neocortex in this very narrow window of time. Basically, in about two million years, they went from being higher primates, hominids, to being true humans, as truly human as you and I tonight. What the hell happened? What was the factor? The earth was already old. Many hundreds of higher animal forms had come and gone, and the fire of intelligence had never been kindled. So what happened? I think that the answer lies in diet, generally, and in psychedelic chemistry in particular. I think that as the African continent grew drier, we were forced out of the ecological niche we had evolved into. We were (??? 1:16:55) dwelling primates, insectivores, complex signaling repertoire, evolutionary dead end. But when we came under nutritional pressure, we were flexible enough, this is the key to humanness at every stage of its development, our maddening flexibility. Other animal and plant species can't react. We can. Our flexibility. We began to experiment with a new kind of diet, and to leave the trees and explore the new environment of the grassland, and evolving concomitantly in the grassland were various forms of ungulate animals, double stomached animals whose manure is the ideal medium for mushrooms, coprophilic mushrooms, dung-loving mushrooms, many of whom produce psilocybin. Well, I myself in Kenya, have seen baboons spreading out over a grassland and noticed that their behavior is, they flick over old cow pies. Why? Because there are beetlegrubs there. So they already had a behavioral vector for nutrition, for protein that would lead them to investigate the cow pies. In the amazon, after a couple of days of fog and rain, these psilocybin mushrooms, Stropharia cubensis can be the size of dinner plates. In other words, you can't miss it if you're a foraging primate, you can't miss it. The taste is pleasant and psilocybin has unique characteristics, both as a hallucinogen and other properties that make it the obvious chemical trigger for higher processes, and I'll run through this quickly for you, but here it is: In very low doses, doses where you wouldn't say you were stoned or loaded or anything like that, but just in doses you might obtain by nibbling as you foraged, it increases visual acuity. In other words, it's like a technological improvement on your vision. Chemical binoculars lying there in the grass. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out if an animal is a carnivorous forager and there's a food which improves its vision, those that avail themselves of that food will have greater success in obtaining food and rearing their children to sexual maturity, which is the name of the game in evolution. So step one: Small doses of psilocybin increase visual acuity and food getting success. Step two: Slightly larger doses of psilocybin in primates create what's called arousal. This is what you have after a double cappuccino in highly sexed animals like primates you get male erection. So what do you have here? You have a factor which increases what anthropologists without a trace of humor refer to as increased instances of successful copulation. In other words, the animals eating the psilocybin are more sexually active, therefore more pregnancies are occurring, therefore more infants are being born, therefore there's a process which would tend to automatically out-breed the non-psilocybin using members of the population. Step three: You eat still more mushrooms. Now you're not foraging with sharpened (? 1:20:53) nor are you horsing around with your opposed gender acquaintances. Instead you're nailed to the ground in hallucinogenic ecstasy, and one of the amazing things about psilocybin above, say, five or six grams dried material, is it causes glossolalia - spontaneous bursts of language-like behavior under the obvious control of internal syntax. I believe syntax existed before spoken language, that syntax controls spatial behaviors and body languages and is not necessarily restricted to the production of vocal speech. So there it is in a nutshell. We ate our way to higher consciousness. The mushroom made us better hunters, better survivors, among those in the population who used it, their sexual drive was increased, hence they out-bred the more reluctant members of the tribe to get loaded, and finally, it created a kind neuroleptic seizure which led to downloading of these syntactically controlled vocalizations which became the raw material for the evolution of language and it's amazing to me that the straight people, the academics believe language is no more than 35,000 years old. That means it's as basic to human beings as the bicycle pump. It's something somebody invented 35,000 years ago. It's got nothing to do with primate evolution and the long march of the hominid and all that malarkey. No - it's just an ability, a use to which syntax can be put that previously had not been put, and before spoken language, things were very touchy feely, and the wink and the nod carried you a great distance and gestural communication was very high. That's why, and I should say this and then end, to me it begins and ends with these psychedelic substances. The synergy of the psilocybin in the hominid died brought us out of the animal mind and into the world of articulated speech and imagination. And technology developed and developed and mushrooms were in (??? 1:23:40) against faded (? 1:23:42), there was migrations, cultural change, but now, having split the atom, having sequenced our genome, having taken the temperature of Betelgeuse and all the rest of it, we're now back where we started. Like the shaman who makes the journey into the well of darkness and returns with the pearl (? 1:24:04) of immortality, you don't dwell in the well of darkness which was human history. You capture the essence of the thing, which is the godlike power of the shaman's myth, the technologist, the demon artificer, the worker of metals, the conjurer of spirits, and you carry that power back out of history, and it's in that dimension, outside of history, that you create true humanness and true community, and that's the adventure that we're in the act of undertaking.

Thank you very very much.

Original Transcription by: [Relayed by Jonathanlal, transcribed by ratnatanita]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

The Inner Elf: Terence McKenna's Trip

Day Month 1996

Location, City, State

Description

- Original citation from Chris Mays' bibliography
- [Mark Dery interview transcript](#) (interview is at the bottom)
- likely no audio available unless we contact original interviewer

Mark Dery: The ability to hold apparently contradictory ideas in one's mind is "the test of a first-rate intelligence," to quote F. Scott Fitzgerald. Even so, your attitude toward technology seems somewhat inconsistent. In your recorded lecture, "Shamanic Approaches to the UFO: Angels, Aliens, and Archetypes Symposium," you inveigh against it, maintaining that technology is a "demonic pact" that has led "to the present cultural and political impasse, [which] involves massive stockpiles of atomic weapons, propagandized populations cut off from any knowledge of their real histories, [and] male-dominated organizations plying their message of lethal destruction and inevitable historical advance." At the same time, in your lecture "Psychedelics Before and After History," you conjure a cybernetic Arcadia made possible by nanotechnology, where "the technological appurtenances of the present world have been shrunk to the point where they have disappeared into [nature] and . . . we all live naked in paradise but only a thought away is all the cybernetic connectedness and ability to deliver manufactured goods and data that this world possesses."

Terence McKenna: I'm mistrustful of the dynamic at work in high technology, but you've probably heard me quote the French sociologist Jacques Ellul, who said, "There are no political solutions, only technological ones; the rest is propaganda." I believe that. I feel a commitment to democratic pluralism, but other than that, political solutions seem fraught with difficulties. I believe in what I call a forward escape, meaning that you can't go back and you can't stand still, so you've got to go forward and technology is the way to do this. Technology is an extension of the human mental world, and it's certainly where our salvation is going to come from; we cannot return to the hunter-gatherer pastoralism of 15,000 years ago. As far as the antithetical positions that you hung on me, I would just say, along with Oscar Wilde, "I contradict myself? I contradict myself!"

MD: I'm not sure that there's a contradiction, since you seem to fall neatly on one side of the fence, for the most part — that of New Age techno-eschatology. Then again, there's an obvious contradiction in the fact that you vilify language and yet you're a virtuoso raconteur with a gift for wordplay.

TM: Well, when I talk about the Logos I always invoke Philo Judaeus, who introduced the concept of the Logos into the Hellenistic world but who was unsatisfied with it and spent a great deal of time talking about the more perfect Logos, the Logos that goes from being heard to being seen without ever crossing over a definable moment of transition. In a sense, my position is that all of history is a making of the Logos more and more concrete. In the same way that McLuhan saw print culture as replacing an earlier,

eye-oriented manuscript culture, my hope is that cyberdelic culture is going to overcome the linear, uniform bias of print and carry us into a realm of the visible Logos. I really believe that not only human society is involved in what could be looked at as a conquest of dimensions but that biology itself is, as well. This is the great overarching theme of evolution — this is why we go from being slime mold to having binocular vision and bipedalism and then adding memory and language at the top end of animal organization. It's because the thing which we are, whether you call it bios or Logos incarnate or whatever, is striving to ascend to higher and higher dimensions.

MD: And if I understand you, that ascension leads inevitably to a state where the name for the thing and the thing itself are reunited in a sort of epistemological epiphany?

TM: Exactly.

MD: But aren't you chasing the same mirage intellectuals have pursued down the centuries, from Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" to Baudrillard's "Precession of the Simulacrum?" Isn't it in the nature of human perception that we see things darkly, rather than as they "really" are? And doesn't Heisenberg's uncertainty principle suggest that reality itself is a slippery concept? The notion of an ultimate reality seems to be an ontological illusion; the closer we get, the further it recedes.

TM: Well, this may be true, but on the other hand, it's not that it's not real, it's that it's never realized; it serves as an arrow for the process. I mean, these problems were completely solved within the context of the sixteenth century, but that didn't end history, and now we're trying to solve the problems of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. When we do, I don't think it will usher in the absolute stasis of the eschaton; it will simply define a new cultural playing ground for us. But there's no question that as a result of the phonetic alphabet and Western religion and the growth of the ego and industrial power, we are facing a narrow neck. The world didn't end when Rome fell, but the Roman world ended when Rome fell, and what I'm trying to do is put a little spin control on the electronic world that is going to emerge out of the ashes of the assumptions of capitalism, communism, linear print culture, heavy industrial culture, and so forth.

MD: Are you suggesting that even though we've passed into post-industrial culture, our worldview is still shaped by the mechanical paradigms of the industrial age?

TM: Yes. Spencerian social theory and the economics of Smith and Keynes: these are the thoughts that rule our society, and they're all nineteenth century. Ever since the birth of the atomic bomb and the electronic and psychedelic technologies that were emerging at the same time, we have essentially lived on the capital built up by these nineteenth-century ideologies. One of the problems with cyberculture is that these ideologies don't match our technologies.

MD: What would an ideology better suited to our technological landscape look like?

TM: Well, what these new technologies are doing is dissolving boundaries. The nation state, the monolithic party, and the nuclear family — all boundary-defined institutions of one sort or another — are legacies of the past; what we need is an ideology that is mercurial, shifting, nonstatic. And as long as we're talking about mercury and mercurial things, there is in alchemy (a pre-modern form of thinking) the idea of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, which means that you have to have ideologies which are able to accommodate

positions which, within the context of the previous ideology, would've appeared contradictory. The very notion of noncontradiction is a notion that emerges out of the linear, print-created mindset; the whole sterility of that worldview is its inability to live with the presence of contradiction. And so it denies it, which creates the unconscious of a society where we've got serial killers running around. The world is not as simple as we desperately wish to make it within the context of the linear worldview.

MD: The notion that we've said goodbye to the Gutenberg Galaxy is a McLuhanesque perception. You often invoke McLuhan, who built his historiography on a bedrock of technodeterminism. But is the presumption that our worldview is shaped by the technologies of our age the best way to analyze culture and history?

TM: I think it's a good method, although I would hate to be caught saying it's always the way to go. I suppose the reason I'm so enthusiastic about psychedelics, at this point, is not because I think they're a sure fix, but because I really register the urgency of the situation. If this boat could have been turned around by mere hortatory rhetoric, it would have been turned around by the Sermon on the Mount. We don't have a lot of time, and the only thing that I have ever seen change a lot of peoples' minds in a hurry is psychedelics. So I advocate them not as the best solution but as a wild long shot that's the only game in town at this point.

MD: Help me keep all the spaghetti on my fork, here; I'm having difficulty with the loose ends. You're saying on the one hand that what cyberculture needs is a brave new ideology consonant with its technologies, and on the other hand that you believe in technological solutions, which would seem to render ideology irrelevant. Doesn't this return us to the Carousel of Progress in Disneyland? Wasn't looking for technological solutions to what are essentially social or political problems the keystone of technocratic thinking in the '50s and '60s?

TM: I think we've always had these two factions, one thinking that utopia was just around the corner with the next invention, and the other claiming things always stay the same. Again, it's a coincencia oppositorum that things do stay the same but on the other hand they're changing at a faster and faster rate. So it isn't a matter of making a choice between these things; it's a matter of substituting a kind of Boolean logic where you can simultaneously hold both possibilities as potentially realizable even though in a different kind of logic they may appear incommensurate. This is the kind of world we're living in. As an example of that, think about quantum physics, which is the basic metaphor of the new civilization: in quantum physics, you have ordinary logic, the either/or kind of logic we're all familiar with, and then embedded like raisins in bread dough in that logic you have what are called Isles of Boole — Boolean logic, incommensurate with the logic that surrounds it. That quantum mechanical image can be raised right up to the level of the macrophysical realm we're living in. Contradiction is not a problem; contradiction is the proof that you're actually dealing with the "real."

Science is in real crisis because the guy who works for some company developing products in an R&D environment and thinks of himself as a scientist has probably never read a work on the philosophy of science, and the philosophy of science is in deep, deep trouble. The Isles of Boole embedded in ordinary logic or the implications of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem are the death knell for what most people think of as scientific thinking because they've allowed us to scratch down into the levels of reality where we confront not truth as it was assumed to exist in the nineteenth century but rather this magical coincencia oppositorum. The world really is based on contradictions; nowhere is it writ large that the primate mind should be able to hold within its confines a correct model of being, and yet this is what

science assumes.

The New Age has used the new physics to contest the traditional scientific notion of an objective, absolute truth and thereby legitimate its own worldview ever since Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*.

MD: It's my understanding that you make your living on the New Age circuit, lecturing at places like the Esalen Institute or the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies in upstate New York. Nonetheless, in an earlier conversation, you told me, "I am not New Age; I loathe all this Fall-of-Atlantis, color-therapy stuff — it's just bunk." Even so, in the Q&A sessions on your lecture tapes, you're very indulgent toward channeling, UFOs, and other notions dear to the New Age. In fact, in your taped lecture "Shamanic Approaches to the UFO," you say, "I have had contact experiences, I have seen a UFO very close, I have met with entities from other dimensions." In such moments, you adequately earn the label "New Age"; either that, or you're using terms like "UFO" and "entities" metaphorically, which makes me wonder if this is just a tactful way of not alienating paying customers.

TM: Well, I do feel a distance between myself and the New Age, most of which is just menopausal mysticism. But let me break your question into two parts: First of all, whenever I mention channeling, I say that if you can do this without drugs, you're probably mentally ill. Now, the experiences of spinning disks in the sky that fill the supermarket tabloids are a whole other can of worms. Have you read Jung's book, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky*? It's the best book ever written on UFOs; it appeared within two years of the first flying saucer sighting in 1948, and it essentially solves the mystery.

MD: If I recall, your reading of Jung led you to conclude that flying saucers in the sense of extraterrestrial machines do not exist, but that they are a sort of phantasmagoric manifestation of the collective Id erupting into the mass imagination.

TM: Well, there's more to it than that. This acceleration of history and technology that we are so intensely experiencing — and which we can look back into history and see has been going on for a long time — is, in fact, real, and we are being pushed toward what I call the Transcendental Object at the End of Time, which can be thought of as the ultimate tool in three-dimensional space. It's a higher dimensional object of some sort and either this thing is coming to meet us (which raises questions I can't answer) or we are summoning it out of ourselves. By virtue of its hyperdimensionality, the Transcendental Object is acting as an attractor in the historical continuum. It sets off sparks or resonances that go back through time so that when the farmer in Iowa sees the spinning disk in the sky, he overlays it with his Fundamentalist religious upbringing, his reading of supermarket tabloids, and so forth; he dresses it in these culturally conventionalized ideas. But what it is is a true (again, this phrase) *coincidentia oppositorum*, the epistemic umbilical mark of reality; it is proof that there is a *telos* to the historical process. This planet is haunted at the higher levels by archetypes of various sorts and the entire historical thrust is toward confrontation with the Other. If you're living in the sixteenth century, it's conceived of as a visitation by the Virgin Mary; in the twentieth century, it's interpreted as friendly extraterrestrials from Zeta Reticuli. But in fact what it is is none of these things; in truth, it is the Other — that which cannot be reduced to anything familiar in our world — and the process of history is the shock wave which announces the eminence of this rupture of reality by this Transcendental Object.

MD: You'll forgive me for being so mulish, but I've found a drill-bit insistence on hard facts to be a rather effective way of boring through opaque rhetoric. What, exactly, is the Transcendental Object at the End of Time? How did you arrive at this concept?

TM: Basically, from reading Jung on alchemy. Do you know anything about alchemy?

MD: A little; is your Object a cross between the Philosopher's Stone and the monolith in 2001: A Space Odyssey?

TM: That's exactly it; Jung liked to talk about how, in the pre-scientific age, when people were naive about the categorical separation between mind and matter, they were able to imagine a migration of terms so that what was matter and what was mind would come together in something which was of the nature of both and neither. I would say that we are still epistemologically naive about the nature of mind and matter and that history is the effort to build a tool, and that tool is the self, and the self is this transdimensional vehicle; it transcends life and death, it transcends space and time, it is both here and there, it is both real and unreal, and so forth and so on.

So history does have a purpose and the revelation of this purpose is not that far in the future. In fact, the chaos of the twentieth century signifies that the historical process is coming to an end. We are now in a position to actually understand and confront this Transcendental Object at the End of Time and we are drilling toward it with psychedelic drugs and cybernetic machinery and so forth, and it is drilling toward us in its fashion (which is incomprehensible to us at this point).

At the same time, we're caught up in the nineteenth century desire to eliminate teleology from thinking about the world in order to keep Darwinism uncontaminated by deism. That has to be put aside because there is in fact a teleological attractor, and fields like chaos and catastrophe theory completely legitimate this kind of thinking in a scientific context which was not possible in the nineteenth century because they couldn't conceive of that.

MD: With the aid of a programmer, you've produced a software package called Timewave Zero that illustrates your vision of the end of history — on December 12, 2012, to be exact — with the arrival of the ineffable mysterium tremendum that you call the Transcendental Object at the End of Time. Is your zero hour a poetic metaphor or an actual calendar date?

TM: You mean how seriously do I take it? Well, as a rationalist I don't take it seriously at all. I mean, these things are models. On the other hand, I'm puzzled, because I have a whole theory about time that is a true theory — not a conversational theory, but a mathematical formalism, a fractal that describes the topology of temporality, which in Newtonian physics is assumed to be a smooth surface. I substitute for the traditional zero curvature a complex fractal dimension, and then I can see that all time that we have any data about, meaning historical or paleontological or whatever, can be mapped onto this fractal. But with a peculiar caveat: for the wave to fit the data, it must be generated from A.D. 2012.

MD: But millenarians throughout history have fixed on arbitrary endpoints and adduced an abundance of evidence to support their prophecies. Inevitably, the great day comes and goes and history grinds on.

TM: I'm well aware of the slippery nature of prophecy, and how once a prophecy is made, there is ample evidence at hand to support it. However, I think the evidence is that we are pointed toward a very tight choke point of some sort, and people who blithely assume that history will be a going concern in 500 or 1,000 years don't seem to have grokked the transformative power of technology. My Timewave Zero software places tools in your hands for you to decide whether this theory is just the product of too much psilocybin; it's a laboratory for moving this wave around and looking at it against historical data. This

complex mathematical object is a touchstone for connecting a bunch of different data points that otherwise would appear completely unrelated to each other. I'm very aware of the selectivity of perception and the slippery nature of historical data, but if I could corner you with this software for a couple of hours, I could at least shake your faith that 2012 is going to be a year like any other.

MD: Are there any parallels between your Transcendental Object and Tipler's Omega Point? [Author's note: In the weeks that elapsed between the two epic sessions in which this interview was recorded, I sent McKenna some articles by the physicist Frank J. Tipler which I thought might interest him. The essays in question set forth themes elaborated in Tipler's *Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead* (Doubleday, 1994), where he offers nothing less than a "testable physical theory for an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God who will one day in the far future resurrect every single one of us to live forever in an abode which is in all essentials the Judeo-Christian heaven." Tipler posits an Omega Point (a term borrowed from the French theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin) of infinite density and temperature toward which the universe will collapse in a backwards Big Bang called the Big Crunch. The energy generated by this implosion could be used, he theorizes, to drive a cosmic computer simulator (think of *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* holodeck) with infinite processing power — enough, certainly, to bring back to (virtual) life every creature that ever lived.]

TM: I'm in complete agreement with Tipler and Teilhard de Chardin except that I'm willing to actually talk about the endpoint as imminent. I thought that Tipler's response to the German theologian ("The Omega Point as Eschaton: Answers to Pannenberg's Questions for Scientists," *Zygon*, vol. 24, no. 2, June 1989), was an incredibly creative piece of dreaming — all these ideas about computers of such size that the entire universe can be modeled raise the possibility of fairly apocalyptic scenarios. And the speed at which microminiaturization and computing power are going forward makes it not unreasonable that some of the scenarios that Tipler is talking about could probably be realized pretty much by 2012. The rate of technological acceleration in many fields is such that when you propagate all these curves forward into the future, you see that sometime after the turn of the century they seem to go asymptotic or become infinite. I would like to hear more from Tipler about his eschaton theory and know a bit about the background of this kind of thinking. The notion of an attractor seems to have re-legitimized teleology in science.

MD: Yours seems to be a teleology of strange attractors.

TM: You could call it that. Have you read *Process and Reality* by Alfred North Whitehead (Free Press, 1978)? That's where my whole metaphysic is drawn from; Whitehead has a concept that he calls "concrecence," and by that he means the eschaton, the Omega Point, the Transcendental Object at the End of Time. What I've done is simply take the Whiteheadian metaphysic and create a mathematical model that is consistent with his concept and then shown how it would work as a heuristic machine.

MD: Don't you draw on Bateson as well?

TM: I hardly know anything about Bateson, although I do occasionally use his phrase "the pattern which connects," but my intellectual roots are Jung, McLuhan, and Whitehead, and perhaps a little Thomas Aquinas, imbibed without realizing it as a result of being raised Catholic.

MD: I'd like to re-attack the question of the New Age's relationship to science and technology. In *Strange Weather: Culture, Science, and Technology in the Age of Limits* (Verso, 1991), Andrew Ross writes, "If

metaphysicians no longer habitually find themselves placed in the anti-science corner, it is because theoretical science in the wake of quantum physics has shattered the intellectual security of the mechanical picture of discontinuous time, space, matter, and objectivity.” He goes on to note that some in the New Age community “have made common cause with quantum physics, finding among the more speculative adherents of that discipline a tolerance for mysticism that complements their own holistic metaphysics and a new *raison d’être* for closing the gap between the two cultures.” What do you make of such developments?

TM: Before, science was based on calculability and sober reflection, whereas now it’s based on premises which most people would find highly irrational and counterintuitive. I feel pretty comfortable being on the side of the philosophy of science but it’s post-Newtonian, post-quantum physics science. I’m a little suspicious of the New Age’s appropriation of the language of quantum physics, because I think most of these people couldn’t solve a partial differential equation if their lives depended on it; they’re just surfing on the obfuscation of quantum physics that its mathematical basis provides.

MD: With all due respect, could you solve a partial differential equation?

TM: No, but I don’t call on quantum physics to support my point of view.

MD: But you often wrap your ideas in the mantle of science by using scientific terminology.

TM: There’s science and then there’s reason, and science has at times used reason, although at times its conclusions have been fairly unreasonable. Reason is a universal method for dealing with information, whereas science is an extremely culturally conventionalized method. I think there’s a role for reason and the razors of logic, but this is a branch of formal philosophy, not a branch of science; science appropriates everything to itself and then we tend to genuflect before it, but what we really need is a relativistic approach to the true scope of science which is considerably less than it has claimed for itself. In the twentieth century, it’s claimed to be the arbiter of truth in all domains when in fact it’s simply the study of those phenomena so crude that the restoration of their initial condition causes the same thing to repeat itself, and that’s a very small part of the sum total of the phenomenal universe.

The question of whether or not what’s ultimately important about a scientific theory is its mathematical foundation or its popular misconception is an interesting one. You should take a look at Misia Landau’s book *Narratives of Human Evolution* (Yale University Press, 1991), in which she argues from a lit-crit point of view that the theory of evolution is nothing more than a campfire story, with all the elements of good theater. It has someone of poor and humble origins who goes a great distance in search of a great gift, forming alliances along the way and finally attaining this gift, but it brings him self-doubt rather than happiness, and so on. I view everything as narrative and science is simply a part of that; its reliance on mathematics is much less impressive to its high priests than it is to the rest of us.

MD: So you make common cause with the post-structuralists to the degree that you view science as a text to be read closely for traces of culturally constructed, rather than empirically verifiable, meaning.

TM: I’m a little uncomfortable being connected with deconstructionism, having just read Camille Paglia (anybody who read *Sexual Personae* would be uncomfortable being connected with those people!). But I think these critiques need to be done. Imre Lakatos, a Greek philosopher of science who wrote a very influential book called *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), talks

about how certain theories which we accept as scientific have in fact been very reluctant to state the circumstances under which they would be proven false, which is what characterizes real science. Freudianism, for instance, is in this position: no Freudian has ever said what piece of evidence would be necessary in order to abandon Freud.

MD: But isn't the question of falsification a moot point for someone interested in "reading" a discourse as reflective of cultural biases? The empirical grounding — or lack thereof — of Freudianism seems irrelevant, in such a context.

TM: Well, I think you do have to ask this question of falsification, ultimately. For instance, in my own theory of time I've been very concerned to make it clear that if the historical continuum does not exhibit certain properties then the theory should be dumped.

What is interesting about the Timewave is that it seems to supply a map of historical vicissitude, a map that you can confirm for yourself by looking at how it maps the past, which then gives you a certain measure of confidence as you notice that it seems to map the immediate future astonishingly well. Where the cognitive dissonance enters into it is that all of these mappings only work if you assume a major singularity emergent on the 12th of December, 2012. That's such a screwy position that most people grow fairly uncomfortable with it. I mean, here is a formal mathematical theory which nevertheless has built into it a bearded character carrying a sign that says, "Repent, for the end is near!"

MD: How comfortable are you with the stickiness of that position?

TM: Well, I'm not entirely comfortable. On the other hand, if you look at the orthodox position on the universe, it's that it sprang from nothing in a single moment. You would be hard pressed to construct a tighter limit test for creditability than that! All I'm saying is that the singularity is more likely to spring from a very complex situation than to spring from what is a completely featureless situation, which is what the Big Bang says.

MD: But you're turning a semantic somersault, there: Science's position is not that everything sprang from nothing, but rather that we do not know what the state of the universe was one picosecond before what we now theorize happened.

TM: You're right; they don't say the universe sprang from nothing, they say we can calculate back to a moment when it was smaller than the diameter of the electron and then we can't calculate any further, and they call that last picosecond the prephysical era, indicating that it's somehow bad taste to attempt to push the laws of physics into that realm. But it seems to me that this is not a wit different from saying, "Let there be light," and resting with that. It's much more likely that the universe is driven by a singularity, but the singularity is of the nature of an attractor rather than an impelling force. Thus, it isn't a coincidence that at a high point of human history the singularity occurs; what I'm suggesting is that history is a phenomenon which announces the imminence of the conrescence: you only get language-using, technology-elaborating animals a geological nanosecond before the singularity occurs.

MD: But what is the engine that drives that teleology?

TM: Well, now we go on to Tipler's paper: It's this Omega Point that he's raving about. What's fascinating about Tipler's paper is that he's saying that physics supports the de Chardinian point of view, which is a

theological point of view, but he, like de Chardin, makes the unnecessary assumption that the Omega Point is far away in time, when actually there's no way of making a judgment as to our distance from it based on what is present in Tipler or de Chardin. What I've come up with is a map of the temporal continuum which, when you have fitted its saw-toothed edges into the ebb and flow of historical vicissitude, enables you to look at the end of the wave and discover that far from meandering millennia or mega-millennia into the future, it actually comes to ground 21 years into the future.

MD: What exactly will happen in 2012?

TM: I've given a lot of thought to this and the answers range over a spectrum, from soft to hard. The softest version is: nothing at all. The Seventh Day Adventists believe the end of the world occurred in 1830, which is a very soft version; it can happen and you don't even notice! In the extreme, hard version, which maps Whiteheadian metaphysics onto Christian eschatology, the stars fall from heaven, the oceans boil, the dead rise, and so forth — in other words, a complete breakdown of ordinary physics.

MD: But aren't you fudging the disprovability of your theory, given that the spectrum of possible proofs includes an event, on the extreme "soft" end, whose cultural reverberations are below the threshold of detectability? If nothing perceptible happened on December 12, 2012, how would an outside observer discern whether you simply got the date wrong, or the predicted event transpired but was simply beneath the threshold of registration?

TM: Well, you need to move into the domain of what's called best-fit theories of curve matching. In other words, we have a curve — the Timewave — and we have a data field — human history — and what's needed is an impartial method of matching the curve to history. This is a difficult problem but not in principle an insoluble one; what makes it difficult on the face of it is that history is not a quantified data field — you don't get good agreement about what the vicissitudes of history really mean. However, there is a kind of vague consensus that you could use to guide you. If you had a thousand tenured professors of history and you asked them to name the ten most important turning points of the last 5,000 years, there would be a fairly high percentage of agreement on the Golden Age of Greece, the Italian Renaissance, the fall of the Roman Empire, and so forth as having global consequence upon all peoples that followed upon them. Eventually, what you would try to do is get a consensus by experts in the field of history and then get them to propose a set of variables onto which the original set of variables could be mapped and then the best-fit configuration of these two data streams should either indicate that 2012 is the end of the Timewave or indicate some other date as the end of the Timewave. So the answer to your question is that the comparison of these two theories lies in the realm of the quantification of historical data.

I don't incline toward the softer end of the scale, but I find the hard end of the scale, where you have the stars falling from heaven, equally hard to believe. I see the eschaton as a planetary phenomenon. I think the Timewave is a topological manifold of the unconscious of biology or something like that; I think the fate of this planet is entirely caught up in this 2012 end date. I'm willing to be the devil's advocate for that, to try to make it seem creditable, because the orthodox theory of history taught in the universities is one of what's called "trendless fluctuation," meaning that history isn't under the governance of any set of laws. Well, if that's true, then history is unique in this universe — the only phenomenon not under the governance of a set of rules.

MD: The notion of an "unconscious of biology," by which I assume you mean some sort of planetary sentience, sounds like a New Age gloss on the Gaia hypothesis.

TM: I've held different points of view about this. Sometimes I incline more to this theory that you're asking about, that the Gaian mind has somehow deputized a subset of higher animals called the primates to be the energy-garnering units in the global ecosystem, and then the question would be why? I'm interested in the phenomenon of these earth-crossing asteroids. Every solid body in the solar system clear out to the moon of Pluto is heavily cratered by cometary material and it may be that life actually has a kind of hyperdimensional proprioception, that there is an anticipation of danger on the planetary scale and so human beings have been called forth as a kind enzymatic response to this sense of danger, and the goal of human history is to use thermonuclear weapons to blow apart some very large object that would otherwise make a real mess out of things.

MD: I'd like to end with a suitably facetious question: What do you consider yourself? Are you a psychotropic philosopher, a cartographer of altered states, a stand-up comedian for those whose neurons have been permanently rewired by psychoactive alkaloids, or . . . ?

TM: I'm a cunning linguist (laughs).

Original Transcription from RoyChristopher.com

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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The TIMEWAVE

25^{*} May 1995

Maui

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Transcribed by software, beware mistakes

I was a chance, where I was not a Scientologist but certainly was not an application for this in error would give me know East Intel I proceeded along this line to its conclusion well I I of course bewildered recipient of this information was trying to figure get ahead of the game and singing aware as this have to what makes us think trying to Sean and I decided it must be what happened here is I'm discovering an ancient Chinese calendar because you know there are 64 hexagrams and six lines in each hexagram is a grand total of 384 lines for the is an interesting number of illumination and motorcyclist 29 point some days anyway 13 of them 383.89 days within a decimal fraction of 384 and I thought behind white guy decoded Stonehenge or something this is this is an agricultural calendar team lunar cycles and some ancient China And of course the obvious objection from people was but what a lousy calendar 619 days year against the son of its so for its 19 days more than solely but I think that there may have been a reason for you see we in the West's Free stability freaks so we have a calendar that does not will against the fixed stars yet not the spicy points only section of the equinoxes which is this a very large cycle you can't do anything about but in an ordinary human life is hardly noticeable it only moves once a dark sign every 2000 years that culture slowly it knows we are stability freaks but if you had a calendar the process 19 days against the solar years calendar and you would have a calendar's entire message was change what will you would be boring if you were born at Christmas time and Christmas selling literature were before you sign age 60 and would celebrate Christmas in the springtime five summer and early all in late fall the entire sliding and slipping up cosmic machinery as well let some Western mind that want which is as Heraclitus said. All loans all loans in class so I played without the Wildman and it was interesting but I was not given to the East by my news said no no this is Terrence this is the start of another in Houston anyway are the there was more to it and so finally I realized right was told to your way as though it were the lowest unit in a modular hierarchy that is structured way be changed structured so that sounds arcane but explain what it means is fairly straightforward it means take the wave 384 yao 64 hexagrams running into directions and by the way there are all sayings in the chain would say stuff like the forward running the numbers referred to cast running numbers refer you should probably meet changing as we have it today there are neither were not running numbers there are just so I Confidence I'm like and noetic archaeologists with not get into the bright shining reconstructing a

intellectual object which I get it all will die and again it will be it's the original Harare or whatever it said was built with, so the I took a little way and I six of them in a row to represent six lines and then I took the

way in mind magnified by our three siblings three times bigger than it had been and I laid to those my six to represent two trigrams that are components of each hexagram and then I took my original way and I magnified by a power six and I laid it over the six little ones to middle sized ones I laid one big one representing a hexagram in its unitary totality will and I felt a great sense of satisfaction when this was all done at all being generated from the same point and now right hand this point was in a long decency for paper covered with colored pen strokes and tiny crab like numbers which I kept will been a bamboo to and I would corner people laugh in dime stores and bus station and I would say you know what this is is a map of history is a picture of time this is how things have well triggered a lot of alarm in my immediate circle and my friends were having what should be done meeting CNN which is always a bad sign when your friends hold meetings to decide what should be done and finally Ralph Abraham is a great friend and mathematician he said to me he said you know what you have this in a cult object nobody understands the same but you and it may make sense and it may may not make sense that the point is no one can tell and what you have to do you want to be taken seriously as you have to take this structure and you have to turn it into an ordinary mathematical object so that fellow mathematicians can participate in this dialogue with you will essentially it was like telling a Hottentots to fly supersonic clear something like I had no clue I am not a mathematician I had no clue and I was sort of hoping Ralph would do it for making out that I could on some smart guy into doing it for me so that's where it's sacked for a couple of years in one afternoon I was getting loaded and the as I rarely did and turn the light with slanting in through some curtains and I was watching that Smoltz swim in the sunbeam and I just like thought I understood almost instantly how to carry out a clever these That's where was I help me out as you will yes it showed me how to take change it into an ordinary mathematical object and good news for you sat in is that I'm not in a bore you with this it's done it's trivial if you're absolutely obsessed with all this you can read the invisible landscape where it's all set out the point being it's all been gone over by experts in its solid as a rock and so we don't have to worry about but the transformation about a cult object into an ordinary mathematical object left me with was a very bizarre fractal wave for which I had calibrated to history and I believe at this point this entire wrap with it entered the annals of exotic pathology and died there were it not for the fact that I maintain that this wave actually works and that we can not only predict the future with this puppy which is an easy enough thing to do because who can say you're wrong you know you just wave your arms and gesticulate wildly and but we can only predict future we can predict perhaps is there a price to pay I know it sounds like a Promethean paranoia to me there may be a price to pay but I don't think necessarily so I think it has a lot to do with attitude like for instance I never ever ever ever ever try to do anything in those states like I don't try to get lovers lose libraries make money lose money I I do not want to use it in any way I say all I want to do is look I am perfect I am unworthy to do more and it's not modesty where all one word to do more and a lot of people try to grab And sale will while Mrs. power I've never thought of that this power and IE IE I think that if you are simply content to adore no harm can come to you but when you start trying to figure out how you could fold it into your agenda then God help you because you know it can leave you a mad broken in the canon among so it's very much about the intent in my mind roles are very modest I'm very pleased that it chose to confine so concrete and idea in me but if it had never chosen to do that I still would die a happy man with the unspeakable experiences of beauty that it has shared with me because my psychedelic trips these days are not about the timewave.

The timewave is pretty much a done a done deal, so I think it's like everything else in life - intent is everything. An impact ability means in that domain do not seek to use do not seek to use. It's a religious mystery and that doesn't mean it's an unsolved problem, it means a mystery and life is only worth living as long as the mysteries continue to inform, transform, and inspire us and then the last thing I want to say and then I'll leave you is: the true can take care of itself. You don't have to approach the true with eyes lowered

and gaze averted on bended knee, that's how you approach bullshit, but the truth is so powerful that you can kick the tires, turn over the engine check, the odometer and nobody is offended. Truth is real. It can stand the test and that's why you know I went all over the world looking at various spiritual traditions I don't feel it's putting them down to say that they were ineffective because they were all great aspirations but the only real open doorway that I ever found out where the point's this works you know another spiritual disciplines everybody wants to go faster they want the roshis to give them further empowerments they want further information postures secret teaching so forth and so once you reach the psychedelic experience the accelerator is far less interesting than the location of the breaks software looking for when I trying to push we all know how to push this so fast we can't stand it to you in and in are

Original Transcription by: [Jonathanlal]

Adjustments by: [grantjoy]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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aka This Counts, Somehow it Matters & A Higher Dimensional Section of Reality

Day December 1994

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon Part 1\)](#)
- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon Part 2\)](#)
- [Audio Link Youtube \(Full\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[ONLY PART 2 TRANSCRIBED BELOW...PLEASE TRANSCRIBE PART 1--LINK ABOVE]
{1:00:30}

I'm not very keen on the whole abduction shtick. I think that one of the symptoms of cultural disintegration is simply that people lose the ability to distinguish between dream and memory and that somehow one's past, one's real past and one's dream past simply become one's past. Then under certain circumstances what was basically dream material is presented as reality.

Just because you have a nut theory, it doesn't mean that you agree with other nut theories. In fact, it often makes you very hostile to them. After all there's a limited pool there that we're all...

My idea with psychedelics throughout my whole career with them was that they were the purpose. It was to go out into mind space and hunt ideas and bring something back to show the folks around the campfire, something that would astonish us and amaze us all. Well you know it's a narrow keyhole, the mind. You can't bring back a flower like the time traveler does in Welles' story. So I've found the only thing I could bring back, not being graphically endowed, was ideas. It's a very mysterious business, the revelation of mind to the world. Since the last time I talked to any audience I finally understood an argument of my enemies that I had never understood before - enemies in the friendly collegial ideological sense, in other words enemies.

The countervailing theory to the evolution of consciousness, how it came to be so rapidly as opposed to the idea that it was stimulated by psychedelic compounds in the early human diet - and I've ridiculed this idea to you before - the idea that human beings throw things. Because we were small and weak and we hunted very large animals, we learned to hurl rocks with great accuracy and that this is a behavior not observed in the animal world. I mean, monkeys hurl feces in a generally downward direction to indicate displeasure but their aim is lousy, which is a very fortunate thing if you're an Amazon explorer. But human beings can hit with considerable force an object up to 120 feet away. Evolutionary biologists have fastened on this as, requiring so much coordination of neuro-material that there would be enough left over to invent Western Civilization and explore the planets once you had this thing down. Well it always seemed somewhat preposterous to me and I pointed out that it would make the big league baseball pitcher the paradigm of

evolutionary accomplishment in the human world if that standard were accepted.

But now I understand the argument a little better and it's slightly deeper than I thought because here's what they were trying to say the first time. It isn't this neuro-coordination. It is really about planning. It is an extraordinary thing to look at a rock in your hand and to make the calculation into the forward vector of the future. Ah ha, if I hurl back and impart a certain energy in a certain direction with a certain intensity, this thing will follow a path through space and will land somewhere with benign consequences to me and my side. The key concept in here is plan! This is a plan and animals don't do this. There are no plans in the animal world. Their consciousness is of the moment and doesn't involve this complex triangulation out of the moment toward future consequences in quite this way. What happens when you let go of the rock is that you can no longer control it. It isn't like hunting or beating something to death with a stick where the strategy is being readjusted moment to moment. No, once the projectile is released from your hand, that's all the planning you get to do. So it represents a condescence of intent and this building towards a condescence of intent - this plan making - then is the tiny flutter of the butterfly's wing that ripples out through the chaotic universe and the next thing you know, the kings of Babylon are issuing their codes of law and slaves under the lash are erecting cities and the stars are being brought into a mathematical model. Well I just wanted to mention that I'm also working on a 2nd book at the moment where we're going to go back into the psilocybin theory of the origin of consciousness and actually attempt to make a case that will demand attack. In other words, to actually marshal all of the anatomical, paleontological primate data because the more we research, the more it appears true that by looking at the psychedelics, they become a kind of key to understanding the entire phenomenon of human emergence by looking at the larger issue of food as an environmental dimension. In other words, our food has shaped us as omnivores. We have exposed ourselves to a very high input of mutagenic material over the course of our omnivorous behavior and this has accelerated the rate of mutation in our species. This is why there are so many cancers. Those cancers are maladaptive mutations - most are - most mutations are non-productive. But by being a creature of the jungle canopy that underwent a forced migration to an entirely different nutritional environment - the grassland - we opened ourselves up to this mutagenic influence. It's only the spectacular effect of the psychoactive compounds impacting on neuro-organization, cognition and social organization that I focused on originally. But now the realization is beginning to ripple out through the evolutionary community that yes, this is the hidden factor - the mutagenic diet and the forced shift in environment.

There are also ideologically unexpected twists and turns in all this. I recently met a very interesting person. He's going to be my coauthor on this evolution book - Philippe De Vosjoli. Some of you may know him and he is a lover of animals. This guy has made a fortune in publishing books on reptile care. If you have a broken iguana, he's the man to see. But he pointed out something to me, which is very, very interesting which goes against prevailing political correctness for sure, which is that browsing ungulate animals have actually no interest in the behavior of other animals. They couldn't give a hoot. Who's interested in the behaviors of other animals are hunting animals and that in order to successfully hunt an animal, you must in a sense be able to become it. You must be able to transfer your consciousness into it and imagine its motivations, its behaviors, so forth and so on. So Philippe has convinced me on one level, the earliest human consciousness was not human consciousness at all. It was primate ability to enter into the behavior patterns and psychologies of other mammals in the grassland environment that it was predated upon. Following vultures as a basis for the beginning of nomadism and this sort of thing. Obviously predator animals are aware and their evolutionary success is based on environmental awareness and being able to act based on inputting the behavior of other animals. This is a very complex mental world compared to the world of the fruitarian, leaf eating, canopy browser that we came from.

Then it appears that in a series of coalescing involutions of culture and neuro-organization, driven by the spatial coincidence of human beings, cattle, mushrooms; our original primate programming was

restructured and I've talked a great deal about this. I think this is the key to understanding at least our sexual politics. All primates have what are called dominance hierarchies and this is where the hard bodied, sharp fanged males – young males – arrange everybody else to suit themselves; the elderly, the sexually available females, the young, homosexuals, the sick. Everybody gets told where to stand and what to do. This is how primates operate. This is how we operate. However, I think that for a long period in human beings this was interrupted by nutritional factors and drug factors in the environment. That in a sense a human society that is using psilocybin on lunar cycles of use is suppressing the ordinary pattern of male dominance – hierarchical dominance. It's not genetically touching it. It's still there. But in the same way that if you give a population of aggressive people a lot of opium, aggression disappears. If you give a population of people a kind of psychedelic boundary dissolving aphrodisiac that promotes group bonding and erodes monogamy and so forth, then you get a different social ambiance than if that weren't present. I think the secret to understanding our curious relationship to the angelic and animal worlds has to do with the fact that under the influence of this hormone/enzyme, which was suppressing ordinary patterns of male dominance, consciousness underwent an extraordinary series of bifurcations. Language, theatre, poetry, magic, religion, dance, music, ethical values and altruism – everything emerged some time between 35,000 and 10,000 years ago. The Paleolithic, the pre-agricultural era; was an extraordinary period of novelty being expressed and conserved in the biological world. The primate species, the hominids, suddenly just take the stage. Through an amazing series of cultural transformations, they become a planet ruling species by 10,000 years ago. And then not content with that, the process doesn't slow down – it accelerates and this has to do with the fact that we have somehow created through language a kind of adaptive strategy that is so flexible that unlike most adaptive strategies, which sooner or later run into a blind box canyon and are just simply trapped there butting their heads against the wall. You see it everywhere, the mussels down on the rocks – most evolutionary developmental lines are dead ends. But somehow we broke free of that by ceasing to be defined by the physical body, which is the stuff upon which evolution works and placing between ourselves and our environment a new thing called culture, we began to mediate evolution. Evolution says the infirm, the idiot, the lame must die. Culture says 'we have different values about this.' Maybe yes, maybe no, but we will decide. Evolution says 'you must be a scattered species; nomadic and moving across the surface of the planet like an animal.' Culture says 'no, we have strategies for food sequestration and common defense and we will build cities' and so forth and so on. Since about...pick a number, 10,000 years ago, evolution has not been the dominating factor; biological evolution. Instead there is something else, which the word epigenetic has been suggested, meaning change not driven by genes – our genes are the same. If you were to be with a group of people active ten to fifteen thousand years ago, they would like just like you and I. We haven't changed that much. We've mixed the genes but we haven't particularly added new ones or lost genes.

But in the epigenetic realm, how many languages have been generated over the past 10,000 years. How many world religions have come and gone? How many systems of government? How many theories of polity and society? We just furiously cast these things off and beginning about 500 years ago, this phenomenon was embraced as a permanent aspect of human existence in Western Europe and the concept of progress became enshrined. Progress is the idea that this process must go on, be extended and accelerated everywhere. Now it seems to be happening and as a consequence of this acceleration of process, all the contradictions in the old system – and I mean reaching back to Egypt – all the contradictions in the old system are now on the surface. I believe psychedelics are a kind of higher dimensional sectioning of reality. I think they give the kind of stereoscopic vision necessary to hold the entire hologram of what's happening in your mind. The old paradigm is gone.

We can talk about how different parts of it died, you know? Maybe not everybody knows the story of how physics, the paradigmatic science of reason, turned into a place where nothing makes any sense at all.

Where stories are told so wild that a surrealist painter would flee from the gathering just shaking his head. That's physics, the very bedrock of the whole western shtick has turned into a place of utter psychedelic contradiction and chaos and the news hasn't reach biology and psychology. They're still operating under different paradigms. What is keeping science alive at this point is the fact that it is able to whore itself to the marketplace. In terms of the old program, which was providing some kind of metaphysical recitation of the nature of the universe, it's pretty clearly out of reach at this point. The universe has been discovered to be stranger than you can suppose.

What this means to the troops, which is you and me, the citizens of these linear, print-created, scientism ruled, democratic, industrial states – what it means to us is you get your mind back. They have no need of it anymore. It's actually become a burden to them. Yes, they struggled like hell to take it but then they discovered it really wasn't worth all that much anyhow. The great thing about living in the twilight of an imperial decline is the permission that exists. Incredible resources lay before us and very few people are looking over your shoulder and telling you what to do. The fact that this community has been able to persist and exist, this is the orphic community. This is the tradition of descent, extasis, sexuality, ambiguity, so forth and so on, that reaches right back to Chalcolithic Greece and beyond.

Shamanism is about shape shifting. Shamanism is about doing phenomenology with a toolkit that works. No religion, no philosophy I think, has ever gone very far down the road of understanding. Understanding is not really a collective enterprise. Understanding is an individual enterprise and you can read Husserl and you can become a Hasid, or you can assimilate these group understandings that are forms of wisdom but ultimately those are platforms for intrepid exploration. Now at the end, I think, of this entire enterprise – I don't know if I'm changing or if the world is changing or both – but it has gotten so rich recently that it's like an enormous meal at some over-reviewed restaurant where you just have to push yourself away and say 'the spectacle is endless and amazing and apparently it's all going to come true.'

My impulse is to distance myself from it all. The mushroom said to me once. It said, 'this is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars. This is not unusual.' The earth quakes, the oceans boil, the planet came into existence for this. All life for over a billion years has been pointed toward taking this step, leaving the oceans for the land was dress rehearsal for what will now be done. It's chilling because it's so huge. You don't even know. It's just enormous. Yet apparently when you look back through the history of the universe, this is how it precedes. Incredibly gradually over staggering scales of time but then every once in a while you come around the corner and there it is – a continent sinks, an asteroid impacts, a star explodes, two intelligent species meet somewhere out in the cosmos. These things set ripples going for eons.

[Audience] – I'm curious what this has to do with psychedelics because it seems to me that when you use psychedelics to break down perceptual barriers, that's one thing. But there is such momentum going on in the world today that things are breaking down without psychedelics – although it may appear psychedelic in terms of the way you see it. Do you see what I'm getting at? At this juncture, have we transcended psychedelics?

Well my idea is that the psychedelic recapitulates on the personal scale this universal meltdown that is going on without the need of psychedelics. But this universal meltdown is very frightening to people. Most people are pattern oriented and nostalgic and it scares them. I think psychedelics are a way...it's sort of like doing calisthenics in preparation for the marathon at the end of time. People who have taken psychedelics should be in a better position to assure, reassure everybody else. People say the laws of physics are breaking down and you can say 'I've seen it before.' And in a way this thing, this event that wants to emerge. We think of it as quantized in a single moment where the shift will happen and it's like the glory or something. Our job, if we have a job and I'm not sure we do, but if we have a job then our job is to anticipate this and to live it out before it happens. Somebody very dear to me said to me twenty-five

years ago – actually it was in the same conversation where they said history is the shockwave of eschatology – how anybody could say that in 1975 I do not understand. Anyway – he also said we should live as though the apocalypse has already occurred. That’s the only way to transcend the historical hysteria because the historical hysteria is about this thing, it might happen, it won’t happen, it will happen. No, you say it *did* happen so enough about that already.

Each thing that we do anticipates this deeper fall inward into the dream. The dream is what awaits at the end of history. The dream, and you can call it hyperspace or cyberspace or the transdeath realm, but what it really is, is it’s a going into the dream and what is the dream? The dream is a place where the laws are set by the imagination. The imagination is God in the dream. If there is a way for us to mirror our highest aspirations, in other words to inculcate the God image in ourselves, then it’s by becoming the masters of our dream and then creating through drugs, technology, magic - who cares the details come later – creating a way to share that so that we each then are a god with an open office doorway to all the other gods who wonder through looking at the cosmogony that we produce as art. I was thinking about this, this morning, I was thinking about what am I going to say to these folks – and I was thinking about the Platonic triad of the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Sometimes people have dissed me and my obsession with hallucination because they say, ‘LSD doesn’t really cause hallucination, it causes insight and complex thoughts – but why are you so focused on visual hallucination?’ Which I am. If it doesn’t do that, I’m not interested.

Then I thought the way into it is: Plato talks about the Good, the True and the Beautiful, but the key concept is beautiful. Good, it’s abstract. True, it’s abstract. But Beauty is felt, perceived with the senses as music, painting, whatever it is. So the bridge to the metaphysical absolutes of truth and the good is through the palpable realm of the beautiful. To my mind, this is what these psychedelics achieve. They as Huxley said, they dial open the valve of consciousness or as Blake implied, the window of perception is cleansed and then you see through into an infinite, holographic, recursive world of mind and affectionate intelligence. Somehow this mystery is in the body and therefore outside of time, therefore beyond, in some sense, the reach of culture. Sex is like this to some degree. Sex is in the body and outside of time. Culture spends a huge amount of it’s energy trying to reach sex, trying to contort it, push it one way or another and has produced some pretty bizarre themes and variations but generally speaking has failed. No society certainly has ever gotten rid of sex even though there have been societies ruled for thousands of years by men wearing dresses that gave us some of the most ribald minstrelsy around.

So there is this mystery in the body. I’m now returning to the subject of psychedelics beyond the reach of cultural manipulation. Discovering this and exploring it is somehow the frontier of maturity. Culture is a form of enforced infantilism. It’s the last nursery and most people never leave it and they’re perfectly happy to interpret the world through the reassuring nonsense of their cultural values, whatever they may happen to be. The reason psychedelics are so politically dynamite is because they cast doubt on this final cultural envelope of insulation and they do it very democratically. It doesn’t matter what your cultural conditioning is – it falls into question under the influence of the psychedelic. For most people, that’s frightening. Frightening enough that not only do they not want to do it but they are also keen to see that other people don’t do it because they realize that this is some kind of a doorway through which demons come; disruptive ideologies, strange forms of music, bizarre behaviors, unpleasant fashions – it’s all coming from this place where these people are messing around. So there is an impulse to close it off.

So there is a tradition 50,000 years old of shamanism/bohemianism. People who are deputized to be weird and are told, ‘ok you be weird, we’ll give you a hut at the edge of the village – you be weird and if we need you, we’ll call.’ That’s basically the role. ‘No, don’t bother, we’ll call you.’ The political position of shamans is fascinating in these societies because they share it but they are not of it. They are only asked in when things are really desperate. I think that bohemianism, this orphic tradition I’ve talked about that goes back

– way, way back - is the continuation of that. So we here represent to some degree a self selected group of these Orphic eccentrics who carry this charge of otherness. In many languages the word shaman means go-between. The shaman moves between levels, and the mythologies differ but either into a spirit world, or an ancestor world, or an animal world – but a go-between.

Let me see if I can tie this all up. I wanted to follow this thing out about the suppression of male dominance through chemical and diet and psilocybin and all that. The reason that is fascinating to me aside from the fact that it answers some real conundrums in hominid evolutionary arguments is that it then has an implication for the present because we are the damaged heirs of a damaged cultural style which has been practiced now for about 7,000 years. There have been various corrective measures, all failures I think. Christianity, Christ – a corrective measure. Somebody who comes and says don't do it that way, and they get rid of him and within fifty years the church he founded is dealing real estate. You get it in Islam, another corrective effort. These things have not worked. The cultural style has been too toxic. With the rise of modern science and the acceleration of the toxic consequences of bad ideology, we now come to the 20th century. Throughout the 20th century there has been an impulse...

[Audience] – What makes bad ideology?

Ideology that has consequences that are bad for the environment and the gene pool.

[Audience] – Who knows what bad ideology is?

Well nobody knows absolutely but when you think about things like plutonium and nuclear weapon stockpiles... I agree with you that in the largest picture moral relativism makes it impossible to say anything about good and bad, but I'm not that morally relativistic. I think biology should be preferred to its absence and that intelligence should be preferred over its absence. I think the universe wants to preserve novelty. That could actually be the basis of a kind of ethic. Bad is that which destroys novelty and good is that which promotes it. It sounds awfully progressive.

I remember the first time I was in Pakistan and I caught this rickshaw into Lahore and I was being pulled by a human being, muscle power. And this guy said, you're an American and this and that – he said – this country is screwed up, this country is really screwed up. He said 'you want to know what's wrong with it? Progress! Too much progress!' This was a man who made his living pulling people around in a rickshaw, so it's a relativistic thing. What I wanted to say was there is an intelligence in the species that is deeper than the societies and the systems that we erect to rule us and this wisdom of the species can make enormous changes in the evolution of the mass psyche, such as the Renaissance for example.

In the 20th century, this has taken the form of what I call the archaic revival. One of my books is called the Archaic Revival. The 20th century, which is a vast stage crowded with different kinds of competing social phenomena, art movements and so forth and so on, nevertheless I think the entire thing is illuminated by the notion that what it is about is an impulse towards archaism. That in the sciences, the arts, everywhere, the archaic ideal is raising its protean head and it begins with Freud in the early years of the 20th century discovering by interviewing these Viennese bourgeois housewives that human beings were brutes and incest, rape, all this stuff was right below the surface. The rediscovery of the beast and certainly Germany developed that theme up into the 40s. Meanwhile, people were bringing African masks to Paris and Cubism was basing its early theory on the deconstruction of primitive art. Meanwhile people like Eric Satie were abandoning the canons of classical composition in music and the twelve tone row was being experimented. Jazz was being given new attention and for its primitiveness, its rhythm and its sense of something beyond the reach of civilization. Meanwhile the deconstruction of painting, which had begun with Impressionism - Impressionism simply is twenty minutes into LSD, had gone deeper, had developed first of all into the deconstructive spirit of Dada where people tore up telephone directories and rang bells while they did something else. In other words, the absurd appears for the first time, an enormous theme in 20th century life – the incoherent idiocy of it all.

Then Surrealism, taking up the Freudian tune, begins to portray these worlds of distorted association. All of this is about boundary dissolution. It was happening on the bohemian left. It was happening on the fascist right. The rise of Marxism is a collectivist theory of society very concerned with collectivism, and then enormous changes. Auschwitz, the atom bomb, space flight and now where we are is for ten or fifteen years, there has been this awareness that it is about direct experience of the numinous and its been hideously marketed and raped by the entrepreneurial instinct and peddled back to us as dozens of New Age cults diced up and presented as different from each other. But the impulse towards this authentic dissolving experience is real. It was there in Theosophy. It was there in the Beats. It came up through the hippies. It survived the trivialization of the New Age. It has now found its way into the youth culture, into rave and house music and that whole thing and it's healthier than it ever was. Well the central figure in all of this when you get it down to the idea that a culture must have a culture hero, meaning a paradigmatic ideal to constellate around, the central figure it has been realized is the shaman, who is this person of indeterminate depth.

Everyone else has a determinable depth. They are the linear cardboard people walking around but the shaman is of indeterminate depth. That's the secret of Carlos Castaneda's magic. He creates a literary character that in any other culture would be deemed mythical but because of our attitude toward the depth of the shaman, we can't tell. We deputize this kind of depth in rock stars, in culture heroes of various sorts and worshipped that for the past twenty years or so. Well then slowly it has dawned that the position of worshipper is not the most satisfying position. The only position that satisfies is to be that thing. At that point, you're at the psychedelic crossroads because you will either make a conservative decision and seek a guru of some sort and be lost in that, which is a whole shell game, or you will simply cut through the human domain and make a pact with a plant, a substance, and then you will at that moment be at the threshold of your adulthood. That's leaving home. Home is culture. Home is this fabric of imaginary values that have been created and maintained by a pathological culture.

So it's a personal thing ultimately; very controversial, not easy to do and then once done, it has to be integrated, dealt with, thought about – and that as far as I can tell is a task that extends well beyond the yawning grave.

[Audience] – When you talked about the dream, it reminded me of the aboriginal culture and that's kind of how they live their lives – in the dreamtime. Is that what you're talking about, living in the dream and being in touch with?

Yeah to some degree. I don't know that much about aboriginals. I'm interested. I read Bruce Chatwin's book *Song Lines* and I found it absolutely fascinating and I'll talk about it for a minute because it bears on something I'm very interested in. Part of the transformation that I think is going to happen to us lies in the way we deal with language neurologically. Because under the influence of psychedelics, especially short acting tryptamines like DMT, you experience phenomena that seem to be transformations of the language modality. I've described this stuff as visible language; that you can actually sing meaning into visible existence and I've seen this on ayahuasca. This is what ayahuasca is about, the famous group states of mind that anthropologists talk about. What they really are, are three dimensional acoustical sculptures that are made by groups of people who are loaded and it's an extraordinary thing. It's an experience you can't have any other way and it's not quite telepathy or perhaps more than telepathy.

The key concept in communications is bandwidth. The more bandwidth you have, the more detail, color and tone that you can impart to your signal. Well a very low bandwidth channel is the small mouth noise channel. This is about as primitive as it gets short of doing in Morse code; doing it by voice. It's amazing that we understand each other at all. In fact you may have noticed that one of the most uncool things you can do is ask somebody – would you explain to me what I just said? They say, 'oh well, oh dear, I'm afraid I was generally'... a lot of floundering around. In these ayahuasca states what you see are group generated

acoustical hallucinations and because ayahuasca is composed of psychedelic compounds which occur in normal brain chemistry – in other words nothing exotic to human brain tissue is present – it raises the question, well how close is normal metabolic chemistry to having an ability to do this?

The answer is, nobody knows but very, very close. The pineal gland produces adrenoglomerulotropin, which is a beta-carboline. 6-methoxy-tetrahydro-harmaline or maybe it is adrenoglomerulotropin – I can't remember. Anyway there are active beta-carbolines produced in brain metabolism and language is such an odd phenomena anyway in our species. Notice that you have to have two people to do it, which raises real question on how you get that coordinated the first time out. It's a behavior. It isn't an organ. It isn't like my arm or nose, it's a behavior and a learned behavior, yet a behavior so much more complex than any other behavior you ever learn. If the average person could walk like the average person could talk, they would be a primo ballerina of the Russian ballet. It's very interesting that we have such facility to the linguistic enterprise and how it evolves. It's changing all the time. Is it just changing in a kind of forward lateral direction or is there some kind of vertical gain here? Can we actually describe things better to each other than the ancient Greeks could describe things to each other? Can we say things, which they couldn't say, or anything of consequence? I maintain yes, that culture – freeways, internal airports, are the trailing edge of evolving language.

So here's a story that relates to this that it is in Bruce Chatwin's book *Song Lines*. There are these things called song lines, which cross Australia and they can be thousands of miles long. If you're a shaman and one of these things crosses your territory, then you are the keeper of the song, of that part of the line. You must learn and keep this song. There are a hundred and thirty-seven aboriginal languages in Australia, so these people did the following thing. They went to the place near one end of the song line and they recorded a shaman singing his song of that place. Then they went two thousand miles to another part of the same song line and they found the song keeper of that place and they played the guys song for him. It was in a language he didn't speak and he had never been away from his own home – he had never been to this place. So he listened to the song and after a while, he began to sing with it. Not the words but the melody and he sang with it the way you could sing with green sleeves if you didn't know the words but you knew the melody. Then after it was over he said, the man has sang this song. His place is a 'Beaut' with three mountains and eucalyptus filling the valley and a red rock like a lizard over here.

So then they tried to analyze, what is happening here? Is this telepathy? Is it magic? What is it? I think the key to understanding it lies in...I've recently seen, you can buy for about six hundred dollars a piece of software where you glue electrodes to your head and sit down in front of your computer and you see an undulating landscape of neuro readouts that look, lo and behold, like mountains, valleys, escarpments. It's like visit to Utah. I am convinced that what's happening is that when the shaman listens to the first shaman's song, he does not process the sound the way we do. He processes it the way this computer is processing the neurological input and what he's seeing is an acoustical environment of sound and he can see the place. The song is the way it is because the song is not a song; the song is a hologramatic acoustigram of the topology of the land through which the song line passes. These people are called the most primitive people in the world, remember?

So I just recently became aware of this. It's very exciting to me. I'm interested in this software but this is the kind of thing that lies out there. The world arrives at the surface of your skin as one thing but the senses bifurcate the incoming signal. The light goes to the eyes, the acoustical signal goes to the ears, the tactile signal is conveyed through the skin and so then when we reconstruct the world, the wells are showing rather prominently in the model. What happens with the psychedelics is, it seems as though somewhere deep in the brain there is an organ or a program that can take all of the incoming sensory data and actually recombine it into a synesthesia whole, which is neither seen nor felt nor heard, but which is hologrok'd or something. A sense which unites all of the other senses, and that's what I call going into this

informational super space. That's what the psychedelic experience is. It reunifies the sensory datum of the world and I might add, the whole world, not the surface of the world, which is conveyed to us by light, but the internal dimension of transcendence that is in the world, is also present.

[Audience] – It's very interesting that you mentioned that binding together of the senses. I attended a conference earlier this year called 'Towards a Scientific Basis for Consciousness' in Arizona and a number of the presentations focused on the way in which the brain operates when this binding takes place. It turns out different cortical groups start to talk to one another by oscillating together in phase and when they're phase locked like that, they begin to bind this into a whole. I'm reminded of the research that Michael Persinger up at Laurentian University in Canada, who has been focusing on the electromagnetic field of the Earth and its affect on the brain. In particular, he's been interested in the correlation between earthquake activity and ghost sightings and such but he's pointed out that the

Yeah, he wrote a wonderful book called *Space-Time Transients and Unusual Events*. He's been very creative with using the electromagnetic field as an explanation for all kinds of things. I'm totally open-minded to his work. It's very interesting. It does seem to be true that along earthquake faults, you do get piezoelectric buildup and release. The world is full of bizarre phenomena. Some of you may have seen in Science News last week, for the first time they have confirmed these enormous blue and red lights above 75,000 feet in the atmosphere. Airline pilots have been seeing these things for years. There was no theory. Nobody knew what they were. Now NASA dedicated an expedition to looking at this and they got thousands of images of these things. It's an electrical phenomenon; theory doesn't account for them, nobody knows what it means. On one level I'm sympathetic to Persinger and that approach to explaining some of these things and I do think that the place has been overlooked in importance.

On another level, this is a very hard thing to talk about, but there is what I call linguistic viruses that infect the effort to communicate. They're very hard to catch at work. It has to do with how can people believe things that are absurd. It's very interesting to spend time with people who believe something which is absurd. A lot of people bring raps to me that they want confirmation or disconfirmation on and I passed this way last night when I talked about the rules of evidence. The standard of discourse has decayed to the point where it's very hard to get any kind of consensus about anything because most people participating don't know how the game is played. Linguistic viruses really are responsible for much more of reality than we suppose. I suppose I can't really talk about this without stepping on somebody's toes so let me pick...for example, crop circles.

Crop circles are important and what was going on at the England end, these things were absurd. You had only to see one to understand what was going on and to see that a confluence of British eccentricity, ripe grain, a certain ambiance the air was allowing these things to come into being. And the media was fanning it into existence. Well now how does this work? Talking of coupled oscillators and Persinger and all that. Pardon me?

[Audience] – Could you repeat that law?

Oh, the paranormal phenomenon has an impact in an inverse square relationship to the distance you are from the event. You see? Here's how it works. The media is reporting the onrushing phenomena of existence – stock markets, wars, diplomatic meetings, gangster killing, so forth and so on. Then something weird happens, now I have a job, you have a job, and we note that something weird has happened but it doesn't affect us. But scattered through the society there are people who when they open their paper and see 'Strange Pattern in Wheatfield near Wiltshire.' They say, 'ah ha – I knew it. This is what we've been waiting for. This is the sign.' They jump in their car and they drive to Wiltshire to look at the crop circle and they get there first. Well then comes the press and they say, 'well what is this?' The farmer doesn't know and everybody standing around and finally the weird person takes courage and says 'well actually I've been studying a peculiar form of biological energy for some thirty years and my theory...' You're off and

running at that point. So weirdness attracts weirdos who then interpret the weirdness very weirdly because they came with sharpened axes to grind, you see?

The crop circle thing was a test case for this. This is why I spent so much time on it. It did no credit to anybody. The occult just went sailing over the edge and science didn't behave any better. If any of you are interested in this, there's a wonderful book called *Round in Circles* by Jim Schnabel that goes into all this. But anyway, there was a fellow named Terence Meaden who was a meteorologist and when the first crop circles appeared and the weirdos began talking about telluric forces, messages from Atlantis, so forth and so on – he jumped into the fray and said, 'nonsense, nonsense!' This is a meteorological phenomenon. In the warm days of summer on the lee side of these certain kinds of hills, a kind of circular low-pressure wind can get going and this is nothing to get excited about and we've got the statistics. The press loved him. They loved him as much as the screwballs and they would put him on. First they would interview the mad people and then Terence Meaden would come on and pooh-pooh it away.

So that was the first year of the crop circles. The next year the crop circles became considerably more elaborate with arrows coming off of them and zigzags and so forth and so on. Bring Terence Meaden onto the scene and he says, 'well the new field of dynamic instability indicates that the mathematical solutions to these breakdown states are very complicated and unusual patterns...' So then the next year, it was inconceivably complex, the crop circles. Meanwhile, crop circle time is in the springtime. It's dead in the winter because the fields are empty, so Meaden had used the winter time to go to the Institute of Electrostatic Physics in Nagoya and came back full of talk about roving plasmic fields and this sort of thing. Armed with the roving plasmic fields, no crop circle was too bizarre to not be proclaimed the product of natural forces.

This went on and on and finally BBC2 - and you can think about this what you like - but they made a crop circle in frustration with this whole thing. They made a crop circle and among the crop circle cognoscenti, there are certain moves that are the favorite moves that are the authenticating moves that no human being could possibly do it. So the BBC2 people made a very good crop circle and they brought Terence Meaden out and said, 'Terence we've just spotted one over here and we need to get you right to the scene before the tourists got there.' They toured with him and he pointed out the distinguishing characteristics, no doubt about it. Then they sat him down in the center of this field and said, 'Terence, we made it.'

It's a horrible thing actually to see a grown man cry. He is devastated. This is just one of many moments. You know Rupert, my comrade in arms? Rupert Sheldrake was one of the people who sponsored the contest that basically put the crop circles out of business because the claims were fantastic, you know? No person could do this. So what they did was they got farmers to donate ten acre tract of English corn, which is wheat, and for fifty pounds you could enter and everybody had to make the same crop circle, which was one chosen to have all the difficult little smiggies in it and you could use no lights, you had to go into the field at 10pm and be out by 4am and at dawn, the helicopters flew over with the video crews and the crop circles were toured on the ground and awards were made.

This guy, Jim Schnabel, who wrote this book I mentioned, by himself in total darkness, in two and a half hours, made the winning entry. It was very close tie to him and a helicopter crew to a nearby airbase who also made one. Yet, this is to some degree the point of the whole story, there are people whose eyes fill with tears when I do this rap because they haven't heard. It will never die now I'm convinced. It's an informational virus loose in the world. Crop circles will occasionally appear but it was really a breakout that was so predictable from the unconscious that it amazed me while it was going on how many friendships that were strained over this thing.

[Audience] – Wasn't that kind of also the capitulation of the History of the Catholic Church?

And the fall of the Ming dynasty I believe?

[Audience] – It's like a virus embedded within a virus here because part of what happens when these sorts of

things erupt onto the media scene and this is true for UFOs, whenever one of those outbursts take place, is that there is this incredible elaboration and complexity that emerge in the kinds of stories that people are telling. The abduction thing would be the latest. By the way, Persinger is involved in that too by showing that electromagnetic fields to the brain can induce these weird out of body experiences. But in the case of crop circles, they've been reported for many decades but they've not received much attention. They're just little circles that have a spiral pattern in them and they've been seen over the world. My personal view is that there is probably a series of different phenomena that have been shuffled into one category but when the media gets a hold of them, all crop circles are the same. When fractal designs start showing up outside the university campus there – the Mandelbrot set which is one of the most ridiculous of the crop circle patterns, the media presents the image that these are all the same. They're all the same phenomena. So consequently, I wouldn't be surprised if Meaden might not be right at some level that there are dust devil like phenomena...

No I agree with you completely and they track down a 1733 account of something called the Devil's Mower. I grew up in western Colorado and part of my rite of initiation into manhood was in forced elk hunting on horseback every autumn. We would come upon these places in the forest that had been whirled down and the explanation was just that these are deadfalls from whirlwinds but it always seemed to me – had anybody ever seen one of these things occur? It was a very odd explanation. Yes, it's about informational distortion and decay. You're quite right. I went to a flying saucer convention against my better judgment and I learned more...my opinion about flying saucers evolved more over that weekend than in the previous thirty years of being interested in flying saucers. I read all the books, all the special cases, I knew the data and all that but I had never hung out with flying saucer people. It was so obviously a private Idaho that I just couldn't wait to get away.

There are two impulses in the human psyche, at least two in this case. I just don't resonate with believers in anything. I get insulting to Buddhists for God's sake. It's just something about their smugness and their whole bit, I just want to squash it. So you can imagine how I behave in the presence of scientologists and the rest of it. Belief is again, it's a form of infantilism. There are no grounds for believing anything. The flying saucer thing, I went to this conference imagining that what I would meet would be a whole bunch of really interesting sincere people who wanted to discuss the phenomenon of unexplained things in the sky and contacting human beings. What I found was booth after booth of people who had all the answers! Learn how a nearby planet reduced crime by 500%! I got news for you, not even God can reduce crime by 500% once you've reduced it by 100%; you've got it!

This was the quality of thinking that was going on. Then there were a lot of really scary people in brown leather shoes with thin smiles and cheap suits who were clearly third rate, semi retired intelligence hacks who were there to keep the flock headed in the right direction. People wanted to talk about experiments on human fetal tissue that go on in underground laboratories out in Arizona through the connivance of the CIA and the Pledian high command. And you just think, I've just got to call my broker. I'll get back to you on that. I don't know. It's an aesthetic thing. I believe that great weirdness stocks the universe. That's not the issue with me but it's not tacky. It is not tacky. People who wear low cut gowns with a lot of sequins on them and tiaras and pass out flying saucer shaped business cards, that's tacky. So it can't be so! I know this. I've never been wrong. If intelligence fails, aesthetics will pull you through. People don't like this part of me. I don't make it comfortable for other squirrels. I don't share the branch very generously.

A place where I've gotten into lots of trouble is with the face on Mars. I just have not got enough unpleasant things to say about the face on Mars, everybody connected with it, the whole idea. Talk about something, which should never have been let out of the box – that's it. The idea of a chachka 17 x 11 miles in size just gives me the heebeegeebees. I don't want to know those aliens. They should go back where they came from and take their chachka with them. We need people who can build in light and balance planetary ecologies and do really cool things. Massive earth moving projects – we've been there, we've done that.

[Audience] We never went to the moon either. Books will appear on these subjects. One of the interesting things about UFO experience though and the other kinds of different phenomena that you're talking about, is the potential for manipulation of belief systems and this is something that Jacque Valay talks about in his books. There is a kind of sinister undertone that the military is bringing people in who are UFO diehards and saying look at these documents, we can prove that there is this majestic group and then snatching them back and then the UFO enthusiasts go out and tell the world about it. They launch stories about aliens under the desert in Nevada collaborating with the military and the newspapers pick it up but completely pooh-pooh it. Meanwhile there are tests of a new spy plane called project Aurora, which travels six times the speed of sound and leaves a trailing ball blue of light and if anybody sees it traveling over the desert and picks up the phone and calls the paper, nobody will report it.

No, it's clear that those black projects and Aurora is the one, is being run out there. That's very exciting. I mean a plane that can fly into orbit.

[Audience] – Terence, what is your opinion on the biosphere? Did you get into that at all? John Allen and the whole shtick there?

I knew those people in the early 80s - 1983, 1981, in the Amazon. They said they were headed for Mars. I don't know. They are derivative of J.G. Bennett's school of Gurdjieffians and I have a rule, which is, I'm against any group that keeps secrets and Gurdjieffians keep secrets. I'm not against Gurdjieffians per se; in fact it's kind of too bad they get into the category. Secret keeping is a bad habit and if you tell me a secret, I'll probably tell it. Nobody ever told me not to say anything. So I've followed them with interest over the years. It's too bad it's another thing lead by a middle aged white guy but they seem to have the pull.

But I want to return to something you said. This can be the last thing about flying saucers but let me give you my conclusion from this weekend of how the whole flying saucer thing worked. This is just one person's opinion but this is how I explain it to myself. As you know in 1947, the Rainer lights appeared and that was the first big modern flying saucer sighting and set off the whole modern flying saucer phenomenon. Well cast your mind back to the ambiance of 1947. The atom bomb was in 1945, the defeat of Germany, the H-bomb was under development, Einstein was advising Truman. People were on the brink of things they could not understand. Nobody knew what the H-bomb really meant. What does it mean that we can do this? They said, we don't know, maybe the universe is monitored and what we're doing is so outrageous that maybe it will bring those who do the monitoring. Then they began to get these reports of these things in the sky. My god this must be it. There were very high-level government – secret, secret, secret commissions that were setup and they began to study the flying saucers furiously.

They penetrated all those groups and they penetrated the flying saucer thing from one end to the other and I'm talking 1947 to 1954. They studied it and they studied it and Carl Jung was brought in, and all kinds of people were brought in, and at the end of that period, they concluded that what it was. They actually understood it. They concluded that it was the cosmic giggle. They concluded that it was that un-reducible nub of nuttiness that haunts reality and that it was not a threat to the security of North American air defenses. That was their question. Is this a military problem for us? By 54 or so, they had decided whatever this is – a linguistic virus, a mass hallucination, whatever it is – it is not a problem for the military defense of North America.

But they had spent millions infiltrating and completely taking over the weirdest group of screwballs you can imagine, the flying saucer, hardcore cultists. They said, these people will believe anything. We know that because we've been to their meetings. We've read their publications. What should we do with them? Should be just withdraw all our agents and let them go back to whatever they are doing and the answer was no. These people will become a pool for experiments in manipulation of information, control of belief systems and response to propaganda. A whole bunch of black box, psychological, programming and informational kinds of research will be done on this pool of people because they're so weird, if they start

telling their relatives that they're hearing voices in the head or something like that, their relatives and friends are just going to say what else is new. You've been talking like this for years. I think it was kept like that right up until the present moment.

I think it's very low budget. This is not high priority for the CIA. They're sending, as I've said, semi-retired guys in scuffed brown shoes who are definitely over the hill. But they shepherd the group along and as you said, they release these outlandish documents and then they pull them back. Some guy comes forward and says it's all a fraud and I know because I was on the inside and I was the one paid to tell you all these things and then somebody else comes forward and says no – he's a walk in and has an implant and it wasn't that way at all. It's sort of like the JFK assassination. There is no bedrock there. There is no ground zero and I find these things sort of spooky. I think it's bad mental hygiene to spend too much time with squirrels.

[Audience] – They can infect you.

Yeah. Put down that groundhog baby Elizabeth. You don't know where it's been.

{2:24:11}

Original Transcription by: [insert your name here] + [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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A Better World (with Mitchell J. Rabin)

10. July 1996

Location, New York City, New York

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Actually Recorded Oct. 7, 1996

[Musical intro]

Mitchell Jay Rabin: Welcome to the show A Better World. This is your host Mitchell Jay Rabin, and we're very glad that you're joining us again today. Today we are again, if I may say so, going to have a very interesting show. Today we have Terence McKenna on with us and we're very pleased since Terence is here in New York, he decided to come and join us here at the studio.

Terence is here, going to be talking at St. John the Divine and at Source of Life Center, doing a weekend -this weekend - and you'll be seeing this show, actually after the weekend, so if you get a taste of Terence's antics and uh, wild thinking, you will be able to find out when Terence will be back in town for the next round. So welcome, Terence.

Terence McKenna: Pleasure to be here.

MJR: Great. Good to have you. Absolutely. So...God, there's so much that we can really embark upon, to talk about, because you have...uh, Terence has been so interesting in this world, because he's bringing such a rich array of different kinds of thoughts and fantasies to the fore. And, um, so, what I would like to talk about first is, if you would bring us up to speed on one of the main focuses of your work, which has been the software program dealing with time and novelty. You've spun out this entire idea of a theory of novelty, as you describe it, and maybe you can talk a little bit about that.

TM: Well, the software is now available in a DOS version and uh, in a very advanced Mac version. The raison d'être for this present speaking tour is we're in what's called a novelty plunge, according to the theory; in other words, a very concentrated period of time in which a lot is predicted to happen. Since these predictions are the only way we have of testing novelty theory, it's very interesting when there is a prediction of a very deep plunge in novelty, because then you get to actually measure the incoming data from the real world, so called, against theory.

MJR: So we are now in a deep novel plunge?

TM: Yes, we are in a novelty plunge which began around the end of February and which will reach its maxima the middle of next week, and then...

MJR: Oh!

TM: ...sustain itself through the summer, so it's not simply a plunge into novelty but a plunge into novelty followed by a period of very intense exploration of that deep state of novelty.

MJR: Perhaps it's only fair, Terence, to let the audience know from the outset that one of the main places of focus that you've been involved in, in the past 20 years or so, has been in dealing with shamanically-sanctioned plants, and bringing the wisdom of the plant world, you could say, to the foreground of our society.

TM: Yes, I've been very interested in hallucinogenic experience and shamanism and that sort of thing since the 60s and uh, what it has to do with time is, I think, if you spend enough time looking at these things, you come to see that the shamanic metaphor, the magical metaphor, are not as fully satisfying as thinking about these things in terms of dimensionality, that actually you do go into another dimension, not in the metaphorical sense, but in a sense that a mathematician would understand. It's a...

MJR: Would you say a literal sense?

TM: A literal sense, yeah.

MJR: Mmm hmm. Now, many people who are very interested in dimensionality have been using all sorts of different ways and been attracted to anywhere from the use of flotation tanks to all sorts of different kinds of Tantric meditations, from the Buddhists, from the Sufis, from the Kabbalists and elsewhere. Now maybe it would be interesting to hear your point of view on these, which are really post-shamanic, religious kinds of disciplines. And you have some points of view on it that would be nice to hear.

TM: Well, the most practical point of view is whatever works for you, you should use. If we then try to generalize to what works for most people, uh, it seems to me the use of plant hallucinogens is particularly effective, simply because it transcends ideology, it transcends ritual, it goes directly to the physical brain, and by perturbing the living brain, it perturbs consciousness, and then out of that experience, conclusions are drawn within a cultural framework.

And so you know, an aboriginal rain forest shaman may get one reading on that and someone with training in quantum physics or something like that may reach a different conclusion, but the important thing of all these techniques, whether pharmacological, or you mentioned Tantra, is to perturb consciousness into insight about itself, by some means, and it's very tricky because consciousness is like a very heavy fluid. It always seems to seek the gravity of the familiar.

MJR: Mmm hmm, right. So in a sense what we're always struggling with or against, is the tendency toward habituation, and one of the things – places - we see that, of course, is mainly in mental habituation.

TM: Yes.

MJR: We think along the same lines, we think in the same linguistic patterns.

TM: Well, an interesting thing about people is our tendency to habituate and addict to not only drugs and foods, but behavior patterns, ideologies, routines, uh, the founder of general systems theory, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, said once an amusing thing, he said, "People are not machines, but in every situation in which they are given the chance to behave like machines, they will do so."

MJR: Hmm. God, I think we have a society that proves that. The beehive mentality Robert Anton Wilson refers to.

TM: The problem is the power of media to co-opt people's ordinary impulses and to channel them along to corporate or consumerist channels that are useful then not so much to the individual but to the organization that's doing the manipulating.

MJR: Sure. Absolutely, and that is no doubt one of the main reasons there has been such legislation on all levels - social as well as legal - about such things as hallucinogenic plants, uh, because, in fact, I think your life is very much a testimony to that, when people ingest certain kinds of hallucinogens, the last thing they're thinking about is authority, consumerism, or legality, for that matter.

TM: Well, it isn't even so much that it neutralizes the consumerist impulses, it actually dissolves and erodes them, because uh, it sort of shows the relativity of all existence. Uh, consumerism is based on a strong reinforcement of ego, and ego is so easily relativized by the psychedelic experience that, in some sense, then, the psychedelic experience is the enemy of the consumerist society, and this makes for political dynamite or at least interesting political rhetoric.

MJR: At least. Well, one of the things that really does happen, um, with the psychedelic experience as well as through such, um, kind of simpler matters as contemplation and meditation, is people start to become cognizant of their lives, of their bodies, um, of the world around them, and the values that they're in a sense being asked to embrace through standard practices in the society. These no longer look very tasteful, I think, is one of the things that happens.

TM: Yeah, I think you could make a simple model of the psychedelic experience and say that what really happens is um, that you develop attention to attention. There's a pulling back. There's a second level of attention and when you have that point of view, you are, to some degree, alienated because you're more aware of the ambiguity that haunts every situation. But on the other hand, you are more conscious. You're picking up on more of what the information is actually being passed in the situation.

MJR: Yeah. I want everyone to know that Terence McKenna has written a number of books, one of which is, I happen to have with me, called *The Archaic Revival*. And there are numbers of others. *True Hallucinations* is the last.

TM: *True Hallucinations*.

MJR: *Invisible Landscape*.

TM: *Invisible Landscape. Food of the Gods*. I did one with the British biologist Rupert Sheldrake and Ralph Abraham, um, *Dialogues at the Edge of the West*, which is a three-fer - you get not only me but two other pretty interesting guys.

MJR: Yeah, uh huh. What were those explorations like in that book?

TM: We would have a dialogue and then the third person would critique the dialogue, and these dialogues were on subjects like quantum physics, chaos theory, psychedelics, the millennium, the soul, just sort of things we thought were in the air that people might be interested in.

MJR: Mmm hmm. You know, I wish you would tell that story about how you came across the whole idea of novelty and what brought you eventually to looking at the I Ching and the 64 hexagrams. I just love that story. It's very revealing.

TM: If by "the story," you mean the entire story of my life. The *Invisible Landscape* story.

MJR: Start in Colorado. [laughter] Just pick it up at Berkeley.

TM: Basically, we were poking around in the Amazon jungle looking at hallucinogenic plants in the early 70s and had a series of very intense experiences, which...

MJR: This was you and your brother.

TM: Yes. Which resolved themselves down to a kind of mathematical obsession with the structure of the I Ching. For people watching who don't know what the I Ching is, it's a very old system of Chinese divination - system for predicting the future. And the thing about it that's so astonishing is many very skeptical people have come to the conclusion that it somehow works and the question that we were asking was how does it work, how could such a thing work, rather than treating it as a mystical revelation. Well...

MJR: People have been asking that one for ages, including the Chinese.

TM: ...to have a system that allows you to predict the future, you would have to understand what time is, and so by grappling with this problem in the I Ching, I came to have a notion of what time is or at least a theory I was willing to put out for argument, and that's what the software you mentioned earlier was all about.

What it comes down to is the mathematics produces a graph, not that different from a stock market graph. It rises and it falls, but it's not a graph of stock movement, it's a graph of this quality of reality called novelty, which is slippery to define but I think intuitively pretty easy to grasp, and novelty comes and goes. It haunts time like a ghost. Sometimes there are long stretches where it is absent. Its opposite is habit, so you can think of reality as a kind of push-pull, a struggle between habit and novelty, and the good news from my point of view is that novelty is slowly winning.

There is the history of the universe or of the 20th century or of the past 6 weeks, is a history of steadily accumulating novelty and it's what makes human society possible, electronic culture possible, a city like New York. These are obviously manifestations of novelty that have taken a very long time to accumulate, to come into being.

I mean, Manhattan 500 years ago, was a wooded rocky island. Uh, so clearly novelty has come to rest here

and we see what it has wrought. Well in a sense the entire planet is in the grip of this developing efflorescence of novelty, but it isn't something which develops smoothly, you know, 1% more per day or something like that.

MJR: In fits and starts.

TM: Exactly, fits and starts. Ebb and flow, but tending always toward greater novelty, eventually. And I think, you know, we're reaching the place with it now where the speed at which the novelty is progressing is so great that people can feel it in their own lives. It's not an abstraction. People feel something akin to psychic weather, and it comes in and novelty is frozen for a few weeks, and then the front breaks up and novelty, you have more than you can handle.

MJR: So there must be this intimate relationship, really, between your description of novelty and of perception.

TM: Yes, in a sense, I'm asking people to observe something within their own inner dynamic, but was always there, but that they really have no vocabulary for. I mean, one vocabulary that somewhat speaks to this is the concept of Tao. I mean, if you know anything about Tao, it's an idea that there is an invisible force that permeates the world and it builds things up - dynasties, love affairs, corporations - and it tears things down, according to very mysterious dynamics of its own.

Well, that's precisely what we're talking about. The only thing I've tried to do is to replace mysticism with mathematics and say there is this force but it can be known, it can be charted, in the way that we can predict the weather or predict bond prices.

MJR: So, novelty, the theory, actually has some very practical uses in that case.

TM: Yes, because what it would tell you if it were widely accepted is it would tell you where to expect unusual events and where you would be wasting your time to look for unusual events. It doesn't tell you what will happen because that is indeterminate, I believe, but that there is a kind of landscape over which events flow, sometimes faster, sometimes slower, like water over a terrain. I think that experience makes that seem fairly reasonable.

MJR: Yeah. You know, you're just reminding me of a weekend I spent with you a couple of years ago at the Open Center when you said something about the nature of science and how we are all... we've been, in a sense, scientifically programmed to value science on a belief level, you could say, and to think that it is really the be-all, end-all, but you've made a very important point that has always really stuck with me, which is that there's one domain that science does not control for, but acts as though it controls for, and that's time. That time, you said, had a topography, that it had a shape to it, and that an experiment conducted on a Monday will not necessarily yield the same results on a Thursday afternoon.

TM: Yes, well, you've put your finger on a complex epistemological issue. Science, as we know it, uses probability theory as the fundamental mathematical tool, and how that works is you gather data, you put all the data together, you add it together, and then you average it. Well, this act of averaging has not been philosophically fully explored, in terms of what its implications are.

When you average a bunch of measurements, let's say, you smear out their individuality, and so behind the

use of averaging and probability theory is the implicit assumption that it doesn't matter when the measurement was taken. In other words, in science they say time is not a dependent variable. It's invariant, but that's just a guess. We don't know that it's invariant. In our own experience, no love affair ever happens the same. No flu is quite like any other. No dinner is quite like any other. Our human world is filled with the unique felt-ness, felt presence of unique experience. But science gives us a world always based on these probabilistic generalities, which I think do great damage to the subtle, fine structure of experience.

MJR: Well, if we just look at a lunar cycle, we see that every single day is actually qualitatively and quantitatively different. One day is never going to be the same, by definition, as another day.

TM: Well, you could almost say, I suppose, that the scientist seeks what is similar between any two days or bluebirds or glaciers, and the poet seeks what is different. The artist seeks to celebrate the unique and so they really represent two ends of the spectrum.

MJR: Sure, I mean, each has its own value. This isn't to negate the value of science.

TM: But science needs to undergo some pretty serious self-critiquing, because over the past 300 years or so, what has happened in science is by concentrating on picking things apart, the idea of spirit or a vital unifying entelechy or a force, that all has been completely discredited by science, and it leaves you then for no basis for any ethic or anything.

Basically, people and animals are machines, in this view and if you believe that, you start treating them like machines, and you start putting machine-like politics in place and it becomes nightmarish fairly quickly. And so, it's all right, I think science is coming along. Um, it's a natural tendency of human beings to hit the easy problems first, and the easy problems are things like what's going on when a ball bearing rolls downhill, what is water made out of. And the tricky problems are...

MJR: That one we haven't fully answered yet.

TM: Well no, but the really tricky problems are questions like what is memory, what is language, what is...

MJR: Existence.

TM: Yeah. And so these questions are eventually going to be...

MJR: What is a magic mushroom?

TM: What is a magic mushroom.

MJR: You have to answer that now.

TM: Well, basically any mushroom with psilocybin in it is pretty magical.

MJR: You describe magic mushrooms as language.

TM: They synergize, they catalyze language, they... probably as a footnote to the fact that they catalyze the

imagination. They catalyze cognitive process. We don't know what that exactly means, but you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see that cognitive process is definitely the name of the human game, so anything which catalyzes art, poetry, literature, mathematics, politics, music, da, da, da...has major implications for the human enterprise. Of course, it's illegal, it's stigmatized, but these are simply local peculiarities of the folk.

MJR: It has nothing to do with the great longevity of time.

TM: Or the real meaning and implication of these things. I'm sure whatever work they do, they do it whether they're scheduled or not.

MJR: Yeah, right, exactly. They're not going to be limited by local customs of the United States or European governments at this little point in time. But a blip on the screen. In fact, that's actually one of your great gifts to us all, Terence, which is to...for me, I really feel myself expand when I listen to you speak, because I give up all local notions of time and it goes far beyond in each direction, by the way, not just two, actually...it probably goes in more than that.

TM: Not only when will it end, but when did we get here? [laughter]

MJR: Really, really. You also talk about this transcendental object at the end of time.

TM: Well, in an effort to understand novelty, where it's leading, you have to...if you extrapolate the notion, you have to realize it must lead to the most novel thing there is, that which there cannot be greater novelty than, so that's the transcendental logic at the end of time. It's the light at the end of the tunnel, a kind of attractor of some sort.

MJR: When you speculate according to the software – not the software, but according to novelty theory - and what you have extrapolated from your studies of the I Ching and et cetera, you have selected a date in time at which you postulate will be the end of history, and I always say in subtext, as we know it.

TM: Right.

MJR: Could you say a word there? Saying that we're out of time. Is that possible?

TM: We are. If not out of time now, soon to be out of time.

MJR: It's a very bizarre notion, isn't it? I won't accept it.

TM: It's like the end of a novel or the end of history. What does it mean? Well, it just means life becomes so complicated that a new dimension is added and then therefore it makes no sense to call it history, the way literacy and writing added a new dimension.

MJR: So, what, do you think there's going to be a particular event or it's gonna be some kind of quantum psychological leap or uh...

TM: I think it's a knitting together of all these exotic technologies and human beings that are presently in

the world, that cultural boundaries, national boundaries, gender boundaries, are all dissolving, and the consequence of that is literally inconceivable, to people embedded in history.

I mean, those of us who try to keep track of all these things are not able to keep track, and the people embedded in the process, as just trying to earn a job and have a career, are largely clueless as to the nature of the way in which things are crystallizing.

MJR: Like what?

TM: Well, like what. All kinds of things are happening. Let's just take the last three months. The human genome has been sequenced. Extraterrestrial planets have been discovered around alien suns.

MJR: They have been discovered?

TM: They've discovered, with... 70 Virginis has two Jupiter mass planets around it. 47 Ursae Majoris has two half Jupiter mass planets in orbit around it, uh...

MJR: Was this written up in something other than the National Enquirer?

TM: Oh no, this is, uh, you're not reading science news and *Scientific American*.

MJR: Yeah, I missed the last issues.

TM: That's what I'm saying, the people who are embedded in trying to have a life....

MJR: What are you saying?

TM:...are not...let's see, what else. Uh.

MJR: They found alien...what they're referring to as extraterrestrial...

TM: Planets. Yes, there are now about six stars within 40 light years of Earth, known to have some kind of object around them. And this is all happening just in the last 3 months.

MJR: How novel.

TM: Anti-matter was created – a few hundred atoms of anti-helium was created at CERN in Switzerland about three months ago. Anti-matter converts to energy 100% in the presence of ordinary matter. It's an ultimate kind of energy source.

MJR: Yeah.

TM: Let's see. One other thing. Oh, analysis of this asteroid impact in Canada leads to the conclusion that a huge amount of organic material was delivered to Earth in that impact, and wasn't destroyed by heat, so they've established that extraterrestrial biology is arriving on Earth. They've sequenced the human genome. They've discovered planets around alien stars. They've had great success in nanotechnology in the past...this is all in the past 90 days, we're talking about.

So these kinds of things, extrapolated 10 years into the future, along with stuff like the internet, and pharmacology and teledildonics, and all this other stuff...

MJR: Teledildonics?

TM: Don't ask.

MJR: Can we even look it up in the dictionary?

TM: After the show. [laughter] All lead to the conclusion that, uh, we are transcending ourselves faster than we realize. We are becoming unrecognizable. The transformation is not going to happen, the transition is underway. It's underway.

MJR: Yeah. This is phenomenal. The transcendent object is approaching quickly.

TM: It's emerging. Well, to take one example, fairly close to home most people. The internet. I mean, the internet is the most powerful and advanced technology ever put in place. It's arisen virtually in the last five years. The world doesn't look substantially different. I mean, we didn't have to make highways other any of the things that other technologies have demanded, and yet, really, the nation state is now obsolete. So, probably is the office, as we know it. Corporations and nations haven't yet realized, but when they begin to understand how much money they can save through telecommuting and this sort of thing, the whole *raison d'être* for clustering into enormous cities may just disappear.

The other thing is, the internet is a tremendous force for empowering the margins – all sexual minorities, all political minorities, all artistic minorities - now can build very powerful communities on the internet, and push their vision, whatever it is, forward.

So traditionally, power to communicate and to control communication has been one of the most closely held prerogatives of the powerful, and now it's just been given unto our hands. So I find that very exciting. I think that I haven't felt this kind of excitement with a new technology since the introduction of LSD and there are similarities, to be sure.

MJR: Such as?

TM: Well, both empower community. The internet was largely created by people who were very much formed by that earlier revolution. I mean, the people who write VRML, the people who are putting Netscape and the new search engines and all this stuff out are freaks. I don't think they would balk at that label at all. There are people who love working in these areas because they represent the same kind of feeling of unlimited possibility that the psychedelic community had in the 60s.

MJR: Yeah, I'm just wondering about the internet. I've just been thinking about it and just getting involved in it myself, and would like to hear what you have to say about this because the powerful have always, as you said, held a very close hand over media, and that's one of the ways they maintain their, even if somewhat false power, they still have that position. Is there a way of propagandizing the internet where a couple of powerful, or of the powerful, power possessing beings, as they're referred to, can usurp the

general community feeling of community access?

TM: I don't really think so. I mean, I think that the internet is so fundamentally a different beast, and here's the distinction that I would make. For at least 200, maybe 300 years, Western civilization has been largely shaped by what is called mass media. It means, first of all, newspapers, and then all the electronic mass media.

The nature of mass media is what's called one-to-many communication, where a Letterman or a somebody speaks and millions listen and emulate. The internet is what's called any-to-any communication. You and I can have an email exchange, or I can send email to 1,000 people, or I can join a chat group of several hundred. And I think the changes are more profound than we can even imagine, because the mass media created two things we cannot imagine living without: the idea of the public and the idea of the citizen. Now we hear a great deal about how society is dissolving into anarchy. What it means is there is no more public consensus. And that is because the post-electronic media personality isn't interested in following fads dictated from above in quite the same way. So instead what we have is an incredibly heterogeneous and complex society that's all niches.

There's no public anymore, there's just niches. The Latino niche, the lesbian niche, the this niche, the that niche, and there is no cohesion anymore. Well, some people think this is a terrible thing. I happen to think it's a very good thing, because I think it makes us much more difficult to coerce and to control.

So the ending of the age of mass media is something that the world corporate state has not really braced itself for, because it has so much money invested in these now dinosaur forms of media. So I think of the internet really as a 60 million television channel, you know, a 60 million channel TV, and naturally that creates...and it's a two-way deal.

MJR: Yeah, right. It's interactive.

TM: I think that the only way to deal with media and keep your wits about you is to produce it. Produce it. Not consume it.

MJR: To wit.

TM: God forbid, do not consume it and then, do not flee it. That doesn't work, either. You could say, "Well, I never...I don't". No nothing-ism, even more easily manipulated.

The key is to produce. And things like Photoshop and MacroMind Director - and I don't work for any of these people but I use their products - are incredibly empowering. Uh, you know, what used to require \$50,000 worth of production equipment can now be done with three and the cost is falling. That's got to be good for the spreading of counter cultural and minority viewpoints and opinions.

MJR: That's a very, very good point. In fact I was just thinking about the internet in this respect a little bit very recently, and I was realizing in many ways it's...another way of putting it is it's a great equalizer. From a socioeconomic point of view, people who would never have anything to do with each other necessarily, would never cross paths, are being given an opportunity to meet via the net.

TM: And it's safe. It's safe. Yes, it creates a...

MJR: People in absolutely distinct economic strata can come together.

TM: Well, and no matter how minority your position, no matter how bizarre your interests, you can find a community of people on the internet absolutely...

MJR: Who share your views.

TM: Who share your views, and who are furiously advancing that agenda. The other thing is, what the internet was designed for, was research. And if you believe that information is power, then the information gathering research tool that has been given to the ordinary person, to actually find out what the hell is really going on...I feel with my internet connection, I have better intelligence than Stansfield Turner had when he ran the CIA for Jimmy Carter.

That's how fast these technologies...it's gone from, what only the CIA Director could have, that now sits on the desktop of millions of American homes. And what's that, 12 years or something like that.

MJR: God. So there's an incredible dispersion of information.

TM: And acceleration of connectivity. Everybody's getting connected the way they wish. And of course some of it is perverse and some of it is silly and trivial, but we had silly and perverse and trivial long before we had the internet.

MJR: Right. Yes, it didn't all of a sudden arise because people had a little desktop publishing computer on their desk. Right, absolutely. Talking about being connected, there's something that's always puzzled me, and maybe you can speak to this, which is, you've spoken about a time before history, when men and women did something very novel: got along. Do you remember that?

TM: Oh yeah. You want me to run that riff?

MJR: [laughter] Ok. Would you?

TM: It's sort of a...

MJR: But I have a question that's embedded in that...which, uh...do the riff and then I'll ask the question.

TM: The riff has to do with...uh, I've done a lot of thinking about early human evolution, and how did we make the leap so suddenly, from an advanced monkey to, you know, a poetry spouting, dreaming thing we are, and the hidden factor, I think, is chemical acceleration agents in the environment, specifically psilocybin and other things. I mean, I'm giving you the light speed version of this, but what I said about the relationship between men and women is, I think that psilocybin dissolves ego, and that the ordinary dominance hierarchies in primates, which are male-dominance hierarchies, dissolved for about 100,000 years in human beings because of an item in the diet. Essentially, they were self-medicating themselves into a slightly different relationship to their psycho sexuality, and instead of an ego-enforced male hegemony expressing itself as monogamy, there was some kind of polygamist, orgiastic, more egalitarian

kind of organization. The reason for thinking these kinds of things when looking at primates is we have bonobos, which are a kind of chimpanzee, and chimpanzees, genetically, they're 98% similar but their sexual behaviors could hardly be more different. One is very male dominant and a lot of aggression and anxiety about female behavior.

The bonobos on the other hand are extremely loose, many kinds of sexual activity are tolerated and so forth and so on, so it looks like, in human beings, though how we express ourselves sexually is hugely important to us, it is not very tightly bound to genetics. It's more like a cultural choice.

You're free to be monogamous, polygamous, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual – this is not usually the case in an animal species. And I think this flexibility about our sexual expression was an effect of the different relationship to libido that experimenting with hallucinogenic plants in the paleolithic period induced. It's a fun idea to play with, it sort of explains our nostalgia for a time of goddess worship, orgy, nomadism, all children and whatever minimal property there was held in common. It's a kind of...

MJR: Anarchy, ecstasy...

TM: Anarchy, ecstasy, freedom. And It may be a myth or it may in fact be a memory of a time, and then of course once the mushroom...

MJR: Paradisal beginnings.

TM: Once the mushroom is taken out of the picture, those old bad habits – male dominance and so forth - returned with a vengeance, and that's the point in history where you get history. Walled cities, standing armies, kingship, slavery, enforced role models, subjugation of women, the whole bit, so in a sense, I think the Western phobia about drugs, about hallucinogens, about these experiences has to do with the fact that the ego is very uncertain of its role, it's not strong, it's...

MJR: Fragile.

TM: It's full of fear and paranoia that it could easily be unseated, and of course, take 5 grams of psilocybin in silent darkness, and your ego will be unseated...

MJR: That's right. We would like to say once and for all that it doesn't go quite that way, but...ok, well, thank you for that riff, I appreciate it, um, the question is, what I wonder about, in listening to you over the years, and they've been wonderful years, I'll have you know. Um, in fact, we met originally in 1988. I was at a seminar on the subject of physical immortality where Terence was giving a talk. We were just reminiscing about that, just...before. What was that famous line you had?

TM: You're immortal as long as you live.

MJR: Voila, there we have it. What is the role and especially since you have gotten so involved I Ching, which touches so many precious elements of human life. What is the role of character development in the shamanic and the psychedelic experience?

TM: Well, it's an interesting question. I think sort of we touched on this a little bit earlier in our talk where I talked about developing the observer of attention, that there is a developing of a sense of...

MJR: A cybernetic position, actually.

TM: Well, and a sense of a proper relationship. I mean, a shaman is neither inflated nor deflated, neither excessively humble, nor excessively pretentious. And humor - if someone claims to be some kind of shaman and they do not take themselves lightly, then they're probably some beetle-browed maniac of some sort, going for your wallet or worse.

So a sense of relative proportion and humor, and a sense of uh, not the inevitability, but sort of the just the power in things to unfold themselves along their own pathways. I've met a lot of shamans because I've spent time in the Amazon Basin, and invariably the signifying characteristic is simply a feeling of being at ease in their presence and a feeling of penetrating intelligence.

And isn't that different from talking about Tibetan llamas or anyone like that. I mean, penetrating intelligence. Some people differ with me but I really believe salvation has something to do with intelligence. It may not be the whole story, but...

MJR: It's not just a passing acquaintance.

TM: Well, I was quoting - I don't know if I can get this right, but I was quoting last night John Stewart Mill to a friend of mine. John Stewart Mill said, "Not all conservative people are stupid, but most stupid people are conservative." [laughter] I thought, amazing.

MJR: That's great. I hear what you're saying. So in terms of character development, one of the main things that you were focusing on was humor, which actually preempted one of my other questions, when I told you I was sitting down and doing something very novel, I'll have you know, which was thinking of questions I would like to ask Terence.

One of the questions was, what is the role of humor - well not in the psychedelic experience, I think that's kind of obvious - with shamanic experience, but that purview on life, which is pre-religious, so to speak, institutional religious.

What is the flavor of the life when people are so close to the earth and the plants, and is that something that you are inviting people to consider these days, in 1996 now, as a way for us to open up toward the transcendental object?

TM: Well, I'm not sure I follow the entire question but I'll try a yes. Yes.

MJR: Do you want me to rephrase it?

TM: No, Let me take a stab at it. Two human activities seem to me pretty much to be outside of history. I mean, one is orgasm and the other is laughter. And they are physiological responses to circumstance that are universal. We do it no differently if we're French or Armenian or whatever, and it breaks us out of culture for a moment, and so laughter, I think, is really the shaman's greatest tool.

That's why the shaman is always associated with the Trickster, and in the clinches, meaning when

somebody's dying or childbirth or snakebite or something, the shaman is a very serious and highly functional caregiver and technician but how the shaman lives with his people is as a clown and a gadfly and a critic and the guy who always says, well, don't you think we should think again or how about this or how about that and I think that...

MJR: I see. It's a playful spirit.

TM: It's a playful spirit and it's a spirit that isn't dogmatic. That's really important. These cultures are hideously dogmatic but the shaman is the one person in the culture who is deputized to make fun of it. And so I see ourselves as bohemians, as freaks, as natural critics of the society we live in, and in that sense, performing a shamanic function.

MJR: Right. Ok. Good. That answers the many-pronged question, and actually to go a step further with that is, um, I remember reading something that you were writing about transpersonally oriented psychotherapists and the role that you see them playing in today's society as really being very instrumental.

TM: Well, now, there are, I don't know, thousands, probably of people who I would consider shamans, who don't live in the rainforest and don't administer their skills to some tiny language group up some river but who are fully embedded citizens of high electronic culture. And this is a new shamanism that is coming into being. We need it. Psychotherapy has been very reluctant to get its feet wet, you know, the talking therapies, and finally the touching therapies, but very little of the taking it and going with the patient into the space kinds of therapies, because that is incredibly dangerous and demanding work, but it's what people must do if they want to uh, work their way out of the modern dilemma.

MJR: Mmm hmm. And do you think that through ingestions, still at this point, this can help us? And it doesn't mean that this has to be for everyone, all the time.

TM: Oh, it's definitely not for everyone, but it's an enormous boon to our culture to revivify the shamanic hallucinogens and to bring them into the developing mix of technology and pluralism and new therapies and so forth and so on. I think it's one of the most important tools. I mean, as you well know, there is just simply nothing that effective and that dramatic for pushing you into a new world, whether you like it or not.

MJR: Sure.

TM: And that's where we're going, whether we like it or not.

MJR: That's true, too. And from that point of view, you use the word and make reference to the idea of evolution, and the more I think about it, the more I think that's a very overused and under defined term. I'm not even sure anymore what it really is.

TM: Well, evolution, in biological terms, is not in the picture anymore. We are evolving now entirely in the domain of culture and so rapidly.

MJR: Culture and consciousness.

TM: Well, yes. They mirror each other. One is the byproduct of the other. But we're not changing physically. We haven't for 50,000 years.

MJR: We still have the appendix, et cetera.

TM: Yes. But we are mutating our cultural values and our technologies and our institutions at such a rate that as I say, we will not recognize ourselves in a very few years.

MJR: Hmm. And of course that's not a biological recognition, it's a psychic recognition.

TM: Yes. I mean, imagine someone brought forward to modern New York from 100 years ago. I mean, I'm sure they would assume...I don't know what they would assume had happened in the intervening 100 years. It looks like Armageddon or something, but it's not. It's just normal unfolding of historical processes and technologies.

The mushroom once said to me, "This is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars. Not to worry."

MJR: They've been speaking to you for a while, haven't they?

TM: Long enough.

MJR: We are being signaled that we are...the end of time is really not in 2012, December 23rd or something like that. It's really in about 4 minutes.

TM: See, it overtook even my expectations.

MJR: Much faster than either of us could have realized. In our closing minutes, Terence, are there any particular points that you would like to make? I mean, here we have this wonderful New York audience that is just loving you and lapping up this show, and I'm just wondering if there's any particular, central points you would like to make, that you would like to communicate, to the folks that are listening.

TM: I think people should put the art pedal to the floor. I think our salvation is in producing as much beauty and as much communication as fast as possible, that what will make this white-knuckle ride to the end of history slightly easier is if we communicate - our dreams, our fears, our experience of what it's like to go through this.

We've never been here before. This is a unique moment, and probably the future of the human race depends on how we comport ourselves over the next 25 years. So it's a privilege, a challenge, an adventure. Everybody should jump in and uh, feel the surf.

MJR: Take off your seatbelt and get ready.

TM: That's right.

MJR: Absolutely. Well, that's wonderful. In fact I just realized, on a practical note, that you are beginning

this think along tour in New York.

TM: That's right.

MJR: As we speak.

TM: Well, this is the most novel place.

MJR: Really. This is the place to begin. And from here, you're going to Santa Fe?

TM: Santa Fe, then Boulder, then Los Angeles, and then home to Hawaii.

MJR: Wonderful, wonderful. A great place to have a home in. Why don't we give a way for people to get in touch with Axiom. So, if they want to communicate to friends in other parts of the country while you're dancing around...

TM: Yes, do you have the Axiom email address?

MJR: Their phone number is 1-800-76-AXIUM.

TM: Oh, well, that'll do it.

MJR: Ok. Feel free to call to get more information on Terence's think along tours as he dances across the country. Really glad that you danced into the studio.

TM: It was a pleasure to talk with you.

MJR: Great.

TM: Lots of fun.

MJR: Thanks so much. This is MJR for A Better World. Thanks again for joining us. Please call and give a couple of suggestions. Where is everybody now when I need you? Share your thoughts and feelings with me. Love to hear from you. I look forward to seeing you next week.

[outro music as credits roll]

Original Transcription by: Twila402

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

A Conversation with Terence McKenna and Ram Dass

Day Month 1992

Location, City, State

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Terence McKenna: This summer past we journeyed to Prague Czechoslovakia to attend the International Transpersonal Conference, a meeting of philosophers and psychologists, anthropologists, writers, ecologists, and thinkers on global subjects. Throughout the conference we were able to track down and interview some of the movers and shakers whose ideas and hopes will shake the new millennium. Prague was a fitting venue for this meeting, poised, as it is, at the center of European crisis and promise, it is a metaphor for the transformation of the planet and of human psychology that must take place if we are to provide a sane future for our children.

I'm standing in the center of one of Central Europe's most beautiful and mysterious cities. This is Prague, Czechoslovakia and I'm Terence McKenna. We're here to meet with some of the world's most outstanding thinkers to discuss science, spirituality and the mounting global crisis. And it's fitting that we should meet in this, the capital of ancient Bohemia, for Prague and Bohemia have always stood for intellectual innovation, chance taking and the life of ideas.

In the [sp?] splendor of one of Prague's most famous concert halls, we encountered Richard Alpert, and persuaded him to have lunch with us. Alpert, who now calls himself Ram Dass, is one of the most enduring figures from the American cultural upheaval of the 1960s. Alpert, whose career reaches from Harvard University, to the plains of the Punjab, has transformed himself into a spokesman for humanity's ignored and downtrodden.

And Ralph Abraham was sitting across the table watching me have this conversation and went after Steiger left Ralph leaned over to me and he said "so you see, Terence, the mushroom's telling you that it can reach out and touch you anywhere, and I thought that was amazing.

Ram: Well, anytime you would like to, or feel that you have time to guide me through anything at all I'd be happy to be your...

Waiter: Oh, excuse me, sir. You are not the famous Terence mushroom McKenna that is you my friend

TM: It is...

Ram: That's him

Waiter: oh, how wonderful! Yes, uh, pleased to welcome you on our bohemian highway. I especially bring you very good black coffee, Espresso. If you may tell me who is the attractive elderly gentleman you brought on your side, Into your companionship here?

Terence: this is Mr. Dass.

Waiter: oh! The MS-DOS, yes?

Ram: No, the Ram Dass.

Waiter: Oh, the CD-ROM!

Ram: yes, the CD-ROM.

Terence: the CD-ROM Dass.

Waiter: the LSC the LSD...

Ram: the LSD Dass, that's the one.

Waiter: Oh, wonderful! Take this it will be making you very bohemian.

Ram: oh, thank you.

[Terence laughs]

Ram: I'm so happy to be in your fair country.

Waiter: Oh, my country very fair, and I'm happy to have the LSD experience...

Ram: What is your name?

Waiter: My name is waiter.

Ram: waiter? How do you do, waiter? A pleasure.

[Terence giggles]

Waiter: Wes, see you waiter.

Terence: See you waiter, yes... *[Chuckles]*

Ram: You don't think there's any... It needs the external form of a mushroom?

Terence: It would never have happened for me. I only argue from my own experience.

Rome: Yeah, but you and I were both so thick and crap, you know, that's why we needed it.

Terence: well, but there were a few others out there. We didn't corner the market on being thick in crap.

Ram: but I'm telling you about someone like a Romano Maharishi somebody like that

Terence: oh, these people?

Ram: you know? I mean there are people who...

Terence: But the idea is not to come up with something that the best among us can make hay with but a democratic, uh, something which addresses the species. The thing that seemed to me so important about the psychedelic experience was that it happened to me. I wasn't reading John Chrysostom or Meister Eckhart, of course those guys...

Ram: Right on... it happened to me ... it happened to me...yes.

Terence: And, and so I assume that I am a very ordinary person. Therefore, if it happened to me, it could happen to anyone. That's really something –

Ram: That's a question ... there's a set of assumptions there; one, that you're very ordinary person, and whether the same chemical given to a dozen people would bring about elevon other... –

Terence:... Similar experiences...

Ram: I think the outcome would be very different. And that's... It, I keep getting cast into an evolution of consciousness model about individuals because they're such marked individual differences. Three people come before my guru: one completely goes *[makes crazy face]* and the other two get at your party. And people take psilocybin and they ... Some go like that *[crazy face]*, or they go like that *[scared face]*, and some go like that *[Enlightenment]*

Terence: Well, don't you think a good metaphor for it would be sexuality? Apparently, there are some people who can kinda, take it or leave it. And others of us, uh, it rears its ugly head with great uh, presence. Yet everybody has to come to terms with it.

Ram: I notice as I get older I moved from one of these categories to the other *[laughs]* it leaves so much space in my life I don't know what to do with my free time.

Terence: I hope it never happens to me.

Ram: *[laughs]* I'm just clinging.

[Both Ram and Terence laugh]

Terence: No, just aspiring to cling

[Both Ram and Terence laugh]

Terence: actually, I live the life of an ascetic. It's my aspirations that are pulling me down *[laughs]*. Well see the great, the nice thing about this evolutionary argument is that you can sort of make the snake take its tail in its mouth because... –

Ram: exactly... Exactly. It does.

Terence: because the escape is not into some science-fiction future.

Ram: No.

Terence: It's into an archaic recursion of some sort. We... We once knew everything we needed to know, so, what we're trying to find out is lost knowledge, not new knowledge, and if you direct people back toward 10,000, 20,000 years ago, they see a kind of completion that an open-ended future is uh...

Ram: it seems to me it's a con- it's a confusing thing to use time that way, because it makes the artifacts of that period seem to be valued as opposed to the artifacts of this period, and it seems to me that I... I mean... Whether you call it... Not science-fiction... But science fiction can also be very compassionate, it can be very historically relevant. It doesn't have to be- uh, it's just using a different set of artifacts to work with, so.

Terence: Well, for instance, I see most of what happened in the 20th century as being unconsciously driven by this fascination with the archaic.

Ram: Fascination with the archaic?

Terence: yes, I mean... –

Ram: Wow! That was... Of all the things I predicted you'd say, it wasn't that. Tell me, what does that mean?

Terence: Well, for instance, impressionism deconstructs the hard image of Realism, and gives you a feeling-toned thing, which was very antithetical to Victorian, Edwardian thought. Then Freud and Jung described different aspects of the unconscious, but to do it Jung ha- uh, Freud has to talk about repressed, primitive sexual imaginings, Jung talks about folklore, fairytales and mythology. Meanwhile, the Dadaists and the Surrealists are saying we have to break up the linear expectations of the bourgeois mind, and then you get a Jackson Pollock, and those people, who say, "the image itself has to be thrown out", and then, to my mind, the psychedelic thing in the 60s, based on rock 'n roll and a boundary dissolving psychedelic, we almost, by a random walk, are finding our way toward shamanism, tribalism, nomadism...uh.

Ram: Uh, go beyond the isms, tell me what we're really finding.

Terence: We're finding a world made out of mind rather than stuff:

Ram: Great, okay, we're finding the world made out of mind. Every time you describe which mind you find, that's just limiting the limiting condition. I mean, if we just find the thing of mind created stuff, live in that, then what happens?

Terence: Well, I mean, there is a transcendental dimension beyond language, it's just hard as hell to talk about it.

Ram: But if you live in it, and talk from there, then the forms that it will manifest in become just the forms it manifests. It's nothing more or less and that, so.

Terence: So, you mean you download the unspeakable into language and let the chips fall where they may.

Ram: Well, they don't fall where they may. They fall in a perfectly harmonious pattern.

[Terence nods as he finishes sipping from his black coffee]

Terence: Well, that's them falling where they may.

Ram: Where they may, where they will.

Terence: Yeah. Well, so, what I'm hearing from you is you have a very strong sense of the pattern. Strong

enough that your limited, necessarily limited personal viewpoint, doesn't tend to get in the way – you can always push the reset to hope button, and then you hope, almost on principle.

Ram: [sp?] said to me: stand halfway between hope and hopelessness. I thought that was very useful.

Terence: And is that [*shrugs and raises arms*] Ehh? [*sound and face of doubt and desperate confusion*]

Ram: No it's [*lifts arms and makes face and noise of orgasm*] it's the ecstasy of total horror and total beauty at the same moment. That's what I feel again and again, Terence, when I'm with somebody dying of AIDS. My God, my heart's breaking, it's horrible, I mean it's a ghastly, social ostracization, this, that, opportunistic illness... And there's another part of me that's giggling, and I can hardly handle the multiphrenia of it all, the sense of the perfection of it all, and the beauty of the moment, and the horrible shit of it.

Terence: Yeah. Well, it all is spun together. Is that because you feel confident that the self is somehow indestructible, or because you don't even ask that question?

Ram: you gotta watch the words indestructible, because that has a time dimension. I mean, I think the awareness is.

Terence: But, for example, do you think this is the stage upon which all acts are performed, or that we move up and down many levels...?

Ram: no, this is one of the stages of an infinite number... Probably infinite number. Because I just look into two minds and I see two different ones, and those are all just on this one. No, I feel I... Like, I had this friend Emmanuel, you know, this spook that has no body...

Terence: Mhm, mhm.

Ram: And uh Emanuel's two lines to me were: death is absolutely safe, firstly– that's a very profound statement. Next thing he said it was like taking off a tight shoe. And then I said to him, "Emmanuel, what am I doing here? Who made this error? What am I doing on this plane?", He said, "you're in school, why don't you try taking the curriculum?".

Terence: And the curriculum is...?

Ram: Life.

Terence: any life?

Ram: It means the exploration of the clinging of mind within the world of projected form.

Terence: So the exploring life?

Ram: it's the exploring life with the... It's purpose is, in the sense of returning back into the garden of Eden. It's a return, there is a return metaphor underlying all of it.

Terence: And I'm sure you're asked this all the time, so am I, and maybe we give different answers, do you think that this can be done without psychedelics fast enough to have an impact on the global situation? [*Ram closes his eyes and pauses for a good 10 seconds, thinking*]

Ram: Uh, I can conceive that it could be, yeah. You ask do I think? I don't really have an opinion whether it will or won't, but I could see it go either way. Like John C. said to me, "it's too late, as far as the rainforests are concerned, he says the inertia is too great and the whole system, it's too late", so I said, "okay, John", I mean, it was the first time, too, he'd said it to me, just like that. He said, "it would take a miracle", I said, "oh...". That threw me back on whatever that was, and then he said, "but after all", he said, "we came up out of the ocean, we came onto land", he said, "we have quite a lineage of miracles. I wouldn't underestimate us". That was a nice thought.

Terence: Well, so my question to you is: are psychedelics a miracle?

Ram: Psychedelics are a miracle, yes, they may not be the only miracle...

Terence: Are they the miracle we need?

Ram: I don't know that... I don't know that. I think they may have already done what they were to do.

Terence: Really? That's interesting, I've never heard anyone say that.

Ram: I think what is done is so much more powerful than anybody yet recognizes. See, I see that all this destruction is just the process of transformation, the question is whether we'll keep it together in the process of transformation, and that's why all I'm interested doing is becoming a person and helping others become a person, who in the process of the dramatic stuff, will keep some equanimity, and keep some love, and some presence in that process. But that's... Psychedelics may play a role in that, so you're right, that comes back to your point.

Terence: Well, see my assumption in trying to think about thousands of psychedelic trips, rather than just mine, what they seem to do generically is they seem to dissolve boundaries,

Ram: Yes.

Terence: -and the ego is in the business of creating, maintaining and defending boundaries. So, I really see the psychedelics as directly intervening in the core process which is running us over the edge, which is, our inability to emotionally connect with the consequences of what we're doing. If, for a single moment, we could feel what we're doing, we would stop.

Ram: I understand. It's interesting, because we take images that one of us know, of the girl running down the street naked in Cambodia, you know, or something like that, and we say that wasn't strong enough, you know, it won life of the year award, but it wasn't strong enough, it didn't stop everybody and say, "holy shit, what are we doing here?". So, what would be strong enough to do that? And you say, well, psychedelics, but that's in a- it's in a one on one thing, I mean, we're talking major game players at this moment. Take, I mean, put China into your computer, you know?

Terence: how do you deal with that?

Ram: you know, I mean, either you're spraying it, or, it's water, or, it's... It's some other level of consciousness that do it. There is a certain level of trauma that's possible, that can soften the ground. Not 3 mile Island, and not Chernobyl, but, I mean, I'm ... I don't want to create this with my mind, but I can imagine a certain trauma, like in Marin when they ran out of water. It was interesting, suddenly all the ego barriers and everything and neighbors were talking who never even met each other...

Terence: People were taking showers together.

Ram: exactly, the whole process was happening, you know, marriages, babies were conceived, everything as a result of that trauma, of that denial. So, a massive, significant trauma... – I just gotta tell you one scary image. There is a saint in India who lived up to, about, 1930 I think, or something, and one of his devotees said to me, one night, he was sort of looking off into the distance, he said, "there'll come a time, he said when you'll walk 5 miles", and he said, "you'll sight the light from a fire in another person, and you'll be so happy to know another person exists".

Terence: Quite a prediction.

Ram: Isn't that quite a prediction? It's in there, it's just in there somewhere.

Terence: Interesting. Yes, well, I agree, I think that what's going to happen is-

Waiter: Gentlemen, everything is fine with the evolution of coffee, and consciousness, both very good with you, too? Yes?

[Terence laughs]

Ram: You have come just at the right time, this is just what I wanted. I want you to know, you tuned in to a higher level.

Waiter: A higher level? Level high, very high yes. Bohemian mushroom soup today, you know?

Ram: Ahhh. We were just talking about that.

Waiter: Oh, oh yes? *[To Terence]* You like bohemian mushroom soup?

Terence: I like mushroom.

Waiter: Let me sprinkle, liberally, some water on your chalice, sir.

Terence: Oh, please, liberally sprinkle his chalice, for sure *[laughs]*

Ram: I am a chalice, so it's fine, if you wish to

Waiter: Oh I know you by your true name, you're Mr. Chalice, sir. Yes, very good.

Original Transcription by: [spencerjbarrett]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Towards The Unknown aka 'A Necessary Chaos'

10 June 1983

New Dimensions Radio

Description

- [Psychedelic Salon Podcast link](#)
- [Youtube Link](#)
- [Youtube Link 2](#) (Contains slightly more audio at the beginning)

(*Note- this may not be the complete talk or the actual title of the talk!*)

Terence McKenna in conversation with Michael Toms

Terence McKenna: The human imagination, in conjunction with technology, has become a force so potent that it really can no longer be unleashed on the surface of the planet with safety. The human imagination has gained such an immense power that the only environment that is friendly to it is actually the vacuum of deep space. It is there that we can erect the architectonic dreams that drive us to produce a Los Angeles or a Tokyo, and do it on a scale and in such a way that it will be fulfilling rather than degrading. So yes, I think we cannot move forward in understanding without accepting as a consequence of that that we have to leave the planet, that we are no longer the bipedal monkeys we once were. We have become almost a new force in nature, a thing of language and cybernetics and an amalgam of computers and human brains and societal structures that has such an enormous forward momentum that the only place where it can express itself without destroying itself is, as James Joyce says, "up n'ent!"

Q: So long long ago in the far away gala

TM: Well, it's in our present I think. Our future is probably almost unimaginable because I think the transformation that leaving the planet will bring will also involve a transformation of our consciousness. We are not going as 1950s style human beings. We are going to have to transform our minds before we are going to be able to leave the planet with any amount of grace. This is where I think the psychedelics come in because they are anticipations of the future. They seem to channel information that is not strictly governed by the laws of normal causality. So that there really is a prophetic dimension, a glimpse of the potential of the far centuries of the future through these compounds. No cultural shift of this magnitude can be unambiguous, i mean the very idea that as a species we would leave the earth behind us must be as rending an idea as that a child would leave its childhood home. Obviously it's a turning

away from something that, once left behind, can never be recaptured. However, this is the nature of going forward into being, a series of self-transforming ascents of level. And we now simply happen to be at that moment of ascent to a new level that is linked to leaving the planetary surface physically and to reconnecting to the contents of the unconscious collectivity of our minds. These two things will be done simultaneously. This is what the last half of the 20th century, it seems to me, is all about.

Q: Well by and large psychedelics have really not been accepted into the mainstream. Do you see a change in that?

TM: Well, not particularly. They hold a certain fascination for a persistent majority, and in that way they do their catalytic work on society, which is to introduce new ideas and to release a certain kind of creative energy into society. I certainly would not like to see a return to the psychedelic hysterias of the 1960s. I think it's fine that these things are now the subject of interest of a much smaller group of people, but perhaps a group of people with a greater commitment and a better idea of exactly what these things are. And it's really the same people. It's just a smaller group of them, and they have accumulated experience over the past 20 years. However I certainly don't think all psychedelic frontiers are conquered. One of the things that I write about and speak about are the phenomena that many people confirm with the psilocybin family of hallucinogens that no one has included in the standard model of psychedelic drugs, and by that I refer to the Logos-like phenomenon of an interiorized voice that seems to be almost a superhuman agency, a kind of *genus loci*. And I have been writing recently about alien intelligence, which is what I call this, where you have contact with an entity so beyond the normal structure of the ego that if it is not an extraterrestrial it might as well be because its bizarreness and its distance from ordinary expectations about what can go on is so great that if flying saucers arrived here tomorrow from the Pleiades, it would make this mystery no less compelling because I believe that the place to search for extraterrestrials is in the psychic dimension. And there the problem is not the absence of contact, but the volume of contact that must be sifted through because the fact of the matter is shaman and mystics and seers have been hearing voices and talking to gods and demons since the paleolithic and probably before. That doesn't mean that we can rule out this approach to communication. It seems to me far more likely that an advanced civilization would communicate interdimensionally and telepathically. That amounts of time available for intelligent species to evolve these kinds of communication are vast. So I think that it's very interesting then that the tryptamines, psilocybin and DMT, at the 15 milligram level, very reliably trigger what could only be described as contact-like phenomena. Not only the interiorized voice in the head, but also the classical flying saucer motifs of the whirling disk, the lens-shaped object, the alien approach. This seems to be something hard-wired into the human psyche, and I would like to find out why. I think it's a very odd fact of human psychology, and I don't buy any of the current theories ranging from that

nothing at all is happening to that this is in fact another species with a world around another star that is getting in touch with us. I think it's something that's so bizarre so that it actually masquerades as an extraterrestrial so as not to alarm us by the true implications of what it is.

But I suspect it is something like an overmind of the species, that actually the highest form of human organization is not realized in the democratic individual. It is realized in a dimension none of us have ever penetrated, which is the mind of the species, which is actually the hand at the tiller of history. It is no government, no religious group, but actually what we call the human unconscious, but it is not unconscious, and it is not simply a cybernetic repository of myth and memory. It is an organized entelechy of some sort, and human history is its signature on the primates, and it is so different from the primates. It is like a creature of pure information. It is made of language. It releases ideas into the flowing stream of history to boost the primates towards higher and higher levels of self reflection of it. And we have now reached the point where the masks are beginning to fall away, and we're discovering that there is an angel within the monkey struggling to get free, and this is what the historical crisis about. And I'm, for no reasons in particular, very optimistic. I see it as a necessary chaos that will lead to a new and more attractive order.

Q: Terence you were talking about extra-ordinary realities. It occurs to me that there's an enormous amount of prejudice against the psychedelics and the use of hallucinogenic substances. It's almost as if there's an inordinate fear to open up the door to the closet that these substances reveal. What about that prejudice? What do you think, how's that going to be resolved?

TM: Well I think it's more complicated than a prejudice. it's a prejudice born of respect because most people sense that these compounds probably actually do what their adherents claim they do. It's possible to see the whole human growth movement of the 1970s as a wish to continue the inward quest without having to put yourself on the line the way you had to when you took 250 gamma of LSD. And I think all these other methods are efficacious, but I think it's the sheer power of the hallucinogens that puts people off. You either love them or you hate them, and that's because they dissolve world views. And if you like the experience of having your entire ontological structure disappear out from under you, if you think that's a thrill, you'll probably love psychedelics. On the other hand, for some people that's the most horrible thing they could possibly imagine. They navigate reality through various forms of faith, and I think that the psychedelics, the doors of perception are cleansed and you see very very deeply. I spent time in India, and I would always go to the local sadhus *** of great reputation, and I met many people who possessed wise old man wisdom. But wise old man wisdom is a kind of Tao of how to live. It has nothing to say about these dimensions that the psychedelics reveal. For that you have to go to places where hallucinogenic shamanism is practiced,**

specifically the Amazon Basin. And there you discover that beyond simply the wisdom of how to live in ordinary reality, there is a gnosis of how to navigate in extra-ordinary reality. And this reality is so extra-ordinary that we cannot approach what these people are doing with any degree of smugness because the frank fact of the matter is that we have no viable theory of what mind is either. The beliefs of the Wetoto shaman and the beliefs of a Princeton phenomenologist have an equal chance of being correct, and there are no arbiters of who is right

So It's the power of these things, the fact that here is something we have not assimilated. We have been to the moon, we have charted the depths of the ocean, the heart of the atom, but we have a fear of looking inward to ourselves because we sense that here is where all the contradictions flow together. And the same prejudice against psychoanalysis that characterized the 20s and 30s when it was thought to be a superfluous or some kind of fad attends the psychedelics now. It's because it touches a very sensitive nerve. It touches the issue of the nature of man, and people are uncomfortable with this, or some people are uncomfortable with this.

Q: What is the value of exploring the extraordinary realities?

TM: Well I guess it's the same value that attends the exploration of ordinary realities. There's an alchemical saying that one should read the oldest books, climb the highest mountains, and visit the broadest deserts. I think that being imposes some kind of obligation to figure out what is going on. And since all primary information about what is going on comes through the senses, any drug or any compound which alters that sensory input has to be looked at very carefully. I have often made the point that chemically speaking, you can have a molecule which is completely inactive as psychedelic, and you move a single atom on one of its rings, and suddenly it's a powerful psychedelic. Well now, it seems to me this is a perfect proof of the inner penetration of matter an mind. The movement of a single atom from one known position to another known position chances an experience from nothing to overwhelming. This means that mind and matter at the quantum mechanical level are all spun together. This means that in a sense the term extraordinary reality is not correct if it implies a division of category from ordinary reality. It is simply there is more and more and more of reality, and some of it is inside our heads, and some of it is deployed out through three dimensional Newtonian space.

Q: Most of us I think just simply accept the everyday reality as the only one, and you're talking about journeys into the nether regions, far beyond most peoples' conception or even wanting to conceive of such a reality.

TM: Well I think there's a shamanic temperment, which is a person who craves

knowledge, knowledge in the Greek sense of gnosis. IN other words, knowledge not of the sort where you subscribe to Scientific American and it validates what you believe, but cosmologies constructed out of immediate experience that are found always to be applicable. You see I don't believe that the world is made out of quarks or electromagnetic waves or stars or any of these things. I think that the world is made out of language, and that this is the primary fact that has been overlooked. The construction of a flying saucer is not so much a dilemma of hardware as it is a poetic challenge. And people find it very hard to imagine exactly what I'm talking about. What I'm saying is the leading edge of reality is mind, and mind is the primary substratum of being. We in the West have had it the wrong way around for over a millenia, but once this is clearly understood, with what we have learned in our little excursion through three dimension space and matter we will create a new vision of humanity that will be a fusion of the East and the West.

Q: Well a world being made of language, and I think of these extraordinary realities which are totally beyond any language that we use in any ordinary sense

TM: Yes well they are beyond ordinary language. I always think of PHylojudeas writing on the logos. He posed to himself the question: What would be a more perfect logos? And then he answered, saying it would be a logos which is not heard, but beheld, and he imagined a form of communication where the ears would not be the primary receptors but the eyes would be. A language where meaning was not constructed through a dictionary of little mouth noises, but actually three dimensional objects were generated with a kind of hyper-language so that there was perfect understanding between people. And this may sound bizarre in ordinary reality, but these forms of synesthesia and synesthesia-glossolalia are commonplace in psychedelic space.

Q: Terence could you identify Phylos for us and tell us who he was?

TM: He was an Alexandrian Jew of the second century who made it his business to travel around the Hellenic world and discussed all the major cults and religious and cosmogonic theories of his day. So he's a major source of Hellenistic data for us.

TM: How would you relate to Socrates' view of the world.

Q: Well, I think that it's hard not to be a platonist, but it's something perhaps we should struggle against or at least struggle to modify. I think of myself as sort of a Whiteheadian platonist. Certainly the central Platonic idea which is the idea of the ideas, these archetypal forms which stand outside of time, is one which is confirmed by the psychedelic experience. And Plato's formation of time as the moving image of eternity is

another one of these aphorisms that the psychedelic state confirms. And certainly Neoplatonism, Plotinus and Poriphry, and that school are psychedelic philosophers. Their idea of an ascending hierarchy of more and more rarefied states is a sophisticated presentation of the shamanic cosmology which is the cosmology that one experientially discovers when they involve themselves with psychedelics.

TM: What I think most of us don't understand or don't really know is the fact that Greek cultures and Elucinean * mysteries incorporated the use of something very akin to psychedelics. That essentially Western civilization is based on the culture that had at its core root an experience and a ritual that used something akin to psychedelics.

Yes well for over two thousand years, anyone who was anyone in the ancient world made the pilgrimage to Eleusis, and had this experience which Gordon Wasson and Carl Ruck * have argued very convincingly was a hallucinogenic intoxication on ergot. But of course, as soon as the church solidified its power it closed these platonic academies and moved against pagan, so-called pagan knowledge and heretical knowledge and not only the platonists, but all the gnostic sects. All of these people, all of these viewpoints were repressed. I like to think that the end of that repression came in a very odd way when in 1953 I guess it was, Gordon Wasson and his wife Valentina in the vilage in *Hwuads in the Sierra Mazateca of Oaxaca, discovered the psilocybin mushroom cult. It was as if Eros, who had been martyred in the old world, was then found sleeping in the mountains of Mexico and resurrected. And the experience of the mushroom is very much the experience of a *genus loci*, a God on the Grecian model, not the God who hung the stars in heaven but a local god. A pre-Christian bacchanalian nature-power that is very alien and yet resonates with our expectation of what that experience would be like.

Interesting that the mushroom also is a symbol in our culture of death and destruction, being the symbol of the nuclear explosion.

TM: Yes well my brother has made the point asking what mushroom is it that grows at the end of history? Is it the mushroom of Fermi and Oppenhimer and Teller, or is it the mushroom of Wasson and Hoffman and Humphrey Osmond?

Q: Somehow I think the latter is safer (laughter)

TM: Well it may not only be safer, it may open the way to escape from the former. It's like a pun in physics that the force of liberation and the force of destruction could take the same form. It's what the alchemists call a *coincidencia oppositorum*.

Q: It is an amazing synchronicity it seems, that. Also I was interested, I was talking with Andy Wile some time ago about the fact that there are a new genus of mushroom appearing that have psilocybin in them that had never been seen before, never been tracked before, and it's almost as if they're appearing now.

TM: Well it's amazing how many have been discovered since people have bent their attention to it. There have been psilocybin mushrooms reported from England, France, localities where so far as we know there is no cultural history of usage at all. However it's interesting that cultural

usage seems to disappear very early in human history. Hallucinogens are hardly even welcome in agricultural societies. I think it was Weston LeBar made the point that once you learn how to grow plants, your god shifts from the ecstatic god of the hallucinogens to the corn god or the food god, and it no longer is about divining the hunt and weather through the ecstatic use of hallucinogen. It's about being able to get up every morning and go to work and hoe the crop. So you mentioned earlier the prejudice against hallucinogens, I think it reaches back to the beginning of agriculture. This competition among plant gods which exemplified lifestyles that must have seemed very alien to each other.

Q: Is psilocybin illegal?

TM: Oh yes, it's a schedule 1 drug. Without any public debate it was placed on the list at the same time that LSD was, and yet the issue was always couched in terms of LSD being made illegal, but actually at that point in time a whole bunch of things were made illegal. And there was never any public debate. All psychedelics were viewed as the same drug, and LSD was used as the model. Actually, these drugs, there's a spectrum of psychedelic effects and certain drugs trigger some of them and certain ones others, but yes, psilocybin is illegal.

Q: Are the mushrooms illegal?

TM: The mushrooms also are illegal as they contain psilocybin.

Q: I got a call from Andy Wild saying he walked down a downtown Seattle residential street picking up psilocybin mushrooms from the front yards of residential homes.

TM: (laughing) Well English law took the view that it was preposterous to try and outlaw a naturally occurring plant, and they took the position that only the chemical was illegal which I think is a very wise position. But I noticed that Canada recently chose the American interpretation over the British one.

Q: Interesting. Turns out, going back to the Andy Wild story, that the reason that these mushrooms were in such plenitude in various locales in the northwest was that their spores were contained in a mail order company's mushroom growing product that they sent out mail order. And so...

TM: Yes, this is an interesting phenomenon. You see, the spores of the mushroom are not illegal because they do not contain psilocybin. They only contain the message and the DNA of the mushroom for the production of psilocybin, so it's a kind of bizarre catch-22. The mushroom spores can move anywhere legally, can be bought and sold, but they are the sine-qua-non for the production of mushrooms of course.

Q: Terence the kind of knowledge and the kind of information you're putting forth is not generally available. It's not the kind of information or knowledge that one would find in the typical academic anthropology curriculum. And yet it seems to be a knowledge that is ever expanding, but somehow it's outside of the cultural institutional entities in some way. Number one, why do you think that's the case- of course there's a logical answer to that one. What do you see as the future of this kind of information, this kind of knowledge.

TM: Well I think in a sense it signals the rebirth of the institution of shamanism in the context of modern society, and anthropologists have always made the point about shaman, that they were very important social catalysts in their group, but they were always peripheral to it, peripheral to the political power and actually usually physically peripheral, living at some distance from the village. And I think the electronic shaman, the people who pursue the exploration of these spaces, exist to return to tell the rest of us about it, that we are now coming into a period of racial maturity as a species where we can no longer have forbidden areas of the human mind or cultural machinery. We have taken upon ourselves the acquisition of so much power that we now must understand what we are. We cannot travel much further with the definitions of man that we inherit from the Judeo-Christian tradition. We need to truly explore the problem of consciousness because as man gains power he is becoming the defining fact on the planet in the near space area. So the question that looms is, is man good? And then, if he is, what is it he's good for. And the shaman will point the way, because what they are are visionaries, poets, cultural architects, forecasters, all these roles which we understand in more conventional terms rolled into one and raised to the nth power. They are cultural models for the rest of us. This has always been true, that the shaman has access to a superhuman dimension and a superhuman condition, and by being able to do that he affirms the trans...the potential for transcendence in all people. He is an exemplar, if you will. And I see the attention that's been given to these things signaling a sense on the part of the society that we need a return to these models. This is why, for instance, in the Star Wars phenomenon Skywalker, Luke Skywalker, Skywalker is a direct translation of the word 'shaman' out of the Temgusik **which is where Siberian shamanism comes from. So these heroes that are being instilled in the heart of the culture are shamanic heroes. They control a force which is bigger than everybody and holds the galaxy together. This is true as a matter of fact, and as we explore how true it is, the limitations of our previous world view will be exposed for all to see. I think it was J. B. S. Haldane who said 'the world may not only be stranger than we suppose, it may be stranger than we can suppose'.**

I think that the character Yoda describes a sort of shamanic character.

Very much so

As we talk about shamans and shamanism, again that brings up cross-cultural currents. Do you see the shaman taking on a new...certainly you don't see Indian shamans walking into the metropolitan areas...but do you see the shaman taking on a new form?

Well I believe, along with Gordon Wasson and others, but in distinction to Merciliad who is a major writer on shamanism, that it is hallucinogenic shamanism that is primary, and that where shamanic techniques are used to the exclusion of hallucinogenic drug ingestion, the shamanism tends to be visciated it is more like a ritual enactment of what real shamanism is. So that the shamanism that is coming to be is coming to be within people in our culture, people who feel comfortable with psychedelic drugs and who, by going into those spaces and then returning with works of art or poetic accounts or scientific ideas are actually changing the face of the culture. I connect the psychedelic dimension to the dimension of inspiration and dream. I think history has always progressed by the bubbling up of ideas from these nether dimensions into the minds of receptive men and women. It is simply that now with the hallucinogens we actually have a tool to push the button. We are no longer dependent upon whatever factors is that previously controlled the ingression of novelty into human history. We have taken that function to ourselves, and this will accelerate and intensify the cultural crisis. But I think in the end it will lead much sooner to its resolution.

Q:So as we continue to move towards the further exploration of the spaces. We can expect that social change is a result?

TM: Tremendous social change. I see in fact what is happening is a tendency to what I call turn the body inside out. We are through our media and our cybernetics, we are actually approaching the point where consciousness can be experienced in a state of disconnection from the body. We have changed. We are no longer, as I said, bipedal monkeys. We are instead a kind of cybernetic coral reef of organic components and inorganic technological components. We have become a force which takes unorganized raw material and excretes technical objects. We have transcended the normal definitions of man. We are like an enormous collective organism with our data banks and our forecasting agencies and our computer networks and the many levels at which we are connected into the universe. Our self image is changing. The monkey is all but being left behind, and all but will be left behind. The flying saucer, again, I take to be an image of the future state of humanity. It is a kind of millenarian transformation of man where the soul is exteriorized as the apotheosis of technology, and it is that eschatological event which is casting enormous shadows backward through time over the historical landscape. That is the siren at the end of time, calling all mankind across the last ten millenia toward it. Calling us out of the trees and into history and through the series of multilevel cultural transitions to the point were the thing within the monkeys, the creature of pure language and pure imagination whose aspirations are entirely titanic in terms of self transformation, that thing is emerging, and it will emerge as man leaves the planet. And it's not something quantized and clearly defined. It is in fact what the next fifty or so years will be about. But at the end of it, the species will be off-planet and transformed, and fully wired from the depths to the heights.

Q: Are we just talking about another version of the Christian death, resurrection, ascension, and heaven?

TM: Except that it is coming into history. What is happening is that the paradise promised the soul is actually going to enter into history because technological man took the apocalyptic aspirations of Christianity so seriously that we are going to make it happen. It has become the guiding image of what we want to be. And I'm reminded of the poem by Yates. It's 'Sailing to Byzantium', where he speaks of how after death, he would like to be an enameled golden object singing to the lords and ladies of Byzantium. And it's the image of man transformed into eternal circuitry and released into a hyperspace of information where you are a thing of circuitry but you appear to be walking along an unspoiled beach in paradise. It is that we are going to find the power to realize our deepest cultural aspirations. This is why we must find out what our deepest cultural aspirations are. Again, another way of phrasing the question 'is man good.'

Q: What about the idea that the spaces that we've been talking about that you've been illuminating are spaces that can be achieved without the use of psychedelics.

TM: Well, again I scoured India and my humble personal opinion is that it is highly unlikely. I have always approached people of spiritual accomplishment with the question 'what can you show me' because as I said earlier this 'wise old man' wisdom is one thing, but only the hallucinogen-using shaman of the Amazon seem to be able to go beyond that. There may be techniques for doing this, but the efficacy and the dependability of the hallucinogens seems to me to make them the obvious choice. It would only be a series of cultural conventions that would cause one to want to engineer around that. It is the obvious path to transcendence. People must face the fact that at one level we are chemical machines. That doesn't mean we are that at every level, but it does mean that that is a level where we can intervene to change the pictures that are coming in and going out at higher levels.

Q: You're not suggesting that people should do this by themselves?

TM: Take hallucinogens? Well I don't know about take it by themselves, probably not, though I always do and I seem to prefer it. What I am suggesting is that they take it in a situation of minimum sensory input, lying down in darkness with eyes closed cannot be surpassed, and people want music, they want to walk around in nature, they want all these things. But nature and music are beautiful in their own right. They are the adumbrations of the psychedelic experience that we deal with in ordinary reality. In confrontation with the psychedelic experience, these things are hardly more than impediments. There are very interesting things happening in the utter blackness behind your eyelids, lying still in darkness. And that is where the mystery comes from and goes to.

My question had to do with with or without a guide.

Oh, I don't think people should do it without a guide unless they feel very confident from experience that they don't need a guide. Because I like to have these ideas get out. I think it's important that we discuss all this in a way that is only now becoming possible because of how it was in the 1960s. Now we need to shed all that and look back, and look forward and try to make a mature judgement for our culture based on the facts of the matter.

0:42:08.9 Well someone asked when we first went around to try and talk about the future. I don't know if I made the point strongly enough. I wasn't sure I felt it click, and I think it's a strong one and it's somewhat new with me. It's this idea that our...that we represent some kind of singularity, or that we announce the nearby presence of a singularity, that the evolution of life and cultural form and all that is clearly funneling toward something fairly unimaginable. I mean I really don't think we can imagine our future because when we try to project some little science fiction scenario of our future, we inevitably select a very small number of trends and then we propagate them forward without integrating the forward propagation of everything else that is going to be happening simultaneously. You know there are options such as nanotechnology, the building of super tiny machines. Space migration was once an option- this seems to be fading, it seems to have been written off the menu by the powers that be as the Soviet Union cracks to pieces, the human race's ability to leave this planet becomes a memory of ancient times. I mean, we could not return to the moon in less than fifteen years if we committed ourselves to it tomorrow, so the space thing seems to have been taken off the agenda. There's nanotechnology, there's virtual reality. The present solution seems to be this enforced larval neoteny on the consuming blue-collar masses, in the high-tech societies, and triage through epidemic disease and mismanagement in the third world. It's a huge mix, this problem of saving the world or halting the forward thrust into catastrophe. People say, well why do you worry about saving the world, you just said it's going to end in 2012. I don't see that rap as any sort of permission for political irresponsibility or a lack of attention to world problems. If it's true, great, we're golden. If it's not true, and what a long shot it is, then we should still keep our eye on the ball with all of this stuff. It is overpopulation is what's driving us crazy. All other problems, toxic waste disposal, epidemic disease, resource extraction, degradation of the environment, collapse of the atmosphere. Inability to satisfy third-world aspirations. All of these problems are population problems. And capitalism doesn't want to talk about it because capitalism is not a human being. Capitalism is a Moloch, a god, a god of bloody sacrifice that sees human beings as ants. And the more ants there are, the more offerings there can be to Moloch, but this is not a good situation for us ants. Capitalism is a gun pointed at the head of global civilization. If you read the theoreticians of capitalism, Adam Smith and so forth, capitalism assumes an unlimited exploitable frontier. There is no such creature, so it has turned pathological. The only frontier now left to exploit is not a frontier in space, but a frontier in time. We steal the future from our children by plunging massively deeper and deeper into debt. But this frontier, the end is in sight, and when we hit that wall we will join the Eastern Bloc in a fundamental reappraisal of our

situation. Democracy I believe in. I think democracy is the psychedelic form of government because I don't see it as a product of rational thought. I see it as institutionalized anarchy. Democracy is biology managed for human purposes. It honors the biological unit, it takes the biological unit and gives it a vote, and that's a way for mother nature to then enter into human history. I mean I'm fairly mystical about democracy, sort of like William Blake.

Q: So how are you preparing for 2012 yourself?

TM: Well, by going way out on a limb, I guess. People ask me 'what will you do if nothing happens in 2012'. Well, by god-sent coincidence, my 65th birthday occurs a month before the date, so then I think I'll just steal away in disgrace and find myself a girl on an island who runs fish traps and disappear forever.

As to what I do in the meantime, I don't...I should make it clear. I don't believe this stuff. I find believing in these high-flown complicated synthetic systems to come off sort of like pathology, so I entertain ideas but I don't give the leaf over. I'm very amazed by the timewave. It continuously surprises and delights me. Very few people are obviously as into it as I am, but it's proof enough as far as I'm concerned. I mean, it's all I ever would have asked for. It's the gem from the other, it's aladdin's lamp, it's what I wanted and I got it. At one point in La Chorrera naturally this question arose in our group. Why us? Why are the aliens revealing the unified field theory to us, and the mushroom just replied without hesitation 'because you don't believe in anything.' And that apparently is what's required.

Do you all know that Van Morrison song about 'no guru, no method no teacher, just you and me and nature, in the garden, in the garden.' I think that's actually where it's at. So what I do between now and 2012 is I'm a meme spreader, a mean replicator, and the purpose of these teaching things is to turn you into fellow replicators of the meme, I mean I see it all in the metaphors of molecular biology. I have a new sequence of codons here, and I want to insert it into each one of you without error in copying and you should go forth and tell other people and copy it into their head, and this meme will spread because we cannot evolve faster than our language. The edge of being is the edge of meaning, and somehow we have to push the edge of meaning, we have to extend it because if we appear to be confronted by insoluble problems it's because we have the wrong language for dealing with this problem. You learn that with computers. Certain languages are good for certain kinds of problems. We have to constantly evolve language and push it forward, and the way I think of the psychedelics is they are catalysts to the imagination. That's what they were back a hundred thousand years ago. The imagination, which was just this glimmering, this iridescence on the surface of ape cognition, was under the influence of the reciprocal feedback of self reflection, you know, that is created by watching your own mind because it has suddenly become interesting, because it has

suddenly been flooded by a psychoactive aiming. That iridescence has been coaxed into language, art, architecture, music, poetry, the whole ball of wax. But now we know these things. It's no longer a sort of haphazard process. We can, by analyzing different kinds of cultures existing in the world today and cultures that existed in the past, we can uncover, reveal, unravel the lost secret of our origins. I haven't talked too much this weekend, but I'm very keen for the notion of what I call the archaic revival, and the archaic revival is this overarching metaphor that is the way for us to go to save our necks at this point. When a culture gets into trouble, instinctively what it does is it goes back through its own past until it finds a moment when things seem to make sense, and then it brings that moment forward into the present. The perfect example is when medieval Christianity no longer made sense to a major proportion or percentage of the people of Western Europe because of the rise of new kinds of classes, new forms of wealth, new information about the world outside Europe, when the medieval vision lost its power, the intellectuals of that time instinctively reached backwards into the past looking for a stable model, and finally they reached the golden age of Periclean Athens. And there they found Plato, Aristotle, the dramatists, so forth, and they created Classicism. Notice that we're talking here about the 1400's. Classicism was brought to birth in the 1400's, two thousand years after the death of Plato, and we are still to a tremendous degree, we are the children of this classical revival which we call the renaissance. Our theories of law, our theories of government, our notion of justice, our notions of city planning, of architecture, military planning and so forth, are all drawn from classical Greek and Roman models that were brought back from the dead five hundred years ago by a bunch of Italian investment bankers who thought that this was a good model to build on, to hang their civilization on. And now this has run out. The contradictions are too extreme. This classicism, I don't want to say it's failed, but it has just taken us as far as it can go. So now we again, we confront great existential confusion, we confront cultural values completely different from our own such as rainforest aborigines and so forth. We confront the toxic legacy of modern science, the retreating species counts of the earth, the decaying atmosphere, all these things. So we must now reach far back into time for a new cultural model. Our crisis is so great that we have to reach back to the high paleolithic, to the moment immediately before the invention of agriculture and the creation of the dominator ego. People talk about the new age and the new paradigm and this and that, well it's larger than that. It's been going on throughout the 20th century. The discovery of the purification of mescaline in Berlin in 1987, Freud begins to publish at the turn of the century, Jung....they are discovering the primitive unconscious. They are revealing to Edwardian and Viennese ladies and gentlemen of great culture and breeding that they have inside them brawling, incestuous, violent, lust-driven animal natures. In other words, they are reintroducing an awareness of the primitive into this tremendously constipated male dominated late 19th century post-Victorian cultural milieu. And then, following hard upon them, the impressionists in the 1880s giving way to analytical cubism and all that. Cubism arose as the result of the fascination of a few artists with primitive

African masks. Picasso and his circle, and when they brought this stuff back to Paris in 1905 through 15, nobody had ever seen this kind of thing, and these guys began to try to reconstruct the pictorial space of people like Degas and those people into the pictorial space of the primitive mentality. Meanwhile anthropologists were bringing in..and Frazer published The Golden Bow, which laid before the European intellectual community this vast repository of integrated mythology. National socialism, surrealism, all of these things- some negative, some positive- are all aspects of the 20th century fascination and re-vivification of the primitive. Rock and roll, the rise of sexual permissiveness, the rise of styles of dancing which were not the minuet and so forth. All of this signals this fascination with the primitive, but at the center of it stand two phenomena, or two integrated phenomena: the personality of the shaman, and the fact of the psychedelic of experience, and we've come late to that. The 1960's is when this theme was first announced for any large number of people and I think that we have to consciously deconstruct the constipated, classical, industrial, linear, dominator civilization that we're trapped inside because it's a vehicle we can't steer. It's glued to the tracks which run right over the cliff. If we cannot alter the assumptions of this society, if the George Bush's and Helmut Coles of this world are going to continue to run things, then head for the bunkers folks and pray, because the bunkers aren't going to be any consolation.

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A report on Crop Circles with Abraham and Sheldrake

1992

Esalen

Description

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A Survey of Shamanic Options

June 1989

Location, City, State

Description

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I'm sure you're all aware of the situation of peril in which the Amazon rainforest finds itself. Very large conservation organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund are working very hard to preserve large tracts of the Amazon in situ and to essentially make large parks. This is commendable and should certainly be done, but what is not being done is an effort to preserve human information about the rainforest. In other words, no effort is being made to conserve the heritage of the people who have lived in and adjacent to the rainforests over millennia. My estimate would be that this information, which is extremely fragile, will be lost by sometime after the turn of the century.

It's not hard to understand why this is happening. It's a consequence of the impact of market economies on preliterate tribal people in the Third World. In the case of the Amazon, the men are leaving the remote villages and going to work in sawmills and as outboard motor captains and mechanics. The kind of transformation that always accompanies urbanization and the arrival of a money economy is taking place, yet these people have a body of medical data that has served them very well over thousands of years. Now, because they are impressed with the values of Western medicine and can buy all kinds of *remedios* at any drugstore in the city, the importance of this knowledge is no longer apparent to them and so it's being lost.

I have no reason to doubt the DEA statistics which say that 70% of the cocaine produced in South America is coming out of the Colombian Amazon. I know nothing about it. As a botanist I can tell you that the Colombian Amazon is the area richest in plant species in the entire Amazon basin. As near as we can tell, looking at the geohistory of the basin, at times it's been considerably drier. During glaciations, when water is concentrated at the poles, the high rainfall areas of the Amazon diminish in size. The Colombian Amazon is one of those areas that is always wet, and it has consequently produced a fantastic speciation of plants. One biogeographer or geologist estimates that the Amazon basin has been above water continuously for 220 million years. This is longer than most places in the world. It's estimated that the Madagascar Plate, which is a relic plate that now comprises Seychelles, Mauritius and the Malagasy Republic in eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean, that land has been above water 350 million years and is the oldest above-water site on the planet. The Amazon basin, by virtue of heavy rainfall, continuous lack of inundation, and by being tropical, has been like a laboratory for speciation both of animals and plants, so that the Colombian Amazon, which is the concentrated center of this process, has the most intense concentration of variegated species and genetic material on the planet. It *should* be made into a vast natural park. If that can't be done, then it should be left alone. What the American government has decided is a better course is

that it should be defoliated, that a chemical called Spike should be aerially sprayed over this valley in order to kill coca bushes.

I don't know who dreams this stuff up, but any one of you on the ground for twenty minutes in this scene would be convinced that nothing could be stupider, that this is essentially like burning down the forest to kill the ants. There may be a lot of coca there, I don't know, but there's a lot of other stuff there for sure. There are hundreds of distinct tribes, dozens of language groups, tens of thousands of unique species of plants and animals. It is floristically and faunistically one of the five or six richest areas on the planet. As if the inroads of capitalism and Maoist politics were not enough, you're also going to get a bunch of clowns from the DEA who want to defoliate it. If any of you have political pull or are of the letter writing type you might put some pressure on anyone you know to halt this. This is really a kind of ecocidal atrocity, and if something isn't done, like all the other ecocidal atrocities it'll be history before most people are even informed of what is going on. This is really one of the great policy wrong turnings, for many reasons. I don't expect the state department to be sympathetic to endangered plants, but what is happening is that all of Peru is being pushed into the arms of Sendero Luminoso, which is one of the most peculiar and radical political philosophies on the earth today; it rivals Pol Pot for having a no holds barred approach to dealing with its enemies. Peru daily is being pushed into the arms of this extremely radical faction by a combination of mismanaged Peruvian economic policies and mismanaged American policies toward the *campesinos*, toward the poor people who grow the coca, because they are seeing Sendero as their only protector, their only hope. It's a repeat performance of a sad story that has been seen in many parts of the world.

Well, that's enough political polemics. What I thought I would do today is just briefly survey the world, looking at the shamanic options in the plant area, trying to see just what is available, what are the history, chemistry, pharmacology and botany of the relevant species. I'll go through this in the way of a survey; it's not a rhetorical flight of fancy unless we lose control. I've talked a lot about Africa, about the emergence of culture and my belief that language and complex neural processing were catalyzed into existence by exposure to psilocybin mushrooms in the veldt situation of ancient Africa. I think I've said enough about that. What I thought I would talk about today regarding Africa is the existing cults of shamanic or hallucinogenic plant usage in Africa.

Africa is a special case because it is, of all the continents, the continent most heavily impacted by human presence — because of course human beings evolved in Africa, fire was discovered and used in Africa before it was used anywhere else, and also the ecosystems of Africa had a particular fragility in relationship to the dryness that comes and goes with glaciations. So in spite of the fact that I propose Africa as the cradle of human emergence under the influence of psychedelic plant synergies, today Africa is noticeably poor in hallucinogenic plants. The most interesting hallucinogen in the African situation is *Tabernanthe iboga*. *Tabernanthe iboga* is a tree in the *Rubiaceae* or a small bush, depending on edaphic factors. *Tabernanthe iboga* contains the alkaloid ibogaine. There's a paradox about ibogaine, which is that of all the indole hallucinogens it was the earliest to come to the attention of Western researchers. In the 1870s and '80s, when Belgium was in control of the Congo and exporting huge amounts of ivory and gold out of Africa, entrepreneurs seized upon this plant, *Tabernanthe iboga*, and created tonics that were compounded with it as the main ingredient. It was sold as a tonic and an aphrodisiac, and in some cases it was understood to be an intoxicant. Much in the way that Vin Mariani, the famous coca preparation which was the rage in the 1880s in Europe, much in the same way that it was marketed iboga tonics were marketed in the 19th century, but the alkaloid was never thoroughly studied after the turn of the century

and of all the indoles we know the least about this one. It has a complex molecular structure placing it closer in structural affinity to LSD than to any other psychoactive indole.

Indoles are a class of hallucinogens that are based on a molecular structure that involves a benzene group, which is a six-sided structure, attached to a pyrrole group, a five-sided structure. Built off on them there may be another six, that gives you the β -carboline family, there may be just a side chain, that gives you the tryptamine family, or there may be more complex stereochemical attachments and they give you the LSD-, ibogaine-type structure. So indole refers to a small family of psychoactive compounds, not necessarily all psychoactive compounds. Not opiates, not tropanes, which are the things in datura, not the polyhydric alcohols of cannabis, tetrahydrocannabinol. This particular small group of plants are united by this chemical structure that seems to lay the basis for the most psychoactive of the hallucinogens because of its affinities to serotonin's chemical structure. Iboga is used by the Fang people, most notably in Gabon and around the capital city in Ghana, in Nigeria and in Zaire. It has an interesting and suggestive usage.

First, let's deal with this question of its aphrodisiac usage. As you know, an aphrodisiac is a chemical substance thought to make one either capable of or susceptible to sexual activity. Over thousands of years this has been a recurring theme of fascination for human beings, for obvious reasons. The definition takes on different nuances in the hands of different people. Probably the best known so-called aphrodisiac among ordinary folks is the so-called Spanish fly, which is cantharidin. The carapaces of a small desert beetle can be ground down to yield cantharidin. If you give someone cantharidin in a carefully calculated dose, they have a generalized reaction to it where they can gain relief from this reaction by having sex, but it is not a true aphrodisiac, it's more like a genital itching or something. It's a strongly localized to the erogenous zone kind of itching, and so this is like a pseudo-aphrodisiac. All CNS stimulants in low doses present themselves as what's called arousal: attention to incoming detail, slightly elevated blood pressure, so forth and so on. This is a precondition for sexual activity but it is not a true aphrodisiac. In fact, when you sort through the many candidates for aphrodisiacs — as you know, they range from powdered rhinoceros horn to mangoes to oysters — interestingly enough, ibogaine is the only thing which actually seems to pass the test. Ibogaine is an aphrodisiac in the truest sense of the word, and I take that to mean this: if you are interested in sexual activity, it promotes, facilitates and enhances it. If you are not, it doesn't. It doesn't overwhelm the intentions of the user. This seems to be one pathway that the psychic energy that it releases can be shunted down, but there are others. Paradoxically, the way it's used in the Fang society is that it's a major force holding couples together.

Fang society is quite complex, and it's structured in such a way that there is a built-in high anxiety factor about women among men. The reason for this is an unusual set of customs which we don't really find duplicated anywhere else in the world. It goes like this: a man may have more than one wife. A wife is always accompanied by a dowry. The dowry is always quite large, in the sense that it is always a strain on the girl's family to get the dowry together. When a woman marries, she and her dowry go to the village of her husband, but what is unusual in this situation is that divorce is very easy for the woman to obtain, and if a woman leaves her husband the dowry must be returned. So men are in a constant dither about hanging on to women, because the dowry must be returned even if it has been spent. These are family relationships — these aren't relationships between a man and a girl's parents, these are relationships between two filial structures — so it can become quite complicated. In fact, Fang men between the ages of 25 and 45 spend enormous amounts of their lives making journeys to the villages of their former wives to negotiate dowry return, because the concept of used goods is recognized. It isn't simply that the guy has to pay back the dowry, it's that he has to meet with the girl's family and argue with them about how much she was really

worth, and this often ends in bloodshed.

So into this social structure that is prestructured for anxiety about women comes this psychedelic aphrodisiac that promotes not only pair bonding but community bonding. The cult of iboga is not the generalized cult of the Fang. They have many cults and some are Baptists and Mormons, but when a couple gets into trouble, the old men of the village will often say to them, “Why don’t you join Bwiti,” this cult, “You’re having marital problems. Why don’t you join Bwiti, and perhaps your wife will reconsider and decide to stay with you.” It has actually become a very interesting force for social cohesion. In fact, sociological studies have shown that members of the Bwiti cult have a divorce rate far below that of general Fang society. I spend so much time on this because this is an unusual role for a hallucinogen. We just don’t see them playing these secondary socially catalytic roles. Iboga is a strong hallucinogen and it’s usually given to a person in very massive doses at the initiatory exposure, which can come in late adolescence. People do die occasionally from it, but the amounts eaten are almost beyond credibility, because they talk in terms of tablespoons and people will go to the river and eat two table spoons...

Methods of preparing *haoma* and *soma* which are very puzzling when you try to apply them to a mushroom — there’s all this talk about how it’s squeezed, it’s filtered — a bunch of processes are described which if you try to carry them out on a mushroom it will just leave you with a mess, but if you carry them out on *Peganum harmala* it quite reliably produces a yellow fluid rich in harmaline that is probably an intoxicant. This is an area where research needs to be done. I urge any of you who are interested in ayahuasca or interested in β -carbolines in psychotherapy to look at Flattery’s book. It’s brand new, 1989, University of California Press Near Eastern Studies Volume 21, Haoma and Harmaline.

OK, moving on east across the Iranian Plateau into India, which is certainly a great cradle of esoteric spirituality, what we discover is a surprising poverty of true, i.e. indole, hallucinogens. There are interesting substitutes, aside from *Peganum harmala* which I’ve mentioned, of which there is very little textual evidence for use in India. The two things which have to stand out in Indian psychophytoshamanism would be, number one, datura species. We might as well talk about them now because we will meet them on every continent, including in Africa. I just read an article about a group in Tanzania, interesting group. *Datura fastuosa*, taken by women only in a women’s initiation rite which involves a labial measuring rite at the height of the trip, and what are culturally sanctioned are blue hallucinations. The women strive for blue hallucinations, and if they don’t achieve them it’s considered an unsuccessful invitation. The anthropologist who wrote on this called this “a culturally sanctioned hallucination.” I’m not sure what is meant here. Do they mean that anthropologists, white people, don’t have blue hallucinations, they just have hallucinations and that somehow it’s expectation that directs this? I’m not sure, I don’t associate blue hallucinations with tropanes, but it is certainly true that blue hallucinations attach themselves to ayahuasca. People have even called it “the search for the blue flash.” If you have ever taken ayahuasca you know that there is a moment when what appears to be the world’s entire supply of magenta jello is unleashed upon you and flows past you and through you, and it invariably is this electric cerulean blue merging into magenta, a very typical presentation of that. Datura species of many types occur throughout the world in the tropical and the temperate zone. There are several species in India, and texts on yoga and on Indian spirituality never stress this. Use of datura is quite strongly a part of sadhu-type spirituality. It’s too much for ordinary people, but when you hang out with sadhus the little prickly pods of datura are as common to find cast about their dwelling places and gathering areas as are the evidences of *charas* smoking.

That brings me to the second major component of the psychoactive flora of the subcontinent, which is

cannabis. Cannabis is not an indole, but cannabis must be considered a psychoactive plant of great age and human association. Cannabis is hemp, cannabis is the source of fiber for weaving, and we find hempen fibers in graves 8,000-9,000 years old, at Çatalhöyük, for one place. It's fascinating, the way in which the metaphors of the weaver are the metaphors for human cognitive activity generally. In the '50s a famous book was published called *Man Is a Weaver* that pursued this theme, but never made the connection to fibrous hemp. We weave a tale, we tell a yarn, we have all these fiber and weaving words that we connect to poetic or narrative activity. Most of us who are aficionados of cannabis in these latter days smoke it — and don't smoke *charas* or hashish, because it's rare in this country, but smoke bud, the flowering tops of marijuana — but if you actually eat hashish, you can convince yourself that this was the LSD of the ancient world and the 19th century.

Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Rimbaud, that crowd — there was this society called the Club des Hashischins in Paris, and they met at the old Hôtel de Lauzun on the Left Bank and ate jellied cannabis that they were getting from Morocco with little silver spoons. The descriptions of these experiences make it clear that this was operating as a hallucinogen. They are not more florid or less florid than the descriptions of LSD that we get from Aldous Huxley and Tim Leary in the early 1960s and 1970s, I mean, this stuff was taking them away. I don't advise you to eat hashish or *charas* for a very practical reason, which is that it's collected off people's hands, and your immune system is just electrified by the presence of all of this material that's been rubbed off of your hands. I suppose we could put it through an X-ray machine and then we could eat it with impunity, but we can't sell short the spiritual power of cannabis.

Some of you may know this book *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* by René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Nebesky-Wojkowitz studied shamanism, was not interested in Tibetan Buddhism but was interested in the pre-Buddhist strata. In that book there are pictures of Bön-Po shamans intoxicated on hashish, experiencing fits and near-convulsions in an oracular trance in a village near Mustang. It is not a minor psychedelic substance at all, it's a very powerful psychedelic substance, especially when concentrated and then eaten. Opium is an Asian plant, but I'm not going to talk about it in the context of psychedelics; I think you know enough about opium and its history. What I will point out is the surprising absence of hallucinogens in the Old World tropics. By the Old World tropics we mean the Indonesian tropics. This is an area that I'm very well familiar with, having spent a lot of time out there as a professional insect collector in my pre-botany days. There just are no major hallucinogenic plants in the Indonesian or Philippine or Southeast Asian tropics. There are certain suspect plants but with none of them do we encounter a living cult that would give a clue to this thing as a major item of human spiritual or cultural usage.

Audience: What are the magic mushrooms we hear about from Indonesia that are available there supposedly openly?

When I was in Bali this practice was absolutely unknown, these famous omelettes of Kuta Beach. Until somebody argues differently, the most reasonable thing to assume is that coprophilic mushrooms have just followed cattle around and around the world in the warm tropics. The mushroom that is most commonly offered tourists in Bali is not *Stropharia cubensis*, it's a *Copelandia*, it's a weaker mushroom. There are a number of these dung-loving mushrooms that contain psilocybin but almost all of them also contain an emetic, which means that it makes you throw up. The Hawaiian mushrooms that people rave about are actually, from the point of view of someone who knows psilocybin mushrooms, a very inferior choice. If you go to Thailand, if you go to Ko Samui and the islands of the south, you'll be offered mushrooms and I quickly understood that there was, to a certain degree, a shell game going on. What it is is this: the people

selling the mushrooms have learned from the school of hard knocks that it's a bad idea to wire up naive Westerners with massive amounts of hallucinogenic drugs, because then you get in trouble with the local constable and so forth, so unless you are on it, in southern Thailand what they will sell you are mushrooms that have grown in the dung of water buffalo, and right there in the next field over is the dung of zebu cattle, and that has *Stropharia cubensis* in it, but they try to steer you away from that because it's so much stronger. They just want people to get a buzz on. So if you're buying mushrooms in southern Thailand, try to go with the guy to collect them and see where they're coming from. Now, there's an easy test to tell these *Panaeolus* and *Copelandia* species from *Stropharia*. They will do what is called autodigest; some mushrooms do this and some don't. That means that if you pick the mushroom and lay it in the sun on a stone, and you come back in an hour or two and it's turned to slime, it was not *Stropharia cubensis*, it was a *Copelandia* or a *Panaeolus*. They literally dissolve themselves at death. This is not a quality of *Stropharia*.

There's been a lot of wondering about this thing: why are there no hallucinogenic plants in the Old World tropics when in the New World tropics, the Amazon basin, it is the most concentrated ecosystem for hallucinogenic plants? The thinking is that the tropics are the tropics. Who can imagine a set of evolutionary factors that would favor the evolution of many species of hallucinogens in one hemisphere but not in the other hemisphere? It's very hard to picture a neo-Darwinian mechanism that would give you that result. Different suggestions have been made; one is that there actually are as many hallucinogens in Indonesia as in South America, but because the Dutch have been there for 450 years, the level of indigenous culture, the "primitiveness," so-called, of indigenous culture, has been mucked with, and consequently the people have forgotten these things. Well, that's a good theory, but when a botanist who is not an ethnographer goes over the species lists and looks at the suspect families of plants, you also don't find hallucinogens. You see, certain families of plants are highly suspect for hallucinogens. For instance, the *Leguminosae*: this is the family of flowering trees with finely divided leaves. This is a typical leguminous tree, this locust-like thing, and they occur all over the world as trees and bushes. This is a family that always has a very exotic chemistry, not hallucinogens per se, but flavonoids, saponins, terpenes, sesquiterpenes, all kinds of exotic tertiary byproducts. A mimosa is a typical example. Another family that is always suspect that you look at first is the *Rubiaceae*. We know this as the family that contains tea, and of course caffeine is an alkaloid that is sequestered in the bean of this plant in surprising concentrations, but some of the *Rubiaceae* contain DMT and other psychoactive compounds. Another family that is always one of the first ones you check out are the *Euphorbiaceae*. These are the fleshy Old World succulents that bleed latex when cut. They often have extremely poisonous or sometimes psychedelic principles in them.

So much, then, for the Old World. As you know, when there is ice at the poles there are land bridges between Siberia and Alaska, and this is the route that most anthropologists believe the major migrations into the New World took. There's an interesting consequence of this northern migration route to the New World. People didn't just set out on a trip from Manchuria to San Diego, this happened over centuries, millennia. The people would move a few miles, have children and die, so what it means is that cultures crossing into the New World had to go through a neck of cold land, a floristically extremely restricted environment represented by the Arctic tundra. We can imagine that this would have stripped away many traditions of plant usage as they moved north out of the areas where these plants occurred. The role of cannabis is not clear, but for instance, no opium was carried to the New World by these ancient peoples. In fact, very few plants at all were; cannabis is the one slightly puzzling exception. It may be that cannabis was carried to the New World by people crossing the Siberian land bridge. Cannabis does grow in Alaska under special conditions with a very short growing season, and it's possible that this happened. The botanical closeness between *Cannabis sativa*, the Mexican marijuana plant, and *Cannabis ruderalis*, the

weed hemp of Central Asia, indicates that probably these things were separated not too long ago. What has happened with cannabis speciation in Asia is that even without the narcotic dimension to the cannabis plant, we can see that very early on there was selective pressure on it by human beings to produce good fiber stock, so what you get in India is a division into fiber tribes and drug tribes in cannabis. The resin tribes are extremely heavily selected for the production of resin, and they are the source of the narcotic *charas*.

Amanita muscaria, the hypothesized mushroom *soma* in Wasson's view, and for sure a hallucinogen of use in Siberia among the Ostyax, Koryaks, Kamchatkan and Yakut tribes, this whole group of people. When scholars study a worldwide phenomenon of any sort, they like to have a baseline area to compare everything else to. This is why, for instance, the volcanos of Hawaii are *the* volcanos of this planet. All other volcanos are compared to them; they are the baseline volcanos, and the Hawaiian words for various lava types and this sort of thing have been adopted by volcanologists worldwide. All rough lava is called aa, all smooth lava is called pahoehoe, because these things have been adapted. Well, a similar thing went on in the study of shamanism. Mircea Eliade and other people were looking for what they felt was the pure, the original, the real shamanism, and they focused on Siberia, now we see for reasons apparently quite arbitrary, mainly that they had a lot of ethnographic data on Siberia. There's no reason to hold the Hopi medicine man, the Amazonian *ayahuasquero* and the Hawaiian *kapu* man up to a Siberian standard, but nevertheless the literature preserves this, so the model or paradigmatic intoxicant of the paradigmatic shaman was *Amanita muscaria*.

There are a lot of problems with this. *Amanita muscaria* is not a reliable intoxicant. It is subject to geographic variation, seasonal variation, genetic variation. There are toxins present in it that are also subject to variation. You can end up with an NDE rather than a hallucinogenic experience if you just miss the mark slightly with this one. Nevertheless, it is circumarctic in its distribution. It occurs in Denmark, across the northern reaches of the Soviet Union, into Alaska and into Canada, and it's generalized in that range. As you move south it retreats to higher and higher altitudes, with certain exceptions. For instance, in California it can be found at sea level in some ecosystems. Some of you may know Baker Beach, a beach that lies outside the Golden Gate Bridge in this very ritzy district of old mansions. Well, go on a rainy January day down to Baker Beach. There are a lot of birch trees and these kinds of trees planted in old sea sand, and my God, this is an amanita ecosystem that you will not believe. I have seen not only *Amanita muscaria* by the bushel and *Amanita pantherina* but rare, rare *Amanitas*. The chocolate brown one, *Porphyria*, rumoured to contain β -carboline, and *Rugosa*, and the deadly one, *Virosa*, the one they call the destroying angel. All of these amanitas can be seen within a half mile walk of each other, specimens the size of dinner plates. What this means is that people moving south through British Columbia and on into the Great Plains and West Coast of North America had been shorn of their phytoshamanic knowledge because they had just come through centuries and centuries of migration through hallucinogen-poor environments. To my mind, this explains the curious absence of major hallucinogens in North American Indian spirituality. North American Indian spirituality relies largely on ordeals, the Sun Dance ordeal and this sort of thing. There are minor psychoactives such as *Acorus calamus*, sweet flag root, but really, North American Indian shamanism is not a shamanism of hallucinogenic ecstasy.

The use of peyote, which might be offered as the counterexample, is astonishingly difficult to document before just a few hundred years ago. We like to think that people have been taking peyote in the New World for millennia, but in fact it seems to be something that came up out of Mexico, where the Tarahumara may have had it in a very localized culture complex, but with the Indians in the Western

United States getting the shit kicked out of them by the U.S. Army there was pressure for revitalization. Any of you who are anthropologists understand how this works: if you put pressure on a people, they will launch revitalization movements. The Ghost Dance religion of the Sioux, Algonquin and Plains people was largely a revitalization movement based on peyote. What appears to have been going on in the temperate Mesoamerican zone anciently was the use of *Sophora secundiflora*, which is a highly poisonous plant. It is what anthropologists call an ordeal poison, not a hallucinogen.

Ordeal poisons are a rougher way to end up at the same place. The place on earth — for unknown reasons, or reasons not known to me, anyway — where ordeal poisons have been perfected is on the island of Madagascar, mentioned earlier in this lecture as one of those sites where land has been above water longer than anywhere else on earth. On the island of Madagascar, the Malagasy Republic, tribal people have located a number of plants that are extremely temporary poisoners, so that you think you're going to die, you beg for death, and you don't die, you recover fully in 12-16 hours. It is so agonizing, and you so completely wish for death in this experience that when you finally realize that you're going to live through it you have the equivalent of a psychedelic experience. Tears of joy well up, you embrace the earth, you give thanks to God and you come clean, but this is a tougher way to do it than most of us might prefer. Sometimes you have psychedelic trips like that, where the fact that it is over is such cause for rejoicing that you hardly know who to thank. Apparently North American Indian shamanism tended in this direction, and only peyote arriving late mitigated that. Peyote still partakes of this to some degree. It is a minor ordeal, especially if you eat enough peyote to trigger truly intense hallucinations. What I've found sitting in peyote circles is that most people only take enough to be able to sit in the circle without nodding out. At low doses, of course, mescaline and amphetamine will wire you up, but it takes a lot to put you into Don Juan country. It is not an indole, it is a psychoactive amphetamine, more closely related to the synthetic psychoactive amphetamines such as MDA and MDMA.

Now we are on the brink of moving down into Mesoamerica, onto the Mexican isthmus, and we are approaching this puzzling concentration of psychoactive plants. Basically, you could start your border at the Rio Grande and it goes south to Argentina, and in that zone there is a tremendous richness of psychoactive plants of all types in many plant families. I've mentioned peyote, I've mentioned datura in another context. Datura cults are very big, and datura has to be viewed as an ordeal poison. It is a hallucinogen but it's also a kind of deliriant and a kind of a frenzy-inducing thing. It's very hard to take much out of it; you have intense experiences but the perceiving mind has been somehow interfered with. Nevertheless, in southern California — Catalina island, San Diego County — in ancient times there was what was called the *toloache* religion of the Luiseño people. This was an adolescent initiation for males that involved being taken into the desert and given large amounts of datura over days. This would be a completely boundary-dissolving, consciousness-altering experience.

As we go deeper into Mexico and leave the deserts behind and begin to approach the mountain range of the Sierra Mazateca and the Central Mexican highland, we come upon what, in some ways, is one of the most interesting shamanic hallucinogen complexes, which is the Central Mexican mushroom complex discovered by Gordon and Valentina Wasson in the early '50s. Now, these are not mushrooms that grow in the dung of cows or any other animal. These are what mycologists call ephemeral mushrooms, meaning small, diminutive and briefly present as fruiting bodies. Ephemeral mushrooms actually live in very restricted ecosystems. One of them lives in the waste from sugarcane, so it can only grow in matted vegetable material. The one called *derrumbe*, the earthquake mushroom, grows only in disturbed land where there's erosion or shifting. Clearly, all of these mushrooms must have speciated from a common

ancestor. There are about twelve varieties; all have been utilized. Interestingly enough, in terms of fungal speciation, the center of fungal speciation in North America is around Grants Pass, Oregon. There are more mushroom species within 100 miles of Grants Pass, Oregon than almost anywhere on earth, and there are psilocybin-containing diminutive mushrooms — not coprophilic — but nobody but the most inspired anthropologists have ever been able to find any evidence for use of these hallucinogenic psilocybin-containing mushrooms in the Kwakiutl, Tsimshian, Tlingit complex of peoples. We don't know that they knew about this. One would assume, because we give Indians a lot of credit, that they knew a lot about their environment, and of course we have the evidence of their peculiar artistic style, which is X-ray vision — these are the people who show you the insides of things as well as the outsides — but in terms of usage or a claim of usage, it's never been substantiated.

This brings up an interesting point, because the plants I'm talking to you about today are plants with a history of shamanic usage, but there are hallucinogenic plants without a history of shamanic usage, plants that pharmacologically look like ideal candidates. Why weren't they used? A good example would be in the *Convolvulaceae*, the morning glory family, there is a group, *Argyreia*. There are 13 species of *Argyreia*, and they occur naturally from northern India to the Solomon Islands. They are woody morning glories; one that you may know is the Hawaiian baby woodrose. Well, the Hawaiian baby woodrose is a very powerful hallucinogen, weight for weight. It only takes 8 seeds of this thing to propel you into a fairly profound visionary state. There are some cardioactive glycosides present, but as we see with these ordeal poisons, that doesn't turn people off in other situations. *Argyreia* is unknown to have a folk usage, and yet looking at the flora of earth, this one of the first things that you would think that people might have looked at. Certainly, hippies in the 1960s and people since have made very good use of *Argyreia* as a visionary vehicle.

Rupert Sheldrake and I have talked a lot about the morphogenetic field of a shamanic plant without a history of shamanic usage, and how different it would be to take *Argyreia nervosa* and contrast it with *Stropharia cubensis* or something like that, that has a tremendous input from past shamanic usage. We don't have enough data on *Argyreia*. Nobody has done the Hawaiian baby woodrose book, to give us thirty or forty accounts.

When I took it I had a quite anomalous experience. It was a standard psychedelic experience but the visionary episode was entirely — and this was in a room in Berkeley, there was no suggestion — the contents of the hallucinations were entirely based on the motif of the sea urchin. I was in huge dome rooms that were pale purple with these starlike things and these tit-like protuberances on everything and then this mauve floor and what looked to me like the pumpkin carriage from Cinderella, but it wasn't a pumpkin, it was a sea urchin vehicle of some sort, being drawn by these bizarre-looking creatures — they were like a cross between camels and giraffes — and they too were pale violet and had these tit-like protuberances all over their bodies. Nobody had ever said to me that Hawaiian baby woodrose had anything to do with the sea urchin motif, but it was pretty inescapable. I would have done more with that but I didn't like this cardioactive glycoside thing. In practical terms, what it meant was that in the first wave you just had to sit down and tell yourself that if you were having a heart attack you'd better get ready because there was nothing you could do about it, and it certainly was convincing. I don't know, maybe there are some medical people in the audience. It's always good to have a doctor around because they're so hard to alarm. I mean, I'll be ready to bury somebody and they will say, "Eh, he'll snap out of it in an hour or two." This person is absolutely rigid and unconscious and you're supposed to be calm about it because their pulse tells you it's alright.

Anyway, to say more about Mexico: coincident with this Sierra Mazatecan cultural area where all these mushrooms are being utilized, there is an overlapping and completely unrelated complex, also of great age and richness. This is the hallucinogenic morning glory group. Not the *Argyreias* that I've just been talking about, but morning glories in two other families: in the family *Ipomoea* and in the family *Turbina*. The *Ipomoea* is the one that you might be most familiar with. This is the heavenly blue morning glory that is the ornamental morning glory, an annual, and you can buy seeds in any decent seed store. It's been hybridized into three varieties, and it's amusing that they chose to name the original variety, which is pure sky blue — it is a magical plant, you don't have to take it, just to look at it this thing, and some of you may know Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings of these flowers — that one is called Heavenly Blue, and then it was hybridized into a blue and white one, which is called Flying Saucer, and then it was further hybridized into a pearly white, which is called Pearly Gates. So Heavenly Blue, Pearly Gates and Flying Saucer; and this is a wonderful hallucinogen. It has everything going for it. You can grow up a bunch of them in a long summer, and the plant really responds to care and water. I've grown them in a single summer forty feet up a double garage wall, and just filled it. Then you let them make seed and you cut down the mass of dried foliage and seed capsules and pound it over a sheet or a piece of plastic. It takes about 200 seeds to provide an unambiguous psychedelic experience. One of the really fascinating things about the Mexican morning glory seeds is the number of people who report Toltec and Mayan and Aztec imagery. I have experienced this myself; it's absolutely uncanny. It's like being at Teotihuacán at the height of that civilization, and the motif of the feathered serpent, all of this stuff is there. I don't know whether this is suggestion. When I took iboga I didn't think that I was in Africa, I didn't see the motifs of the Fang. This is an interesting area. I don't know how you do research in it, it's not empirical, but it is an interesting area. Why do the plants seem to have their own message?

The other Mexican morning glory is *Turbina corymbosa*, formerly *Rivea corymbosa*, and it is not an annual, it's a perennial. It's a little bush with small white morning glory-like flowers on it, and it is quite powerful. With the *Ipomoea* you have to take 200-300 seeds; with the *Turbina*, the ordinary dose is 13 seeds, and this would barely cover the bottom of a teaspoon. It's interesting that in the *Convolvulaceae* the concentration of the alkaloid is really quite intense. In both of these morning glories the active constituents are LSD-like compounds. LSD-25, the classic LSD that we all know, is active in the microgram range, in other words, 200 µg of LSD is considered a good dose. These naturally occurring ergotamine and LSD-like compounds have a more ordinary dose spectrum. They are active in the range, even purified, of ten to thirty milligrams. This is more typical of a drug. The activity of LSD is still a pharmacological miracle. You understand, do you not, that one microgram is one millionth of a gram, and that one milligram is one thousandth of a gram. It takes 1,000 µg to make one milligram, so LSD is active at an unearthly intensity. This is why a guy could make six million hits in his garage, because the physical amount necessary for one human dose is literally microscopic.

Perhaps the floristic coincidence of the two morning glories, the many mushroom species, and then several minor psychedelics in this Sierra Mazatecan situation set the stage for the evolution of such an intensely hallucinogenic style of shamanism. Anthropologists differ as to whether people entered South America by going through the Caribbean Islands from the Yucatán and entered in the Suriname area, or whether people came down through the land bridge and across Panama and entered through Colombia. Current thinking is that they came through the Caribbean Islands, that this was an easier route. Now, down through those Caribbean Islands what we find are DMT cults using the seeds of leguminous trees. In fact, the major source of the snuffs of the Caribbean is a tree called *Anadenanthera peregrina*. In the deserts of northern Chile, in the Atacama Desert, they actually have found 4,500 year old samples of DMT-

containing snuffs. If any of you are interested in this, the anthropologist Manuel Torres and his wife have made this their life's work and have published on this a wonderful book showing the snuff trays of these Atacama people. They're beautiful, carved in wood, inlaid with shell and bone; they were the major high art that these people produced. Whether people entered South America through the Caribbean or in through Colombia, it's very clear that the experiences in Mexico gave them a complete shamanic armamentarium of hallucinogenic substances.

In the Amazon what they encountered was the most floristically complex environment on the planet. The thinking is that human beings arrived there somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand years ago, depending on the faction in anthropology that you align yourself with. What they found there that they had not known before was *Banisteriopsis caapi*, this malpighiaceae, woody vine that can attain up to 200 meters in length, which is approaching 600 feet. I've seen specimens of this thing as thick as my thigh where it came out of the ground. Clearly, a tree the size of this one was completely shrouded and hung with it, so that in estimating how much biomass you were looking at you would have to estimate it in metric tons of material. What these people discovered about *Banisteriopsis caapi* was that it was marginally psychoactive by itself — it is an MAO inhibitor, but not an overt hallucinogen — but they could combine it with plants containing DMT and they would become activated. It's interesting that this technological breakthrough involved in the combining of one plant with another to create an effective drug happens at the end of this long process of cultural peregrinations and migrations. In other words, up until that time, so far as we know, there were not drugs, there were plants which get you high. A drug is a combinatoric thing, where the phenomenon that pharmacologists call synergy, the causing of one thing to become more active by being in the presence of another thing, is being utilized. This must have been developed rather late in the search for avenues to psychoactivity in the Amazon. What's going on there is that DMT-containing plants, either *Psychotria viridis* in the *Rubiaceae* or *Diplopterys cabrerana* in the *Malpighiaceae* in Colombia, are being added into these *Banisteriopsis* brews and are significantly changing the experience.

Now, above and beyond that, a very complex folk pharmacology has been put in place down there using what are called tertiary admixtures. This is a very rich area for anthropological research because these tertiary admixtures are often highly localized, and also very secret. This is the personal part of a shaman's repertoire: his admixture plants. If you can get these people to open up to you and share the identity of these admixture plants, almost invariably, when you get them back into the laboratory and perform tests on them with Dragendorff's reagent, they are alkaloid positive, they are chemically complex. In other words, this is not a bunch of shuck and jive, these people have an extreme sensitivity to the presence of exotic chemicals in the environment and they know how to track them down. It's been very fruitful in our work to spend a lot of time on the tertiary admixtures. These are the things which are in danger of being lost. Millions of people take ayahuasca in the Amazon; I venture to guess that it is the largest psychedelic religion on earth at this time. Over a vast area this is going on, but knowledge of these tertiary admixtures is fading fast and so is the availability of some of the plants.

If some of you are interested in this, write to my brother at the Stanford Department of Neurology. He published two review papers on admixtures to ayahuasca in which the species names are given, the taxonomic families and the identifiable chemical exotics are tabled there, and you can then see what a rich selection of psychoactive substances these people have to draw from. They claim that ayahuasca is not one thing, ayahuasca is many things, because we change it for the circumstance, we change it for the personality, we change it for the problem. I've come to think that this is quite true, that there is an entire medical system there, so at Botanical Dimensions, though we preserve all kinds of plants and have

collectors in Thailand and West Africa and hither and yon, we've really put our attention on this one medical system because the evidence for its importance is the amazing balance, decency, dignity and integrity of these people. I am a cynic, I do not wax eloquent over the noble savage. Some of you have read my descriptions of my life among the Witoto, and I found them hard to put up with in some cases. It's not simply that if people are naked, they're beautiful — some naked people can be a real pain in the neck — but this ayahuasca complex is an ennobling folkway. These people have great heart and great sensitivity. They could get along fine at Esalen, these *ayahuasqueros*. You go into a village where this is happening and the women may cluster around you giggling because you're so funny-looking, all beet red and mosquito-bitten, but the shaman sees exactly who you are. He is not culture-bound in the same way.

In a way, this is a definition of shamanism. A shaman is a person who by some means has gotten themselves out of their own culture, so they can look back at it and manipulate its symbols, its beliefs, its expectations, its rituals to an end. If it's a negative end, then you have magic, *brujería*, sorcery, witchcraft, but if it's an end which serves and maximizes reasonable social goals, then you have true shamanism. In addition to the ayahuasca complex, about which I know a great deal because I've concentrated on it, also in the Amazon there is a subcomplex of the datura phenomenon. Throughout the world the daturas are bushes, but as some of you may know there are ornamental tree daturas that are a favorite with landscapers because they have these beautiful hanging flowers that shed scent in the evening. Well, all tree daturas originated in Peru and southern Colombia. In the subfamily of the daturas called *Brugmansia*, these are the arborescent daturas, and they have an exotic chemistry, even in comparison to the bush daturas. These are tropanes — hyoscyamine, L-hyoscyamine, scopolamine — and these are not true psychedelics. You may recognize the term scopolamine; this was the truth serum of Nazis in interrogation situations. It really isn't a truth serum, it just causes you to dissolve your boundaries so thoroughly that you babble incessantly, and if someone's willing to listen and they know what they're listening for, you might spill the beans, but it isn't that you suddenly have a compulsion to tell the truth. If only such a thing were possible, who would need psychedelics?

The other complex that has been quite highly evolved in the Amazon, probably brought in by the Arawakan-speaking peoples who swept through the Caribbean, is the snuff complex. In the far east of the South American continent the snuff complex concentrates on the seeds of leguminous trees, *Anadenanthera peregrina*, *Anadenanthera macrocarpa*. These are not trees of the deep climaxed rainforest, they are trees more of the coastal and semi-arid regions, so as you go into the true climaxed lowland rainforest these snuff-using people had to find substitutes. They very cleverly found a very excellent substitute in the form of a family of myristicaceous trees — Myristicaceae is a family that includes nutmeg — of the genus *Virola*. They discovered that if you remove the bark of these trees before sunrise, when the sap is still in them, you can strip off these long, narrow pieces of bark and when you lay them on a low fire or a bed of coals the exudate, the sap, will rise up out of the inner cambium of the bark and bead up on the interior surface as what looks like blood. This is the resin of *Virola*, and this is a broad-spectrum source of psychoactive tryptamines. DMT occurs in it, 5-MeO-DMT occurs in it, other psychoactive, cardioactive and inactive tryptamines occur in it. It varies from species to species, and these *Virola* trees are outrageously difficult to identify. Even a taxonomist who has made this group his special field of study requires a handheld 50 power lens to make a species determination, because the species are determined by these little hairs on the underside of the leaf called trichomes. They're little hairs which come up and then split in three ways, and by the angle on the dangle you determine which *Virola* species you have in hand.

In 1980, my brother and I, a botanist from UBC and a fellow from Harvard all went down to the Rio

Yaguas drainage which is just over to Peru from Colombia, specifically to study this *Virola* complex, because we felt that it was in real danger of being lost in a hurry, that this was the fragile one. Some of you may know about the Waika or Yānomamö; these are peoples who use these *Virola* snuffs. The way you do it is you pack a hollow tube with the ground up seed dust, or in the case of the *Virolas*, the ground up resin, and someone blows it into your nostril with the full force of their breath, and it's like being hit in the side of the head by a log. You scream, you fall over backwards, you salivate, and by the time you've gotten back up on your haunches and cleared the mucus out of your system, the tube has been reloaded and they do your other nostril. Then you have an unambiguous intoxication, but it doesn't come anywhere near to being a DMT flash. This approach to the grail of the psychedelic experience is difficult with botanical materials; you have to take a lot and you have to have the correct phytopharmacological strategy before you ever begin. In my opinion, you can't approach the real center of the psychedelic experience with psychobotonicals unless you're doing a fair bit of psilocybin or a fair bit of ayahuasca, a committed dose, otherwise you'll just slice low.

I left out ergot; I'll say a little bit about it. Ergot is not used as a psychedelic anywhere in the modern world. Nevertheless, ergot is the source of LSD, and it is grown in Pakistan because ergotamine tartrate — which can be made into LSD — for many years was the preferred drug for migraine. As a migraineur I took a lot of it years ago. Migraine is a condition that is not well understood but operationally it is a sudden uncontrolled vasodilation that allows too much blood pressure on the head and intense head pain. Well, ergotamine tartrate is a vasoconstrictor, and will just squeeze your veins down very small, and this is wonderful for migraine. You may have heard horror stories in the 1960s about people who took too much LSD and developed gangrene in their fingers and toes. This is possible, this is true; it's the vasoconstricting aspect of LSD. It's not related to its psychological effects, it is physically a strong vasoconstrictor. Ergot may have had a history of usage as a hallucinogen, because Gordon Wasson, Carl Ruck and Albert Hofmann argued fairly persuasively that ergotized beer lay behind the Eleusinian Mysteries. As you probably know, Eleusis was a cult site near Athens where every September for 2,000 years a great initiatory celebration was held in honor of Persephone's return from the kingdom of the underworld and her restoration to her mother. It was clearly a rite of hallucinogenic use of some sort, and Wasson-Ruck-Hofmann argued that it was ergotized beer.

I question this, because I think that there would have been more problems at Eleusis if it had been ergotized beer. Ergot is something not to mess around with. I mean, you could kill yourself in a big hurry with this stuff, and the notion that year after year beer could be brewed reliably that would intoxicate several thousand people at these ceremonies and there would not be any bad public relations about death or tremoring or convulsions, this causes me to wonder. The proof of the pudding for the Wasson-Ruck-Hofmann theory would have been to go to the Eleusinian Plain, gather ergot from the wild rye and brew ergotized beer. Why not carry these experiments out? If we're confident in our theory, the proof of the pudding would be to do that. I wouldn't touch ergotized beer. I'd want to see a liquid gas chromatogram and infrared mass spectrophotometry data before I knocked back a pint of ergotized beer.

A small voice in opposition to this theory of Wasson-Ruck-Hofmann was the English poet and *bon vivant* Robert Graves. He believed that it was simply mushrooms, and his argument for this was that he took the list of ingredients that was used in the cult. There was actually a published list of ingredients and the ingredients were always listed in a certain order, and one of the ingredients was water. Graves argued that it's crazy in a recipe for beer to include water because you know that you're going to add water, so he argued that these words were to be interpreted as an Ogham. An Ogham is when you have a list of words

and you're supposed to take the first letter of each word in the list and it spells out a secret message, and Graves showed that the six ingredients always stated to go into the beer at Eleusis could be easily arranged so that their first letters spelled out the Greek word for mushroom, *μύκης*. It's not clear either way. In fact, the Eleusinian Mystery is quite mysterious, because if they were mushrooms all trace of them has died out, and there's not unambiguous iconographical representation of mushrooms. We have a few vase paintings where something small is being handed around, but to say with certainty that it's a mushroom isn't really playing fair.

Well, I wanted to run over this today with you and pretty much give it to you in one burst. This is really just to bring you up to speed. It's the kind of information that you should have under your belt if you're trying to make informed and intelligent decisions about your own spiritual growth in relationship to these things. Anybody who's interested in taking a new or an old drug, my advice is that the first stop should be the library. Find out as much as you possibly can. It's going to mean a lot to you when you get out there in the billows. I've had experiences where the shaman said, "Take this, but never shake the bottle," so then five years passed, and I'm trying to remember whether this guy said, "Take this, but never shake the bottle," or "Take this, but always shake the bottle." Well, having a background in pharmacology and ordinary scientific thinking, I decided that he must have said, "Always shake the bottle," because we want to agitate the stuff on the bottom and get it up into solution. I'm telling you, pay attention, because mistakes like this, if they don't kill you, can scare the socks off you. It's all in the details.

One last thought that I'll leave you with: I talked about the unclaimed nature of the *Argyreia* morning glories and how interesting it is to hypothesize possible hallucinogens, possible combinations that have never been used by people. An interesting one that was suggested recently that I want to do research on and find out more about, because I am puzzled by the *soma* problem and not really happy with any of the current answers, is reserpine, which occurs in *Rauvolfia serpentina*, an Indian tree. Reserpine is the first tranquilizer. It's pretty clear that reserpine works by inhibiting serotonin, that reserpine somehow competes with serotonin for its uptake, so you could combine reserpine with *Peganum harmala* or a psychoactive tryptamine. There are some on the Indian subcontinent; one of the most interesting ones is *Arundo donax*. Now this is a plant that really has a suggestive aura about it. We have no history of human usage for visionary purposes of *Arundo donax*. Nevertheless, it is the giant river reed of the Old World. To this day the reeds for reed instruments, for clarinets and piccolos, come from this plant; the very best ones are made from the shafts of the *Arundo donax* plant. Well, the roots of this plant contain large amounts of DMT. Think about the symbolism here: Orpheus was a god of music, Orpheus was a flutist, and Orpheus made a descent into the underworld in search of his beloved. The so-called Orphic strain in Greek religion is the magical, mystical, extramundane strain in Greek religion. It seems to me entirely reasonable to suggest that the old strata of the Orphic religion may be pointing us toward looking at *Arundo donax* as a plant with a hallucinogenic potential whose efficacy was lost before the rise of literate Greek civilization.

So I don't want you to think that all mysteries have been solved and all work has been done in this area. It hasn't at all. The flora of Africa, the flora of eastern New Guinea, the flora of the Amazon, of Mexico, of what little forest remains in Africa, all of these areas may yield astonishing tools for spiritual and shamanic exploration when the cataloging and the phytochemical analysis is complete. There's a generation of work still to be done.

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject July 11, 2017

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Address to the Jung Society aka Sacred Plants as Guides: New Dimensions of the Soul

Day Month 1991

Location, Claremont, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#) (2:54:43 to 3:35:35 of this video is mislabeled and is taken from [Rites of Spring](#))
- [Video Link](#)
- [Video Link 2](#) - includes final Q&A from 1:03:20 onwards
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

without further ado i want you to welcome ethnobotanist shamanologist and visionary terence mckenna
applause from audience

well, its a pleasure to be in southern california, and in clare mont addressing the jung society
before we get into the main body of all this i will personally introduce myself to some of those who may
not know me

I started out my academic career as an art historian with a major in ancient languages and that took me to
asia and sort of disillusioned me with traditional spiritual approaches in the asian style
and i reconnected then with my childhood love of nature

and pretty much abandoned the humanities and went into the sciences

but by then it was to late to become a real scientist and i was too tainted by my time again among the poets
and the artists so i had to become a very soft hard scientist

so i got a degree in conservation of natural resources, about as soft of sciences as you'll ever hope to touch
and i did a lot of traveling around looking for a viable vibrant numinous approach to spiritual reality
and the only place i found it was uh in the amazon basin, where as you know there are extremely archaic
groups of people

people who never submitted themselves to the historical process, the way, the peoples of the middle east
and europe did

and there there flourished through the use of chemically complex plants, techniques and traditions for
accessing a world invisible to the rest of us

a world of forces and information that is uh transhumance, supernatural, if the word means anything, but
this um, this supernatural dimension is uh anchored in the plants that live in our world

and my brother was a botanist and i had botanical training as we studied the psychoactive plants of the
world, especially the new world tropics where they seem to be concentrated

we were simultaneously exalted by the realization that we had found a doorway a real doorway into
hyperspace and at the same time tremendously upset and alarmed by the fact that this doorway is in the
process of being dismantled by the forces of human ignorance that are not even aware of its existence
so, uh, this was the impulse behind the disision on the part of my partner cat and i, that these plants must
be saved, they must be preserved in germplams ropistories or botanical gardens or something like that

toward a day when they can be studied and the uh power the dimensions within them can be given their real weight
so to this end we founded a botanical garden in hawaii that is specifically dedicated to preserving plants with a history of shamanic importance,
and i mention this because this is the real world political world that we do
and everything else that i will say today will be barely anchored in a world familiar to most of us
but there is a political anchoring there is a place where it all comes tangential to the world bank and the IMF and the host governments and so forth and so on
it is tremendously important to preserve this shamanic option if for no other reason then we do not know what it is we do not know uh what it is
well uh so at the break if you come up our news letter of the botanical garden is the large stack of beige paper and there are 300 copies of that so i hope theres enough for everyone
we do exist on donations so if any of you are philanthropists we can certainly tell you how to spend your money, we have many plans for your money
okay um
i wasn't kidding about what an honor i think it is to address the jung society
at one point in my life my greatest desire was to become a jungian analyst and i had the good fortune of coming upon jung very young
i was about 15 when a very precocious friend of mine brought psychology and alchemy in the karuahbane translation
i think it had just been brought up
we were stunned and we read it from cover to cover
and then went on to mysterion discontinionase ion the studies and the phenomenologies of the self
i said to someone yesterday we read all the books of jung that the jungians never read
they seem to stop up there at the front of the line with the archetypes of the collective unconscious and the personality type-but to my mind it was the late stuff that was fascinating
and i uh am slightly puzzled and we were talking about it last night
at the distance between the jungian community and the psychedelic community - because they seem to me the unschooled observer to be definitely sharing the same concerns and strangely enough they share much of the same history and geography
bosal was of course junks home town, it was albert hoffmans home town
did one half of town know what the other half was doing (audience laughter) i'm not sure, um that the relationship to jung to the unconscious - to the collective unconscious as it's discoverer has been always somewhat puzzling to me because of course if you know the history of 20th century art you know that da da which was the great prefigurative movement for surrealism rose in zuorich
so you know we got LSD 0 the schools of modern art that laid great stress on the irrational and the great schools of psychology that extended the boundaries of the unconscious, all rappelling around in these little swiss towns. and it's interesting to imagine conversations or meetings that might have taken place when people slightly left there ordinary habits and wandered into bars they didn't know and drank with people they never met before
because jung provided maps of the unconscious
and at 16 when we were beginning to experiment with this
and let me stress this was before the great social waves of LSD taking of the 1960s just preceding that from about 1963-65 we were frantic for maps of the unconscious and fried was useless i meant he notion that the contents of the psychedelic experience could be reduced to what fried called day residues and repressed sexual desire - didn't wash within 10-minutes you could tell that was not a serviceable metaphor

jung on the other hand offered a vast uh pantheon of uh gods and archetypes and psychic complexes forgotten or abandoned
i mean i thought of jung basically as what i call a noetic archeologist, someone who goes with toothbrush and nutpick to dig away the detritus from the bones of vanished idea systems
and if any of you have read the complete - the works of jung in the bulling set
you know that the richness of it all is in the footnotes
i mean her was a man who raised the footnote to a high art and who was aware f a literature to my mind that no one seemed to know about
that junks references reach a thousand years deep into the past with great density of reference
this is where i learned about mechrobis and dosephius and dionysus the pseudo areopica and all those other folks that you just never hear about
it was my introduction to the underbelly of western civilization was through jung
uh and to my mind - now i'll fiend this in to todays theme - i think maria mentioned that jung did not have a lot to say about shamanism
he came to it late in his life and he had already worked through the massive the exojesus of the symbol systems of the europena mind and so she was sort of content to indicate shamanism as an area where more work was to be done
and then the great follow on scholar who was mercialiode who then actually studied shamanism showed what it's archetypal underpinnings were in all times and places
the combination of jung and illiad i think pretty much delivered us as firm map of the psychy as dependable a map of the psychic geography as we can expect to have until we make the trip ourselves and uh readjust the landscape with our own notes and uh observations
for jung the great path into the unconscious was alchemy
and alchemy is an interesting pivotal domain
because i think we could in a way say it lies halfway between the concerns of an archaic cshamanisma dn halfway between the concerns of a quasi scientific psychedelic attempt to explore consciousness
merciliode wrote a brilliant book on alchemy called the forge and the crucible which is the bridge to show you how you go from jungian psychology into an understanding of alchemy that approximates illiad. the notion for the alchemists that jung brought forth very strongly - 13:00
was the idea of projection of psychic contents, projective of the active imagination onto processes and uh objects in the exterior world in the case of the alchemist it was the swirling chemical processes in the elembox in their alchemical vessels that they projected the uh the uh the great round of the archetypes onto these chemical processes
they saw crystalization, sublimation separation a statements about the contents of the psyched as much as about statements about the exterior world
because for them the firm division between mind and matter the firm ontological division between mind and matter that is built into western thinking now did not exist
that comes with renae decart with the invention of whats called the resextenia - the extended world and the resbaren - the interior world which has no spacial dimension
so for the alchemist mind and matter were two terms who's e exclusivity could be blurred under certain circumstances and the terms of one could migrate toward the other
well now we as moderns - ordinarily only experience this state when we are intoxicated by hallucinogenic drugs or when we are in a state of severe psychic weakness, when there is then overwhelming from the unconscious that is not uh not with the permission with the ego as what happens with the psychedelic experience
all these various ways of approaching the psyched seem fairly abstract and bloodless and removed from

daily existence unless the psychedelic experience is present
and it vivifies these metaphors
it makes clear what these perennial traditions are uh talking about
so what i thought i would try to do today - and you're welcome to steer it other directions in the question
and answer period is the workshop is sacred plants as guides
uh a lot of information has to be imparted if we're going to satisfy my pathological urge here because i
would really like to leave you with information that you didn't have before some of which may have
practical efficacy in your own life
so in thinking about this very large issue: sacred plants as guides
i basically break it down into three categories for ease of handling in a context like this
and they are a kind of survey what how many plants are they
what are the chemicals that drive them
and what is their geographical distribution
in other words what are the botanical facts of the matter
and then uh secondly i think that in order to understand what these things for spiritual growth and psychic
development you have to place them in a context and the context is chronological and historical
has these things always been around have shamans always been taking them how do they relate to the
synthetic drugs that have been developed in the last couple of centuries
so the history of our relationship to the pharmacologically induced ecstasy
and then finally and probably we'll get to this this afternoon the phenomenology of the experience and the
techniques for achieving and controlling it
because this is a practical - there is a practicum here
this is not a course in mongolian philology or something like that
the ultimate idea is to get those who feel called to the task
sufficiently informed and psychically empowered that they can push off into the oceans of mind and the
interior with some fair amount of confidence that they'll return to the port with all hands
(audience laughter)
so let's start with the survey then and let's talk about what the options are
and this will be sort of unstructured and conversational with forays into other areas
first of all the striking uh thing when you want to study psychoactive drugs and plants and their impact on
human culture - and that's really what interests me - is how drugs affect culture - after we went through Jung
and Iliad my net port of call was McLuan
and i have soared very deeply the notion that media structure civilizations in ways that the civilizations are
never aware of
and Jung of course talked about print and manuscript and electronic culture he did not talk about drugs but
drugs are a form of media because they - information travels through the drug to the mind - that's a
medium of communications and various societies where drugs like clothing with no awareness of their
existence at all, somehow in the way that a fish relates to water - so that Frances if you're in Dublin you are
swimming in the ambiance of an alcohol culture - you don't have to be drunk to be in Dublin although it
helps
but the entire society is premised on the possibility x2
in India the entire society is premised on the possibility of uh hashish intoxicants and social mores
building design
uh everything takes account of this - cultures don't see this - we do not think of ourselves as a meat sugar
alcohol culture - people do not walk around saying "oh wow i'm so high on meat, alcohol and sugar, i can
hardly stand it" but they are

and certain consequences flow from that
so as i make my way through this survey you need to bear in mind that a culture takes its tone
its clothing from the drugs that it emits, and you can know a great deal about a culture from the drugs it
excludes, the drugs that it excoriates and fears
because various drugs exentuate the suppressed different parts of the psychy
so these are statements about anxiety about various parts of the psychy
the striking thing when you set out to do a survey like this
is that you discover that our culture - the culture of europe for most of us some of us are black some of us
are asian but largely the roots of american culture lie in europe
this is the most pharmacologically poverished culture on the entire planet
it has the longest history of disconnection from any kind of ecstatic intoxication
and the cultural forms of earope linear abstract narcissistic and promoting of male dominance are to my
mind exactly what you would expect in a culture long deprived of the boundary ddesolving numinous
encounter with the vegetable mind
so um a lot of the culture problems we are dealing with are based on the fact that we as europeans have no
place for drugs
we don't really know quite what todo with that as you move south from europe into the content of human
origins : africa
you discover that well africa supports a tropical ecosystem which because that means increased speciation
of plants you would think indicate an increased number of hallucinogens
africa is surprising poor in hallucinogens
this is not well understood
as we go through this survey i will make reference to numerous unsolved mysteries in the field and i
always try todo this because I'm hoping their are graduate students listening and they are looking for
research topics
and there are numerous research areas where important work can be done
one of them is
this question of poverty of hallucinogens in africa - why
does it have todo with the extreme length of time that africa has been subject to human impact
because afirca is species poor generally for a tropical continent
however in the interest of thoroughness there is one hallucinogenic drug complex that should be mentioned
because it raises issues that are important for the broader context
and that is
ibogaine or tabernantha iboga the so called bedee cults of zyarre and gabon
now this is the psychedelic about which we in the west probably know the least
it has spawned no waves of social histeria
it has not been the subject of padromes or uh media freakout
and its a powerful hallucinogen and its not only a powerful hallucinogen but it has a component of sexual
excitation which is ansylary and unusual, if you have actually ever looked into the chick of aphrodisiacs uh
that
genital chaining and prolonged direction
but a true aphrodisiac a chemical that would impel you to want to have sex
there is nothing quite like that except this tabernantha iboga is very interesting
we tend to think of an aphrodisiac because we tend to break our heart away from our genitals as a kind of
uh cold thing i think
but when you talk to these people who are taking ibogaine they don't talk about aphrodisiac they say this

causes open heartedness
one heartedness they call it
and one heartedness is what they are striving for in the boety colt and they achieve it
and it allows them to resist cultural incursions by christian missionaries
bowery is the main cultural force that is holding back conversion to christianity by these people, fang
culture the people who are using this ibogaine
it's an interesting culture
its a great deal of anxiety in fang culture about divorce
because in relationships between men and women divorce is very easily maintained in the fang but it's
always followed by extremely lengthy and protracted negotiations with the family of the divorced partner
about the return of dowry and a huge amount of neurosis and agony and murder and violence goes on over
these dowry return negotiations, the ebogaine stands right in the middle of this as a source of one-
heartedness making divorce less likely
so it's a very important as a force for social cohesion
and i mention this because when we reach ayawausca i mean when we reach south america we will see
ayawausca not as a type of aphrodisiac or a thing to unify couples
but as a kind of telepathic pharamon that unifies whole small tribal groups together into a one hearted one
minded modality
and if we get into a discussion about the possible evolutionary impact of hallucinogens we'll see that it
always lies in the direction of these collectivized states of mind
and uh
dissolution of boundaries between people
other than tabernanthea eboga african hallucinogens are trivial
and i won't mention them in the time we have
cannabis is in africa as well but cannabis is worldwide now and probably has been for quite some time
cannabis is a special case chemically and culturally
we tend to think of cannabis as a recreational drug but thats because in the 20th century we always smoke
our cannabis
in the 18th and 19th century cannabis was eaten and jelly forms of cannabis that were eaten judging by the
pros of people like _ _ _ _ and people like that it was as powerful as LSD without doubt
i mean these people were being swept into titanically alien dimensions
well when we cross from africa to india
india interestingly of course all of you know tremendous depth of at least concern with the spiritual
dimension if not realization of it thats a tougher call
uh
india would be a likely place to look for indigenous hallucinogenic plant cults because of the spiritual
obsession that characterizes indian thought
when we look at the historical foundations of indian thought we find that it all rests on a group of texts
composed between 4500 and 2000 years ago called the vedas
and the vedas are nothing less than the worlds longest continuing advertisement for a hallucinogenic plant.
the problem is we don't know what this plant is
this is the mysterious soma of the rig vedas
and uh mandala 9 of the rig veda is an entirely a hymn to soma
soma held hinduism of the vedic phase together
later it was repressed and again graduate students pay attention one of the very interesting problems to be
looked at by sociologists social psychologists and anthropologists is how if a drug once discovered or a

plant once discovered is so wonderful how can these things ever be lost or forgotten
and yet in several instances we deal with literatures which sing the praises of some plant or drug, the
identity of which we can't figure out or it becomes a very big arm restle between various competing
schools of scholarship
we do not to this day know what soma was
gordon was son who some of you may know the discoverer the modern discoverer of the mushroom cults
of mexico founder of the science of ethnomicology believed to his dying breath that soma was amanita
mascara the red topped white speckled amanita
um
this is a mushroom which has a major role in tungustik and arctic shamanism but to say as was son did that
this is the supreme entheogen is not supported by the evidence
was sons own efforts to become intoxicated on amanita muscaria were not succesfull
uh my efforts have not been successful
occasionally you will hear anecdotal evidence - someone will tell a story about eating amanita muscaria and
obviously they had a staggering breakthrough - a rupturing of plane as mercioliode in his wonderful phrase
but its extremely undependable and when you look at the botany of the amanita muscaria you discover that
its chemical constituency is seasonally variant genreically variant uh geographically variant and so forth
often i think as we gain a understanding of a given shamanism we will see that it depended on an extremely
deep local knowledge and if you take what a yakut shaman says about the amanita muscaria and attempt to
apply it in the national forests of new mexico you could end up with a tag on your toe
uh these things this kind of information doesn't travel well
there are old shamans and bold shamans but there are no old bold shaman
in looking at the indian subcontinent for other hallucinogens that may have made a contribution
the obvious one to my mind is straferious cubensis that which mushroom that grows in the dung of cows
and the book that my brother and i wrote was about
other possibilities some of you may know their are a family of the argerea family of morning glories an
asian family of morning glories distributed from india to micronesia
thirteen species all containing psychoactive ergot alkaloids
none with a history of human usage
now this is another area which really fascinates me
why do some plants become discovered by human beings and become the objects of cults which last
millennia and others are never discovered at all
in societies absolutely obsessed with spiritual advancement
this argeraea nervosa is the perfect example because you take the seeds the seeds are the active part
and you don't need much of this thing
you need four or five seeds
less than a table spoon of plant material which i would bet would make it pure unit volume probably one of
the most powerful hallucinogens in nature
and uh
the hallucinations are absolutely stunning
and nobody has ever claimed this
its free for the taking
this means you can cut a deal with an a lie that doesn't belong to the hindus the mayans or the somebody
else
its an unoccupied parking space ni uh hyperspace
and its very interesting that the discoveries are continuous

just a year ago some phido chemists in the midwest discovered a new a plant its always been there no ones really taken it very seriously, treated it like a weed

desmenthus elenoyensus

the elony bundle weed

this is suggested that its called bundle weed because a medicine bundle is of course a shamans mojo bag so bundle weed 6% by dry weight nn dimethyltryptamine - the largest concentration of dmt in any plant and unclaimed by native people - unknown to the folk medicine of the north american indians as far as we can tell

well so this is very interesting

uh continuing our survey

since we're now somewhere on the eurasia continent we should mention uh uh pavisoanaphorum the opium poppy with cannabis

this is probably the oldest human narcotic minoan civilization was entirely based on opium, on the use of opium - 36:00

and in fact when michael ventrist translated the tablets the linear bee tablets they got these tallies and they thought at first that the symbol for opium must be the symbol for wheat

because the tallies were so huge of the things being moved and sold

and then when they sorted out they realized no that for the last 1000 years of it's existence the minoan civilization drifted deeper and deeper into an opium narcosis

that was its way i think

of emephasitising the pain of the death of this last outpost of the goddess religion

because thats what it was it was a cultural inachronism

while asian minor had gone over to god king city states

and bronze tipped spears

the people of minoan creet had kept the old old archaic religion that came out of africa

and then in the last gasp of that minoan culture those mysteries were handed on to the main

land of greece and became the mysteries at eleusis and uh and other cult sites

it was said by the commentators

contemporary commentators of the hellinistic world

the site the rights practiced in secret at eleusis are practiced in public at kinosis

and this was the difference

the going underground of the old proto-minoan mother religion

uh in modern times we have a horror of opium

uh i mean people are amazed that i even mention it in the same breath

but it doesn't hurt to remind ourselves that this verily addicted substance

opium was not even noticed to be addictive by anybody until 1627

when the english physician john play fare for the first time commentated that opium once taken over a long period of time then there would be a requirement that it be taken throughout life

uh um

we're right in a middle of the drug war at the moment and it's interesting in that context to notice how the goals of drug wars can change

100 years ago the british navy was involved in what is called the opium wars in china

very few people in the modern world have botherd to inform themselves to find out that the opium wars were about the right of the british government to deal opium

the emperor of china did not want opium dealt in the ports of china

and the british government used canon to enforce their desire to sell opium in the ports of china

why were the english trying to sell opium in the ports of china
because the tea trade had collapsed from overproduction they stuck with all these tea ships
they had created a whole global infrastructure for the sale of tea when the market fell out on tea they just
turned to opium
they grew it in goa and they sold it in china
this was government policy less than a hundred and twenty years ago
ok well moving on then from eurasia
and I'm sure I'm missing different things but if missed your favorite thing bring it up in the question period
to the north american continent
and the north american continent - is uh i almost said similarly cursed like europe but thats just my
prejudice
the north american content is similarly poor in hallucinogens
uh there are no very interesting hallucinogens in north america
and north american indians and north american culture did not avail itself of this ecstatic plant induced
shamanism it tended more to go for whats called ordeal shamanism
the sun dance thing where you hang yourself by your pectorals on hooks and stuff like that
i mean there are other ways to attain these visions
you see but that absence of good hallucinogens in north america just reinforced that whole bear and
woolen and uptight thing that came from europe
uh the only major hallucinogen to have a role in native american culture is of course peyote
and many people without informing themselves imagine that peyote is something which goes millennia
into the past
and this is absolutely not true
peyote use may well be less than a thousand years old among native americans
when you go back into the old graves and the very old sites in the rio grande valley in the south you don't
find peyote what you find are the beans of sephoris condefolia you all probably know this plant although
you may not know it's name its the plant that produces the very hard red and black bean that they can
string
if you all know what corellanus are these era thrinas which are related to these things
ok that stuff contains cytosine and sistinethis is these are what are called ordeal poisons
and it might be worthwhile to just talk for a minute about ordeal poisons
i said theres more than one way to skin a cat
theres more than one way to have this experience to shove your through to an awareness of the numinous
thats what we're trying todo is have an awareness of the numinous
well in a certain part of the world where hallucinogens were not present in the biome
people concentrated on ordeal poisons and what an ordeal poison is its a chemical compound that you take
it and you think you're going to die and you beg for death and you do not die
you get better you're fine
and you're so damn glad to be alive that you undergo an abreaction you get straight
you shed some of your complexes and you turn over a new leaf
is uh is what it is
in madagascar these ordeal poisons have been brought to a high state of perfection
also in malaysia theres a poison complex that replaces a hullainogencic drug complex and these are horrific
poisons
so uh
what apparently was going on in the rio grande valley was after centuries of this sephoris secundofolia cult

someone discovered peyote and said my god
thank god
and the other the other plant which was big in the southern california northern mexico and across the southwest were the tropane containing deturas the so called tulax religion of southern california where these are deliriant confusants that are unless you have a psychic constitution that is not like mine you can't take these things
they're too i just found them confusing it was like a kind of madness
and also physically very difficult to handle i experimented i had a phase with these things when i was in nepal because there are sadhus in the catmandu valley who swear by this stuff
and if you're in catmunda you may notice in the gutter - well you'll notice plenty in the gutter
but you may also notice these detura pods
empty detura pods
and i noticed them and started asking questions and then out at the kings game preserve past pashupatina i found a bunch of these things and layer in a supply
but it is an occult watery- its a dimension of confusion not a dimension of high awareness
and i think some of you have heard me tell the story about the reason i gave it up was an english men a friend of mine who lived in this little village in nepal where i lived he was also experimenting with this stuff
and one day i was buying potatoes and tomatoes in the market and i ran into him and we started having a conversation and in the course of the conversation he revealed that he believed we were in his apartment - and then i knew we were losing hold on our grounding
uh so i don't recommend that i don't have a whole lot to say about it
apparently its a thing for magic power magic
and i've never been particularly interested in that because I'm afraid of it
I'm uh I'm a watcher i like to look i like to get very close to it and watch it
but I'm not into grabbing it or doing anything with it
i have a feeling that would lead to a catastrophe
for me personally
uh
ok where are we now
northern mexico
now we've gone all around we started in europe we went down into africa crossed the eurosia continent north america north mexico - now things get interesting
because as you leave the senorra uplands and go south in the sierra mazatecka there is this mushroom complex which valentina and gordon wasson discovered
in the 1953s
17-22 species - it depends on who's counting of extremely endemic meaning very localized species of mushrooms all producing psilocybin
coincident with the mayan
the cultural side of the mayan miztechan and mazatechan civilizations
and this is psilocybe
an extraordinarily powerful visionary and benign hallucinogenic metabolite
once the was sons had nailed down this mexican mushroom complex
then people started checking and they discovered these mushrooms or con specific species in many localities
uh two that are worth mentioning are

the pacific northwest oregon washington and british columbia
which appears to be the world center for species density of the psilocybin gene
and strangely enough very good ethnographic research turns up no hint that these quacutal shimsham
clinget and other people had any hint of this
they lived in the center of the psilocybin distribution complex and as far as we can tell their shamanism
which was highly evolved never discovered or made use of this
not so these civilizations of mesoamerica
the other places where these mushrooms have been discovered is europe
the tragedy of the european civilization is that the logos was apparently there all the time
uh uh the english countryside i understand is now practically a scene of annual mushroom runs
that are not unlike the lemming runs of scandinavia and everyone poors out to collect the semilenciata
mushrooms
i've been told i haven't been to these sites but i've been told that uh ionia where the book of keels was
composed and where uh saint columba went is covered with mushrooms its very clearly a mushroom
ecology
attention graduate art students the tracing of mushroom motifs in european art and civilization and culture
is an extremely rich untapped field
if you need some clues uh look at family escutcheons look at family crests
uh
in france and the italian parts of france the morel lie family has the morrell on their eschuchen
there are other mushroom families and mushroom names
so uh there may have been this may have been the struggle between paganism and christianity
may have revolved around a mushroom
we know druids were into plants we know they were into oak groves
but uh the plant that is always mentioned that is the druidic psychedelic psychic plant of choice is mistletoe
but mistletoe is chemically very disappointing and i wonder if mistletoe ~ 50:00
is not, it wasn't the plant they wanted to symbolize
they wanted to symbolize a symbiosis of one plant up on another
its that the mistletoe symbolizes epithetic existence
uh anyways this is an untapped area
once you get into the new world tropics
then you are in the great domain of the hallucinogenic plants
and no one knows why it is that the tropics of the new world are tremendously rich in hallucinogens
i mean idk how many of you are botanists or or biologists
but try to imagine uh figuring out a set of evolutionary constraints that were operating on one side of the
planet but not on the other
you know
when we take for instance the jungles of southern columbia
and compare them lets say with the jungles of new guinea
these are both continental floras
both equatorial
both climaxed at a species rich climax
and one has dozens of hallucinogens in it and the other has none
none
uh this is not well understood
theories range as wildly as obviously that must be where the flying saucer landed

and uh (laughter)
thats where the genes were seeded
i confess I'm not sure why it is
at first i thought it had todo with extremely primitive state so called primitive
extremely archaic state of culture in the south american jungle
that they represent a real stone age culture
where when you go into indonesia it may look primitive to you but the dutch were there before the english
arrived in north america
it is
it has had centuries and centuries for in which these things could be forgotten
but then here come the botanists who care nothing for ethnographic data and who simply carry out plant
surveys and chemical analysis of plants
they can't find these hallucinogens either
in the tropics of mess america
and the equatorial tropics of the new world
theres a vast panoply of hallucinogens
not only in the mushroom complex
but then also this ayahuasca or yahey complex
that we've referred to several times
uh this is a huge jungle fine
and as we cross into the yahey area we also cross an interesting barrier because we move from plants single
plants which are hallucinogenic ally active into the realm of preparations
we're on the threshold of the concept drug here
because what ayawausca is is uh two plants which are not active unless brought into combination with each
other
one plant contains a monoaminoxidase inhibitor and the other plant contains dmt which would be
destroyed in the gut if taken orally unless it were taken orally in the presence of an MAO inhibitor
this was not understood by western pharmacology until 1956
but it was understood by amazonian shamans millennia ago
so they bring these two things together
and by varying the ratio between the plant containing the beta carbines that inhibit MAO and the plants
that contain DMT
they can't intensify or de emphasize the vision
well most of the hallucinogens in the amazon basin run on tryptomine of some sort
usually dmt
in the upper basin of columbia ecuador peru like that
you get these banasteri these yahey ayawasca beverages
these are things you drink and then it comes on
this outlandish trip
as you go down into the lower basin
the banasterri ophis cult gives way to these snuff cults
ebena and neopo
depending on the languages
these don't depend on an mao inhibitor ffor their activity
because they're absorbed through the sub nasal mucosa
which is an extremely effective way for getting drugs uh into the system

the problem with that complex
the snuff complex
we are such delicate and wimpy people that we cant stand that route of drug administration
because what they do is they toast these seeds of anadanantha peragreen
this huge leguminous tree which is the source of the seed
they toast these seeds and powder them
so what you get is a kinda ruff cross between sawdust and charcoal
and then they have a hollow tube about this long
and they load it up with this stuff
and you squat down and put the tube into your nostril
and your friend, your friend (laughter)
not you because you would not do it hard enough (laughter)
your friend takes a huge breath of air and pshhhh
its just like being hit in the face by a two by four
and you fall over backwards you scream and you salivate and you squirm around there in the dirt for a
minute or two
and then you sit back up and by that time the tube has been loaded for the other nostril (laughter)
and your eyes your sinuses can't believe whats happened to you (laughter)
so you have to sort out this whole sinus shock which is going on in parallel with then an evolving strange
state of mind which is beginning to take over and clarify everything
and then there are numerous minor variations on these things
uh might talk just a little bit about the chemistry of these things
and the chemistry of hallucinogens generally
my attitude toward thesee uh
this question of plants compounds drugs should these things be used for spiritual growth
if the answers no then it finishes it doenst go anywhere
IF THE ANSWER IS MAYBE OR YES THEN OTHER QUESTIONs ARRISE
WHICH COMPOUNDS OUT OF THIS whole SURVEY
and at what frequency and at what dosage and under what circumstances
and over the years I've sort of evolved a three way test that i will share with you
because i think its operationally maybe the most useful thing you'll hear this weekend
and that is
if you are contemplating some compound some plant
the first thing to ask yourself is does it occur in nature
does it have some tangentialty to what is already existing
because obviously hat exists
thats nature
has undergone some vast winnowing process
out of the set of all things which might exist
in that wonderful phrase of alfred north whiteheads
certain things have undergone the formality of actually occurring (laughter)
you know
and they and so
certain compounds have undergone the formality of actually occurring in the biological matrix
and so they should be our pool out of which our experimental compounds should be drawn
but this is thousands of compounds

how can we further narrow it
well
an excellent way of narrowing it further is to ask the question of this compound
does it have a history of human usage
does it have a history of human usage
that is your uh FDA approval
because if you can point to a tribe of people who have been taking this plant or mushroom for millennia
and they don't have miscarriages
tumors
cataracts
blindness
downsyndrom
8 fingers on the left hand
or whatever it is then you can be fail confident that this thing is benign
that these people have observed its action on pregnant women
the elderly
those with you know
and that it has passed that test
then finally the narrowest gate
through which a compound has to go to intersect my precious body
is it has to have an affinity to ordinary brain chemistry
it has to have an affinity to ordinary brain chemistry
we don't want to launch something on your brain that it can't recognize at all
that it has no biosynthetic pathways to degrade
that his no receptors for
just some crazy thing you know
5 amino 3 triothyfinthioimaxodine
we don't want that
its not the spirit that we're acting in here
so if the compound can get through those three barriers
then its an excellent candidate for providing spiritual gain
at low physiological uh impact
well now some people may say oh well you've taken all of the fun out of it
all the good things have been tossed aside in this mad rush to purity
not at all
the very best stuff was retained in this process
because uh
in terms of relative strength and bizarreness of effect
and so forth
the strangest
the most powerful the most transformity of all hallucinogens in nature or out
is dimthyltryptamine
DMT
and uh it's worth talking about DMT for a moment
because it will raise certain issues and distinctions that you may not have been aware of
because DMT is hands down the most powerful of all hallucinogens

i mean it is so powerful that whatever is in second place is lost over the horizon
yet
yet
it is the most benign of all hallucinogens because it occurs as an endogenous neurotransmitter in the
normal human brain
we every single one of us at this moment have n-n dimethyltryptamine being synthesized activated and
degraded in our synaptic membrane
so this is almost a paradox
the most benign of all hallucinogens, the most fast acting i should also add
is also the most harmless, the easiest to take
it's sort of removed, it sort of puts a certain obligation on the experient
because there is no reason to hold back
except that there is this question
does it drive you mad?
and then the more serious version of that question
what about the possibility of death by astonishment (laughter)
this is no joke, death by astonishment is probably the major risk we run (laughter)
uh with this stuff, because the impact of the breakthrough is uh is so total, so complete, so unexpected
and in a way this sort of brings me back around to my theme
because I encounter DMT LSD all of these things
in that very period when i was getting set to take flight as a jungian analyst and what completely blew my
mind about DMT and uh I mention it again, here is an opportunity for research
is how trans
ehres a horretical construction
how trans-archetypal the content of the flash seemed
i was appalled because not only had i a certain amount of interesting jung and proclivity along those lines
but my original major had been art history
art historians
what we're trained todo is to be able to look at a motif
and say oh yes i'm familiar with this from ceramic from second millennia peru and also mendian
embroarderary work
we know motifs
we're trained to recognize and connect disparate aesthetic domains
when i smoke dmt
and came down
i said you know this is not on the map
i can't believe it, this doesn't connect to anything
how can there be domains of the human mind that do not announce themselves in folklore
fairytals
dreams or mandala painting
that are so
removed
from the van of what is human
that they are apparently not except able in structuring our maps of ourself and our psychy
and that for me was the contact with what i call an i didn't call it it this rudolph auto called it this
and this term influenced jung auto preceded jung

was, it is the holy other.
and if there is an archetype of a holly other
then there, this is it
but perhaps the holy other transcends the archetypes
this may explain to some degree interest in gnosticism
especially the valentinian school of gnosticism
that there is a higher and hidden father, all god, who is outside the machinery of cosmic fate
and it seemed to me that in those extremely profound dmt flashes
i was actually witnessing a domain outside the machinery of the archetypes
which is for us as moderns; that's what machinery of fate is
it's not zodiacal machinery
it's hard wiring in our psychology and our genes that gives us our fate
well so having said that uh i've not only made the the survey but also brought us to by ending with dmt -
the subject matter of this quest
and i wanna make it clear i speak about the power of the psychedelic experience
because i think people should be informed of their birthright
and i feel very antsy around the notion that someone might go from birth to the grave without ever having
a psychedelic experience
it makes me as antsy as the notion that somebody might go from birth to the grave without having a sexual
experience
it's a strange kind of uh protective denial or a kind of expression of fear
this is our birthright
this is part of what it means to be human
these altered states of consciousness i think are pretty much scripted into the existence of women because
they, most of them will give birth which is an organically scripted psychedelic experience from which
there is no escape unless of course you go for the drug knockout, the spinal and then you miss everything
but biologically, physiologically women are set up for uh this experience
man are not, it's possible to build such barriers against overwhelming that it never happens in your whole
life
and i believe that if we psychologically analyze the effects of these uh psychedelics what they do is they
dissolve boundaries
that's all. i mean, if you interview ten thousand people who've had a psychedelic trip
each one has their own herotherny there own heroschomos that unfolded for them
but the some total of it is boundaries dissolve
and then whatever's on the other side of your boundary comes flooding in to claim you
and to reshape and remake your psychic
well i see the entire illness of our civilization as an
as
an ego inflationary illness. we have gone so sick with ego that we are literally murdering the planet rather
than confronting the consequences of our psychic imbalance.
and uh the psychedelics act to regress this
they are almost an inoculation against the ego
and i see the ego as uh phenomenon arising in historical time or rather actually history is caused by the ego
but the ego is a component of the psychy that arose in the post archaic phase in the post psychedelic phase,
uh it's entirely a modern invention
it's less than 15 thousand years old

and the assumptions of the ego are the source of our neurosis
our disequilibrium
why did the ego arise?
it arose because of the climateologically enforced abandonment of these psychedelic religions of the
archaic period
in other words here is the scenario as I see it
primates, even primitive-even uh
non advanced primates like squirrel monkeys, howler monkeys
these kind of primates all have male dominance hierarchies
the whole thing with primates is about male dominance
but a lot of things about human beings mark us as the most unique member of the primate group
uh
obviously we look different from any other monkeys
even the stranger monkeys look more like the normal monkeys than we look like them or look like thus us
our upright posture
the other thing about us is our suppressed extra cycle
we cannot tell at a glance whether a woman is in heat or not
and yet obviously that had a tremendous shaping force on the social psychology of uh of the primates
I believe everything about us that is noble and worth saving
uh
occurs against the grain
that if we had followed the grain, we would still be uh competing with jackals for the carcasses left by
lions of uh large game kills on the plains of africa
but when the african continent began to dry up and we were forced out of the trees where we had in an
arboreal vegetarian lifestyle
we came under great pressure to expand our diet and the - i believe that the great unstudied factor in
human evolution and human emergence is the effect of a complex diet on our emerging species
and it's not only the presence of hallucinogens such as psilocybin in the in the diet
but other things swell. psilocybin is the most spectacular case, and if you came to see darwin you'd hear
about evolution and if you can to me you'd have to hear this little theory about human emergence
most of you can probably recite it by heart now
uh but its a three step
its a three step feedback loop from a fairly bright monkey to a fairly stupid human being
and uh the way it works is like this
these monkeys come down out of the trees
they're predating on kills of ovungulate animals made by lions, they're competing with jackals, they're
testing all of the foods in the environment
and low and behold, in the maneur of these ungulate mammals that are eradeating across the african
continent
uh
there are what are called copperfitic mushrooms
and the presence of large amounts of tryptophan in maneur as a substrate means that these copperfitic
mushrooms elaborate psilocybin
so here in this new grassland environment are the psilocybin mushrooms
these protohominid creatures testing foods for their diet would reach the psilocybin and would test it
well then this three part feedback loop to humanist then comes into play

and it works like this

very light doses of psilocybe and so light that you cannot an hour and a half or two hours later tell you've taken anything. you say i don't feel it i feel completely normal i must not have taken enough.

that dose, if you would submit yourself to being tested by an optometric analysis we could show you that your vision has improved slightly

this is an effect of eating small amounts of psychoactive amines

increase visual acuity

well o - 1:15:00

you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that if you're a hunting animal competing in a highly competitive environment and suddenly someone hands you a pair of chemical binoculars you are going to be a more successful hunter than other members of your species who are not availing themselves of this food item

so there was reinforcement there

aha

if we eat these mushrooms in small amounts we will be more successful hunters

or maybe it was never raised consciousness as an if than relationship

it was just we eat mushrooms we hunt well... kind off thing (laughter)

then if you eat slightly more of the psilocybin if you bring slightly more of it into your diet

uhhhh

it's what's called a CNS stimulator

Central Nervous System stimulant

an effect of all CNS stimulants is what's called

uh

arousal

and arousal means simply that you can't sit still, you're very restless

you're very energetic

and often in the male animal you have an erection

it's an overall systemic arousal

arousal

and uh if you if you give if you witness this situation in monkeys

monkeys are very hang loose kinda characters

and so they just all fall together in a heap and make love

uhhh

and this uhhh increases what anthropologists and primatologists like to call successful instances of copulation

this means that this increase interest in sex in combination with an increase success in obtaining food is creating the perfect situation in which there will be a population boom of these creatures

they're eating better, they're enjoying themselves more

and they have better relationships with each other

so population boom is on the way

well then, the next and final level is she you raise the dose higher so you're no longer restless or interested in sex or any other - but you're flattened with the ecstatic folding of the flu numinous hallucinogenic rupture of playing

then - and this occurs in the tribal context

then there is boundary dissolution uhhh group sexual activity and group bonding and identification and this is where uhhh this telepathic coherence

this inner dynamic of cohesion and caring that we see in primitive people to some small degree
and that we imagine must once have been our birthright
this is where it came to be
and at those higher levels of psilocybin
most of you probably know language is formed by an organ on one side of the brain called brooches area
uhh
brooches area
the brain being always symmetrically constructed
brooches area has a twin on the opposite side of the brain
but no one knows what's going on there
it's apparently a silent area of the brain
well when you take psilocybin there is spontaneous linguistic activity
glossolalia - Henry Munn has written about this
in his essay the mushrooms of language
it's almost as though psilocybin is a pheromone that promotes linguistic activity
an effort to take verbal intentionality and connected up to the ontos of being
in some way
and then it's almost as though words are born out of you
you give birth to words
and uh these condescendances of meaning then create a kind of unitarian ambience
which we call understanding
language is a miracle
i mean make no mistake about it - i don't mean any amount of dissection of monkeys or human cadavers
will give you an insight into language
language is a behavior of some sort so bizarre, so many orders of magnitude more complex than anything
else we do
that for all practical purposes, this is the thumb print of god up on creation
human language
and it's a self transforming thing
it keeps bootstrapping itself to higher and higher levels
and it creates for us the entire ambience of reality
once we had words, we quirky replace reality with them
and so i believe that what psilocybin promotes is cognitive activity. the coordination of visual input with
plans and strategies for hunting or acquisition or whatever
uh
it promotes this uh increased arousal, which really in a way_
we as moderns are absolutely as in awe of as our mushroom munching ancestors 25,000 years ago
we can't reduce it, we don't know what it is
you know jung was always so concerned that people say it's only psychological, it's only the psyche of the
news for you
it may only be the psyche but the psyche is a hell there is
and as we came into a relationship with the mushroom, humanness emerged on the african belt
and was able to stabilize itself for a few millennia, and then we fell into history because of climatological
change for many reasons
but we literally fell into history and now we operate in this lower domain
a domain of limitation of misunderstanding of low grade languages

uhh

but and we are neurotic

we are unhappy

we are dysfunctional

and i believe this is because our connection to the logos, to the informing voice that gives meaning to being has been broken. over ten thousand years it's fallen away

and all we're left with is our spiritual yearnings

our nostalgia for paradise

and uh our pathologies and miraculously we are left with the time capsule of preservation represented by the rainforest shamanic culture that use hallucinogens

there lies our answer

but it's like the auroboric serpent taking it's tale in it's mouth

the salvation of the super future of the planet lies in a recovery of the values, modalities and religious practices of 25,000-50,000 years ago 1:22:50

Break Break break (applause)

we haven't screened the pile so we're just gonna go through them

i'll read them aloud

normally i give long answers but there's such a stack of questions here i'll try and be general (laughter?)

or general breif n ___?

since dmt is present in the brain does the introduction of excess dmt shut down the production of natural dmt? in the way that the body stops producing opiates during opiate usage. if so what are the effects? is dmt really so chemically perfectly benign?

the first point to make is that many of your questions cannot be answered because research into these areas is not allowed

so often uh we can't answer our question

this question, "does the introduction of excess dmt, limit endogenous production?"

I can say with fair confidence that that's never been studied

my guess would be that it does not, because the dmt is in no sense of the word do you become habituated to dmt.

i mean - a person who does dmt want's a year as a fanatically heavy user, i would say. and uh the question; is dmt really so chemically benign?" again this has not been studied as you would study with rats and so forth to determine it but experimentally speaking, the amazing thing about dmt is the speed which you return to normal. You return to the baseline of consciousness in under ten minutes. Well that tell's you that the brain is very well able to deal with this compound.

One way of judging how toxic a drug or a plant is, is to ask yourself the question, "how long after i take it do i feel completely normal?" and with dmt you feel completely normal 15 minutes after taking it the shortest recovery time of any uh drug

this question is concerning the bundle weed, while it does not correctly meet the criteria of longterm use, is it to be considered safe?

i'd say the way to answer that question is to do a chemical analysis of the bundle weed. if theres nothing present but dmt in it, i think it should be considered safe. Now there may be other compounds present. in south america it's possible to contrast two plants - psychotria veridas. which has almost entirely nothing in it except dmt as the portion of it's alkaloid fraction. or uh varola cathaganascens which is used in the making of snuff, and chemically it's a mess. it looks like they swept the floor. you've gone nn dmt, 5meo

the shortest recovery time of any uh drug

dmt, alphenyltryptamine, monomethyltryptamine, sixhydroxymethyltryptamine - all these
this is not what you want
you want a surgical strike on the synapse that's what you're going for
not splattering all kinds of junk all over the place
uh
what is the best medium for psilocybe spore germination
the best medium is rye malt agar no question about it, go with rye
organic rye malt agar extract
in today's climate talk about access to shamanic pharmaceuticals for the average person
this is the where do i get it question
dressed up in respectable terms
without being too self-serving my brother and i wrote a book about growing mushrooms
called psilocybin the magic mushrooms growers guide by otis and
i'm otto's as you can see
i really believe in growing mushrooms
if you are as you sit here not psychically strong enough or balanced enough to take psilocybin
then if you learn to grow it, at the end of that process you will be
because growing the mushroom teaches you cleanliness, punctuality, attention to detail, uh steadiness
all of these virtues which are the very virtues you need to travel smoothly in that dimension
other hallucinogens other shamanic hallucinogens that you will find easily available to you without
breaking any laws
uh
the heavenly blue morning glory
sold in every seed store and garden store, are not to be taken, do not take them. they have been dipped in a
fungicide that will make you sick
grow them, and collect your crop and take that
and uh this is a major hallucinogen of uh of great antiquity, extremely visionary
uhhh
the hawaiian wood rose
uh you can obtain this from uh people who make dry flower arrangements often have these
pay attention, you want the hawaiian baby wood rose
if they try to give you something called hawaiian wood rose, a big clunky thing. that is inactive and uh and
won't do it
umm
the deterras are freely available - i do not recommend them. i recommend against them. they're a common
landscaping plant in southern california, and the gypsum weed is of course growing out in the desert out
around lancaster and other places like that, there are a couple of companies which have very forthrightly
decided to sell plants with a history of shamanic involvement
i have no stock in these companies, so uh i can recommend them without fear or favoritism
one is called , of the jungle up in sacramento california
and the other one is called dream gardens and i think it's here in santa monica
both of these groups publish astonishingly complete catalogs of psychoactive and shamanically important
plants
ok that access without going to the streets and crime and that
can you tell us anymore about elenoy bundle weed
i just did, umm

and that's all really i can tell you about it
all these questions are the same question
having convinced us of the wonder of DMT, what would be the easiest and quickest way to obtain it
how does one acquire DMT (laughter)
comment about the supreme court ruling against the use of peyote by north american indians
um
very bad law obviously, law so bad that the national council of churches, the national jewish affairs
committee
and some very large catholic organization, all filed briefs protesting this thing and i think that it was
actually realized that it was a goof and it will be brought back in the new-you can't bring something back
something in court in a hurry because that's unseemly
but i would bet within 5-10years this would be overturned because a close reading of this law means that
uhhh lying for pesa or communion could be construed as a psychoactive substance
and uh the whole thing is just bad law, bad idea
exhale
has consideration been given to the possibility that in the case of certain plants which are recounted in
writings but the identity is unknown that the reason they are unknown is because shamans purposefully
kept their identity a secret. perhaps such secrets are still being kept
this goes to the question i realised this morning
how can a hallucinogen once discovered ever been lost
and i've only been able to figure out one scenario in which this could happen
it happens like this
uh
people discover a wonderful plant that imparts visions or insight or something
and everybody takes it and enjoys it and then slowly a hierarchy emerges
a professional class, priests, and only they decree, they decree that only they will be allowed to take it
and then they lord it over the rest of society with an iron hand
and then the rest of the society gets fed up with that
and theres a slave revolt and everybody in the ruling class is killed
and the sacrament is lost
i can't figure any other way that it could happen
and the vedic thing, this seems quite reasonable
obviously soma was being more and more confined in it's use to a single class
and then that class became viewed as obnoxious and it's overthrow and the death of this sacrament thing
follow each other
perhaps such secrets are still being kept
uh perhaps they are, i--- the fact that this bundle weed could turn up so alter date
probably means their are shamanic lineages with secrets that we don't know
as a field ethno botanist and an explorer i'm always interested in the unconfirmable rumor
and there are some doozy's
uh
the mysterious beetle from eastern brazil which causes intense hallucinogens if eaten
here's a career for somebody
Noooo hallucinogenic insect has ever been found and yet there are persistent rumors in different parts of
the world of either a butterfly or a beetle that is uh hallucinogenic
most shamans in the amazon if you spend five or six weeks with them and take ayawausca with them and

tromp around with them
when you finally get to know them, they will allow us how there uh is another magic which they call the magic of the big trees
and i've spent half my life trying to find out the names of the big tress and i'm still working on it. we have collectives in peru and nothing is more exciting then a clump of root stuff or a seed packet that comes across our desk, labeled suspect hallucinogen
that that gets me to the edge of my chair (laughter)
what do you think of robert monroe the journey out of the body man?
uh well this a good time to discuss what do i think of all these other things on the spiritual market
uh idk what to think about them, i'm not a spiritual consumer
uh i've never been to a workshop that was never my own unless it was free
and uhhh theres a lot of stuff out there you know
astral traveling, channeling, all of this stuff
and i tend to believe its bogus or it's for people with a psychic constitution considerably different from my own
uh, sometimes people say to me, well these states that you're talking about, can't they be achieved without drugs
and the answer to that is, my god, who would want to
what what would be proved by achieving these things without drugs
if the things i'm talking about, began happening to me without drugs. i would be very very concerned and alarmed (laughter) because umm (laughter) you know i i i just don't uhhh and also i i think theres something to be said for admitting that we cannot do it alone
that if you want this spiritual insight, if you want the dianimatrix then humble yourself to the point of making a deal with a plant
that's the key, you can't enter the bank without the key to the bank
the key to the bank is a plant
jumping up and down outside the bank and exerting the banker to recognize your inner worth and open the door is just not uh not going to do it
i can understand that psychoactive alkaloids are a survival mechanism for the plants
why is that effect psychoactive in man or perhaps animal
well first of all maybe we have to argue with your premise
you're right that a lot of these so called secondary tritary compounds are elaborated supposedly to make things taste bad
or so that birds will spit out things and stuff like that
uh but on the other hand, they studied this question fairly closely
and a lot of these alkaloids are produced specifically to attract animals, to bring them in, to nactaries as pollinators and that sort of thing
uh
old style botany always believes these compounds are whats called tertiary to metabolism
meaning they're kinda like waste products and not very important, garbage
but when you look carefully inside what it plant
invariably what you see is that the psychoactive chemistry is going on where metabolism is most active
this is an indication that actually these things aren't tertiary at all, they are doing something with the plant
but we don't know what it is
as to why they have this peculiar effect that they do in us
uhhh

i think that because there was anciently and over the evolutionary life of human beings actually connection between us and nature

and uh that these these drugs are the antenna, the switches, that switch us back towards the logos of uh the natural world

i suspect that all of nature is a seamless web of pharamonally mediated connections and interactions and that we are just not yet at an efficient level of analysis uh give it observation to see this interconnected web

you know our idea of nature is that it's all tooth and claw survival of the fittest, and the devil takes a high most the NEW version of evolution is entirely different

it says that the way you attain survival is by making yourself indispensable to everybody else so it's not by triumphing over the ecosystem that by integrating yourself so thoroughly into it that it can't function without you

then you're on your way to being a dominant species not by crushing the opposition

uh lets see how we're doing here

what are deconstructionists doing to our understanding of the language? is it helpful? (laughter)

hmmm

by deconstructionists i suppose you mean uh juckderada and that crowd

well i think deconstruction serves a very useful function and we're unaware of uh of what/how thoroughly language is a medium in which we swim

how thoroughly our world is bult in language

in a way the boundary dissolving character of the plant hallucinogens is a dissolving of language barrier they show you that the surface of reality was not the surface of reality, it was the surface of your local language

and now it's gone

and uh and uh theory is uh what lies beneath it

at what point in the evolution of organic matter on earth do psychoactive plants appear and why?

interesting question, if we're talking about psychoactive fungi we're severely limited by the fossil record which is no fossil mushroom has ever been found over than 40 million years

this is because fossil mushrooms are very soft bodied femoral kind of thing

as primary decomposers which is what fungi are doing on this earth

it's reasonable to assume that they must have been here fro the very beginning of the conquest of the land but proof in the fossil record has not been forthcoming

now if we're talking about higher plants, flowering plants

which is mostly what we're talking about here

than no flowering plants existed before 65 million years ago

flowering plants emerged out of the same catastrophe that destroyed the dinosaurs and set the stage for the emergence of the mammals

this is something people don't realize

flowering plants are as recent as mammals

you know if you look at the

if the period of life is visualized as a yard stick, the period of the flowering plants is the last inch and a half and it's also the rise of the mammals occurs in that last inch and a half

so before that the plant life on the earth was of a very different sort

and we know nothing about it's chemistry to someone who asked a zen question (laughter)

what would make the present government interested in the study of psychedelics? (laughter)
i don't know, they could make a buck out of it
uh
i don't think they're very interested in psychedelics
i don't think any political - but "they were very interested in psychedelics" - except that they abandoned it,
yes mk ultra, stood for mind control
mind control ultra was the program the via pursued in the 1960s where they tried out all kinds of
psychedelic drugs and they also worked with this in combination with hypnosis
they were trying to make what they would call the trojan horse
this is somebody who would be an assassin but not even know it
and uh how far they got with all of this we would never know
because of course it all disappeared behind the walls of secrecy
but the declassified history of the cia and led is very interesting
some of you may know the book acid dreams by uh by uh martin lee
uh fascinating history of the way the government tried and really failed i think to use psychedelics that the
governments initial approach was uh this is great this is a truth syrim we can give this to enemy agents and
they'll tell us all we know
well a few months of following that path they decided no (laughter)
this is an obscurity drug we can give this to our agents and they can take it if they're captured and no one
can learn anything from it
(laughter)
and clearly this was not a fruitful path either
and i really don't fault the government, i don't really fault the government for this
after all the government is in the business of being the government
i don't think any institution can incocate psychedelics into it's own program, because psychedelics destroy
instititution
all institutions
it's like trying to move an acid around that corrodes whatever pipes you poor it through
and because the boundary resolving quality of psychedelics is precisely the quality that government is
involved in resisting
government builds up label, pans out role models, explains how everything is and this stuff just then melts
that, melts that into a primal chaos
so it's pretty corrosive of any social values that don't arise spontaneously out of biological organization
it's anarchists, it's the acid of anarchy in a way
alright we're never gonna get through this list, but it's gratifying to know that it's here if we need to
(laughter)
heres a question about the time wave which i'm gonna skip because we're not talking about the time wave
today and pittty the poor soul whose never heard of it
know of any herbal sources to raise seratonin as a treatment for depression?
uh no i'm not uh i don't uh know a lot about herbal medicine and that sort of thing but uh raising seratonin
level as a treatment for depression seems likes a pretty good strategy
um
i don't know of herbs, usually inhibition seratonin is whats going on
and with these psychedelics they do compete with seratonin for the bond site
that what it's all about at the atomic level
is in your synaptic cleft in the synaptic clefts of your neurons there are uh what are called receptors and if

you were to fly down and look at these things they look like complex locks their hooks protuberances, little drawers and fit in places, well then the drug molecule comes - is carried into the synaptic cleft by the blood stream and it seeks to what's called occupy the bond site or simply bond and it's trying to fit in well the normal thing which fits in those bonding sites is serotonin but some of these hallucinogens are much better fits than natural serotonin they are what pharmacologists say - competitive at the bond site and so they literally elbow the serotonin out of the way and then they fit themselves into the receptor well once the receptor and it's uh it's fit it's against are in place then the biodynamic the bioelectric uh field of the synapse can be activated well if you swap out serotonin for an exotic molecule like harmine or mescaline or something like that well then this shifts the mode of this huh molecular level electrical environment and i believe that that is what registers as a higher cortical experience that we call the trip it's the experience of hundreds of millions of these introduced molecules displacing the normal serotonin and then broadcasting this signal in the slightly different way than it is normally perceived so there's a molecular connection there's a connection down into the molecular level this will be our last one this morning language transcendence, huxley jung and others often mention liberating and enlightening epiphanies as beyond language and iconic imagery, you yourself mention this, can you explain further the use of transcendental language? yeah and we might talk about that a little this afternoon i sort of alluded to it this morning my idea is that language is a process that is half completed in us as we sit here and that languages really something which wants to be seen not heard but that we are on our way to evolving toward this visible language and we currently are operating with these somewhat substandard acoustical codes where i make small mouth noises they go through the air, they strike your ear, you look in a culturally validated dictionary, if your dictionary is like my dictionary and you understand what's in your dictionary then we say we are communicating but in a visual language in a visibly beheld language there is no culturally validate dictionary there is simply hard wired kind of animal language that we all understand instantly from birth without any cultural acclamation to it, because it is the natural language of human beings of getting out, revealing, defining, refining, uh this natural language the place where the psychedelics impact upon us as social creatures is the language domain i mean you may have tremendous horrofinies and break throughs but if you can't talk about it or paint about it or dance about it or in any way communicate it to anybody then it is not efficacious for the species it's just your private entertainment so the domain of language is where the collective impact is coming and one of the things i think about psychedelics is that they are probably capable of helping us force the evolution of language because we cannot move into the future any faster than our uh language of description for the future so if we're interested in stream lining culture and getting away from this sort of random lock style of

culture evolution then we have to look at rationally uhhh interfacing with the evolution of language and maybe we can talk about that when we come back

thanks very much um (applause) i appreciate you sitting for this (continued applause)

1:52:13

brian when you get a minute - yo um this morning was sort of an intro uhhh in case people needed to be brought up to speed we discussed basically the distribution of these psychoactive plants with a history of shamanic use and then discussed a little bit about the history of them and i didn't really finish with that uh because i want to stress uh

that this - i think what we talked about this morning is we got them all to a good place

we got them all to paradise in africa

with clear vision much food and plenty of horsing around

and then we broke for lunch

uh

the forces that created that partnership society in pre-history

the forces that allowed the emrrrence of a none male dominant social style

were the same forces which then eventually destroyed it as well

because it was nothing more than climateolgical change

is what was happening

uh

as the african continent became drier

uh

the grass lands retreated the water holes became less frequent and further apart

and the mushroom came under pressure because of increased dryness

and at that point i think probably uh the mushroom festivals became less and less frequent

the whole thing became more tenuous

and there was great pressure then to try and figure out how to preserve the mushrooms through the dry times of the year, to have them available for ceremonies

and i think that uh it's the uh the use of honey as a preservative that uh really set the stage for things to go wrong

because honey um turns into a psychedelic compound on it's own if you do nothing to it but leave it alone it ferments it becomes mead and mead is a premitive kind of alcoholic beverage

so over several mellenia what began as an ecstatic mushroom cult turned into a beer cult, a cult of alcoholic intoxication, and then you get the same shift of ratios that you see in our own society

i mean how many women in our own society have there first sexual experiences in an atmosphere of alcohol abuse and misuse the two almost go together and less in the twentieth century

before the twentieth century it's almost possible to imagine nobody got laid for a thousand years in the west without being juiced up

because it was pretty unappetizing i can imagine

so this is a way in which sensory modalities and emphasis on different aspects of psyched change over time, uh without a culture even being aware of it

and then i talked this morning a little bit about the - the fall into history

the neurotic, dysfunctionalism that characterizes historical existence

and i think it's worth going back to that because some people have the idea that psychedelics are a kind of instant psychotherapy

and that they address the concerns of the individual

but they're not concerned to link it up to history to see what it was for us in the past and what it's absence

has done for us
i think that the whole phenomenon that we call the fall into history is the uh uh scenario of abandonment that we underwent as we broke the umbilical connection to the guy in matrix of organic life that's what we were um imbedded in in this african context
but when africa dried up and we move out of africa and into the middle east we then were transformed from nomadic pastoralists into primitive agriculturists
and then later city builders and the entire pattern of male dominance and anxiety is set in place
if you look at the world of seven thousand BC the most uh - the most sophisticated human structure on the earth of let's say 7500 BC is at jeriko
in what is now palestine
and it what is it?
it's a grain storage tower, built at jeriko 72-75 BC uh it indicates that the primitive pastoral nomadic form has given way now to an agricultural form that uh allows for the accumulation of surplus and hence the need to defend sane
and hence the establishment of have and have not psychology and so forth and so on
so all of the institution that we now must attempt to reform and grapple with began then!
urbanization kingship, male dominance, representative politics
all of these things uh begin then
and uh are further exacerbated a couple or 3 thousand years later
by the western decision to go with the genetic alphabet
see a genetic alphabet further removes you away from anything uh concrete or real or related to nature
theres no ideogram theres no gliff there isn't even rebus
theres simply an abstract symbol which stands for a sound
i mean this is about as far away from the hands on approach of language that you could get
well the culture that made these decisions
which is our culture
the culture of europe and the ancient middle east
has evolved into the dominant culture on the planet
and has put in place, institutions like science and so forth and so on
our metaphors have grown every more cogent in there ability to manipulate matter and energy as they have evolved less and less relevance to our selves, so now we have ideological systems of tremendous power that none of us can understand or relate to
this is kind of an odd relationship to knowledge
since knowledge is supposed to be an experience of empowerment not an experiment of disempowerment
but our society has done it differently
so we all wander around with a sense of disempowerment
because we're surrounded by accomplishments which we couldn't possibly duplicate
well i mention all of this because i think it shows where the solution lies
if we were in balance 1500 years ago
and it was achieved through the use of psychedelics de emphasis of the ego
non existence of the nuclear family
and the suppression of the concept of ownership we should look at these as possible styles of existence that might be put in place in uh in the future
that's the psychedelic society that you've heard me talk about at various times
well that's probably enough on that - 2:01:30

oh you thought so too (laughter)
when said we'd look at the geographical distribution, the history, and then the phenomenology i thought that we would put most of the phenomenology of the thing in here in this section because it is important to establish just what we're talking about
and also to empower people to describe their own experiences
which are often so peculiar that unless there is a group such as this a person tends to just define themselves as starkers
i mean what else can you say about some of this
if your starkers and you get ten people to agree with you you're not starkers anymore you're a movement
ahem
so i mentioned this morning about DMT and i made a bit the kind of paradigmatic compound
because it's so brief so natural so powerful so quick to recover from
and it's also a very good paradigmatic case when talking about what the psychedelic experience is like to have
because i think if you have the DMT experience on the way to the center of that flash you'll probably have all the other ones
it seems to lie at the center of the mandala
the most startling thing about the dmt flash and i mentioned this this morning when we were talking about jung is how astonishing it is that death by astonishment seems the major danger
and this is even if you're an art historian a jungian an athesian nodo of symbols of so forth and so on
it seems to come from some dimension orthogonal to the human world
and it is not a unitary experience, the way the famous white light and all these others wordless
indescribable elusive mercurial things are
it isn't like that at all
it's uh it's extremely multiplisic and it's extremely specific in it's presentation
i mean when you smoke dmt you have the feeling that you have burst into a place that you have not had a psychological experience
you are not having a mental experience
you have burst into some kind of a space and within that space ummm there the first shock is that it's inhabited and this is the shock i've never recovered from
because it was just the last thing i expected to find inside a chemical compound was the equivalent of a bugs bunny cartoon
uh
it is inhabited by um entities is the only word to describe them
and they are as i've said many times, they are like jeweled self dribbling basketball
and their many of them
and they come out of the background and they present themselves to you
they're literally vibrating up and down, they're fasented and rotating and they see you as clearly as you see them
they even uh greet you
some of you may recall the pink floyd the old pink floyd song the gnomes have learned a new way to say hoorayyy
i think it's on pipette the gates of dawn
it's the first album those floyd fans were looking puzzled
it's because it was 40-years ago (laughter)
anyway as you burst into this space the gnomes say hooray

and they present themselves and they are truly the gnomes of uh central european fairytales archetypal gnomes
they are uh they sing and out of their singing elfin chatter condense objects which look like nothing at all in this world
i mean the closest i've been able to come to them are the furbish the edges of furbished eggs
you know they constricts in sapphire and ivory and crystal and vitreous glass that uh the french designer fabruche created
well these things are like that but they're like that raised to some excruciating pinnacle of completion
because as they show you these objects you know beyond any possibility of contravention that a single one of these objects were to exist in this world it would change this world forever
if a single one of these objects existed in this world we would spend a thousand years studying this object
the last time this happened was a guy gave a speech on a hill about moral obligation
we've studied it for a thousand years
um this is the same kind of thing and these fabruche hyper-dimensional objects are themselves undergoing a dynamic transformation
they're not static objects like the fabruche eggs
they are undergoing changes, singing, condensing other objects, these objects are crawling all over the ground in front of you, clamoring for your attention
now remember 12 seconds before you were sitting in a suburban living room somewhere grappling with some drug somebody wanted you to take
now all of that's gone and here are these things
i call them types because i wanted to capture the sense of their childlike-ness
i don't know why i call them types it just seemed like the appropriate thing
if some of you are classist or students of literature of pre-socratic philosophers
you might recall the 50 second fragmented paraclytus which says uh "the aeon is the child at play with colored balls"
"the aeon is a child playing with colored balls"
and when you break your way into the presence of the aeon it's extremely uh idk it's upsetting you can't believe it's happening, there's a lot of cognitive dissonance
you could believe this if it just weren't happening to you
and there is this tremendous affection and interesting humanity
and then there is urgency a lot of urgency
the types want to initiate you, they have a message and the message is you can do what we are doing
and what they're doing is using their voices to make this ecologies condense out of the air
they're saying, you can do this, do it, do it, DO IT
and their on you and they jump in and out of your chest which is something described in the amazon too the hucalay in the tryptamine snuff cults of the amamano
that they jump in and out of your chest and they're saying do this thing, do it, do it, suspend your belief
and eventually you do do it
you you discover that you can drop the filter of meaning that your voice can move back several registers
and out comes elf chatter and this elf chatter is able to ring the air in front of you like a wash cloth and get out chemical gold to drip out of the air and to begin to condense in front of you
well by this time most people would like to call time out (laughter)
so they can make phone calls to various philosophers
but there's no time out, it just keeps going uhhh, and these things have a very, the aura of strangeness of aliens is palpable

theres an emotion in there that we just don't have in this world
because it composed of unbelievable alieness in the presence of unbelievable familiarity
it's an ecstasy that is a coincident appositorum
simultaneously it is both what it is and what it is not
and the human mind can't handle that, that's called cognitive dissonance, and you just go into a a conixifit
of some sort
well
the very fist time i smoked DMT in 1967 with absolutely no expectation
this happened to me and it has happened every time since
and then i've had occasion to observe people taking DMT uh in countries where it's legal
and what i see is there is an archetype which surrounds DMT which you must make your way through it
but at the center of the archetype the archetype is not present in only the alien it's present
the archetype is that of the circus or the carnival
the carnival
think for a moment about the carnival
it has two aspects, one is blazing light and activity at the center of the triple ring the lady in the spangle
costume is high above the main floor and the lions and the tigers and the clowns are parading around -
that's part of it
but it has another aspect. just off to the side of the big tent, there are the side shows. The hooch coach
dancers. The two headed man, and so forth and so on
in other words theres this kinky peculiar shadow side of it
and i often uh if any of you are fans of the film of federico feline
here's a man who understood the archetype of the circus and how if you remember in amachor that circus
or if you remember juliette dislike the flaming doorway into the room with the bed of the bed springs and
the crate paper flame
these are carnival, carnival images that relate back to uh DMT
when you finally come into the center of it these are all seen to be veils
it veils itself that way because that's how you uh it's the old candy to the baby routine
it treats us as people who would go to the circus and then it takes us to the circus but then there is a
revelation beyond that and i, i don't know how many people present in this room have confronted the thing
i'm talking about
i'm always at the moment aware that some people are saying, "my doesn't he perfectly get it" and other
people are saying "huh? what is this, what is this guy talking about?"
the point i want to make is it's real, it's not vague you don't have to strain for it. nobody wonders whether
or not it happened to them, it's just like somebody walking up to you taking you by the arm saying "there's
something i insist on showing you, come this way please."
and i am very -it is the presence of the entities that shattered the person who i was. because i was a
scientific rationalist a reductionist i had no no room for elves in my cosmology (laughter) and here they
were, hundreds of them. So it seems to me that this is a central question that shamanism has always dealt
with. perhaps not with eh kind of ontological specifications hat we imagine ourselves to have
but this is the question that must be asked
who's int here, who is this
there are at least 3 possibilities, and i'm not sure which is the most conservative
the first possibility is that um we don't understand how the world is constructed, and that in fact there is a
parallel universe running alongside of ours, uh full of elves who use a language to make an object. and then
why you can burst through to this place on this one drug then it raises each explanation, raises a lot of

questions

and then the other possibility is uh um this is the jungian possibility and jung and i can't remember which one it was, but one of the alter things he talks about these elves. because of the caber the caber are the alchemical children that appear in act three of foist that jung spent a lot of time on these alchemical caber and the question of the humungulous and uh he says in one place, i think he says, uh uh, he describes them as autonomous psychic elements that have escaped from the control of the ego

this is a weird way to go about it, i means it's probably an accurate description but how much does it tell us you know? it means that the psyched is to be visualized as a half gallon of mercury. and when we throw it on the floor the mercury balls up and spreads everywhere/ each ball of mercury by god it has a little face looking back at you. that's because mercury is a mirrored surface, you're looking at your own psyched shattered into pieces around you.

another possibility and one i leaned toward for ears, and i still lean toward. because i've noted the radical nature of your explanation diminishes with the distance since the last time ou smoke DMT. uh the longer it's been, the more likely you are to have some humdrum notion that you can poor it into. so the humdrum notion that i settled on was the clearly these are just extraterrestrials. they don't come in silver ships demanding to be taken to the national defense agency. this is how they come, why they come this way, who knows? they're coming through mind, mind is the medium in which they travel. where did they come from? who knows, can it even be located in the newtonian space-time matrix. i mean what do you want here, a star catalog number, would that satisfy you?

and then finally, i think i've exceeded my number of possible explanations (laughter)

and then finally the explanation which is my current favorite, it's a little disturbing and i haven't quite figured out what to do with it. but i'm on the sense that we're on the right track here.

the reason that the DMT space feels so peculiar, both alien and excruciatingly familiar is uh because these things in this other place represent what i call an ecology of souls.

this place is the one place you never thought you were going to make a visit to and come back to and chat it around the coffee maker. this, they're dead, that's who these things are. this is the realm of the dead. well i have to confess in all of my psychedelic voicing and idea mongering, i never was able to go that far to reach that far in my imagination.

it sort of had to be presented to me

but if you go to shamans, world wide, and talk to them about their spirit helpers, and say you know what's the deal with this, whoa are these things. - 2:19:35

they say, well these are the ancestors, didn't you know these are the ancestors.

it's perfectly cut and dried and normal

uhh

i i had an occasion i won't use his name to embarrass him but i had occasion to expose a very well known tibetan high mucky muck to DMT and he said after he took it like a man said after words. that is the lesser life. that is the lesser life. and if any of you are student's f mayahani buddhism you know that the lesser lives are the lives you see at the edge of the bardo as you start in to the 42 day process of dying, you encounter the lesser lives

this guy was saying to me. you can not go further in the body and have any expectation of retiring. in other words, once you have seen the lesser lives, you have stretched the umbilicus to matter to the breaking point, if you go one step further, it's eternity for you. well i don't know how i feel about this. the the head type i've had to then ask myself, the head tyk is that me? do you actually encounter your dead soul? is there a dimensions here you are both simultaneously both dead and alive, both simultaneously witness and observer. um i don't know. but i certainly think that if we're going to use a conservative explanation for

these things. the only the only theory more conservative than that they are dead people. is the theory that says that they are nothing whatsoever. and that just simply will not serve. i think it would come as a tremendous surprise to twentieth century civilization. if orthogonal to all our expectations of space flight and virtual reality, and all this techno shmechno stuff that we're lining up in front of us. that there would be a broadside from ninety degrees out from the unexpected, and that there would be a doorway swinging into the realm beyond organic existence.

i resisted this fiercely. but i just don't know what we're going to do with these DMT creatures, if we don't try to find a rational explanation. and the - any rational explanation will be exotic because the facts of the matter are exotic. those of you who have not had this experience or sitting there thinking it would never happen to me. you're full of it (laughter) it will happen to you. this isn't this doesn't require the willful suspension of disbelief, this doesn't require a pure heart or dietary prescription. no this is part of the human birth right. and the fact that we deny the existence of a non-human entity, intellectual intelligence on this planet is just part of our heritage from rationalism. and you know, you don't have to take it very seriously, because rationalism the philosophy that gives us permission to deny the invisible world, you know who founded the philosophy of rational materialism? any takers? aristotle was early, i think i give credit to renee decart for modern materialism and rationalism. well uh you know who told renee decart to found rationalism and materialism, an angel! (laughter)

are you ready for this, this is a suppressed history episode in the history of human thought. here are the facts folks. 1619 renee decart is 21-years old. he's a young frenchman in search of adventure, he joins a hoops army that is going off to prague to lay siege to prague, to put down an alchemical revolt there. they kick butt on these alchemists, win the war and their on their way back to france, and in september 1619, this french army camped ulm in southern germany. some of you may know ulm as einsteins home town. in fact that figures in our story obliquely as you will see

this french army camps at ulm and renee decart hits the hay and in the middle of the night an angel appears to this young man, in the radiance of his rooms and says "the mastery of nature is to be achieved through number and measure" modern science is founded folks

right there, right then. by an angel. so how you know, how far away are the informing voices. How rational is rationalism. how material is materialism? all of you must know i'm sure the famous story of kukulay the german chemist kukulay who discovered the benzene ring. he was struggling with the problem and physical chemistry could not figure it out. fell asleep in his study and the oraboric serpent appeared before him in his dreams. and took it's tale in it's mouth and he came out of sound sleep and said i've got it. he got to the blackboard and he drew the first benzene ring

angelic intervention. intervention from the unconscious. so my, i - the point of all of this is to suggest that human history is completely interpenetrated by the peculiar, the non-human, that which has intentionality and affection for mankind. for humanity. and this is what shamans call to their aid. this is how the curing is done, it's done through these spirit helpers. they're called, elemental. and um. so far as i know jungians is the only modern intellectual position where you can even raise this issue without having a matt dropped over you. i mean this is absolutely forbidden by the modern world view. uh and yet it lies very very close to the surface in our culture. i mean as an example of how close to the surface it lies in our culture, consider for a moment, um, santa claus. what's this about? santa clause is the master of the elves. the elves that he is master of are demon artificers. they make toys for the world children in their vast underground toy shops. and where are these underground toy shops? at the north pole. i don't have to tell a room full of jungians that the north pole is the axis mundi, idrisil, the magic world ash, the center of the mandala. what are the colors of santa clause? red and white, the colors of amanita muscaria absolutely. what is the particular animal of santa clause, reindeer. reindeer are very central to the amanita muscaria cult because reindeer uh eat the mushroom and then excrete their urine and this is thought to be a cleaner and easier way to take the

mushroom than to take it on the so-called first path. the second path is after the reindeer have had it. an anecdotal side, if you're ever in the yakut basin one of the great parallels of the intoxicated amanita user is to crawl out of the yurt in the middle of the night to take a leak in the snow and before you can back off the reindeer come and knock you headlong, because they want to get to this amanita flavored soul. so here is santa clause right in the center of our culture and when you take it apart, all of the motifs are there. the demonartificers the elves, the cosmic axis, uh, the magical flight. it's a beautiful example of the preservation of pagan psychedelic use into uh a modern context.

what can we say about this? oh well i know, one more thing i wanted to say about it. that this program that these tyk's are pushing is a language skills program. and we don't know how long people have been bursting into this place. this may be the source of language. you know - where di language come from? we learned it from elves in hyperspace is as good a possibility as any other. and this is still on-going. this language reformation program. they want us to activate our language forming ability and language is the DMT flash i said this morning. it's something beheld. syntax is something potentially to be looked at. not to be heard. and we don't understand this because for us language is something that you hear. we can't imagine a language that you see. but have you ever noticed the way in which we preserve clarity of intention in language with verbal metaphors? we say, i see what you mean, he painted a picture. it means we unconsciously believe that truth will be beheld and some of you who are students of the ancient literature may know phylojudaeus, uh helenistic alexandrian jew, absolute contemplate christ, born before died after. in one of his treatises on the logos, which he was always talking about. phylogudeaus presents an edimology of the word israel, and he says, isreal means "he who sees god" this is this meaning of the word god. and then he goes on to say uh this 'he who sees god' he's talking about that and he says "what would be the more perfect logos?" now i assume most of you would know the logos was an informing voice, a voice in the head. which was the scenic qua non of alexandrian spirituality. uh socrates had it, plato had it. the logos. so philojudeaus asked "what would be the more perfect logos?" and then he answers his own question he says "the more perfect logos would go from being heard to being beheld without ever crossing over a noticeable moment of transition."

well that is precisely what you encounter in deep psychedelic experiences and the DMT flash. you behold the logos. In the initiation of experience. you don't behold it, you hear it. it sounds in michael harness wonderful phrase "like the sound of rushing water" or like the sound of tinkling bells. and it's very far away and then it begins to come closer, you can you can, you vein to forma picture of it in your minds in the way you would of a napoly marching band that you just heard it about a half-mile away and the pa pa pa is getting bigger, coming closer. this is the elf parade. and when it finally comes into view it actually goes without ever passing over a noticeable moment of transition from being heard to being seen. through the phenomenon of approach. you hear it before you see it then you see it far away then you see it very close. and when you see it very close it who cares what it sounds like because you're see ing it.

this more perfect logos is what the tyk's the spiritual helpers want to teach. and i think that it's import ant to spend a little time on this because i think this would have tremendous historical impact upon our situation if we could by hook or by crook create a uh a more visible logos, a language which could be seen. You probably all considered at some time or another, what would telepathy be like? and i think most people answer that question by thinking telepathy would be for me to hear what you think, but how would it be telepathy worth for me to see what you mean. that's telepathy. it put's you in the other guys shoes. if you stand in the other persons shoes you are the other person. to have a persons point of view is to be that person in regard to that single atom of experience.

so i've spent time with virtual reality people, and all these technical folks, because i think visual language is something that wants to be born. and it may be that it is - can be technologically coaxed into existence, that we're gonna have to wear goggles or have fast computers. or it may be that it can be physiologically coxed

into existence. there may be drugs which shift the processing of language from being an auditory phenomenon to being a visible phenomena. aywasca is an excellent candidate for this. uh if you spend time with the ayawausca taking populations in the amazon, theres great stress in these populations on acquiring what's called an ekaro

ekaro

means magical song. and the ekaro is a spontaneous chant like song which comes to you during the intoxication. the thing that's interesting about these ekaro's is that they are critiqued as visual objects, not as sound. people never say of an ekaro, it sounded beautify. they allays say it looked lovely. and then people will say, but there should have been more blue (laughter)

this kind of thing, it's clearly being criticized as a visual modality. well i think that these ryawasca using people are at the cutting edge of evolution.

2:37:40

they are forcing the evolution of the modality of language. it may be that the processing of language is not hard wired not physiologically wired. it's uh software function, having todo with culture, language, upbringing and so forth. because some people claim they are grade visualizers and they do think visually and so forth and we have no reason to deny this

so it may be that we are just a one gene, or even an expression of gene ratio's different away from an entirely different way from processing communication between each other. and this is what the new age, the end of history, the anticipation of this great breakthrough that we can feel but not really outline is about. if that seems far fetched to you, you should notice how far fetched the original emergence must have been. because i think people were fully people and totally mute and you know unable to articulate a thought. and then either an accumulation of neuro's or some synergistic effects was brought into play and low and behold spoken language emerged out of that.

well something similar could happen to us. in the morning session i talked about the uh forced evolution of language, paying attention to our language. i really think that the way to think of these psychedelics is as catalysts for the imagination. uh if any of you are chemists you know that a catalyst is something that when you add it to a chemical process, the process is tremendously speeded up, but in the end the catalyst is not destroyed. the catalyst is reconstituted at the end. so psychedelics, one way of thinking of them, is as a catalyst for cognition. the original description of psychedelic drugs was that they were consciousness expanding drugs. well if we take the idea that they are consciousness expanding seriously for even a moment then we have to put a lot of attention in on this because it's the absence of consciousness that is murdering us and our planet. we need all the consciousness that we can get, we need to reign it out of computers, get it out of plants, raise it in ourselves and children. wherever we can get it, uh we need it and the present, you know the present situation with the planet is very dire.

very dire because of us. our unchecked evolution in a single direction along the gradient of culture has now created a toxic planet that is an endangered planet. uh. since this situation has arisen entirely within the confines of history aren't we going to have to look outside of history in order to redress this problem, i think so. and when we do look outside history, then we find the institution of plant shamanism there, waiting to inform us, to educate us, and to show us how to set a course out of the present dilemma. i don't think we can find our way out by ourselves. i don't think we can get high by ourselves and i don't think as a species that we can save the planet by ourselves. we have to have a partner. we have to uh get an ally into this situation. uhhh just in closing and as an example, the mushroom as a tremendous problem solving ability. and because we can talk to it, we can ask it questions. we can actually get a non-human perspective on human problems.

a few weeks ago i made this statement before a group of people somewhere, and after the talk was over, somebody came up to me and said well why don't you ask the mushroom how to save the world?

and i just put it off, thought it was the wrong attitude, but then later i wondered about this questions, how to save the world. and i thought maybe i've been to circumspect with the mushroom maybe i should just put it to it. so i carried out the experiment. and put to them, how do we save the world. Now i don't offer the solution, i'm going to tell you the mushrooms answer. so you can see how our backs aren't quite to the walls yet. theres still avenues to be explore. i said to the mushroom "how can we save the world" there was a hesitation of 1/3 of a second approximately. and then the mushroom said, no woman should raise more than one natural child. and i said, "what?" said no woman should raise more than one natural child. so i took that home with me and i thought about it, uh here are the consequences following that piece of advice. uh the population of the earth would be cut in half in 60-years. fifty years fallowing that it would be cut in half again, 50 years after that in half again. in 1 hundred and 50 years the population of the earth could be under a billion people. nobody was shot, no wars were fought. no one was told they could not have a child. no one was coerced, no one was starved. um. then i started looking into this thing about children and population. and most of you, like me. probably imagined that the world has a population problem. and this population problem is going on in places like pakistan and bangladesh and god dangit those little brown people will just not stop having children

well i looked into it and i've got a surprise for you

a child born in america will use between 600- and 1 thousand times more natural resources and energy than a child born to a woman in bangladesh. Suppose you went to bangladesh and you met a woman, a young woman of child bearing age, and she told you that her ambition in life was to have a thousand children. you'd be appalled, i mean what kind of social responsibility is this, what kind of a person are you that you want to do this. an american woman having one child is having the equivalent of those thousand infants. now another interesting thing about this suggestion made by the mushroom. that each woman should rear one natural child. when we think of population control schemes, the first objection is "my god you can never sell this to people, they have these religions they have these centuries and so forth they just won't watch"

notice that what the mushroom suggested is most likely to be accepted by the person most important to convert. we don't want to convert the woman of the backstreet of bangladesh to this policy. we want to convert the woman of sherman oak, malibu, pandemoniac, gross point, boston, philadelphia. because these are the woman whose children are using the resources. so here's in one sentence. the mushroom was able to answer a question i put to it, with a suggestion i had never dreamed of, that seems at first glance a way to stand up pretty well. and i've spent a lifetime trying to figure out ways to solve this proble, see we're a little stupid, because we're all alike. Something years ago the mushroom said to me which deals with this was uh people are always - this question of enlightenment, and the mushroom said for one human being to expect to obtain enlightenment from another is like a grain of sand on the beach expecting to attain enlightenment from another grain of sand on the beach. don't you get it, you're all grains of sand. i mean joe shmo who runs a body shop and mookdaruby baba are the same people. theres no difference between these guys, no reason to assume so.

uh

so i think we need help and that little exercising what do you do about the population problem shows that there are suggestions out there that we haven't thought of, avenues that we haven't tried. when i thought about why we haven't we tried this avenue of one woman one natural child it took me about thirty seconds to understand that its real hard to make a buck in this situation when population is retracting at a rate of fifty-percent per generation.

and our whole world is based on making a buck. i told this idea to someone and they said, but if the woman of malibu stop having children they will lose all their political power. because political power is numerical. this is not true. political power is power. and if the woman of malibu stop having children they will be

quite a bit wealthier than they already are.

notice that this deciding to voluntarily have one natural child is also very helpful to you personally. that uh a woman will have to work less hard. will have to cut fewer deals with the in place structure of male dominance if she was only one child. a woman with two children has got to cut a deal with male dominance or she has a trust fund or something

uh

the reason we are i think instinct - we have a tendency to clench at a suggestion and not follow it through, uh is because we imagine there is something holy and sacred about the nuclear family and that we don't want to attack this biological unit that has such integrity. but this is a bunch of nonsense, the nuclear family has no biological integrity whatsoever, it's a creation of the post industrial reformation. the extended family is the natural human unit to ease the pressure child-rearing on young woman. and to give everybody the benefit of contact inter-generational contact and so forth. no this nuclear family that our politicians are always beating their breath about, is the absolute caldron of neurosis in this society as far as i can see. and when you look at the demographics about what is happening, the number of house holds that are one woman one child household i think you can see that maybe our unconscious has already been in communication with the mushroom and it's just the ego that's gonna get the news last.

well i don't want to spend too much time on that but it's an example of how these things offer solution to human problems. and if it can offer solutions to a human problem like over-population by six billion people on a planet, then it can surely take care of the needs and concerns of a group of rainforest hunter gatherer's that number 70 or so people. i doubt that they can conceive of a question that doesn't have an answer to, because it can operate on many levels, uh simultaneously. and this is an example of consciousness in action, you see - me plus nothing had nothing new to say about the population problem, me plus psilocybin had a whole new take, a suggestion. we can slaughter it down and ultimately decide it's a bunch of larch but at least there was a new thought a new try a new hope. this is the consequences of consciousness. and we're beset by problems like this, and we shouldn't assume that they are insoluble simple because we haven't solved them intact we must assume they are solvable otherwise we are not gonna have a place to hang our hat in fifty years. but the solution comes through a act of humility, an act of opening to the dynamic of nature, the feminine, the psychy, the ego is the calcarious knot, tumorous tissue that stands outside of all that. it cannot be trusted, it cannot be relied upon.

uh

and so by attempting to dissolve that, to mitigate it's hard edges, to smooth it out into the greater context of being, then we really discover uh what humanness is about

because humanness is not something that can be encompassed from the point of view from the ego that's why creating the ultimately egoist society

we created a society with so little humanity in it you know

and i see the psychedelics as a - an - make the world a better place than as we found it which is certainly not our record so far

but it's not too late, i mean HG wells called history a race between education and disaster

it's not mere coincidence nor even mere synchronicity that at this moment in time and space with these tremendous crisis bearing down upon us that we have reached out to the archaic peoples with a new attitude, not an attitude of how can we enslave them, but how can we learn from them. and my hope is that here in the final kicking of the clock of history, we are going to end our prodigal decent into the desert world of the ego, and return with what we have learned. the fruits of the prodigal journeying of the evan son which is what history has been. return with the fruits of that prodigal wandering to the larger human family that waits on us in the rain forests, in the deserts, in the marshes in the thorn forests of this planet. the archaic people are waiting for us to get on the train and then the train will be able to be part. but we

have to awaken to our past and then we can set a course toward a meaningful future.
that's the wrap (clapping, applause)
2:54:43

Deus Ex McKenna - [Address to the Jung Society](#) - 2:54:43 to 3:35:35 is mislabeled - this segment is from [Rites of Spring](#) 0:09:40 to 0:50:45 -- already transcribed at <https://terencemckenna.wikispaces.com/The+Rites+Of+Spring>. The Q&A (the second of two question periods during this seminar) for Address to the Jung Society has not yet been transcribed and is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKZTV5bXw9w&t=1h3m20s> - questions begin at 1:03:20.

Original Transcription by: [03/21/2015 - Spencer Barrett]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by:

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aka A Psychedelic Point of View [Psychedelic Salon Title]

Day June 1989

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Well, this is the third, uh, opportunity that I've had to talk to the community at these Wednesday night lectures. Well, I figure we have about 25 years before this information will become completely assimilated into the encroaching consumer society, the leveling of values that seems now to be an inevitable part of the globalizing of society. On one level, it's very good. We recognize ourselves in our enemies and, uh, there's a commonality of values generated. But, on another level, it's tremendously destructive of novelty and uniqueness. I mean, we're turning the whole planet into a white bread, mall-shopping culture and the values of every other way of doing things is being subsumed to that.

I talked a lot in these Wednesday night lectures in the section about, uh, the importance of partnership societies in the human past and how the nostalgia for these kinds of social arrangements have driven us throughout our experience of history. Well, it is, uh, nevertheless, true today that in the Amazon and in perhaps in a few other "relic'd" environments, uh, partnership societies exist. Partnership societies thrive and regulate themselves through a relation - a symbiotic relationship - to plants that we call hallucinogenic plant shamanism, but which is actually almost a welding of the social organism into the natural surround in a way that feeds back into the psyches of these people and the structures of their society in a way that is very, uh, very much promotes the conservation of equilibrium - something we have sadly lost touch with. So, it's very important to preserve, uh, the, uh, options that have been discovered by people over the millennia.

The options that allow a recreation of the, uh, sensory and psychic ratios that characterize the partnership society in contrast to the kind of dominator society that we've lived under for such a long - so, it isn't a matter simply of preserving plants for medicines; it's really much more philosophically deep than that - it's the idea that a, uh, relationship to the vegetable matrix of the planet is what constitutes a, uh, Gaian resurgence. That it is plants that regulate the composition of the atmosphere, the temperatures of the oceans, so forth and so on, and that it is our lack of integration into that system that has precipitated the crisis of toxic 20th century, uh, potlatch civilization. By potlatch -- potlatch was a custom of the Northwest Coast Indians where they would, uh, uh, to show their wealth, destroy huge amounts of material, so that houses would be burned, feathered blankets burned, totem poles burned in the potlatch, in an orgy of destruction which proves your wealth -- and we have assimilated and perfected this custom so that it is second nature to us.

The whole planet is a vast potlatch. We are robbing our children and their children of any sort of recognizable future by, basically, grabbing it all for ourselves. No other society in history has been so callous to human values that it condemned generations unborn of its own, uh, children to live in a, uh, desert. The main thing, I think, that comes out of an effort to formulate a psychedelic point of view - and I take it, this is what we have been involved in - a psychedelic point of view means a point of view which honors consciousness.

Consciousness is seen as the value to be maximized. That's what we want. We want more consciousness, better integration, better information, better models. Uh, we don't want to petrify ourselves or commit ourselves to a model that somehow then is found to be obsolete and inadequate. So, what chiefly constitutes the psychedelic point of view, I think, is its open-ended and provisional nature as opposed to every other ideology or point of view that's running around. We have to -- what the psychedelic point of view is, it's a kind of cultural relativism. We're trying to get a grip on who and where we are in the cosmos from a point of view not that of the American consumerist citizen: something else - something larger, deeper, broader, more touched by the cosmic, more touched by a sense of the past and, uh, of destiny.

So, I have said this many times, but I want to say it now in a slightly different context and discuss it. The statement of the British, um, enzymologist, J. B. S. Haldane who discovered enzymes, so he became an enzymologist - a logical move.[audience chuckles] Haldane said, "The world is not only stranger that we suppose; it is stranger than we *can* suppose." And this is something that we have not entertained very seriously as a possibility, especially the cheerful characters in the white coats with the clipboards. The assumption has always been that Man's mind - notice the gender slant - Man's mind, is, uh, sufficient for the cognition of the cosmos. This is not all that surprising though it is patently idiotic. It is not all that surprising, uh, when you think about the fact that as recently as, let's say, 1830, people believed the earth was 4,000 years old. As recently as, uh, 1480, the New World was unsuspected to exist or it was suspected by a few wild-eyed mapmakers and mad sailors. But, conventional knowledge held that, you know, the Eurasian landmass in connection with Africa was all that existed.

So, when we look back into our recent past, we discover tremendous epistemic naïveté. That means people didn't know what was going on. [audience laughs] They weren't even close. [audience laughs] And yet we are asked to believe that somewhere after Darwin, and before now, it was all figured out. And now, we view the universe from a lofty pinnacle of integrated understanding. Now, the physics explains biology, biology explains culture, culture explains sociology, so forth and so on. Well, uh, you know, this is really whistling past the graveyard because meanwhile the visible consequences of this understanding are: spreading chaos, disillusion of values, an inability to control technology, an inability to set reasonable political goals, such as moderation of population growth and carry them out. Instead, somehow this, uh, deep insight into how everything works has left everything a mess. And, you know, what does that mean about us? Why is that and what can be done about it?

Well, I think the problem is that we have too long ignored the possibility that reality is stranger than we can suppose. I mean, let this reverberate in your mind. Not that -- that means no model will ever work. It means, it will always be provisional. That the understanding of what it is will always recede ahead of any epistemic program to describe, enclose, explain. This is all a -- a fallacy, if you believe that you are embarked on a finite project where eventually you will issue a white paper and that will explain how the boar ate the cabbage. It's not to be explained. And we have, uh, because of unique characteristics of the male ego, chosen to operate with the assumption that we can understand, that the human mind can in fact

'grok' larger and larger levels of embeddedness and make sense of them. What the psychedelic experience, No.1 and point of view, No.2, is saying is that we have the means present, at hand, to completely explode this nonsensical fiction of certitude. And yet, we choose not to confront it. This is why I first proposed calling this, "Facing the Answer" because the answer about how you understand the universe is the same answer that you get when you ask the question: "How am I to understand my own life?"

It can't be understood. It is a receding mystery. It is a continuing carrot. It cannot be brought under the aegis of rational apprehension. It says in Moby Dick, "reality outran apprehension." It always outruns apprehension because apprehension is the primitive functioning of the primate neural network. And reality? Who knows? Who would even care to take a guess, you know? It's a -- it's a mystery. You do not measure the depth of the universal mystery with the neural network of a primate. Our role is not to understand, but to appreciate, to appreciate. We have an immense capacity for resonance with beauty, aesthetic awareness, appreciation of form, appreciation of how things go together. Notice of this word - appreciation. Appreciation. If you don't know what's going on at a dinner party, in a corporation in an environment, then the best course is to keep your mouth shut and pay attention and try to appreciate the situation. It's ridiculous to attempt to seize the tiller of reality because we don't even know where we want to go.

So, the notion that by creating these models of reality which are not acknowledged as models but which are called scientific truths, we betray ourselves down the primrose path that leads to dreary, dusty death because what we do is take the poetry out of being. We extract the poetry from being by the assumption of the mundane. The "banality of modernity" is what I call this. The banality of modernity. The steady flattening of values so that nothing means much. You know, the sense of outrage over political mistreatment of the underprivileged. Or the sense of outrage of the society slips towards the abyss. Or the sense of outrage when people mistreat you is muted. Everything is flattened by the banality of modernity. This is the heritage of all the bad little boys of the 18th century: Nietzsche, Darwin, Hegel, and Schopenhauer - these clowns were on a bad trip and they were loud about it [audience laughs] and what they give us is a universe devoid of soul. Man looms larger and larger, notice the gender slant. Man looms larger and larger in the picture and what this ushers into is, uh, fascism, pure and simple.

And it's not surprising because this calling forth of the image of Man into larger and larger perspective has been the program of monotheism for 3,000 years. It has been a relentless accentuation of the centrality of the human image - the male dominant human image. And, in the -- in the, uh, transmutation of Hellenistic Judaism that becomes Christianity, the final apotheosis of this, uh, uh, point of view is created in the notion that man can be god. That's it and it is hailed as a tremendous infusion of existential validity into the human image. The greatest stride -- the greatest single stride ever taken in the definition of human ontology. Well, I would like to suggest to you it was the greatest backward step ever taken because what it did was it shoved Nature further and further into the background. "Nature is something from which we torment her secrets." This is Francis Bacon. "We torture nature to obtain her secrets." The world is created for Man; it is for Man to remake into his image -- all this gender stuff.

No wonder, that building on that foundation, 19th century rationalism which thought it was putting these things behind it. It conceived itself as anti--clerical, as anti--monotheism and Christian in some sense. Yet, what it really did was just strip away the Baroque trappings. Hans Jonas was very acute in pointing out that 3rd century Hellenistic Gnosticism and Heideggerian philosophy are essentially the same thing. It's just that in the - in the Gnostic recension, you know, you get all these sexy things: demons, angels, levels, and

the emanation from the Pleroma and the clash of the Archons, opera. Opera.

In the Heideggerian recension, they've just gotten down to the nitty--gritty, but the message is the same. Man is thrown into the unknown. Man is in the abyss, lost. All meaning must come from within. All order must come from an inner vision. "We are abandoned." This is Heideggerian language. We are abandoned." Well, this is permission then for pathology because it is a point of view purchased at the cost of ignoring the facts of the matter. And that is, in my definition, is a delusion. A point of view purchased at the expense of the facts of the matter. Whitehead said that there are certain stubborn facts. You can reduce and reduce all you want, but there are certain stubborn facts. Well, one of them is the primacy of Nature, a stubborn fact which was ignored by this tradition.

Once nature is taken as the ground of being then the permission to inflate the image of the ego is denied. And, I think, that this is happening globally, very slowly, under pressure, under duress, because our backs are to the wall. We are seeing a planetary crisis unfold before our eyes and, you know, blame has not yet come into the rhetoric.

But, eventually it's going to be understood who's to blame and it isn't the tribesman of New Guinea or the Indians of Siberia; it is western, male, scientific, technological hubris that has claimed center stage like a noisy drunk and then just preceded to hold us all prisoner while it acted out a, uh, a process that is rooted in its own traumatic birth, in the sundering of the symbiotic relationship to the vegetable matrix that characterized, uh, prehistory. Well, so what I'm offering, as a counterpoise to that, is this notion of provisional models. Nature is not mute. This is what Sartre said, "Nature is mute." He was another one of these people who pushed this existential line in one form or another. Nature is not mute. Nature is full of affection and intentionality toward humankind. But, intuition must be given prominence in the -- in the rearrangement of our relationship with the world.

And I talked the other night about induction and intuition and I want to say a little bit more about it tonight. Different things. Science runs on induction which is a very low grade form of logic. It means you do something over and over again and if it happens the same way 100 times, you have confidence that the 101st time, it will happen the same way. Intuition doesn't work like that. Intuition, as I said the other night, leaves no trail. And most of us are accustomed to thinking of intuition as something feminine, mysterious, unexplainable and, uh, sort of magical. And, also, I think, because we live in a male--dominant society, we undervalue it. If someone has it -- claims intuition, our position is probably one of, "Prove it." Doubt in the face of the assertion, you see. But, there's an interesting thing about intuition that I don't think many people understand or have bothered to look at which is, did you know? -- I bet you didn't know: mathematics is based on intuition.

Now, half of mathematics would rise with a screech of horror at this statement [audience laughs], but the other half of mathematics calls itself intuitional mathematics. Okay, well now what's going on here? Probably if you are not a professional philosopher of science, you are accustomed to associating mathematics with science rather closely. This is because science in order to give itself legitimacy has very slyly appropriated mathematics, especially in the 20th century, to its purposes. But, if we talk about what is called pure mathematics which is the great love of mathematicians — the other kind of mathematics is applied mathematics and that's for engineers and technologists and is not, you know, what moves them to the edge of their chair [audience laughs] — but, if we think about, uh, pure mathematics, it is an activity carried on in the mind based on, uh, deductive truth. Deductive, not inductive. In other words, a statement is made. It can be anything." All greys are non--X." This is just a statement. We don't yet know what this is

going to be about. "All greys are non-X." "All greens are F--Sub--1". What we're putting in place are a set of statements that appear nonsensical, but what we will assert is, that we should seek a relationship between them and then that will show us something. And this is how mathematics really works. It has very little to do with number. It has to do with the conceptualizing of relationships, conceptualizing them and then exploring your intuition about these conceptions and then the third and very late stage is you write a formal statement of your cognitive activity around these assumptions.

So, you see, mathematics is entirely intuitional. It leaves no track. It is drawn from this other domain. Well, um, why has it been appropriated by science? Well, for a very funny and not well understood reason. Mathematics has been appropriated by science because mathematics has an uncanny ability to describe nature. Completely uncanny. Now, you may have never asked yourself, why is mathematics such a powerful tool for the description of nature? Maybe you thought that somebody else can answer this and that it's not a problem. Well, I've got news for you. It is a problem. Nobody has any good ideas about why mathematics describes nature. But, notice that mathematics is an intuitional activity. An intuitional activity describes nature, without the intercession of inductive science. Inductive science is a kind of naïve holdover from Greek, um, Democritian theories where everything is conceived of as clearly conceivable and operating according to known laws. But, in fact, the deeper structure of nature is not modeled out of an examination of data obtained by measurement. That isn't how it works these days. The deeper description of nature is achieved by taking weird objects from the frontiers of mathematics. These things dreamed up in the confines and depths of the human mind and inside computers, and then laying them over nature. And seeing, my gosh! there's a one-to-one correspondence, between let us say – the multidimensional catastrophes described by Rene Tom, and the dripping of a faucet, the turbulence in a brook, the voting patterns in a ghetto. All of these things are seen to be easily modeled by extremely exotic mathematical objects discovered through intuition within the mind. Well, what does this mean?

Well, it means, if it means anything – before we draw the deeper conclusion – what is the conclusion on the surface? It must be that the unaided human mind is more capable of correctly modeling nature than the human mind that works through the methodological inductive approach called Science. And, in fact, this is clearly true because the world described by science, a scientific description of this room, would say very little about all the important things going on in it. A scientific description of this room would leave out personality, would leave out linguistic intent, would leave out the uniqueness of each of us. For science, we are merely members of the human species. Again, this flattening, this reductionism. This betrayal of the quintessence of the phenomenon in a desperate effort to achieve closure in the modeling process. And so, then you do achieve closure, but the model is always inadequate; it's always inadequate. So then there's this sense of frustration. We can't -- we can't get closure with the model unless we tell a lie, unless we deny the complexity, the interrelatedness, the soulness, the spiritness, the mindfulness, all of these things are, for science, what are called, uh, secondary properties. They are epi-phenomenal. They are only, uh, an aspect of your point of view like an iridescence on a butterfly's wing or something like that. In fact, that is the classic reductionist definition of consciousness. It is an iridescence that appears on the surface of neural processing that we mistake for true being. Haha, and yet, somehow we are embedded within this iridescence and it from within this iridescence that we launch the descriptive models that then deny our existential validity. Well, so this has been an animistic exercise, and there must be others.

So, then what is the path of intuition in relationship to nature that is different from the path of science. In a way, it is only a shift of emphasis. William Blake said, "Attend the minute particulars." This is very good advice for science and it is very good advice for mathematics, and what I'm suggesting here tonight is that

we have misconstrued mathematics and have bought the notion that it a part of science when actually it stands ready to empower intuition and to sweep science, if not away, at least, into a more proper role more befitting it's extremely limited application to the higher orders of reality that we really care about. I mean, science is really -- it's the plumbing level of reality. It doesn't catch the integrated, you know, the nature of language, the evolution of fairy tale, the dynamics of love affairs, uh, the quintessence of genius. These are the things that, as human beings structure and constellate, and guide and inform our world, and science has nothing to say about these things. Mathematics on the other hand is like the bedrock celebration of these things. It empowers intuition; it discovers intuition to be the most powerful epistemic tool that we have - more powerful than induction, more powerful than deduction. Intuition is the unifying of experience into a Gestalt image of the world: a coming together within the organism of a correct imaging of the world. Now, what do I mean by a correct imaging? All I mean is a provisional image that carries you to the next moment. This is all we can hope for at this stage.

We are much more suited for dancing than for whatever it is that we have been doing. You know, whatever it was, it wasn't dancing. We are a part of nature; we are a part of light; we are a part of the energy field of the planet. We are not its keeper in the sense that, it is not given unto us to understand it. That was all a horrible misunderstanding. The idea that we should understand reality and then somehow make something of it. Alfred North Whitehead said, uh, that, "Understanding is the apperception of pattern as such." "As such," that's all -- so here we have a room full of people. Well -- it's a pattern, its many patterns. It's the pattern of how men and women are mixed together statistically as we scan from left to right. If I see a pattern there, I know something about the crowd. I understand something about the crowd. The pattern tells me something and I call that understanding. But we could analyze the crowd from the point of view of the distribution of young people and old people or people in, uh, colors in the red/blue spectrum as according to the yellow/white spectrum. Each one of these things is a way of analyzing the pattern in the room and each one of these patterns tells the perceiver more about what is going on in the room. Because the room is not a distribution of young people and old people, a distribution of men and women, or a distribution of garment colors. The room is a mystery, a recessional mystery, that presents itself as a series of interlocking patterns of infinite depth. And so in building collective epistemologies, this is what we must ask of these epistemologies, that they give us the experience of understanding. And the experience of understanding is largely intuitional.

How much of an experience of understanding, do you have when you examine what you examine what modern physics is saying about the origin of the universe? I submit not much because it is so clearly the product of abstraction. The product of the phonetic alphabet, the male ego, they set all the interesting stuff back in the first three minutes -- who can go and look? It's all stacked against empowering the perceiver.

It's all staked against empowering the perceiver. You can't even check the statements these people are making unless you happen to have a \$125 million colliding bevatron or something, and the understanding to use it, and interpret the results. So, what we have is priesthood, off on the edge of things, propounding great profundities that nowhere touch the heart. Nowhere empower the individual, nowhere strengthen the diade or reinforce the family or give support to the downtrodden. It doesn't seem to be about that. In other words, the explanation of the world is not a human explanation. A human explanation must come from intuition. It must come from poetry, it must come ultimately from experience and, by experience, I don't mean, uh, the experimental method of science which is that things are pulled apart, taken down to their lowest common denominator and then described. I mean, if you do -- that's like believing you understand Los Angeles, if you have the telephone directory, you know. [audience laughs] I mean, this is the level of

genetics today. They say they understand life and they have the telephone directory and they're talking about Los Angeles because they can look up where the genes are, the coding for the proteins. Does this tell us anything about a broken heart? Or a messiah. Or a Hitler? I don't think so.

So, what we are trying to do is return the focus of attention to individual experience. We have been slaved too long to ideology transmitted hierarchically and based on a tremendously alienating instrumentality. That's what science depends on now: a tremendously alienating instrumentality. What we need to do is empower experience. Well, this is where the psychedelics come in because citizens don't take psychedelics because it's illegal. Neither do marionettes, neither do robots. None of these well--behaved and mechanistic reductionist images of humanity take psychedelics because it's misbehaving. Misbehaving is a great sin. In fact, it's enshrined as the first sin. You'll regard that the psychedelic issue was there in Eden and somebody misbehaved and then they got tossed out forever, and their children's children into the chaos of history. It's interesting to read in Genesis why this was; it was because, "They will become as we are," says Yahweh, "They will become as we are if they eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge." I suggest to you that this is precisely what we should seek to do and that this 'we' is the voice of hierarchy, the voice of paternalism, the voice of the male ego finally right up into the storm god, the volcano god who lies back there in the origins of monotheism.

We empower our experience by insisting on our authenticity. It is a wonderful thing to learn to be able to stand up and yell, "Bullshit." I did it first when I was about 18 years old and it was the meme of the hour and it held -- it blew their minds; it did blow their minds. It was uncivil [audience laughed]. It lacked polity. It was rude and crude and correct because so much is being slung and nobody is talking about the primacy of experience and the dignity of the individual. The dignity of the individual. We went a long way with this in America before we betrayed it. And it wasn't only betrayed by the clowns in Washington. It's also betrayed by anybody who clusters themselves around the feet of some self--proclaimed nabob. Because the fact [audience laughs] of the matter is, nobody knows what's going on. Nobody knows. Nobody has the faintest idea. The best guesses are lies, you may be sure of it. So to pretend that one human being will lead another out of the dark night of ignorance and into the shining light of truth is ludicrous. Absolutely grotesque.

A product of this empowering of the human image that has gone on through several thousand years of dominator culture. If you want a teacher, try a waterfall or a mushroom or a mountain wilderness or a storm-pounded seashore. This is where the action is. It's not back in the hive; it's not in the anthill; it's not knocking your head against the floor in front of somebody who claims that because of their lineage and whose feet they washed and whose feet they washed, that you should give credence to them. Knowledge is provisional and, uh, we are yet to approach the first moment of civilized understanding. The way it is to be done is by trusting yourself, trusting your intuition. Reject authority. Authority is a lie and an abomination. Authority will lead you into ruin. It's not real and it isn't -- don't get the idea that it's this liberal rap about how everybody has a piece of the action. You know, the Jews know something, the Buddhists know something, the Huichol know something. Nonsense! Rubbish! Nody knows anything. These are different kinds of shell games that have been worked out by priestly castes of people to keep things under control. Institutions seek to maximize control. Control. Control. Did you think that they were in the business of enlightening you? Saving your soul? Forget it. Control is what this is all about. And to the degree that we commit ourselves to ideology, we are poisoned. Any ideology -- Marxism, Catholicism, Objectivism, you name it. Rubbish -- all rubbish. What is real is experience. What is real is this moment and so then what it becomes about -- what are the frontiers of experience? How much of that has been taken away from us by

these dominators? By these priesthoods, by these cults, by these philosophical shell games. Well – a lot. That's the whole story of history. Our growing unease, our growing dis-ease. Our malaise is all about the fact that we are kept from the wellspring of experience.

We are sexually repressed, you may not feel it – but look back 100 years to a time when pianos wore pants. You know, maybe we've made a little progress on the sexual thing, maybe not. Maybe more or less than we think. But we are repressed in all of these areas. Uh, and we are particularly repressed in the area that relates to the psychedelic experience because it is -- it is Raid to the dominator insect invasion. They can't take it. They can't stand it. Because it empowers the individual. It dissolves the cheerful model of science. It's just exposed as a nice story. It enriches the accessible universe 10 fold, 100 fold, 1000 fold. It makes the individual complete within his or herself, and this completion of the individual is extremely destructive to the plan of the dominators which is that you will be a cog in the machine; you will participate in the life of an organization. Not your life – the life of an organization. You will go to some bullshit job, you will pour the best years of your life and your genius and your hopes into this. You will serve an institution. You will serve, serve, serve, serve.

Well, it's a bad idea for free people to go a long with this. A much better idea would be to insist on the dignity of human beings. To recognize that the freeing of slaves, the giving of the vote to women, the ending of public whippings, that this program of political enlightenment must also then include hands off on how people want to relate to changing their minds. We are not interested in being sexually regulated by the state and we are not interested in being intellectually, spiritually, emotionally manipulated by the state. The state should stand down in this issue. The state is acting as the enforcing arm of the dominator culture. Specifically, of fundamentalist screwballs who, you know, are horrified by all this, by the notion that people would claim the authenticity of their own minds, that people would stand in the light of nature and reject original sin and the guilt from Eden and, you know, the sins of the fathers, and all this rubbish which is handed down.

What the archaic revival is going to have to mean if it has teeth, is a re--empowering of the individual, and a consequent lowering of the profile of institutions, especially government. We need to think about these things because we have bought into the idea that we have to serve and behave and be enslaved, else chaos will engulf the world. We need to carry out our analysis of the situation to the point where we can embrace chaos. And see that chaos is the environment in which we all thrive. That's how I've done it for years. You think I could have lived -- you think I could have gotten away with this in the Soviet Union. I don't think so. I require a society on the brink of social breakdown to be able to do my work. And I think a society on the brink of social breakdown is the healthiest situation for individuals. I don't know how many of you have ever had the privilege of being in a society in a pre--revolutionary situation, but the cafés stay open all night and there's music in the streets and you can breath it, you can feel it, and you know what is happening. The dominator is being pushed. It never succeeds. It's never able to claim itself, but on the other hand, history is young. We may have a crack at this. A global society is coming into being. A global society made out of information that was not intended to be ours, but which is ours, through the mistaken invention and distribution of small computers, the printing press, all of this stuff.

Information is power and information has been spilled by the clumsy handling of the cybernetic revolution by the dominator culture in so that it is everywhere. Never has the situation been more fluid. Never have, uh, the opportunities for infiltration, insurrection and hell-raising been more present at hand, but we have to seize the opportunity. We have to seize the opportunity because the world doesn't have that much more

to run unless somebody begins to shake the apple cart. If we don't begin to shake the apple cart then the apple cart is just going to sail over the cliff and be lost.

So, the psychedelics are very hot in this because they dissolve boundaries. They dissolve assumptions. And our task, "our" being the -- everyone who seeks self-empowerment through experience, our task is to dissolve the assumptions of the dominator culture and make it impossible for it to work. This, I think, is already happening. We have nature on our side, you see. Nature is beginning to kick up, and, you know, it may alarm you that they're cutting down the Amazon rainforest, but imagine if you were the clown who owns it, how alarmed he is. He sees it as an investment. He thinks he owns it and when he sees that it's being destroyed, he's extremely alarmed. The fact that nature is itself being seen as a limited resource is a tremendous tilt to our side because the provisional model psychedelic open--ended-partnership way of doing things is uh, the only style that can perhaps seize the controls of this sinking submarine and get it back to the surface, so that we can figure out what should be done.

If we continue, as we have, then, you know, we're doomed. And the judgment of some higher power on that will be, "They didn't even struggle. They went to the boxcars with their suitcases and they didn't even struggle."

This is too nightmarish to contemplate. We're talking about the fate of a whole planet. Why are people so polite? Why are they so patient? Why are they so forgiving of gangsterism and betrayal? It's very difficult to understand. I believe it's because the dominator culture is increasingly more and more sophisticated in its perfection of subliminal mechanisms of control. And I don't mean anything grandiose and paranoid; I just mean that through press releases and sound bites and the enforced idiocy of television, the drama of a dying world has been turned into a soap opera for most people. And they don't understand that it's their story and they will eat it in the final act if somewhere between here and the final act they don't stand up on their hind legs and howl.

So, this whole, uh, effort to bring the psychedelic experience back into prominence is an effort to empower individuals. And to get them to see that we are bled of our authenticity by vampirish institutions that will never of their own accord leave us alone. There must be a moment when the machinery and the working of the machinery becomes so odious that people are willing to strive forward and throw sand on the track and, uh, force a re-evaluation of the situation. And it's not done through organizing; its not done through vanguard parties or cadres of intellectual elites; it's done through just walking away from all of that. Claiming your identity, claiming your vision, your being, your intuition and then acting from that without regret. Cleanly, without regret.

Okay, well, I want to thank you all again not only for this evening, but the month. And, uh, Esalen is a wonderful second home to me and my wife and my children.

I'm very concerned about free speech, freedom of thought, these things are, uh, endangered memes. Esalen has always tolerated and even encouraged me and I think this is extremely laudable and brave. They don't have to do that. Somebody else could sit here and amuse you and it wouldn't cause any ripples. So, I'm very appreciative to Esalen for its commitment to free speech. I'm appreciative to you. This may have outraged some of you. You were noble about it. Civilized dialogue is our last best hope and we must preserve theatres and opportunities for dialogue. The best idea will win. The best idea will win.

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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aka A Stiff Dose of Psychedelics

Day May 1990

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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We will, I think, continue this kind of neurotic behavior until it either is our undoing or until we awaken to archaic values. That's why the weekend is called what it is. The archaic revival is a very large cultural wave that, you know, can be pushed -- you can trace the beginnings of to the first swell back to the turn of the century with relatively and theosophy and surrealism and the work of Freud and Jung on the unconscious. But, it's a discovery, a moving toward a realization that the values that can serve us are archaic values. That we have to go completely outside of history and we have to make -- you know, we're going to find out the nature of human nature. We can't have it several ways. We can't live in obfuscation.

I mean, the real question is, is man good? You know, because we're going to find out, because as we move more and more into this cultural domain that I call the imagination, nothing lies between us and the expression of our dreams, you know. And so far, our dreams have been, I think, expressed fairly shoddily. I mean, you know, our cities are like sores. Our contribution to the ecosystem of the planet is, uh, plutonium, pesticides, chlorofluorocarbons so forth and so on. An apologist for the human race would say, "But we had so many strikes against us: the law of gravity, the cost of materials, the resistance of water, air, and so forth and so on. Well, fine, we're going to get rid of all that. We're going to enter into the imagination where, you know, the tensile strength of a structure is whatever you say it is.

This is where language comes in, I think. Language is the, uh, sort of the cad-cam, the computer-assisted drawing software for creating the reality of the imagination. I think, it's a very -- it's overwhelming, our situation, the potential and the depth of the strikes against us. I mean, it's really I, um -- what's going on, on this planet is absolutely unique so far as we know. It's never happened before on this planet: intelligence emerging out of biological organization. And actually having a shot at what? Who knows? I mean, being itself is some kind of opportunity. The reasonable expectation is that nothing exists. Why should anything exist?

I mean, it seems to me that the most conservative universe would be a dimensionless plenum; a homogenous, pointless, dimensionless. That makes sense. Why then is there instead, you know, multiplicity upon multiplicity? I mean, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles [audience laughs] -- stuff like that? How in the world do you get from utter emptiness to that kind of thing? The richness, the creative force behind it all is awesome. And I am not religious in any ordinary sense. In fact, I'm violently anti-religious in most senses and I certainly would lead the charge against priest craft in any form, but the picture of the

universe as a machine subject to a few laws discovered by a bunch of guys in powdered wigs – that's ridiculous. [audience laughs] I mean, you've got to be kidding!

Uh, science doesn't deal, as it's always at pains to point out, with what's called subjective experience. Well, that's really too bad because that's all any of us ever have [audience laughs] is subjective experience, you know. So, we have, we have -- in the interests of - I don't know what exactly – a curious drive or an obsession with the Greeks really, an obsession with the physical world that we have not been able to disentangle ourselves. So that, you know we can measure the temperature of distant stars, but we don't know what we think about the woman we're living with. Stuff like that. Just such a completely overgrown and over-developed dichotomous situation that, uh, it makes no sense.

So, uh, In terms of any kind of finding a conclusion or something like that - it's that, there is an experience. It's harmless, meaning it can't kill you. That's the guarantee there. There is this experience, it is in our cultural heritage. It synergizes the most profound and private dimensions of our being. It allows us to recast ourselves in new forms quickly. And, uh, If we don't turn back toward this style of relating to ourselves, to each other and to the world, but persist instead in the addiction to syntactical abstraction then, I think, we'll just run it off the edge. That, uh -- and it would be a tragedy because it *is* a horse race. Don't let anybody kid you. It's not that the good guys are miles and miles behind and so you might as well tear your ticket up and throw it in the air and go home. No, it's an absolute horse race, neck and neck, a photo finish – the race between education and disaster. I mean, we're going to either burst out into a millennium of freedom and caring and decency, or we're going to toxify the whole thing and just turn it into an ash heap.

And the responsibility falls largely on us and we don't know! I mean, the momentum, the lethal momentum of these institutions is terrifying. Our position is like that of people who are attempting to turn a battleship 180 degrees and we're doing it with an oar, you know. I mean, the momentum of it is incredible. But, it is not a closed system and I say this is as a reasonable person. I mean, I want to keep stressing that, that I won't sit at the same table with the channellers and the people who have good news about Atlantis and all of this stuff. I mean, if this is your private thing, it's okay, but the rules of evidence preclude it being taken seriously until you get your act more together. [audience laughs] But, in the psychedelic experience, there is confounding paranormal material. It's the only place I've ever found it. I scoured India, these guys -- as far as I can tell, it's a skin game" uh, bu...

But, outlandish things are going on inside the psychedelic experience. It seems to imply the thing we had hardly dared hope, which is that the world is whatever you say it is if you know how to say it right. Then the whole task becomes, how do we take control of this language that allows us, uh, to say it right? We - I think I speak for most people here - serve the idea that matter is ultimately at the command of mind. But, we need to move that forward as a demonstrable principle because, uh, uh, without that, the fear of most people is that we're imprisoned by physics in a sinking submarine. And yet, when you go into these psychedelic spaces, what you discover is that all bets are off. That we can't even tell how weird it is. I mean, it may be possible to walk to Arcturus if you have the right set of coordinates.

And, uh, the whole concern is to get the word out, to spread this meme, to empower people, to confirm the existence of these realities for themselves and to begin to form a kind of community consensus about it. You know, it's only -- I guess in 1992, we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World. Five hundred years ago, people discovered the other half of this planet and we're living there now.

This is the New World. Five hundred years ago, this didn't exist. What existed was a vast cataract, uh, patrolled by sea monsters and the oceans of the world poured off this cataract into the infinite abyss. And that was the edge of the world. We, the psychedelic people, are like these early explorers coming back and saying, you know, "I sailed west for 16 days and I didn't go mad. Instead, this is what happened and I bring news of this, this and this." And what we're accumulating are like the diaries of explorers that there's a world there. It's a mental world, yes, but we are mental creatures. Take note of that.

Uh, if we could go there, we would go there. And the thing is, we don't know that we can't go there. We have never taken the imagination seriously. We have never taken the self-management of culture seriously. We've always sort of thought things should just go along, uh, like a random walk. But, now, because of the immense technical power that's come into our hands, we're -- the design process of the whole planet is now on our desk. And we're being asked to essentially step into stewardship of the entire planetary environment. We have to have then a vision. We have to have a dream. Not *a* vision or *a* dream; *the* vision, *the* dream. And it can't come from, uh, the personality of individual human beings; it has to come out of the bones of the planet.

Yeah, and this is, I think, this is what the psychedelic experience is broadcasting. It's broadcasting the hologramatic, fracto, all together, all at once image of totality that our religions have sensed and called "God," that the shamans have learned to use as a vast kind of computer for extracting information and for generating healing energy. But, it is -- that there is some kind of controlling, minded, integrated thing behind nature and we're not going to understand that this weekend, next week or ever. This is not a relationship of solving a problem; it's a relationship of being a -- an initiate of a mystery and then living your life, you know, in the light of that. And, uh -- and the task of understanding is endless because understanding is simply the integrated coordination of pattern, and nature is pattern upon pattern, upon pattern, upon pattern, upon level, upon level, upon level. It has no depth. Its measure cannot be taken. Everything is infinite and everything is animate. And everything is filled with a kind of deep concern for humanity. And, we are the lame, little brother because we seem to be cut off from all the rest of this. Well, that's kind of a Blakeian take on it.

[Question] The shamanistic cultures themselves have a notion of a fall and that this may just be the people that we happen to interview in our era we're roughly studying it. The old days of shamanism were the 'good days' and what we have now is deluded. Is that just a matter of cultural contact with other cultures in that the original shamanistic cultures were isolated, or is, indeed, there a different quality to the time of this 20,000 years ago that led to a general fall amongst our species and, you know, people in general?

It's a very complicated question. The answer gets pretty technical and talking about it gets pretty technical. Uh, the thing that's so interesting about psilocybin and DMT is that they're so closely related to ordinary brain chemistry. The brain chemistry of all higher animals runs largely on serotonin. Serotonin is 5-hydroxytryptamine. DMT is N,N-dimethyltryptamine. Psilocybin is 4-phosphoryloxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine, but the phosphoryloxy group goes off as it crosses the blood-brain barrier, so it's 4-hydroxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine. So, it's very interesting that, uh, these powerful, naturally occurring hallucinogens are in many cases only one molecule away from endogenous neurotransmitters. So, in answer to your question, it's possible to suggest that we're as close as one mutation away from significant shifts in the chemical, uh, mix of the human brain. And, for instance, in the pineal gland, um, there's an enzyme called adrenoglomerulotropin, which is chemically, uh, 6-methoxy-tetrahydroharmaline. It's very closely related to the harmine alkaloids in ayahuasca. Well, the persistent

myth about ayahuasca is that it creates states of group-mindedness and telepathy. The original alkaloid was actually named telepathine until it was discovered that it was structurally similar to harmine, which had been previously described by, uh, Hochstein & Paradies.

So, in other words, what's going on here, is the possibility that language, telepathy and all of these mental abilities that are unique among human beings have to do with a very, very small number of mutations in the amine brain amine production pathways. Uh, one of the things that I want to talk about here is the possibility of new forms of communication and that the psychedelics can stimulate new forms of communication among human beings, even in the way that they created language in the first place. In other words, I see language as a model A version of something, which could be made, uh, a lot more efficient, better and more effective. You had something or did you? You? Go ahead.

[Question] When humankind changes direction and goes towards the altered state and that projection - what do you think that we will do with science and all of the stuff that we created that is destroying us?

Well, science -- there are different ways to practice science. Uh, the Greek style was science was a spiritual undertaking. The purpose was to know. The idea being that somehow there was something good about knowing. I mean, I had a philosophy professor who said, "First of all, I'll teach you how to recognize the truth, then secondly, I'll try to teach you what's so great about it." And, uh, this is that kind of a situation. Science -- philosophers of science are perfectly aware of the limitations of science. It's the thousands and thousands of workbench scientists who think of themselves as servants of a world religion who create the problem. We need to know how matter works and we need to know the things which science tells us, but it is no basis for extrapolating into human values. And the -- the culprit there is the concept of social science. This is an obscene idea and we should disabuse ourselves of it immediately. Social science, psychology, intellectual history, um, you know, even linguistics I would say and philology. All of this stuff. These people should find honest work. [audience laughs] They're not scientists and they're mucking it up. It was a grand dream of science that it would extend its methods into social phenomena, having had such great success in the 19th century with Darwin and Wallace in biology, they thought -- well, then Herbert Spencer and all these people -- why not just extend it into society?

But, the problem is, uh, there are emergent properties in society that exceed the descriptive engines of science. There are emergent properties in biology. I mean, biology is not -- may also have to be left out of science. I mean, biology is classificatory and it works very well there, but in terms of mechanism and understanding, it's pretty murky. DNA was decoded in 1950. The molecular geneticist promised a golden age shortly to follow and it's 40 years later, and they still don't understand gene expression or what all this stuff is. It's been very disappointing, considering what was promised. I think science is an art. Everything is an art because we have no sure knowledge of anything. I mean, maybe mathematics is not an art because there, you know, you work from artificially constructed premises. I'm very much -- I'm very keen on science; I just don't like its philosophical pontification. Uh, as a method, it's, uh, it's been very effective, but it's bred great pride in it, and it's thought that it could turn itself to domains where it was completely inappropriate.

[Question] I have a question, maybe one or two. I haven't tried mushrooms yet, but a lot of the things you've been explaining and describing to me have become a reality over the last year. Just the usage of hashish, just the ingestion of it, I would have to say, very limited, I'm comparing my experience to these psilocybin descriptions that you give and they sound tremendous. I think the question I'm looking for is - before you, I

guess, got involved with psilocybin and DMT and things like that, we're you predisposed to saving the planet and being a humanistic type of person? And did the DMT and psilocybin take you to a more profound awareness of, you know, what you as a human wanted to do?

Well, I've thought about all of this because it's weird to have the life I have. [audience laughs] You know, it's so strange. I mean, until I went into therapy, I thought I had the most ordinary family in the world. And then once you're in therapy, you discover no, it's the most insane scene you've ever heard of, you just didn't notice. [audience laughs] I've always been interested in nature and I've always been interested in beauty. And, I think it was the pursuit of beauty that served me best because when I was a kid, first started out collecting rocks. Then I collected butterflies. Then in my emergent phallic phase, I was an amateur rocketeer. And the major thrill there was setting off these explosive fuels [audience laughs] and watching the possibility of shrapnel and all that. And then as I got into rockets, I got into science fiction. Science fiction, I really consider a proto-psychedelic drug because what science fiction does is it gives permission to imagine. It says, try it this way, this way, this way. And as a kid, you get the idea, you know, that anything is possible. That's what science fiction teaches you. And then I was really obsessive about science and I wanted to be an astronomical engineer and Wernher von Braun was my hero and all that. And then it sort of flipped at some point and I got in -- I decided that I had been terribly narrow. I was figuring all this out for myself and I was in some little town in Colorado, and I decided I had been terribly narrow and that it was all in the humanities and I began reading Henry James and all this type of stuff.

And I was into Aldous Huxley, as an example of an English novelist. I read *Antic Hay*, *Crome Yellow*, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* and then came upon *The Doors of Perception*. And, just, you know, I was, like, 14 years old and it was astonishing. And I said if a tenth of this is true then this is the most amazing thing there is. Well, if you've read *The Doors of Perception*, you know, it's actually a terribly conservative gloss. I mean, it's all about looking at pictures and seeing the escheat in the folds of your trousers and thinking about how that relates to Meister Eckhart and -- all this Huxleyan type stuff. That gave me the idea and then I stuck with it. I stuck with it somehow and found marijuana and that went on to LSD, and then my great, good fortune, I think, is that just after a few months of taking LSD, somebody brought me DMT. And, you know, DMT is a miracle. I mean, DMT is like something that fell out of a flying saucer. I mean, it is so strong and so psychedelic; I can't imagine being more smashed than that or *wanting* to be. I mean, it's more like a near death experience than any near death experience I ever heard anybody describe. They sound absolutely pedestrian compared to a DMT trip, [audience laughs] where, you know, you're sure you're dead. You say, "What the hell else could it be?" [audience laughs] You know.

And then I went to, I went to Asia. I was at Berkley when I had all these drug experiences and then I went to Asia and tried to find it with yogis and all that and ended up smoking a lot of hashish and becoming more cynical than ever about spirituality and just saying, you know, hashish and LSD. That was -- before I went to the Amazon, that was what I discovered that really convinced me you could get somewhere was, you know. You could take a bunch of LSD and then smoke great hash on top of that and really crazy things do go on. And then I went to the Amazon and, you know, incredible shamanism is happening there. I mean, they don't hold back. The method I used in India was, I would just say, you know, "What can you show me? You know, I've read all these books. I know how to manipulate all this multi-syllabic mumbo-jumbo. But, just one thing!" And they would mumble, "Very pushy." [audience laughs]

When you go to South America, they just say, "Okay. Let's go out in the forest. We'll get this stuff and cook it up and tonight, we'll show you our best trick." And it slams you to the wall. You plead for

mercy.[audience laughs] And, uh, it was a vindication. Because the thing I want to stress and I don't know if it's as important to you as it is to me, but you do not have to sell out to any form of airhead-ism. You can be as tight assed as you want. You can be as hard nosed as you want. You can be as demanding, analytical, rational as you want and the thing is bigger than you are. It'll just take you apart. It'll make you weep like a baby. So, there's nothing about faith, and sensitivity and reaching – no, no, no. When it comes, you know, it kicks in the front door and takes you prisoner. [audience laughs] It's uh...

So, uh, and that was what the flying saucer meant when it said, "Because you didn't believe in anything. This is the way to get somewhere. You'll never get anywhere if you believe in stuff because, you know, it'll take you six months to work through Baba G and then you have to go on to somebody else and life is just not long enough to give all these guys a crack at your enlightenment." So, you know, you sort of have to goose it along. And, uh, and the great vindication is, then that when you behave like that, when you take that stance, which you would expect would betray you into nihilism, depression and so forth. Instead, no, that works. That's the method then the gold. You know, reject everything but gold and you know what gold is? It looks like gold. It feels like gold. It's not something that you have to...you know. I mean, I'm amazed at what thin soup is dished out as spiritual food, uh, and it's because we are, as individuals, conflicted, you know. I feel this in myself. I mean, it's hard to take psychedelics. It's not hard to sweep up around the ashram, but it's hard to take psychedelics.

[Question] You know, I've read some stuff by Andrew Weil where he was talking about going in search of, you know, the ayahuasquero, the curandero and he talks a lot about these guys that are mixing up this sloppy brew and, and they're drunks and they're just, you know -- I don't even know if you could go down to the Amazon and find -- I don't know what you'd find. I haven't been there, but what his attempts were, is, there's a lot of just slops and drunks stuff happening. A lot of these guys are alcoholics, you know.

You're absolutely right.

[Question - cont'd] . And that's the main thing happening: was the alcohol and Christianity has just kind of pervaded so much of this stuff that I wonder what's left? And how you find it anymore?

Well, it really helps to do your homework. It really helps to go down there knowing as much as you possibly can about all this. Meaning...

[Question] Apparently, so much of what you get out of it has to do with how it's made. Who makes it? How it's mixed? And so on. And, if you don't make it yourself and you don't know what's happening, then what have you got?

Because ayahuasca is a combinatory drug. It isn't like peyote, or mushrooms, or morning glories where you get the thing and eat it and if you eat it in sufficient amounts, it works. This is something where two plants have been combined and the proportions must be correct and the method must be correct. So, there's a huge room for personalities to come into it for fast shuffles of all sorts and mind games of all sorts.

[Question] A lot of them are really egotistical, too.

It's true. Now, what you have to do if you're into ayahuasca, or what we did, is, first of all, we drank a huge amount of swill and we worked our way slowly through these people. And, if somebody appeared to be an

asshole, they were so classified and moved on. And eventually we got to good people. But, what we did then is we got samples of their stuff, brought it back, took it through Mass spectrometers and high pressure liquid chromatography, saw what the proportions were, collected the live plants, moved them to Hawaii, grew the plants, re-concocted the thing, re mass-spec'd what we did and made it as much like the 'good stuff' as possible. So, it was a project of 15 years and really maniacal dedication, but I have the faith. You know, I mean, that if given sufficient time to work on ayahuasca, you could produce a drug out of there so good that it would be ludicrous to suggest that it was illegal. I mean, I -- because, you see, this is brain soup. These are all neurotransmitters. There's not a non-endogenous neurotransmitter in the whole beverage. So, really, what you're -- what you're...

[Question] A non- what?

A non-endogenous neurotransmitter. Meaning, everything in this drug that you're about to drink is already in your head. There's nothing unusual where drugs like ketamine, mescaline, LSD, there's none of that in your body.

It's like a slow release DMT trip. It lasts four to six hours and it's intensely visual. And unlike psilocybin, it's not -- it doesn't have this outer space, science fiction, mega 'apocalyptic' kind of take on it which is what psilocybin does. I mean, psilocybin shows you the machines preparing to transport the faithful away from a burning Earth. That's not what ayahuasca is about. It's about nature, water, flow, life, energy. It's almost -- you know, when MDMA was so hot and people called it an empathy drug and said it makes you empathetic with the people you're with. Ayahuasca makes you empathetic with the people you're not with, and that's a much more profound experience because there's so much more of them, you know.

[Question] I don't understand what you mean by "empathetic with the people you're not with"? I don't quite get it.

You feel the poignancy of the human situation. You feel -- well, see, I'm usually in a hut somewhere surrounded by a bunch of Indians and suddenly, I understand what the songs are about. And they're always about the same thing. They're about the water, and the people, and the life, and the fish and lost love and -- but, you have this heart-opening thing. Say, you know, the folk - this is their mystery, this is their religion. I'm getting it now. I'm feeling this huge wave of, uh, of the wisdom of the folk. And, they say this to you in Peru, "This is our university. You went to Harvard. We went to Ayahuasca." Uh, yeah.

[Question] I'm wondering if you can comment on morning glory -- rather, Jimson weed, which I believe is the same thing as morning glory seeds.

No, it's different.

[Question] But I'm curious about Jimson Weed because it grows wild all over. It's on the highway and on the property. It's toxic, right?

It's quite toxic. Um, it's used shamanically in pre-contact California. The California Indians had what was called the Toloache religion and they used Jimson Weed seeds to initiate people at puberty, boys, mostly. It's, uh -- I'm kind of Pollyannaish about drugs. I mean, I don't -- I'm after a certain thing, which these tryptamine hallucinogens do and I tend to not pursue these other things too far.

I didn't like Datura. It's very hard to have the degree of clarity that I think you should have on a drug. The tryptamine hallucinogens don't interfere with your clarity at all. You know who you are. Where you are. What you're doing. I've seen people on Datura -- I had an experience with someone on Datura where in the course of the conversation, it came out that the guy thought we were in his apartment and I had actually encountered him in the marketplace. Well, that's a serious delusion, you know. That's a serious problem. When I took Datura, uh, all this was in Nepal years ago, uh, I did have peculiar experiences. I mean, it is magical. It is delusory. Reality begins to come apart. I -- these wraithlike, ghostlike creatures would come through my window and I was waiting to get high and then I would sort of -- my attention would drift and these things would come through my window and they would let loose these sheets of newsprint that would flutter down over my lap. I would fall forward reading [audience laughs] these things that were -- and as I read, amazement would grow in me and say, "This is it! This is the answer!" [audience laughs] Then I would pull out and say, "huh? Is it working? Is anything happening?" And that went on for several passes of that. And then I -- then it caused me to throw my leg up around my neck and I very carefully unfolded myself, and lay back down again and then it happened again.[audience laughs] And I thought to myself, I'm really glad I'm alone because I think this would freak anybody out.[audience laughs]

And, uh, so, I -- But, it was definitely strange. I mean, the guy down the hall from me, I had taken it and he had taken it. And, uh, he had the impression in the night that this woman that he was scheming on came to him and that they made love. And in the middle of the night, I got up to go to the john and I had to cross through his room. And, it was also my impression that she was in bed with him. Well, when we sorted it out the next morning, she'd been thirty miles away throughout the whole incident and had never been there.

So, it's interesting. There are a lot of altered states and maybe that's a good point to make. There are all kinds of strange states of mind and many plant induced. From sorting through them, I've just become sort of, uh, fixated on these tryptamine things because they seem to me somehow the most promising and the most real. Uh, the hallucinations of Jimson Weed are curiously related in my mind - it's some kind of association schema - they're like séances and table-tapping and Victorian women in shredded lace dresses. And that's, you know, about as far from a DMT hallucination as you can get. I mean, DMT hallucinations are three-, if not four-dimensional, brightly colored, high-tech, organo-insectoid, uh, so forth and so on. Yeah.

[Question] You talked that the momentum is so strong and having to change it. And, like, I think of all the people who are opposed to drugs and they think that every drug is the same. It just seems like an impossible task to be able to educate where these drugs will be available and then people would take them and see the world in a healthier way. What would you say about a question like that?

Well, it's this struggle about human nature and defining human nature, you know. Is it good to take certain drugs? Is it always bad to take drugs? What's are -- you know, can you always tell a drug from a food or from a spice? What do these words really mean? Uh, all we can do is what we are doing, which is replicate the meme. Hold these workshops, try to build a core of consensus about what we're talking about. And this is itself quite elusive, you see, because what we're talking about is a mental event. Less focused than let us say, orgasm, but even if you're talking about orgasm, here we use this word that it must mean something different to everybody. Well, it's even -- the problem is much worse with the psychedelic experience 'cause nobody wants to be left out, so anybody who's ever taken anything thinks they've had the psychedelic

experience and feels fully qualified to hold an opinion on it, when, in fact, it's pretty elusive – the real thing.

Uh, you have to take a heroic dose under the right conditions to really smash through. I mean, yes, there are all kinds of approaches to it: insight into childhood trauma, recovery of lost memories, opening to your emotional side, uh, insights into the dynamics of the life and the people around you – but that is not anywhere near the bull's eye. That's just dancing around the rim of it. So, you -- we have to, as a community, try and build consensus about what happens at the real center. What's happening at the center of the mandala? What kind of a modality can we describe and create a shared map of, that we can come back to the rest of the folks and talk about?

And then the other thing is -- um, well, I'm just banking on curiosity to do a lot of the footwork for the revolution. This is too good to miss. Uh, you know, it's like placing sex off-limits or something and then expecting people not to find out about it. Now that Marxism has collapsed, uh, if we don't substitute something for consumer values, then we're just going to rape the Earth in an effort to create crap for everybody. Well, the only counterpoise to consumer values to materialism is spiritualism and I don't mean some bloodless, carol-singing kind of mamby-pamby abstraction. I mean, there has to be as much inner richness as there previously was outer richness. And, this is why, to the alarm of some people, I've been fairly interested in virtual realities. Because, I think, you know, if everybody wants to live in Versailles, the only way you're going to be able to do that is if you make Versailles a disk for \$3.95 that they can plug in and then go live in it. So, uh, we can't preach to the have-nots the virtue of voluntary simplicity when we're riding around in BMWs and collecting Monets. That doesn't make a lot of sense.

So, building a core consensus, this is still in answer of your question, what can we do? And then replicating the meme. And, I introduce this concept in each of my workshops because I think it makes it easier for you to understand what's happening here. A meme is the smallest unit of an idea. It's like a gene is to proteins. Proteins are made by genes, and genes code for proteins, okay? Well, ideas are made out of memes. You link a few memes together and you have an idea. Memes, like genes, can be replicated. You replicate them by either telling the meme to many people or telling a lot of people all at once. And then these people you've told, they become potential replicators of the meme. And, there is a domain of culture that is like an environment of competing ideas and the memes go off and live in this ideological environment. And some flourish and some are consumed by others and some are incorporated into others.

And, the idea is to keep the psychedelic meme alive, and to make it grow, and to allow its claim to be heard. It's not in danger of dying. It's a very persistent meme. It's been around for about 20,000 years and it's been highly repressed in many cultures for the last couple of thousand years. Yet, we're trying to, uh, rebirth it. So, thinking about it that way, thinking of yourself as a replicator of this thing that wishes to move through society, gives a mechanical model for understanding what is really ideological war, you know. A war about the definition of human nature. That's what's at stake. What shall we become? Uh, what can we become? There's no question that we need a greater consciousness of who we are. And, if psychedelic drugs are to be taken seriously at all as consciousness-expanding agents, then they have to be given their due place in the great dialogue that's taking place about the future: creating it and then, uh, realizing it, the future of the species.

[Question] I wanted to say something further about the Book of Genesis and the notion of getting to the center. There are two cherubims guarding the gate with flaming swords and that they represent a pair of

opposites: Fear and Desire. And the part of the problem of getting a bite of that tree of immortal life is getting beyond the realm of opposites, beyond fear and desire. And the other related thing is: the question of why this world is not one of homogenous perfection instead of a world of multiplicity of forms and conflicts? And it's from a drop of ignorance that spills into undifferentiated perfection and from that one drop of ignorance precedes a multiplicity of the world we experience.

This is a Gnostic idea: the drop of ink in the pure glass of water. Yeah, well, Gnosticism was the idea -- I mean, in many forms, but, the basic idea was that light had been scattered through the universe and that the task of salvation was to gather this light together and to somehow transmit it back to it's source in some -- some higher dimension which is a pretty good metaphor. One of the issues that comes up in these workshops inevitably -- and I confess that I don't have a real answer for this is, you know -- are we a part of nature and the stewards of nature, or are we out of nature? Are we of another ontos and sculpted for a different destiny? Uh, it's very clear that the life of the planet and our, uh, success, as a conscious species, these two things have to either be split away from each other, or one is going to be the undoing of the other. And, uh, this is a real problem. This problem haunts Western thinking; it's nothing new. Is nature God or is nature the Devil? I mean, that's the harshest statement of this problem.

[Question] One of the ways of detecting breast cancer is with thermography. This is where they look for a hotspot on the breast and say that's a suspicious area. When I go up in an airplane at night and am looking down on Gaia and thinking this is an organism, a giant organism. And say, "Gee, there's a cancer down there. It's hot. You can see it. It's glowing." When you go down there and what you find is that the cells that have gone awry and the way in which we've gone awry is the nature of our consciousness and that it's focused in terms of time, and space and causality; and then, the thumb, the prehensile ability to do something about it because, I don't know for sure, but I imagine if the dolphins could have their consciousness with a sense of time, they might have some of the same time/space causality understanding of the physical world that we do, but they lack the ability to do anything about it.

To project force into the world.

[Question] So that given those two qualities: this quality of our minds to look upon the world in this way -- time space and causality, and the thumb, we have become a cancer on the organism of the Earth. It's kind of a negative thought.

It is negative and I'm not sure that I buy into it and I'm not sure that I don't buy into it either. This is the question: is the evolution of historical society and science and all the ugly adumbrations of that: sexism, fascism, racism - is that part of the process or is it a breaking away? Is there some good in it? Was history for something or would we have just been better off without it? And, I don't know. Uh, sometimes, I mean, I think of Western Civilization as the prodigal son. We went forth, we left our father's house, which was the archaic style of existence. We left our father's house and we wandered into matter and cut deals with demonic forces, and millennia have passed and now, the Earth is polluted and we are back at the longhouse, saying to these people, "Do you have any wisdom that can save us from our fate?"

Well, they do, to a degree. I mean, they have this deep insight into natural dynamics and curing, and maybe more. I mean, maybe there is magic in this world? Uh, but we know some things, too. We can summon the energy of the stars, if necessary, down to the deserts of this planet or to the cities of our enemies, if necessary. And, this is no small accomplishment on any scale. This is quite impressive. I mean, my God,

that cytoplasm could create a strategy for triggering fusion. It's amazing. Uh, so, I would like to think that this peregrination into matter went for something; that these are skills that we may need out in the universe when we really get our wings, uh, and take off. And that this deep involvement with matter, it was a kind of an addiction, and if we can pull out of it, a great deal has been learned. I mean, after all, if people had stayed in the rainforests, then we would have been ineluctably linked to the destiny of this planet as an animal species. And what if this is the only intelligence in the universe? Then, I would think we have a certain obligation to, uh, preserve it past the life of the existence of the solar system. So, if we're not willing to commit ourselves at any phase of our evolution to a technical phase that involves mastery over matter, then we have no more defense against the larger universe than raccoons and katydids if push comes to shove.

I don't know, I've stressed that there's no easy resolution on this. It haunts all thinking about conservation. I mean, I thought throughout the 80s, why aren't the conservationists not space-colony enthusiasts? Why don't the 'Save The World people' support the high-tech solutions that would move industry off the planet? Why are these various factions unable to make common cause behind a very large vision? And, uh, I don't know, but I think as pressure mounts for solutions, this will have to be done. I would like to live in a world where the entire Earth is a bio-reserve. I would like to live in a situation where the idea that there would be heavy industry inside the bio-reserve would be thought an abomination. All that stuff can be done on the moon or in the asteroid belts. It's as inappropriate as having a nuclear power plant in the middle of a rainforest to have heavy industry on the surface of the Earth.

We need to think on very large time scales and we need to figure out how to create political machinery to do that. We've been living a potlatch existence; just a frenzied consumerist kind of, uh, unthinking, uh, abuse. And, I think the best inoculation for that style of life is a stiff dose of psychedelics. You can't evade it, you know. It dissolves boundaries, it puts you -- it allows you to feel what you're doing. I mean, the level of denial in this society is incredible. My God, we don't feel it. We read the newspaper, but we don't feel what it's telling us, you know. Because if we felt it, we would probably be an emotional wreck, but there's something to be said to opening up to some of that, you know. There's a notion in therapy that if you want the client to actually make progress, you raise the alarm level.

A guy comes to you for therapy, you say to him, "Huh! You think you've got problems? Huh! You've got *no idea* what problems you have!" And then work from there. So, it's very serious business. It's trying to steer a society back toward a faith that was lost. And God is like a lost continent in the human mind and it's the only continent where there is safe harbor in the present historical situation.

Well, why don't we knock off and, uh, we'll meet at four o'clock. Thanks very much.

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown - June 3, 2015

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

aka Loose Ends Time

Day May 1990

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

What I thought we would do this morning, because these things are so brief, is, again, return to the form of going around in a circle. And this time, it's your last chance to ask a question, make a statement, voice a complaint, whatever you want to do. But, just to try and -- in other words, it's loose ends time. As rapidly as we can, to tie up loose ends, things people didn't understand, things, uh, people feel they need to hear more about, that sort of thing. Why don't we just start, as we did before, on this side and go around?

[Audience] - I'd like to hear a more satisfactory explanation of what archaic revival means. I haven't got it straightened out. I suspect it means a return to a more stable state when there is too much chaos in the present. I'm sure that's not what you mean.

Well, that's partially what it is. It's based on an idea that when societies get into trouble, an unconscious response seems to be - they search back through their own history to find a model that they can revivify or revitalize. The strongest example in our own history was when the medieval world broke apart and didn't make any sense anymore. The new middle class went back to classicism, to the Greeks and the Romans, to Roman law, Greek philosophy and Greco-Roman architecture and mechanics and that sort of thing and created classicism. Classicism was invented in the 14th century. But, our problems are deeper than this. We can't go back to ancient Rome or ancient Egypt or something like that, and expect to have real answers. Uh, we have to go back further to prehistory, to this archaic state and there, in partnership, in genderless, uh, self-organizing society, we begin to see the kinds of models that we have to somehow recreate in the modern world. Obviously, we can't in the modern world become mushroom-eating nomadic pastoralists, but we can study that approach to reality to try and learn from it how you live in equilibrium. That's the key thing that the archaic world knew that we don't know. How do you live in equilibrium, uh, so that your children may live in equilibrium because, otherwise, you get a cycle started that's going to shove somebody over the cliff and that somebody, in the present, case is either ourselves, our children or their children. It's no further away in time than that.

So, the archaic revival is the idea that all of the -- and I see the whole of the 20th century, the discovery of the unconscious of Freud and Jung, the dissolving of the naturalistic image at the hands of the cubists, the probing of the dream state by the surrealists, the exploration of mass ritual by the fascists -- I mean, it wasn't all good, this stuff. But, what all these things had in common was they were, uh, a return, an appeal to the level of the mass psyche that had been ignored and denied for a long, long time. The LSD taking of

the 60s was the same kind of thing and, you know, I'm very -- I come out very strongly for McLuhan in the idea that as the emphasis, uh, as the ratios of the mix of media in a society changes, the sensory ratios and values of the society change. And we're living in a post-literate, post-linear, uh, kind of world now where a whole different set of assumptions make sense and they're archaic assumptions. You know, the archaic world was a non-linear, preliterate, audial 'all at once' kind of world and the fact that our sensory ratios have shifted back in that direction makes us very sympathetic, very susceptible to this re-archaization that wants to go on.

[Audience] Thank you.

[Terence laughs]

[Audience] - The, uh, I guess the ultimate psilocybin question is: - can you envision, Terence, in your wildest imagination that we as a society, instead of as individuals taking mushrooms and gaining some enlightenment that we'll ever be able to do it in an organized mass way? Do you have that vision?

You mean that someday it will be legal?

[Audience] – Legal and encouraged. You know, a mass taking of?

Well, obviously, it would take a total revolution. Uh, the current thinking is that the big revolutions in the world have to do with the internal contradictions of Marxist-Leninism, but it may actually be that Marxist-Leninism was a kind of partner in a co-dependent relationship with consumer capitalism. And, maybe revolution is just going to become something that everybody is into. God knows - we could use a perestroika. I mean, we, too, are ruled by constipated lying bureaucrats. What are the statistics – 97% of all incumbents are reelected, that there is less turnover in the United States Congress than there was in the higher echelons of the Communist party of East Germany until the wall came down. I mean, we love to congratulate ourselves on the forward leaning, uh, liberal society that we live in and the truth is it's a bunch of rattlesnake handling fundamentalists that are much closer to Stalin than they are to FDR or anybody else like that.

Still, I-I think that the culture crisis is going to become so intense and the world is going to become so weird as we saw on the graph last night, novelty is going to intensify and intensify and intensify and even last year when Eastern Europe was falling to pieces, very straight people were saying – "Gee it seems as though history itself is accelerating." Well, then there was a lull, so that talk was dropped but I think history is accelerating and the next time it accelerates, the talk that this is happening will come around again much louder. And pretty soon by the turn of the century, I think, it's going to be hard to hide from anybody who's paying attention, the fact that the entire social evolution of the planet seems to be caught in some kind of evolutionary meltdown that is imminent, you know. And in that environment, psilocybin has a chance.

The whole drug thing – leave alone psychedelics – the whole drug thing is properly understood as a civil rights issue. I mean, people should be able to take whatever drugs they damn well please in the same way that they should be able to express their sexual preferences, in the same way that women should be allowed to vote, uh, people of low incidence of light reflectivity should be treated like everybody else. I mean, all these things which are perfectly obvious. You cannot have a free society and regulate people's drug use.

Any society which sets out to call itself free and democratic with the footnote that certain states of mind are forbidden is headed down the slippery slopes of totalitarianism. There is no way that this can be avoided.

So, aside from our belief as a group in the wonderful healing, uh, and teaching potential of psychedelics, even if psychedelic drugs didn't exist, I would favor the legalization of all drugs because I just think that you cannot treat people as though they were infantile. That's called paternalism. That's the old dominator game. We have to just admit, you know, that we're all in this together and nobody has cornered the market on the truth for sure.

[Audience] - Would you talk a little bit more about, uh, seeing language?

Well, this is to my mind, you know, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow of the psychedelic experience. These experiences get stronger and stronger and stronger and then language becomes visible and then if they become any stronger you fall asleep. That seems to be about the outer limit of what the internal processors can tolerate. Seeing language, you know - it's a mystery, it's a miracle. I don't know what it is. It's the thing that keeps going with all of this because it's the idea that we're just on the brink of some kind of transformation of how we communicate with each other that will change not only how we communicate, but who we are because see if you could see what I mean rather than hear me and run to your internal dictionary and look up all my words and then reconstruct my meaning - but if you could just see what I mean then you and I would be very much like the same person because we would be looking at the same thing. So, it's a tremendous -- obviously, language is what has knitted us together and made us social creatures. I mean creatures of our body weight and so forth have styles where, you know, the males and the females get together only for sex and once a year, like mountain lions or something like that. So -- but, obviously, the presence of language and our social history as primates set us up for living as we do. And, we have managed to create through language a monkey troop of five billion people. You know, a monkey troop of five billion individuals united through the glue of language. So, it's an intensification and it's something shamans do. And I think, you know, it's the real social magic of shamanism, at least, in the Amazon is based around these visible communication.

[Audience] - I wanted to make a comment about the difference between seeing and hearing. And, it's like the difference between a sculpture and music. Music and language take place, uh, in succession of elements through time. So, it requires a duration to understand. But sculpture and seeing things is all in a single moment, that the sculpture or object is beheld in a single moment. The aesthetics of the object or the sculpted object is the relationship of part-to-part or part to whole in a single moment. But, music is the succession of elements in time and somehow I think that relates to your... When you talk about seeing language, you're talking about seeing little creatures, words being creatures and so, then you're observing these creatures. Are they coming out like music in -- through time or can an idea, a sentence be seen all at once?

They're coming out through time and a sentence can be seen all at once because in a way your analogy is not apt because sculpture is static. But, these visible statements are like sculpture made of some magical substance, which has an internalized program of change. The analogy I always make is to the eggs of Fabergé. These things are like machines, jewels, but you can also tell while your looking at them that they're statements. They're like -- you know how people talk about beautifully crafted sentences? Well these are beautifully crafted sentences but they're like exquisite interlocking mechanized things made out of ivory and glass and topaz and chrome. And just -- brrrrr, they're carrying on at a furious rate. They have

a life in time.

I would like to write a computer program that would be like a full paint-type program, but it would be for the purpose of generating these types of objects because I've seen them a fair bit and analyzed what's going on. And here's how it works: you have a dodecahedron or some other complex regular polygon, so that it's made of surfaces and then, to each surface, you assign a set of color and frequency changes. And then each surface can run its program independently of all the other surfaces. So, you slowly build up a program on each surface but then you can also cut into this polygon and remove chunks of it to reveal another polygon inside it that can have different programs written for each of its surfaces. And then you set these things slowly rotating, one within another on several levels, and you're beginning to approach a really shoddy example of what these things are like that you see in this space. Beats me, you know! Most of this stuff is reportage.

[Audience] - I've heard you speak often of these incredibly complex images that you received on psilocybin or DMT. I'm just wondering if you've ever had an experience of total emptiness or voidness. The most profound experience I've ever had on psilocybin was actually being void of any content at all, but not being like blanked out or something like that. Just being aware of emptiness.

Well, I think this may have something to do with philosophical bent and proclivity. I never got any of these 'zenny' states, the white light, the black light. It's probably in my personality – I really stress visual hallucinations. And people have hassled me about this and said, you know psychedelics open your heart, they do this, they do that, and all you ever talk about is visions. It's because to me the vision is the proof and I guess I'm still a skeptic after all these years. The vision is the proof that it's not me because if I've never seen it before, hell I'm willing to grant it's not me if I've never seen it before. How difficult a character do you have to be, you know? So, when there's things I've never seen before that are absolutely amazing streaming past my closed eyelids, I have to grant that it isn't coming from me and that thin thread can be the basis of a bridge to faith.

If it isn't me then there's something out there. God, the Devil, who knows? But at least somebody. Now we can begin to have a serious spiritual quest. There is a signal. We're getting a signal from the other and it can be pursued. But, it's the task of a lifetime.

[Audience] – Now I hear you mention faith and it seems like yesterday morning you said something along the lines of, 'I'm not a believer in any sense of the word.' But what I wanted to ask you is in the context of the chemicals in the brain and the pineal gland and so forth – what do you think of fasting as a way of altering consciousness?

Fasting I think is probably very effective. If you analyze this whole rap here about the early mushrooms and the primates and all that, really what's being said is that diet is the key. That foods are very important and this is what they're saying about ayahuasca in the Amazon. They say half of it is ayahuasca but the learning of the shamanism and the becoming of this superhuman type of personality is all in the diet. And shamans in the Amazon, when they're trying to establish their credentials with each other, do it by saying how long they kept the diet. Somebody will say, well I did it for two years or something like that.

[Audience] – I just thought of something about the shamans in the Amazon. You know this magic phlegm that they bring up? What do they do with it? Do they spit it out finally or swallow it back down or what?

What do they ultimately do with it? It's hard to find out stuff like this when you're a guest. [audience laughs] I don't know. I didn't see where it went.

[Audience] – Have you seen it? Because if they use this to pull a disease out of somebody or a poison, or some kind of illness causing thing - if it's like a magnet that pulls this out – if they just keep this inside of them it doesn't seem like it would be very safe I wouldn't think.

Well, talking about what it is and judging whether it's safe or not. I mean, what is this phlegm in the first place? When you're really there, really dealing with it – you're pushed towards ideas like it's a zone -- it's a zone of space-time, which repels English. What? You know, in other words, it's a magical substance. It comes out of their body. Calling it "phlegm" is because we're following some anthropologist in the 1920s who, you know, went back to his tent scratching his head and tried to figure out what the nearest analogy to this was. But, what they do – they also in some of these tribes, the story goes that they can force this stuff out onto the surface of their skin and I don't know what this is about, but I have had ayahuasca visions where it's like a black field and suddenly there's a huge, huge black hand and I can see in the lines of this hand, jewels and it's just there – this black hand.

[Audience] –It's not your hand?

It's not my hand. It's a black hand.

[Audience] –Where does it come from? I mean is it on your hand?

No, it's like in a vision and then I see in the lines that what I thought were jewels is some kind of sweat, which is seeping out. And you look deeper into this stuff and you see, you know, that wonderful line from 2001, "My ! There are stars in here!" [audience laughs] It's completely disorienting.

No, the magic is real. I have no idea how far you can go. I mean, one of the paradoxes of what we're doing here in this room is, you know. Here I sit, I have two children, a wife, a mortgage, book contracts, lawyer, all this – here you sit with whatever you brought to this and we're talking about this stuff. Uh, if any one of us cared to, we could turn ourselves into something that none of the rest of us could relate to at all. We could become a sage. You could go up onto cold mountain and those of us left down in the valley would say, "Oh yes, I saw him three years ago up in the mist, naked as a Jay bird hauling firewood out of the woods". These places -- there's no barrier between you and these places except, is that what you want? Do you want to become utterly incomprehensible to the community because you are so deep into the unspeakable? Maybe? And that's what a shaman is.

A shaman is somebody who's just on the edge. They just have one finger back in the world of the rest of us and then they're in this stuff. Well, seeking that used to be called the spiritual quest, but as I said to you, you know, we've found the means to do that. We've found the answer; you know, you just go in the wilderness and take mushrooms and, you know, Cohen move over. But, what to do about that? I don't know. I really don't know because I'm attracted to it. I want to go as far as I can go. But, when you realize that you can go so far that nobody will even remember that you ever existed, the other can close over you so utterly.

[Audience] – The reason I ask is because a lot of times they say that, you know, gurus and different people take on the karma of the different people they work with or heal. You've probably heard this before. So, I wondered if when these shamans were healing if they -- if they magnetized out some kind of illness or something, where does that go?

Well, they have, yes. They're very concerned about the power of this illness and they have techniques and many times after a big curing, a shaman will fall sick. And, you know, if you want to understand this, read Jung's book called *The Psychology of the Transference*. It's the same in all cultures: you must be able to turn back the transference if you're a healer otherwise you'll be killed, ultimately. And, all psychiatrists, psychotherapists understand this or if they don't, they're at great peril.

[Audience] – Did anyone happen to see a film called "From Beyond?" The premise was that there was a machine that induced visions in the spiritual realm and stimulated the pineal gland and what happens is, a couple of people – the inventor and someone else – get hooked on the machine and the pineal gland starts growing out of their foreheads...

Ah Hollywood.

[Audience] – It was big on special effects. The one guy, his whole body was totally transformed. He was always on this machine and so forth. It reminded me of an electronic version of what you're discussing.

Yeah, well this is also coming, you know. Artificial technologies. Where are we in this process? Yeah?

[Audience] – I'm quite satisfied with questions at the moment, but I'm commenting on that, with respect to the pineal gland and visions. You know, the pineal gland feeds directly from the ocular nerve with no interceding brain tissue. It's just a direct connection, so the colors one takes in are directly responsible for the particular secretions of that gland, which is one of the reasons why television is described as being difficult on people. It causes hormonal problems, if you watch it enough because you're dealing with a very restricted spectrum of colors and that sort of thing. Uh, the additional thought occurred to me, that everyone who is watching television at the same time, their nervous system is being pulsed at 30 times a second, even though they're not conscious of it, but every TV set in the whole United States is exactly in sync with each other all at thirty times a second. It's like this sub-audible dial tone that's going through everyone's brains. It has kind of an ominous tone to it.

*The one comment I wanted to make was, uh, having recently read a book by Gurdjieff, called *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, which is about the only book I've ever read which pertains to the sort of cosmic time scale that Terence talks about enough. And, one of the warnings in the book was that was, if you read this with enough attention that you'll eventually lose the taste for your favorite dessert and the particularly attractive person across the street who you like to watch won't seem nearly so interesting anymore so be forewarned, you may not want to read this stuff and to a certain extent, I feel that's quite possible.*

You think the cosmic view kills the trivial? The joy of trivial?

[Audience] – The curse of mysticism.

Well, I don't know. Your thing about television and everybody being in sync, one of the most creative and

eccentric explanations ever dreamed up for flying saucers, uh, rested on the fact that the guy said, "In the United States, on an average evening, 40 million people are all in sync watching TV and if there then is a storm on the sun, it acts as a kind of coherent energy beam which illuminates these millions of psyches that are all synchronized by watching television and it causes, uh, an image of an archetype to be projected into space on the other side of the planet." Not my theory [Terence laughs]

[Audience] – Well, computer image processing, when you want to draw out a very fuzzy sort of pattern, quite often what you do is interfere with that pattern with another pattern on top of it and see how these two patterns comingle. Sometimes you'll get an accentuated thing as a result and this 30-hertz dial tone is definitely sort of illuminating this other aspect of the imagination it would seem. Maybe?

[Audience] – Have you ever read "A Wrinkle in Time"? Have you read that? It's supposed to be a children's story but it sounds exactly like what you just said. It's by Madeleine L'Engle.

[Audience] - I've read the whole trilogy. It's great.

[Audience] - It's almost exactly what you said.

Back there.

[Audience] – I'm interested in what you feel your relationship is with these, whatever you call them, these beings that come to you. Are you, are we, their offspring somehow or, you know?

Well, I don't know. I mean, this has puzzled me for a long, long time. When it first happened, I just thought that they were straight out extra-terrestrials and that this was some kind of weird technology where this was a contact between a species that evolved off planet, and then -- but, they're like, uh, inter-dimensional dwellers of some sort. And I -- so then I thought, maybe they're just hyper-spatial creatures of some sort in some other dimension but I can't even imagine. And then I thought, maybe they're actually from the future. It's like maybe this is a future state of humanity that we're actually going to look like this in ten million years and they're doing some kind of weird experiment with time and I'm the Neanderthal that they're checking out. And then the other possibility which I mentioned here which is really unsettling, but, in a lot of ways, fills the bill better than any of these which is -- they're souls of some sort. They're human beings and when you try that on for size, it's pretty hair-raising because it feels right and yet your mind boggles. I mean, I am not ready to believe that you can smoke a drug and cross over the great divide and return ten minutes later. That really strains my credulity; nevertheless if you ask shamans, this is what they would say.

I -- after having many DMT trips, I came to realize that this place that you break into where the gnomes greet you with this huge hooray and all this linguistic machinery is happening and so forth, that alien as that place is, it's somebody's idea of a reassuring environment for human beings. It's somebody's idea of the equivalent of a playpen. And these colored machine linguistic object things are the equivalent of colored rattles and things strung on a string and you're just sitting there, you know, gaping and they're saying don't freak out, pay attention, uh, learn to do this. I don't know. Maybe, I mean -- first of all, nothing is impossible. No possible speculation is verboten, right? So, maybe it is that we've gone too far and maybe it is that this planet is doomed. And maybe it is that somehow that, too, is part of the plan.

Borgia had this idea. He said that he believed in what he called "the soul of the species." And he said that the soul of species is not released to the higher dimensions until the last individual member of the species dies. As long as there is a single member of the species alive, the soul of the species is somehow in some kind of transient zone. But, when the last member of a species died, then it goes off. Well, if you look at the fossil record, 95% of all the species that have ever lived on the Earth are extinct. From that point of view, it looks as though biology is a, uh, process for producing extinction. Well then what is it? Is it that in the world of three-dimensional space and time and matter and energy, the DNA rears a form which inhabits a region of time and space called the body and then at a certain point, this form withdraws into something and what the matter that it had previously organized just falls to pieces. I don't know, but the entities in the DMT place are a real challenge. They either are the dead, extra-terrestrials or inter-dimensional dwellers. Any one of these is a headline in the supermarket checkout line, I assure you. [audience laughs]

[Audience] – I'm not quite sure what I want to ask you but I recently had a dream that we're all linked together. It seemed like you've had the same experience on mushrooms, feeling that? Do you have anything that you could say about that in relationship to affecting others?

Well, I think that, you know, the link that we cannot evolve, we can't change the world any faster than we can change the language we use to talk about it. And changing language is a collective activity. You empower memes, we talked about this. You create a concept and then you empower it by spreading it and by communicating it clearly enough that in the act of spreading it, it doesn't get badly copied and get all mushed up, you know, so that after it's been copied it ten times you can't recognize it. I sometimes have this experience – people quote me to myself and I'm just amazed, you know. Sometimes it turns out it's verbatim and I'm still amazed. But the linking together is through the evolution of language and we've never, ever attempted to engineer language. We've always let it just grow like topsy, not realizing that certain language habits are very toxic. Certain language patterns give permission for very detrimental ways of thinking. I mean, for instance, the subject/object relationship in English or the, uh, assignment of gender to things which goes on in a lot languages. These are habits of language that then become tremendous, uh, social problems for their inheritors.

[Audience] – The use of the word it. It's raining. It's funny. What is funny?

Or the " I." There are languages where there is no first person pronoun. The only way you can refer to yourself is by the extremely clumsy form, this person. This person thinks...yak yak Yeah?

[Audience] – I was curious, you mentioned DMT and visions of, I think, you said dodecahedrons, and then you mentioned, um, that they're saying to kind of stay with it, hang in there. I'm kind of curious about this dialogue on DMT and the logos in psilocybin. I mean, do they sound the same? How do you know it's not your own Howard Cosell commenting in the back of your mind?

How do you know it isn't your own mind?

[Audience] – Yeah, and is there a way to break through there to begin a dialogue or does it just start going like a tape loop?

No, it doesn't start going, you have to invoke it. This is an interesting thing if you're practically inclined.

You can't -- it won't speak to you; you have to speak to it. You come into a certain place on the mushroom, which I now, based on having done it a number of times, recognize the territory and say, "A"ha, it's now possible to communicate with the thing." And then I, -- well, you must know the old *I Love Lucy* episode where they do the thing about, "Come in little green men. Come in little green men." Ethel and Lucy are into this. Well, I tried that and, you know, you hear this thing which sounds like the tinkling of bells, the distant tinkling of bells and what it is, is it's literally -- it's the elf troop marching band and chowder society [audience laughs], and you can hear them getting nearer and nearer. It's like... [Terence hums a few bars of a symphony]

And it gets louder and louder and at a certain point, you begin not to hear it, but to see it. It gets brighter and brighter and clearer and clearer and finally they're all around you and jumping up and down and saying, you know, "How do you like it McKinney?" And all this other stuff that they say. They're gnomes. You couldn't miss it. And, I'm still me of course, I'm still just as I would be sitting here. It's so hard to assimilate. That's why I say; you know, sitting here in a room talking about this stuff is nothing as to being out there signing treaties with the folks.

[Audience] – That to me is following in the question. When you say logos, is this the machine elves?

No, the logos is something a little subtler that is a -- actually it stuck with me since La Chorrera. It's just a quality of thinking which I recognize to be clearer and deeper than my own. And, it usually takes the form of: 'why don't you try this' with regard to some problem. Why don't you try this? And, I know immediately that it will work, it's got the tone that's the real thing. I just go and do it and it always works. And, it's these, you know, evolved ideas.

[Audience] – OK, so I can understand that's your subjective experience and some people don't get the machine elves and things like that when I talk to them but you mentioned the mark of this was terror, so I can already realize that being in that domain is enough of a terror in itself, but you said the mark or the proof of this was – some of these trips were terrorizing. I'm trying to understand. Something else must be going on which makes you feel terror?

It's the implications are what's terrifying because you know that amazing moment in *Rosemary's Baby* where she's in the dream and then she sits up and says, "My God! This is really happening." Well, that happens to you in the DMT thing. You realize that the center of it: this is not a drug, that's preposterous. A drug, are you kidding me? Drugs make you feel good or bad or fall down or disgrace yourself. This is not a drug. It's something masquerading as a drug. I mean, it's as appalling as if they were about to give you the umbilical examination that Whitley Strieber specializes in. You're inside a flying saucer. You're with things that in a moment before, you would have laughed at the possibility that they even existed and now you're there. And you feel completely normal. You don't feel drugged or dulled or distanced or high or low. You just feel stoned, amazed at what has happened to reality and how it's all been replaced by this thing that not only did you never expect its existence but nobody ever expected its existence. You talk about a well-kept secret that's only two tokens away. How did they keep the lid on this? [audience laughs] That's the miracle to me. How did they keep the lid on this? Well they have.

[Audience] – Well I'm not sure what my question is, but in the experience last night with the computer time program, now, that was real exciting to me. It kind of made me almost have the experience of traveling through time and having that awareness of history and wondering now – now that you've brought that out

and we have the awareness, what do we really use it for? What is your vision for how it can truly be used?

If you understand history, you will see it in the present. It's an amazing tool for enriching your own experience. If you, when you go to get a hamburger at Hadrian's Hamburger Joint, know that this is happening because you're caught in a resonance related to the expeditions of the Roman emperor Hadrian to Scotland. I mean you're totally schizophrenic, of course, to entertain thoughts like this but it makes life a lot more interesting. You -- instead of seeing a linear thing with a fading past and an unpredictable future, you live in a super rich kind of baklava style of time, where time is folded and folded and folded and the layers are very thing and the stuff between is very sweet.

[Audience] – How have you used that personally in your life?

Well, the other way you use it is, of course, it predicts the future. We saw the line going off into the future. Well, I've had it in my possession since 1972, so after you've watched it correctly predict the future for a while, months or years, however long it takes, you gain confidence in it. And as you gain confidence in it, you discover that it gives you permission to let go of anxiety about the future. You've got a map of the future. You know that August 1991 is going to be a pain in the ass. You know that great triumph will come to you in January of 1993, so why worry about it? You just then go and live your life and as you watch the wave unfold, confidence grows and grows and grows. And, what's happening you see, without any fanfare or, you know, alien symbiosis, you're becoming a hyper spatial person. You're adding a dimension to your view of the world. The future is changing from a question mark into a map that you're quite confident is working for you and anxiety about the future is a major thing twisting people around. So, if you could get agreement on this. It's the Tao, you know – live in the perception of the Tao. Its just people didn't ever think that would mean that you'd go and look at a printed outlook from a computer, but the exhortation is the same. Live according to the constraints of the Tao.

[Audience] – I thoroughly enjoyed this weekend. Uh, it has given me much food for thought. I'm very interested in how you -- what the best setup is for taking the mushrooms? Um, the amount, time of day, condition, whatever? I think there must be in your experience, I'm sure you've tried all of them – there must be one way that lends itself better to the mushroom than others?

Yes. Well, yes, I haven't said it this weekend but it's practically a battle cry of mine. It's five grams in silent darkness on an empty stomach and I'll explain. Five grams. Now, you must weigh it. A lot of people take mushrooms and when you show them what five grams is, they pale visibly.[audience laughs] Yeah, five dried grams. It's several mouthfuls. I'm speaking for a hundred and forty five pound person. Obviously, if you weight 90 pounds, back it up a little and if you weigh 230 pounds, you might go a little up, but five dried grams on an empty stomach. All that means is don't eat for six hours. Silent darkness. Silent. And a lot of people disagree with me about this and they want to listen to the Moody Blues and they want Bach and they want this. Forget it! Nobody is going to listen to you if you come out of this experience saying Johann Sebastian Bach is God, we know that! [audience laughs] It's very confusing because the music becomes everything if you listen to it. I mean, you cannot separate it from the trip and people will not believe that the trip without music will be just as rich as the trip with music because they've already decided they're inadequate. That out of their own depths, they couldn't possibly produce a psychedelic experience so let's have the B- minor mass thrown in just to help it along a little here.

So, silence, silent darkness and then darkness. Why darkness? Because the hallucinations actually need

darkness in order to form. They form behind closed eyelids and so, what I do is - and I clear the decks and I try to pick a point in my life when I don't feel to anxious and oppressed by trivia. I unplug all the phones. I get rid of every obligation. I roll up three or four bombers and I then wait on an empty stomach, and about 9 o'clock at night, I take it. And I just sit as I'm sitting now waiting for it to come on. Once I've taken it, I am completely in the sacrospace even though I don't feel anything for an hour and twenty minutes. Some people do the ironing and, you know, chop up some stock or something, but I just sit and then it begins to come on. Usually -- some people say it comes on very quickly but for me it usually doesn't really come on until the hour and twenty-minute mark. There may be a surge of nausea at forty minutes or a need to take a leak or something like that, but then I get back and resettle. And at an hour and twenty minutes, it comes and it comes as a wave. It's almost like a very sheer silk scarf just drops over me, just settles over me and I think, oh my god here it comes. Here it comes. And then it comes and it's a wave of hallucination and if I, well, I gauge it, but at that point I smoke and something about the cannabis synergy meeting the psilocybin, I mean, it is spectacular. I mean, you think that everybody from Vancouver to Tijuana must have just thrown themselves on the ground as this thing -- I mean, it feels like the sun exploded. It feels like you're watching through eleven feet of quartz crystal a hydrogen furnace on the other side. You cannot believe the release of energy. It's like a siren comes on, a siren, which you hear and feel. A siren, which shakes your body and the building that you're in and then it just, you know, pushes you out into who knows? Long periods of time where not a word of it will ever be reported to any other human being. I mean, you see things that nobody has ever seen or will ever see again. You're into it, you know, and it's an infinite matrix in all directions and it means something. It doesn't just look pretty, you know. It's playing on the harp of your soul with the emotional overtones. Yeah?

[Audience] – Have you ever taken it outside?

Yes, and I don't do that very much because I really try to control, uh, the setting because the freakiest things happen. I mean, if you in any way lift your foot off the pedal of controlling the parameters of the setting, the damndest things will happen. I mean, grizzly bears will break into your house [audience laughs]; motorcycle gangs will arrive [audience laughs] and saucers will attack. It's weird to go outside.

[Audience] – Do you eat the mushrooms or just drink the tea?

No I eat the mushrooms.

[Audience] – Do you have eye shades on did you say?

No I just sit in darkness but I rarely pursue total darkness.

[Audience] – What specific species of mushroom?

There are many species but the only one you'll ever encounter unless you're a specialist is *Stropharia Cubensis*. That's the one that people grow and is an item of underground commerce and it's the one that grows in the dung of the white cows. It's the one that I'm implicating in the evolution of human beings. Over here.

[Audience] – Back to language for a minute. It's not really a question but I wanted to reiterate a couple of things that I said yesterday. I'm trying to break into my own computer and stop habitual behavior of long ago.

Starting with language, just picking the phrases or words that you use the most when you are lazy; it could be profanity, outrageous, amazing, very interesting, awesome, it's a long, long list. Those are all cop-outs and if you can stop yourself at that moment and say wait a minute, you know, that's not really expressing an articulate thought. I think it sends a message. It does break into the computer and says things are changing, you know.

Yeah, paying attention. I think we said in here at some point that the key to everything is paying attention. Uh, awareness of awareness the Buddhists call it. But your point is very good. If you're truly awareness of awareness, the best place to manifest that it is in, I guess the Buddhists call it, right speech. Yes? So that it's always appropriate and sufficient and so forth. There's a book that some of you may know and you might be interested if you don't know it – it's called *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*. It's edited by Michael Harner. But, it has articles by a number of people and it has really one of the most wonderful articles ever written about the mushrooms by Henry Munn called, *The Mushrooms of Language*. He talks about how they are an inspiration to articulation, how even in these Mazatec villages when people are not taking mushrooms, the way you can tell a shaman is by a speech style. And I saw this in the Amazon with the ayahuasqueros. They have a diction, a psychedelic diction that is careful, appropriate, and always sensitive to the context of the listener and so forth and so on. In other words, they are great teachers; educators, communicators and I think it's the residual effect of this empowerment of speech.

[Audience] – What was the name of the book?

Hallucinogens and Shamanism by Michael Harner. It's in paperback from Oxford University Press. It's an excellent anthology. It has articles about ayahuasca, about ibogaine, uh, San Pedro; it's a good world survey of folk usage of hallucinogenic plants and extensive bibliographies, which will lead you on if you're interested in some particular area.

[Audience] – How long does a five gram trip last?

If I take it around 8:30 at night, by midnight I'm ready to call it an evening. I always eat before I sleep 'cause otherwise you'll wake up in the morning feeling really wasted and sort of hollow. But if you eat something fairly substantial right before you sleep at 1 in the morning, then you wake up the next morning, you feel great.

[Audience] - Any difficulty getting to sleep?

Well, your mind is just roiling with thoughts but on the other hand, you've come so far down from where you were an hour, an hour and a half before, that's when you smoke the third bomber and that shoves you into unconsciousness. [Terence laughs]

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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aka Monogamy, Marriage, and Neurosis

Day February 1994

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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[Audience] - Can you maybe briefly go into what your model for how sexual relationships would be in a society? If you had an ideal, how would you setup sexual interactions? Would you do away with marriage? How would you do it?

Well, that's an interesting question. Uh, certainly because -- I mean, in my own life, I've gone from incredibly traditional arrangements: long marriage, monogamy, um. In my early psychosexual existence, it was very mainstream in that it was driven by the archetypes of Hollywood. Like, I was always amused -- well, not amused -- puzzled by the concept of casual sex, couldn't exactly put those two concepts together because for me every relationship I ever had was, you know, Galahad approaching the Grail or something. Then I got married and I was married for a long time and then my marriage ended and, uh, so, I've been single for a number of years. So, I have thought about this. I don't have a prescription but I'll tell you how I think about it.

Um, it's -- my approach to everything tends to be mathematical in order to not miss any of the cases. You just work through the exhaustive set and try to understand it like that. Okay, so, the exhaustive set is first of all, you can be single and celibate. This, uh, is out of the question for me. [Audience laughs] I mean, in this area, all you have to do is answer the question for yourself. So, while there may be those brave and, uh, ether highly motivated or completely neurotic or God inspired -- who knows? -- people, who can be celibate, I don't think I'm one of them. And, I think the I-Ching inveighs against a kind of, uh, 'sterile' it says. It says ideas not fertilized by friends or something like that. Two then, moving through the numerical arrangements, the post reformation, postindustrial solution is the nuclear family, which I've attacked at times in the past. Um, it is not a traditional social unit. It's less than 250 years old. This is the man, the wife and the two children. The traditional social unit is a very large extended family of cousins, sisters, brothers-in-laws, children, elders. This nuclear family thing is, I think, part of the root of our problem. It is an engine for the production of neurotic dysfunctional people.

And, you know, the entire industry of psychotherapy is based around trying to straighten out what was done to people by their family and trying to get them to them to stop doing equally horrible things to the people within their family structure. And, uh, it's an artifact of capitalism. It does not serve human needs; it serves the needs of the engines of capital and it is also based on paranoia. I mean, monogamy in all forms is based on extraordinary anxiety; uh, male anxiety about the behavior of females. And, it also

denigrates females to the levels of property because they have to be controlled and so forth and so on. So, I conclude from that that certainly marriage doesn't seem to work and that high levels of divorce and all that seem to support that. Marriage is, I think -- part of what has gone on since the industrial revolution is called what's called forced social neoteny.

Neoteny is the phenomenon of maintaining juvenile characteristics into adulthood, and, uh, marriage is a kind of neotenus schizura in life's development where you're just about to cross the great bridge into adulthood and then it says, 'Last exit before authentic responsibility – Get married!' And, so, people leave the great freeway of life and they get married and they form this 'you and me against the world', us back to back, this basically paranoid unit and they set off then to acquire houses in the south of France and little Meraux etchings and stuff like that.[Audience laughs] And, then it ends in great unhappiness and bitterness usually, and people say they wasted their time and they weren't understood and so forth and so on. So, two doesn't work, I conclude, uh, in this monogamous thing.

So then we come now to the flashy possibilities. The culture, the sub-culture in pornography, fashion and the advanced sectors of our society, meaning the people who edit interview magazines – or, I don't know, something. The subliminal message there is that three is far out. A *ménage à trois* of some sort and that if you get into a relationship like this, you're really stretching the envelopment and are quite avant-garde and a growth opportunity and so forth and so on. My analysis of this is that it is actually, um, a male dominator fantasy of some sort. That, it has a sadomasochistic, um, flavor to it because what you have are two women who are somehow inevitably in competition, inevitably judged – male value judgments are happening. It's, uh, sick it seems to me, or suspect - let's put it that way. I don't want to trod on anybody's arrangement. [Audience laughs]

So then -- here then is where I was left with this and then I won't take it any further. That an interesting social arrangement is the three-one arrangement. It's almost in some sense fair and it is, uh, amoeboid. No one can control it. It's too complicated. And, I don't think it's a male fantasy. I think if you suggest to most males that they should enter a simultaneous relationship with three women that there is a constriction because it's, uh, over-challenging. But that, in fact, if we're talking about future arrangements that completely replace the ordinary family then one thing that would work, I think, are these three-one relationships with a periphery of children around them and 75% of those children are female. Because I think, built into this 'one women-one child' thing, is this concept that male birth should be reduced and that there should be far less males in the society and that is the way to change the ratio of the functions being expressed. What we need is more nurturing. We need more maternalism. The way to do that is to get more maternal people and since most maternal people seem to be female, this kind of social engineering could be done.

This is like a fantasy in answer to your question because, of course, none of this will be done because it will be leaped on by hysterical fundamentalists and denounced as Satan's work and so forth. But, I think the dynamic of three to one is an interesting one. In a sense, following Camille Paglia and that kind of rhetoric, what we're saying here is that if guys really got as much sex as they think they want, they would probably hand over the machinery of civilization without a fight. [Audience laughs] So, it's like, 'you want it, here it is.'

[Audience] – Isn't this why prostitution is illegal?

Why? Make it make sense to me.

[Audience] – Because males would spend all of their energy, all of their resources, buying sex.

Well, but the fact that it's illegal doesn't make it non-existent. Um, I -- I don't know.

[Audience] – But it's very tightly controlled by males.

We have to have strategies for reducing male dominance and, uh. And, we have to have strategies for advancing females, but we can't tromp on anybody living. So, obviously, then what we have to do are twiddle the demographic dials. We have to control birth rates overall then we have to control the sexual ratio of birth rates. And then -- I just don't think the monogamous marriage and the family unit -- it's really dysfunctional. And, I came up with this three-one thing because I also don't see us returning to the, uh, traditional extended family of many relatives and generations of people because modern transportation makes that impossible. So, a family based on genetic relationships doesn't seem to me possible. But, what does seem possible is, uh, social cohesion based on erotic attachment. Uh, and, and that's what this three-one thing and then the constellation of people around it would be. Yeah.

[Audience] – What kind of feedback are you getting from females about that kind of thing? It sounds more like a male fantasy than a female fantasy perhaps the three-one...

Well, I suppose to be absolutely fair, female fantasies might involve more males, but that's not allowed. We have enough. [Audience laughs]

[Audience] - Why is it not allowed?

Because the over-expression of this dominator tendency is what's running us to rack and ruin. We're not trying to create these social arrangements for the titillation of one sex or the other; we're in a sinking submarine for Christ's sake. We're trying to sort this out so that we *live*, you know, and then hanky-panky later.

[Audience] – Can you mention love or is that outside of the whole thing? Does that cloud the issue?

No, I don't think that [audience laughs] clouds the issue. You mean, that you imagination that love can only go on in this dyadic situation?

[Audience: indecipherable]

Well, I don't know. I mean, I think that love...the thing I like about this three-one thing is that it's inherently kind of unstable. You can tell that the energy will never settle. That it -- what happens with a lot of marriages and even extended relationships is: people come together, there's all kinds of excitement, they negotiate the arrangement, they get the negotiations taken care of and then everything goes stale as the contract is acted out. If there were never any stability, if it kept changing all the time, then keeping track of this complex, quadripartite relationship would be a full-time task. It would almost replace your job as what? [Terence laughs] Jeffrey.

[Audience] – This isn't going to work. The women would kick the men out in no time at all because they get on much better with each other than the average man.

Well that's why the man has to be inspired to achieve indispensability.

[Audience] – But Terence what's different between that, getting the men to fork over the goods for sex. It seems like it's as old as Cleopatra.

No way and I don't understand. How did goods enter into it?

[Audience] – I'm sorry, I thought you said that this was a way for the women to get the men to hand over the controls by offering them sex but it seems to me that's been tried. We see tycoons with beautiful women at their side. Isn't this the only way that women were allowed to compete to get the men to do what they wanted – through sex? This doesn't sound very new to me.

Well, I think we're talking about a new kind of woman. We're not talking about submissive, slave-like property. We're talking about independent, educated, financially independent professionals. It would be, I'm sure, a phenomenon of the high-tech industrial democracies. It's weird to talk about this but, on the other hand, you have two choices: you can either propose something that sounds outlandish or you can stick with what we've got because what we've got, we've had so long that anything else would sound outlandish. And, in the messy business of life, what really happens is that it's sort of all kinds of things... come and go, gel and dissolve and work themselves out under the aegis of all kinds of pressures – economic, epidemiological, psychological, driven by images of media and, you know, self worth fads. Yeah?

[Audience Indecipherable]

Well I was thinking of this earlier today for some reason. I was thinking that - I don't know why I was thinking this - but I was thinking that sex is so intrinsically a mental activity that the amazing thing is that it's kept in the body at all. And that normally, this equation is turned upside down and people say, "Well, it's so intrinsically of the body," but the fact that phone sex can be a nine billion dollar a year industry is telling us something about how erotic sensitivity is distributed through the network of the civilization.

[Audience Indecipherable]

Yeah, I mean, it's a pity that it's linked so closely to biology. This is why the cult of sexiness is something very different and very modern than the cult of procreation obsession. I mean, sexiness is something probably invented post-1850 and it's flash, is all it is. It's the permeating erotic sensitivity that characterizes modern civilization – in billboards, in advertising, in the constant assault of visual images. I mean, I really notice this when I go up the Amazon because there's no calendars, there's no girly pictures, nothing. Then when you get back to Iquitos, you just realize, you know, that what civilization is - is an ocean of explicit erotic imagery that keeps us all in a state of probably willingness to consume stuff, you know. It's a stimulant like caffeine, but it's a sexual stimulant.

[Audience Indecipherable]

That's right. Like bisexuality, which is a characteristic of feminine psychology. In this society, I think is directed related to the rise of modern advertising. There was no reason to reinforce that before 1850 or so and then you see this emerging.

[Audience] – *Do you think that virtual will make it worse?*

Well I don't know. I suppose there is a raging debate about pornography. There's a raging debate about everything.

[Audience] – *What about pornography directed towards women and children?*

Ah, pornography toward women and children. Well, I make a distinction between...oh god, now do we want to go off into this?

[Audience] – *I'm sorry, I take that back.*

Camille Paglia asked a very interesting question to which I don't have the answer and I don't even think we need to discuss it. But, I think everybody should think about it. And the question was: you know, can sexual liberation end anywhere but in sadomasochism? And, that's a very interesting question.

[Audience] – *Sure it can!*

Sure it can? She said maybe not. I don't know. I don't want to mud wrestle over it. But, uh -- what do we think about this? For instance, aggression toward women. Um, what do we think of aggression toward women that is acted out and no women are actually abused? And, this is where the pornography thing comes in. Is it subliminal? Is it a cause or a substitute? If it's a substitute, surely we must agree that it's a good thing. But, if it's a cause, we must surely agree it's a bad thing. Or is it both? Um, I don't have burning opinions about all this. I'm a first amendment guy right down the line and just take a position that nothing should be restricted by government. That there -- whatever the means by which the memes are sorted out, it should not be the wisdom of a benevolent government telling us what kind of images, uh, we should have.

The tough one is images, you know, of pain and abuse, images of psychological degradation. I don't know exactly what to do about that. You know, if you go back to the roots of western civilization and read Plato's *Republic*, Plato was very suspicious of the poets and did not think those people should be allowed to just run untrammled over the landscape. Uh, you know, here at Esalen, a great deal of time and effort has been expended to establish the medical concept that there are healing images. You know, Stan's work, some of Michael Murphy's work, some of the continuum work. Healing images are an article of faith around here. I believe it, but has anybody stopped to notice that if there are healing images, there are sickening images. Well then, so, uh, if you have tuberculosis, we don't say you have a right to mingle with the rest of us, or if you have some other contagious, rampantly contagious disease. Well, so then if you're carrying a meme that is toxic, do your first amendment rights exceed the mental health rights of the majority?

This is a nightmare issue to discuss because I heard a discussion on talk radio and someone was inveighing against *Silence of the Lambs* and saying it caused psychotic behavior. Somebody else called in and said,

"Well, if you want to ban books that cause psychotic behavior, I think you better start with the Bible; it's caused more psychotic behavior among more people than any other book in history." Certainly true, but we're not obviously going to do that. But, what is the relationship to toxic information? And, psychedelic people can take a more cutting edge role on this because we know the danger of toxic information because if you encounter some in your trip, it can really throw you for a loop. Yeah.

[Audience] – I think it comes down to integrating with shadows. If you don't integrate the shadow, it becomes very toxic. So, we got to deal with our full humanity, but so far what I know, we haven't. I mean, I grew up in the most neurotic country in recent history and, of course, the United States is catching up fast. I was born in Germany in '75 and I had this feeling when I grew up. God, what is that around us? I had no words for it. I was just horrified. I never wanted to grow up like this. Then I, you know, end up in America and now it's going to be like being German twice!

[Terence laughs] [Bad luck for you! Ha! Terrible choices.

[Audience] – But it's more comfortable than Germany.

[Audience] - But doesn't it lead you right back to psychedelics again. If you want to straighten all this stuff up, you've got to start with the brain and you've got to start with...

Yeah, although a question that interests me since, you know, I've been roughly doing workshops like this since 1983 and, you know, I've gotten to know everybody in the psychedelic movement and all the personalities and shakers and so forth and so on, and many of you in this room I've known for years and years, and a question that's interesting to me is: you know, like everybody else on some ideological bender, eventually we're going to have to answer to, uh, the bar of public opinion. What is so great about our thing? Or are we just like Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses or Rajneeshees or something – we have this wonderful thing that we're just convinced is the holy grail, and yet if you're not part of our little clique, it just looks like a bunch of deluded lost souls reinforcing each other's belief in some alchemical nostrum that...you know? So, I'm interested in the moral consequences of taking psychedelics. Uh, time is passing. Is the meme breaking loose? Is it a positive meme? Do people behave better to each other? Do they perform acts of charity or whatever, acts of creativity? Or is it good for the individual but inconsequential in its affects on society.

In other words, that when the final catastrophe comes, you will meet it with great humor, equanimity, uh, understanding because your psychedelic training has taught you to take it all with a grain of salt [audience laughs], but nevertheless, you know, the sludge will sweep over and all will be lost and you just went down without whining or complaining. Uh, I don't know. The thing that is so amazing about the psychedelics is how close to the surface the, um, state lies and yet how dramatically different from ordinary consciousness it is. It is dramatically different and it lies very, very close to the surface. This is why it's, you know, possible to suggest it's just a one or two gene mutation away in the neurochemistry and then you would be able to slip into these places. I mean, thinking, what is thinking? Reverie? Where in the animal phylogeny does it begin and how intense is it: uh, mental behaviors with the internal contemplation of language. How broadly based are these behaviors? How many different kinds of them are there? We don't know. We don't even have a vocabulary for this kind of thing. Yes, you wanted to say something.

[Audience] – Just an observation after twenty years of studying and experimenting with psychedelics is that

one of the things that they do is that they allow a person (this is assuming that we're not thinking the thoughts, that we are [indecipherable]) and if you do psychedelics, you get to a state where you are beyond thinking. You step aside and there's a common denominator that a lot people, yogis and [indecipherable]. In history, we can't really change anybody, but ourselves, and by changing ourselves, we can change everything. And that, um -- what's going to happen and what's not going to happen in the future? If every person can work on being 100% conscious in the moment, that's where all the magic happens, that's where all the miracles happen. It's being 100% here, focused, and by doing that, then whatever is happening, you're able to be part of a solution instead of part of an illusion. So, we're really blessed to have really good psychedelics and being able to spend time that not many people have experimenting with them. And that the gift is to be an example of what...[indecipherable]...and our child can grow up to be conscious. [Applause]

Yeah, one way to think of it is what you call 100% aware – is to just strive for appropriate activity. That, if everyone in this room were to suddenly begin behaving completely appropriately, it would immediately change the context of things and set the stage for further appropriate behavior. And, this would be like a cascade of appropriateness. I mean, enlightenment need be nothing more than that, I think. Yeah.

[Audience] – Now we're just getting into that area almost like religion. What you just said – it sounds like somebody behind a pulpit. It's really close to that but it's good.

Well let's hope it's not too close to that.

[Audience] – It's contagious coherence.

Well, appropriate activity. I mean, is somebody going to speak up for inappropriate activity? It's a winning concept.

[Audience] – But the inappropriate activity is rampant already as it is. That's pretty obvious.

Yeah, well, inappropriate activity stems from bad communication – bad message transfer. No, there should be some kind of maximum energy solution in any given situation that everybody can relate to. I mean, once when I was in the Amazon I discovered a sense that I didn't know people had. On psychedelics, I discovered this sense. And, it's an internal desk accessory which allows you to calculate the least energetic path between two points. Not the shortest distance, but the path of least effort between any two points. It has to do with following ridge edges. And, I just discovered this ability in myself and it's real. And, I'm sure it was very important for primitive people before history. And, who knows how many of these kinds of talents, abilities, and behaviors... because they're software programs, which when they become inappropriate, they just fade away. And yet, you know, the hardware is perfectly capable of running these programs. Yeah.

[Audience] – I wanted to just harken back to this thing that we started out with. In the dichotomy between history and Eros - you say that within history is a kind of built in end-point that you can sense. So, does that mean that the end of history is a dissolution into Eros? Is that the conclusion that you draw from that?

I guess it is the conclusion that I draw from it. I mean, that finally when language fails, as it surely must, then there will be love. Love is, um -- lies beyond all that. So, you can only take ratiocination so far. You can only model the thing so much. That's why always in these wild far flung schemes of modeling the end

of history and the end of time and everything, the fracto key is one's own experience. The feeling of death, the feeling of love – these things can be extrapolated to universal proportion. Everybody gives, um, currency to the idea that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, right? Everybody knows what this means, correct? Ah! It's simple. It means that the fetus in the womb, the ontology, recapitulates the phylogeny – it means that the fetus in the womb goes through all the stages of evolution. It begins as a single celled creature. It becomes like a fish. It becomes an amphibian. It changes into a mammal. It changes into a primate. It changes into a human being. But nobody even then takes the process further and says, "Well what we've learned by observing this, we can learn more from further extending the process." The person in the womb, now a complete person, is born and then they have a life, and then they die. So if ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, then the entire answer to how does the world work and what is it, is contained in looking at the fracto substructure of an individual history from conception to death. And, uh...

[Audience] – What you're talking about is the body. There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether a consciousness dies or not, or whether some physical transmutation takes place beyond living in this plane that we can perceive.

Sure. No, right. There's no certitude about that question by looking at that process. But everybody, you can see that for each of us as individuals, the thing ends in death, which is a big question mark. So then as a society, we should not be surprised that there is built into the superstructure of society this same kind of dissolving. Uh, it appears to happen even when there is no real good reason for it. Like, for instance, with the Maya. I mean, their civilization collapsed basically just because they were stupid. In other words, they got bad habits. There was no external pressure on them. They just made stupid mistakes and then the whole thing came apart. Uh, we could be in a similar situation.

But, to your question about how nobody knows what lies beyond death, nobody knows who is using the sanctioned tools of scientific investigation. But, if you go next door to the shamans, they claim all kinds of information on this question. They claim, essentially, a technology for accessing an ecology of souls – where a great deal of power for potentially good or evil lies as a reservoir that can be brought across by certain kinds of practices and activities. Now, science says that that's malarkey, but science says that the primary datum in support of that contention, which is the psychedelic experience, is also malarkey. And you can satisfy yourself that the psychedelic experience is, in fact, an ordered, uh, perspective on something coherent, simply by having that experience.

So, you, little old you, can satisfy yourself that science is not dealing from the top of the deck on this question of the content and meaning of the psychedelic experience. And, I feel like maybe the big news, the truly jaw-dropping news that will come out of all this re-exploration of the archaic and shamanism and hallucinogenic plants and so forth and so on – is a mapping of this realm of souls. That what we are actually on the verge of securing is that there is something that survives the physical organism and it's hard to tell what it is because, you know, essentially, we're at the stage with this where people were with electricity in 1700. Uh, we have yet to build the technologies, establish the standards and create the vocabulary for talking about this. But, if the task of Western epistemology is to integrate all knowledge into its sway then shamanism and the experiences of shamanism have to be brought into the metaphor. I think what this may, in fact, secure is that biology is the platform for establishing some more, um, hyper-dimensional structure that survives. Yeah, no. Yes. Stretching?

[Audience] – And therefore the cultural then?

It may be, you see, that in fact what the most pessimistic among us believe is happening is happening. In fact, there's no way out. That, in fact, we're all going to die. Then the question becomes, what is that? What does it mean, you know? Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Uh, Borgias had a story where the entelechy of the species could not move on until the last member of the species became extinct. There is some kind of relationship to mind across this barrier. Or, shamans have chosen to interpret a nearby, non-physical species of life as somehow related to the human after-death. And, why that should be and why that error should persist of fifty or one thousand years is not clear either? I said earlier today, science precedes with the simple cases first. You know, what is a marble rolling down a slope, so forth and so on? But, the complex question – what is my perception of my being – what is the nature of the inner dialogue that describes the ontos of being – this is a very, very complicated question. It takes 2000 years of preparing the epistemic ground before you can even reasonably ask the question.

[Audience] – Why do you suppose...your talking about us all dying as a species, or all dying as a civilization. We don't like the fact that we're going to die as individuals but somehow we grudgingly accept that and we create a lot of literature and congress around it. Why is the idea that we're all going to die as a species so much worse? Um, and, and...

Well, because I think probably as a species we're more neurotic than our individual members. We're pretty hysterical about this. We're not talking the news well that the doctor is handing out, you know...

[Audience] – But as a culture, maybe something lives on?

Something lives on? Yes, we've talked about this in the past in terms simply of technological innovation. For instance if the technology of time travel were to be created, historicity would end. Uh, the linear serial unfolding of events would become an epoch, that lasted from 10,000 BC to 1998, or something. And then following the epoch of serial moments came the epoch of non-serial moments. The epoch of simultaneity, in which people choose where to live in time the way they choose to live in space now. Yeah.

[Audience] – Well, uh, Eros?

Achieved through a knitting together. Everything that is, is an anticipation of what will be. Uh, being is growing more nascent or something. Th, there is this appetite for becoming that everything is striving for manifestation. Somehow what this boils down to mathematically is that all points seek co-tangency which means that in terms of dimensionality, the phase space of description is collapsing and all the points within it are becoming co-tangent. Uh, the 16th century anticipated this in the form of the philosopher's stone, you know – the alchemical quintessence, the lapis. It's a zone of space-time that is a singularity. It's where matter and imagination exchange clothing, and matter behaves as though it is imagination and imagination behaves as though it is a material physics.

[Audience] – Ok, that's really eloquent. It's like breaking the sound barrier for the first time. Before we broke the sound barrier we didn't know what that was going to be like. So, when we did it the first time, we have this glass afterwards. You break through, it shakes but then afterwards it's fine.

Well, you know, one of these little aphorisms that the mushroom handed out was, "History is the shockwave of eschatology." What that means is, as the species mind approaches the eschaton, what is called queue in engineering circles, uh, vibration begins to build up along the leading edges of the social vehicle. And, uh, as it approaches the eschaton, this queue force builds and this is where we are. We're

literally having our teeth shaken out as the historical bowshock of encountering the eschaton builds. If we can redesign the culture fast enough, the airframe of culture, then we can create an airfoil that will distribute the queue and we will just slide through. If we can't do that then our airfoil will be ripped to pieces and we will, you know, back to the drawing board.

[Audience] – That abyss we talked about. First of all, will we all go together or will some people be on this side?

No, I think it's a temporal moment of embedded novelty. Um, they've come and they've gone, but this is a critical one because it sets the stage. You know, it's the summation of everything that has happened and it's an anticipation of everything that will follow. It is that history is a kind of psychedelic trip. It's a kind of alchemical, um, distillation of the quintessence. And that the stuff generated out of the alembic of history is this trans-dimensional, cyber, electric, um, literalization of the imagination. You know, James Joyce said man will be 'dirgible.' What he meant was that the raw stuff of the unconscious will be downloaded into shimmering silicon and the protean child will be born out of the chaos of history; something like that.

[Audience] – You're taking a chance.

Well, the other thing is – a lot of what is called neurosis, or what is called less technically, unhappiness, is, actually, I think, caused by performance failure that is ultimately sort of physical. In other words, a person who is not working at their physical optimum will be mentally depressed but it's crazy to look for childhood trauma or something that lies behind that because the cause of the depression is physiological, not psychological. So, um, well, if you can take a pill and your depression goes away and your performance improves, psychotherapy is not indicated in that case I would think. Well, if you delay it long enough, it's solved. *[Terence laughs; Audience laughs]* I've always felt that tabling is a great solution for all kinds of problems.

How does the Time Wave apply to the individual life?

[Audience] – Do we speed up when we get older?

It's a truism to say that the older you are, the faster time moves. When you're seven, a year takes forever. When you're 77, they just rush past like pages falling from the calendar. Astrology went through a crisis several hundred years ago where under the emergence under a new class of wealthy people, there became a demand for personal horoscopes. And so, astrology reconfigured its toolkit to be able to provide that. I'm not very interested in individual time waves. I don't even have my own readily accessible, but what you can do is you can take your birth date and add to it one full cycle which is 67 years, 104.25 days, and set that as an end date and then you do get good correlation between your life and the wave. A way to think about how this relates to the general Time Wave, it's that the general Time Wave is simply the average of all the little time waves. In other words, it's additive. So, obviously, we all are at different places in our time wave, otherwise when I'm happy, you'd be happy. And, when I lose money, you'd lose money and it doesn't work that way. Some people are miserable in the presence of other people's joy, often causally related. *[Audience laughs]* Obviously, these people are at different places in the cycle. Yeah.

[Audience] – Would you like to say anything about 2CB since we were talking about drugs. A more general sort of political question: you obviously act as a very strong advocate for psychedelic drugs, has this attracted

to you any official attention? Are you getting audited every year?

Um, well actually, I've never been audited. It doesn't attract any attention. This is a great disappointment to the more delicately poised of my fans who would like to assume, you know, that we're at the barricades, barely able to evade the long arm of the law. Uh, I don't know. Their strategy in my case seems to be incredibly intelligent. They just completely ignore me [audience laughs] and why that is – maybe it's because it just doesn't matter, or because I use big words, I'm dismissed as an intellectual. We all know how powerful they are in America. [Audience laughs] So that's that.

[Audience] – It's because there's obviously no money involved.

Well that's the other thing. My theory on drugs, if you're not making money from it, you're of utterly no interest to anybody. Opinions are free.

[Audience] – Except that couple in, where is it, Calaveras that got arrested for having the frogs.

Well then there are the occasional, uh, examples.

[Audience] – They got arrested for what?

Toad-ranching. A heinous and nightmarish crime. They were extracting 5-methoxy DMT from Bufo Alvarius that they had in a domesticated situation in their home. And, uh, I suppose they were beaten with rubber truncheons and taken away, their house seized, their children taken from them, their animals murdered and so forth.

[Audience] – He was a teacher and a Boy Scout leader...

It just shows how deep into the middle class these nightmarish practices have reached. [Audience laughs] The abuse of amphibians is something our grandparents contemplated and yet here we are, you see. It's an ugly, ugly business.

[Audience] – But they did get into the press to say that they put an end to the rumor that you just don't lick it.

I think it was the Australian press which popularized the image of people nuzzling the under tummies of toads in order to obtain...

[Audience] – What about 2CB?

I know, I haven't forgotten you. 2CB – I have no opinion about that. No experience with that. I mean, I did take 2CB once but it didn't emerge prominently enough for me to form a bunch of opinions. Just as a general rule, but it's, you know -- rules are made to be broken – I'm not part of the faction that thinks we need ever more exotic drugs. I think we have a full toolbox, if we just would use it. Um, and, uh, you know, if you have ayahuasca, psilocybin, DMT, toss in mescaline, ibogaine and cannabis...

[Audience] – I don't happen to have any of those.

Ahah! Well, capitalism is searching for you, I'm sure. [Audience laughs] But, you know, it's a a very individual thing. Whatever works, use it. People have to come to terms with this. We are very much the product of our genetic and biochemical differences. Some people like things that other people can't handle at all. And you have to -- part of your self-education in pharmacology is learning what you -- what works for you. Yeah?

[Audience Indecipherable]

Outside of the intellectual concerns of science, this has been a generally persistent attitude that time is as important as geography. Uh, not only astrology but, uh, Mayan divinatory methods, African divinatory methods. I think that science, uh, is running against the flow here with its attitude that time is not, uh, to be differentiated. The reason for that, if you analyze it, is not far to seek. Science depends on the concept of experiment and experient to mean anything it must be time independent. And so, in a sense, you could almost say that what science is - is the study of those phenomena so course-grained that when they occur, time doesn't affect them. So, that leaves out most interesting things, you know? All the subtler processes of biology, psychology, sociology are left out of that. And yet, that's why this idea -- I showed you last night -- it may appear revolutionary but it's *really* revolutionary because science could not operate. It would be the end of science if this idea were accepted because it says that experiments are time dependent, therefore, it is not ever possible to perform the same experiment twice. Therefore, the idea of building up a serial set of observations of many examples of the same experiment is bogus. And, uh, so, you know, this idea aligns itself with astrology and with all these other pre-scientific series of change that is modulated by both space and time. Yes. Question? Yes.

[Audience] – If growing such items like ayahuasca vine and *Psychotria Viridis*, is it kosher for someone like us to grow it and not be hassled by the DEA or someone like that?

Well, you have to be an excellent Amazonian field botanist to recognize these things. It's a pretty mute point. I mean, you do have DMT in your brain, so you're potentially bustable at all times. *Psychotria viridis*, it's not easily recognized. ayahuasca and *Psychotria viridis* can't be grown in occidental, for example because it's too cold. They can be grown in Hawaii. This conference that I was at in Mexico, the great alternative technology that those people are excited about is what are called ayahuasca analogues. Meaning that, at closer scrutiny to the flora of the earth shows that, in most environments, there are plants that produce DMT and there are plants that contain MAO inhibitors. In most ecosystems of the world, there are plants which, if properly prepared, create a kind of ayahuasca. And, s people are retiring to their kitchens and laboratories to cook furiously all of these things.

If you're interested in doing this, uh, the way to proceed is, uh, as an MAO inhibitor, you need seeds of *Peganum harmala*. No more than two grams. *Peganum harmala* seeds are available from seed suppliers. They're also available in Iranian markets as a product called hermal – little hard black seeds. Two grams of them, pulverized in a shot of water or alcohol will inhibit your MAO quite thoroughly. If you then take a DMT source orally, you will have a response to it. And people are using *Desmanthus illinoensis*, the Illinois bundle weed. At this conference, letters were read from people in Australia who were using Australian Echinacea. *Phalaris* grasses can be grown, and using a sprouting device, you can grow *Phalaris* sprouts and dry them. They are intense in the sprouting stage with DMT. So, this group of people I was with in Mexico – their great enthusiasm is to provide so many different psychedelic, so many different paths to the psychedelic experience that there is no way they can all be made illegal.

Uh, DMT, we have not yet hit the crush in terms of the social debate about all this. DMT was made illegal when, um, LSD was made illegal. At the height of a media fanned hysteria in an atmosphere of intense 'no-nothingism.' Uh, it was not known at the time that DMT occurs in human metabolism. Nor was the physiological profile of DMT known. What rationale for keeping a drug illegal is there if it's not a social problem? It begins to look just like sheer 'for-your-own-goodism' of some sort. Uh, it -- one way of measuring an index of the danger posed by a drug is to look at how many emergency room admissions there have been for that drug. Well, I dare say in the last five years for DMT intoxication there've probably been zero emergency room admissions. By the time anyone could get you to the emergency room, your main anxiety is that nobody find out that you lost it.[Audience laughs]

And the fact that it's a human metabolite. I don't know what's going to happen. It's a very interesting situation because the arguments for keeping the psychedelics illegal are becoming weaker and weaker and weaker and more and more flimsy, and more and more people are awakening to what a racket this is. And, weird forms of co-option are taking place. It's not easy in Garberville to advocate the legalization of cannabis because people are all around you getting \$400 an ounce for it. The thought of legalization strikes terror in their hearts. They have a kid at Stanford, they have a house in Saint-Tropez, they have a sailboat -- why in God's name would you want to legalize cannabis? So, this is a factor, you know?

[And, in the past several years, three years or so, there's been an enormous surge in psychedelic publishing. I don't know if you're all aware of it. You certainly should be, I mean. Obviously, you should buy and read every word I've ever written. [Audience laughs] In addition to that, Sasha Shulgin and Ann Shulgin's book *PIKHAL* has come out. You should be aware of Jonathan Ott's book *Pharmactheon*, which in between the covers of one book, if you just want excellent scholarship and the longest bibliography ever to attend a drug book, this is for you. Uh, Eduardo Luna's book on ayahuasca has come out. Um, well, Schultes book, *The Healing Forest: Medicinal and Toxic Plants of the Northwest Amazonia* has come out. Um, there's a resurgence of interest in this field. And, I think it's a very hopeful sign that people are, you know, -- have enough sense to realize that it has something to do with shamanism, it has something to do with plants, it has something to do with taking charge of your own experience and spiritual growth and, you know, ditching ideologies, and some of these beady-eyed gurus are being sent back to wherever they came from to find honest work among their own kind. This is a fine thing, I think.

[Audience] – Let's imagine that we're post legalization. How would you see it? Would it mean that the government would want to go toward education, or would it be like Amsterdam where you sell it in cafés?

I don't know. I guess I'm a cynic about this. I believe that the reason drugs are kept illegal have nothing to do with the reasons given for why they're kept illegal. They're kept illegal because, if they were legal, it would be hard to make a lot of money off of them. And, you know, an enormous part of the world economy runs on drugs, so -- and always has: sugar, coffee, teas, spices -- drugs, drugs, drugs. Uh, so, it would be a much saner and safer world if drugs were legalized because intelligence agencies would not have these vast sources of money, which they then use to finance private armies, murder liberal magazine editors, setup phony political parties, indoctrinate people, so forth and so on. So it's really an issue of covert control. Drugs are the last bastions of hidden slush funds at the billion dollar and up level. If this were not a factor, the psychedelics never would have been illegal. I mean, the whole drug-scheduling thing is completely cockamamie. You have Schedule 1, which is the severest category, and what do we have in this most severe of all categories? -- we have heroin, we have cannabis and we have the psychedelics.

Schedule 2 is cocaine. Cocaine has legitimate medical applications. It's used in certain kinds of throat and eye operations. So, there is -- so, it's the psychedelics strangely enough which are the most stigmatized of all the non-addictive drugs.

This is just pure fear and it relates to what I talked about last night, the issue of surrender and how anxious the dominator types become when the issue is loss of control. You know, they are absolute control freaks and, you know -- until people demand that this be changed, it won't be changed. People are not very demanding. I mean, you know, you give people the four-term governor of Arkansas and they think that Christ is healing in the market place or something.. [Audience laughs] I mean, that's how pathetic the liberal position in America has become that it can embrace someone like Bill Clinton as its standard-bearer. Not to launch into a knock on that. I mean, I certainly prefer it over George Bush, but it's very minimally important. It doesn't impinge on our lives. All these people are jackasses and should be hung. In a civilized society they would be hung before a howling mob [Audience laughs] but...

[Audience] – Would a civilized society hang anybody?

Certainly, it would. Voltaire said the common people will know no peace until the last politician is strangled publicly in the entrails of the last priest. [Audience laughs] But that's just an opinion of mine, you don't have to follow me into that and probably shouldn't.

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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And,

And

aka Nothing Lasts [Psychedelic Salon Title]

Day February 1994

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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[Audience] - I had this experience of dreaming that I smoked. It was very futuristic and it looked like little pellets, like something out of a star film and out of a little metallic pipe. It was like DMT when I went up on it. It lasted about 45 seconds - intense. I wondered if this was common or do you have any theories about what happened?

That's an interesting question. It relates to some of the properties of DMT. I mentioned DMT occurs in human metabolism. It does, and its concentration in cerebral spinal fluid fluctuates on a circadian or daily rhythm. The most intense concentration of DMT is about four in the morning and this is when the deep REM dreaming is going on. When you give DMT to somebody – as an index of how loaded they are – what you look at is, with them stretched out in front of you, you look at their closed eyes. And, if their eyes are darting wildly back and forth under their eyelids then you assume that they have in fact become successfully intoxicated because they are then in the realm of the self-transforming elf machines and they're watching all this stuff.

Many people who have smoked DMT report that, later, they will have a dream where a glass pipe will be introduced into the dream; they will smoke it and this will happen. This is really interesting to me because it argues that the physiological capacity for the DMT flash is present, at least, in deep sleep, maybe all the time. It seems to me that an inspired biofeedback program of research ought to be able to teach people how to do that. One thing I've talked to my brother about in terms of orienting the research programs of these pharmaceutical companies is, you know, how about a drug which just allows you to remember your dreams. That, alone, might throw open a whole new world of possibility. Kathleen?

[Audience Indecipherable]

Yes, so, if you could get in there, uh, we might solve our drug problem, uh, because I think that probably every night we go deeper than we can remember and that the dreams we remember are basically at the surface. And even the deepest dreams we remember are fairly near the surface. But, that the dissolution back, into some kind of primal swarm state, is part of the daily cycle and why the top level can't remember is a real question about our physiological and psychological organization. I mean, maybe there is simply no efficacy to it. But, uh... Yeah.

[Audience] – Does it have something to do with the brain waves? If you're down in theta, you can still witness what's going on. But, when you go down to delta, it's just a total absorption. Within the process, you remember it felt nice afterwards, but you don't remember.

Well, what seems to be happening is, there is no transcription of short-term memory. DNA - I'm sorry - RNA activation of short-term memory isn't happening. All of these things are physical mechanisms which could be studied, but, you know, we spend money in unusual ways. I doubt that any drug company would put money into a dream recollection drug.

[Audience] – Are there no futuristic drug companies at all?

Drug companies are the most bottom-line gang around. It's a very cutthroat business and research curves are short because you're in constant competition. Uh, I don't know, but, you know, long-term research, this could be done. If we spent as much money on this as we spent to dig the hole for the now cancelled supercollider, we would probably have the thing in hand.

[Audience] – I'm curious about the parallels you drew between the DMT flash and orgasm, um, or the non-parallels that you said. You said that you were baffled about that. I guess my question is, have you experienced or do you know the orgasm to be potential for that kind of a powerful mind consciousness expansion, or is it just what you would term the post-coital fog?

Well, the fog comes afterwards. *[Audience laughs]* Well, um, orgasm is an interesting phenomenon. First of all, it's not necessary, uh, and it's not expressed in lower animals. Sex, as you descend the animal phylogeny, becomes more and more mechanical, less and less intimate. You know, finally, it's all about eggs that are deposited somewhere and then males come along and fertilize them and there's not even contiguous activity by male and female. So then what is it that, as animal complexity increases, there's this concentration on this burst of boundary-dissolving pleasure in the central nervous system. I don't exactly understand what the function is there. Obviously we're all interested in sex, but are we interested in sex because we pursue orgasm and the, you know, is that the payoff? Couldn't you build in a more gentle gradient of interest based on biology which must be happening with these other animals?

Uh, there's a book to be written about all this. I have all the questions; I just don't have any of the answers. I can see that sexuality is related to consciousness and to the psychedelic state. But I can't and I've thought about it for years and years, but I just haven't gotten anywhere. When you have sex on psychedelics, you know, there's an incredible enhancement and reciprocal feedback into that, but, um, I don't know. Kathleen?

[Audience] - I'm thinking of the Tantric practice where that energy, that regenerative energy is conserved. So, at the moment of orgasm, to concentrate your energy at the base of the spine and let it wash the nervous system internally. It seems like an evolutionary....

Well, I was going to mention that. One of the things that's always puzzled me about Tantra is that, if you analyze it, it's a -- it's a frustrating of the biological drive toward ejaculation in the male. How strange then that at the top of animal organization, there would evolve a physiological response that is contra the biological momentum of the species. I mean, you know, a hanging man ejaculates but a yogin doesn't, apparently. And so, I'm skeptical, not of the phenomenon, but of the interpretation of the phenomenon.

[Audience] –Actually there's a good description of why that's encouraged in a book called, "The Jewel and the Lotus" by Bodhi Avinasha and Sunyata Saraswati. What it is - is that it transmutes that energy whereas that orgasm would send that energy out the bottom of the man, that it would come up the spine and accumulate in the medulla and activate the third eye and promote a superconscious state. That's actually the physiological thing but you were questioning the philosophical end of it. But conserving sperm is something that, uh, a tradition in many martial arts and spiritual traditions and does seem to have in my observation and practice a good effect on spirituality and on states of altered consciousness.

But that means that people with vasectomies should be enlightened.

[Audience] – No, no! It's a physical practice that comes about...

[Audience] – That's a cutting of the circuitry too with the vasectomy.[Audience] – It's not the sperm, it's the energetic. You know, men have had accidentally dry orgasms that have gotten them to the same place mentally as a wet orgasm. Um, I think it's a mistake to concentrate of the physiological part of it and the pleasure center part of it and look at the wider context of where and why and how it's been practiced. And There is a lot there. I've studied and practiced that a lot so I think it might bear looking at is what I'm saying.

I agree with most of what you're saying. I'm not so in agreement that it's not important to understand the physiology of it. The way to bring these things forward is to get some kind of handle on it so that it can be raised off the level of metaphor. And, I suppose they're trying to do that but it's freakishly elusive considering how radical the claims are. I'm very suspicious...

[Audience] - Actually it's not. It's like anything else once you get interested in it. There are a lot of teachers and there is a lot of literature on it. It's not freakishly elusive at all. It's just...

Well, I mean to demonstrate to someone who is not pre-committed to believing it. That's what I mean by elusive.

[Audience] - Well, it's been called the secret teachings for a long time but with what tools and media we have now, these methodologies and explanations are available.

Well, yeah, we're in a situation where all boundaries between knowledge systems have dissolved in the past hundred years. Take something like Dzogchen. You know, when I studied Tibetan, you didn't even mention this until you'd been with them for years. It was inconceivable. Now it's pedaled on every street corner, which I think is a good thing.

[Audience] – What is Dzogchen?

Oh it's an advanced Tantric-Shmantric something or other. I'm using it as an example of the fact that there are esoteric idea systems have all been brought together and we're sorting it out. Over the past hundred years, this has been going on. I have been underwhelmed by the accomplishments of Indian spirituality personally; overwhelmed by the accomplishments of Amazonian spirituality. I suspect priestly hierarchies of unspeakable acts and intentions and always try to avoid that. I'm also very suspicious of secrets. I mean, if you tell me one, it's finished as a secret. [Audience laughs] I took a pledge long ago to tell all secrets as

quickly as possible, um, because I think that everybody is a lot stupider than you might think. Uh, that nobody has a leg up on this stuff.

[Audience] – The only secret in Dzogchen is not to tell it to somebody who’s not interested. [Terence laughs] The idea of a secret has nothing to do with a secret. It’s keeping the energy and not going around telling it.

Well what I found though is that...

[Audience] - It’s a technique. It has nothing to do with a secret. I tell you not to tell anybody and the hard part is not to tell. The secret is irrelevant. It’s only a technique for the student to hold energy. That’s all.

Well, real secrets can’t be told, period. So that’s not an issue. And then secrets, which can be told, are not secrets. Secrets are a way of controlling other people.

[Audience] - What is your best guess as to what is the outcome of this experience? In other words, are there any conceivable other choices besides a reversal or a going upward. Could time go backwards? I mean...

By this process, you mean this historical spin down that we’re caught in? Um, well, there are different ways to think about it; um, like a whole smorgasbord of ways to think about it. It could be that we are simply in anticipation of our death as a species. This is the downer possibility. That what the 20th century is - is like a terminal delirium. We are sinking into coma. All philosophies, books, teachings, points of view, are now swirling around the deathbed of human culture. You know, we remember the shattered affairs, the failed crusades, the ruined dreams. We’re looking back over the wreckage of the last 10,000 years and trying to make peace with it and sinking into coma.

Another possibility is, um, you know – I mentioned that the Time Wave seems curiously appropriate to technology. That what we’re calling novelty, the evolution of novelty seems linked to the evolution of technology. Uh, a technology that would fulfill this whole scenario without requiring the intervention of God almighty or something like that would be time travel. Because if -- if it were possible to travel in time, then you would understand what it meant that this linear wave of novelty terminates on December 21st, 2012. It just literally means that’s the day history ends because after that day, you have a different kind of time. You have a kind of time that is like space. Notice that when we look at the evolution of life and human culture, it’s a conquest of dimensionality. You know, we started as some slime on a rock somewhere and slowly through the coordination of our senses, our eyes and then our limbs, we have conquered space. Notice that when you decide to walk over yonder, this is a journey through space that is volitional, but the time is not volitional. No human being has ever traveled an inch in time or a moment in time.

[Audience] - We just can’t change the rate. We travel in time constantly but we go at...

We’re in the river and the river has a speed and we’re carried along. But, in principle, if it were possible to travel in time, uh, you could create an entirely different kind of sociological domain and I have talked to the mushroom about this. And, it says, you know, that time travel is possible, but only of a certain type. The type that is like this: you can travel back in time, but you cannot travel further back in time than the invention of the first time machine because before that there were no time machines. And, if you took a time machine there, you would introduce a paradox.

[Audience] – Is memory traveling back in time? Like a vivid memory of something that happened a while ago. Isn't it a sense of manipulation of time in that way?

Well, that's what's called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness." I mean, the mind can travel in time, but the mind -- time is a domain of non-mental objects. It's a domain of real objects. So, the mind traveling through time is fairly ineffectual. If you could actually move matter through time and there's reason to think you could, then -- and if you could travel back in time than no further than the first time machine -- then the moment the first time machine is created and turned on, time machines will appear from all points in the future visiting the most interesting place in time, which is the beginning of the era of time travel.

[Audience laughs] It's as though -- if you have an airplane that you could fly to Kitty Hawk to December 17th, 1905 to witness the first flight of the Wright flyer. So, in a sense, what we call a time machine is not a technology at all and certainly not a technology for individual travel through a temporal medium. What we call a time machine is a kind of switch which, when pushed, collapses the entire notion of future history down into a single moment. It causes, in a sense, the rest of history to happen instantly.

[Audience] – Is this time machine mechanical or non-mechanical?

Well, it's a -- it's a concept at this point. I mean...

[Audience] – But I mean if there were a time machine, would it be mechanical or non-mechanical.

I think you can visualize it any way you like. I mean, it's probably more like a drug than a machine.

[Audience] – I guess maybe that's true too. I've often thought about this time travel thing about the fact that we couldn't fly at least in a physical sense until a few years ago and I'm thinking that maybe we can't time travel until we get a mechanical prop to help us along at first. But then later on maybe we'll learn how to do it without a mechanical prop.

Although we've never learned to fly without mechanical props. In fact the more we learn about flying, the less likely it seems you know.

[Audience] – Because it's so easy to fly with a mechanical prop...

And 50 years in -- or 70 years in -- to the history of powered flight, we still haven't a clue to how you could fly without mechanical augmentation. Yeah.

[Audience] – I'm thinking that each time you do a really deep psychedelic experience in some ways you travel to the first time that shamans interacted with the plant world because you're experiencing basically the same connection that takes you out of present time and into something more ancient and more circular. The other thing that occurred to me is if we were slime on the rock, we were pre-historical then maybe up to 2012 we become post-historical and maybe what that means is that we're living life so much that we don't have time to sit down and record it.

Well, post-historical existence would be non-linear, you know. People would live in time the way we now live in space and would spread out. What was the first part of your thing?

[Audience] – If you're on psychedelics and...

Oh, yes. Well that's how I think of psychedelics. I mean, when I say boundary dissolution, the real boundaries I'm talking about are the boundaries of dimensionality. That the way a shaman is able to do what shamans do is by transcending Newtonian space and time. Here is my model of it. The mind is like a crystal growing under pressure and the pressure is the pressure of Newtonian space/time. And, so the crystal grows and takes the shape of it's confinement, but when you liquefy the crystal matrix with a psychedelic, it has another preferred geometry and it unfolds into this second geometry and the second and alternative geometry is more hyper spatial. Culturally, our minds are confined by cultural pressure and cultural phase space to, uh, reflect cultural concerns, you know. How am I looking? How much money do I have? Are my social relations in tact? Is my behavior falling within acceptable and so forth and so on?

Uh, when you take the psychedelics and you dissolve the social confinement, the intellectual confinement, the ideological confinement, then the mind -- it's like taking it out of it's box and it can configure itself in a most comfortable geometry, and it's free. And, uh, the reason shamans know what the weather will be, know where the game has gone [clears throat], know who will recover and who will not recover from serious illness is because they have a relationship to the future that ordinary people lack. They can see the vectors of possibility and propagate them, uh, into the future. In a sense, chess is like good practice for shamanism because good chess players see deeply into the future. That's how you win chess games. It's the person who can see the most moves ahead without obfuscation who inevitably wins the game. That's all that chess is about. So, it's, uh -- And, if you've ever played chess on LSD, uh, you know that it's, uh, ridiculous. [Audience laughs] [Terence laughs] Yes, Cheryl.

[Audience] - Spending time and being liberated from that -- when you talk about transcending time and being liberated from that, is that also being liberation from the body? Because so much of our sense of time is wedded to our embodiment.

Yeah, I mean, this freedom in time usually comes in a state of trance. The I-Ching says, "Keeping still." Trance...

[Audience] –But even after 2012 when there's this radical transformation of what we know as time, is that also a radical transformation of what we know as body?

Well, at other times we've talked about this. There are factions who want to do away with the body. Who believe that somehow in some kind of electrical simulation of the Ketamine space, we will all flow like amoeboid energies from one orgasmic nexus to another; and genital consciousness, body image consciousness, all of this will be left behind. I - I suppose I should have an opinion about all this, but I really don't. If it feels good, do it, is my motto. The choice between extreme artificiality and extreme naturalness, I think we talked about this the first night, didn't we, about the gnostic choice? On one level, it's a choice about the body. I mean, Is the body the glorious instrument of, you know, our interfacing with the miracle of creation or is the body a bag of rotten guts dragging us down ever deeper into Tartarus. Uh, these are just shifts of perspective and people have vehemently argued, uh, both ways. I like the idea of taking the body with you into cyberspace and creating a virtual body. I mean, obviously the body is a product of many millions of years of evolution and generally seems well adapted to the mind that inhabits it. It is meaty, fleshy and perishable. If that could be overcome...

[Audience] – Ok, so the perishability ...

The perishability I think is what I think. What I've said at times in the past is that the task of history is the inversion of the human being. Our goal is to get the soul outside in three-dimensional space and the body folded inside in mental space. Now we have it all wrong. The body perturbs into three-dimensional space. The most important organ, the mind, cannot be seen. It's harder to find than the pancreas, uh, because simply by opening the body and looking around, you can find the pancreas. Opening the body and looking for the mind won't give it to you. It's obviously in another, uh, dimension. Many religious traditions have this idea of building what's called "a light body". They say, life is a preparation for death, you're building an after death vehicle. It's a -- it's a simulacrum of a living body, but it's made of light and it's under the control of your higher intentionality. Uh, there may be something to this. Certainly, you know, we all do build our images according to how we cut our hair, according to how we dress, what particular reconstructive surgeries we elect to have, so forth and so on. We sculpt, uh, the body and when the body is made of light, this will become much easier. I mean, you know, rather than a boob job, you can become a canary if you want [audience laughs] or whatever else is your particular...yeah.

[Audience] – Does the idea that time is compressing contradict the idea that the universe is expanding scientifically?

Well, there's a lot of argument about whether it's expanding or contracting. The measurement seems to show that it's incredibly close to the limit case, to the place where you can't tell. I mean, it's either just barely expanding or just barely collapsing and why it's so close to the limit case isn't clear. Yeah, this contradicts all of that. See, the scientific theory says, the universe appeared from nothing for no reason, 14 billion years ago. It exploded outward. It's cooling. It's slowing down. Complex processes are appearing. Eventually, it will reach the limits of gravitational expansion. If it reaches the limits of gravitational expansion, it will then re-collapse. If not, it will just go forward until entropic heat death. The model that I'm proposing is a little different. It says that the big singularity lies not at the beginning of the universe but at the end. So, I call it not the big bang but the big surprise. What's happening is that process is complexifying. The scientists want to say that the entire universe burst from a point smaller than the electron for no reason. As I said yesterday, this is the limit case for credulity. If you believe that, you'll believe anything.

[Audience] – I have a feeling, you, know I'm not a physicist but it sounds a little strange.

Yeah, how is that different from 'and God said, "Let there be light." It's not different at all. It just uses a personal pronoun in one case and not in the other. I think that there are singularities but that they arise in complexity and that history is the shockwave of the approach of an animal species toward such a singularity. In other words, when monkeys walk toward the mystery, they begin spouting poetry, solving quadratic equations and manufacturing instruments to measure the charge of the electron. It's a sign that you're getting close to, uh, the source of gnosis. That the noetic point source radiates understanding with such an intensity that the closer you approach it, the more you understand. And the closer a species approaches it, the more it manifests cognitive activity. So, we dance, we paint, we sculpt, we poeticize, we construct complex architectonic structures because we are close to the source.

And, the way we are narrowing distance between ourselves and the source is by moving toward it through

time. It exists at a point in time and we are slowly wandering across the epigenetic landscape of becoming and it's a steep hill. So, we are wandering down into this basin of attraction unconsciously being drawn closer and closer to the dwell point. And now the walls are so steep, the momentum so great, that there's no doubt where we're headed. We're headed toward the point of, uh, maximum equilibrium within the system. Yeah. Somebody over here.

[Audience] – A few minutes ago, you were kind of laughing at the ridiculous claim of playing chess under LSD. I was wondering why it would be ridiculous? What would happen?

[Audience] – The pieces would melt in your hands!

Well, the thing is, it depends on how seriously you took chess. If you took chess very seriously, it would be perfectly possible to do it. Like everything else under LSD, the implications have to be kept under control. So, if you could just look at the chessboard and see it as a chess problem, you could probably play chess. But, unfortunately, everything will become symbolic of other things and -- and you will, you know, it's very hard to keep your eye on the ball. You would have to have incredible powers of concentration. You would have to really love chess. Some people can do this. I mean, I know people who cross country ski on psilocybin. I find that unimaginable. I mean, I can't cross-country *open my eyes* on psilocybin. [Audience laughs] So...something?

[Audience] – I've noticed in chess that what disappeared was the complete lack of desire to beat the other person.

Yes, I think that the killer instinct declines. But, if you were looking at it as how deeply can I see into it, it's good probably -- probably the way to take acid and play chess is with a computer. Then you don't get into the personal issues of, you know, what is it on the other side of the board. What I find with psychedelics is, it's always people that are the most confounding. I mean, people, as nexi of complexity, are orders of magnitude more complex than anything else in the universe and can always throw you for a loop if you're -- I mean *always* throw you into a loop, there's not if or anything.

[Audience] – This is totally off the wall. Have you ever pointed a video camera at a TV screen and observed what happens?

Sure, that's called a Hopf bifurcation. That's a standard thing in chaos theory to demonstrate. That's just a feedback loop. That's the equivalent of audio feedback but that's visual feedback.

[Audience] – Extraordinary huh?

Well, if you're making a metaphor to the act of self-reflection, yeah. I mean...

[Audience] – It seems like you're seeing into the particle matter or something; forms getting deep, deep between the molecules. It's very strange. If you mess around with the contrast and the light button at the same time, you can get it just right to pointing in the middle of the screen on a tripod, and then mess around, you can actually video it, too. You can record an empty video. You can make a light show out of that. It's extraordinary.

Well, Ralph Abraham when he was studying dynamical systems built a device, which he called a macroscope. And, what it was - it was two sheets of glass with a liquid like gel or something in between and there was a frequency knob and an amplitude knob. And, you play with these two knobs; you illuminate the glass plate with Schlieren Optics, which is a polarized light system, and project it on a screen. And, you discover, you know, that there is this pulsating pattern, but as you steer with the amplitude and frequency knobs, you can stabilize the pattern. But, what's interesting, when you leave the pattern and try to steer back to it with the same series of moves again, you can't find your way back by repeating your previous action in reverse because it's a dynamical, uh, system. This is what chaos theory, complexity theory and dynamics is studying now. Very new mathematical tools are emerging for studying complex systems and this is precisely what we need. You see, all of modern science up until 1980 was done as an extension of Greek mathematics. You -- you had the perfect Aristotelian solids. Then you have the multivariable equations that come out of Algebra as it evolves into Calculus.

[Audience] – Pi was interesting because it couldn't be computed exactly.

Right. Well, there were all kinds of problems in nature and mathematics that were called pathological or a less dramatic term is, incommensurate. Meaning that you could tell that there was a mathematical solution, but nobody knew how to carry out the millions of operations necessary to do that. Well, now, with computers, computers are making a revolution in mathematics that's very unwelcome among some mathematicians because, you know, with computers, you can perform hundreds of millions of iterative operations a second. The computer becomes an eye into domains of complexity that previously could only be vaguely indicated.

As an example, fractals. Fractals have been known since the late 19th century. They were not called fractals; they were called pathological curves: uh, the snowflake curve, the piano curve, the anti-snowflake curve. These things were known, but you could only calculate them to the 3rd and 4th stage of expression. Now, with a little program on a PC like Fractasketch, you can calculate the 8th, 9th and 10th level of these complex objects and it only takes ten or fifteen minutes for it to draw them for you. So, this is, you know, using technology, specifically technologies that mirror mental functioning, to push us deeper and deeper into the mathematical realm. Yeah.

[Audience] – There was a composer named Cornelius Cardew and he came up with this one composition called "Paragraphs." It was in a John Keats style. It was not musical notations. It had a series of written instructions and there would be forty people that would perform it. Anyway, for instance an instruction would be: sing the word "if" in any note that you hear personally for the duration of a breath. So there would be forty people who would go 'aaaa' and so what they would do, he had, at that time they had all over the country, Europe or America, all these groups of forty people doing it. The variables would be that they had five trained musicians and thirty-five people that just walked in and read the instructions. Anyway, each piece was maybe twenty minutes long with a series of instructions and when you played all of these back to back, there was rarely a difference in the way it would sound and be performed. People would have a tendency to hit A for instance. You know..

You mean it reveals an underlying organization that is not known to be there. Well, this is how the world is put together it turns out. I mean, a story that I occasionally tell that illustrated for me how this works that was very interesting was, I was on a beach a few years ago in Southern California, a very long beach with no people on it. And, uh, I came upon a black round rock that was just deposited there and I noticed, uh,

this rock and I, uh, kept walking along the beach. And, then I came to another black rock exactly like the first one like about five hundred yards further on. I had for some reason, probably because I was loaded on mushrooms, had the prescience of mind to go back to the first rock I'd encountered and count off the steps between the two rocks. It was like 650 steps. So, when I got to the second rock, I began walking continuing down the beach and I counted off 648 more steps and there was a third black rock as I knew there would be. [Audience laughs]

So, you see, what's happening here is that you have a huge bay with this endless beach. Some kind of incredibly complicated equation is being continuously run on the bay as computer. And every 648 to 656 steps, it's solving this equation by depositing a small black rock on the beach. Well, now, if I'd have had a naïve person around, I could have predicted that we would encounter the third black rock and then they would have deified me or offered sacrifice or something at this proof of a prescient knowledge of the future. But it wasn't prescient knowledge of the future; it was knowledge of how fractals work in space and time. And, you know, if you get this attitude, it's a firm basis for a kind of warm-hearted cynicism. So that when people do something wonderful or terrible to you that has been done before to you, over and over again, instead of expressing outrage and amazement, you just notice that 'aha,' it's happening again [audience laughs] as it happened in the past and it surely will in the future. This is how Finnegans Wake is written. It's just within the great fall are suspending many little falls and spread through that are many tiny falls; an infinite regress of repetitious pattern. This is how the world actually works. Yeah.

[Audience] – Science would have said it was incorrect because there was a difference of three or four paces between the distances between the rock, therefore, nothing was proved.

Well, that's Greek science that is trying for a kind of exactitude. But, it turns out, you know, nature is not deterministic. That's why they used to have the idea that you could run the universe backwards and that all the particles would eventually rearrange themselves as they were in the original, uh, situation.

[Audience] - They're slipping back to, isn't it?

Yeah, that you could run it back to the big bang. But, this is an incredibly naïve and simple-minded understanding of how the laws of nature work because the laws of nature are not absolutely determined. I mean, you can run time backward and it will sort of return to where it started from, but, you know, Columbus will not sail the ocean blue in 1492. It doesn't work like that. Once something has undergone the formality of occurring, it is, uh, never to be repeated. It's unique. I mean, that's what's happening. There is this moving wave in front of the class of the possible that slowly at the point of interest, called the now, translates itself into what is actually occurred.

[Audience] - But just now you said, the way things are. It's repetition – the fractals - you know, like, it happens to you again and again but now you say that nothing is ever repeated. On one level it's a contradiction and on another level it's not. I don't understand.

In a fractal, there is no contradiction. These two statements are both true. Here's the first statement. Everyday is like every other day. That's generally true. Here's the second statement: but, occasionally, amazing things happen. That's also true. You have to round one of the big corners in the pattern. So, everyday is like every other day. Every century is rather like every other century and every million years is sort of like the million years that preceded it. But then at the fine scale, there are incredible surprises. So,

everything oscillates between its sameness and its uniqueness. And, it is co-temporaneously both unique and part of a universal plenum. I mean, this gets close to some kind of Buddhist idea. Uh, uniqueness is the thing that hasn't received enough attention. That's why, you know, I'm a Whiteheadian. I think Whitehead dealt with uniqueness with more care and attention than anybody else has. Yeah.

[Audience] – *You have to follow this path. Take that first step and you're good.*

Well, yeah. Boolean algebra, which is both/and logic wasn't invented until the late 19th century, so there was this long, long period where you had to make this choice. This is again what's called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness". The idea that ideas are things therefore they have to be A or B. They don't have to be A or B. They can exist in a both/and situation. I had a professor who seriously advocated, he said, "You want to know when the world went wrong? It went wrong when the Greeks stopped being fishermen and pulled their boats up on the sand and starting talking philosophy," and the road to hell was paved broad and straight from that point on.

In alchemical thinking, which existed like a counter-cultural alternative to all this Aristotelianism, there is what's called the *coincidentia oppositorum*. I found this very useful. It's a psychedelic idea, a Jungian idea and an occult idea. It's the idea that you have to practice thinking, holding two contradictory thoughts in your mind at the same time. Uh, this is a way to snare the mind and it's truer to reality. So, like, it's also a great way to name books, by the way. If you ever have to title a book – this was advice from a New York editor. He said, "You have to have a title that contains a contradiction." "True Hallucinations" [audience laughs] or "The Invisible Landscape" [audience laughs] or "The Archaic Revival" [audience laughs] or "Black Neon" – a book I haven't written that will be my foray in pornography, uh, if I haven't made it already.

This is the way to do it, to oppose these things. That's called a *coincidentia oppositorum*. That's what life is really like, you know. I really love you and if you really knew me, you would know that I don't. You can depend on me for the next thirty seconds, and so forth and so on. I mean, this is what life is really like and people hate it because they want to extrude this residuum of the uncertain. They say, I want you to be dependable or I want you to be X, Y, or Z. When, in fact, everything is shifting and changing.

I see I'm over time. This leads me to my final point. First a question I'd like you to think about. We can't discuss it here, but it's, uh, "Are we psychedelic people different from anybody else?" We make the claim that we have found the answer. That it is suppressed by an ignorant and intolerant world. We sound very much like the kind of whining that goes on among Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses or anybody else [audience laughs] who has some screwball theory that if the world would but listen then everything would be fine. So, I'm very interested in this question, you know. Are we morally superior? Are we intellectually superior? Do we treat our children people better? Psychedelic users, that's what I'm talking about, uh, because that's the bottom line is, you know. Does it inspire better lives, more love, greater care – that's the question? And then the last thought I want to leave you with which is sort of a *coincidentia oppositorum* thought because it will bum some and exalt others is the one thing that I've learned from psychedelics that seems secure over all the decades and the, you know, embracing one idea, one ideology after another. The one thing that seems secure is a truth that is hard to hear in the context of a dominator culture with an obsession with the material world. And that truth is that nothing lasts. Nothing lasts.

You know, your enemies will fade. Your friends will fade. Your fortune, your poverty, your

disappointments, your dreams - everything is in the process of changing into something else. So, your agony is about to be assuaged. On the other hand, your happiness is about to be destroyed. So, the obligation that comes out of this realization is an obligation to the immediate moment, to this thing that I've been calling "the felt moment of immediate experience." It isn't who you were or what you were or who you will be or what you will be; it's the felt moment of immediate experience and this has been robbed from us by media and by our tendency to denigrate ourselves, to see the world in terms of the great ones not here, whoever they are. Aristotle, Madonna or Jesus – whatever your particular bent is. Um, the overcoming of neurosis, of unhappiness, of toxic lifestyles is, uh, the felt presence of immediate experience in the body, in the moment And, you know, psychedelics, sexuality, gastronomy, sport, dance – these are the things which put you in the felt presence of the moment.

And, that's really all you ever possess. Your memories are eroding away. The futures you anticipate will mostly not come to pass and the real, uh, richness is in the moment and it's not necessarily some kind of 'be here now' feel-good thing because it doesn't always feel good. But, it always feels. It is a domain of feeling. It's primary. Language is not primary. Ideology is not primary. The propagation of future and past vectors is not primary. What's primary is the felt presence of experience and that is the source of love and that is the source of community.

And, if you get that together as people always have in the past, or we wouldn't be here – they to some degree succeeded with this enterprise – if you get that together, everything will flow with considerably less resistance and you will find it in yourself, I think, to have enough inner equanimity and peace of mind to triumph over whatever life throws your way, whether it be, you know, poverty, obscurity, wealth, fame, power or the absence of power. All of these things should be dealt with equanimity because all are ephemeral. All are in the very act of coming into existence, uh, passing away. "*Panta rhei*," Heraclitus said. All flows. Everything is both simultaneously coming into existence and dissolving away to make room for something else. Clutching doesn't work. Fearing doesn't work. The only thing which works is a kind of affirmation to the process. And, uh, psychedelics, to my mind, are the medicine that clears away the obstructions that make it difficult for us to touch this existential core and that's what life is all about.

And that's the end of the weekend. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

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Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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aka Psychedelics and the Feminine

Day June 1989

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon\)](#)
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I was going to, uh, mention just three books—I might mention more as time goes on—but these three are, uh, central to understanding what I'm going to be saying this month and they're very different books. Some of you—many of you—may have read this one which is, *The Chalice and the Blade* by Riane Eisler. And this is the book that talks about the partnership versus dominator model of society and gets the gender tension inherent in the matriarchy/patriarchy way of framing that problem. It gets that out of the way because it just says: dominator and partnership. And, she believes and offers evidence that there never was a matriarchy, that that whole notion of a pendulum moving between patriarchy and matriarchy is not, uh, valid, and she and I are in agreement in that we both see something very important happening to human beings around the emergence of pastoralism, around the time when the domestication of cattle became a major concern of human beings.

Uh, this great goddess, uh, religion that was worldwide in prehistory is inevitably, uh, a cattle religion. And, uh, she talks a lot about this and she talks a lot about early cultural accomplishments - uh, she's trained as an archeologist - early cultural accomplishments such as Çatalhöyük. This is a civilization in southern Turkey that is important for my argument, too, because it was very, very early and achieved a sudden and extreme flowering of culture like nothing that would -- nothing would rival it for several thousand years. Mary Settegast calls it, uh, a premature burst of complexity and brilliance.

And, uh, Riane Eisler uses, um, dynamic theory borrowed from modern mathematics - borrowed from, uh, uh, Ralph Abraham who I'm sure many of you know - to make cultural models. And so, there's been a lot of excitement about this book among feminists, but what has been sort of overlooked is that this is the first time there was ever a mathematical, uh, application of dynamics to human history. So, this is a good book and she is not psychedelic. She and I did a weekend together at Ojai which was -- where she was wonderfully generous and tolerant of my dancing around in the middle of her parade ground because I'm saying, you know, that the dynamic that drove this cultural transition had to do with psychedelics, and that this goddess cattle religion had to be also a mushroom religion. And later today even maybe we'll talk more about that.

The second book, which I think you'd enjoy—and I don't know, maybe they have -- they have this at the bookstore, they should have this—it's called, *The Creative Explosion: An Inquiry into the Origins of Art and Religion*. Now, notice that both of these books that I've recommended contain long passages about sudden

outbursts of creative brilliance on the cultural level. This is very interesting to me because this is, uh, the stuff called "novelty" that we talked about a little bit yesterday. And tracking these outbursts of brilliance and complexity in cultures and in our own lives is the way we confirm for ourselves the existence of this, um, topological manifold over which probabilistic, or previously thought to be probabilistic events, are flowing. What Pfeiffer, John Pfeiffer is saying in this book is -- it's a study of the cave art of Spain and southern France - and what he's saying about it is, you know, that some of these things are hundreds and hundreds of feet underground down very narrow passages and you have to go through all these contortions to get to them. Anyway, he's saying that this was a, uh, manipulated environment, that these were created and placed in this way to evoke very strong emotional responses from people. And certainly even today, with very high-powered flashlights and nylon ropes, and all of this stuff, it's a very big deal to descend hundreds and hundreds of feet into the ground. You could imagine people who had tallow lamps. And, it appears that they went into these places and made these things, uh, and then only returned very briefly, uh, on a cyclical basis, uh, afterwards. In other words, they didn't inhabit these places; these were ceremonial places and what he's talking about is the high Magdalenian, which is, uh, 19,000 to 17,000 years ago when, for the first time, there was, uh, bone and antler technology. In other words, the Stone Age is ending and there's a bone and antler technology and there's this tremendous, uh, outpouring of creativity, mostly vented on a depiction of these animal images of animals that were in, um, a state of semi-domestication or balanced upon the probability of domestication. So, what we're seeing are herds of deer and cattle and, uh, primitive sheep and this sort of thing. So, both of these books point to unexplained outbursts of creativity in the human past and document them very well, but without offering a causal mechanism.

Now, on a partly more practical bent and this directly addresses the psychedelic issue. If you're at all interested in psychedelic plants, this is, uh, the bible. It occurs in several different forms. This is, *The Botany and Chemistry of Hallucinogens* by Richard Evan Schultes and Albert Hofmann. Schultes was the Harvard botanist who basically single-handedly created the field of ethnopharmacology. And, uh, early on, Schultes understood that what, uh, native peoples were saying about disease and plants was very, um, touched with folklore and cultural factors, but what they said about psychoactive plants, you could rely upon. And, so, he reoriented his career towards the psychoactive and through the 50s, the 60s, the 70s and the 80s, he and his graduate students basically shed light on a previously completely unexplored area of botany and we know through books like this and you may have seen his more popular book, *Plants of the Gods*, uh, these basically list and discuss the major psychoactive plants of the third planet from the sun and, uh, if you need -- if you need information, this is where you go and there are extensive bibliographies. This is the first edition and it's now been issued in a second edition. But, this is pretty indispensable. There are a few other books, too, but this is the one to start with. So, that's sort of business. People should be directed toward books that then expand the basis of what's being said. Does anyone want to say anything about yesterday and go back over any of that?

I thought I would talk a little bit today about, uh -- see the way I imagine this happening is, if there's nothing else going on, then there are facets to this thing. And they may not appear to be connected to you at first, but I will just then choose one of these facets and, uh, talk about it. So, a facet that was brushed on yesterday that needs to be really brought forward and understood clearly is, um -- it kind of comes under the general, uh, banner of the feminine. That from several different points of view, I want to talk about how the psychedelic experience reflects on and relates to the feminine.

First of all, a lot of this has to do with how I think of the origin situation. I think everything was set then. And, uh, women, I think, well -- it happened like this: That there was specialization in these early proto-

hominid and hominid populations and it generally divided along the lines of that the women, because they almost always had babes at breast, were more collectivized and more traveled less. The men hunted and the women kept the children and all that together, and the women were gatherers—this is the important thing—that the women were gatherers and that what they were gathering was food and what they were gathering was plants, primarily. So that, uh -- I'll show you something here. This is a description of a plant. You see, before the era of color lithography, botanists tried -- had this need -- to be able to exactly describe and differentiate plants, one from another. So, here is just a bit of a description of a plant. The plant is, uh, *Methysticodendron Amesianum*, and this is what is called, "The Taxonomic Description":

Tree up to twenty-five feet in height, leaves membranaceous, dark green, very narrowly ligulate, apically acuminate, basically long attenuate, marginally commonly subundulate or undulate, 20 to 26 mm long, 1.3 to 2 cm wide, minutely and irregularly pilos on both surfaces, flowers up to 28, usually about 23 cm long, apically 10 to 13 cm in diameter, very strongly sweet scented at sundown, calyx spathaceous green, papyraceous or membranaceous, 2 to 5 fid with acute teeth, 3/5ths as long as corolla, very minutely pilos, corolla divided 2/3rds to 4/5ths it's length, usually with 5 lobes but usually 4/6 membranaceous, white spatulate or subspatulate, rhombiform, long acuminate and circinate.

That's half of the description.

Now, the point of this is, the need to describe a plant puts tremendous pressure on language to accommodate itself to difference; that's what they're doing there. They're attempting to create a word picture that will make it possible to tell this thing from any other thing. Well, women who were gatherers in this early situation were under tremendous pressure to elaborate a vocabulary of visual distinctions. You know, you eat the thorny one, not the smooth one. You eat the one with the leaves that have the crinkle on the edge, but not the one with the leaves that have the furry underside. And this kind of need put on real pressure for language. Men, in the hunting situation had, strangely enough, the pack-signaling repertoire that we came down from the trees with. It's pretty sufficient for a pack-hunting situation. In other words, you had forty or fifty barks and yells, and you can direct a complex hunting operation. You don't have to have this tremendous stress on adjectives, you know. Uh, and the major stress in hunting is often stoicism and silence. You know, I mean, it's not a rappy undertaking [audience laughs] and, to this day, it's thought to be a sexist observation, but when you go into villages of native people and they always speak of the chattering of the women. And this is true. I mean, women chatter a lot about the details of ordinary existence. This is what they are heavily linguistically programmed to be into, is the details of, uh, ordinary existence and especially in this matter of food.

Well, um, the way in which the mushroom fits into all this is that, um, when the African continent began to dry up—this happened over a very long period of time and it wasn't just a gradual phenomenon; there were glaciations and interglacial periods—but, generally speaking, over a past half million years, Africa has experienced a progressive, uh, aridity, and this forced our remote ancestors down onto an evolving grassland situation. Simultaneously, with all these changes going on in the proto-hominids, a lot of ungulate mammals were evolving in this sudden, rich grassland environment. Um, and in the dung of these particular mammals, the psilocybin-producing mushrooms found a suitable environment. They are that kind of mushroom, which is called coprophilic, means likes dung. And the, uh, the mushrooms used in the Indian cults of central Mexico are not coprophilic mushrooms with one exception. They are ephemeral, deep forest mushrooms and indemnified, um, um, community of species that seem to have evolved there. But, the exception is in the genus *Stropharia* where you get these coprophilic mushrooms, *Stropharia*

Cubensis and its, uh, conspecific species, and they appear wherever there are cattle of the *Bos indicus* type, which is the zebu, the humped white cattle. This is a very primitive form of, uh, Asian cattle, probably the nearest living relative to *Bos primigenius*, which was the prototypic Ice Age, uh, cattle. So, um, the mushroom occurs then in this situation in the manure. Well, the pressure on the environment is for protein is intense and I saw myself in Kenya, tribes of baboons on the veldt and they would go over and examine cow-pies and flip them over looking for grubs underneath them. So, it's in the repertoire of the behavior of these apes to associate these things, and the mushroom presents itself as a completely startling phenomenon in the natural environment. I mean, I've seen them in pastures in the Amazon the size of small dinner plates and on stocks 11 inches high, you know. So, we're talking a hefty, uh -- a hefty piece of protein. The question is, can you eat this thing?

And the, um -- what happens, you see, when you eat a little bit of psilocybin--and this was shown by experiments by Fisher years ago--is that there's an increase in visual acuity. It's very slight, but measurable. Well, this means that it gives you an evolutionary adaptation in the hunting situation. You have better eyesight than other members of your group, and than you, yourself, had before you admitted this item into your diet. Well, you know, this is a self-reinforcing situation on a scale of thousands and thousands of years. Very quickly, those not availing themselves of this quote/unquote "artificial" augmentation to sensory clarity will be bred out because, uh, there's just no percentage in poor vision.

Uh, at slightly higher doses, the psilocybin causes, uh, sexual arousal. Well, again, you don't have to be an evolutionary biologist to understand that the number of successful copulations that you complete has a direct bearing on the success of your reproductive strategy. And, these are all numbers games, you know. Those who fuck more, have more children is what it comes down to. So, if a certain dietary, uh, item is causing sexual activity, well, then, we're going to see more and more of the children of the people who indulge in that dietary item and this can be very unconscious, you see.

And then, the third thing, of course, at higher doses gives way to this mystical tremendum, or this entry into hyperspace. What this has to do with the feminine is that, uh, I think, that the women would have been the gatherers of the mushrooms. The women were the keepers of the reproductive mysteries, anyway. This cow cult that got going, it's very clear to me that from the primitive -- from the point of view of a preliterate person, the mushroom comes from the cow. I mean, you can't explain it any other way. It has no seeds. I mean, this was puzzling to people up until the 16th century. They couldn't figure out where these things ever came from. They were accustomed to the notion of plants having seeds. But, these mushrooms which sprang up over night, just seemed mysterious. So, I think very early in prehistory there was a religion, which was a -- a celebration of the feminine, a psychedelic religion, an orgiastic religion to take account of this arousal factor in psilocybin. It was in this environment over thousands and thousands of years that humanness emerged. And environment of boundary dissolution of, uh, uh, where erotic connection was actually the basis of community, and where there was a constant exposure to this unlanguageable, unassimilable, um, mystical tremendum and the psilocybin was acting then as a tremendous catalyst for language. Because, remember, I think I said this -- that it's primary role in prehistory and in the present possibly is as to catalyze linguistic shifts because linguistic shifts then give culture permission to follow and erect whatever edifices it wants.

Now, throughout prehistory, this vegetable goddess is a, uh, horned goddess. It is a goddess of the moon, a goddess of cattle and a goddess of plants. And, what I'm suggesting in this book I'm writing and I should try it out on you because I won't -- you're my best shot is the notion that, um -- and I said this before but I

repeat myself and things make more sense when heard again -- that the natural human condition is actually a condition of symbiosis with this hallucinogen, this particular hallucinogen. That the mystery of who we are and the mystery of why we are so bereft and why history and why all this malarkey, is because things went on 15,000 to 25,000 years ago that we have not -- we have repressed and never faced the implications of. That we actually had a symbiotic relationship on the mental level with some kind of feminine over-mind. And, you know, never mind all the questions which this raises about where is it, what is it, how does it do it, but just that the Gaian, uh, process is more than a process; it is a self-reflecting, uh, entelechy of some sort. How can we pass judgment on this? What do we know?

The Earth is five billion years old. Intelligence may come in many forms. Self-reflecting awareness may come in many forms. Uh, but, what seems clear is that, uh, there was a dialogue with this other, and there was balance and there was wholeness, and there was a way of being which, well, it was paradisiacal. That's why we are so haunted by the loss of it. That's why all of our ontologies are the story of how something was taken from us. Something was lost and, uh, it's nobody's fault exactly. I mean, it really has to do with the processes of the planet, that this partnership paradise that arose as we came to consciousness in the cradle of Africa was dependent on the continuation of this extremely rich grassland environment, which was, in fact, a transient phenomenon. So, that by 8,000, 10,000, 12,000 years ago, visible pressure was being felt by these populations in Africa. And, you see -- each time there has been an interglacial period over the last 100,000 years, uh, human populations--and in the older strata proto-hominid populations bottled up in Africa--have radiated out across the Eurasian continent. But, only in the last interglacial, 20,000 years ago, were those people leaving Africa true pastoralists. They had flocks. They had skin tents. They had a religion. They had language. We know this, I mean, there is just no doubt about it. Before that, they were, uh, nomadic hunter and gatherers.

So, this relationship to the mushroom and the relationship to the cattle--actually, the first payoff--was an entirely new order of civilization. The symbiotic relationship with the cow, which made life much, much easier either fueled by or fed into the symbiotic relationship with the mushroom which gave more successful hunting, better sex, and religion. So, there were all these factors feeding into this situation. Now, when these people got out of the Middle East -- I mean got out of Africa and settled in the Middle East -- it was a much dicier situation. And, if you know anything about Middle Eastern archeology, in Palestine, there is a great puzzle because, uh, before 9,500, it's virtually empty. This is the interglacial, uh, ice reached as far south as Sidon in Lebanon and this area was all frozen up. But, that as the glaciers retreated, suddenly there are people at Ain-Saba and later at Jericho and at several places, and it's always been assumed by, uh, archeologists on basically chauvinistic grounds that this must have been an outpost of old Europe, that the Balkan Yugoslavian area that Marija Gimbutas has written so much about. Because these people are so advanced, they're called Natufians and they appear very suddenly in the archeological record 9,500. A thousand years later, they build Jericho, which is, at that time, the most advanced, uh, city site on the planet. And, uh, but, before they build Jericho, their habit of building was under rock escarpments. And, this is the same style of Neolithic, uh, building that existed in the Tassili Plateau of Algeria.

So, in the absence of much archeology to support either side, I think it's reasonable to think that these people may have come out of Africa. And, in fact, there is some evidence of this because there is what's called, uh, uh, Burnished Sudanese Ware Four, is found in these Natufian places and Burnished Sudanese Ware Four comes, uh, from deep in what is now Ethiopia. So, there was, at least, trade and I think, based on -- and the people who write about all this, have commented on the African motifs because, uh, -- while

we don't have much art from Jericho, these people a thousand years after Jericho, by now it's 7,500, they built Catalhoyuk in southern Anatolia, and this is truly a science fiction civilization. I mean, it's freakish. It's 7,500 BC, uh. The pyramids lie 3,000 years in the future. So what about that? Well, we don't know, but, uh, one of the -- one of the questions that will remain unanswered in this month is why? Why is there this synergy between the plants and the human being? Is it chance? Is it just that this is how it works out and now we are now self-reflecting enough to be able to unravel the threads that went into the confluence of, uh, influences that created us. Or is it plotted somehow? And this is then the extra-terrestrial gene theory. Is this thing somehow strewn in our way?

Because, you see, I don't buy any of the extra-terrestrial intervention theories that have them landing on the White House lawn or projecting images into the minds of people who live in trailer courts or all these things they're accused of doing. The one thing I grant extra-terrestrial intelligence is: great subtlety. And probably a long time scale to do whatever they want to do. It's possible to reach a point of, uh, deconditioning--it's a kind of reconditioning, but also deconditioning--where it seems obvious that the planet must be monitored. It is, after all, such an interesting planet. It seems that if anyone could monitor, they would. I mean, we've already now, through the probes we've sent into our own solar system, seen about thirty-three worlds. And they all fall into various classes, and not one comes anywhere near to what we are. We are what astrophysicists have given the charming acronym: We are a WHORE. A WHORE is a water heavy, oxygen rich world and water heavy, oxygen rich is rare, rare, rare, rare, rare.

So, it may very well be that every one of these is closely monitored. Well, once you allow that notion, then the presence of the psychedelic genes, the psychedelic, uh, activator in the environment begins to look more like a sort of biogenic engineering. It is curious that what these psychedelics do on a -- on a scale of the community is they release new ideas. You become a bearer of new ideas, or new tools, new techniques, new ways of doing things. And that this is how culture moves forward. That culture is a phenomenon dependent on the generation of ideas, plans, notions, connections. Well, this is precisely what these compounds are doing. So, is that a coincidence or is that, uh, part of the regulator? Are we, in fact, somehow managed towards some point? And then the question becomes, of course, for what? And then it devolves into the realm of science fiction. I had a -- I had a professor once who had a fairly grim view of things. His notion of what human history was all about was that, uh, it was a, uh, radioactive minerals mining project. And that when we finally had all these nuclear weapons stacked up like cordwood, somebody would come from another world and say, "Thank you very much! [audience laughs] This is what we wanted and you've done a good job" [audience laughs] [Terence laughs]

All of human history was to get to stockpile plutonium for somebody else's very good reasons. Well, I don't think it's anything quite so Jack Armstrongish as all that because what I sense in the mushroom is a tremendous heart -- a tremendous, you know. It's well beyond all of that. It's a -- it's an emotional, intellectual, feeling toned kind of thing. But, is it a benevolent, galactic monitor? Is it the beating heartbeat of Gaia? Is it this entelechy that I spoke of at the beginning of the hour that is somehow the sum total of process on the Earth? Or, is it possible that I have been, uh, remiss in my assessment of the capacity of human beings and that this is nothing more than us? It doesn't seem to me like us. It -- It doesn't look like that to me.

I got into this game originally as a kind of an art historian, and art historians are -- you track motifs over centuries or decades depending on your bailiwick. And you -- what it really is, is the exploration of the human unconscious viewed as art. Art -- you learn what people have made, can make, and do make in the

realm of images. Well, the thing that was most astonishing to me about these high game psychedelic states is how unfamiliar it is. How totally unfamiliar it is even if you've made a study of the productions of the human mind in the visual dimension. So that, it -- to me, and again this may be my own psychology, what is always left out of descriptions of the psychedelic state, the deep psychedelic state, is how weird it is. I mean, a hair-raising oddness that adheres to it that is, I call being in the presence of the other. The other wants to be as acceptable to us as possible. It doesn't want to frighten us, it doesn't want to appall us, but it's very hard for it to perceive what our parameters of expectation and bearability are. I mean, that's very, very clear.

Uh, one of the things after years of smoking DMT and trying to form a metaphor for it, I finally realized that this place that I kept bursting into was, um, the equivalent, it was somebody's idea of a playpen. It was somebody very weird! This was their notion of what a human being would feel most comfortable with. And so, you know, it was rounded, enclosed, there's a low hum and it's white, and these, uh, language elves that come hopping out of the woodwork to transform themselves. Those are the equivalent of what you hang over a baby's cradle. You know, bright colors, moving lights; that will keep them busy! [audience laughs] While -- and, and, and, it was a shock to me to realize this because I realized it profoundly. It's true, that's what it is. It's some kind of environment designed for a human being who has just been transported across hyperspace and is going to be observed for two minutes and fifteen seconds, and then sent back.

And, uh, why should it be that way? Does this really have anything to do with the spiritual life or is this some skewed off other tack entirely? I don't know. There are suggestions, there are hints, but by no means has the support of a broad river of tradition. For instance, um, the 56th fragment of Heraclites who was a great guy and was one of us. He would be comfortable with this situation, I'm sure. The 56th fragment of Heraclites says, "The Aeon, the Aeon, is a child at play with colored balls." This saying is 2,600 years old, what is it talking about? Who knows? But, then you break into this place and you see the Aeon, and it's a child and it's playing with colored balls. You say, "My God, you know, it's like you're not meant to know this stuff."

The Cabeiri in alchemy are the children that are generated in the alchemical process—not the homunculi—but these are the little elves of the metals that come out of the retort and can be seen dancing, uh, in the fire. These -- this archetype or motif, whatever it is, is hair-raising when you encounter it because it doesn't look like an archetype or a motif; it looks like a little man eleven inches high, or a self-transforming jeweled basketball, or an object from a -- another dimension. Very puzzling. The parameters cannot be known, or at least are not yet known. I mean, perhaps it's foolish to say the parameters cannot be known. We are like explorers. We--anybody who goes into this psychedelic dimension—we are all going to go into the books as pioneers because it's too early for us to be anything else. There's no maps, no finished database, just anecdotes of the crazy, crazy stuff that goes on. That's why it's so important to, uh, to try and share this stuff.

[Question]: Doesn't the comparison of -- it sounds to me that the DMT experience and you've said other people have had very similar experiences with the languages and the elves and all this. Does your comparison with that and other hallucinogens help you draw a conclusion as to maybe this particular one is more off the wall and more...?

No, I think it's a place that you approach by different strategies because a high dose of psilocybin will

eventually put you into a place where you have to say, "My God, I can't tell it from a DMT flash." And a high dose of ayahuasca will eventually carry you exactly to the same place. The difference is that the DMT -- if you -- the only way you can evade the DMT is mechanically. That means, only if you take too small a toke will it fail. If you can take a big enough toke, it will deliver the goods. While with the psilocybin mushrooms, with the ayahuasca, you have to be a navigator. You have to know how to tack, and breath, and descend, and level and maybe a little mantric flash and dash -- it's trickier. But, uh, with the psil -- with the DMT, you know, by God, it has you if you get enough of it.

You know, they used to say during the Mughal dynasty - they used to say of the city of Isfahan in Persia that it was half the world because of the beauty of the vaulted ceilings of its mosques. Isfahan is half the world. Well, DMT is half the world. It's just -- I would be totally despairing if it didn't exist because it holds back the premise of the mundane. The premise of the mundane is shown to be ludicrous beyond belief and not worth a moment's trouble. It's just ruled out of bounds, you know. The world is - I'm sure you've heard me say this: The world is not only stranger than we suppose; it's stranger than we can suppose. I mean, think about that. It is stranger than we can suppose! And when you sit down with a notion like that and let it sink in, you realize that any conservative habit of thought is totally skewing you away from the quintessence. And, it's personal, that's the other thing. The world isn't this unbelievably strange thing which is out there. The world is this stranger than we can suppose thing, which begins from the core of us out. That means nothing can be taken for granted. It can be taken apart. It can be put together many, many ways.

I mean, I really -- a short definition of Tantra--you probably all have some notion of what Tantra is--a short definition of it is, it's the shortcut, that's what they say in India. The premise of Tantra is that a single being can attain enlightenment in a single lifetime. That's the premise of Tantra; that in a single lifetime you could attain enlightenment. Well, imagine if you took that seriously? How much more engaged you would be with the problem of figuring it out? What if the only place you can figure it out from is a living body? And so, you get eighty, ninety years in a living body, and if you haven't figured it out by that time, well then your dead and that's it. But, during that time, you had a crack at the big one. There was nothing holding you back from figuring it out and then transcending such absurd notions of life and death and here and now. So, it's like an opportunity. You get to walk out on the court, they pitch you the ball, and you have a chance to make an eighty foot set shot, and if you don't [audience laughs] -- into the bin with that one! [Terence laughs]

Oscar Janiger, who was a great old LSD researcher and who runs the Albert Hofmann library in LA -- when he and I first met we were sort of testing each other and he has a famous reputation for being irascible and we were sort of fiddling around and then I mentioned DMT and he just beamed and lit up, and said, "Now, that's something, my God!" And, this is what everybody says when you push them. They -- it's, like, admit that it is what it is, but it never occurred to them to go further, to look into it and to see what could be done with it. Of course, it's sneered at them from two directions. It's called the businessman's trip because it's so short. The old thing in the 60s was that you could do it on your lunch hour. Well, what I want to know is what business are these businessmen in? [audience laughs] Because -- and then the other thing that was said of it was it fries your brain. Well, that's a subjective statement about what it is like to have it happen to you. It doesn't fry your brain. The fact that it reverses itself in seven minutes shows that it probably can compete with the world's five or six most innocuous drugs because that's a way of thinking about how your body handles a drug. My God, if it can return you to the baseline of consciousness in seven minutes, then it's just immediately turning this stuff into harmless byproducts

that go into the urine. It means it's safe. Well, you see, we're reaching scary conclusions here. We're reaching the conclusion that the strongest of all hallucinogens is the safest of all hallucinogens. That would carry with it a certain implication about doing these things.

And yet, what is on the line when you do DMT is not your body, but your maps, your structure, your belief system. I've never seen it hit anybody quite as hard as it hit me, but I was transformed in a moment from a Marxist skeptic scientist. I just -- it was then and I will say it still is now; it is pure 100% magic! It's magic! It's not a drug; it's an event. It's not something that you do; it's something which happens to you. And people come out of it saying, "What happened? What happened?" You say, "You did it!" They say, "That's what happened, I did it? I just smoked that. That's it?" You say, "Calm down, the trip is over." They say, "'Trip? You must be crazy to call it a trip. It's not a trip. It's a -- it's a -- it's an event. It's like being struck by lightning!" Have you ever had one of these things? It's a lot like an automobile accident. An automobile accident is a very interesting thing because you're going along, everything is ordinary and then reality just begins to unpeel. You have this very, "Oh, man! God, I can't believe it." [audience laughs] It continues to go on and you say, "Wow! It's really happening." [audience laughs]

It's exactly like that. You know, I mean, it's just a collision with another modality. I have, uh, on DMT made sounds, the intensity and purity of which it would immediately convince you that no human being could do this. I mean, it's just not the way humans do it. It has this synthesizer steady and I'll bet the wave is absolutely flat down as far as you care to look into it. It's as though we don't know what we are. It's as though this is the control panel in the human animal and you discover, you know, the monkey form, the third planet from the sun, all that was a mere fiction. And the reality is this other thing. And then why is it -- why does it have the character that it does? For instance, both ayahuasca and mushrooms approach this place from different directions, but the DMT and the psilocybin have this unexpected science fiction aspect to them. This is what the art historians left out. This is what you don't get in Hildegard Von Bingham. You don't get the machine, the deep, iridescent, highly polished surfaces that are clearly made somewhere, manufactured. You don't get this cosmic viewpoint where the history of the solar system and the local history of the galaxy is being called upon to validate what is being said. In short, why is it so cosmic? It's different from ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is a heart-opening, earth-centered, earth tones, uh, pastel, flowing water, organic form, fish in the river, mothering, canoe, animal type thing. It's that even in Hawaii or British Columbia. It isn't the Amazon unless the morphogenetic field is amplified without subject to the universe-square law.

Well, this is really mysterious stuff that human cultural forms should be scripted in to plants - what exactly is going on here? Uh, one of the things you can do with psilocybin and, uh, ayahuasca that's very puzzling and should be studied, is you can, um, when you get equilibrium in the state, uh, project a motif. Let's say art deco. Suddenly there will be thousands, thousands of art deco objects: water pitchers, cigarette lighters, automobiles, hood ornaments, uh, sculpture, grill work, and then you can just instantly -- you can say, "Italian Baroque" and in a single moment, you know, you're at the church at Santa Maggiore and seeing all this gold work and all this stuff. And then you can say, "Surprise me." So, what kind of a dialogue is this and what kind of an entity is this? Is this part of the spiritual quest? Is it off in it's own domain?

The language of ayahuasca, a way in which ayahuasca and psilocybin slice it differently, is psilocybin actually speaks. There's an informing voice. It tells you. The language of ayahuasca is visual. It shows you. You become like the eye of the cinemascopic camera and after a good ayahuasca trip, you just feel like your eyes are sticking out of your head. I mean, it's like going to Madison Avenue to buy art or something.

You've looked at so many prints and you just look and look, and you've been looking and looking because that's how it does it. And, you know, what I said on Friday about the more perfect logos, this thing which is visually beheld? See, what we're doing is mucking about in the domain of profound mystery and I really can't help you. I don't have answers. My one answer is my little time wave which I'm willing to share with you, but, uh, ideas in this domain are a dime a dozen. I mean, my dream was always to catch an idea because I saw that's what the psychedelic thing was. And, some of the ideas are tiny ideas, amusing and preposterous, but utterly worthless. And then the large ideas leave you just, "bubububu" like that because they go by and tear your nets to shreds and your main concern at that point is to row for shore. But, every once in a while, there comes one of manageable size that you can actually wrestle into your little boat and take back to astound everyone in the village with.

And the time wave -- I have the feeling that in the DMT ecstasis that the time wave gets about a minute -- about three seconds because they say, "Look at this." You say, "Oh, wow! That's amazing!" Then, they say, "My God, but look at this." "But, look at this!" And each one of these, your amazement is genuine and your reaction is correct. You are being shown the most amazing things you've ever seen. It's simply that you cannot retain what they are. So, the goal is, first of all, to be there, to know about it and to draw strength from the evidence for magic. But, then the higher calling is to be a hunter. To find something, to bring it back. If that's a little too meaty a metaphor for you, well then think of yourself as a noetic archeologist. We want to bring back an object: a flower from hyperspace, a machine from another world. Apparently, the easiest things to bring back are ideas. And so, we have to pay a lot of attention because ideas can cross the barrier - very little else can, but if we pay sufficient attention, I think all -- much of these ideas can be brought across and we can bring -- nothing is unfair. I mean, computer graphics, voice operated tape recorders, uh, anything that works and this is -- we've hit the main vein of ideas out there in hyperspace and the goal is to just fill our knapsacks as full as we can and then get back to base with this stuff. [audience laughs]

I guess really, I mean, I'm about wind it down now. The real point of this month and I have to keep clearing it back and reminding myself and you -- is that we've discovered something and that we don't know what it is. And we're like the monkeys in *2001* dancing around the monolith, but this is important! I mean, that's almost all we can say at this point. But, it's very, very important. The world will never be the same once the implications of this are worked out and since I believe a lot of this impact is going to be in psychotherapy and I see you guys, that probably many of you will be psychotherapists, or therapists or doctors; you're going to have an impact and be involved in this. But, basically we're just clearing a space for a discovery. And it's a hard discovery to announce because we don't know what we've discovered. We just know we've really discovered something. Fire must have hit with this kind of impact and look how long it took to work out what you could do with it.

Well, that's it for today. Thanks very much!

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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aka Suggested Reading List

Easter 1987

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link \(Psychedelic Salon\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)

At each of these weekends we usually update people on, uh, books on the subject that are available. One of the things that people don't do enough of when they do psychedelic work is, uh, spend time in the library. I mean, there's a great deal of published literature on these things - historical, chemical, so forth and so on. And uh, it's good to be informed. I know that I often- I use reference books; I use Schultes' *The Botany and Chemistry of Hallucinogens* for those aspects. Peter Stafford's, uh, *Psychedelic Encyclopedia* is good for a kind of social history overview. Um, Marlene De Rios has a book called *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Hallucinogens*. Probably one of the books that I recommend most to people is Michael Harner's anthology *Shamanism and Hallucinogens*, where he gathered a bunch of very good articles together there. Hoffer and Osmond's old classic *Hallucinogens*, even though it was last updated in '68 still, on the major hallucinogens, is the best source. And in addition to those, which I just mentioned but don't have here to show you, I want to show you some of the newer or more interesting stuff in the field.

This is a book that has not been widely distributed at all. This fellow might be a candidate for teaching at Esalen, I don't know. Uh, it's *The Science and Romance of Selected Herbs Used in Medicine and Religious Ceremony* by Anthony Andoh. And Andoh has, uh, his own institute in San Francisco; he runs a nursery on Taraval. He's, uh, judging by this book, an extremely knowledgeable person with a worldwide education in herbs and a special stress on, uh, on folk usage. So there are for instance, here's, uh, a piece- an Egyptian illustration of Sennefer, the royal garden- gardener and his sister Merit. There's a lot of plant lore in here that you just don't get anywhere else and, uh, another book like that is William Emboden's book *Narcotic Plants*. Terrible title but a tremendous amount of information that doesn't seem to appear anywhere else. Uh, Macmillan is the publisher. So he's a Bay Area resource that we certainly were not aware of until very recently and maybe some of the rest of you were not aware of him either. This is some- this guy should- he's one of us. He should be part of the party.

Then in terms of publications, the publications on psychedelics that you may be familiar with, such as *High Times* and *High Frontiers* are sort of addressing this, uh, trying to restart the youth rebellion or, uh. Anyway, it's not a full spectrum or deep look at psychedelics. This magazine, which was previously called *Psychozoic Press* and has been renamed *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays*. [chuckles] Are you a psychedelic monograph, Eric? Oh you're an essay?

[Audience Laughter]

It's published out of Florida and, uh, it's very, very lively. It has a huge letter section. Everybody you know

seems to write one letter per issue in and, uh, for instance, this issue has articles on psychedelics, a woman's rite of passage, Earmarks of Psychedelic Spiritual Experiences, also by a woman. Psychedelics and lucid dreaming, door ways in the mind, also by a woman, and Tom Riedlinger who some of you may know from Chicago, an article by him on psychedelic schooling. Uh, this is simply printed but it's from the heart, it's scholarly it's uh, the tone I think is very good. I would actually urge you to support these people by subscribing. We have nothing personally to do with it; it's just that they're, uh, on a good trip. I'll hand this around and you can get addresses off of them if you want.

This is Rupert's new book. Rupert is, uh Rupert Sheldrake. It's just begun to be distributed. He is going to make a revolution in thinking about, uh, resonance and form and it has an aspect in it that is very kind to our concern. The psychedelics are much more centrally important to understanding in a morphic resonance theory of nature. So, uh Rupert is just a brilliant writer, even more brilliant than he is a talker and, uh, this is a delicious book to just read ten or fifteen pages at night, uh, before you go to bed.

This is a reference, uh- I'll send this one this way- this is a reference book that in terms of getting a lot of information between the covers of one book with a massive amount of color, uh, illustration - uh, this is Richard Evan Schultes, the leading light of Ethnobotany. He spent over fifteen years in the Amazon and, uh, has, uh lead hundreds of graduate students into careers in Ethnobotany and really, uh has put the field on the map and his co-author is Albert Hoffman who invented LSD. In terms of one book about psychoactive plants that is in print and readily available, I would go with this one I think.

[Audience] – Alfred Van Der Mark?

Van Der Mark, I guess, did this edition. It was originally done by Macmillan. This is Riane Eisler's book, *The Chalice and the Blade*. It may not immediately appear to have anything to do with psychedelics but it has to do with, um, re-visioning society by looking at ancient models of how men and women, uh arranged social structure in the past. And like Rupert, this is a book with a secret agenda. This book, uh, is a tracking horse for a new respectability for psychedelics because when you begin asking the question, why was there a partnership society for so long and why did it give way to a dominator culture, the answer lies, I think, in changing patterns of plant utilization and a changing relationship to the psychedelic experience. This is a wonderful book; maybe the most important book for archeological scholarship in the last ten years or so. Riane lives in Carmel Valley. She is a local person and a great, uh resource and I'm sure that you'll be seeing more of her, uh in the Esalen catalogue and around. She speaks very well if you- if you have a chance to hear her speak, I would urge you to do it. Send that this way...

This is just to remind you of our little book on cultivating mushrooms. I don't think that- if you have the time and the focus, this is really the way to do it shamanically - to get out of the 'dealing' cycle and the 'not knowing what you've got' cycle. And also, as I've said earlier, this trains you to punctuality, cleanliness, attention to detail - all of these qualities which I- I, in fact, I used to say to people once you've grown the mushroom, you know you're ready to take it because it has imbued in you the qualities you need to take it through the act of growing it. Don't be fooled, it isn't easy and it isn't that the process is difficult. It's that you have bad habits that will get in the way of the process. Habits like leaving your apartment occasionally. [audience chuckles] You can't do that any more if you do this....

And it's, it's definitely much more than a grower's guide. It contains a lot of, as Kat mentioned, a chronology and a lot of discussion about what the mushroom is. It also is the first place to- where these

images from the African Plateau, the Tassili Plateau in Algeria, have been reproduced from and they are strong evidence for the use of mushrooms in Neolithic Africa. This is evidence which Wasson did not include in his books; new evidence and, uh both of the major, uh, the major, uh, rock paintings that argue for this point of view are in here. The next issue of revision will have a drawing by Kat on the cover and an article by me about mushrooms and the goddess. An article-it will be a psychedelic issue. Everything in it will be psychedelic so you might watch for that.

And then last and just sort of as a fun thing, in case you're not aware of this book, some people aren't. It's called the S- the *Codex Seraphinianus* and it is written in an unknown language. It contains hundreds and hundreds of color drawings and since it's written in an unknown language, it's impossible to figure out what it's about because the drawings are all of objects which don't exist in this world. So it's, uh, great fun, it's stimulation for the imagination. It shows, I think, uh, one person's response to the psychedelic, uh experience. And this book was originally published at \$75.00. It's obviously a labor of love. It could not have been conceived of as a money making proposition. Consequently now it's being remaindered in most places. You can pick one of these up for 19 bucks, at least at Moe's in Berkeley and probably any other large volume, uh, bookstore like that. You can spend hours with this thing. It's more than you can take in at one, uh, go.

Well, I thought this morning because we don't have too much time and I have- several people have asked me to talk about our personal visions and some people specifically, the Time Wave and all that. I'll sort of work my way into it. I did want to take account of the fact that today is Easter. There are workshops who would have fallen upon the coincidence of Easter with themselves as an excuse for an orgy of oval ceremonialism but, uh, somehow it slipped past here. But I, I will, uh, Well, it's an excellent excuse for me to talk about what seems to me one of the most mysterious of all passages in the New Testament. I'm not a New Testament scholar but I've puzzled over this passage for years and years and I think it relates to what we're doing.

I'm not sure, I believe it's in Matthew when the women come to the tomb on Easter morning looking for Christ – now I think the two, the two Annes and Margarets- it's Mary Magdalene who comes first and she's alone I believe – and Christ is there, she sees him. It is the two Margarets who come later. She starts toward Christ because she thought he was dead and she sees him standing by the tomb. She starts towards him and he stops her and he says 'touch me not, for I am not yet completely of the nature of the Father.' And I've always thought that this was just a fascinating passage because, uh, what is being said here? What's going on here? He see-Christ seems to be indicating that though he is now alive, he has resurrected, he has come through the crucifixion, nevertheless in some sense he is not yet completely transubstantiate and it suggests, uh, a process, a physical change in the body that requires time to complete itself.

So, this morning I thought I would talk a little bit about time and, uh, insights into it that have come to me out of, out of psychedelics. What I always hoped for out of the psychedelic voyaging was to bring back something. I always felt and still feel that that is the attitude with which you should go into these things – to bring something back. I mean it could be something – a personal insight into a personal dilemma or a more generalized idea. Because I really think that the, uh, that the psychedelic realm is the realm of ideas and that ideas which change the world come first from, uh, from that place. And I'm always a little reluctant to get into this because when I speak about my own ideas, I feel much more, um, how much I'm asking from you as an audience. In other words, it's like an ego trip because it's *my* ideas and why spend an hour on my idea instead of talking about all these, uh, facts, careers and, uh, established, uh, concerns? But

you asked for it so, uh...

In the-in 1971, when we went to the Amazon to look into DMT and all of these things, we really had no clear conception of what we were after. We just knew that we wanted to get more time in that dimension, more hands-on experience. Well, if any of you have read *The Invisible Landscape*, you know that my brother conceived of a certain kind of project where he thought that the psychedelic molecules could actually be bonded in to the physical body, into the DNA using sound and that they could be made briefly superconducting, and it's interesting that that was a word that no one knew what it meant back then. He predicted room temperature superconductors, uh, in 1971 at La Chorrera. Well now room temperature superconductors are a huge concern of a vast part of the scientific research establishment. A whole new technology is promised by this stuff.

Uh, he had this notion that you could bond psychedelic molecules into the DNA and that then the trip would sustain itself indefinitely and could be analyzed as a kind of, uh, waveform signature of the totality of the organism. In other words, he felt that the ordinary psychedelic trip is a fleeting photograph, an almost an X-ray, you could say, that comes into the mind when the psychedelic molecules occupy these bond sites and then flash to the higher cortical processing area of the brain, a kind of gestalt of the state of the organism. And he felt that if you could stabilize and permanentize this that, uh, it would be worth doing. I mean, it wasn't clear whether he thought he would become a Taoist sage or turn into a flying saucer or what it was. I mean it was a shifting image of totality that he was projecting.

Well I was very skeptical of this and, uh, because it seems unreasonable and basically I'm a reasonable person. But on the other hand, going to the center of the Amazon Basin had been our purpose and here we were and now somebody seemed to be coming up with something very interesting so we let the experiment run since it seemed to me it would either work as he said it would work or it would fail utterly. Because what was proposed was that you saturate your body with psychedelic molecules then sing in a certain range and in a certain way. And I thought either nothing will happen, 99 chances out of a 100, or since he's so impassionately convinced something will happen, the thing he is convinced will happen, will happen.

So we performed this experiment and if you've listened to *True Hallucinations*, you know what a riot it was and what chaos it set off. And I won't really review that except for those who haven't- who didn't read *True Hallucinations*: what he said would happen didn't happen but on the other hand my expectation that nothing would happen was completely frustrated and instead he seemed to initiate what at first brush looked like a psychotic break. He became unaware of the people around him. He would talk right through other people's talking as though he couldn't hear them. He began to make less and less sense. He lost motor control and, uh, and every-and everyone assumed that he was slipping into some kind of psychosis.

What complicated this was I, who had been cast in the role of the skeptic and the witness, had noticed that the moment he had forged the joint (as he called it), something began to happen for me. Something very unusual. What it was was the teaching voice familiar from psilocybin experiences but with none of the ambiguity and difficulty of connection that I had associated with the psilocybin experiences. Instead it just came on and appeared to be locked in place and he was saying, that's it, we've succeeded. Uh, this is what it is. And, and all the hallucina-I wasn't even on mushrooms. He had taken ayahuasca. There were no hallucinations. There was no feeling of being stimulated or depressed – there was nothing but this voice and it was talking at such a speed that I would walk these jungle trails like this: uh-huh, uh-huh, yes, I se-yes, yes! At that speed, not for minutes but for months, you know?

And, and what it was concerned to convey is what I now call the Time Wave and, and I will attempt, without blackboards or mathematics or being boring I hope, to explain what this is. And that's a formidable problem because this is an idea as rigid as the kind of ideas that run subway trains and send submarines back to their bases. I mean it's a, it's a formal, tight idea. But the way it was taught to me was in a steady process of self-amplifying parables or teachings, you could almost say. So how it began was it said to me: have you noticed that every day is like every other day, somewhat? I said, yes I've noticed that. 'And have you noticed that every week is like more or less, like every other week?' Yes, I said. It said: 'well did you know' – and this is a typical mushroom construction – 'this did you know, I'll bet you *did* know' (and then the whammy) 'that every day has a relationship to four other days. And they are not the four days preceding it, they are scattered back through time. One of them may be six months in the past, one of them may be thousands of years in the past but each day is actually an interference pattern caused by the, uh, resonant, uh-the coming together of the resonances of other times.'

And so I-it never occurred to me. It never occurred to me that that was a possibility. So then it said, uh, 'go get your I-Ching' and I went and got my I-Ching and it said 'we're going to look at the first order of difference.' I said, 'what's the first order of difference?' It said, 'oh, you don't know that the first order of difference is. The first order of difference is how many lines change as you go from one hexagram to another.'

Now, I don't know how many of you are familiar with I-Ching but I assume most somewhat. Right? Ok, the I-Ching is composed of structures, which have six levels called hexagrams. They are either broken or unbroken lines. The first one, called the creative, is all solid lines. The second one, called the receptive, is all broken lines. Who can tell me the first order of difference between the first and second hexagram? Here's a clue, it's the number of lines that break.

[Audience Silence]

No fair!

It's six. I don't know why you're not leaping forward with this. It makes me wonder how far we can go. Six. Anyway, to try and shorten this story, what this teaching voice was concerned with was structure in the I-Ching; previously hidden structure. So I-it said, 'we can't go forward with this conversation until you get some graph paper because this is going to be not only conversation, this is going to be diagram.' So I got graph paper and it said, 'draw the hexagrams in a descending line in the King Wen sequence and then make a graph of the first order of difference – the number of lines that change as you go from hexagram to hexagram.' I did this and I got a wavy line obviously.

You can tell that, uh, the values will lie between one and six. In some cases six will change, in some cases only one. Never none because each hexagram is different. I was puzzled as to why an Amazonian mushroom wanted to talk about the archaeology of ancient China. And so what that this resonance calendar existed but then it said, 'no, no, you don't understand. We have just- we are now in the atrium of what it is I want to reveal to you. [audience chuckles] I want you to go back and look at the first order of difference wave and I want you to understand that'- and I already knew this but I hadn't done much with it. The reason the I-Ching is based on 64 is because 64 are the number of codons that DNA runs on. The I-Ching is not an arbitrary construction. It is something that comes out of a deep, formal inspection of what the human organism is. The human organism is a molecular machine that runs on an iterative program of 64. And our-the proteins that compose our bodies are like this, so forth and so on.

And then I said, 'well, I understand about DNA, I understand how the I-Ching mirrors that, but I don't understand how then it's also a calendar' and the voice said, 'well don't you see – perception can be only organized out of the matter which composes it. Time appears to you in your psychological perception of it in the way that it does because time is a property of matter that is being amplified by biology into the theater of awareness.' So in other words- and this is now me speaking, not it- my interpretation of what it was saying was, life is a phenomenon of quantum mechanical amplification and because we are organized on the blueprint of this quantum mechanical pattern that is very deep at the sub-molecular level of matter, then all our institutions, languages, religions, love affairs – everything has this pattern as the base embedded in it, almost like these fractals which give rise to endless amounts of a certain kind of beauty but if you were to see the equation which generates the fractal, you know, it has six terms. It can be written, uh, in fifteen seconds.

So then there was, there were-years passed and a great leap had to be made because I was like non-functional. Because I worked with this wave, I felt I had the signature of the universe, that a great gift of truth had been given to me but when I tried to tell people, they just backed to the wall and said, you know, 'get help. Now. Now get help!'

Here's where we separate the men from the boys, the women from the girls, and the wheat from the chaff. The conclusion that I reached was that this universal wave, which has been operating for several billion years, will reach its maximum concrescent, uh, state of enfoldment, uh, at dawn on the 22nd of December 2012 A.D.. This immediately puts me in the nut category. This is what's called messianic delusion. Millenarian, uh, uh, grandeur, so forth and so on. Nevertheless, it's a persistent intuition of most religious ontologies. Perhaps not the Buddhist, but the Hindus, the Jews, the Muslims, the Christians, all appoint an end to their world. And uh, I really, I'm a little shy about this because I-it's so personally mine. Nobody has ever made a contribution to this idea that was substantial. I just, it seems to be mine alone and welcome to it and yet, I want you and historians and paleontologists and primatologists, and people who are experts on time in different, uh, sizes to look at this wave. It's working ladies and gentlemen. It does in fact describe the ebb and flow of this thing called novelty.

Now when I questioned the mushroom about this, it, it almost makes it trivial. For it, it's an 'of course.' Of course you are made of DNA, DNA is made out of matter, matter has to have time as a precondition of its existence. The signature of time embedded in the atomic structure is amplified to the molecular structure, then is amplified to the organismic structure, then – and that's called a human life well lived, then it's amplified to the societal structure – that's called the birth, growth and senescence of empire. And then it's magnified to the global structure and that's called the coming of the hyperspatial object at the end of time. It's also a theory of resonance. It's saying that large scales of time have their themes and concerns condensed and revived in the smaller components.

Now this is somewhat hard to understand but rich enough to pursue. It's this idea.

Now I'm going to use James Joyce's classic example. Joyce wrote a book called *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* is a book about a man who rises on a morning, a bright morning day in June in 1905 or 6; he wants to fry some kidneys for breakfast so he gets his wallet and heads out into Dublin to score some kidneys to bring back and he has all these adventures. But Joyce understood that this man on this day was also Ulysses with his brave component of men journeying to the end of the Mediterranean laying siege to Troy for nine years, winning the Trojan War and returning their homelands. In other words, he understood that in each of us, we are acting out larger and larger scales of time that give color and precision and depth and interest to our

being. So if you find yourself on a Saturday night in a place in San Francisco called Hadrian's Hamburger Joint, it has something to do with the emperor Hadrian and his conquest of Britain and his effort to hold back the barbarians. Life carefully examined is actually a form of allegorical literature of a- with a very tight constructional grid laid over it.

Um, this is a rich idea and as I say, I'll be giving a five-day workshop on this only because this is the only psychedelic idea I've ever brought back other than, you know, idiotic realizations such as – 'everyone's little finger precisely fits their nostril.' [audience laughs] You know – there's no market for that. But this, this would actually create a re-visioning of time and had we more time this morning, I would tell you how it could be turned into a calendar of the Goddess. How, by living with a solar year, that always puts Christmas with the same slant of sunshine coming in, that we have locked ourselves into a paternalistic, uh, masculine dominated structure.

What the universe is, is flux. Nothing lasts. Nothing abides. Everything moves on. Women know this. Men don't and we're living under a solar masculine calendar. The reason our ideas and I-by our ideas I'm now speaking of the entirety of the new age and all of this stuff – the reason our ideas meet resistance is because the framing around the entire discussion of the spirit and feminism and transformation, the frame is always the masculine solar time frame. As long as we operate under that calendar, we will have a very difficult time advancing ideas. This is- the Chinese understood this. This was why when great reforming emperors arose, the first thing they did was change the calendar. If you want food for thought, look at hexagram 49. It's revolution. You open it up expecting sage political advice; it talks only about the calendar and it talks about the magician as a calendar maker. In fact it says the magician is a calendar maker.

So I think that, uh, what this teaching that came out of this experience in the Amazon was all about was, it was a totality symbol. Dennis had thought that the flying saucer would emerge out of his body as a spinning violent disk of trans-linguistic matter that would become showerhead, pizza or Mercedes, depending on what you needed at the moment. He thought it would become matter in the act of appropriate activity. Instead what emerged was a totality symbol. And Jung talks about how in the individuation process, you always hope that the patient or the client will generate a totality symbol but he usually means a kind of individual and wavering totality symbol like a mandala or a, a, a cohesive structure or something. I think we got, and I try to say this without hubris because I felt like I was nothing more than the vessel into which this thing was being poured – what we got was *the* totality symbol in a complete version, not- certainly not a totality version because I don't think the human mind can encompass the total version, but we got a skeletal blueprint of what totality is in the world.

What it is, is knowing how things happen. Knowing that all processes, the firing of a nerve, the culmination of a love affair, the fall of an empire – has a, a, a pattern. And if you know the pattern, you will be at ease with any process in all or any of its stages. Because you will just say, 'ah this is the time of resistance. It will soon be followed by the time of foreword motion. That will be followed by the time of re-enfoldment.' And what this does is – it eliminates anxiety ultimately. That's the bottom line. Our anxiety about death and our anxiety about the future and our relationships and money – all this stuff can be boiled down to anxiety about the unknowable aspects of the future. If we could assimilate a model like this we would be Taoists. The future holds no terrors for a person who knows how process inevitably unfolds. They are always right and with it in each moment.

So I, I think that we've always talked about the I-Ching and Taoism and all this sort of thing as short for the culmination of mysticism but to make it a living faith in our own lives, there should be nothing

mystical about it. And I maintain to you, there *is* nothing mystical about it. It's simply that we are at such a primitive stage of culture that we haven't yet understand-understood what time is.

A hundred years ago we were at such a primitive stage at culture that we didn't understand what time was. Einstein had to come along and say, you know, time is not an abstraction necessary to have a place to put objects that you want to examine. Time itself is an object. It is curved in the vicinity of massive gravitational fields. It has a topology. It has a surface. I think what we need to understand out of this idea, ultimately what the psychedelic experience is teaching, ultimately what Taoism is trying to say – is that time is a topological manifold. It is a surface. Events flow across it like water over land and like water flowing over land, when the land is flat; the water becomes reflective and moves slowly. When the landscape becomes disrupted, the water moves faster and chaotic attractors appear and new kinds of activity emerge and out of that new activity, then comes the new states that define the future.

Well, uh, I'm going to stop there. I haven't shown you a graph or written a number or drawn a hexagram and I think that's remarkable. [audience chuckles] This is the feeling the feeling tone; this is the good stuff that you get if you go through those graphs, numbers and time on at the computer. But this is the totality symbol that I was able to get out of living a psychedelic life and I believe that there are as many of these kinds of totality symbols as there are people willing to trip. And each one of them is different. You know, we create them for each other, they complete our lives, they assuage anxiety and they give us a tremendous appetite, then, for the adventure of being rather than the ordeal of being. And they arise out of using psychedelics to amplify and inspect the quantum mechanical and subconscious and superconscious portions of the human mind. This is why the psychedelic experience and psychedelics are so important. It's because they are tools for understanding and re-visioning the reality in which we all live. The personal growth is a wonderful thing and will naturally follow along but it's more important than that. It's a way to make a new world that is Taoistic, feminine, free of anxiety and in great anticipation of further stages of completion laying into the future. That's, uh, that's where the mystery, the transcendental object, the pot of gold at the end of rainbow is waiting and I think that's the job of each of us – to show our best toys and our best tricks that lift us and our friends to higher and higher levels. And there is no end to this bootstrapping process. The future of the human mind and body and the future of humans together is, uh, endlessly bright.

Keep the faith! Recognize each other and maybe I should close with a little line from Gary Snyder if I can remember it. He said, uh, 'learn the flowers, travel light and stay together.' [audience chuckles, claps]

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

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aka The Evolution of a Psychedelic Thinker [Psychedelic Salon title]

Day June 1989

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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The way I got into all of this, and it seems to me it's worth talking about because it- psychedelic, uh, the word has, in a sense, been too narrow. It's a- it's a kind of secret faith, uh-uh, having to do with perception of the world, I think. I mean, I feel that I was psychedelic long before I knew anything about psychedelics, because what I was interested in as a child was, um, nature and complexity, but not simply nature and complexity, but a certain, uh, visual suggestiveness of mystery. So, I was like a beetle collector and a butterfly collector, and it was this pursuit of iridescence was actually what it was. And then years later when I studied psychology and the brain, I read Sherrington's definition of consciousness as an 'iridescence upon matter', meaning an effect that when you shift the point of regarding slightly, the iridescence disappears. And, I was, you know, it's hard to even explain to myself, let alone to a room full of people, how much I cared about this kind of thing. I mean, how is it possible for a nine-year-old child to hold the image of one insect continuously in their mind for months as in almost a mystical epiphany because of how it looks; something about how it looks? And, then, um, you know, as I broadened my- my interest, as a pre-adolescent child, I got into science fiction.

As I look back on it now, I see it was simply that it broke down barriers - conceptual barriers about what was possible and that it was setting me up for this position vis-à-vis the input of the world which was that I would entertain any idea, but believe in nothing. And this is, I think, a very you know, if we're actually trying to talk about a psychedelic canon; this is a very central part of the psychedelic attitude toward the world. To entertain all possibilities, but to never commit to belief; belief always being seen as a kind of trap because if you believe something, you're forever precluded from believing its opposite. So, you have run a line down the center of the cognitive universe and divided things into the believable and the unbelievable. Well, if you know how a child lives in fantasy and how fantasy then gives way and gave way in my case to science fiction, this is a kind of pre-psychedelic mindset that many, many people of my generation were experiencing as they came up through the Eisenhower years which were spiritually a complete desert, but in this pulp magazines, uh, you know, beneath the surface of consciousness.

Notice throughout this month, how much of what is important to what we're talking about goes on in the non-sanctioned corners of the culture. Pulp literature, uh, cults, uh, un-sanctioned gatherings of friends, Rock & Roll - all of these areas where the emotional content of the culture is allowed to come to rest are, uh, somewhat off limits. Into adolescence, this cognition breaking iridescence-pursuing thing came

directly up against Eros which was, you know, a complete, uh, new dimension for the goggle-eyed terror of the science fairs to be plunged into which was myself. And, uh, you know, women, sexuality, social signaling, intense emotion, all of this and everyone experiences this. In a sense, sexuality is the built-in psychedelic experience that only a very few people manage to evade because, uh, you know, we may like to think that we are rational animals, but for purposes of biology, a whole set of completely irrational programs have been built in that just can take, you know, a professor of Indo-European grammar and turn him into a haunted figure pursuing chorus girls or any of the other 50,000 variations on that theme.

So, Eros is an ego-overwhelming, boundary dissolving, breakthrough creating force scripted into human life that is pretty intrinsically psychedelic. And I think that, um -- I don't really understand how all this works at all, but when you get very deep in, especially on some of these tryptamines, you brush up against some kind of -- it's hard to even put words to it -- but it's erotic. It's a -- It's a potential within the concept of Eros that is almost too much to bear and almost seems to imply that what we call, uh, erotic sensibility is a kind of lower dimensional slice of some higher dimensional reality that our feelings are trying to carry us into.

One of the -- this is sort of an aside on that -- but one of the interesting things about psychedelics and I now speak of the compounds themselves is -- especially the plants is they have a certain fascination with where the genes go and will pair people across great lines of improbability. In other words, uh, it's almost as though the biological control which is exerted on this mammalian species by the mushroom is actually at the materialistic level a control of who has children by whom which means the control of the evolution of gene lines. I maintain this is why the place most people feel magic in their own lives - even the most humdrum people feel magic in their lives - is in the matter of mate-selection because, you know, I was just down in the baths and heard a story this morning where a man said, you know, "I had a happy marriage for seven years. It was perfect and then I ran some kind of a company and one day I got a telephone call. Someone wanted to sell me a new line of nails and I knew when I heard the voice on the other end that my marriage was ruined and that I would follow this voice [audience laughs] and possess this woman and so forth and so on" which he had done for better or for worse. Well, this kind of thing where the most staid lives can be skewed off in other directions is -- uh, you know, in the old style of talking about it -- it's an eruption of the unconscious. But, where psychedelics are involved, it seems to be more of a winnowing of, uh, of the genes. So, sex obviously has this, um, deep, complex multi-meaning kind of, uh, feel about it that, uh, pretty much the rest of reality for most people doesn't, I think.

Uh, the next step in my own evolution - and I feel like I am simply the fortunate beneficiary of a series of random events which were very fortuitous from my own point of view; in other words, that without having a whole lot of sense and with very little foresight - I very fortunately found myself in a lot of right places at a lot of right times. And the place I went after adolescence was, uh, political awareness and the discovery of what it meant. You know, the goggle-eyed kid had conquered or, at least, had had a brush with the feminine, but then the next great item on the agenda was the community. And I was, uh, in Berkeley for the street uprising in 1968 and learned what a revolution is; not what it is from the point of view of history books or the 11 o'clock news, but what it feels like - what it actually feels like - to take and hold a place that's been denied you against the state. And, uh, what this -- what I learned from that, I think, is that one of the core elements of this psychedelic thing is freedom on the broadest scale. I mean, it truly is, and you'll hear me use this phrase over and over again, boundary dissolving. And that's almost for me synonymous with freedom. This is what we want to do. We want to dissolve boundaries between the rich and the poor, the feminine and the masculine, the living and the dead. All boundaries do dissolve in

psychedelic experience and the social metaphor that captures this is revolution. Revolution is an eruption from the unconscious. It is not a reasonable thing. It has a logic of its own. It's as though the overmind reaches down into the mechanics of political process and says, "No, it won't be that way; it will be this way."

And, uh, as you watch this thing in China unfold, the revolution that I went through was child's play. But, the revolution going on in China is about consciousness. I mean, God, the notion that, you know, people were selling Jon Stewart Mill in translation in Tiananmen Square like hot cakes brings a tear to your eye. I mean, uh, it's incredible. And, as I said on Friday, this -- the psychedelic dimension lies directly ahead of us. It is permission for cognition; permission for revolution and resolution of the, uh, contradictions that have emerged out of 500 years -- 1000 years of practicing culture in this particular way that we've been doing. It just doesn't work. Well, Abbie Hoffman said, uh, that the first duty of a revolutionary is to survive. And so, my political career reached a point where, um, I would -- I had to choose between exile and martyrdom - hope that you should be so lucky because both choices are heroic, you see.

But, I chose exile which brings me to the next of these psychedelic metaphors or these psychedelic styles that have nothing to do with the compounds and that is travel. Travel! Some of you are traveling. I know because you have accents from far away, so you probably know what I mean. But, the people who don't go anywhere are -- are in danger of missing a major point about what is going on. So, I -- my traveling began very tentatively and I went to Israel and then I went to the Seychelles Islands and then I went to India and then I got in trouble. And then I couldn't come back. So then I had to be who I said I was because I had essentially been making a tour in order to return to Berkeley and slay women with my tales of daring-do. But, I got caught out there, halfway around and had to stay not the plan -- three months -- but years, years and years and years, and India, Indonesia, the Amazon, Tokyo and, you know, just a series of scenes. I used to say I never sleep in the same bed twice. I also came to realize then that what happened to me in ten days was more than happened to my friends back at home in a year because I would see, you know, three countries, five cities, eighteen ecosystems, five cuisines, so forth and so on in two weeks. And for them, you know, they were living out some kind of machine like existence.

Nothing is as boundary dissolving as -- uh, except psychedelic compounds -- as travel. Travel is really up there. I mean, you know, go to these places. There are many, many places and they are not to be taken at face value. They are parts of your own psyche. They are syntactical intersections of intentionality and cognition. The fact that you have to fly there on KLM is only incidental, you see, because what you come up against in these other places is cultural relativity. And cultural -- the deep coming to awareness of cultural relativity is finally permission to look at who you are, not who they say you should be, you know. You see in this tribe, you're an SOB if you fail to eat your uncle at a certain critical time in the situation and in this society, you're an SOB if you don't own a condo in Carmel. So, you know, how seriously are we to take all this?

There's a great saying -- um, an alchemist of the 15th century, Athanasius Kircher said, uh, "The highest mountains, the oldest books, the strangest people, there you will find the stone." And this idea that there is something to be found, first of all, this is very important for the psychedelic life. Again, I was very lucky, I read Carl Jung very early before the Jungians really got a hold of him and ruined it. And, um, what Jung is saying about conceiving your life as a quest is absolutely true. Psyche is some kind of semi-malleable, uh, medium and if you set yourself up as a loser - if you image yourself as a loser, you will be a loser. And so forth, this is not big news. But, what's big news is, if you set your life up as a quest, you will actually find

something transcendental and unimaginable. I mean, I am living proof of this because I set my life up as a quest for a perverse reason: to prove that there was no mystery. In other words, to debunk it. To say, you know, I will follow the ancient formula and show that it's baloney by doing it perfectly and achieving nothing. [Terence laughs] That's the kind of guy I am! [Terence laughs] [audience laughs] However, [Terence laughs] what I discovered was, um, that the world -- the model of the world that we inherit, that it's three- dimensional space, very hum-drum and like that you're caught in it's laws, it's just not so.

I don't have all the answers but this is where we need to put pressure. The world is some kind of thing, which can be taken apart and shown to be something else, many other things and nobody is saying this. I mean these physicists are just as sober as can be and all this argument that goes back and forth about this paradigm and that paradigm and whether the world is made of anti-newmesons or -- the world was obviously made of mind and intention. And I -- I don't mean this in some airy-fairy, can't get a grip on it way -- I mean, if the world is made of cognition and intention then let's get a technology together that allows us to use that principle to make it the way we want it to be.

My mother said to me when I was at her knee, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. And, I think, you know, the political implication of that is, uh, beggars should ride and therefore turning wishes into horses is a reasonable political agenda. And psychedelics show, you know, the way it is to be done, it's somehow... I don't know. I don't know! My intuition is very strong that with people with sufficient intelligence and sufficient courage could at any time break through and make this somehow happen. I mean, it's a fantasy of two people having a conversation which ends with the abolition of language, basically. In other words, turn the tools upon themselves and unscrew everything and lay it out and look at it. And then rebuild it, um, the way we want to. Now, this could not even be talked about if there were not evidence that it is possible and the evidence lies in this weird dimension, this psychedelic thing. And I would be utterly despairing of the state of this planet and ourselves if it weren't for the existence of these compounds. I think we would not have the chance of a snowball in hell, not a chance, because everything on the surface spells ruin. You know, we are murderous monkeys. We have looted the future! We have eaten the food of our own children. This is the kind of crowd we are. And yet -- and yet and yet -- you know, there is this shining transcendent thing that is real. And this is what I hold against all the priests and gurus and rishis and roshis and geishas and Babajis around. They don't explain that what they're talking about is real. I don't even think they know that it's real. Perhaps they're just, you know, parasites on an idea but it is real and it is possible to manifest it.

The problem is that we are so perversely committed in the way we invest energy. I mean, a modern, well-equipped fighter plane costs \$75 million. The United States government orders them in lots of five hundred at a time. You know what \$75 million would do to consciousness research in California? One -- the cost of one fighter plane? I and the people I know and they people they know could deliver the millennium for that kind of money if, uh, you know, the law stood back because what we're talking about is a correlation of data that has gone on now for four hundred or five hundred years: botanical data, chemical data, human data, anthropological data, data about language, data about complex systems, generally, mathematical models, dynamics, chaos theory, so forth and so on. These are the tools out of which an understanding of the dynamics of mind can be created and creating an understanding of the dynamics of mind is the way out of the political logjam. No amount of haranguing and preaching is going to do it. It requires a breakthrough to the mechanics of ourselves. That's what it basically comes down to, that we must see ourselves as potentially salvageable, reprogrammable and worth saving.

And I think that because the psychedelic experience is not bound in history, but in a way is a morphogenetic field amplifier of our species. I mean, if you think of the Sheldrakan model of morphogenetic fields and then imagine that they cannot be detected by radio, they cannot be detected by any electronic, uh, means, the field is too subtle. But, if you imagine that mind is a quantum mechanically indeterminate and delicately balanced enough system that it can actually resonate to the presence of the morphogenetic field then you begin to have a theory of what the psychedelic experience is. It's the experience of the transcendent dimension of every object and every object has a transcendent dimension, more than one. I mean, it has a dimension which extends into the past; it has a dimension which extends into the future and it has a dimension that is orthogonal to any of these that is the internal horizon of its own transcendence. Now, this kind of talk is Whiteheadian talk. Whitehead, in the 20s and 30s, actually created a philosophy, a rigorous metaphysic entirely capable of -- of working in a psychedelic environment. Had he written it in Sanskrit, he probably would have, uh, had a wider audience, but he wrote in plain English. So, if you're interested in a metaphysic of the psychedelic experience where you actually take it seriously and say these things which we perceive: the dissolution of boundaries, the recombining of form, the transience of form, the transience of meaning, uh, the coming together of actual events in a real world and the dissolution of those events into a world of potentiality. This is all, uh, Whitehead-type stuff.

Some of you may know the notion of memes. A meme is the smallest unit of an idea. It's to ideas what genes are to biology and memes compete in the same way that genes are competitive in an environment. A meme can be copied. I can tell you something and you can tell someone else. The meme has been copied. A meme can be repeated. I can say the same thing over and over again to different people who then copy it and take it away. But, in the same, uh, sense as a gene is only effective if it remains, uh, faithful to its original, the meme must remain faithful to its original. And the only way we can correctly copy these memes and pass them among ourselves is through clarity of understanding. So -- so, is this pressure on clarity, nothing should be ambiguous. I don't believe in it. You know, I believe that understanding passes everywhere and that a thing is not existentially apprehended in some sense until it is understood.

And, as far as what understanding is; it's simple. It's nothing more than the perception of connecting patterns, so that here is a data field -- it could be a beach full of people, a great corporation or the history of England -- a data field. What patterns do you perceive in it? The more patterns you perceive in it, the more you understand it and there is no bottom to this. I mean, understanding just falls through the phenomena of the world endlessly. Essentially, it's about communication, that most of what we say and do, even though we may define ourselves as wide ranging intellectuals, most of what we say to each other is incredibly animalistic and low-grade data exchange because we're not used to pouring the energies of cognition into articulate speech. We just tend not to do that, but actually it's at this stage of things the closest we can get to hardwired, uh, telepathy, you know, honest straight talk that draws from as deep as it, uh, as it can.

And the search for, um -- well, Blake said this thing - see if I can get it right - he said that truth, if it is told so that it is understood, must be believed. In other words, if you hear it and you understand it and it's so, you will automatically give allegiance to it. This is because we resonate with some kind of ground of being that is below the speakable and yet supporting it. So, the idea here will be to try and communicate between ourselves to create, um, a slightly different kind of reality than everybody else is hanging out in. Mostly, I hope our reality will have more hope than the generic reality that's going on outside because I think that, um, there's a lot of data on the table now, more information than ever before and we can actually begin to figure out what's going on, not in terms of the first three milliseconds of the universe, but actually, you

know, what is going on on this planet. What is human history? What is a cognizing species doing running around by the billions on the surface of this planet obsessed with religions and driven by vice and hatred and visionary longing? This is not what they talk about in the biology books and still less is it what they talk about in the physical chemistry books. Something has torn loose on the surface of this planet and we are embedded in it and we are it and it is sweeping us and all life on this planet into some kind of apotheosis, some kind of shit-hit-the-fan situation where all the hopes, dreams, fears and obsessions are going to be held up to some kind of transcendental inspection. Nothing can stop this.

Uh, perhaps, you know, it could have been stopped in the 12th century or the 6th century, but now technical processes, population growth, information transfer, destruction of the environment -- we have -- the great dying is well under way and the question is: does this make sense? And an even more cogent question: can it be made to make sense? In other words, can we come to in the situation of a planet sinking into chaos and somehow run around and punch some buttons and close off some areas and salvage something. Can meaning be salvaged? Or is the process that has gone on over the last, uh, you pick a number but it's in the billions of years, essentially meaningless dumb show and, uh, absurdity? The really freaky thing about this, I think, is that it is not clear, that it seems to rest in the domain of human decision. That the universe is not at all what we suppose it to be and that we are in effect presented with a three-dimensional, four-dimensional, eleven-dimensional koan: a labyrinth, a puzzle, a kind of conundrum, which has to be cut through. And, it's all done in the mind. The whole, uh, apparent world is actually, uh, syntactical in nature. This is what they don't tell you in the philosophy departments or the physics departments. That the universe is made of words and that there has to be a speaker and there has to be a hearer. Photons, quarks, anti-new...that's not what it's about. That is a linguistic model that floats above the bedrock of syntactical connectedness; that mind travels through to create networks that it interprets meaningfully. That's what's really going on.

So, looking at this situation, years and years ago, knowing and feeling what I've essentially just said to you twenty-five years ago, I, uh, I've always been a skeptic. I've always been sort of on a downer, cynical even: take things apart and belittle them and see how they tick. It's just, uh, it's a male rational style, a scientific style. And the assumption behind that is that you can reduce the whole world to something which is nonthreatening and neutral somehow. But, um, a weird thing happened on the way to completing this program which was, um, I discovered something which it is my intention to try and share with you. I don't know, it's --- many people have made this discovery, but I can only speak, uh, for myself. So, for me, it had a very intense and kind of transformative immediacy. And this was, I discovered that in the realm of the so-called transcendental -- I was raised, uh, Roman Catholic and in the process of cutting that loose, switched, uh, Latin for Sanskrit for a while -- and, uh, you know, I've had a life long interest in the transcendental, but basically from a debunking point of view. In other words, not for me sweeping up at the ashram, not for me the ambiguities of Babaji. And -- I just -- and in India, the tact that I always took with these people was, "What can you show me?" You know. "Anything!" Because talk is cheap. God, if I don't know that, who does? [audience laughs] So, a line of patter is completely non-convincing. Well, it's not, uh -- it's not to be found in those traditions.

What I'm trying to say is that when I put pressure on the spiritual domain, the only people who could deliver were shamans with a history of use of hallucinogenic plants. And, um, an awareness of this came to me, say, as early as 1967 and I begin to pursue it. At first, I pursued a pharmacological basis behind, uh, Tibetan shamanism. The pre-Buddhist shamanism of Tibet is called Bonpo. I went there thinking that their art could not possibly be what it is unless they had access to hallucinogenic plants and were using them.

Well, I was, you know, twenty-two, I didn't know anything. I didn't speak these languages. I had no notion of the task that I was setting up for myself. But, later I went to the Amazon basin and there -- there is an extent and thriving a rich shamanic tradition of hallucinogenic plant use and they can just convey you into, uh, astonishing dimensions. And it's those astonishing dimensions that will form inevitably the focus of what we do this month because we need to run it as a headline.

It goes something like this: uh, scientists discover nearby hyper object in alternative continuum. It's that sort of thing. It's that by pushing the psychedelic experience, we can satisfy -- and by -- let me define "pushing" there. I mean putting a great deal of research pressure on the tryptamines -- by pushing the hallucinogenic, psychedelic experience, I think we could fairly quickly satisfy ourselves, if the legal climate were different, that the Freudian model won't do, the Jungian model won't do and that, in fact, all psychological models will fail. And that what we're dealing with is something quite of another order -- and I am not one to reach, you know, for the metaphors of spirit with the connotation of moral opprobrium and all that, but there is a dimension which is accessible to each and every one of us - this is the primary thing about it, it's accessible - that is so appallingly, titanicly and bizarrely different than the continuum that we're currently residing in that it seems to throw doubt on the entire effort to understand the world as it's been carried out over the past 1500 years.

In other words, there is an object in this mental space which, as culture creating creatures, we are attempting to colonize and invade this cultural space through the concrescence of language. In other words, through exteriorizing our ideas as tools, we are invading this cultural domain and the psychedelic, uh, tryptamines and very recently discovered, by the way. I'm doing a book for Bantam and I have to go through the whole history of these things and to my amazement, I -- the indole trip -- the indole hallucinogens actually were never studied. LSD was invented in 1938; they put it on the shelf for five years, then the guy took it, Hofmann. He said it's a hallucinogen but, uh, the war was raging. That was 1943. It didn't actually make its way into the journals until 1947. Then, from 47 to roughly 65 there was a great deal of interest in LSD and research on it. Then that ended with it becoming illegal.

In the meantime, psilocybin, uh, DMT and, uh, the, uh, beta-carbolines, the number of articles and papers published on these things numbers in the dozens. In the case of DMT, it's under ten -- human, we're talking now human experiments, not rat-slicing and, uh, physical chemistry, but actual human data. So, what we inherit out of the 60s -- one of the ways which we have been disempowered that we didn't even know (isn't this fun to learn a new way that you were disempowered that you didn't even know? [audience laughs]) is that the LSD experience was made the paradigm of the psychedelic experience and it was placed at the center of the phenomenological mandala and then all of these other compounds were sort of related into it in terms of: doesn't last as long as, lasts twice as long as, uh, that sort of thing. When you think about this alternative reality and the exploration by drugs with psychedelic drugs and then the pervasive problem with other sorts of drugs in the society, it's, it's -- and it cuts very close to the core of ourselves as creatures. I mean, we are addictive animals. We addict to everything. We addict to each other and glorify it as our most noble outpouring of sentiment in the phenomenon of romantic love.

I mean, when a pair of lovers are parted, the withdrawal symptoms are indistinguishable from heroin. I mean, vomiting, shaking, uncontrollable emotional outbursts, sleeplessness, short temper, hysteria -- this is real. It is -- what romantic love is, is a pheromonal bonding, an exchange of chemical messengers which takes these two autonomous organisms and welds them into one galaxy of need and intention and understanding and expectation. Well then you just tear that apart and people are, you know, shook up. We

addict to political ideals, you know, all kinds. I mean, it's wonderful what's happening in Peking but, uh, several decades ago the same thing was happening in Berlin to a different beat. You know, people find an idea and it works and all barriers appear to be movable and all goals attainable. We addict to things. This is, you know, like magpies but then through media trained to propel ourselves into ever more extensive relationships with objects. We invent money which is kind of a, uh, multi-transformable drug. It stands for everything. [audience laughs] You know, everything that you ever wanted and you can addict to money.

Nevertheless, uh, what I will argue during this month is that, uh, that this is not a bad thing. That we have a secret history that I will try to convince you of and I -- and you should try to convince me that I'm wrong. And we will argue over the secret history of the human race and why it is, therefore, that we are as we are and why it is that these psychedelics are not some peripheral issue of screwballs who can see God in a cabbage, but that, in fact, the issue of psychedelics is directly on the tracks of the onrushing locomotive of rationalist, paternalist, uh, schloko society and that it ain't going to go away. Because what we're talking about here is a nude part of the human mind. What we're talking about here is something which takes its place in the great unfolding of the define -- of the defining of human freedom that characterizes the entire adventure of global civilization. In other words, uh, you know, we've got the Pope under control - that happened in the Middle Ages. Uh, slavery has now been generally embraced as a bad thing to be into and we've gotten that on the books as a bad idea. Women have been suddenly recognized to be human beings and so forth. So, this, this, swelling bubble of 'aha' and perception of the real nature of the universe should also include the, uh, sudden realization that governments have no business telling people what foods and spices they should prefer. That this is an absurd role for government and that, like slavery, like the, h, subjugation of women, the, uh, uh, legal, uh, persecution of dietary habits has just got to take its place with the high-button shoe. [audience laughs]

Uh, and we will talk a lot about the consequences of this. What does it mean? Because, you see, what the government would have us believe and perhaps believes itself - although I doubt it - is that we would return to the beast. That's all. You know, we would just shoot junk and toot blow and flop around in ruinous orgies until hell froze over and they - wiser, sterner, more disciplined than ourselves - represent the edifice of moral authority. This is the, 'I'm doing it for your own good' trip. See? And actually this is all hypocrisy and we will talk about all that: the roles of governments in the promulgation of drugs and drug cartels and how -- this is what I learned doing this book for Bantam: that drugs have always been there and have always been manipulated by governments. I mean, this is almost what money was invented for, was to do dope deals and, you know, I'll show you what I mean as we get into it.

Um, but I want to return for a minute to the transcendental object because that's the part that gets me off the most. It's taken me a long time to believe what was actually happening in that I always said I could believe it if I read it in the newspaper, but I can't believe it because it's happening to me or it's happening so near to me. But, I just, you know -- it hardly now seems to matter and what we just have to do is to try and talk frankly based on our -- the experience which each of us brings to this about, you know, the thing. How much of it have you seen? Well what do you think? You know. How does it cast its shadow into your life? What is it? Uh, because I talk on these subjects, I am a sort of a nexus point for information and I gather stories and I see that, you know, science and rational philosophy and all that stuff is going on over here quite to its heart's content while hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands and thousands, of people exactly like ourselves are logging in these experiences which are, you know, absolutely off the scale.

And I just don't -- I mean, there are a lot of people having problems. People abducted by UFOs, people

visited by Whitley Strieber's triangle face? That's not where I'm coming from. I have nothing but scorn for all weird ideas other than my own. [Terence laughs] [audience laughs] So, and the reason I tolerate my own weird ideas is basically because of what I've gone through. I would never believe it if I hadn't seen it. You know, there's a wonderful story and I have no love for Christianity either, but I'll tell a Christian story. This is what I got out of the Gospels. Uh, Christ appeared several times in the upper room after the crucifixion to the apostles. The first time he appeared, the apostle Thomas was not there. And so then, uh, Thomas came after the visitation and they said, "The master was here. He was with us." And Thomas said, "Bullshit!" [audience laughs] [Terence laughs] And they said, "No, no – he was here." And he said, "Unless I put my hand into the wound, I will not believe it." So, time passed and Christ came again to the upper room and, uh, Thomas was there among the other apostles. And Christ said, uh, "Thomas, come forward, put your hand into the wound." And he did. And he did. Now, the conclusion that I draw from this story is: alone of all human beings in human history, Thomas, the doubter, touched the incorporeal resurrected body of Christ. Only the doubter was allowed that privilege. For everybody else, you know, the show.

And I -- I just take that absolutely seriously. I think that God or he, she or it, loves the doubter and prepares treasures in paradise for the doubter that eclipses anything. The method has worked for me and I have seen absolutely astonishing things. I'm sure many of you have, too. I have seen things where I had perfect confidence that no human being had ever laid eyes on these places before and I'm sure you have, too, because that's how big it is in there. It is -- the further in you go, the bigger it gets. We are like monkeys sitting in the presence of a flying saucer whose doorway has just been flung open. This is what we need to become conscious of. We need to dissolve the assumptions of the culture and this is why LSD was so terrifying because I firmly believe that one of the things psychedelics do is they, uh, dissolve cultural assumptions. It doesn't matter whether you're a member of the politbureau or a go-go dancer in Berlin or a professor of agronomy in Kansas, you will doubt your beliefs and your world if you take psychedelics. This is good. We need to dissolve our cultural conditioning and try to get down to brass tacks because I'm convinced that reality is a tinker toy set that we can learn to take apart and put together in completely different ways.

And we're going to have to pull some real rabbits out of the hat or the planet is just going to pour over the edge into chaos. Uh, and I, you know -- before they were called psychedelics, they were called consciousness-expanding drugs. Well, if there's any possibility that that's true, let's put our best people on it because consciousness is what we're dying for! We don't have enough of it. We can't feed the hungry; we can't manage a global economy; we can't hold down guerilla warfare and we can't cure AIDS – we need to get smart. If this stuff has anything to do with getting smart on any level, even for one in a thousand of those who use it, pour it on! We can't stand around like a bunch of nitwits just watching the planet burn down around us.

Now, it's very touchy, this whole thing because it is literally and, uh, and perhaps metaphorically as well, illegal, forbidden territory. We're like South Pacific Islanders. We have taboos, you know. Bring this plant into your house and you must go away to the big slammer for a while. [audience laughs] This is a taboo. I, um, I don't -- my position, which I don't suppose I should say I advocate it because as I understand that's one higher level of federal crime, so here is my position, but I don't advocate it: [audience laughs] [Terence laughs] is that people should be able to do whatever they damn well please. The government is for the convenience of people. And, in particular, in the United States, we already have in place a clause which says: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights. Inalienable. That means government cannot interfere with these rights. Well, pursuit of happiness, I don't think you have to be a

shyster to believe that pursuit of happiness covers experimenting with psychedelic substances. It seems to me perfectly clear.

I think that, uh, you know, part of what I do as I speak around and I suppose I should say it here because I imagine some of you will end up psychotherapists or are psychotherapists – is that, uh, you know, without an understanding and familiarity of the psychedelic experience, uh, you should be sued for fraud if you're practicing psychotherapy [audience laughs] because, uh, the dynamics of the mind – isn't that what psychotherapy is about? – well, you know this much unless you have had a variety of psychedelic experiences. That's where the confirmation of all this theory is and that's where you find out what you're running from.

It isn't that it is a psychotomimetic as the government researchers hoped it would turn out to be; it's simply that it plays all the changes. You know, it pulls out all the stops and it plays in the major and the minor keys. You see it all! This is indispensable for psychotherapy and if you look at the pure statistics on alcoholism with LSD, uh, it's phenomenal before LSD was made illegal. Now I -- understand, I don't believe these are chemical cures to drug dependency, that isn't how it works. It works like this: you take LSD, you're an alcoholic or a junkie, you take LSD, all your illusions and defenses are dissolved. You see that you're killing yourself, that you're a pathetic wretch and that you're destroying yourself and the people around you and then you come down. And out of that experience you existentially draw in some cases the power, the self-will and the motivation to change your behavior. Well, I believe that as a culture we could do this and this comes perilously close to sounding like everyone should take LSD. I don't believe that. I think that, um, it's a -- it's a calling. It's a kind of a profession. It's, uh -- well, shamanism is the best model and I think that the rebirth of shamanic awareness is part of a much larger cultural phenomenon which I call the archaic revival. I hate the term "New Age." I think it's just, you know, 11 o'clock news stuff.

But, the archaic revival is a notion of a series of integrated trends that have been going on for over a hundred years that are the actual turning belly-up of Victorian, Christian, scientific, male dominated, uh, civilest, materialist civilization. It begins with phenomena like pataphysics in the 1880s in France and surrealism and Freud and Jung and abstract expressionism and even the Nazis had a piece of the action because of their understanding of how ritual and propaganda. I mean Goebbels was the architect of the German archaic revival. LSD has a part of it and what it is, it's, uh, an intuition - an intuition - that to save ourselves from what we have done, we must reach far, far back in time for a stabilizing metaphor; not as the renaissance did back to classical Greece and Rome to create classicism which of course all happened in the 15th century, but further back to a prehistory, to a time when people and nature lived in a kind of balance. I don't mean just any time in prehistory; I mean essentially the post-glacial called the Magdalenian, about 19,000 years ago when the glaciers began to melt and the Sahara turned green again and, uh, the cave paintings were done at Lascaux and Altamira, bone antler technology was invented. It was the great springtime of our people and the last springtime of our people.

And then we came down through. Uh, but, in that time, in a partnership society - and this is Riane Eisler's term and I will talk about that through the month - in a partnership society there was no oscillation between a matriarchy and a patriarchy. There are dominator societies and there are partnership societies, and gender has nothing to do with it. We can entirely overcome the bullshit about gender in talking about cultural forms. It's dominator versus partnership. And, uh, the partnership society that existed in those times was the quintessential expression of a symbiotic relationship and this is a new, you know, a new idea that I want to get across during this month which is, our anxiety, our angst, our wandering in the wasteland is because, um, there's something wrong with us that we don't know about. What it is, is this: we are

symbiotic creatures. We require a relationship with a certain plant and if we don't have this, we go slightly bananas and this symbiotic relationship was disturbed about 12,000 years ago.

It has to do - and I will go over it in more detail downstream but it has to do, uh - with periods of drought in the African continent that forced people into the Middle East to where they were no longer able to access this plant. Then begins what we call human history at the 9 th -- at the 11,000 BC point at, uh, places like Jericho and Catal Huyuk in southern Anatolia. What's happening with human history is a -- perhaps not even articulated, but nevertheless restless driving search for substitutes, substitutes for the lost partnership ambience, substitutes for the plant symbiote which held that in stasis. And these substitutes work their way over the millennia through, uh, the opium cults of Anatolia, um, the hemp cults of the Skifians, the Eleusinian mysteries - and these, these are the great, uh, acceptable substitutes for the mystery. You see what religion is, is a contact with the tremendum, with the numinosum at the beginning of history in this context of plant hallucinogenesis and then the fall, literally, the fall is the telescoping stages that moved us away from the original purity of this numinous image and it ends in crack addiction. It's all about substances. This is why we frantically search the universe for what my friend Leo Zeff used to call the perfect high. That's what we're looking for. We can't help ourselves. Whole cultures are doing it. And they don't think of it as a drug; they think of it as an epiphany, a religious system and a set of sacramental buildings or a city organized on a divine plan. But, what they're trying to do is restore order and they can't do it because like the romantic lovers parted, the partner is not present. The, uh, completing anima image is simply not there. And so, we are restless, violent, neurotic, repressive, migratory, uh, destructive, self-negating, so forth and so on.

I think that we're coming to the place where we can actually begin to take an idea like what I just said and amass evidence for and against it, and try to then cure ourselves. In a way I'm trying to carry out a kind of Jungian analysis where we realize that we are all the children of some kind of very damaging thing which happened in prehistory and it's plain as the nose on your face, it's just that we are so traumatized that we do not see it. I mean, look at the story of Eden which is the central datum, the central mythologem of our culture. It's a story of, uh, substance abuse and the consequent punishment that follows upon that because Eve eats of the fruit of the tree of life and it says in Genesis: if they eat of this fruit, they will be as we are. In other words, it was specifically the issue of consciousness expansion and Yahweh, the jealous god, the volcano god of a paternal -- of a -- of a dominator culture said "No, you're not coming into that inner sanctum." But, she had eaten of it anyway so there was a parting of the ways. Well, this parting of the ways, I believe is a metaphorical description of the breakup of this symbiosis in Africa and the fall into profane time. The, uh, withdrawal of the, uh, the bride really in alchemical terms or in terms of the -- of the Jungian marriage of the marriage of the anima and the animas and, uh, we are now I think in a position to, at least, talk about this as a possibility because this thing which was driving these religions on the plains of Africa was a tryptamine hallucinogen. It was specifically a mushroom which was occurring in the, uh, the dung of the most -- of the early cattle that were just at that stage being domesticated.

Well, the experience which that mushroom induces in us is no less overwhelming and transcendental and incomprehensible than it was to those people 15,000 years ago. We have nothing up on them. In fact, we may be in a worse position to understand it because our language is now carrying a thousand -- a millennia-long legacy of paternalistic, egocentric, uh, materialistic and empirical biases. They may have possessed languages that far better commanded the true modalities of the transcendental object than do our languages. So, the archaic revival is, uh, an invitation to historical humanity to view itself as a kind of prodigal son and to abandon the wandering in history, the peregrination in history, and to return to the

archaic fold with what has been learned. And what I will suggest to you that has been learned is, uh, the purification and, uh, and, uh, rational analysis of the, uh, *sine qua non* of the whole shtick which is the hallucinogenic compound. In other words human history is a dipping into matter, a kind of Faustian, um, pact to come away with what the shamans of the -- of archaic times were approaching by a natural means. Well let's see. It means I've talked for about an hour. Are there questions?

[Question]: Uh, yes. I'd like to hear you talk a little bit more about language and words. Um, I read somewhere - I can't remember exactly where - if silence is a reality then all words is an intrusion and a lie. And when you said that reality is made up of words and yet it seems to me aren't you talking about rather than, you're talking about it?

Yes, well that's a good question. Um, my brother said a funny thing one time. He said, uh, "Has anybody noticed that as you expand the sphere of understanding, the surface area of ignorance necessarily grows larger?" So, there is this paradox that as we understand, there becomes more and more that we don't know. Uh, I, uh -- what I am interested in and it may not be the highest value - I'm perfectly willing to agree that it perhaps isn't - is communication. So, I can't do much with silence, uh, but I do, uh, grant it primacy. What we're trying to do - but also, you know, I have to say and I suppose it's good to say it in the early phases - I am -- I try to be rational and analytical about what I'm dealing with and I don't even know if I would agree that the psychedelic dimension is a spiritual dimension. In other words, all I'm willing to say at this point is it's another dimension. It -- trying to turn it into something which would make us better people or worse people, it doesn't seem to operate like that. Uh, William Burroughs had the notion. He said language is a virus from outer space.

Um, it's possible that language is some kind of higher order organizing principle. It only arises in the most highly organized higher mammal on the planet. And to those of you whose hearts leap to the defense of dolphins, magpies and honeybees, good luck, but 'cause it ain't King Lear. That's the point. You see, it isn't Milton. Language has a force and a dynamic of it's own. Perhaps it is a virus from outer space inhabiting us, using us to articulate sound. I--I'm fascinated by the mystery of language because it's very central to understanding what psychedelics are. Why do I say that? Because, and I will refer again and again to DMT, dimethyltryptamine, as the most interesting for many reasons of these psychedelics, but today I just want to mention one aspect of it.

In the trance that overwhelms you when you experience this hallucinogen, it only lasts for a few hundred seconds and, in that place, there are entities that are making sounds, which visibly condense before you. In other words, language has the potential, I swear to you -- in other words this settles a question -- language has the potential to be seen rather than beheld. Well, I saw this years ago in DMT flashes and, lo and behold, a thorough inspection of Philo Judaeus who lived contemporary with Jesus Christ and was an Alexandrian Jew who wrote volumes of commentary on the religions of his era, Philo Judaeus talks about what he calls the Logos. Logos was an interiorized teaching voice which Greek ecstasies sought to contact, and Philo says -- he sets up a little dialogue and the first speaker says, "What would be a more perfect Logos? A more perfect Logos than the informing, teaching voice?" And Philo answers, "The more perfect Logos would go from being heard to being beheld without ever crossing over a noticeable moment of transition." Astonishing! I mean, I always wondered, did they know what they were talking about? What did it mean to them? What did it mean to him to write that sentence? Well, we'll never know so here's what it means to me! [audience laughs] [Terence laughs]

It means that the program of language is an open-ended one and that we are dynamically caught up in it. That we are language. That's what distinguishes us from those who chirp and twitter and romp in the trees. That we are language and that language is evolving. It's changing and that, in fact, what we call culture is nothing more than a kind of shockwave trailing behind the forward edge of this language-making capacity because you can't invent it before you can say it. You can't sell it before you can describe it. You can't do anything with it until it exists as a linguist -- commandable set of syntactical connections. So, in one sense and I will carry this forward over the month, what the psychedelics are for us as a species rather than for each one of us as an individual -- what they are for us as a species is an enzyme that catalyzes the language-making capacity. What is an enzyme? An enzyme is an organic catalyst. What is a catalyst? A catalyst is a chemical agent, which causes a chemical reaction to proceed faster than it ordinarily would without being consumed. The catalyst is not consumed.

So, I think that the astonishing proliferation of cultural effects, languages, religions, ontologies over the past 40,000 years out of nothing because before that human organization was, I mean, it was dull back there for a million or two years. I mean, it was -- there was, so far as we can tell, no material culture at all. Now you may wish to defend that it was wonderful but you will find you have no evidence for it. But, suddenly after staying stable for a million years, the human brain size doubles almost overnight and there is this cascade of cultural effects. I maintain that it has to do with pastoralism as a behavioral habit bringing these proto-hominids into contact with psilocybin as a dietary element and that psilocybin specifically catalyzed certain qualities of the human organism that worked to its evolutionary advantage, such as consciousness. Can you imagine a more multi-purposed, mutational, adaptational change that would serve you well than being able to think clearly? I mean, if a flatworm could think clearly, evolutionary horizons would open before it or any other organism. It's like a super nonspecific immune response. You can handle any problem. Give me a problem! I'm a thinker! I can handle it! You know. So.

But catalysis of language, well, then, it only ceased, uh, two thousand years ago at Eleusis when triumphant Christians stomped out paganism wherever they found it and all of these mystery religions were driven underground and forgotten. And it has to do, you know -- there are other factors such as the botanical scarcity of decent hallucinogens in the European ecosystem but details, which we can talk about. But, the point is 2000 years is all that we've been away from this and in that 2000 years, you know, we've elaborated the most lethal set of assumptions and cultural conventions ever brought forth. I mean, you know, war. Before people used to knock each other on the head, but in the hands of these un-stoned dominator types with this linear linguistic bias which then is totally reinforced by the printing press, why, you see, you know, it's a suicidal cultural style. Well, one of the things I think that happened in the 1960s that supports my case; in the wake of LSD, you see a tremendous enriching of language, endlessly sneered at by those who don't talk that way but, you know, it introduced the notion of the vibe, the ego trip - these are worthwhile concepts -- the bumper, uh, the flashback. Uh, these are linguistic pearls that, uh, you know, crystallized out of that experience. I realized in the Amazon, hanging out with these ayahuasqueros, these people using ayahuasca, which is a different strategy to make DMT happen, but it ends up with the DMT happening. Their songs were not to be listened to, but to be seen. People would say, "How did you like my song last night?" And people would say, "You mean the blue one or the yellow one?"

And, so, you see, I believe that the psychedelics are working at the cultural level to promote language, but also to -- it's not simply a linear enriching of language. There's also something going on biologically that language is actually gaining in the vertical dimension in its, uh, uh, beholdability. And this is taken very seriously in the Amazon because these small hunter-gatherer groups, where there's big pressure on protein

and there's no room for mistakes, they guide their societies by taking these drugs together in a group situation and collectively they "see," whatever this means, they see and they model, uh, what their future is going to be. It's true telepathy. You see, when you listen to my voice, if you understand what I'm saying, it's because my incoming words cause you to go to your dictionary and look them up, one by one, and if your dictionary is pretty close to my dictionary, we will understand each other. But the whole act of communication depends on this assumption that the dictionaries are the same. If they're not the same then you will not understand me.

If, on the other hand, I could make you see what I mean, this is not a culturally conditioned avenue of information transfer. You don't have to learn English to look at an English woman. It's easy. You just do it! It's at the biological level. And so, this is, I think, in terms of consciousness expansion. You say, "Well, it's good as a general notion, but what direction is it moving?" It's moving in the direction of, literally, a clarifying of language, a clarification of language into something that can be beheld. And, uh, it's an arrow toward a greater domain of existential validity that each of us can, uh, can move in. We need to communicate. We need to find out who we are, each of us, individually, and then we need to tell each other.

The whole dominator style of un-stoned culture engineering is ego. That's what happens when you don't take psychedelic drugs as a culture; ego flows in. That's what was happening on the plains of Africa every Saturday night. Everybody was getting loaded and boundaries were dissolving. The boundary of the assumption of the uniqueness of the individual. They were taking these things and they were having, well, group sex, basically. These were the two things – it's clear because of the quality of psilocybin that it actually at midrange doses causes arousal. You see, at very low doses it increases visual acuity. Therefore, your hunting improves. Therefore, you and your progeny are more successful. Then at slightly higher doses, everybody's horny and there's a lot of activity in the group and partying. At higher doses, then that turns into religion and you just slam to the floor of the cave, you know. So, it's this three-step thing which plays on our basic needs to drive us into a deeper and deeper relationship with this, uh, with this mystery. And, it's such a huge idea that this is what we are, that this is so fundamental, that this isn't just some curiosity of, you know, hedonic, west coast, so forth and so on. But, that it is, in fact, central to understanding and defining humanness and to trying to grab some of the controls of this sinking submarine of a planet and get it back up to the surface long enough for us to all climb in a row boat and, uh, make our way somewhere.

So, thank you for being here today, all of you!

[Audience: *Thank you.*]

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Weekend Workshop Esalen (aka The Psychedelic 'Religious' Agenda)

27-29 August 1993

Esalen, Big Sur, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription \(Part 1\), \(Part 2\), \(Part 3\), \(Part 4\)](#)
- [Other links](#)

So, one of the things that's really important, I think, about psychedelic get-togethers, uh, however marginal and contrived, is that everybody gets to see who else is in the community. Most of the time we're fairly deep in the closet and can't be told from a typical convention of investment bankers or sports car enthusiasts or anything else. I won't keep you too long tonight because as I've said, a lot of people came a long distance. I always think about these things before, because I wonder - is it changing? What's my role in relationship to it? Have I sort of fallen into being some kind of gatekeeper, or in a worst case, a dancing bear? This issue of infotainment...recently I found myself in clubs at four in the morning raving at people at high decibel with the perfect knowledge that they couldn't understand a word I was saying. I wonder - this is a strange thing to happen to a philosopher. Is this what my daddy raised me for?

[Question]: What clubs are you raving at?

Blow my cover! Well, not in LA yet. In San Francisco we did a rave at Paradise Club down below market. In the Fox Warfield, I appeared with a shaman, which was insane. They give you a microphone and just push you onstage. Just breathing on one of these microphones makes the walls move back. Megatripolis in London - I appeared there and Knowledge. The point being, I keep trying to understand where to put the psychedelic experience in terms of the available cultural pigeonholes. Is it to subvert academic thinking? Is it to ignore all that constipated bourgeois dominator malarkey and go for the kids?

I've been here as scholar in residence for a week and so I've given a couple of lectures, which naturally, some of the themes we'll talk about and some of the themes have been anticipated. I think, what is the point of thinking this way? The way I'm willing to purvey rather than some other way? What is so great about this point of view? I decided the final defense is that it's the most fun. This is not normally how we evaluate ideologies. Normally the concern, which is true, and then whatever is decided is true, no matter how dreary and depressing that may be, then somehow because it's true, some enormous morale obligation descends upon you to believe in it.

I remember this from my own intellectual journey when I was 14, 15 and 16, the world looked very bleak. So I read Camus, Sartre and the lesser lights of that dreary French existential school and because it was true, you had come to terms with it supposedly. You know, life is a drag! But as you mature intellectually

or as you spiral off the track into madness, whichever my particular development can be described as, you discover that truth is philosophical coinage for the naïve. The banks of philosophy do not trade federal truth certificates. That's for the hoi polloi. What's going on among the professionals is something very different, a sense of the limitations of knowledge. Cogito Ergo Sum, I think therefore I am, appeared to be a kind of axiom, a kind of bedrock statement. I – think – therefore – I – am. Now somehow in the 17th century this appeared to have some kind of incontrovertible logic about it. Like – I am I. But when you analyze it, it's an incredibly complex statement embedded in assumptions that can barely be languaged. Just look at the connector 'therefore' and try to wrap your mind around what this actually means. What are the limits of the meaning and what is implied? It's a profoundly intuitive concept not easily languaged. All knowing is incredibly provisional and this is something which is hidden within in the context of a culture. Cultures don't run around announcing how they haven't got their acts together. That's not what culture is about. Culture is all about announcing how we do have our act together. Look at this Gothic cathedral, look at this Stone Henge or look at this wonderful human sacrifice we just put on here. We know what we're doing. We know how to run nature and ourselves.

In the 20th century, at last the evolution of philosophy has become sophisticated enough to sort of question this search for truth. I studied philosophy from somebody some of you may have read or personally known, Paul Feyerabend, who was a wonderful philosopher of science and essentially an anarchist. He wrote a book called *Against Method* and he talks in there about the provisional nature of knowing and how naïve we are in the ways in which we manipulate data about the world. Just as an example, we imbibe without question the very complex philosophical assumptions that lie behind probability theory. For instance, talking about averages poses no intellectual problem for us. If you want to know how much current is running through a wire and you take 10 measurements, you add them and you divide by 10 – we then say this is how much current is running through the wire. Strangely enough, when you go back to your original 10 measurements, no one of them may be the value that you now announce to be the true value for the current running through the wire. All of our epistemic enterprise, all of the effort to understand the world, is hedged about by this uncertainty. Wittgenstein was once asked if a particular proposition was true and he said it's true enough. This is the voice of modern philosophy, where at last enough simple common sense has sunk into the philosophical enterprise that we're now talking about things being true enough rather than the revelation of God's truth.

I mean, good grief, if you met a termite wandering across the floor of the jungle and interviewed him on his life's work and he announced that it was the discovery of certain truth, you would be fairly condescending on how you would relate to that. But do you believe that you are greatly different in your cosmic positioning than that termite? Monkeys are better at this than insects? I don't think so!

I spend a lot of time trying to make my ideas seem rationally apprehendable but in a way that's just slight of hand. Their attraction for me and I hope for you, is not their rational apprehendability but that they're fun. You can't top this for fun? If you can, I'll convert to your way of doing it. The phenomenal world is delightful. It's humorous. It has locked within itself all the adumbrations and reflections of its aspirations, its past and its unfulfilled possibilities. I really think this is what the psychedelic thing is about, or at least for me; it's a kind of sensual glorification of multiplicity. That's why if we were to look at spiritual traditions and try to categorize them into great or weaning categories, then I think what you would get are the minimalist schools which are all about white lights, nirvanas, satoris, sunyatas, and things largely unsayable that discourse despairs of describing. Those ontologies that glorify the phenomenal world - and that would be Paganism, psychedelic thinking and shamanism - notice that these are more nitty-gritty positions not driven by a thirst for abstraction but driven by a thirst for sensation.

To my mind, the centerpiece of the experience of being and the centerpiece of the psychedelic experience

and the point around which the great issues of modernity revolve is the issue of the felt presence of experience, the relationship of the individual to the sensorium of the body. We see it in all kinds of subtle ways and unsubtle ways. Unsubtle ways, the whole issue about a woman's right to control her reproductive processes. Subtle ways, the way in which the entire society is an engine for producing certain behavioral outcomes in the marketplace. Everybody is being programmed and manipulated and I think the antidote to that in some sense is this wider appreciation of complexity and experience.

The reason the psychedelic thing is so powerful and can touch so many people of so many classes and outlooks is that it's an experience. It's not an ideology. So we're not talking something which competes on a level with say Marxism, behaviorism or deconstructionism. This is something more operating on the level of sexuality, emotion, devotion; it's a feeling and it's a birthright of the organism that has been socially restricted and controlled in a very weird way. We are literally a schizophrenic species. We are at war with our own nature. Civilization, whatever that means, is felt to be so fragile an enterprise that it's constantly refusing to come to terms with the context in which it finds itself, which is the animal body, sexuality, emotion, pain, desire, elation, and ecstasy; so we go outside of those things and create a generalized abstraction and reason backwards.

The reason psychedelics are so frightening to the guardians of social order is because they represent a direct addressing of experience. For a very long time, I mean one millennia, five millennia - choose a number - experience has been hierarchically distributed in human society from the top. You get a Christ or a Hitler or a Pope. It's a leader of some sort or a visionary, and then the exegesis of the vision is passed down through and we imbibe it as a product coming with the sanction of social correctness. This has had a kind of neotenizing effect on us as human beings. What I mean by neoteny is the retention of juvenile characteristics. We have allowed ourselves to become more and more childlike to the point where now some considerable percentage of us allow ourselves to be warehoused in a larval condition most of our waking lives watching television. Consumer object based fetishism and the cycle of production of money for the acquisition of fetish material, then the inevitable disappointment, the reformulation of the fetish, so forth and so on. This is what occupies us. It was William James I think who said, 'if we don't read the books with which we line our apartments then we are no better than our cats and dogs.' I guess I say - if we don't take the psychedelic plants that are in the environment that we can avail ourselves of, then we are no better than our cats and dogs.

There are doorways open to us but they are all experiential and personal. They lie in the realm of sexuality and I guess what you would call experimental psychology. These are areas where we get very nervous and want to follow rote, follow tradition and be assured that we are not deviant, that we are not strange and that we are not violating any canons of the tribe. I think because of the social crisis, meaning this vast generalized sense that everyone has that things are out of control, we are going to have to go back to first principles. What that means is a return to the authenticity of the body. You know McLuhan wrote how media distorts human self-images? One of the reasons I'm involved in virtual reality and electronic media and all of that sort of thing is because I think that the age of the distortion of the human self image by media is coming to an end. That the medias of the future will be largely transparent and that this is very important because it's going to allow us to discover who we are. A person who can read is a person who possesses an ability that is tremendously distorting of their essential relationship to their humanness. I mean if language is a bizarre activity, and no question that it is, reading is orders of magnitude more bizarre yet because abstract signs are being manipulated at close to conversational speed and in some cases faster than conversational speed.

So much of culture is complex behavior and I think that what the psychedelics show - that is a secret that some people don't want told - is that we can redesign our behavior. We can change very, very quickly the image of ourselves as somehow the rigid inheritors of evolutionary programming and therefore doomed

like lemmings or Monarch butterflies to enact a programmed pattern of behavior and destroy ourselves. This isn't what I see happening at all. The whole history of humanness is a history of unexpected, adaptive response to unusual circumstances and I believe that's because the imagination has played such an important role in defining who and what we are. Whatever the imagination is, psychedelics catalyze it. Psychedelics enhance it. The thin bandwidth of interior self-monitoring that goes on in normal consciousness becomes much more clear, three-dimensional and intensified under the influence of psychedelics. These things used to be called consciousness-expanding drugs; it was just a good old phenomenological description. Well consciousness, or the absence of it, is what's pushing our species towards some kind of crack up.

So if there are factors in the rainforests, in the Arctic tundra, in the toolkits of preliterate and aboriginal people that can act to transform consciousness then this is where we have to put our attention. If we could feel the consequences of what we are doing, then we would stop doing it. The reason we don't stop is because we are partially anesthetized to the consequences of untrammelled population growth, unregulated capitalist market oriented behaviors, so forth and so on. We are semi conscious. This is our problem. We're like someone half awake inside a burning building.

Are we going to suffocate and become a crispy critter? Or are we going to sufficiently integrate the situation and grope ourselves to an entrance and call 911? In our case, I don't know who comes when you call 911, but it's something like that. During the weekend, we'll talk a lot about human history because I think human history is something that we are far too blasé about. We take it for granted because our own lives are so ephemeral, last seventy years or something - we think of history as something that was installed with the rocks but in fact it isn't. It is a behavior very recent like language, another behavior very recent. Physically, human beings have been about the way we are for 100,000 years, and much the way we are for half a millions years. But the behaviors have changed radically. From nomadic partnership, from societies based on shamanic intoxication, orgiastic sexuality, and no fixed abode, to a massive integrated global electronically based civilization. These are extraordinary modifications of behavior. It's as though hummingbirds were to begin assembling locomotives. That's the kind of radical transformation that we see inside our own species.

Well then, the question is – what's it about? What we are doing, by replacing one behavior after another, never resting, never satisfied, is in practical terms – we're accelerating the entire temporal continuum. We seem to be pushing process towards some kind of dimensional apotheosis of some sort. We're not content to let things rest. Human history is the record of this process, which begins as a kind of random walk across the epigenetic landscape of culture. The random walk finds a compass heading and this compass heading has many names. You can call it unity. You can call it God. You can call it a chicken in every pot. You can call it completion. Whatever it is, freedom seems to be its central feature. We want freedom. We want freedom from the constraints of the cycles of the sun and the moon. We want freedom from drought and weather, freedom from the movement of game, the growth of plants, freedom from control from mendacious popes and kings, freedom from ideology, freedom from want. This idea of freeing ourselves has become the compass of the human journey. That which doesn't free doesn't serve.

This has become almost a kind of universal ideal. No one on Earth preaches the virtues of slavery. There may be people who practice slavery but they have the decency to keep their mouths shut about it because the defense of slavery has become impossible in polite company. I think over time, the growth of an ideal of what human perfection is – first worked on by the great religions and then some time I suppose around the time of the Italian Renaissance handed over to secular forces – who began to say freedom was more than the right to wear wool and pray twenty-four hours a day. Freedom means the acquisition of property, of the visible manifestations of wealth, the acquisition of information. Freedom with the publication of the first books becomes associated with accessing the database of the culture. Well, what we've learned

through Freud and Jung is that the database of the culture goes deeper than we may have anticipated and that the final keys to the deeper levels are in fact plants that were part of our shamanic heritage millennia ago. So freedom has become basically a project in the Blakian imagination. Blake called it the divine imagination and we now dream of transcending the constraints of matter, space, time and energy themselves.

I mean this is what stuff like nanotechnology and virtual reality and this sort of thing is about. We wish to find ourselves in the imagination. Well, I maintain that this desire is a kind of nostalgia for a paradisiacal possibility that actually existed in the past. To understand the human predicament, we're going to have to come to terms with the idea, which has been around for a long time, but not given much coinage recently, history is a fall. That this is a lesser state than we have known in the past and that all this material culture and all this exhibition of energy control; these are the toys of lesser gods. Being integrated in nature, at peace with the rhythms of life and death and co-identified with the eternal organisms of community, that these were actually higher and nobler ideas that somehow became compromised with the fall into history. It has to do with the relationship to the lost continents of our own minds. That's what this psychedelic this is really about. I think it's as profound as the European discovery of the lost half of the planet 500 years ago. It's that half of the human mind became disconnected from the ego and for a thousand years or more, these things have drifted in such profound estrangement from each other that when reunited, the only thing that we can map it to is a flying saucer invasion or a descent of angelic intent, or something, because we have become so alienated from the collected images of the soul.

While it's true that shamanism has existed forever and ever and that people, midwives, shamans, visionaries, schizophrenics, have been doing this in all times and places, nevertheless it now has a special poignancy because the official philosophy of our civilization – capitalism, materialism, reductionism; I guess that's it, maybe misogyny is in there somewhere – has played itself out. It's failed! Modernism has failed! Modernity has failed! The rational analysis of matter has led to the revelation of the irrationality of matter. The attempts to create systems of perfect deterministic prediction have led to the revelation of the chaos that haunts all systems and makes all prediction in principle impossible. The prosecution of the dream of a formal edifice of logic to explain mathematical structures in truth has given way to Gödel's incommensurability theorem, which shows you that basically nothing makes sense. Everywhere where reason has shown its light, the greater darkness has been revealed.

I think a turning point has come in the human enterprise. Childhood's end is upon us. We have to drop the naïve assumptions of certain truth and perfect understanding; the conjuring rod of reason turns out to be a fairly weak magic after all. We have to begin to cultivate a sense of mystery, a sense of living without closure because that, in fact, is how the world is. The world is a mystery. It's not going to yield to the fragile constructs of the human mind. Some portion may be rationally apprehendable but the basic facts of the matter are that we do not know where we come nor why, nor where we're going, nor according to what plan. Instead of seeking a flawed communication with the intentionality of deity, I think the psychedelic religious agenda, if that's how you want to think about it, is a more modest one. It's a cultivation of a sense of wonder in the presence of something, which obviously cannot be encompassed by the human mind. It can no more be encompassed by the human mind than the ocean can be emptied into a thimble. Once you get that straight you can go back to getting high, staying tight with your friends, making love, growing your garden and appreciating the felt presence of experience and realizing that the abstraction game, the high-modeling game, is in fact simply a game and that there should be no emotional investment in these structures.

What I've learned from the mushrooms ultimately is that ideas are for play. The final payback from all of this is a sense of fun, a sense of humor. The truth for sure, when it arrives, will make you smile. If it doesn't you should seek a deeper truth. For a long time it troubled me, this question of truth and falsity.

Now I think that it's more like this: that the person who has the best idea, or the let's put it this way, the best idea and that means the funniest idea, the idea that brings the small smile to the corners of your mouth, that ideal will win. It will win! It's twee the cheerful. Twee treads on the tail of the tiger, no blame. No blame because the cheerfulness of twee overcomes the inherent reticence of the world. The light touch is the right touch and if psychedelics don't give this to you, you may be an incurable case. There may be no hope for you but Martin Heidegger in high doses or whatever they do with people who have displaced funny bones.

The world is truly a strange place and getting stranger all the time. It's more the character of a pun or an optical illusion than it is the world of humorless, scurrying, grey atoms and invisible forces that we inherit from nature. The laboratory of being is your own body, your experience. Everything else is going to come as an unconfirmable rumor so fraught around with epistemological problems that you might as well toss it out at the beginning and not even bother with it. The basic thing is the empowerment of experience. That's why sexuality has always raised such a ruckus among authority freaks. It's why the psychedelic is so unsettling. It's why youth itself is unsettling because these things cause symmetry breaks. They cause a shift in perspective but this is in fact, at this point in time, exactly what we have to it.

It may be that we're going to rack and ruin but it's not an unconscious process. There are the technologies, the information retrieval systems, and the engineering capacities to fight like hell against the dying of the light, if that's what's going on. But the will has to be activated. The problem is, the people creating the problems, which are the people in the high-tech industrial democracies – people like you and me – are the furthest from the consequences of the problems. Here we anticipate the apocalypse and it's a theological discussion. You go to Somalia and the apocalypse is well under way. It's moved beyond the planning stage in many parts of the world but these are the parts that we don't go to. Yet we represent, for all our humility and financial difficulties, whatever they may be, we represent the five percent of the world's people who have some ability to contact control and direct the resources and the technologies that are available on this planet. If you're able to sit here at Esalen this evening, then you automatically are in that five percent classed as the world controllers, you and your friends.

[Question]: Why can't if enough people lock into that space of undeniable unity that cause almost an epidemic on the planet?

Well I'm not worried. I think that what is happening is a transformational process, not the bankruptcy of ideology. Not the spin down of technical civilization. I'll argue through much of tomorrow and tomorrow evening that history is not our fault. You no more can blame us for the shape of human history than you can blame a fetus for the unfolding morphology within the womb. That history is the necessary distortion of an animal species to lead it to the brink of an ontological transformation. When we get into this issue of politics, it's a very tricky issue I think, to handle from a psychedelic point of view. This is because the psychedelic point of view as I read it from a fairly deep level is that it's a done deal. It's OK! Basically we're going to make it. We've been on a straight line vector for millions of years with this transcendental attractor that has shaped us, called us out of matter, and is revealing itself through us. But knowing that is not permission for sitting on your can or ceasing to participate in the struggle to create a just and caring society. It does mean that you shouldn't worry, that worry is off the menu. That you don't know enough to worry is one of the arguments to be made.

So it's basically a case of: we need to act locally and think, not simply globally but cosmically. In our cosmic ruminations, struggle to erase boundaries and to see that the difference between us and the next species in waiting in the evolutionary elevator, and the difference between life and death, and the difference between pre and post history; these are differences that can be easily erased. When they are, what comes through is this lost sense of unity, purpose and rightness that we're trying to recapture. Well that's all I really wanted to say about that tonight. I didn't want to keep you past 10pm. We'll get

together here tomorrow morning. Get a good night sleep. The baths are open twenty-four hours a day. Thank you very much. Bring your questions, controversies and whatever, and we'll dig into all this with great gusto on the morrow. Thank you very much!

It's only 10am and already it's been mighty peculiar. Did anybody have any particularly strong reaction to last night or feel that we were started off on a wrong direction, or a right direction? Is there any feedback from all of that last night? I'm beginning to have the feeling that the need to stoke the furnace of psychedelic information is a task that is being generalized into the culture. It is a relief for me because it frees me to discuss to my own megalomaniacal concerns, which are this mathematical effort to model history that will probably be mentioned on and off all day then dealt with in detail this evening. Strangely enough, the novelty wave or my theory about how history is structure, normally leads me into a situation of whipping the horse ever faster towards apocalypse and millennium. Very recently we're entered into a phase where you should get out your lawn chairs and learn to play solitaire or something. Because at least by the expectations of the time wave, the next couple of years are going to be incredibly repetitious, mundane, pattern bound and ho-hum compared to what we've just been through. From our close perspective it's hard to tell it, we've been through one of the most profound decades or five or six years of the 20th century. The whole slow, catastrophic collapse of Marxism and what it's meant for Islam and capitalism. It's all in the past but very dramatic.

I like talking about my chaotic notion of time because it seems to me that the scientific data that is arising week by week is supporting my originally somewhat far-fetched contention that the universe is getting weirder and weirder and weirder at an extraordinarily asymptotic rate. Just two examples in the last six weeks, both bizarre. This ice-drilling project in Greenland has brought up 325,000-year continuous record of snowfall and because of the decay of isotopic oxygen, there's some mumbo-jumbo by which you can determine the temperature of the air at the time the snow fell. So what they're getting is a continuous temperature record over 375,000 years. They can hardly believe what it's telling them. It's telling them that the climate and the weather has been nuts for tens of millennia. There are five-year periods where the world temperature fell twenty degrees, remained there for seventy years and then bounced back. A picture of completely chaotic climatological fluctuation has emerged just in the last two months. I mean – they're holding congresses and flying people in and drilling a second core to try to understand this because it's always been thought that the planet's climates were fairly stable, except that the human factor was capable of perturbing it. Now it looks like these glaciations are merely macrophysical reflections of micro-reflections in the climate that are extremely dramatic. So that's one piece of data that's arrived in the last six weeks arguing that the universe is a strange and chaotic place on an accelerated trajectory toward novelty.

The other is much more peculiar and in fact it's at a level in the scientific literature where panic has not quite broken out. Are you all aware of this very large object, which has entered orbit around the planet Jupiter and which has broken up into between seventeen and twenty-five objects? This is not coming to you from the Fortean Times and The Star; this is Astronomy, and Sky & Telescope. It's apparently a cometary body but it's very large. It has broken up and gone into Jovian orbit but the orbit is decaying rapidly and the whole situation is explicit enough that they can say with reasonable certainty that next July 22nd, these objects are going to encounter the Jovian surface with greater release of kinetic energy than the extinction which wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

The impact as presently calculated will occur on the side of the planet turned away from the Earth but within six hours, that side will swing into view of terrestrial telescopes. The amount of energy released in the impact, it will be possible to calculate it by studying the reflected flash off the Jovian satellites. So what we're talking about here, in the words of Astronomy magazine, a once in a hundred million year

event. But that's the clue that something weird is going on. Once in a hundred million year events don't happen in the lifetime of a single human being. What are the odds of that? We also had Marilyn Monroe, the Kennedy assassination, the landing on the moon. How many once in a 100 million year events can you cram into a single lifetime. Well, I don't know what this thing going on out at Jupiter is about but it's bizarre.

It's bizarre that in science now, things like chaos theory and non-linear dynamical systems and these kinds of things, these intellectual tools arrive just as the assumed stability of reality, established by Newtonian gentlemen in powdered wigs working through their brass instruments, that all flies apart and there's just the heaving oceans of the spaghetti of ambiguity as string theory and non-localization stretches you from here to Zebu Gonubie and back again. The feedback between the perceiver and the object perceived is tightening. I don't know if this is a psychedelic theme but it's the theme of my psychedelic explorations. I think of the shamanic model as inherited from classical aboriginal shamanism worldwide, which is a model of levels that the universe is somehow made of distinct levels. Energetic, geographic, but that there is an access, an elevator that allows you to move from level to level. This is usually some extraordinary technique of physical stress production or in the hipper societies, a pharmacological intervention of some sort.

The information is deployed differently on each level. They're like defined perspectives on the stuff of being, the raw perceptual input of experience. I really think that and I don't understand, you can't quite wrap language around it, it has something to do with the fact that we're physical creatures at all. The mind at its deepest organizational level reflects the geometric principles of the organization of space and time. The mind as present in us at this moment has been folded and sculpted and shaped into a tool for threat detection in three-dimensional space because the body is a fragile thing born along by the vicissitudes of matter. But when you take a psychedelic or when you perturb ordinary brain chemistry by any means – illness, high fever, lightning strike, hunger, prolonged drumming, grief, all of these ways – then there is a transition of level, or what Mircea Eliade in this wonderful phrase, called the 'rupture of plain.' The rupture of the mundane plain – isn't that great...you'd almost swear you'd have to smoke DMT to get together a phrase like 'the rupture of the mundane plain.' But then the organization of the information on these different plains has hitherto been largely thought to be somewhat expressionistic, or haphazard ala the Jungian maps of the unconscious or something like that.

I think that there is actually more to be gained by making a strict mathematical model and saying that the shaman is a person who penetrates to a literal informational hyperspace of some sort. To take it literally in terms of a geometric explanation because think about it for a minute, shamans are primarily in their aboriginal setting, they function in three roles. They predict the weather. Weather prediction is very important in shamanic cultures. They tell where game has gone. In other words, they monitor the food source of the group and direct the hunting and gathering activities according to the availability of the food. Thirdly, they cure disease and this is very important and they are incredibly adept at choosing patients who will recover. This would be a cynical way of putting it. They are very adept at choosing patients who make miraculous recoveries. Some of you may know the tape recordings of Maria Sabina's mushrooms Velada made by Wasson, where an eleven year old child is brought to her and she says she wont shamanize for this case – that this kid is not going to make it. He doesn't make it and dies within three weeks.

Well if you're a materialist of the modern stripe, then the only way you can deal with this testimony about shamanism, about the precognitive knowledge of weather and game movements and the miraculous ability to cure is to deny it. To deny it and say that this some kind of sleight of hand or they are very closely observant of nature. In other words, some 'only this' argument that denigrates the thing. I think when you actually look at the ethnographic data from all parts of the world collected in the field by people who spent time with the Azande, and the Kikuyu, and the Witoto and the Kyrgyz and so on; the body of testimony of

what we would call paranormal phenomenon is sufficiently impressive that another model has to be called into play. I think it's that there are ways to push the mind by extraordinary pharmacological encounters or stress into a kind of higher dimensional space. This would be sort of like the idea that the indeterminacy that adheres to matter at the quantum mechanical level, the fact that it displays itself as particle or wave depending on the questions being asked – that that fundamental indeterminacy apparently has to be amplified through every level of nature, including the human level. So that when you get to ourselves, the mystery of ourselves is the particulate, finite and dissolving body and the intuition of the unseen wave like infinite spirit, the indwelling entelechy that creates the cohesion of the nexus of actual occasions that is the coordinated prehension of an organic system, right? We'll just stop there...

[Question]: Let me see if I'm getting this right? Somehow I'm getting the image of you mathematically decoding the language of the gods in a way?

Well except that it isn't actually a language. It's more like a point of view. What I'm suggesting here is that the magic, if that's the word, or the grandiosity, the power of ecstatic exelation that resides in the psychedelic – is because it is literally a change of dimensional perspective. I hope this isn't too an obscure an example – in the 14th century Petrarch climbed a mountain somewhere in Italy and wrote a passage about it and invented the observation of landscape and nature in this single work of art. People had never done that before. It was an entirely new thing to climb a mountain and look at nature and feel the unity and the grandiosity of it, and write about it. It was part of Renaissance humanism. It was part of getting people out of those dreary, urine stenchy cathedrals that they'd been hanging out in for far too long.

So what I'm suggesting is that in a sense, the shaman is someone who climbs an inner mountain but a real mountain, a geometric mountain, and then has a higher perspective. It's a shift of awareness. We all are body, soul/spirit but to the degree that we concentrate on one, we occlude the other. I don't really like the sound of that because it sounds like you could turn that into some kind of asceticism, which in principle I am against. I think the key is paying attention to mental life without bias. One of the things I've been talking to the staff here because I'm scholar in residence is Finnegans Wake. We've been taking it apart and looking at it and noticing that part of the genius of Joyce in the way the Wake is composed is that all terms are transparent. Every word you can see through it to other words, to other associations, to other connections. Nothing is explicit and overt and defined. It's a mental universe.

The novel can take two directions. It can try to create what's called realism, which is in a sense an attempt to duplicate the laws of optics on the printed page in narrative, so that you have lord and lady so-and-so moving about their country home with the crisis of daughter and servants, or whatever. But then that's not the world those people are living in. That's the world you would see if you were a camera watching them. The world they're living in is a much less crystalline and temporally defined world. It's a world where memory and anticipation are in a disystolic relationship as the attention of the characters ebbs and flows, focuses and merges. This is what a great deal of modern literature is about.

[Question]: Are we trapped?

Well, trapped in artifice. Trapped in art. In a sense, yeah. That's why Proust and Joyce, who are so different, can be seen to be essentially about the same thing. A true rendering of experience is very hard. This is the great challenge. I think that's why somebody asked me recently – what was I doing with myself or where was I going? It seems to me that once you work your way into all of these places, the real test of your psychedelic authenticity is the ability to write a novel because what you have to show to yourself, not necessarily to anyone else; what you have to show to yourself that you can put yourself into the mother giving birth, the fascist interrogating a prisoner, the child at play, the gangster plotting the advance of his career. In other words, the human experience is open to you. You know what it's like: hooker and priest, saint and sinner. It's all accessible to you. That's the sign to me that a person has really dissolved their

boundaries and done their inner work because the quintessence of understanding is the ability to occupy other people's points of view. I certainly make no claims in this area. In fact, I'm very weak in this area. I learned a long time ago but watching how I play chess, that my emotional immaturity is right on the surface because the way I play chess; I make brilliant plans and then I attempt to carry them out as though there was me and nobody else there. Meanwhile, coming at me across the board is this bewildering series of interruptions of which throw off the plan.

This is the Via Dolorosa, the street of tears. I think there's a crying tradition among North American Indians. Stress is what we're talking about on one level. It may be that there are two ways to attain these places, stress and psychedelics. And then we could have a discussion about whether psychedelics are a subset of stress or not. I mean that's sort of like whether you think of surfing as stress. Obviously it's strenuous and it can kill you but some people think of it as exhilarating. There are many ways to perturb the mind. The reason, when we talk about psychedelics, we fall automatically into a vocabulary of travel. We talk about journeys and tripping and that sort of thing. This is because travel is how people normally attain this if they don't have pharmacological means and that's always been respectable. Even among very Bourgeois societies like the 19th century England. The summer holiday in Italy was de rigueur and if you saw room with a view, this was where Eros and the dark Latinate unconscious was expected to swarm over these pale English women and initiate them into unspeakable pleasures and debauchery. It doesn't sound half bad, does it?

[Question]: You talked about...I'm having trouble wrapping my mind around it but my question has to do with one of the topics of the weekend, which is ethos vs. politics, inner vs. outer. Psychedelics are a way of experiencing other planes of reality or reality in a different way but it seems as if you're also talking about a way of using that requires – I don't know if there is inner discipline – how do you use it so that it's not just a distraction or a drug?

[Question]: The fetishes? The fetish objects?

I think the simple answer to how do you do it without trivializing it is that you doses that scare you. These things are not physically dangerous and yet they are terrifying at what are pharmacologically completely harmless doses. The LD50 for psilocybin is hundreds of mgs per kg, yet if you take anywhere about 25 mg, I think strongest wayfaring soul reaches for the break pedal somewhere in there. It's amazing how we just skim the surface of this and we can't go very deep because language fails. Most of you who have done committed doses know that you go into a realm where it gets weirder and weirder and weirder, and finally the very machinery of explaining to the observer what is happening begins to melt. Then you are there with it for a while and then you descend out of that and the language mechanism reactivates and says, we are now leaving the utterly unspeakable behind.

It's an extraordinary thing, the motivation of my career is I just can't believe how this much strangeness could lay that close to the surface and the enterprise of human history be conducted for 10,000 years with people running around trying to do weird things, writing polyphonic music, the Rudolfian court, Hieronymus Bosch, and all this stuff. Right under the surface, just a Niagara of peculiarity and strangeness that makes no sense to me when I put on the hat of the biologist. Why should an advanced animal of some sort have this curious relationship to an invisible river of imagery running collectively through the brains of all and each? What is that about? The beauty of it, and as in Blake's word, the futurity of it. The fact that in the glistening of the flowing waters of the unconscious, you glimpse not only the square topped towers of Ilium, the ruins of Carthage, Petra and all that – but you also see the intimations of some kind of magnificent future. Is it in the imagination? Is it directly ahead in the time stream? Is it lost in dream? The whole circumstance of being alive and being a self-reflecting, thinking human being is just too peculiar for words.

[Question]: Would you say that, as far as the terror of this goes and what makes people hit the off button, to

push the breaks to the floor board, something that you were saying last night about lost continents – it seems that this psychedelic experience isn't new in the sense of a cultural endeavor, that's called out the discovery of the unconscious, and Freud attributed that to the Romantic poets, so I think what you say, that one could see the whole modern and post modern era of this progressive discovery of this lost continent, the unconscious, and perhaps it is as the Native Americans would put it, the purification in the sense that psychoanalysis, the analysis of the unconscious brings to light hidden aspects of truth of peoples lives, or their collective lives, that no one wanted to face. But these things have been layered into the unconscious so it's a process of bringing things to light, or as Carl Jung says, enlightenment does not consist of visualizing figures of light, but making the dark unconscious?

Well, I'm not sure I understand the question. If you're saying how derivative of... I mean I basically agree with the premise, I would just push the thing further back into time. I think where this all... it's fun to find various break points. I mean, was it Tim Leary, was it Alfred Jarry, was it Lenormand, or was it the French symbolists. I've been thinking about this a lot recently. I think that what's popularly called age of the marvelous indicates the real descent of the western mind towards the psychedelic confrontation. When we look at the time wave tonight, maybe we'll get around to talking about this but basically with the inventing of printing in 1440, I now see books as obviously a psychedelic drug of enormous power. The early books were manufactured with chains on them so they could be bolted to tables so that addicts would not tear them loose and take them home. The invention of printing and the seizure of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks set off an age of scientific advancement, exploration, so forth and so on, that lead to the discovery of the new world only 500 years ago. And this had the impact on Europe that flying saucers on the White House lawn would have on us. It was an alien planet that had been discovered with trackless jungles and temperate forests and people clad in gold practicing strange religions and enormous trading. It was an alien civilization, and at the same time, the grip of the medieval church was breaking down and people had a fascination with the bizarre and with the phantasmagoria of natural existence. They were bringing back birds of paradise from Bougainville. They were bringing back carved Incan and Mayan material, codices and all of this stuff. This is the period shortly then into it of the great flowering of European magic. The establishment of the Rudolfian court in Prague and all of that.

It was the age of the Wunderkammer, the wonder cabinet, where you collected together stuffed birds, amonites, gnostic gems, bits of archaic detritus, large insects, narwhale horns, all of this stuff. It was pre-Linnaean, it was before the categorical mind had stepped in and the whole thing was just a maelstrom of individuated data collections. I think that's where the psychedelic thing in the west became explicit.

[Question]: Back to this man's question about the actual taking of a psychedelic, I think it's real important that it be done with an intent and to kind of ask for or put it out there what you need or want?

Yes, you have to talk to these things. You do it on an empty stomach in silent darkness in a situation where you feel secure, which can mean in your apartment with the phones unplugged and the door locked or off in some jungle. It's very important, empty stomach and silent darkness and intent as you say; then, not a reckless dose but a committed dose. Not to see if it works - it works, other people have established that. You don't need to do research to confirm that it's psychoactive – you just do it! There are techniques for navigating through there. The best is a pure heart but since we can't always come up with that, sweating blood also helps.

In terms of actual, physical techniques, singing – this is what I learned in the Amazon. You don't always have enough presence of mind to breath but if you will sing, the breathing will take care of itself and the body is an instrument. The Yogis, they got that right. The body is an instrument for tuning through these dimensions. I don't know what it all confirms. I don't rush to embrace any particular esoteric school; in fact, I'm fairly scornful of all of that because I see how it's used to promote priestly hierarchy and mumbo-jumbo and that sort of thing. Certainly science doesn't have the whole story. The human body is an

incredible esoteric instrument. It's just that I think you need to self teach yourself.

[Question] The shaman's perception, I guess that's what you're trying to get to, on the subconscious level. Their minds aren't cluttered. They don't have to overcome the knowledge, the facts, because they don't start with that. How do you get past that? It would seem to me in this case, the more you know, the more difficult it would be to reach that pure second conscious level where it's just a matter of knowing through the vision of your consciousness will do.

Well I don't know about that. I see the logic of it. I had a shaman tell me once in the Amazon, he said, 'it's not easy for us to do this.' It's no easier for us to do this than for you to do it. I imagine, giving shamans pure DMT and stuff like that, and watching them go through it – they're macho, they do it but at the core are as sensible and afraid as anybody would be. Everybody comes down to a local language structure and a local set of cultural myths. The shaman's job is to be outside, behind and under that. He's sort of an archetypal plumber. He sees and he knows where the shit goes. He knows how to repair the system that is invisible to everybody else. I think it's very challenging to do this stuff in any cultural context. One thing you find that you may not expect when you go to the Amazon is not all shamans have the great zest for going as deep as possible. There are a lot of shamans whose attitude is, you get in, you do the work and you get out fast. You take only as much as you need to...

[Workshop Day 2]

It's a question - which is more important to the content of your psychedelic experience? The books you've read in your life or your genetic heritage? That kind of thing. Teasing this apart, the only way we'll ever know and this is why I tend to encourage and hang out with the technical crowd on one level, virtual reality is a technology that might allow you to show somebody the inside of your head. If I could spend six months building a virtual reality, which was my DMT trip, then escort someone into it and show it, then they would say – that's exactly what happens to me or they would say, you know that was the damndest thing, no where does that come tangential to anything familiar to me. Well then this would be wonderful in either case. You would either have confirmation of a generally recognized reality or a breakthrough to an immense domain of potential creativity where every individual could create their own equally personally compelling metaphysical joy ride of some sort.

I think on one level what we're doing here is something that's never been done before in Western society that I'm particularly aware of, which is, we are talking about the psychedelic experience. This is the first step towards understanding it. I guess the first step is having it but then, so many people have had it who don't attempt to English it and it's quite respectable to do that. Too much has been made of the indescribability of it. I mean it's fine to say that but then decency demands that you go forward and describe it. You're pushing there against the envelope of language.

The culture cannot evolve faster than the language. The language is the flashlight that shows the path and so if we don't talk about something: race, homosexuality, drug experiences, then no cultural progress takes place on that front. It's like it just doesn't exist. So part of what we're trying to do here is create a dialogue that is not necessarily politically confrontational. Too much of the public dialogue about drugs is whether they should be legalized or not. You can take care of that in one sentence. Yes they should and they won't be. So now let's move on with that.

Experience, this is probably the richest domain of experience that we have. I mean, you may go on your

vacation to *Benares* and I may go to Argentina, and we will get back and talk about the restaurants, national parks and museums that we visited, but far more interesting conversation could take place if I do psilocybin and you do mescaline and then we get together and talk about the places that we've seen. In other words this psychedelic universe, whatever it is, is the major datum of experience. It's larger than this planet. Nobody knows how large it is. The further in you go, the bigger it gets. We don't know what to make of something like that. That's the reverse of our expectations.

[Question]: You seem to use sound a lot as a key issue. You were mentioning in South America, you sang songs. Were those songs ayahuasca songs, Inca songs or little ditties you were doing your own self?

They were in some cases ayahuasca songs that Don Fidel taught and in some cases just taking ayahuasca, I learned and called them songs. But one of the things that's so interesting about ayahuasca is that it promotes a synesthesia that's very dramatic. You see sound and when you make it. You have an experience, which is beyond English by several leaps. The experience of generating colors out of a vibration so that you go 'onnnnnnnnn'... and a chartreuse line like a neon light descends and hangs there and then you can move it off and it goes from chartreuse to lemon yellow. Then you just begin playing with this and within 30 seconds you're doing something that seems to you only intelligent insects on other planets do.

[Question]: Is it true of everyone who you've talked to about ayahuasca?

I think if you can come through. You have to sort of get your wits about you because ayahuasca sweeps over you. There's stomach stuff. There are waves of hallucination but once you sort of get your sea legs, you can do this. It's very clear when you're with these shamans that these performances are pictorial. Originally the active principle of *Banisteriopsis Caapi* was called Telepathine when Theodor Koch-Grunberg and those people went in there in the early years of the 19th century, they collected samples, took it back to Berlin, characterized it and called it Telepathine. Then it was later realized that the compound had been earlier isolated from *Peganum Harmala* and called Harmaline and the rules of chemical nomenclature give the early discovery precedent. But it was called Telepathine because the tribal groups using it seemed to have this extraordinary group mindedness. This is one of the things that I'm keen to talk about, is the fact that telepathy of a sort we didn't conceive seems to lie very close to the surface in these states. I think most people think of telepathy as you hear what I think, that's telepathy. That is not what psychedelic telepathy is. Psychedelic telepathy is you see what I mean. You see what I mean! There is a way to use voice, inflection and tonality to edge people's transduction of the language experience out of the audio, out of the ear mode and into the visual mode. This is something which is neurologically very fragile in us. It's as though the land is very flat and the river flows one way through the audio processing channel of the neocortex but just a very slight shift of the inner stratigraphy and the river would flow another way. It would flow into the visual cortex and language would become a thing beheld. One of the things that's so interesting about ayahuasca is that it contains DMT and Harmaline and these are both brain neurotransmitters occurring in normal metabolism, suggesting that there is simply a one or two gene mutation or the intensity of the expression of a gene already present that would switch brain chemistry toward visual processing. Meanwhile in the culture, simultaneously there is this tendency going on, the culture is becoming more and more imagistic. The invention of photography, high-speed color printing and film, we see and we relate through the image much more. So I think psychedelics, media and the predisposition of the neuro-landscape is setting us up for a kind of ontological transformation of the project of communication. Yes?

[Question]: As you're saying this, I'm observing the way that I'm listening to you and I'm seeing what you mean. Your language, like when you say neurological, I see a picture. It goes really fast but I'm seeing what you mean. That's how I'm comprehending you.

Yes, well you're embarrassing me by turning the magnifying glass upon the current project of communication but that's the name of the game.

[Question]: Maybe it evolves as we evolve, that seeing what you mean?

Yes, one reason some people have criticized me is because I use big words. But I've always had the feeling that if you use big words right, your listener understands perfectly what you mean. I don't know how that works exactly or it may just be an illusion of mine, but it's a very satisfying one.

[Question] It seems like in a way you're working with sound and you've got in touch with that sound on different levels but you express it in conscious communication, which anyone's consciousness is somewhat a lie. It becomes more conscious and they hear communication or understanding and it all clicks right.

I think language is a behavior. It was acquired 50,000 or 100,000 years ago and I think people don't use it enough. Ninety percent of spoken communication is trivial. It's very interesting to try and use the descriptive blade of voice; it's like Manjushri, the sword of discriminating wisdom. Communication is about discrimination. It's about finely delineating difference. With this sword of discriminating wisdom, you make your way into the world and, granted, it's an image of penetration and cleavage and so one but what your left with is the cognitive enterprise.

[Question]: After all these years, what is it these days that would make you want to hit the breaks?

Out in the state you mean? Well it does this thing on me occasionally, which I call going all 'halloweenish.' And I say, 'why are you doing this to me?' It's scary. It's probably just my own inner demons. I ride this stuff through but I always feel like you should never take the sea for granted. The metaphor we're dealing with here is the sailing of small ships over great and turbulent depths. I've also noticed, my god, if an iota of pride lodges in your character it can rub your face in it like you just don't want to know from. So I respect it. I fear it, the strangeness of it. Somebody near and dear to me - I won't name them - but just recently described taking ayahuasca and the dose was somewhat low, so after a couple of hours they smoked some DMT on top of it. With your MAO inhibited like that, this is a pretty hairy chested thing to undertake. Don't try this at home folks! With your MAO inhibited like that, it just settled in and he said 'it is strange!' When you get the tabs trimmed and you get the focus right and you can just look at it - it just says behold if you can, oh mortal, the essence of Freg-Youg-Maglama-Glock and you just say oh my God! It is clear that it presents itself through a series of veils. It's so kind to first timers and second timers. It's like a series of Disneyesque images, but god, once you're into it, it begins to part the veil and you realize that the human mind is just like the mind of a gnat falling into the sun of peculiarity and then you come back and try and talk about it.

[Question] – I have two questions. After all of your psychedelic experience and these experiences of other capacities and abilities in the brain, when you come back to the mundane plain, have you found yourself developing the ability to use your brain in the mundane plain in the same way that you have experienced its capacity in a psychedelic plain? And also, do you think all of this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of leaving this dimension, like maybe a near death experience, leaving the body ultimately through death and is all this just kind of like the beginning of that? You seem to feel that the fear component is important to you. Is it more like a fear of dying when you go too far?

I think in my case, it's a fear of madness. I've convinced myself that dying is highly unlikely. The madness question is totally open book. Who knows? And you do get into places where the only reassurances that it won't last...as far as the tip of the iceberg question, and death and all that – I have a lot of intellectual resistance in this area myself. I was raised Catholic, I fought my way free of that, as I said toward Camusian existentialism and then I got hooked into all this and then was just swerved back into a more spiritually teeming universe than I ever would have thought possible. It's hard to talk about. It may be that what the psychedelic thing is, is that it is some kind of look over the edge. Out of let's say, 50,000 years of conscious human experience; 49,500 of those years has been lived in the assumption that something

survives physical death and only in the last 500 years in Europe has this become a gradually less and less popular assumption.

We don't understand what biology is. We understand some of the details of how form maintains itself but we don't understand the mystery of the descent of form into matter. We don't understand where mind fits in to the loop of causality. So the testimony of DMT for me is that there is a nearby dimension teeming with intelligence that from one perspective – and one of the more conservative perspectives – seems like an ecology of souls. It seems as though that what the shamans always said they were doing was in fact precisely what they were doing. They always said 'we do it by ancestor magic.' We go to the realm of the ancestors. The ancestors exist in some kind of super space. But ancestor is a sanitized term for a dead person. What we're talking about here is apparently beyond the train of mortal care; there is this super-space where apparently everything is made out of mind. And so, in James Joyce's wonderful phrase, "if you want to be Phoenixed, come and be parked, but up n'ent, prospector, you sprout all your worth and you woof your wings." Is that perfectly clear?

Well, if you want to be Phoenixed, come and be parked means if you want to be transformed and reborn as an angel, you have to die. And up n'ent prospector, prospector means rock hunter, as in searching for the philosopher's stone, you're a prospector. You sprout all your worth and you woof your wings meaning you make your own body out of the imagination and I don't know what this means.

One of the things that interest me is the fact that we seem to be moving towards a transformation more radical than any that has ever occurred to our species before. So radical that in the interest of intellectual fairness, one of the possibilities that has to be put on the list is that we're about to go extinct, 100%. We don't know what that means because we don't know what death is. When you look at the record of biology on this planet, 95% of every evolved species that has ever lived are now extinct. This is what nature produces, fossils of extinct species. And the question then, we're down here to ultimate values. Are we trying to have what the Catholic Church, with an utter lack of irony, calls a happy death? Or are we trying to seize the levers of the cultural machinery and pull out of the power dive at the last minute and get this baby back up to altitude and sorted out here? What's going on? Or are there in fact any controls in front of us at all? Are we the hapless passenger on this strange vehicle that is...

[Question] Doesn't it seem with all the soul searching and people getting in touch with what you might call the source - that the messages will be coming down with what you might call 'the way to go?'

Well that's what I think. It's what I think and it's also possibly delusional, so be forewarned, but it appears to me that history is ever more rapidly vindicating the notion that it is building towards some kind of apotheosis, some kind of apocalyptic, apocatastasis. Anyway, something in Greek! The people who project the human future thousands of years they don't understand the asymptotic speed. You talk to somebody in; lets just take a field, gene transplant. You talk to somebody who is tops in gene transplant, they tell you things that drop your jaw. Then you walk over here another laboratory and talk to somebody in parallel processing computation and they tell you astounding things. Well, you realize these two people don't know each other. All of this information is vectoring together and the connections are being made and it's out of control – no company, no government, no religious group – nobody is in control of this and yet there is a plan. It isn't a chaos. There is a morphology being expressed that won't wait and we all are simply the cells being directed into this archaeological expression of mind.

[Question]: When you were talking before about the enlightenment period where artifacts were being brought back, displayed and enjoyed, I'm wondering about the Time Wave 1996, what sort of cultural manifestations we might be involved in? If that makes any sense?

No that makes sense. It might make more sense to other people this evening but the answer to the question is: the parallel resonance between now and then, or between 1996 and the past was the great flowering of Umayyad Caliphate at Baghdad, which was the birth of modern science through the codification of

Algebra. So two things to keep your eye on in 1996 are the political fates of Islam worldwide and breakthroughs of a major sort in abstract systems of description like Algebra and that sort of thing.

[Question]: Or virtual realities?

Well certainly there were technological breakthroughs under those caliphs as well. They were the great patrons. They preserved all this. They don't get any credit. We talk about our heritage from the Greeks but we never talk about how that heritage comes through the Arabs. There's a great book called *How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs*.

[Question]: You said this last night and I want to see if I've got this straight. You said that the mushroom said, 'don't worry, everything is going to be OK?'

I think worry is preposterous. That was Wei Po Yang; a 6th century Taoist sage said that. Worry presupposes that you understand what's going on and I think it's safe to say that we do not have a clue as to what is going on. We can't even tell whether it's a happy ending or a catastrophe. We can't tell whether we're slamming into the wall of our cultural limits at 50,000 miles an hour or we're about to go hand in hand off to the galactic center with the human soul as companion and vehicle.

We just do not know what's going on. I think it's safe to say that we're approaching a symmetry break. That whether you're a horrified pessimist or a gung-ho optimist, everyone can see that the make or break point is coming up because life is either going to get a lot drearier suddenly or there's going to be some kind of a breakthrough. I don't think cosmetic management of the cultural crisis will work much past the current Clinton administration. This is apparently the last go at spin doctoring the apocalypse.

[Question] – I just wanted to ask how you feel about the technology behind the AIDS crisis?

So what do you mean exactly by the technology behind the AIDS crisis?

[Question]: Undecipherable.

Well, in a sense, I see AIDS as the inevitable consequence of the ocean-crossing airliner. Always sites of pilgrim were sites of disease conveyance. Any virus worth it's salt would jump into this situation and exploit it. Now as to the darker side of the AIDS thing, in terms of was this a product of human engineering or human intent or so forth or so on? That's an interesting question but in a way it really doesn't matter. It's a product of human behavior and I don't mean simply sexual or homosexual behavior; I mean such behaviors as travel, pilgrimage and the wish to mix it all up. Think of the gene streaming that is taking place in the 20th century. I mean I know a Tibetan married to an Egyptian woman. Stuff like that's going on all over the map so there are all kinds of crisis. When we were a nomadic community the transmission of disease was retarded by the fact that human groups didn't really come into that much contact with each other. When you're in a place like Terminal One at Heathrow and you just look around you – my god – Muslim priests, Tibetan Lamas, Botswanan Dignitaries – people are just swarming and swarming and swarming and using the bathrooms and coughing. In these airliners when they fly over the ocean - when they fly above 30,000 feet - they recycle the air in such a way that if there is one person who has a problem, 275 people are having their immune systems on red alert by the time you get to Tokyo or New York. Not to rave but...

[Question] I'm not sure but it sounds like your talking about early Christianity, the abstract, that all sounds hallucinatory, a look back towards paradise or something like that?

Well, one way of analyzing Christ if we keep pretty much to the strict orthodox and accept the Gospels and so forth – it's as if he presents a shamanic figure. The unique claim of Christianity was this bizarre doctrine of the resurrection of the body. That was the part that was the jaw dropper. Christianity, working from the primary text, looks very much like some strange kind of biological magical invocation of some sort. There is that amazing passage in one of the gospels where the three Marys: Mary the mother of James, Mary Magdalene, and the other one, go to the tomb and Christ is standing outside the tomb and one of the woman starts toward him and he says, 'touch me not for I am not yet completely of the nature of the

father.' Well good grief, what's going on here? He is resurrected. He has overcome death but he says touch me not, I am not completely of the nature of the father. My interpretation - it's maybe too much to get into at this point - but my notion of what religions are, is that this dwell point at the end of history, which is acting as an attractor for the temporal process and drawing and sculpting and shaping everything as it is brought into its light, as it were, has a kind of reverse causality operating. And what Wordsworth called intimations of immortality haunt time like a ghost. So if you're a Buddha, a Mahavira, a Christ, a Mohammad, you get essentially a geometric theory. You're simply geometrically positioned vis-à-vis the object at the end of time that you become a false reflector of its light and these false reflectors always distort it in some way. It's the nature of it. It's no rap on them; it's just the nature of it that they distort it and some distort it horribly - a Hitler, a David Koresh - and some distort it maybe we like to think less - a Buddha, a Mahavira - but the point is they all distort it. Marshall McLuhan said, 'you know - our mistake is that we're driving the vehicle of culture into the future using only the rearview mirror,' and that's sort of what we do.

But each one of us you see, we are like Christ, Buddha and Mahavira. We also have a perspective on the transcendental object at the end of time, on the divine, and we work it out in our life in our psychedelic experiences, our sexual epiphanies, whatever it is that moves us. It's just what Blake said: psychedelics are window washing equipment for cleansing the glass of perception that allows you to then perceive the world as infinite. Because this transcendental object lies ahead of us in time, to know it is in some sense very 'woo-woo,' very tricky to English - in some sense to know the future and that this is where I think the existential power or the quality of nmenosisness, of realness, comes into the shaman's personality.

The shaman knows the future in the same way that I as a 46-year-old man can advise my 12-year-old daughter and have an immense kind of position of existential authenticity in her world. It's because I know the future. I know that the first love will not be the last love and I know that heartbreak lies along the way and all this. I am wise from her perspective. Well a shaman is a wise person and they are wise because they know the future, not of the individual only but also of the culture. That is why when the TV cameras arrive in the Ecuadorian village and they boot the medicine man out of his thing - they say - well Jose, what do you think of the fact that the forest is being cleared? The usual reply is: eh?

[Question]: Blake also said religion and politics are the same thing. This is a political seminar and I've been waiting to ask you this. I'm wondering if you would entertain a question on what religions are in viruses? I want to talk about the dark side of Christianity and if I could get you to frame it in this way? On psychedelics with books, Christianity - I think a better word is Christianism - as a spiritual ideology looks like a warfare, a protracted warfare if you will against the Earth, against the body, against our very humanness, and I think we accept that there are these invisible things called viruses that attack the physical body. But would you be willing to entertain the possibility that there can be a spiritual virus that attacks the planetary body, in fact attacks Gaia? The reason I ask that, you remember Porphyry long ago when Christianity was on the rise, a Neo-Platonic philosopher said that he thought Christianity was a disease of the soul and I think Freud and Jung has pretty much proved the same thing.

Well long before the viral metaphor, somewhat before the viral metaphor became *au courant*, Jung talked about what he called psychic epidemics. He, in I think 1934, wrote an essay on the return of Wotan as an archetype of the German soul and very presciently picked up on what National Socialism was all about.

[Question]: I'm talking about monotheism when I say Christianism. Patriarchy and monotheism and Christianism as the apotheosis - I get to use that word too - in western history of western society, Christianism being the apotheosis of the patriarchy.

Well, I'm on one level not keen about monotheism. I think it gives a distorted map for the psyche to emulate but I also see Christianity as a pretty radical betrayal of the monotheistic agenda. Monotheism, whatever its social consequences, makes sense. It's a drive towards philosophical economy so you get down

to the idea of not many gods but one God and it works like this. Christianity is a gnostic cult of physical redemptionism grafted onto this Jewish theology by Alexandrian controversialists who had a very curious notion of what they wanted to do. I see Islam as a reclaiming of the pure intent of Judaism to conduct a philosophical discussion of the consequences of monotheism and that all becomes really murky with the mystery of the Trinity and the nature of the Father and the Son. Christianity is an incredibly exotic religion. Other religions are just absolutely straight ahead, they're metaphysical systems with morale consequences. Christianity is about the absolute worship of the irrational and the incredible. Origen, who was one of the patristic writers, great Christian fathers – they said 'your religion is absurd, it's preposterous.' And he said, *credo quia absurdum*. I believe it because it is absurd. That's the foundation of the Western mind. All this mumbo-jumbo about reason and evidence, when you strip it away it's ultimately faith in the absolutely, incontrovertibly incredible: the resurrection.

All three see the permission of this belief, its true, comes out of the earlier stratum of Judaism where an earlier unlikely promise is made. The promise that God would enter history. That's what set them up for this later deal. God will enter history they were told. So then if you're a theologian of this faith, the question obviously arises, how will God enter history? And you ruminate on that for 500 or 600 years and eventually what you come up with is, he will send his own son. He will send a divine manifestation that will be an absolute union of spirit and matter. There will be a descent of the Paraclete into our midst and the idea of the messiah is born, which is an incredibly peculiarly western idea. Buddha, Lao Tzu, Mencius, Confucius – these were guys, you know. A messiah is a horse of a different feather. A messiah is not exactly a human being you know. A messiah is a convalescence of historical force of great energy. So, I don't know, where are we with all this?

[Question]: I don't want to argue; I just think there is another way of looking at it. These are the same guys that we have to remember, the white, male guys – we see the Pope over here, we see the medieval picture. These are the same guys who burned Giordano Bruno, the great poet, visionary and scientist of the state because he wouldn't recant, probably because of a stubborn Calabrian; I'm not sure about that though...

But look at the reputation they gave him! Bruno without the pyre is a whisky priest laying waste to the maids of Umbria. No, I mean here is my point on this: I agree that history has been a nightmare and if it could have been any other way, then probably there is some answers have to be given and some debts paid.

[Question]: But I'm saying there might have been another way if they hadn't burned all the libraries, sought to destroy knowledge to the point in the middle ages, when the Christians so called liberated places like Toledo and found these Arabic writings about the Greek lost science, they couldn't even translate it because they didn't even have a concept of zero. It's like the barbarians won in this society.

Well, yeah – they won.

[Question]: Would they have won if they closed down the philosophical schools and didn't destroy all the knowledge? Would it have been different? Well, we'll never know because we didn't have the chance...

Well, what I hear you saying is: life is tough.

[Question]: Especially for Pagan philosophers...

Yes, you have to make your career choices carefully here.

[Question]: Is your belief in this one dwell point to which history is moving, a form of monotheism?

Is it a form of monotheism? Well, I guess it's a form of Neo-Platonism. I had digested all that - Porphyry, Proclus, and Plotinus – I do feel the power of the argument that when all boundaries are dissolved there will only be the plenum, the one. It's an idea with a very long history in western philosophy. It goes back to *the Timaeus*. My idea of how this thing is working is that boundaries are dissolving. If you want to make one prediction that you can take to the bank, that would be it. Boundaries are dissolving so any scheme that involves setting up new boundaries is probably doomed.

[Question]: Undecipherable.

Well, yes, so it is a kind of impressionistic pastiche that we are trying to anticipate. The other thing is and this goes slightly more to the guts of the mathematics of my theory but I think that time is wrapping itself in an involuting spiral, where each spiral is 1/64th as long as the cycle that preceded it. If you accept that premise then you have a cosmogonic scheme where half of the unfolding of the manifestation of the cosmos will occur in the the last hour and 35 minutes of its existence. So attempting to anticipate what it will like as we go down the maelstrom towards the lapis at the end of history, it can only be conceived psychedelically and wordlessly. I really think history is a psychedelic experience and this old saw about how ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. If you carry that through to completion then all organic process ends in the big question mark of death and we individually recapitulate that journey. We each will end in death. One of the things that always amuses me is that people are always so resistant to the idea of the end of the world. Never apparently having noticed that it's a fairly academic question when played against the fact of the certainty of their own death. Their world is going to end so what's with all this altruistic concern about all the rest of us? We'll take care of our own apocalypse, thank you! You just need to come to terms with your own because it's inevitable.

[Question]: What do you think will happen to Islam when the east hits the west and fundamentalists are struggling to survive and reclaim their old territories?

Well I think that as this post modern, post communist thing unfolds for several reasons, Islam is poised to make the greatest steps forward since the 10th century. For two reasons: first of all because out there in central Asia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizia, an enormous chunk of real estate is poised and rightfully toward moving toward fundamentalist Islam. If those states becomes Islamic states, Islam will effectively double the amount of land that it controls on this planet. The other thing is, as time accelerates, as the weirdness spreads, the global networking, the simulacra, the teledildonics, the virtual reality, as all this stuff becomes more and more prevalent, a lot of people are going to freak out and reach for the button marked 'return to traditional values.' And on a global scale, this is Islam. Christianity is a whore to capitalism. Christianity is not traditional values. Islam is not kidding. I can imagine millions and millions of people alive today who can't imagine that they would ever entertain conversion to Islam who will before the end of their lives make it part of what they're about because there is no other traditional system available. It's either that or what I call consumer object fetishism: which means the Mercedes, the house in Trent St. Tropez, the Rolex watch, all of that.

[Question]: Undecipherable.

That's it!

[Question]: The weekend seminar!

Diamonds on the souls of her shoes, yeah!

[Question]: What about Judaism.

Judaism is not a converting religion. You say you want to become a Jew, they send some guy three times to convince you it's a bad idea. You're not going to.

[Question]: In between, you have the Islam and you have Christianity but in the society it doesn't seem like you have what you would call the word of truth coming out of the music or out of society. It's like bits and pieces and fragments but there is no basic word of what you might call hope or truth.

You mean out of popular culture?

[Question]: Right, there is nothing really coming out. You hear fragments in music...

This is why I associate myself with rave culture, house and ambient music, and all that – you all know what this is right? Well see that's part of the problem. For years and years, youth has just been wondering in the desert of neolism and industrial noise, bands and that sort of that. So now out of England there is a new kind of music which has different kinds of names: it's called House, it's called Ambient, it's called Rave, it's called Trance Dance, Tribal rap; it comes out of hip-hop. It doesn't come out of Rock & Roll. It's quite

consciously not Rock & Roll. It's very optimistic. The people who are eighteen to twenty-eight are the most with it generation in a while and they are not buying in to the consumer object fetishism and they don't seem to be converting to Islam in large numbers either. So I think that you'll be amazed that popular culture will take a very positive turn in the next few years. There's immense energy under the surface. Most of these bands produce CDs in pressings of 2 or 3 thousand copies but it's a very vital and alive thing.

[Question]: Are you seeing that they might come out with a wave of conscious lyrics that are true, and like somehow in the 60's, you had Pink Floyd and The Beatles, and all the groups but there was a basic movement and everyone at that time could relate to those words?

Well I think we're just slightly premature. If the 90s are the 60s turned upside down, then we probably have to wait until 96 and that the energy is gathering. I'll show you on the Time Wave tonight, not that that's gospel, it does appear there is a kind of gathering charge under the atmosphere of Southern white-boy eschaton that's attempting to be created, but when that's all over and the hard lesson is learned that Christ himself couldn't right the American Government as presently constituted, then I think we'll get down to a more serious dialogue. It probably involved electing a fascist president but what's new about that?

[Question]: The media likes to pull the popular cultural mass movements and what sort of distortion happens when people start looking in that mirror. How do you plan to avoid the Timothy Leary syndrome wherein you allow something good and a few people in the know become trivialized, banal and totality commercialized? How do you plan to escape that?

Me personally?

[Question]: Yes, if you're connected with the rave moment.

I will pursue what I call the Salinger-Pynchon strategy. This is where I'm going to become progressively more remote, hard to reach, legendary, and sort of just fade off... But I don't really have any complaints about the media. If I could get to the kind of consideration from Mondo 2000 that I get from the New York Times, all would be rosy in my world. It's your friends who scare you to death in the media.

[Question]: I think it was Colin Wilson who said when he published The Outsider who said there were two ways that the society could totality destroy ones creativity. One was by totality ignoring you and the other was by recognizing you.

Yes, that's right. You become a cliché.

[Question]: The 18-to-28 group, my concern is, what's going to happen to them?

Well what's going to happen to all of us? We're all in the same...

[Question]: Doing for them, so that what happens in the 60s doesn't happen to them. Being particularly aware of the incredible kind of resistance, brain washing and cult snatching...

I don't think we want to get into a wrangle with the establishment over some life or death issue like the Vietnam War. That permitted an incredible penetration of the underground. The great middle class who was maybe not interested in the war but who was also not interested in tearing their clothes off and smoking pot in the panhandle; they were willing to stand by and watch while the establishment really did a job. I think also a stealth strategy is best. You don't want to manufacture ten million hits of LSD in the dormitory on the weekend and then go for the jugular of society. Obviously this alarms ordinary people. Remember when Ken Kesey used to tour the country with the bus, 'Further.' Well they had a big banner, which was on the front of it which said, 'we have come for your daughters.'

Now this is great for a laugh but it doesn't reassure the folks out there in Baboon Wassu when you roll into town.

[Question]: Kind of teaching discretion since the general tendency of youth is to be kind of...

And a lot of survivors of the 60s are now in position to help. A fifth column within. All the years of guilt you've built up over how you betrayed the revolution could be redeemed in a single moment down the road

a few years because you can intervene at some crucial point.

[Question]: Does that include stoning Bob Dole?

Stoning Bob Dole? Dosing Bob Dole? No, I think the Republicans; their only hope of survival is to nominate Perot, which they probably will do.

[Question]: I wish I believed in your writing off of fundamental Christianity but I kind of see it as such a strong irrational force that I worry about it. I'm wondering why you think it's not?

Well, again, when we look at the Time Wave tonight, you'll see that we're in a period, which has a very strong resonance with the Dark Ages. You probably noticed anyway. I think that fundamentalist Christianity is rising in its power but that that power doesn't extend much beyond the turn of the century. There is going to be a last gasp and a final bubble in their attempt to influence the political agenda, but in a sense, their gripe is already broken but there are enormous battles which lie ahead. By the turn of the century, I don't see it as particularly a problem. It's only in America that this horrible business goes on. Europe is a truly secular society. They are just absolutely baffled that our political agenda can be influenced so strongly by what they perceive as crazy people. Rattlesnake handling ecstasies from the hills of Tennessee, I mean, you have to go to Bengal to get stuff like that.

[Question]: They're taking apart our sacred constitution. You're talking about crypto fascism; won't you also admit that there is Christo-fascism that we need to be worried about that just as much?

Well for instance, this Supreme Court decision on animal sacrifice is alarming to animal rights people but the larger issue to my mind is that it's an invitation for eccentric religious practices to get constitutional protection. The Supreme Court even re-invited the submission of the Oregon Peyote case based on that. I think that the election was about this and that, cut it how you may, those people got their asses whooped. They just keep screaming about it because they're bad sports. The election basically turned into a referendum on this family values crapola they assumed everyone would rally around and instead, that was the final evisceration. So I think they are very poor sports but that they not controlling the political agenda of this country.

Of course, give the democratic party enough rope and I'm sure they can sufficiently fumble the ball to get Hermann Goering elected...

[Question]: I'm just wondering if anyone is in such disbelief as I am that in the anti-papist country of Thomas Jefferson, the Pope could come here and draw a crowd that looks like The Beatles visit in the 60s. You know, a stadium full of all these people crying and tearing at him. This is supposed to be a secular society – why does this guy get this kind of reaction from the American populous? Doesn't that disturb you?

Well what disturbed me about the Papal visit, I could see that some very, very sly public relations people are going for the same demographic I'm interested in. The way in which it was presented as an outreach to youth and how he's in the hood, he's our guy, he's my man! The pope, my man! I just thought this is bizarre but also a measure of desperation. I just think this too will pass away. Let's check the Time Wave, I think it has something more to do with the captivity at Avignon than the politics of Denver, I think. Help me out here somebody, where are we?

[Question]: The second-generation are very beautiful kids. They've gotten good spiritual training over the last 18 to 20 years. They don't have anything to do with the institution and they have a nice appreciation for drugs and chanting, dancing and feasting. I think when the raves get with the second-generation Hare Krishnas, it will be nice combination.

Well, see in a sense, the rave is an attempt to be second-generation freaks; to actually learn from the 60s. I'm pretty positive about it. It's just going to be a smorgasbord. The evidence is going to come in faster and faster, supporting all positions. Things are going to get a lot worse and a lot better and it's all going to happen simultaneously. I really believe that from 1945 to 2012, we are reliving in a compressed form about 4300 years of human history. Very literally, this is not a metaphor and if you take that seriously then

we have reached 765 AD. That's as far as we've come from 1945 and ahead of us lies the establishment of Gothic Europe, the Black Plague, Newton's laws, the Italian Renaissance, the machine age, the European Enlightenment, the discovery of atomic power, DNA – all that lives beyond the turn of the century. So when people are frustrated by the fact that we can't see what the transcendental object at the end of time is going to look like – I can't say here is what it will be like on the great day when it comes – it's because it lies literally below the horizon of rational apprehension.

But that doesn't mean that when you look east the sky isn't streaked with the blush of rosy dawn. It is! It has been for centuries. We're moving toward this thing. It has to do with the idea of human freedom. It has to do with the idea of the inherent dignity of human beings. It has to do with the idea that everybody should have four square meals and a roof over their head. It stretches from the sublime to the mundane. It's an idea of how it should be and sometimes it resides in the secular domain through the schemes of Marxism or even of National Socialism and sometimes it resides in the domain of religion as some kind of great cleansing or the descent of the glory or the coming of the Maitreya. But human history is the outer shell of the phenomenon, that's one way of thinking of it. So if you find yourself inside of human history, then you are inside the attractor field of the transcendental object and then you just have to find where you are in the historical galaxy. Are you just about to escape it's influence and drift off into the interstellar darkness or are you closer into the core and therefore irrevocably locked and irrevocably being moved slowly but with great certitude towards the confrontation and revelation of this thing? And of course it happens to us individually with death. There is no escaping it!

Then we choose, in the same way we're a little dodgy about facing our own death; we're even more dodgy about thinking about the fate of the species. Science has tried to tell us that human history is purposeless. Well this is a very odd contention because if it is purposeless, it's the only purposeless and disordered process that's ever been observed and there it is right smack in the middle as the sum total of the activity of the most conscious entities known to exist in the cosmos. A strange place for purposeless to crop up with such a vengeance.

[Question]: You talk about how psilocybin mushrooms are responsible for the big cranial leap from the proto-hominid to the Homo-sapien. Do you think its possible that again the psilocybin mushroom can play a role in the next evolutionary leap or some form, it may not be physical...?

Well that's a good question. I don't think I've talked too much about this because it has a sort of funny vibration to it. But sort of following Isaac Asimov's style of writing *Foundation and Empire*, *Second Foundation* if you haven't read these books, these are huge science fiction histories of the future. It seems to me that you could make a case that there is something called the Strophariad. It's great that this Latin word works out this way. The first Strophariad was established on Earth half a million years ago and lasted until 12,000 years ago and then it ended. Then there was the historical era, the imperial era, the era of ego, kingship, phonetic alphabets, exteriorized technology, standing armies, urbanism, architecture, hierarchical structure, forced social role playing, so forth and so on.

Then beginning in 1953 - that would be the year zero of the second Strophariad when the Abraham and Sarah of the new order, Gordon and Valentina Wasson, discover the mushrooms in the mountains of Mexico. And then of course in the 70s, the brother's McKenna propagate the method for cultivation, which turns it from a rare tropical endemic into a denizen of every attic and cellar from Nom to Calcutta. The symbiosis between human beings and the fungi is reestablished and it's a symbiosis that leads directly back to a connection into the Gaian mind of the planet. It would be great. It's a little grandiose for me to claim it but it would be wonderful if technology would miniaturize itself, if sexuality would generalize itself, if nomadism, electronically sustained through universal issuance of power books and fax/modems, were to come into vogue and an entirely new social order – isn't that what it says on the dollar bill, a new social order for the ages would be born and we could all become an eye floating above our own pyramidal

database of uniquely sculpted virtually real personal brick-a-brack.

I think that the mushroom has an immense role to play in the human drama?

[Question]: What do you mean symbiosis? What do we give the mushroom?

We give it hands. It has no power to manipulate the environment. It touches the environment as lightly...

[Question]: Are you saying that you think it's an intelligent thing that needs expression through human mind and body?

Well that's one idea that I have entertained – that it's some kind of thing that blew in here a long, long time ago. As I was saying earlier this morning, we will come to live in the imagination. If you look at the mushroom, it looks like an organism that engineered itself that way. It said, 'let's deemphasize our bodies, let's reproduce by spores, let's be primary decomposers, let's get out of the food chain, let's spread ourselves as lightly as cobwebs through the ecosystems we inhabit.'

[Question]: And see who eats us first?

And see who eats us first! But it seems to have like a database of intelligence that is transplanetary. We don't know what kind of a barrier space represents to the drift of life. We've only known about DNA since 1950. Presumably any civilization with a full understanding of DNA could design itself and create a karmalious body, an eternal style and an enormous telepathic capacity. Mushroomhood may be something that we're headed for or at least it may serve as a natural model for a new style of organic existence as the shedding of the monkey begins to be progressively accelerated.

It's perfectly clear; I don't think that we can go to the stars as hairless monkeys. It's just bad packaging. It was great for the conquest of a terrestrial environment but if we're serious about taking our place in the hegemony of galactarian civilization then I think a considerable downsizing and repackaging is going to be necessary for that. The spores offer a good blueprint for that.

I see that it's noon. To your scattered bodies, go. We'll meet back here at 4 o'clock and I'll probably be in the tubs part of the afternoon. I'll be giving an interview part of that time but I'm happy to talk to you anytime that I'm around untrammled, feel free.

Well let's see. It was suggested to me that maybe we should confine questions to designated periods so as not to break what was perceived by some as the forward thrust of rhetorical momentum and perceived by others as the unmitigated exhibition of megalomania. Ho-hum for that! So maybe we'll do that. I was sorry to hear that because questions are such an easy way out!

Let's talk a little bit about any loose ends of this morning and then I'll talk for a while and then we'll entertain discussion at the end of that. Is anybody disappointed? Are we not getting to your favorite subject or somehow slighting some side of it that you're afraid isn't going to get its full treatment? Any comment on what went on this morning?

[Question]: I was just talking to some people in the bookstore and I thought pretty much everyone had the same experiences but with me and mushrooms, I had profound teachings and teachings of things that I was unconsciously aware of. I was given very good advice and sometimes instructions as well as awarenesses, so I don't know if this would be boring since you do it a lot but I would like to hear about stories.

So you like stories? I agree. I just never know. I'm always trying to calculate. There's just such a limited number of hours. Is it OK to swap stories and never mention the Paleolithic? What gets sacrificed for what? I think stories are great and I certainly don't discourage them.

[Question]: As you were talking about before, the intelligence in these substances, the intelligence that seems to be in these substances.

So that's what interests you? Well yeah, it's what interests me. What I keep going back to is how confounding it is. How confounding it is to rational expectation that a plant can, exactly as you say, it gives

you specific advice. It can color coordinate your wardrobe if this is a major concern of yours. It has no snobbery in what it will deal with. It's eerily like a companion. No other psychedelic does that. It's in a sort of a category by itself as an entelechy. On DMT you encounter these self-transforming machine elves or the gnomes of hyperspace but these things are drenched with the peculiar or the *au pre*.

Often in the mushroom thing, it's very approachable, friendly and manageable at least on a certain level. It's like anybody, any personality. It has depth. I never know – is this news to people or is this ho-hum and we've been over all this many times before? The mushroom as mind, the mushroom as historical – something which is penetrating human history and changing what it means to be a human being. In my book *Food of the Gods*, I argue that it actually shaped human organization out of primate organization. Our bizarre situation in nature, that of being half primate and half arch-angel, is explainable only if you assume some extraordinary catalytic agent coming into our environment around the time when we were descending from the trees and becoming omnivorous and switching over to becoming nomadic grassland animals. The human brain size doubled in two million years, the most extraordinary transformation of the major organ of a higher animal in the entire paleontological record. This, under any circumstances, would be an extraordinary challenge to the theory of evolution. The fact that the theory of evolution was generated by this very organ under discussion makes its inability to explain it particularly embarrassing if you follow my logic.

So there was some extraordinary catalytic action that in terms of the geological record was like a bolt of lightning. A species, a primate, an arboreal creature transformed into a grassland forager suddenly stands upright and begins to perform symbolic activities. Our peculiar relationship to our sexuality and to dominance hierarchies has to do with the fact that as primates, we are genetically scripted to have male dominate hierarchies. But for a very long time, the presence of psilocybin in the human diet pharmacologically interrupted that maladaptive behavior and created an orgiastic social style that was very strong glue for group consciousness because men could not trace lines of male paternity under those circumstances.

So a very old primate behavior was for a couple of million years perhaps overwhelmed by a dietary factor. Then fairly recently with the drying of the African continent, the mushroom religion and the society that had gathered around it and the social and sexual style that had gathered around it, collapsed. These ancient people around 10,000 BC migrated in yet another wave of migration out of Africa into the Middle East and established the early human stratigraphy that we see in the Nile Valley and at Jericho and at other places. That is the fall into history! Because in the absence of the mushroom, the old primate program reemerges and it's right at that moment as we break with the African grasslands and as we become sowers of cereal grain across Asia Minor. It's right at that moment that a whole series of maladaptive institutions spring into being simultaneously. Male Kingship, standing armies, urban concentrations, canonized law, suppression of a goddess religion in favor of a religion of male warrior figures, the age of Gilgamesh, agriculture – all of that comes at once. I think it represents a break with the Gaian mind previously maintained through this quasi-symbiotic, shamanic, psychedelic, mushroom connection; a break with that and a profound alienation from the natural world that issues into history.

Gilgamesh, for crying out loud, the earliest piece of literature out of that area that we have is a story about a guy who gets a hold on the loyalty of the shaman and co-opts his loyalty and gets him to help him cut down the world tree. They go off into the wilderness, Enkidu, the shaman figure and Gilgamesh, the wily king figure, and they cut down the world tree. This is the earliest piece of literature out of that area. Just to leave no 'stern untuned', in our own liturgical tradition, a story of that antiquity is the whole Bible story of Genesis, which is the story of a drug bust essentially; a whole hassle about a forbidden plant, a plant that conveys knowledge, that the owner of the garden has decided that this knowledge is not for the human beings and then the woman - the woman, the gatherer - the one who represents the old religious strata, now

being suppressed heretical, fungal connection. The woman eats the plant then she corrupts her roommate, the landlord goes berserk, the lease is cancelled and in the final fade on that story, what we get is 'and God set an angel at the eastern gate of Eden with a flaming sword that they might not find their way back.' Well that's simply an image of the desiccating African sun driving these people out of the cradle, the Saharan cradle, of this mother goddess, psilocybin based, nomadic, cattle centered religion, which was a kind of style that had arisen there and flourished for a 100,000 years. And then the fall into history is real. We are like the children of a kind of a dysfunctional relationship. There really is a trauma of some sort in our past. History really is a kind of pathological bereavement because we were dropped on our heads 12,000 years ago and we've been trying to sort it out ever since. It explains to my mind, our fascination with drugs. It is true that many animals, elephants trample down fences to get to rotting papaya and butterflies hang out as dishes of sugar until their little legs are clawing the air but human beings are of a different order when it comes to addictions.

We physically addict to several dozen substances, psychologically addict to dozens more, addict to behaviors, political ideologies, each other, and art works, you name it! People go bananas in some cases if deprived of any of these things and show all the symptoms of heroin withdrawal: insomnia, palpitating heart, irritability, irrational decision making, delusion, so forth and so on. The extraordinary confluence of events necessary to call us into being as a thinking species was this kind of quasi-symbiotic relationship that evolved between us, cattle and fungi, where the fungi became or is for some mysterious still to be discovered, a pipeline into a mind, an entelechy, which we can only image as feminine and can only associate somehow to the environment, to the ecosystem. This is the Gaian mind. This is what the goddess really is! The goddess is a network of connective intelligence that is operating on this planet.

I think it's not in its essence mysterious. It's simply that what the psychedelic does is it dissolves boundaries. One of the boundaries that it dissolves is the boundary between community, which is a behavioral boundary maintained by the convention of language and therefore not as set in concrete as you might wish to be congealed. Between that boundary and nature there comes a dissolution and then there is, low and behold, not the barren howling atoms of Democratian materialism, but instead, nature. Pulsating, minded, alive, caring, threaded into the human enterprise, willing to advise you on your fashion choices and your investments. It's an astonishing thing. We were the great celebrants of that in the Paleolithic world. We were its chief acolytes if you will because our glory was the neocortex. The language processing capacity that we brought into the game because we had been primates in the canopy of trees with a pack signaling repertoire at the level of dogs, or something like that. Then under the stimulation of the glossolalia brought on by ecstatic doses of psilocybin in this context of orgiastic boundary dissolving sexuality, this mystery was connected with. It is exactly the same mystery that you hit at five grams in silent darkness and it's still mysterious. Thomas Aquinas, Heidegger, they don't really shed much light on this. We haven't in 25,000 years learned anything that makes this trivial or dismissible. It still raises the hair on the back of your neck. It still feels like the true indwelling of a metaphysical essence. It turns out that all the careful deconstruction of living nature by materialism was in vain. I mean – nature is alive and minded! I don't know what this means.

I myself, as I sit here not loaded particularly, cannot grasp the implication of a minded nature. It means that we're living in a world much closer to the spirit of early Greek mythology than the spirit of our own materialist philosophies. I suppose that's why there's an argument for being *au courant* in your philosophical biases because from places in our cultural canon like quantum physics and chaos mathematics, places that are very like early Greek philosophy. Heraclitus speaks for chaos and I suppose Parmenides or Thales speaks for some of these other points of view. Quantum physics, the discreet nature of the world; these things, if you can assimilate them are very close to what is perceived with psychedelics but very, very far from the models that are being inherited from the past. At the very center, you put your

finger on it to bring it back around to it, at the most confounding center of this mystery is the presence, the voice, the companion, the ally! It's crazy! It literally is impossible within the context of the cultural expectation and yet it's real. This is what got me onto it all this years and years ago because somehow I had friends early on who said these plants talk to you. And I just thought, my god, they're losing their marbles. I would take LSD and smoke cannabis and do these things and have all kinds of strange experiences but I never got what this thing was about and how the plants talk to you until I got to psilocybin. But you have to invoke it! You have to speak to it. It doesn't speak until spoken to. They're shy. They're like fairies – hell, they may be fairies, who knows? You have to coax it out and then it will just come forward. It's the damndest thing. As I sit here, a man of 46, earning a living by telling people how you coax fairies out from under invisible bushes, I wonder myself at what the cultural crisis has come to. Nevertheless, it's true! It's as true as anything and it's more confounding than most things.

I don't know what it means. I've been through the possible explanations: Jung, autonomous psychic entities escaped from the controlling influence of the Superego, yes, but when you're talking to a gnome, saying that to them is absurd as suggesting to a Javanese person that they're an autonomous portion of the psyche that has escaped from the control of the Ego. It doesn't wash. I think that somehow we, unlike shamans, we haven't taken these worlds seriously enough because we have a materialist basis. One of the things – this is maybe a point worth making then I'll stop raving about this – one of the things that quantum mechanics has secured is the necessity of the observer for the ongoing enfoldment of phenomena. To me, that means that hallucinations have undergone an ontological shift of status. If hallucinations are now part of reality, they are primary data for theory making in the same way that the movement of the stars is or the changing of the tides. Quantum mechanics secures the mind as the necessary agent in all process and so hallucinations are no longer off the table or out of evidence in terms of trying to understand what's going on with reality.

[Question]: That brings up the question that I've heard posed before, sometimes it's on people's minds and they don't want to say it. That is, why should people believe this Irish raving tale-tell of human evolution? After all, I have to admit, I am in awe of your intellectual prowess. I figure everybody knows this guy talking about stories. A guy who can convince his girlfriend to bring his lover down the Putumayo could talk a whole generation into anything. Your powers of persuasion are fantastic.

Thank you! I appreciate that. Are you saying...what is your question?

I mean I agree, I think the best idea will win. In a sense you're right. The person who can tell the best story, that story will win, but best story is a complex concept. It also means best formal mathematical underpinning. You get high points for that and most people come up rather short in that department. I come out of the Berkeley tradition of all-night conversations. I think, often in arguments, you don't make progress until the 9th hour and I'm willing to debate all this stuff. As far as my theory of evolution is concerned, first of all you might suppose there is a large and established body of theory that has to be exploded – what the straight people say about how we doubled our brain size and got culture and mathematics. It turns out no, they haven't got a clue. There is no big theory, which has to be blown up. The best shot the straight people can give it: they say we were puny and small in a world of the large and the lumbering and so we learned to throw rocks with great precision and accuracy. They would essentially make the big league baseball player the pinnacle of human evolutionary development and then say, once we had done that we had so much brain capacity left over, the plays of Shakespeare and modern mathematics were no problem.

I say that this is hokum. Obviously they've done these experiments where they raise identical rats in environments which are very rich in experience and then others poor in experience and the ones raised in the rich environment when – hang on folks – sacrificed, exhibit in the brain slices a much more complex arborization than the ones that were in the learning poor environment. So I think one way of thinking about these psychedelics and especially the psilocybin family coming out of these mushrooms were that they

were catalysts for the human imagination. They catalyze cognitive activity, whatever it is. Counting your toes, painting on your friend, playing around in anthills, making funny noises in your off hours, arranging the roots you've collected in different categories – it just promotes cognitive activity, which you then take back into the group.

[Question]: Is there a different effect from the fresh mushroom, the mushroom picked fresh from the dung patty and the dried mushroom?

I don't think particularly. You mean like is the spiritual intelligence present in the dried stuff?

[Question]: Is the effect more potent?

Well the fresh ones are definitely kickeroo simply because the psilocybin isn't bound up in dried cellulose matrix. It dissolves much quicker. That's probably what that's about.

One of the things that I think happened. I've spent a lot of time trying to understand this scenario of transition from what I call the mushroom partnership paradise to the historical bummer that came down when all that blew up. I can imagine, as Africa grew drier, the mushroom would have perhaps over millennia slowly faded in availability. Instead of being all the time everywhere; it would go to being seasonable and then to be only in the rain shadows of mountains and stuff like that. I'm sure a certain amount of cultural specialization would take place, i.e. you would appoint shamans to be the people who take the mushrooms in order to keep the connect open. The other thing that would go on, there would be anxiety about preservation, to keep a supply available for human use. Well, perversely, the most obvious method of preserving mushrooms or any other delicate foodstuff in that kind of an environment is to desiccate it in honey; put it into a crystalline honey and the sugar will draw the water out of it. This is why you hear about the Romans eating hummingbird tongues pickled in honey. It's because the honey made the whole process possible.

The problem there in our scenario where we're talking about how drugs shape culture is that honey itself has the perverse ability to become a psychoactive substance to ferment into mead. If you've ever been in the tropics and experienced aboriginal honeys, they have a much higher water content than what you are getting at the A&P and they do quickly ferment. When you're offered honey, it's often a completely baffling and horrible thing that you can't really associate to what you know at home.

As an example there of how drug styles shape cultural styles, alcohol, the fermented meads in early cereal beers of the ancient Middle East, they create a different set of cultural values. Gone are the orgies, gone is the connection to the Gaian mind; now what you have is an increased sense of verbal facility and the lowering of sensitivity to social queuing. The kind of behavior you see in singles bars on a Friday night. A lot of negative imprinting goes on around alcohol or in the past has gone on around alcohol. This thing I was talking about earlier, the itch we can't scratch – this fascination with drugs. Once the umbilical connection was broken to the Gaian mind in this African situation then it was just a series of insufficient substitutes. The early beers and meads, opium appears to come into the picture shortly after this time. Cannabis we have no idea how old it is. To my mind, cannabis is the closest substitute for the social glue and provides the same kinds of social functions that the mushroom may have provided. It may have later across central Asia played a somewhat similar but subsidiary role.

We have explored nature frantically in search of intoxicants of all kinds. This continues to this day. The old style primate dominance hierarchy reemerged and what it brings with it is moral cruelty and insensitivity to suffering and a willingness to sacrifice others for grandiose political schemes and a willingness to let dogma rule over common sense. And 10,000 years of letting that run rampant as an engine of cultural destruction, it can't be beat. The pygmies in the rainforest are no match for it, nor is anybody else. After 10,000 years of letting that run rampant over the landscape, here we are. Strangely enough then, here we are gathered for the deathbed scene of western civilization and as every text is published, every archeological site excavated, every occult system explored, every drug injected, so forth

and so on – comes the news from ethnography, this minor branch of anthropology, that people are taking these drugs, these plants, in the rainforest and making extraordinary claims about its ability to transport you into other dimensions and heal and so forth. It's like the Ouroboric snake taking its tail into its mouth and the energy just runs around the circle.

History is somehow redeemed by this return to the archaic. The question of what history was for, I'm not sure, but what caused it, I'm pretty clear on. It's a pathology or a series of behaviors that are responsive to the tremendous trauma and stress of the break up of this symbiotic relationship with nature. It's like a crisis of adolescence or a temporary psychosis or something like that. Now strangely enough, we have gained through the peregrination of history, vast knowledge about forbidden and dark subjects – the control of matter, the control of the genetic units of life itself, the building of instrumentalities that can survive flight to the stars – but to this point this has all been in the service of some weird Faustian conqueror complex. Now all these tools have to be put at the service of a kind of ethos of planetary care giving and ecological maintenance. It has all fallen into our responsibility.

In a sense, we have come of age. Child of the Earth, now here is the inheritance. There are a few dents in the Ferrari from some of the little episodes that we took before we settled down but it's all ours to make of what we will. Then behind that, what is it that Andrew Marvel says in his poem: the graves a lovely quiet place, but none do, dare I think embrace, for always at my back I hear, times winged chariot near. Of course, behind this level I'm talking about is time's chariot hurrying near. The fact that rising over our world is the black sun of the incomprehensible event of our cultural transformation that has been built into our cultural mythology since Abraham hesitated to slay his son. This is our thing. The finite apotheosis of the world and all these yet un-integrated but soon to be integrated technologies, control languages, understandings are leading to the transformation of the human self-image.

Really the psychedelic experience is just inoculating yourself for the onslaught of transformation that is going to be rolling towards you through 3D. It's not going to come entirely through drugs you know. It's going to come through the cultural. It already is. It's batshit weird out there. You don't have to have a bone through your nose to pick up on that.

[Question]: I read a theory that primates from four legs to two, exactly why I don't remember, but once up in the higher air the brain enlarged and prospered more rapidly and the number of neurons in the brain increased so that we now have 100 billion neurons and that was the real origin of civilization.

The complexification?

[Question]: No mushrooms.

Oh I see what your saying. Well it is true, if you've ever observed even squirrel monkeys, which are a fairly primitive primate. Squirrel monkeys, if they want to run quickly, will rise up off their front legs. There's a lot of question about bipedalism and when it came in. Some people think it didn't come in until we leave the trees. We were a complex animal, there's no doubt about it when we were in the arboreal canopy. But we were probably no more complex than the Prosimians that exist in the world today. You see the real challenge for evolutionary theory is not that the human brain could evolve at all – that seems reasonable and somewhat inevitable – but the speed is really shocking. A transformation of a major organ like that when charted in some other animal order occurs on a scale of 50 million years. In the human beings, it occurred in a million and a half years. If you're just going to limit yourself to the rules of normal evolutionary theory, then when you look at that transformation of that major organ in a million and a half years, you have to say there was an extraordinary selective pressure operating there that apparently operated on no other species at no other time in the history of the Earth.

I think to generalize a bit here, that the un-discussed dimension of evolution is diet. If you study evolution without great depth, what they tell you is that mutation is acted upon by natural selection and that mutation

is caused by gene breakage and that gene modification is caused by radiation - cosmic radiation reaching the earth. Now that part of the story is a gross simplification. Gene breakage is actually caused by stress of all sorts. Incidental cosmic radiation reaching the surface of the Earth is only one kind of stress. Another kind of stress is the chemical toxins in the environment, especially chemical toxins in the diet. So if you have a species, which comes under nutritional pressure, it has two options. It can either go extinct or it can begin experimenting with its diet. If it begins experimenting with its diet, there is many a slip before it gets it sorted out.

Many exposures to toxic and poisonous substances or quasi-toxic substances skew the ovulation cycle or affect expression of body hair or cause the retention of juvenile characteristics. So when an animal is undergoing dietary transformation, it's in a situation of extraordinary of mutational flux. An example that I think makes this perfectly clear, sweet potatoes are a big part of human diets in many tropical parts of the world and many primates are keen for sweet potatoes. But Ortho-Novum and birth control drugs like that are made from those same sweet potatoes, from dioscorea vines which are grown on huge mechanized plantations in northern Mexico. That's where the birth control hormone comes from.

Well now, here's the scenario: a hungry band of foraging primates comes upon a big patch of what looks like our favorite food – sweet potatoes - and everybody chows down. It turns out it's jammed with these hormones and lactation, ovulation, menstruation, fertility, fetal formation – all of these things, you just shuffled the deck folks. You don't know what you're going to get out of that. If the animals are sensitive enough to the situation to stop eating it, well then it's just a localized catastrophe. But if they persist they will be mutational or extinct within several generations. So I'm suggesting that at this moment when we left the trees, there was a great deal of dietary experimentation going on and psilocybin was a factor in there. Looking at us and trying to understand our relationship to the other primates, one of the things that evolutionary primatologists have always noted is that human beings exhibit was is called neoteny. Do you all know what this is? Neoteny is the preservation of juvenile characteristics into adulthood. We all do this. If you look at our skull proportion to our bodies, it's an infantile proportion when you compare us to other primates. Human adults look like the fetuses of other primate species. Our hairlessness, that is a fetal and juvenile characteristic in other primates that fades in adulthood. We retain it and so forth and so on. This is the kind of thing that we see in other species that are reacting to toxic episodes in their earlier evolutionary history. We are a funny looking monkey, you have to admit. Ugly suckers too! Thank god the estrogen reddening of the bottom was suppressed before we got down to the business of civilization. Public masturbation seems to be under control but otherwise if you've ever looked at those Prosimians and the proboscis monkeys of Southeast Asia, they're just like very ugly people, you know. Anyway, enough about that.

[Question]: We're there other predators that were likely to happen upon this psilocybin?

No. Well possibly. See the thing is, animals tend to specialize their food supply. An animal will not explore a new food unless it's under nutritional pressure. I don't know if there were other animals being pushed out of that same environment. A sort of parallel family that if the primates hadn't seized the golden ring might have gotten somewhere were the raccoons. The raccoons have a pretty advanced optical system, a pretty adaptable hand, a reasonable level of socialization and would make a cute movie I supposed.

[Question]: Maybe bears, weren't they omnivorous?

Bears also have been suggested as one of the lines from which an intelligent species might emerge.

[Question]: When these mushrooms in the wild die, do they just decompose eventually or do insects eat them?

Well, they persist. They are not the kind of mushrooms that auto-digest. Some kinds of mushrooms just turn into slime. Most of the psilocybin mushrooms, especially the more palatable ones, persist. Well, you should understand, the mushroom that you see which mycologists call a carpophore is just a small part of what a mushroom is. A mushroom is really a very fine network of spider like material, cob-webby material

that's under the soil. It can stay like that for decades, no problem, growing, vegetatively propagating itself the way a houseplant is vegetatively propagating. No sexual reproduction involved there, just an individual getting bigger and bigger.

Last year, you may recall, they reported some of these mushrooms clones that were acres in size and weighed more than a sperm whale and were in fact the world's largest organisms, and were these enormous fungal individuals sleeping in the Oregon forest for unaccounted eons, dreaming nightmarish dreams that were....

[Question]: They were 30 miles big?

I know. The mind boggles to the point where I lost my thread in the thing.

Oh, the natural history of the mushroom! So what I was saying, the mushroom is like something that happens when this fungal mat, this mycelial network gets in the mood for sunbathing and sexual thrills and so then it undergoes dikaryotic self expression. The genetics of fungi are somewhat complex to the point where I never really have understood it myself. They're not like you and me, let's just put it like that. Then it fruits! It fruits, that's what the carpophore is; it's also called a fruiting body. In the *Stropharia Cubensis* mushroom, a single mushroom can shed up to 3 million spores a minute for six weeks. So you know it's a truly astonishing deal and they're at the bottom of the food chain. They're primary decomposers. If you were a Buddhist with a hyper degree in molecular biology and were trying to design a karma free body, you would have to become a fungus because they are the only blameless members of the food chain because they exist on dead matter. They don't destroy anything. They don't live off living material. The spore is this tiny microscopic capsule of genetic material that is surrounded by an organic layer of material that is as electron dense as many metals.

I maintain that these spores in fact percolate through space and that they can survive the conditions of extraterrestrial environments. If you want to store mushrooms spores, you essentially store them in liquid nitrogen. It's about as outer space as it gets. You can calculate, if a single mushroom sheds 3 million spores a minute for six weeks, heh, I'm telling you – there are a lot of spores being shed into the terrestrial environment and then they percolate and some percolate into the outer atmosphere where they become involved in highly energetic events that actually detach them from the terrestrial environment. I think one of the easy predictions that you can make - it's like a knockoff and yet it would be the cover of Time magazine - it's perfectly obvious that space is no barrier to certain viruses and spores and that one of the future revolutions of biology will this will somehow be proven.

It's always puzzled me, and some of you have heard me talk about it, that psilocybin is an indole which is phosphorylated in the 4 position. This is chemist talk but the important thing for our discussion is, it is the only force-substituted phosphorylation of an indole on this planet and that's very weird. Why? The way it would expect chemical evolution to work is if you have 'molecule A' then you should find molecule 'sort of A' and 'nearly A', and 'A+1' and 'A+2', but here's a molecule that has no near relatives. I think one kind of mentality looks for extraterrestrial life by shifting for radio signals with a telescope. I think one way to look for an extraterrestrial thumbprint would be to make a thorough molecular categorization of the molecules on this planet to see if there's anything that looks like blew in from somewhere else. Psilocybin would be a strong candidate. What is it doing in some forty species of mushroom? There are hundreds of species of mushrooms, which do not contain psilocybin proving therefore that psilocybin is not somehow a necessity for fungal existence. Well then, if you believe that evolution operates with a certain economy then why do these forty species furiously dedicate a major portion of their metabolic budget to making a metabolite that seems to have no purpose?

[Part 3]

I think when we finally, if we ever, tease apart this psychedelic thing, what we'll discover is it's an interspecies communication system; that life is a seamless web of signal transduction and that we somehow have become isolated from this process by our historical pathology. So for us the voices have grown mute. We can't get the signal and consequently it's a pretty grim row to hoe. There's a curve with the introduction of every drug of great expectation. I mean once it was Milltown and then Valium, then something else and usually once as your data sample swells, you begin to see the negative effects of these things.

I'm very sort of not the person to ask this because I'm very...some people have said blindly prejudiced in favor of plants but I just think human beings have evolved in the presence of living systems and that that's a very good filter to pass drugs through. The question: do they occur in living systems? I mean God knows there's enough stress built into modern life. It's like a stress production machine. I'm constantly trying to tell myself that we're having a good time now. But this is what it's all about.

If I may go off on a tear here. I followed with interest the crop circle phenomenon in England and recently a book has been written by an American called *Around in Circles* and it basically buries the crop circle phenomenon. If your metaphysic was hanging on this, you better head for cover in a hurry. The most interesting figure to me in the controversy was this British meteorologist Terence Meaden, who at the beginning, his position was this is the wind. These things are vortices caused by heat convection and they're capable of swirling the wheat into these patterns. He was, you see, a reductionist. He was saying there's nothing unusual going on here, so forth and so on. Then as the phenomenon got rolling, the circles became more and more elaborate and Meaden, always being asked by the media to explain these things, came to insist...he eventually electrified his vortices and they became plasma vortices, a rare natural phenomenon disputed by some whether it even exists or not. Once he had in place the concept of the plasma vortex, no matter how elaborate the crop circles became - the straight lines, triangles, triangles in triangles - Meaden could always explain that if you were cognizant of the higher mathematics which ruled the world of plasma physics, this was all perfectly straightforward and in fact predictable from theory. This went on until the BBC made a crop circle and then took him out to it and got him to certify it as genuine and to lecture on the various features, which made it impossible for human beings to create such a structure and then they revealed to him that it was in fact artificial.

Now if you'll repeat your question, I'll connect this up to it.

[Tape Cut]

Well that's an interesting question. So far we've had this cheerful little scenario where the monkey descends to the bottom of the tree empty of tummy and lo and behold, here is this mushroom. I called it, I think, an extraordinary confluence of events or some weasel term like that. What I was skirting around is the issue of: was this simply a wonderful fortuitous confluence of events or was this a thickening of the plot? Was this a bringing together of two elements that had been designed to meet each other in the councils of the Galactarian eons before somewhere else? I don't know. It does appear to be a viral catalyst for technological civilization. You give it to a monkey and 15,000 years later they're landing instruments on their nearest planetary neighbor.

I had a professor in college who said what he thought it was all about was that someday flying saucers would visit the Earth and they would take all the fissionable material away and they would just then explain that human history was a project to concentrate fissionable material for their purposes. 'Thank you very much, you people can go back to picking fleas and beating each other brains out as far as we're

concerned.'

You know, we do that. There's a technique for extracting gold out of very low-grade gold ore where what you do is, you crush the gold into a watery slurry and then you infect this muddy gold laden water with a kind of bacterium that concentrates gold in its body tissues. Then you stir this up and cook this up and then you just skim off the bacteria and harvest the gold out of their body tissues.

I actually lost the thread of that. My point was that if you're committed enough to a hypothesis, no matter how the data can twist and turn, you can fit it to the hypothesis. I find it possible to entertain the idea that the mushroom actually is some kind of extraterrestrial thing. After all, we don't really know what the nature of the cosmic situation is. We don't know whether life arises wherever conditions are OK. We don't know how chaotic the universe is. Do most planets get ten hundred million shots at stability where they can get higher animals together before some comet or geomagnetic reversal or something flips it over? I do think if you were an extraterrestrial and you had an ethos of non-invasiveness and you wanted to have a very low key interaction with an intelligent species, the way to do it would be to come at it through an intoxication. You don't appear with trillion ton beryllium ships over major cities. "We have been studying you for 50,000 years." I don't think it's done like that. I think it's more like: you find a dimension in the cultural world of the species you're trying to study where weirdness is sanctioned, then you setup your lemonade stand in that world. In this case the world of psychedelic intoxication.

I'm not sure it's all about their purpose. Everybody assumes their purpose is to communicate with us. It seems to be that if their purpose is to communicate with us, they could have just communicated with us. The purpose appears to be to influence or to observe. My purpose is to tell all secrets. I'm at war with the keepers of the secrets.

[Indecipherable Question]

It's one way of looking at it. I don't think they've done it to another species. It seems that what they are - they're mean traders on one level. They've blown in here and they have this intentionality to communicate. The content of the DMT experience is where this contact becomes much more explicit, more puzzling, more alien and more strange. What's happening with psilocybin usually is a voice and a voice you can handle - because if it doesn't speak in English, you can't understand it. So it must operate within a certain narrow band of rational apprehendability or you lose it and it makes no sense. On the other hand, a visual input can go off the beam of rational apprehendability and you're still looking at it. As it loses coherency and tentacles sprout and ciliary snap and exogonal eyeballs roll by and then it gets its fix back on. Oh excuse me for a moment; I merely lost my face as it were.

The content of the DMT thing is really puzzling. One of the motivations for my career is to get other people to check it out because here is truly confounding data. That you don't have to make an expedition to the heart of the Amazon or battle your way through hours of waves of nausea and dark spaces chanting your mantras obsessively. When you smoke DMT, thirty seconds later you're in the presence of the unspeakable and the show is going full blast. These tyke-like self-transforming machine elf things that rush forward to exhibit their rhetorical skills in a three-dimensional language that you look at rather than hear and they offer you the technological artifactory of another dimension. Faberge eggs and Ming Dynasty orreries - just the most amazing fabricated objects, which they make out of language. They demonstrate language in another dimension. That's why I really think that part of what we're moving toward is technological only in the most fundamental sense. It's going to arise out of the body. The project of language in human beings is only partially completed. It doesn't have to stop at little mouth noises. There's a way to pass over into something more grandiose, more enclosing, more boundary dissolving, more emotionally intense.

What I always tell people who are really dedicated and it's deep advice - go to the Amazon. The mere act of placing yourself in the Amazon is pretty psychedelic in and of itself. As you make your way through

these colorful personalities that are the Peruvian people and their medical practitioners, all kinds of adventures happen and then eventually if you're lucky, you actually get to the good brew and it will sweep you... just knock your pins right out from under you. Sweep you screaming into the cataracts of perturbability.

[Indecipherable Question]

Well it may be. It may be. You have to take a number if you want to accuse me. You can't just elbow your way to the front of the line like that. I don't have any problem with the idea that dance is a primary language. Cognitive activity is the term that I prefer. Clearly we had an animal existence of a very limited number of concerns: not to be killed, to feed our children, to get sufficient sex and like that. Then we broke through to something else and self-expression. I think people danced for each other, did glossolalia for each other, body painted, made faces; did all of these things and for a long, long time before meaning was invented. The reason language got a special position in all this is that it's easier to make small mouth noises than it is to dance. It's easier to make small mouth noises than it is to make faces or gestures. So it was an energy economy thing.

That self-expression comes out of the body and dance, you're probably right, very well was primary. I think where my fetish lies, if there's a genuine accusation in all of this – but like any fetishist, I will defend it – is for the visual. People say, why do you always insist that you always have to have hallucinations? Why are you so bent about the visual connection? Well the answer is, a voice in the head or a funny bunch of thoughts - like for me that's what LSD was, it was for very odd kinds of thinking. All of these things could be generated out of my own psyche but I'm pretty familiar with the inventory of my psyche as far as its image bank is concerned because it's drawn like yours. It's from the culture. It only stretches so far from Hieronymus Bosch to Andy Warhol and all the themes in between. Well so then when you turn on psilocybin and you get these bursts – 'I've never seen anything like that before' – then that convinces me that this is the real McCoy.

So the fetish for the visual is pretty real I think. The object fetishism; these things aren't exactly objects. You have to understand that we download through many levels of compression in order to sit in this room and talk about such outlandish things. I describe them as objects like Faberge eggs made of agate, chalcedony and ivory but I could just as easily have described them as puns, interlocking in a dance of casuistry; reflexive meaning and teleological entendre of great satisfying depth. Something like that, you see, because they're both/and. These things exist in another dimension and I don't do the best job. If I could make it weirder for you, I would. People say 'you evoke images very well.' Sometimes that's the defeat of rhetoric because what we're really talking about is in fact so hard to invoke. We're really pushing the envelope of language. It really frustrates me when people have psychedelic experiences and don't talk about them, because to me that's what they're for. They're to fertilize the enterprise of communication. It's to be talked about and if it's not talked about - it's sort of like seeds which fall on sterile ground.

[Indecipherable Question]

Well, I've heard it. This is also said about the Maya. It was said even about the dinosaurs, which doesn't mean it can't happen. I don't know if I believe it ever has happened. Obviously I believe in principle that it can happen. It's always seemed to me that this used to be the motivation for my LSD taking. It seemed to me that you could sit down in a room with someone and begin – this is maybe what I'm trying to do with you but we never get there – sit down in a room with someone and begin to have a conversation that would take it apart. Take it apart and leave nothing there! You know? At the end: no guru, no method, no teacher and no nothing else either. I think that the world is held together by a misunderstanding and that if you could overcome that misunderstanding, it would just fold up and deconstruct. In a sense this is what the concept of enlightenment is. It's a series of insights or thoughts or revelations, ones that project forward into another, which lead you to just say – 'oh, it's not this and it's not that, and it's not this...'

[Indecipherable Question]

Well I guess the mundane plain is the misunderstanding. I guess if we analyze the mundane plain we see what constitutes the misunderstanding; a belief in three dimensional space and time, a belief in the finite life of the organism. And then the rupture of the mundane plain leads to this kind of platonic super space where there seems then to rest incontrovertible truths. They are not truths approached by logic and argument, they are self-evidently true so they're either true for you or they're not true. Shamanism sort of views all this very optimistically – takes the existence of this trans-mundane world as a higher world. A world in which healing can be done and the community can be made to cohere. The shaman is essentially a technician, wiring and repairing and moving behind the board of culture, keeping all these lines open and together. Is that where your interest lies?

[Tape Cut]

Apparently, it seems to me; it looks like mind is something that if we were to make an analogy, it's somewhat like sulfur in that sulfur has this weird quality of having two melting points. You have solid yellow sulfur and you heat it and it melts, but then you keep heating it and it turns back into a solid. You continue heating it and it melts again. This is a curious property of sulfur, but not magical. The human mind seems to me to be like that. It's something that in the mundane plain, it has collapsed down into a tool for threat detection and social account keeping basically. But when you go alone or with your nearest and dearest to wilderness, or places where you feel secure and you perturb the chemical foundations of consciousness, then this is the equivalent of heating the sulfur and lo and behold, a new geometry is cast out of the fluid mercury of the psychedelized mind.

I think I said this morning; I really favor a geometric model. I think that the shaman's power comes from the fact that the shamans really are seeing things from a higher dimensional perspective – that's not a metaphor or analogy; that's the voice of mathematics speaking. As I analyze the history of biology and higher animals and culture and so forth, what I see as a continuous theme from the very beginning is the conquest of dimensionality. Life conquers dimensions. Life begins as a fixed line in one place with no eyes, no ears, no nothing, and it evolves tactile awareness. Then it slowly becomes, through the sequestering pigment sensitive cells on its surface, it acquires the notion of a gradient of light and darkness. Then through the formation of lens, it's able to stabilize an impression of the exterior world. It evolves progressively more advanced forms of locomotion. Eventually it evolves memory and complex cognitive interior maps for anticipating the future. This is a description of a strategy for the conquest of dimensionality.

I think really the shamans are the people among us who represent the next evolutionary level. They're people who have learned to do what we can't do, to come and go from hyperspace, whatever it is. An informational super space that exists inside the psychology of the individual and the group that we can't even see because we're materialists, fixated on the topological surfaces of the three dimensional manifold, which is only one level in the onion of reality. These shamans have moved over to another level but I think they are the paradigm for a new authentication of the human experience and it's all about experience. This is what we clearly have wandered to far from. We are too in our heads. The consequences of a phonetic alphabet, monotheism, modern science, Greek aesthetics is just to move us too far from experience. So then this compensating thing is coming back in and the shaman is the paradigmatic figure and when you analyze what shamanism is, the psychedelic experience is revealed to be the sine qua non of this lifestyle. I've fiddled with screenplays. My objection to most visions of extraterrestrials is people don't understand extraterrestrials are not mundane. They don't want our beautiful women; they don't have a fascination with our gross industrial output. The real trick with an extraterrestrial is to know when you're in the presence of one because it's going to be so strange and of such a different order of magnitude in many parameters that the trick is recognition I think.

I mean eventually we may come to see that many life forms - that we are not all to be traced back to one blob of germplasm, the warm pond theory. I think the warm pond theory is in for serious revision. I think interesting genes have blown in here every once in a while over the millennia as the Earth has ground forward and of course those genes get embedded in living systems. The mitochondria, which power the animal cell, were originally free swimming bacteria that got into a symbiotic relationship with some kind of membrane-like matrix and before they knew it, they had been incorporated as sub cellular organelles of a larger system. Mind that this doesn't happen to you.

[Tape Cut]

Well isn't it the role of the artist? It's to stretch the envelope. It's to bring the music from the edge. The musician, the shaman, the smith, the physician; these were all originally combined, you know. Because the mystery of creation and the mystery of the human body, this was all spun together. That's why when people say, what is the proper response to the culture crisis? I think the response is to shamanize. That means to help with the healing, to explore the invisible world and to make art; to try to make art. To try and anticipate the revelatory process by which the transcendental other is drawing the historical matrix into an ever clearer reflection of its identity – whatever it is. It's going to come through us somehow. We invoke it. We're boring toward it through the mountain of human history. It's boring toward us. We can anticipate it. It senses us. This is a real relationship here but it's a relationship where illusion must be shed and shed and shed about what the other is.

[Indecipherable Question]

Well it's not clear as I say; it's not clear what the intent is. After all, what we now take to be the great canon of western art were basically a fairly self-indulgent bunch of courtly types spiraling around, producing public relations flackery for royal families. There are different ways of looking at the artistic enterprise in each time and place.

[Indecipherable Question]

Well I maintain history is a self-limiting process and that you can see the end from here. You have to have a pretty complicated rap to deny that we are in some kind of unusual situation here folks. Well that suggests to me that this is awfully close to the surface of ordinary metabolism considering what a shocking shift of consciousness it is. Millions of people go to the grave without ever having a DMT trip unless they have it at the brink of the grave that we don't know about. But the idea that in a dream such a shockingly extreme physiological response could be elicited means, if we could do human work with DMT unfettered in an environment of biofeedback and that sort of thing, that you could teach people to have this experience. Well that may be what it's all about – a non-invasive, non-drug technique for just opening up a portion of your brain that somehow cultural abuse has closed off to us and that if we could access it that would be the dream time and that would be the entry into the domain outside of history. Yeah?

The Seth Material. I used to say if you can do this without drugs, you're probably mentally ill. I tend to take a hard view of it. I don't exactly understand the razzamatazz that surrounds it. I've talked to many entities; I've never felt the need to establish the spelling of their English name. This wish to name the entity puzzles me.

[Indecipherable Question]

Or whatever.

[Indecipherable Question]

But I didn't then write a book and then go on opre and say that I was channeling Dorothy and that the world should pay attention. It seems to me a curious relationship to your own mental life that you would say you were a channeler. It's just these are the things we think and it's a way of casting it. For instance, it never occurs to me or doesn't seem to me a very interesting question to say of the mushroom – is it the same person each time? What a joke. It's some kind of enormous intellectual agency. It's not a human

being, that's the thing. The channeling – I guess my take on channeling and it will come out maybe tonight when we talk about the Time Wave, is that the real skinny is that you have a connection to everybody whoever lived. There's a way of tuning your internal machinery in such a way that here comes Marie Antoinette or here comes Beethoven but it isn't that Beethoven is a relative of yours, or still less, that you were Beethoven. How likely is that for crying out loud? It's simply that they're all there in some cultural super space and can be reached and called down. I mean they're an idea. Beethoven is an idea. His grumpiness, the hands behind the back, the da-da-da-dah – we know Beethoven so he lives in some kind of super space and I think people are much too literal.

I have this trouble with channeling and flying saucer people and with the fans of great Atlantis and the people who believe that lantern job Neanderthal visages ten miles high that are gracing the deserts of mars. All of this, the attraction of this kind of thing completely puzzles me because it's so hokey. If you want the real thing, it's just five dried grams away. The real thing! So that you will be done with anecdotes by the denizens of trailer camps in Florida or all of this other stuff – it's not that the woo-woo isn't out there. It's that it's so much more woo-woo than the beady-eyed peddlers of it assume. They just have no idea with what they're playing with.

The New Age generally I find somewhat obnoxious because it's a flight from the psychedelic experience. What you can safely say about the New Age; if a technique doesn't work, they'll proclaim it. I'm very much in favor of anything, which breaks down the conceptions of ordinary medical practice. That's the most important part of the New Age, the attack on the medical fascism of the hierarchy. But people confuse science with reason and think that if you're anti-science then you're somehow just permitted to go bananas. No, you can be anti-science but nobody gets released from stuff like the rules of evidence. You have to make sense. Your position, whatever it is, just can't be sky blue and you should then expect to be treated with the same respect as somebody who's gotten themselves epistemologically together and ontologically oriented. There are flaky ideas in this world.

People associate with me with the New Age because that was the only place where I was originally tolerated but I really want my ideas to be tested in the ordinary way, by the ordinary methods. I offer a mathematical formalism and then surrounding that, a bunch of arm waving verbal exegesis. The core thing is the mathematical algorithm to be tested by the ordinary rules of evidence and falsification. You can read Karl Popper to figure out what all that's about. I love science. I just think it's just incredibly pretentious and has claimed too much. Its methods are great but its constipated conservatism is maddening because what it deals with is the most interesting thing there is, nature. Nature is very, very interesting, complex and permits all kinds of radical speculation about what has happened. It's just that science is also a business and a priesthood and also a men's club; also the plaything of certain classes – so all that has to be overcome.

My method, if method is the word that I would share with you since this question about the New Age came out, is not to embrace things that are simply to outrage bourgeois sensibilities but to explore edges. To test edges yourself, that's the important part. Yourself! You don't learn about Tantra by reading about Tantra, or ibogaine by reading about ibogaine. You have to go and do these things. What you will discover is you will be fleeced a few times in your youth with this method. You'll get in with some flying saucer cult or some beady-eyed guru and his fanatical devotees but eventually you'll learn the neighborhood and you'll become street smart. You won't be a mark – that's the goal of real spiritual method – is to not be a mark. Then when you get that together, lo and behold, you would think this would lead to cynicism because you say, well I went and stayed with Baba Ji and he was a jackass and then I joined the Unitarian Uniformitarian Unifunctionalists and that was just a scam and so forth and so on. You would think it would lead to cynicism. Not if you keep to the edges because eventually you're going to come to psychedelics – and then lo and behold – jackpot! The real thing! Weirdness beyond all possibility to

comprehend. You have just won the publisher clearing sweepstakes of peculiarity.

[Tape Cut]

I had this happen in the 60s. I got into a place with LSD where I had this LSD and I would give my friends one and I would take one and then I would excuse myself to the bathroom and take five more. And then I would end up holding their hand all night long and I felt weird about it. Where is all this stuff going? It's like it's not working and when that happened to me, I just said it's time to dry out for a while. And I did and then everything worked normally later. One of the weirdest things I've encountered is about one in twenty people don't react to DMT and it looks genetic to me. I can't believe you could resist that if it's coming at them the way it comes at me; nothing could stop it. And yet, they will do it and take enormous inhalations and then say – 'is this it? I don't know, it's kind of strange but it doesn't seem'... and you're just like, 'oh my God, what is this?'

One thing to bear in mind in all of this is that we talk a lot about the mental effects of drugs but these drugs are tiny objects. They are molecules and they won't work unless they find their way to your synaptic cleft and find waiting for them there, what are called drug receptors. Think of them as little outlet holes into which the drug can plug itself. How many of these little receptors you have is part of your genetic inheritance and so some people have a lot and some people have a little and some people have some for some and some people have some for others. You have to learn what works for you and what the right tool is. Yeah?

[Audience] – Toad?

Yes, toad is 5-methoxy-DMT. It's an exudate of *Bufo Alvarius* – a large southwestern toad.

[Audience] – So it is DMT?

No, no, it is not DMT. It is 5-methoxy-DMT. It doesn't cause the same thing that DMT causes. It causes an intense void-like emotion that is very dissolving but it is not accompanied by the kind of visual activity that DMT has. The visual activity on DMT is astonishing. It conveys you into a world more complex than the world we're living in, a world of brilliant colors and faceted surfaces.

[Indecipherable Question]

Yes but on ayahuasca, unless it's really horrendously strong, you will never reach the kinds of places that you reach on a DMT flash.

[Audience] – Smoking it?

Smoking it. No, there is nothing like that this side of the yawning grave I hope. I don't know, is everybody cognizant of what that's like? About how fast the world can be rearranged and how totally replaced it can be by something that you not only hadn't imagined, until thirty seconds before that, you couldn't imagine. And now here it is and you just gaze, you gape in slack jawed disbelief at what has happened to reality.

[Tape Cut]

Oh no, it doesn't induce. Somebody asked, is it dangerous? The danger with DMT is death by astonishment. This is an entirely possible outcome of your involvement with it, especially if you're intelligent. I think the more intelligent you are, the more at risk you are at death by astonishment because you just say, good grief!

But I see that it's 6:04 and time to knock off. We'll do the Time Wave tonight. It's a kind of indulgence of me because it's the only original idea I've ever had. So, you're forewarned if you have something better to do. The hardcore will assemble here at 8pm and will there be a technician to boot the disk or is there somebody here is DOS?

Cool. Good.

Well I'm pro-virtual reality, just in the sense that I don't think it should be made illegal and stamped out. I think it should be a legitimate area of research. I certainly don't think that most people should plan on

decamping to virtual reality land for the rest of much of their lives. That wouldn't be a good idea. I see it primarily as a tool for studying language and communication. You never know where a technology is going to lead. When Edison invented the phonograph record, his sincere belief was that it's major application would be in the making of wills because you would have an incontrovertible record of the person's voice speaking and so it wouldn't be legally contestable in court. Well I don't know if anybody has ever made a will on a phonograph record. It clearly had an entirely different use and application.

[Tape Cut]

So here we've arrived at Sunday morning. This is basically loose ends, complaints, resolution, that whole bit. So let's work our way into it and then if need be, I'll harangue. So anybody have anything they want to...

[Tape Cut]

I like understanding. Whitehead said that understanding is the apperception of pattern as such. That's all, as such. So you can look at any situation and see different patterns. I mean like in this room. If we were sociologists, we could analyze where the women are and where the men are and that would be a pattern and we could talk about that. Then we could switch our field of interest and talk about where the men and women over forty are and the men and women under forty are; an entirely different pattern. Where the people wearing socks are and the barefoot people are. You realize that in any assemblage of objects, there's an infinite number of patterns of connection and the more of them you see, the more you have this feeling, which we call understanding. It's a feeling of having assimilated the object to yourself. The great mysterious assemblage, the mother of all weird assemblages, is history you know? The peregrinations of our species is through time and the detritus of that journey – I have a friend in London who is a rare book dealer and when I'm in London I'm usually able to contrive a situation where he has to have some errand out so that then I'm left alone for hours with the books inside these multiple concentric circles of security and I can open up all the cases and pour through this stuff and it's astonishing.

I mean, just the cul-de-sacs into which the human mind has wandered - Phlogiston theory, the Chaldean oracles, the Wunderkammer, the hollow Earth thing and then all this literature of exploration. I mean, the stratigraphy of the human experience is maps and machines and diaries and blue prints and out of all this, if there can be a pattern, then there's a kind of epiphany – a sense of order, of ah-ha, it does make sense. It isn't simply a chaos.

Well that's a Hindu notion of this same thing essentially. This Platonic super dimension where all and everything is suspended and in place. If you ever want to have a very bizarre sub-psychedelic experience when you're in Oxford – go to the Pitt Rivers museum. Everybody goes to the Ashmolean, and of course you should, to see the Uccello's and all that – but on the kinkier side, the Pitt Rivers museum. Pitt Rivers was an early ethnographer in England and into one of those Victorian caste metal and glass ceiling buildings; he gathered hundreds of millions of objects classified by category. So you know there are like 50,000 needles from all over the world in drawers. 10,000 pairs of pliers from all over the world, from all times and places, and on and on and they're in drawers which you can open. The stuff is stacked up twenty feet high and you realize that it's a concentration of manus. It's a concrescence. There's one section where there are over two hundred drawers labeled magical amulets. You open these drawers and magical amulets, southern Iraq, magical amulets Syria, and on and on. Very bizarre. That to me is searching for patterns through the detritus of human history because I really think that we are caught up in a relationship with something very, very mysterious. I don't like religious vocabularies but an epiphany is taking place.

Something...consciousness is really important and it is using the stuff of biology to create some kind of new order in nature, and technology I'm convinced has something to do with it. Machines are more than they appear to be and the machine as we have known it - is to a possible technology what the chip flint is to the technology that we possess today, in the concept of a machine which is downloading of a function into

matter – is a concept of immense profundity. Life may be able to extend its career by orders of magnitude through this means and life is now seen to be clearly central in the evolution in the career of the universe. Most stars gutter out of existence after 500 or 600 million years. That's the average lifetime of a star. We happen to be on a planet around an extraordinarily slow burning and smooth burning star that has lasted a long time. But life on this planet has been here for at least 2 billion years. That's three times the life of the average star. Biology is persistent. Biology is a major player and biology is not entropic.

A star, no matter how smooth burning and self-sustaining is on a downward energy curve toward heat death and extinction. Biology, on the other hand, pumps itself to higher and higher levels of complexity, faster and faster. It uses the dying stars as stepping-stones for one to another. You know for instance, in the Hawaiian Islands, there's thirty million years of evolution visible but no island out there has been above water more than six million years. The islands keep slipping beneath the sea and rising at the western edge of the complex and the life keeps stepping from island to island and perpetuating itself. Hans Moravec has done calculations of the kinds of computational simulations that could be carried out if you had a computer where every atom was a switch and the computer was the size of the solar system. With a computer of that size you could resurrect every DNA sequence that has ever existed on this planet and he feels that you would feel a moral obligation to do so and that the resurrection of the dead would become a social project pursued with government funding.

[Tape Cut]

Well I don't think Rupert would agree that biology is entropic. The way biology works is by being what's called an open system far from equilibrium. You see a closed system like a star or a fire will always drift towards equilibrium, which is entropic. But the miracle of biology is that by taking in matter, by being an open system and allowing matter to come into the system and then breaking down that matter and extracting energy from it – the biological organism achieves the miracle of evading equilibrium. It hovers off the main curve of equilibrium so people who talk about the third...what?

[Indecipherable Question]

Well this is debatable at the highest level. There's a problem there because for some weird reason, the identifiable amount of matter in the universe falls so close to the cusp of either 'it's open' or 'it's closed' that they can't tell. And why this is probably means there's something wrong with the theory. You know P. W. Bridgeman said 'a coincidence is what you have left over when you apply a bad theory.'

But I want to go back for a moment to this question of the open system far from equilibrium. The second law of thermodynamics, which was thought to be inviolate, states that all systems run down into entropy. But in practical terms, given the facts that I just stated about how life is three times as persistent than the average star and that if you view life on this planet as a single unified system of genes, then we have to say that there has been a dissipative structure far from equilibrium for 2 billion years. It's been able to maintain itself well off the entropic curve. So I think the second law of thermodynamics looks much more provisional from that light.

[Indecipherable Question]

But you see it's been the third law that's been the downer. I mean the second law because it seems to dictate some existential terminus to everything. See that's when you view the universe as matter. Here's another thing you have to lay over this; that all comes out of a materialistic view of the universe. If you view the universe as information, the picture becomes much more complicated. We don't really understand what this process is of symbolic signification, of arbitrary assignment of significant association, and it's not simply something done in human language. The codons of the DNA that code the three nucleotide codons that code for a amino acids that build proteins are arbitrarily assigned at the molecular level. There is no inherent logic that says that guanine/guanine/guanine, that codon should code for what it does. It's entirely arbitrary and yet out of that leap towards arbitrary signification comes life itself.

So we shouldn't assume - and it's a natural tendency to fall back into it - that we know what we're talking about. That our intellectual journey through time has taken us to the level where we can actually glimpse what the basic ordering principle is. It may lie in language, not matter. Yeah?

[Audience] - I keep waiting for you to get to the political implications of all this.

Oh, well I think I passed through it lightly but let me take another stab at it. If my picture of things is correct or even close then the future is going to become considerably more dramatic from the middle 90s on. What we have directly in front of us is sort of the long golden garden party afternoon before the news arrives. As the world gets more and more and more peculiar and improbable - and given the kind of things going on out at Jupiter that I talked about - this seems to be arriving on schedule, all this chaotic activity. There's going to be various political stances arise in relation to all of this stuff. For instance, one faction will say that nothing at all is wrong. This is I think what we see going on now. That there's a kind of collusion by governments and institutions to manage apocalyptic awareness and to say, well you don't need to worry about the fact that ozone is disappearing from the atmosphere because by 2000, we will have a 7% reduction in output of CFCs and by 2050, we're planning a further 7% reduction. And you say, 'no, no - these are crazy people obviously.' There's a lot of arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic going on. But I think eventually as the fluctuations become more violent, they will burst through and political dialogues will start on various fronts. It's hard to say where it will come. For instance, historians of the break up of the Soviet Union can reasonably argue that what actually was the hole in the dike there was the Chernobyl explosion and that actually set off a series of thought of awareness - people's minds changed. It was like a psychedelic drug, this radiation spreading through Soviet society because they realized, my God, this was a power plant. It was at ground level. It wasn't even a designed explosion and eight days after it happened above Auckland New Zealand you could sample the radiation in the air. There was a whole crisis of faith in the command economy, in everything. This will happen. The one thing you can be sure of is that the 90s will be shaped by the unexpected. It could be anything. A hot day in August in Mexico City and a million people die when finally all of these toxic levels come together as they potentially could. Or it could be a nuclear failure, or it could be an assassination, or it could be the outbreak of a synthetic disease. Or anything.

What this will bring home to people is that the meta-stable nature of society is beginning to break down. That the shock waves of the future are building up. In engineering an airfoil, engineers have to take account of what is called Q-forces; vibration. If you don't design the airfoil correctly, as you approach the speed of sound, the wings of the airplane will be torn off. So you have to redesign the airplane to move through this barrier. What we have to do is redesign the cultural airfoil so that we slip...

[Indecipherable Question]

What? You mean that it shouldn't support wrecking the third world? Pardon me?

No, see I think that kind of thing is like talking about closing air bases near Sacramento and whether western civilization can survive the shock of this loss jobs. We're turning into an information society and managers are trying to meet the crisis but if my faith rested with human managers, I'd be frantic. The main thing is that the design process is being imposed by nature itself. Just in the way that a supersonic aircraft has it's design imposed by nature itself. The nature of the medium is dictating the shape of the society that is coming into being. The main thing is to try to make this through with as little bloodshed and hysteria as possible. It's very hard call. Looking at something like Bosnia, you know, the impulse to use F-18s to correct the problem is very great. Yet in the past this has not brought joy and thanksgiving where it was used. Also the hubris of thinking that your job is to separate these people. On the other hand, we can't have people running around trading nuclear weapons in the red light district of Frankfurt, which is going on. This is actually going on.

There is a great potential for chaos on the Eurasian landmass right now. How should that be managed? A

lot of people have nuclear weapons that have no business having nuclear weapons. I think we need to disarm from the top. That's a political agenda and one thing that has to be understood is that what is going on is a process of fragmentation. That is what is supposed to happen at this cultural stage I think. McLuhan talked about what he called electronic feudalism. Wherever fragmentation is resisted, violence and war and horror will break out. For instance, five years ago there was great anticipation of a federal Europe. That ran against the current of dissolution and now we see there won't be any federal Europe. I mean there will be something on paper in Brussels to keep the diplomats shuffling back and forth but there will be no unified psychology. They're going tribal. The great political force shaping the 90s on one level is ethnicity and turf battles. As these huge ideologies withdraw their imperium, all these local satrapies and warlords begin to exercise their historical claims.

Islam is set to make enormous gains. This has to be accepted in the West. It shouldn't be resisted. The historical momentum is too great and you know, it's 700 million people and it represents the only reservoir of tradition of significance left on the planet. In terms of a political agenda, it's pretty clear. The psychedelic thing speaks to freedom, so you can shine that on a number of issues: women's rights, abortion, legalization of drugs - but not absolute libertarian anarchy because I don't think we want to get rid of the Food and Drug administration. We may want to execute the top echelon and replace it - but the concept...

I've lived in a country without a Pure Drug Act and it's a nightmare. In India, you can't buy pepper without being afraid that it's been contaminated with lead flakes to make it weigh more when you buy it in the market.

[Indecipherable Question]

But none of us ever had a psychedelic experience in a safe environment. We come out of the nightmare ages. I took psychedelic drugs under the aegis of Richard Milhous Nixon. I've stared at archetypal danger in the face. I took psychedelics under Indira Gandhi. That was...

[Indecipherable Question]

Well see here's the bottom line on this. It's exactly - and I've said this ad nauseum but I can't think of another metaphor for it - it's exactly like a birth. So what you have when you have a birth, it's going to happen. The only option you have is you know: is it going to happen smoothly and with skillful pain management and quickly brought to a conclusion or is it just going to be an opera of agony and hysteria and pleading and so forth and so on. The way to ease the historical crisis is by spreading awareness. You're right, the psychedelic is the primary catalyst and then what follows along is this vocabulary of 'relax' for crying out loud.

If hearing the word relax is enough, then so be it. If you have to have the Time Wave and all this mathematics to prove to yourself that you should relax, then that's fine too. But the bottom line is we're in the roller coaster. The little pipe has now been dropped into your lap. Please do not stand up, scream if you want, hang on and we'll come through it. But we have to reassure people and the way you reassure people is by getting them to transcend the systems that are spreading the anxiety. I mean if you're a fascist, if you're a capitalist, if you have some vested interest in the system, then you're going to be sweating blood. You have to divest yourself of a commitment to the system because it's in the process of transformation. Here's a hard psychedelic truth actually if you want to boil it down to the bottom line. This is the one thing I've learned, maybe, from psychedelics which is - and this is the message of the Time Wave and this is the message of your life and my life - it's that nothing lasts. Heraclitus said it, *Panta Rei*. All flows, nothing lasts. Not your enemies, not your fortune, not who you sleep with at night, not the books, not the house in Saint-Tropez, not even the children - nothing lasts. To the degree that you avert your gaze from this truth, you build the potential for pain into your life. Everything is this act of embracing the present moment, the felt presence of experience and then moving on to the next felt moment of experience. It's literally

psychological nomadism is what it is. That's what evolve to do and that's what we're happiest doing. But we've fallen into this object fetishism, sedentary agriculture based style and then we're frustrated. So a recovering of this ability to surrender and release, it's very hard for me and it's very hard for anybody who has an ego and it's why the psychedelic experience is so challenging...

[Part 4]

The Maya established their own civilization in a not very interesting part of their own calendar. Not at the beginning but sort of two thirds of the way through. It looks as though they counted forward to an end date rather than just had an establishment date. How they were able to count forward that many thousands of years to a solstice without losing and time or being off even by a day is hard to figure. I made an interesting discovery just a few weeks ago with a program called Voyager. I don't think we discussed this, did we? There's a program called Voyager, which lets you view anywhere in the Solar System from 10,000 years in the past to 10,000 years in the future. So I typed in the longitude and latitude of La Chorrera, December 21, 2012 AD. I knew that the exact moment of the solstice is 11:18am Greenwich, so I knew then that this was 6:18AM local time at La Chorrera. I put in all these coordinates and saw that the sun, if you turn and look east along the equator, the sun has risen about 12 minutes before. I went up to the menu and chose the ecliptic and it slashed down through it as it would because the sun defines the ecliptic. The ecliptic is the path the sun follows. But then I went up and chose define the galactic ecliptic and it drew a line, which made crosshairs that exactly caught the sun in the crosshairs.

Now this is very interesting. Those of you who aren't astrologers or astronomers let me explain what's going on. This is what's called a heliacal rising. What is happening is the galactic center, which is where the plain of the ecliptic and the plain of the galactic ecliptic cross each other at 28 degrees Sagittarius at the cusp of Capricorn. There that point, the galactic center is rising at the exact moment of the rising of the sun – that's called a heliacal rising and this heliacal rising is in this case occurring on the winter solstice. So then you ask yourself as you do of any such astrological configuration, how often does this occur?

Using Newtonian mechanics where you simply propagate Newtonian laws backward through time infinitely – the answer is it happens once every 26,000 years because it's a phenomenon that depends on the equinoctial great year of precession. You all know that this happens? OK! Now if you use modern mathematics to calculate how often this happens where you put in the chaotic factor into these orbits, you discover that this doesn't happen once every 26,000 years. It happens once only in all eternity because in orbital calculation back beyond 20,000 years, uncertainty accumulates in these calculations and they are not reliable. The solar system itself is chaotic.

'Loud child screaming in the background'

I think someone is processing as they say.

Just the last thing on that. If any of you are interested in that and its an area I'm interested because I don't quite understand what all this means but there is a book called *Hamlet's Mill*, which deals with this old, old myth of galactic world wide myths of the galaxy in the Paleolithic era. There's a lot about this notion in many cultures that there are these gates – conceptually gates – which need to all align themselves and then there is some kind of straight shot...

[Question]: And you felt that they made the Mayan calendar out of that line up so accurately?

Well they end their calendar on this particular solstice. Oh I know what I wanted to say about this because I don't want to leave it. It's a real question because the galactic center as a concept was not defined for Western Science until the early 1960s, so how could the Maya have locked in on a concept so abstruse? It means you would have to know there is a galaxy and so forth and so on. The only explanation I can come up with for that, which maybe shows my ability to explain everything by one hypothesis, is that perhaps there is a drug that allows you to see at the far infrared end of the spectrum. So that instead of hypothesizing that the Maya had a super advanced mathematics and radio telescope and all this fancy equipment – maybe it was simply that they had a drug that when you look at the night sky in the direction of Sagittarius, there's an enormous pulsing thing in the sky which you then could - because you can see it in this drug state - calculate when it would be eclipsed by certain bodies. It seems to me a more economical...because it's a real thing to try to explain how they would have known this.

Then the question, what does it mean? There are in many cultures, the Norse Culture, the Hindu culture and so forth, this idea that the world exists for a finite time and then the stars return to like an original setting. It's sort of like an alarm clock after it has gone through one complete cycle and it returns to the original setting, then the world disappears, is destroyed or the gods come. Anyway, it points to the end of a cosmic cycle. You haven't known me my whole life so it's hard for you to deconstruct it; this is not my style of thinking. I'm repelled by the particularity, the messianism, the counter logical nature of it and yet attempting to objectively describe the content of the psychedelic experience and the map of the human mind that it makes visible. This is the message that I get.

It's as general or as specific as you want. It's as general as 'everything is going to change soon' and it's specific as 'these computer programs that not only show you not only the exact moment when it's going to change but the exact numerical valuation of every moment in the entire history of the cosmos back a trillion years preceding it.' So it's as though in the plants, in nature or in the human mind, depending just on where your depth of focus is; this pattern which can be as generally stated as I said – everything is in the process of transforming or as specifically stated as a mathematical formulism. We've lost it!

History has been the pursuit of a false god: the god of stability, the god of permanence, the god of the unchanging and we've become just neurotic on this subject.

[Question]: You mentioned last night one of the big things is that our thinking process is wrong. This morning, I have nothing last. That's a basic truth but we all cling to building visions, projects and ideas that we can cling to and hold onto. We try to make reality more structured and solid and what's happening around us is that it is falling down in a way. The structured society if 1996 will start crumbling. It is crumbling now but all that solidness that everyone has built – security in a way – all you realize is that nothing does last and you're just experiencing life.

Well in a sense the bottom line of this from a feeling and a heart place is that what's being said here is: reclaim experience. Do not dwell in the mistakes of the past. Do not lose yourself in the castles of the future and do not give your authenticity away to experts, gurus, government commissions, bosses, wives, mates – take back your mind and your body and begin to engage with the fact that you are alive, you are going to die, nobody knows what being alive is and nobody knows what dying is. You're involved in a mysterious engagement where every living moment presents you with mystery, opportunity and wonder. There is no mundane dimension, really. If you have the eyes to see it, it's all transcendental. Every object, a leaf, a bird, a pebble, everything leads back to the basic questions. Everything is the stone. The stone is present. It's a matter of you being present for the stone.

[Question]: I'm not a great spiritual searcher but I did a vision quest once where you traumatize yourself to get into vision. One of the things that I realized that hit me home was that life is chaos and that in human mind, even our walls are built to give us a sense of stability, to protect ourselves and our foundations, we

create a sense of stability that really doesn't exist. It's our name.

Well, the quest for permanence. By having children, this is a pretty good way to do it because you've actually got a shot at a billion years with a lot of luck. But building houses on the slopes of Hawaiian volcanoes is probably not something...

[Question]: It's a whole different dimension. That's how you imagine it?

Well yes, I've imagined it many different ways and according to how recently I've been loaded, I take different positions. People are pushing, I think, because they don't want me to disgrace myself towards a soft version. Something like - that we all make nice and clean up the Earth, you know. No, no! I'm convinced and I think the Time Wave argues for this and looking at the prediction of the cometary impact on Jupiter next July, how can you argue then that this wave is generated out of human biology or culture? It's not. It's not even generated out of biology if it's predicting a cometary impact on the Jovian surface. Presumably no biology is involved. We're talking about what we're seeing is the laws of physics themselves beginning to go into some kind of crisis. It's not no blame for human beings. We are the witnesses and we were somehow called forth by all this but the laws of physics are going into crisis. This is why I urge people to look at Alfred North Whitehead, who was a very scientific and mathematically grounded thinker and who talked about what he called sudden shifts of epochs. His philosophy made a place for sudden shifts of epochs and what that means is the speed of light drops by half over twenty-four hours or the charge of the electron is rearranged. One of the peculiar properties of a fractal universe is almost all the transitions are very smooth but every once in a while you come around the corner and there is a transition that just side winds you because you're crossing over one of these nodes at the highest level of the structure then profound things occur.

[Question]: The shamanic ethos that you talked about in the description of this weekend, is that what you mean by the commitment to direct experience?

Yeah, the commitment to direct experience and then the commitment to build a language for this; to build a culture. The suppression of psychedelics has had the unfortunate affect of making it impossible for us to build a linguistically coherent community and have a shared body of experience. Because you know - you just can't say this stuff to everybody. To put it in very simple, understandable terms, coming out of the closet on psychedelics should be part of the political agenda. Psychedelics should not be classed with other drugs and certainly the Schedule I category, which seems to be reserved only for very hard narcotics and all psychedelics. That's just a cockamamie categorization and the whole society is phobic of the mind, terrified of the unconscious, terrified of dissolving the ego, very anxious if you dissolve your ego - it's a real issue. It's a taboo, very thoroughly a taboo.

[Question]: Does the commitment to direct experience preclude a metaphysical perspective for you?

No but the direct datum for metaphysical speculation should be one's own experience. If you've studied modern philosophy, I think you discover that it's very clear that all you can rely on is your senses. You can't rely on what anybody tells you. The real laboratory bench for philosophy is you looking at your mind and examining it and trying to make judgments about it. Reclaiming experience and the political consequences of reclaiming experience are: that far more than we realize we're embedded in a hierarchy of declension where information is distributed over Macneil Lehrer, Time magazine, CNN and we the serfs down in the valleys are the grateful recipients of the news! 'And now for all you jerks out there - the news!'

So we don't believe anything of our own experience. We wait to be told that a White House commission or a Blue Ribbon group....

[Question]: How does this affect history?

Well I think of history as this prison. I would go with Stephen Dedalus who said, 'history is the nightmare from which I'm trying to awaken.' That's the consequence of bad metaphysic.

[Question]: Earlier you called it a misunderstanding and I'm saying that you have to deal – in this sense it's all about metaphysics.

Well but that works. If you think of it as a misunderstanding then the dissolving of the prison of gnostic confinement was an act of contact with the higher hidden order of things behind appearances. That was the gnostic epiphany. I would say if history is the prison then the psychedelic experience is the epiphany of dissolution that frees, and then you see eternity. You see the Platonic. You see time as the moving image of eternity. The mystery is revealed. That's this whole thing about how a shaman is somebody who has seen the end. That's all and that's what confers this wisdom is having seen the end. It's kind of ultimate experience and then you take your place. You go back to your group and take your place and perform your function.

[Question]: I'm wondering if you've had experiences of talking with other shamanic teachers who also talk about this. I know Henry Taylor, who is an Arapaho medicine man, has that 2000-year-old shamanic tradition. He says that there is time coming, he doesn't say 2012, but he says soon when life will not be like we know it at all. We won't eat the same food...

I made a list of them once. There are about five or six different sources of this 2012 thing. There are some Hasids in Israel who have decided that July 2012 something is going to happen, the Mayan calendar, my thing, something else and some of these Indian prophecies. Of course you see my theory would explain this because what's happening, it would say, as we get closer and closer to the transcendental object, it gives off what I call scintilla. They're like sparks or little reflections that ricochet backwards through time. So you take a psychedelic or you have a dream and then you say I had this dream, there were flying saucers and it was the end of the world and they were taking millions of people off the planet while there was some kind of an adjustment. Well I would call that a typical transcendental object anticipation dream where your dream is not true – that isn't how it's going to happen – the human mind cannot encompass how it's going to happen but that's a little fable about how its going to happen.

Some of you may know Arthur C. Clarke's wonderful book, *Childhood's End*. If you've never read this, it's wonderful. It's about the end of the world, a believable scenario for how it could in fact be transformed and its just spin chilling – it's wonderful. It too is simply a fable. The real thing will be beyond your wildest imaginings, literally. It's messianic return, it's flying saucer invasion and it's Gaian revelation. It's all that and more and more because eventually the machinery of anticipation fails and you just say, it's more than we bargained for. It's the jackpot.

[Question]: I'm interested in your thoughts on psychedelic drugs and levels of maturity. In children for example, to your knowledge are there cultures at a particular age – not three, maybe it's five, maybe it's fifteen – when are humans who are allowed to be exposed to these chemicals and socially indoctrinated?

Well among the Augaruna Jivaro in Ecuador, they put ayahuasca on the mother's nipple the third day after birth. So they quickly establish at least a chemical recognition in the immune system. It's an important question, what do you tell your kids about drugs. I thrashed around about this. I have two kids, a 15-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl and this question comes up in the family and at these groups a lot. I think all you can do; you have to tell the truth. You have to just lay it out and educate them. It's the one place where you can actually function as a parent because the schools are lying and you just say, this is part of life.

You're going to have to make choices, there are dozens of drugs, they are associated with different lifestyles, risk levels, sensations, kinds of people and the main thing I think to avoid is hypocrisy. I think it's really weird, people who say, we can't smoke dope until the children go to bed. This is weird! First of all, the children know and what they know is that you're conflicted and giving off different signals about it. If there are drugs you do that you wouldn't want your children to see you doing, you shouldn't be doing those drugs! That's a perfect litmus test.

[Question]: When do they get to? Is age twelve the age, talking about mushrooms?

Well the first thing to recognize is that it's not up to you and that if you wait too long then they'll just present you with *fait accompli*. So if you say, you know I think it would really be good to wait until your fifteen to do mushrooms, they say – right ok and then you found out it was done. Sometime between thirteen and sixteen, they're going to sort it out. It's right up there with sex. The thing to do is to really say, this is very adult business and you can get into trouble of all different kinds and here's the kind of trouble you can get into. My son is surrounded by cautionary tales and I try to warn him that the great age of hashish smuggling lies in the 14th century and shouldn't be duplicated.

[Question]: Undecipherable.

Oh I'd say we're pretty tight. We live together as sort of bachelor roommates and try to not get into conflicts over women. We like the same kind of music and it's done me no harm with my son to get into this rave club, staying up all night, London, New York, Frankfurt scene because he just loves that. It amazes me. When I was a kid, I was socially terrified and I remember I used to never go to the canteen dances because I knew there were these enormous guys who would just stomp me. I used to lurch in the park across the street and watch them going to and from the canteen because I couldn't socially show my face. So it's a late flowering adolescence that it perfectly in synchrony with my son.

[Question]: Do you believe that theory that some people in the 60s will tell you, that because they were heads, their children have more of a chance to be heads, and do you think it's a social thing?

Well to me that's this issue. This is a real hard issue for parents and to some degree deeper even and harder than the drug issue. And that is, I think I can speak for most people here and say – we are alienated intellectuals of some sort. Alienation is ipso facto not such a cool thing to be. It means that you're constantly aware of the failings and the betrayals – it's alienation and we're alienated intellectuals. So then you have kids and you see that there seem to be only two paths open. They can become nitwits or they can become alienated intellectuals. Which do you want for your children? Do you want them to be perfectly satisfied with a house on the cliffs, two cars in the garage and their position at the advertising agency? Or do you want them to be like you – haunted, always in conflict and never able to come to terms with what? That's a big problem...

[Question]: I want to come clean and say I have a 15 year old daughter who hears all this stuff about it. I've had to come to terms with it. I've said this to her, do you want to be another stupid American or do you want to be alienated like your father?

And she says I'll take stupid!

Well my daughter is not conservative exactly but she looks upon me differently than Finn does I think. Although she's only twelve, so we'll see what it does to her to go through all that. But that's a real problem. I don't regret my alienation. It's hard for people sometimes to understand where I'm coming from. Like a lot of people will go through a weekend like this and one of the rare resistances I get is people say, your vision is so dark, which is completely puzzling to me because it's the most optimistic vision conceivable,

not only by me but by anybody. I say that heaven is eighteen years away and they accuse me of pessimism? What that tells me is that the world transformation is so threatening to some people that no matter how much you talk about how great it's going to be, all they come away with is: 'oh boy – big change?'

[Question]: Maybe it's the way you describe certain analogies. When your talking about some guy falling through a black hole through eternity, it kind of sounds like shit!

No it's the Silver Surfer?

[Question]: Undecipherable.

Well this is the question that gets down to an all-Catholic catechism classes. Sister will there be sex in heaven?

[Question]: The end is going to be an individual thing. Whether it's 2012 or the end of Pompeii, for everybody who it was the end in Pompeii, for some it may have been ecstatic and for others it may have been terrible but we all face it individually.

So what you're saying is that it's the accumulation of fate. It's really what you did before that ultimate moment...

[Question]: It's all going to be individually and it depends on what your situation is at the moment because it's going to be a grand moment. You may have a beautiful high; someone else might be in the depths of depression.

Well what you're saying is that it will come like a thief in the night, unannounced. This is what Christ told Nicodemus. He said, I will come like a thief in the night. No man will know the moment of my coming. Blake talks about this. He says, though Satan's watch fiends shall search through all eternity for the moment, they will never find the moment. Apparently the moment is a very big deal. That's why it's interesting that this all devolves down to a moment. If you're interested in this kind of thing and want to keep your psychological wits about you, read *When Prophecy Failed*. It's a wonderful book about a flying saucer cult that comes to expect the end of the world and has been infiltrated by two Stanford sociologists who then observe what it is like for this very, very devoted cultish group of people to be disappointed, to have an extraordinary disconfirmation of their theology and what they do about that and how they react to it.

[Question]: You mean December 23rd, 2012?

Well people ask me, what will you do if nothing happens? I am not a believer. I want to keep this tar baby definitely at arms length. I think it's very interesting that I have this idea, very interesting that the Wave conforms to history. It's all weird I grant you. It's like being trapped inside a science fiction novel. But I could go through December 21st, 2012, have absolutely nothing happen and say, well, that blows it off – let's go have some coffee. My 65th birthday will occur thirty days in front of the date, so I will just gracefully retire. I think that would be the decent thing to do at that moment! Just say, it's been nice...surely you didn't take it seriously?

[Question]: One of the things that have impressed me this weekend is your encyclopedic knowledge. One of the things I'd like you ask you, what do you read to get the news? How do you get all this information?

Well for instance, the best thing to read to keep abreast of science is Science News. It's totally unpretentious. It's nuts to subscribe to Nature or Science – they cost a hundred dollars a year and you can't understand a word of it. So you read Science News, which comes out once a week and tells you things months in front of everybody else. I subscribe to Archeology magazine, Astronomy magazine, On Our

Backs just to keep in touch with the lesbian erotic literature front...very important!

And let me, what else? For twenty years I've been a member of the Society for the Study of Alchemy and the History of Chemistry, so I get Ambix. I don't know. A lot of information flows my through my scene. People send me stuff. There's a very lively underground press: Psychedelic Illuminations, Reactor out of Chicago, Talking Raven out of Seattle – a very lively English press, music press and psychedelic press. You shouldn't read mainstream media particularly because there's a much more interesting strata of information under the surface.

[Question]: In the question of practicality, how reliable are street psychedelics?

As reliable or as unreliable as the street chemist who made them. That's the problem. When you're confronted with an off-color powder, all bets are off because the motivation for making this powder is nine times out of ten to make money and corners can be cut. That's why if you really want to liberate yourself from the illegal and toxic cycle of drug production, you should grow mushrooms. My brother and I wrote a book called *Psilocybin: Magic Mushroom Growers Guide*. If you want to get into alchemy, this is real alchemy! The formula is rye to mold, mold to gold. You can take a twenty-five pound sack of rye, which costs \$19.99, and you can turn it into \$22,000 worth of mushrooms. Not that you would want to do that of course, you would want to turn it into an enormous number of mushrooms which you would give to everybody in your apartment building and neighborhood. It was one of the most satisfying things about my career, it doesn't happen much any more because that book is long in the past but when I first started public speaking, people would come up to me and say we just want to thank you for writing the mushroom book, you kept a family of six off welfare for eight years.

So growing the mushroom is a wonderful, satisfying thing. The mushroom is an incredible workhorse organism. It will take dry weight of rye and transform it into dry weight of mushroom at 12% efficiency. That's just amazing! And it's short supply these days, like cleanliness, punctuality, attention to detail, responsibility, sensitivity to small shifts of parameters – it teaches you, it literally teaches you to be the kind of person that it wants to take the mushroom.

[Question]: Is it out of print? Can it be found?

No it isn't out of print. It can be found. It can be ordered from a place in San Francisco called Quick Trade. They'll even take a credit card number. Quick Trade has it!

[Question]: Is there anywhere in LA that carries it?

Yes some very hip bookstores keep it.

[Question]: What about the Invisible Landscape?

The Invisible Landscape, which has been very hard to get for ten years or so will be reprinted next year from Harper on the 15th of April with considerable new material and revision. When that's done, when *True Hallucinations*, *Invisible Landscape*, *Archaic Revival* and the Time Wave Software in the Mac and MS-DOS version – when all that's out there, that's essentially the bit. I may be considerably less inevident because I don't see myself... as it is I've given every one of these raps sixty times and Paul has archived it. I would like to go off to some jungle or island somewhere and get back into stretching the envelope with these plants and substances.

[Question]: Could you give us a sense of what's going on in Europe?

Well what's going on in Europe is that this very large intelligent, postmodern youth culture is sustaining

itself and growing. It has more than the dimensions of a fad. The house music scene has been around since 1988 and it's growing still and innovating still. It's a very tribal, positive message and it's very critical of establishmentarian values. It started out as an MDMA based club thing and it's turned much deeper, much more towards psychedelics. I've given talks like this in Megatripolis – which is a London nightclub in Charing Cross. We turned out three hundred people. I talked from ten to midnight and then we dance until 4:30am. And this kind of thing Sasha and Ann Shulgin took London by storm. There really is a fertilization going on. There is a similar scene in Berlin, a similar scene in Frankfurt and I think common cause can be made. The Europeans have a different attitude towards all this drug problem. They see it as a social problem to somehow be studied and solved, not that you have embraced Satanism if you smoke a joint, which seems to be the American attitude. Eventually European attitudes will just shame us into changing our...

[Question]: Is there a drug hysteria there?

No there is not a drug hysteria there. In a very good Berlin restaurant after dinner, make a splif and pass it around and the waiters bring you a silver ashtray as they're clearing the table.

[Question]: I thought that the legal punishment for illicit drugs was a lot more intense in Europe.

No, no! The Swiss are talking about giving Heroin to seven hundred addicts and they just concluded this free needle thing. They're open to experiment; both social experiments with large numbers of drug users and clinical, medical work is being done there. It's being done in Switzerland; Hanscarl Leuner is doing work.

[Question]: I know of one in Amsterdam, where they take about two-hundred people, some inmates, some college students, some working class people, some hippies, various groups of people – and they give them all ecstasy and somebody will talk and sort of work the whole program, the whole communication into a oneness where everyone experiences that together and they say profound things happen in the psyches of all those people.

Yeah, a lot of things are happening. The hemp movement is very strong in Germany and getting stronger in England. But I believe that the boundary dissolving quality of these psychedelics makes them social dynamite and that the policy makers figured this out long ago. This is not a simple, straightforward issue like it's trying to be presented. They just can't allow these drugs to be legal. They will shift social values too much. They know that alcohol, tobacco and sugar are much more detrimental than let's say, mescaline, psilocybin and cannabis – but this is not an argument about detriment, this is an argument about what social values shall be affirmed and what's suppressed. Alcohol keeps a dominance in place. A very rote like, machine like, assembly line society can be maintained based on alcohol, red meat, tobacco and caffeine. They don't want people philosophizing and kicking back and getting people in touch with their feelings about the system.

So I predict that at the very best, there will be a kind of permissiveness but no legal revolution is insight I think unless it comes through the hemp argument. Simply that we can't afford to let the tax revenue go by and the resource base that hemp would represent so we have to change our attitudes on this.

[Question]: I'd like you to talk about the emergence of women?

We didn't talk too much about woman this time. Sometimes we talk a lot about all that. The major difference between historical society and this archaic thing that I'm so enthusiastic for was the position of women. Nature is imagined as feminine and that in the partnership society there was role appropriate behavior. Obviously women represent the unconscious, the untamed and the wild side of things and that's

why the control of woman is so high up on the agenda of everybody who is trying to hold the line on what's happening.

The more rapidly that women can find their place, the better it's going to be. Then the question is, what is their place? I think feminism, understandably but nevertheless, did itself no good by deciding that what liberation meant was that 50% of the country CEOs should be women. It meant nobody examined the system into which all these people were going to be liberated and noticed that it was a horribly repressive system itself deserving of radical reformation. But I think the agenda of women seems to be now being reexamined and thought about. I'm amazed at how powerful misogyny is and how politically incorrect the 90s are from the vantage point of say the mid-70s.

In media, women have clearly lost ground. The bimbo is back big! How this is to be addressed, I don't know. I think it's all related to – well here this opens up a big issue but let me just mention it – Esalen is one of the places which promoted the idea that you can heal various conditions through visualization and imaging, you know? But one of the consequences of that that has never really been dealt with anywhere is, if there are images that can heal then there are images that can sicken. There are images that can make ill. Our terror of psychedelics and anxiety over sex have lead us to substitute for those legitimate domains of human experience, an incredible plethora of images of violence. I am very, very strong first amendment person. I don't think anybody should be restricted in anything but I'm troubled by the obvious affect of images of violence on society and women. The woman question is right in there.

As long as we tolerate an unrestrained outpouring of violent images, we're undercutting any chance women have of moving their agenda forward. I don't know how you do anything about this. It's a very difficult problem. Violence without violence to women is like a circus without lions. Violence is code word for violence against women.

[Question]: Violence is no fun without women?

It doesn't sell particularly.

[Question]: The connection of sex and violence?

Well, the number of images. See we try to pretend we're not being shaped by our technology but an average evening of TV brings you three hundred fifty images of violent death and dismemberment. Well in a lifetime of hunting people down and hacking their heads off, you wouldn't see that much violence if you were in a media free world.

So what the hell is going on here? It's that somehow we're anxious about sexuality, so no; no there can't be any of that. We're anxious about drugs, that's not even on the agenda. So the only pizzazz left is this violence thing and it's like a drug, in that you build up very rapid tolerance and so there has to be just more and more piled on. It's amazing to me that this is all done in the service of the ideals of the marketplace. This is all done so people can make lots of money. It's an extraordinary abdication of responsibility on all members of society that we tolerate this kind of iconoclastic behavior. Anyway, that's why I think of television as a drug and a very insidious drug, a drug you can program. I mean, a drug you can buy time on for your message. And yet millions of people are being larval states of mind for years and years out there in the flats just getting those sixty channels, nine hours a day.

[Question]: It's voluntary!

There are so many levels of programming. See what happened is, this is just my take on it – but it was a very traumatic thing for my parent's generation to go through the depression and then the defeat of Hitler in Europe. All that science fiction stuff about eugenics and what was done with the Jews – people were just fed up with the 20th century by the time the atom bomb arrived. What they wanted and what they had been promised by the New Deal Democrats was a paradise. Well the only way you could deliver paradise in that political context – it has to be an ersatz paradise. A paradise of stucco and TV, TV dinners and tube

furniture and that's what they got. They got an ersatz paradise and out of that come the discontent of their children who see that Howdy Doody and a water sprinkler on the front lawn doesn't feel like paradise. That is what has driven American society deeper and deeper into artificiality – the need to supply this synthetic, manufactured paradise. That's why the cult of the celebrity and the intense media saturation and all of this is diversion; it's a substitute for a life. That's what 'get a life' means – go get stoned, go get laid, go climb a mountain or kayak a river but somehow take back your own authenticity from the people who are peddling you canned experience with laugh tracks, caffeine augmentation and so forth and so on.

The real message of psychedelics I think is to reclaim experience and to trust yourself. Your perceptions are primary. Your feelings are correct. Everything must constellate out and make sense and parse with what you know. If you don't start from that assumption then you are off-center to begin with. The psychedelics will dissolve the cultural programming that has potentially made you a mark and restore your authenticity. That's what it's all about. Whether the only transformation in life is the personal dying that awaits each of us or whether there is a grand opening and opportunity just ahead at the end of history. That's all folks!

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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aka The Psychedelic Option [Psychedelic Salon Title]

Day May 1990

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Well, I'll just say a little bit about myself and how I relate to this. I don't really like to talk about it in those terms, but since this is the getting-to-know-each-other thing, it's very important to the what I understand that, um, everybody else understands, there is nothing special about it, or me. In other words, for what I'm trying to do to make sense – this access to this transcendental realm – has to be democratically available. It can't depend on your spiritual accomplishment or your mastery of a technique or something like that. It isn't like that. It's something that is as much a part of us, as ordinary people, as our sexuality is. And sexuality is not something that is dispensed by gurus; it's just something you figure out, and do, you know. And, this is much more along those lines. My -- How I explain to myself what I'm doing in this position is that I was just simply incredibly lucky, incredibly fortunate to be, at certain places, at certain times, when they were handing out the good stuff. [audience laughs]

And, um, so -- I see you in the same way. Someone over here – Fred – said that he was looking for the answer to the mystery of life. Well, the weird thing about taking that position is that you can fall into positions where you find it; where you find the answer. And, I sort of feel like that's the situation that the deep plant psychedelic community is in. It's a sense of having found the answer and now the task changes. It's a completely different kind of spiritual universe that you live in after you've found the answer because the task becomes facing the answer. Facing it. You now have it. It's no more about disciplining the passions and all that. No, no. It's now been handed over, and so what are you going to do with it? And, this is, uh, to my mind, in a way, the problem and the challenge that we face globally as a species.

You know, if the holy grail of the Western mind was the ability to release energy and form matter and control nature then this is now achieved. The goal -- so, now, the whole context of the problem changes and the problem becomes changing our own minds, controlling the hand that controls the energy. And this is an entirely different kind of problem. It is not to be solved with the analytical knife plunged again and again into the body of nature. That whole approach is, uh, seen to be, uh, at best, passé, at worst, bankrupt. So, instead, it's about trying to edge up close to nature and feeling, as individuals and as a society, very peculiar about this. You know, it's like going back to your rape victim and pleading for their forgiveness. And yet, as I've tried to make sense of these psychedelic experiences, first, in a general way, saying, "What are these molecules for?" or is that a proper question to ask? "What are they doing for the plant? What are they doing for me?"

As I've tried to come to terms with what this might all be about, I've come more and more back to the notion that, uh, it all lies in the plants, that our peculiar restlessness which, in modern circumstances, has evolved into a rapacious appetite for addictive substances of all sorts - our peculiar, uh, inappropriateness in all contexts -- we are not quite simply complex mammals and we are certainly not angels and we just seem to occupy a very uncomfortable place in the hierarchy of, uh, creation. I think this has to do with the fact that we are, uh, the traumatized inheritors of a dysfunctional relationship, a relationship that grew dysfunctional, uh, in the last 15,000 to 25,000 years. And what we call history is the fall out of a dynamic here-and-now feeling-toned relationship with our environment and into, you know, this morbid anticipation of the future and worry about the past, basically, ego.

I recently spoke in New York and New York is a very nuts-and-bolts kind of town. And people there took issue with the notion that all of our problems can be boiled down to a single problem: If you trace the thread of every screw up back into the maze, it all comes back to a single issue which is excess of ego. We all have excess of ego. Our entire situation - legalistic, psychological, religious - everything is about this. That it doesn't work. It's maladaptive, and yet we have it. And, uh, why do we have it, if it's maladaptive? If it doesn't promote human values, then how in the hell did it get started and what is it that's maintaining and sustaining it? Well, this is what I want to talk about over the course of the weekend.

When I pushed the analysis of what the psychedelic experience meant, to the limits, I was surprised to discover that it left the domain of my personal relationship to the mystery. You know, what is it? What does it want from me? What is it trying to say? All that had to make room for another issue, which is, there's a political issue here. I think most people in this room - most people who have had the psychedelic experience - will agree that the most profound, the most open-hearted, the most moving moments of their lives, some of them, have been tied-in with those experiences. But, we seem unable, unwilling, or even afraid to extrapolate that conclusion to the notion that this is a general panacea for society because we cannot conceive that our, uh, that the solution to a spiritual dilemma could lie in matter. In other words, we ourselves have been infected by the inside/outside, matter/spirit dichotomy of the dominator culture. But, the notion that man - notice the gender thrust here - the notion that man could somehow bootstrap himself to godhead without reference to nature seems to me highly peculiar and simply nothing more than an expression of hubris, pride. A belief, you know, that we can do it our way, and alone.

So, all of this is very -- the shelf life is short on all of these issues because the planet is in a state of terminal crisis. Does that have anything to do with the psychedelic experience or are these separate issues? How can they be separate issues, if the psychedelic experience is a mirror of the state of the individual and collective psyche? And, if the planet is, uh, on a collision course with some kind of terminal crisis. It seems to me then that nature is struggling to right this disequibrated planetary ecosystem. So, in a sense, there is nothing to be done except to watch and wait. But, on the other hand, we are not apart from nature. We are in some sense a portion of nature. This part of nature is the most reactive and energetic because we are reactive and energetic in the domain of epigenetic codes. We can foment rapid change. Until recently, it was a truism of thinking about society that all change had to be gradual. This myth has now been exploded. We know that, you know, you just take them all out and hang them, then that's not gradual and suddenly you've got a new world. This had been done in several places with excellent success recently. So, change need not be gradual and, in fact, I think we're entering into a historical domain where very little change will be gradual. Gradual change was a luxury of the past.

Well, how to come to terms with these processes and patterns - forming and reforming - in our lives, in our

relationships, in our families, in our businesses, in the extended relationships we have with people? It's -- what is needed, you see, is a kind of collective breakthrough in apperception. I was thinking in the hot tub, today, that the most politically potent thing you can do for somebody is to educate them; to give them the facts. The facts are now so horrifying and the means of delivering the facts so effective that there is no excuse for everyone not beginning to act in an informed manner. And I - I think this is happening.

A few months ago, I was in Belize, which is an extremely poor country, a little chip of land in the armpit of the Yucatan that used to be British Honduras. I didn't know there were countries this funky in the western hemisphere. I thought you had to go, you know -- they have the fortune, good or ill, of speaking English as a national language. So, when the British left, they just simply pointed their dishes to the sky and they got 270 channels of American television. It has completely educated the entire population of the country into an extremely sophisticated strategy for surviving in the real world of the present moment. They understand that their only resource is their nature, so they have made the entire country into a nature reserve. They understand that they -- that tourism is their only hope, and for tourism to work, they must halt the destruction of their environment. This, informing people at distant points of the value systems operating at the centers, where values are being created, allows people to position themselves for success.

I mean, a lot is being lost. You cannot pretend that the situation we're in is unambiguously rosy. It isn't. It's extremely complicated. Marxism dissolves. What does this mean? It means that now, uh, 21 language groups and 16 tribal groups are open to exploitation, homogenization, the leveling of cultural values. Every- body will be turned into a kind of white-bread consuming citizen in a beige-fascist world. And this is the alternative to Armageddon. We hail this as a great step forward. What is happening is that all restrictions are being done away with against the expression of completely rapacious drives for immediate self-gratification. Until 18 months ago, only half the world had permission to behave like assholes. Now, this permission is being extended to everyone as quickly as possible as a right, you know, your right to join in the looting of the planet. Well, certainly Stalinism is a bad thing, but is the only ideological counterpoise to that to be high-tech mindless consumer, uh, fascism? I don't think so. In fact, I know not. Because there isn't enough metal in the planet to put a Volvo in every driveway of three and a half billion or four billion people.

So, the search for a serious revolution in values is on. It cannot -- it must come from the spiritual realm. And, the spiritual realm in practical terms means the imagination. The -- the frontier of our species is the imagination. Now, we have to take that slogan and somehow turn it into a technology. How can we go to the place where ideas come from? How can we somehow separate our architectonic fantasies from the ongoing momentum of the planet? Both are valid, you see, but we have to recognize that what we are is almost an ontological transformation of life. We are to life, what life is to the inorganic realm, and we need to separate ourselves from the planet. the planet -- the entire planet should be a bio-reserve. How many of these oxygen rich, water heavy worlds are there? Now it's pie in the sky to talk about moving all heavy industry into space or to the asteroid belt or something like that. But, on the other hand, when you extrapolate a visionless future, even as much as three or four decades into the future, you see the accumulation of problems on such a scale that then there will be no pulling out of the power dive because once a society passes a certain point in the process of dissolution, you just don't make a decision to change. It's too late. You don't have the engineering skills, you don't have the technical community and you don't have the resource extraction ability. It's all slipped through your fingers.

Well, I think psychedelics are catalysts to thought, to imagination, to understanding. And, we are like

somebody who has been dead drunk while the house was burning down around us and now we have awakened to the sound of falling timber and the smell of smoke. We have a certain limited amount of time to figure this situation out. We don't have 500 years or 100 years. Anybody who speaks in terms of solutions that require 100 years or even 50 years to implement doesn't understand the dynamics of the situation. History has some kind of will for its own transcendence. And, I think, we are now so close to the dropping of the mask and the realization of what the game was all along that the -- the sense of this nearby revelation informs all of our lives, I mean, drives our dreams, our thoughts, the choices we make. This is why we're here in this room this evening. It's very big news I think.

The world is not at all as we suppose it to be. I find that very amazing. I mean, that's the bottom line, for me. I always think of these things in reference to that scene in *2001* when the anthropoid apes are leaping up and down and screaming and pointing at the monolith. That's what we're doing here in this room. I mean, the subject of this weekend is unspeakable, you know. It can only be obliquely indicated. Whatever you say about it is not true, uh, and yet, it is somehow the informing mystery of being, and it is not remote, that's the big news. That, the previous human model, which is that we are all poor groveling sinners and that gnosis will trickle down to us from the wonderful folks up on top of the steep building nearby where they're conducting mysterious business with liver readings and star-gazing, that model is, uh, insufficient and insulting considering the situation we have been brought to by those very star-gazing men wearing dresses.

I think what we have to do is just take the machinery into our own hands. It's a matter of personal responsibility to find out what the world is really doing and what it is. What do you think is going on? What do you think this is all about? Who do you think you are? What do you think English is? Uh, how do you really cognize notions like the future, the past, where I've been, what I want? I mean, you know, in *Moby-Dick*, Melville says, "If man will strike, strike through the mask!" Everything is a mask, and just behind that mask lurks, well, what? That's the question. It's the thing that informs every individual existence and that's fine and people have always lived in the shadow of that mystery. It is our weird privilege to live in an age where there is also to be a collective dropping of the mask. A moment of melting and recasting of what reality itself is to be. So, you know, discussing this, convincing ourselves of it and then working out the minute details of how it all is inevitable and couldn't be any other way is how we will occupy ourselves this weekend.

I'm really conflicted in these situations because I feel for some reason - I suppose it's an ego trip - that I want to be correctly perceived. I, as a person, want to be correctly perceived. And, I think of myself as a reasonable person, a person sensitive to concepts like evidence, causality, uh, so forth and so on. And yet what I have to say is completely unreasonable. I'm a messenger bearing news of complete madness approaching from all directions, so -- and I got into that position by staying pretty close to the principle of skepticism. I'm not a believer. In fact, when the aliens draped the mantle over my shoulders, they said, "It's cause you don't believe in anything." This is why -- that's why you got this far, because you didn't believe in anything. It's a good method. Normally, it's a method spawned out of futility. You say, "Well, fuck it! I don't believe in anything." But, it's also very good for getting rid of a lot of crap because the real stuff can take the test of skepticism. The real stuff doesn't have to be bowed down before, you know. It works. It's on its own.

The news is, and it's very hard news to get out because it's news about the structure of reality, the news is coming back from, you know, 50, 60, 100 years of anthropologists, ethnographers, geographers, botanists

dealing with the most quote-unquote primitive people in the most remote parts of the world. The news is that reality is not at all as we imagined it to be and that our prowess in the technical sciences is simply a cultural artifact, an accomplishment of ours. Some people do great tattoos; we send spacecraft to the stars. But, it doesn't mean we understand anymore. And, in fact, the evidence is building that our style of society is the historical equivalent of a temper tantrum. You know, that it has no viability. It's completely self-limiting. It's destructive. And it hands nothing on to its receivers.

So, I sort of talk to this group and others from two points of view: I'm trying to convince you of something, and yet, reason dictates that I assume that you're already convinced pretty much. So then, it's also an effort to figure out what it is we're so convinced of and then what is so great about it? Because I think, uh, some kind of -- this is a real mystery - the only one I know. This is the thing that you hope exists and assume doesn't, if you're a reasonable person because it's that -- you know, all the dreams of childhood, all the sense of magic and the dissolvability and transcendability of boundaries, is returned. It is affirmed in this experience. Well, yet here we are, having this on the brink of a planetary meltdown of culture and ecosystem. So, is this just some kind of dancing on the brink or a kind of ultimate self-indulgence? Does it feed back into the central moral problem of the age, which is, what is to be done? What are we to do? How can we be effective, whatever that means? Is there a discernible role for each of us to play in the metamorphosis and near death of the planet that we are now experiencing or are we simply to witness it?

Well, I don't think there is any point in thinking about these kinds of questions unless you draw back to the big picture and first premises. Uh, you know, a good example of what I mean is, suppose we save the rainforests and stabilize the population and then 50 years down the line, the sun explodes. It means that we didn't get it. It means that we were not reading correctly the message nature was trying to hand to us. And, so, we did the wrong thing and are going to be blown out of the water for such churlishness. So, what's important is to figure out what is going on before you start pushing in the process. And, I don't think you can do it from within a culture. In other words, if you're a person of decent intent and moderate intelligence, and you read the great minds of your culture and study their thought, it's insufficient because everybody is bound within an illusion of language. The entire enterprise of culture is this illusion of language. Homer was as sick with it as Heidegger. So, there's no going back and no classic recension.

What we have to do is reach past to some kind of experience. It must be anchored in an experience. But, there is this thing about being human, which we, as a culture, have ignored, repressed, and don't want to talk about, face or think about which is you can get loaded and nobody knows quite what to make of this. We dance around it with the same kind of furious, ambiguous intensity that we also reserve for sex which is also a boundary-dissolving, momentary, uh, loss of self into some kind of greater whole. And, It also just drives us into a frenzy. And we establish boundaries, we have hierarchies, we push it this way - it just drives us up the wall. Whoever she was who designed this system had the good sense to connect the sexual process very tightly into the generative process. So, there is no way you can get sex out of the human experience. I mean, people have tried in all times and places and in many strange ways. A hundred and fifty years ago, they were putting pants on pianos because it was thought that young men should not see pianos unclothed because it might excite them to impure thoughts. [audience laughs] And, this is real. In England and in our culture, not New Guinea or the moon, but in England pianos wore pants.

But, the psychedelic option is sort of like an appendix. You know, you can have it but you don't need it, apparently. Apparently. That's the key thing. Whether or not you have the psychedelic experience does not stand between you and the ability to pass on your genes into time. It does not stand between you and

continued existence like the autonomic reflex of breathing. It's a kind of a potential loop in development, which we can as culturally-coordinated creatures choose to follow or choose not to follow. But, this development is very recent. Until -- pick a number. Ten thousand years ago, the onset of puberty - which was, you know, a wave of hormonal release, basically - the onset of puberty was the signal to the social mechanisms of the people to begin the administration of psychedelic plants to carry people into adulthood, to carry them into a feeling-toned relationship with the mythological material that they had learned as children, but that they now would be expected to exemplify as realized adults within the Kung or Shu culture, or whatever it is that they are. We, in our anxiety about all this -- and I'll talk about why. I'm sure will come out, but for the present, just to say -- we have interfered with this and have enforced upon ourselves a kind of infantilism. This is a phenomenon that is well known and it's called neotony.

Neotony is the preservation of adulthood characteristics into adulthood - [audience "childhood"] - childhood characteristics, infantile characteristics or even fetal characteristics into adulthood. So, for instance, all primate fetuses are hairless but only the human being retains this fetal characteristic throughout life. The very large head of the human infant, the percentage relationship to body mass remains, uh, very much in the fetal end of the statistics throughout life for human beings. We have large heads. The very prolonged, uh, period in which skills, cultural skills are acquired, up to 16 years. Well, this tendency towards biological neotony, which was reinforced by, uh, mutagenic influences in the diet, is carried over into culture as a cultural characteristic. Have you noticed that every generation views the generation it spawns as more childish than itself? And, we look back to our rugged grandparents who slogged across the plains and I suppose they looked back to people in chain mail who were only four feet high and who could go without eating for six months, or something like that. We become more and more soft, more and more infantile and the final phase of this was just the decision that we never needed to grow up at all. We never needed to find out about the nature of our relationship to being at all. And, so, the psychedelics were suppressed and what you have, in the pre-adolescent child, what is an extreme expression of ego. You know, the 11-year-old child, lets take as the example, is the supreme egoist. And, in a sense, we got hung up at that place because we, uh -- we didn't get hung up in it; we fell into it. We were in balance, but the suppression of psychedelics created the precondition that allowed the generation of ego. And these are -- its very complicated and a lot of factors were at work you see. The mushroom style, the shamanic style of the nomadic hunter-gatherer is a style of goddess worship and, uh, psychedelic shamanism and orgiastic religion. There the shamanism and the religion overlap each other considerably.

The style that replaced that was a style of domination, hierarchy, with these alpha males -- with powerful males controlling females at the center of these hierarchies. And, to my mind, the concern that caused the shift was, uh, the accumulation in the psyche of these hominids of enough ego that there became concern for the line of male paternity. In other words, men wanted to know who their children were and that made the orgiastic style of religion in conflict because that was all about -- the children were the children of the group and sex was a shared activity even though there might be bonding. But, once people -- once men got it into their heads that they wanted to know who their offspring were, then females had to be controlled very rigidly and there had to be control of sexuality and the whole thing just turned into a nightmare. My women, my property, my children, my food, and my territory and so on and so forth.

What had been going on before was a true incipient symbiosis and this is the new idea that I want to communicate and that I'm 1) absolutely serious and, 2) literal about this idea. Our glory and our uniqueness, and why we are as we are, exists because we are a plant-animal symbiotic species. Our ordinary state, our state of nature - the way in which we existed until 10,000 years ago - was in a very

tightly bound symbiotic relationship with plants. They were -- we domesticated them and we, uh, spread them, and we created environments for them through the use of burning. And, in return for this, this mysterious connection opened up where real information couched in humanly cognizable terms - information about where the reindeer went, who you should marry, and what the weather is going to do, stuff like that. Real information began to be traded back and forth.

Now, biologists are familiar with the notion of pheromones, message-bearing chemicals that regulate behavior within a species. But, we're just getting ready to go to the next level and recognize the possibility of what have been called exopheromones, pheromones that regulate behavior between species. It's very clear that in climaxed ecosystems of great age, such as the equatorial tropics of this planet, uh, exopheromonal interactions become the major mediating force in all the evolutionary exchanges going on. The old notion of competition and survival of the fittest is now seen to be bankrupt. The way that nature works is it's the species that can make itself most necessary to other species, the one that can cut energy deals with the most of its neighbors that is the successful one. So, you maximize cooperation, you maximize dependency, you maximize integration. This is the successful evolutionary strategy. I mean, of course, you can be a jaguar and crash around in the forest and eat things immediately smaller than you, but, um, jaguars will be a memory in the fossil record of this planet when the plants will still exist given that man were not part of the picture. So, uh, uh, the dynamic of, uh, of life dictates that these energy levels be held very close.

[Question] - Outside of the natural?

Well, no. Nothing is outside of the natural. All of this can be explained in terms of climatological flux on the African continent. Very briefly, you know, the primates evolved in Africa. Out of the primates came the hominids which were these gracile, upright, opposable thumb, binocular vision and there were a number of these and they existed for, you know, over the past six million years. But, Africa and the planet, because of repeated glaciation, is subject to cycles of drying. And, uh, every time the ice moved south, primate populations were bottled up in Africa. And, we know there have been four glaciations, immediately the last one, the ice melted 20,000 years ago. And, out of Africa that last time came pastoralists, people who had domesticated cattle and had a style of following cattle around rather than being just strictly hunter-gatherers.

Well, I maintain what happened was these arboreal, tree-canopy-living apes came under pressure as the continent dried up to expand their diet because the forests were disappearing and being replaced by grasslands. Well, most animal species eat only one or two kinds of food. This is a general rule in nature and it's in order to hold down exposure to mutagenic influence. But, when an animal population is in a situation of food scarcity, the logical thing to do is to begin to test food sources and to expand your repertoire of food. Well, that's what these primates coming out of the trees did. Number one, they began eating meat which gave them a real interest that they had never had before in these ungulate mammals that were evolving in the grasslands and they also began to test all kinds of other foods in the environment.

When you do that, you are exposing your population to mutation and mutation rates soared. And, it was during this period that the human brain sized doubled, in, like a million and a half years. Someone said it was the most rapid evolutionary expansion of a major organ ever seen in the fossil record. Nothing like it ever happened. Why? What was making this happen? Well, uh, it looks like probably huge numbers of mutations were taking place in this population because people were literally eating anything that they could

get their hands on. And in this environment of the grasslands, the mushrooms were growing on the dung of these ungulate animals. Well, a weird thing about psilocybin is that in very low doses - doses so low you that don't feel anything - uh, your vision improves. They've done tests with this and, you know, there is an improvement in visual acuity, uh, on psilocybin at low doses. Well, you can imagine the evolutionary impact of something like this on a hunting-gathering population where visual acuity is all that stands between you and grim starvation.

It means the population of animals -- the populations of these evolving hominids that accept the mushroom into their diet have just been given a tremendous leg up on nearby competing troops, the competing troops that don't have it. It's like chemical binoculars. Immediately there is an evolutionary reason for mushrooms to be eaten and for mushrooms to be accepted into the diet as an item. When you take slightly more mushrooms and like all alkaloids, it's a CNS arousal. It means you feel alert, feel interested, and you want to boogie. Also, if you're male, it means you can sustain an erection. Now, arousal means arousal, so this stuff is an enzyme promoting sexual activity at that level. Well, sexual activity, you know, the number of copulations that occur within a population is directly related to the number of successful impregnations. So, suddenly you have these horny primates with a lot more interest in sexual contact and partners and all this means that these psilocybin-using creatures that are now more successful at hunting and more interested in sex have all kinds of pressures on them that will force them to outbreed the dull, uninteresting folks who don't use mushrooms at this point. [audience laughs]

Well, so then, uh, yet higher mushroom doses, it's no longer about sexual activity or clarity of vision. It becomes about the psychedelic trip, this tremendous, which is as awesome to you and me as it was to these so-called primitive folks 20,000 years ago. We don't know what to make of it and they didn't know what to make of it. They founded a religion about it. We're trying to start the engine of that same religion all over again. And, the way in which this religious ecstasy manifests itself is in language activity, in cognition, but also in glossolalia, in spontaneous outbursts of syntactically organized vocal activity. Well, the great mystery of human emergence is language. What is it? Where did it come from? How did it ever get going on such a scale? So forth and so on.

But, it looks to me like what we're seeing in psilocybin is a kind of neurological enzyme, a catalyst in the environment that could take an evolving primate population and put it through a series of forced changes that produce ultimately a self reflected, minded, uh, creature practicing a shamanic mother goddess religion in this nomadic context. And, that was paradise and that was the ideal for the archaic revival. In other words, that Eden actually existed. That, we are made for better things than what we've got. It says in Finnegans Wake, "Here in Moicane (Moicane was the red light district in Ireland) we flop on the seamy side, but up n'ent, prospector, you sprout all your worth and woof your wings." That's a promise for the future -- "up n'ent, you sprout all your worth and woof your wings." But also, Antes, we sprouted our worth and woofed our wings, and this whole nostalgia for a perfected shamanism in prehistory is reasonable, I think.

I mean, I think, we had an unimaginably precious gift. We had consciousness and dynamic order. Consciousness as we experience it now within the confines of history is most analogous to cancer. I mean, it's replicating, spreading, but it once was a dynamic ordered thing. People lived, they died, they made love, they had children, they herded their flocks, they had ecstatic flights into dimensions which we cannot even conceive of and they felt no need, you know, to break into the earth, to divert the rivers, to do all of this stuff. And, you know, even if we're not aesthetically attracted to that, we have to make a value

judgment on it because it was not a runaway process. It did not push everything towards crisis.

Okay, well, so, what happened? What the hell happened if that's how it was? Nature is just an ongoing story. The very drying processes that created those grasslands, that created those pressures on diet, that created the mother goddess religion that evolved those ungulate animals - that process continued and the grasslands dried up and the winds began to blow and the water holes got further and further apart from each other and the mushroom festivals went from every Saturday night to the first Saturday of every month, then to four times a year, and then to once a year, and then to once every five years and then to never. And, in the absence of the psychedelic experience, this ego thing gets going. I mean, it's literally like a calcareous growth in the bloodstream of the psyche. If you don't inoculate yourself against it, it will begin to take root and grow. And the world -- the boundaries of the world begin to move inward, you know, and you no longer see things on a planetary scale or a millennial scale. It's just about my women, my money, my land, my children - all of this stuff.

And, at that point, you get the appearance of historical civilizations. You have kingship and the Age of Gilgamesh. My God! When you read the story of Gilgamesh, you just wonder what's going on. Uh, Gilgamesh spurned the goddess and the goddess sent a bull which, to me, you know, is symbolic of the mystery of the mushroom, the ungulate herding horned animal, the cryptic symbol for the goddess. And he rejects the bull and he rejects the goddess. Then he takes Enkidu, the shaman figure and forces him to go with him into the wilderness. And what do they do in the wilderness - this oldest of all myths, this story of the first men - what do they do? They cut down the tree of life. That's what they do. They cut down the tree of life and then it goes forward.

The earliest strata of mythology that comes out of these middle-eastern civilizations is full of this male/female nature artificial tension. The story of Genesis is a similar thing. I mean, what's happening in Genesis is history's first drug bust. [audience laughs] A woman is involved with a plant and the plant, uh, opens their eyes. And, they see that they are naked, which happens to be the case - they are naked. So, in other words, they see -- they grok their true existential condition. And Yahweh, wondering around mumbling to himself in the garden, says: "This thing that these people have done. What if they eat of the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will be as we are." It's very clear that there is concern to withhold knowledge that human beings are to be held in an inferior position. Otherwise, if they were to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, of knowledge, they would be as we are. So there's this whole tension.

And, in the story in Genesis, you'll recall that Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden and an angel is set at the east of Eden with a burning sword. Well, what I take this to be about is the -- it's a story from a strata where already the shift to the dominator culture has taken place. But, they're looking backward at the partnership society on the grasslands of Africa and the angel with the burning sword is nothing more than the sun. That they literally were cast out of Eden. Eden disappeared around them. It dried up and blew away and there was nowhere for them to go but the Nile Valley and Palestine. And these people who appear in the Nile Valley and Palestine at about 9800 BC, called Natufian, come out of nowhere with a very high culture and a tremendous ability to exploit plant resources. And I think they are the remnants of this partnership culture.

And you see our -- the way that this all ties into the present and attempts to be more than, you know, just a cultural reconstruction of prehistory - we're trying to understand who we are, why we are the way we are. The major thing now is that we have transcended ideology. Nobody gives a hoot whether you're a Marxist

or any of that anymore because we've all seen through that. The new issue is human nature and it evolves around this drug thing, you know. Is it the truest and purest expression of human nature that you should drink nothing but cold water and eat nothing but raw vegetables and any departure from this is an abomination? Well, when you get to drugs, this is really an abomination. How -- what should be our relationship to substances and why are we the addictive creatures that we are? I mean, I know that elephants intoxicate on papayas and bumblebees get loaded on sugar-water, but human beings addict to dozens of substances, to behaviors, I mean, all kinds of things. A guy goes out in the morning to pick up his paper off his porch and it's not there. And he has a heart attack and he has to sit down and he says, "My God! What am I going to do?" He has to have instant relief from the traumatic crisis of the non-presence of the morning information fix. Then, there is the phenomenon of falling in love which doesn't really happen with other animals. Other animals bond, but they don't go bananas in the way that we do on this issue. Uh, we're chemically highly queued in a way that a lot of animals around us aren't.

So then history, because of this, because of this addictive drive within us, because of this disrupted symbiotic relationship in prehistory -- see we're looking for the score, but we can't quite find it. Imperialism doesn't do it, heroin doesn't do it, sadomasochism doesn't do it. Nothing quite does it, but we keep trying stuff: cocaine, money, fascism, mercantilism, ideology -- all of this stuff. We are very, very restless and the path of our restless, frantic peregrinations across the intellectual landscape is what we call "history," you know. It's our effort to try and get straight and get back to something, which we feel we deserve and that we lost. And we don't know quite what it was.

Meanwhile, in the rainforest, in the arctic tundra, these little brown people have been keeping the gnosis going. Never questioning, never doubting, millennia after millennia going into these hyper-dimensional mind spaces and operating there. While this has been going on, we have been elaborating positivism, scientific philosophy, building atom smashers, so forth and so on. We have created then out of our infantile cultural style, uh, what Erich Fromm would call a fecal cultural style because we just excrete stuff, you know, all kinds of stuff. Uh, they have held this mystery, but they -- to my mind, the mistake that has been made is that it's been thought that they understood it. That we now go to the shamans and they will explain to us what the inner-skinny is on all this. That isn't it. There's no explaining this. Once you've been there, you know the futility of a notion like understanding the psychedelic experience. It's like understanding the ocean or understanding planetary ecology. We think that things are to be understood, but some things are simply to be -- what's the word? -- appreciated, imbibed, to be in the darshan of them.

Well, let's talk a little bit more as we were did this morning. I talked a little more than I intended to. What is anybody's take on this. Did anybody not get their licks in this morning? Yeah?

[Question]: You mentioned the odd, the strange and the weird. Other than hallucinogens, how can we fool this brain away from the ego?

It's pretty difficult. I think that's why we're in the situation that we're in.

[Question]: I'm talking about things that we can do everyday, not just once a month.

There is no substitute for awareness in any situation. I mean, part of the work is the spectacular episodes of intoxication that break down the boundaries of our personality and reorient us and recast us. But, the other thing is just living that out from day to day and there's no substitute for hard work. I mean, people say,

“How can psychedelics be real? You’re saying that it’s some kind of shortcut to spiritual wisdom.” Well, it may be a shortcut, but nobody said it’s easy. Uh, it isn’t easy. No. It’s just that it’s ultimately effective. I don’t know, I find myself preaching a doctrine that is hardly welcome in the touchy-feely circles that I’m usually teaching in, which is stifle it. There’s a doctrine to take home from the New Age. Stifle it. You know, the ego is much too large. I mean, we need an ego, yes. That’s so that if you take somebody to dinner, you know whose mouth to put food in. That’s having an ego. But, above and beyond that, it becomes sort of superfluous. It’s a habit. It’s a bad habit. It’s an infantile response that has been culturally supported to the point where it’s become institutionalized.

[Question]: Do you believe a person needs a strong enough ego before they can transcend or transform it? The reason I’m saying that, I’ve seen a lot of teenagers in the city and they experiment a lot with drugs, and especially with psychedelics. Sometimes I wonder if they’re really getting anything out of that early experimentation. I didn’t get into psychedelics until my late 20s.

Well, it’s a real complicated question. Civilizations evolve folkways to deal with the drugs that they’re interested in and this takes hundred or even thousands of years. Part of the question I hear you asking is - you say that these drugs dissolve the ego, but aren’t some people in a weakened ego condition when they come upon them and I think probably you’re right. It’s not clear that the onset of puberty, when there’s a good deal of psycho-sexual and endocrine confusion going on anyway, that this is the precise right moment that you want to drop these psychedelics on somebody. Although this is done in many traditional societies. But, the problem is, in societies where there is shamanism, there’s an understood way to do it. There’s an understood way to initiate somebody. Kids growing up on the streets taking drugs of all sorts, in doses of all sorts, is very hard to sort it out, you know. I mean, people don’t have intent, they don’t have focus, they don’t have information. Everything is so fragmented in modern life. Part of what all this yammering about shamanism might eventually lead to is the reformation of psychotherapy along the lines of a shamanic style, so that then, uh, you know, people could have these voyages, could have the insight into their problems that you get from psychedelics.

[Question]: Also, in those cultures and societies where they do use psychotropic drug at puberty, I think those societies support the individual, the child growing up, in very positive ways and feed their ego in a very constructive, positive way so that they are not filled with a lot of self-consciousness and self-hatred and a lack of self-worth and so forth. A lot of the critical nature and the lack of nurturing and attention that a lot of us grow up with in our society then get weak egos from adolescents then on into adulthood. I think the developmental quality of life in different cultures has a lot to do with one’s ability to utilize the drugs and the plants effectively.

Cooperation is just an automatic response among many of these rainforest hunting-gathering people and when you finish a job, you go on and do another job until all the jobs are done. And, this is clearly a learned response because these are human beings just like us, but under the extreme pressure of being, you know, 20 people trying to hold it together in a rainforest through gathering. They have accepted that the tribal unit is the lowest common denominator and that everything has to operate in the light of that. Back here.

[Question]: Part of what was being discussed here was the difference between discursive and one-pointed meditation. And, discursive meditation is meditating on the stations of the cross if you’re Catholic, or the seven teachings of the self if you’re a Hindu, and it sort of serves years of doing that as establishing a ladder that

can take you to the transcendent. One-pointed meditation, and even more profound than the use of psychedelics, can suddenly put you into a transcendent state and whether you'll have the capacity to get back is the question. So, there might be a role for a period of discursive meditation or an education along that way before something instantly propels you into an experience of the transcendent.

Yes, although, um, this difficulty getting back is an interesting thing to talk about because I certainly know what you mean. I think, that everybody who takes psychedelics a lot eventually has a trip that stands their hair on end. And, the reasonable fear I've always felt about psychedelics was not that it would kill you - that's not reasonable - uh, but, the somewhat murkier question, could it drive you mad? is a little harder to just say, of course, not because why not? It's definitely rubbing up against those areas. I have real faith that it's like flipping a coin and getting it to land on its edge. The psychedelic experience represents such a stage of disequilibrium that in almost all cases the entire system is striving to return to normal and will do so very quickly. You know, my life is built around one spectacular exception, where my brother took a bunch of things and had a theory and proceeded to sail off for the better part of three weeks. And, this sort of brings up another issue, we sit here relatively down and calm and we can talk about the LD50 of psilocybin. That's how much you would have to give to 100 mice for 50 of them to die. This is what pharmacologists are all about. But, when you're actually stoned in these places, you realize, or you have the apparent realization, that, of course, the mind is in control. And talking about safety - you're only as safe as you think you are. Literally! And, if for a moment that you decide you're not safe, the state is very fragile. It's skittery. Get it going too fast in one direction and it will be very hard to run around and get in front of it, get it halted and moving off in some other direction.

[Question]: Is that what you meant by self-toxicity?

Did I use that phrase this morning?

[Question]: Well, no. In a past tape, you did mention about self-toxicity and possible negative effects.

Well, yeah. I think this is what people fear, that they are self-toxic. We have all been disempowered. To some degree, we are self-toxic and that's a real tragedy. It means we have been made our own enemy. Whether or not we are, we all fear self-toxicity. This is why in the 1960s when LSD first began to appear, people had such violent reactions to it. You know, Tim Leary said, "LSD is a psychedelic drug which causes psychotic behavior in people who haven't taken it." [audience laughs] This is absolutely true. Why would a drug that you don't take cause you to become psychotic? It's because the mere fact of its existence is so threatening to you because you know that you're self-toxic. That's what I always felt in the 60s. These people all know their crazy and they don't want to get near anything which would perturb their psychic dynamics. They know beyond a shadow of a doubt that they're certifiably insane and they don't want to hear about it. So, they're not going to be delving in to something that shines a Kleg light on the mechanics of the psyche [audience laughs]. It's the last thing that they are interested in.

[Question]: If the definition of ego is the reality-testing mode of the psyche. The psyche's ability to perceive reality, then it almost seems that the psychedelic experience augments the ego to a new level rather than extinguishes the ego and that it gives a truer picture of reality.

Well, you know, Freud had this concept that he called the "superego" and this term has somewhat fallen out of use. And because we all tend to be a little more Jungian than that and we talk about the collective

unconscious. But in a way, though I'm more sympathetic to Jung, I like the phrase superego because the phrase "collective unconscious" is a kind of blah concept. It's like a databank, a repository, whereas superego seems to imply organization, intelligence, focus, and awareness. And, uh, what seems to emerge from these psychedelic experiences is that where we expected disorder or the absence of organization, we find order. We find mindedness. The superego seems to be everywhere. So, in a way, it is like that. It is that you're becoming more informed, but it diminishes your personal importance and the physical atom of your body, you know. I mean, we believe - and it may be true but the question is - how important is it that we are each unique and that somehow in this uniqueness is our worth? And that if something were to happen to you, we can't replace you with me and you can't stand in for me. But, uh, you know, back off to where you're looking at a thousand years of this stuff and you see that each one of us actually is expendable and that the general processes in which we are embedded are so large that it probably doesn't matter who you are. And I could have been you and you could have been me. Once you've got that nailed down, being becomes a whole different project.

Being is something out there that you do: you garden well, you bare and raise children, you feed people, you build objects, you know. It becomes something outside of you rather than something interiorized and, I think, you know, thousands and thousands of generations of people were born, lived and went into the ground with this kind of a psychology. And, we are all imprisoned by our cultural expectations to such a degree that the real problem is to make ourselves realize how blind we are. How much of what we've been taught, the words we use, the expectations we have hem us in. The psychedelics show us that cultural relativism, not as an exercise, not as something that you're convinced of by rational argument, but that you just see it, immediately. I think we're very malleable creatures and have held many positions in the last 10,000 years vis-à-vis these structures, which we call the ego, the superego, the self, the unconscious. It's more fluid than we imagine.

Language may have emerged only 40,000 years ago. Well, imagine that, language is the software without which we wouldn't be people, you know. I mean, language allows us to explore realms of subtlety and inclusive understanding that so exceed the animal grasp that they can barely be compared. Uh, I think that probably in the beginning, language was something that women held almost as a magical power. The reason for this is that there was greater selective pressure on woman than on men to develop language because the physically larger male - when there began to be role specialization - the physically larger male was made a hunter. Hunting places a premium on such values as stoicism, patience and an ability to keep your mouth shut.

The women were involved in gathering and because the children were physically with the women, this area in which the gathering went on was more tightly related to the living space. Well, if you know anything about the science of botany, you know that it is a science of the coordination of detail. Everything is about the detail. Here you have 50 species of grasses. To Joe Blow, they all look exactly the same. To a specialist in the gramineae, here is a whole rich universe of taxonomic diversity to be combed over and milked for years as you advance through the academic machinery. So, women had to learn all these differentiations. Women had to be able to make statements like, "It's the small bush at the bottom of the draw with the wrinkled leaves and the sticky, white berries with the silver hairs on them." See. It's all color, shape, form and relationship words.

Well, this kind of language is the kind of language that gave us a leg up on animal organization. After a passage of time, I think this linguistic thing generally established itself but it was, uh, originally a thing that

women were into. Even to this day, when you go into villages in third world parts of the planet, uh, there's this phrase in all travel books, which is, the chattering of the village women. And, it's true, they really do chatter and it's because they are more collective creatures. The male is this proud, lonely hunting figure and the females represent the village values and they held the knowledge of the plants. They discovered all this stuff. You even get that in the Eden story. It's a woman who's blamed. Somehow these women have a deeper insight and the poor guy is just led to slaughter because he's trying to get some chow. [audience laughs]

[Question]: Perhaps an appropriate image would be one of climbing a temple. (...) most impressive temple that I've ever visited. But, um, there, as you walk up the temple, if you pay attention, you hear (...) Buddhism and different symbologies, but, basically, your vision of the surrounding jungle expands and your sense of self diminishes, so...

Because you see the larger world.

...you see the larger world from on high.

Yeah. From the center of the mandala. The same psychology is operating on the Mayan buildings. The Mayan buildings are barely buildings at all; they're more like pedestals. This thing is 230 feet high but when you climb to the top of it, there's room for twelve guys to stand shoulder to shoulder. And, that's the building. It's clearly to elevate them above the social space. It was literally a machine for lifting the priesthood into another dimension and the dimension into which it lifted them was an aerial dimension. They could see then the whole world; they could see the socbay stretching out to the next pyramid. They could see the next pyramid five or ten miles away on the horizon and could see the life of the city and all this.

You know, there's a funny thing, um, it's almost as though biology and then its ancillary tack on phenomenon - culture - is a kind of conquest of dimensions that has been going on for a very long time. And, this aids me in understanding the transformation that I think lies ahead for this planet. The earliest forms of life had only a tactile sense. That means all they knew was what they were bumping up against. And they would move around and what was edible was eaten and what wasn't wasn't. And then a long time passed, you know, 100 million to 200 million years, and certain specialized cells, uh, aggregated. And, these cells were light sensitive cells. They could send an on/off signal based on whether or not photons were falling on them. So eye spots developed and eye spots are just these sensors that tell you if it's light or dark. And, suddenly these creatures could move off after a light source or could retreat from danger into a dark spot. While then, eventually, these eye spots evolved into the kinds of very finely coordinated optical systems that we have and octopi have and so forth.

At the same time, motility was developing. The ability to move through space. Well, have you ever noticed that when you look at something, at a place a few feet away from where you're sitting and then go there, physically move there, that what you have really done is you have coordinated a short trip into the future? Because you have looked at a spot and said - this is how the brain computer works - "I am not in that place. I want to be in that place. I am in this place now. To get from this place now, to that place then, I have to move through the following points." And, when animals began to move, uh, another dimension was added to their repertoire of control. And, when they began to coordinate vision, another dimension was added to their repertoire of control. Well, we made then a great and fundamental break in our neurological

organization. All animal life, as far as we can tell, is imprisoned between very steep temporal canyons having to do with the present moment. Animals are in the present moment in a way that would be very frightening to us, I think. If you could suddenly enter the mind of an animal, the immediate thing that you would notice that would really unnerve you was the absence of a past and a future. That just, you know -- talk about "Be There Now" - an animal has that down pat.

Well, when we, through language -- language is a strategy for binding time. Language is a strategy for taking the animal mind locked in the present moment and pushing it back conceivably to the creation of the universe as we do, and forward conceivably to the end of the universe. So, culture is a strategy for intensifying the dimensionality of an animal species. And, uh, the, uh, -- when you get into what's called epigenetic coding, not simply being able to recall the past neurologically and project the future neurologically, but to actually write down the past and calculate the future. Well then what is happening is mind is spreading out through the dimensions available to it and this whole cultural intensification that we call the 20th century - the spinning down and interconnecting of technologies, and, uh, animal ecosystems and philosophical systems - all this knitting together is a going hyper dimensional of our species that yet more of the future and more of the past is apparently to be realized. And, if you know anything about virtual reality thinking, there time is to be homogenized completely. I mean, you will not be able to tell if its next week or last week because they will be approximately equally accessible. And, uh, somehow the psychedelic experience is related to this bootstrapping process of climbing organizationally from one dimension to another, deeper and deeper into complexity.

It's almost as though the psychedelic experience is a viewing of the process from the highest dimension in the plane. One way of putting this that isn't so mathematical is to say what you experience in the psychedelic experience is eternity. All of time. You leave the slowly revolving Taurus of time just as one would leave the galaxy in a spaceship and you go outside, and then you look back and you see all of time. You see the beginning of life, the end of life, the fiery death of this planet bi-millennia hence, whatever it is. And, I think this is a true vision. That this is what shamans have achieved. This is what we with all our sophistication are confounded by. A shaman is someone who has seen the end. A shaman is somebody who has seen it all. They've run the movie and run the movie and run the movie, and they've satisfied themselves that they understand the movie. Then they go back to their place in the movie and they live it with a small smile [audience laughs] because they know the end. They know how things work. They know what life is.

And, when you have even a piece of that action, you can get a real handle on peace of mind, on true authenticity because it's in the tumbling forward rushing chaos of the lower dimensional slices of time that we lose it. That we become confused. Who am I? What do I want? Where am I? Who should I be with? What should I give myself to? This is a voice speaking from chaos. I remember once at a period of turmoil in my life, I - I took mushrooms to try and resolve my personal difficulties. And I said, "I'll think of a question" -- you know they say, "You think of a question" -- so I said, "I'll think of a question" and the question was: "Am I doing the right thing?" And at the point in the trip I posed this question to it and the answer was, "What kind of a chicken shit question is that [audience laughs] to ask an extra-terrestrial entelechy?" So then I got it, you know. That that was a chicken shit question and that I had been completely misunderstanding the nature of the relationship. This wasn't some kind of little glass ball that gives "Yes" or "No" when you turn it upside down.[audience laughs] This is -- I don't know - words fail -- but, nobody to expect psychotherapy for free from, anyway.

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Alien Dreamtime

27 February 1993

Transmission theater, San Francisco

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Alien Dreamtime was a multimedia event recorded live on February 27th 1993

All right. Tonight for your edification and amusement, three raves, two interregnums. Visions by Rose-X. Didgeerido: Steven Kent, and sound by Spacetime. Words and ideas by Terence McKenna.

Rap 1.

The Archaic Revival. History is ending because the dominator culture has led the human species into a blind alley, and as the inevitable chaoticist approaches, people look for metaphors and answers. Every time a culture gets into trouble it casts itself back into the past looking for the last sane moment it ever knew. And the last sane moment we ever knew was on the plains of Africa 15,000 years ago rocked in the cradle of the Great Horned Mushroom Goddess before history, before standing armies, before slavery and property, before warfare and phonetic alphabets and monotheism, before, before, before. And this is where the future is taking us because the secret faith of the twentieth century is not modernism, the secret faith of the twentieth century is nostalgia for the archaic, nostalgia for the paleolithic, and that gives us body piercing, abstract expressionism, surrealism, jazz, rock-n-roll and catastrophe theory. The 20th century mind is nostalgic for the paradise that once existed on the mushroom dotted plains of Africa where the plant-human symbiosis occurred that pulled us out of the animal body and into the tool-using, culture-making, imagination-exploring creature that we are. And why does this matter? It matters because it shows that the way out is back and that the future is a forward escape into the past. This is what the psychedelic experience means. Its a doorway out of history and into the wiring under the board in eternity. And I tell you this because if the community understands what it is that holds it together the community will be better able to streamline itself for flight into hyperspace because what we need is a new myth, what we need is a new true story that tells us where we're going in the universe and that true story is that the ego is a product of pathology, and when psilocybin is regularly part of the human experience the ego is suppressed and the suppression of the ego means the defeat of the dominators, the materialists, the product peddlers. Psychedelics return us to the inner worth of the self, to the importance of the feeling of immediate experience - and nobody can sell that to you and nobody can buy it from you, so the dominator culture is not interested in the felt presence of immediate experience, but that's what holds the community together. And as we break out of the silly myths of science, and the infantile obsessions of the marketplace what we discover through the psychedelic experience is that in the body. IN THE BODY, there are Niagaras of beauty, alien beauty, alien dimensions that are part of the self, the richest part of life. I think of going to the grave without having a psychedelic experience like going to the grave without ever having sex. It means that you never figured out what it is all about. The mystery is in the body and the way the body works itself into nature. What the Archaic Revival means is shamanism, ecstasy, orgasmic sexuality, and the defeat of the three enemies of the people. And the three enemies of the people are hegemony, monogamy and monotony! And if you get them on the run you have the dominators sweating folks, because that means your getting it all reconnected, and getting it all reconnected means putting aside the idea of separateness and self-definition through thing-ferish. Getting it all connected means tapping into the Gaian mind, and the Gaian mind is what we're calling the psychedelic experience. Its an experience of the living fact of the entelechy of the planet. And without that experience we wander in a desert of bogus ideologies. But with that experience the compass of the self can be set, and that's the idea, figuring out how to reset the compass of the self through community, through ecstatic dance, through psychedelics, sexuality, intelligence, Intelligence. This is what we have to

have to make the forward escape into hyperspace.

Rap 2.

Alien Love Hello... So that was like an introduction, now for some preaching to the choir on the subject of how come it is that the further in you go the bigger it gets. I remember the very, very first time that I smoked DMT. It was sort of a benchmark you might say, and I remember that this friend of mine that always got there first visited me with this little glass pipe and this stuff which looked like orange mothballs. And since I was a graduate of Dr. Hoffman's I figured there were no surprises. So the only question I asked is, 'How long does it last?' and he said, 'About five minutes.' So I did it and... there was a something, like a flower, like a chrysanthemum in orange and yellow that was sort of spinning, spinning, and then it was like I was pushed from behind and I fell through the chrysanthemum into another place that didn't seem like a state of mind, it seemed like another place. And what was going on in this place aside from the tastefully soffited indirect lighting, and the crawling geometric hallucinations along the domed walls, what was happening was that there were a lot of beings in there, what I call self-transforming machine elves. Sort of like jeweled basketballs all dribbling their way toward me. And if they'd had faces they would have been grinning, but they didn't have faces. And they assured me that they loved me and they told me not to be amazed; not to give way to astonishment. And so I watched them, even though I wondered if maybe I hadn't really done it this time, and what they were doing was they were making objects come into existence by singing them into existence. Objects which looked like Faberge eggs from Mars morphing them- selves with Mandian alphabetical structures. They looked like the concrescence of linguistic intentionality put through a kind of hyper-dimensional transform into three-dimensional space. And these little machines offered themselves to me. And I realized when I looked at that if I could bring just one of these little trinkets back, nothing would ever be quite the same again. And I wondered, Where Am I? And What Is Going On? It occurred to me that these must be holographic viral projections from an autonomous continuum that was somehow intersecting my own, and then I thought a more elegant explanation would be to take it at face value and realize that I had broken into an ecology of souls. And that somehow I was getting a peek over the other side. Somehow I was finding out that thing that you cheerfully assume you can't find out. But it felt like I was finding out. And it felt... and then I can't remember what it felt like because the little self-transforming tykes interrupted me and said, 'Don't think about it. Don't think about who you

are. Think about doing what we're doing. Do it. Do it now. Do it!!

Rap 3.

Speaking in Tongues And what they meant was use your voice to make an object. And as I understood, I felt a bubble kind of grow inside of me. And I watched these little elf tykes jumping in and out of my chest; they like to do that to reassure you. And they said, 'Do it.' And I felt language rise up in me that was unhooked from English, and I began to speak... like this, 'Eyo ca dema fla gwa si pipi eng...' or words to that effect. And I wondered then what it all meant and why it felt so good if it didn't mean anything. And I thought about it, a few years actually, and I decided that meaning and language are two different things. And that what the alien voice in the psychedelic experience wants to reveal is the syntactical nature of reality. That the real secret of magic is that the world is made of words, and that if you know the words that the world is made of you can make of it whatever you wish. And one of the things that I learned about DMT was that if you've ever had it, even just once, then you can have a dream, and in this dream somebody will pull out a little glass pipe, and then it will happen! It will happen just like the real thing. Because there's a button somewhere inside each and every one of us that gives you a look into the other side. And that's the button that resets the compass that tells you where you want to sail. Good luck... Rap 4, 'Timewave Zero Hello... alright. Have you ever noticed how there's this quality to reality which comes and goes, and kind of ebbs and flows and nobody ever mentions it or has a name for it except some people call it a 'bad hair day' or some people say 'Things are really weird recently.' And I think we never notice it and we never talk about it because we're embedded in a culture that expects us to believe that all times are the same, and that your bank account doesn't fluctuate except according to the vicissitudes of your own existence. In other words, every moment is expected to be the same and yet this isn't what we experience. And so what I noticed was that running through reality is the ebb and flow of novelty. And some days, and some years, and some centuries are very novel indeed, and some ain't. And they come and go on all scales differently, interweaving, resonating. And this is what time seems to be. And Science has overlooked this, this most salient of facts about nature: that nature is a novelty conserving engine. And that from the very first moments of that most improbable big bang, novelty has been conserved because in the very beginning there was only an ocean of energy pouring into the universe. There were no planets, no stars, no molecules, no atoms, no magnetic fields; there was only an ocean of free electrons. And then time passed and the universe cooled and novel structures crystallized out of disorder. First, atoms; atoms of hydrogen and helium aggregating into stars. And at the center of those stars the temperature and the pressure created something which had never been seen before which was fusion. And fusion cooking in the hearts of stars brought forth more novelty: heavy elements - iron, carbon, four-valent carbon. And as time passed there were not only then elementary systems but because of the presence of carbon and the lower temperatures in the universe, molecular structures. And out of molecules come simple subsets of organism. The genetic machinery for transcribing information, aggregating into membranes, always binding novelty, always condensing time, always building and conserving upon complexity, and always faster and faster. And then we come to ourselves. And where do WE fit into all of this. Five million years ago we were an animal of some sort. Where will we be five million years from tonight? What we represent is not a sideshow, or an epiphenomenon, or an ancillary something-or-other on the edge of nowhere. What WE represent is the nexus of concrescent novelty that has been moving itself together, complexifying itself, folding itself in upon itself for billions and billions of years. There is, so far as we know, nothing more advanced than what is sitting behind your eyes. The human neo cortex is the most densely ramified complexified structure in the known universe. We are the cutting edge of organismic transformation of matter in this cosmos. And this has been going on for a while; since the discovery of fire, since the discovery of language. But now, and by now I mean in the last 10,000 years, we've been into something new. Not genetic information, not genetic mutation, not natural selection, but epigenetic activity: writing, theater, poetry, dance, art, tattooing, body piercing and philosophy. And these things have accelerated the ingress into novelty so that we have become an idea excreting force in nature that builds temples, builds cities, builds machines, social engines, plans, and spreads over the Earth, into space, into the micro-physical domain, into the micro-physical domain. We, who five million years ago were animals, can kindle in our deserts and if necessary upon the cities of our enemies the very energy which lights the stars at night. Now, something peculiar is going on here. Something is calling us out of nature and sculpting us in its own image. And the confrontation with this something is now not so far away. This is what the impending apparent end of everything actually means. It means that the de-no-ma of human history is about to occur and is about to be revealed as a universal process of compressing and expressing novelty that is now going to become so intensified that it is going to flow over into another dimension. You can feel it. You can feel it in your own dreams. You can feel it in your own trips. You can feel that we're approaching the cusp of a catastrophe, and that beyond that cusp we are unrecognizable to ourselves. The wave of novelty that has rolled unbroken since the birth of the universe has now focused and coalesced itself in our species. And if it seems unlikely to you that the world is about to transform itself, then think of it this way: think of a pond, and think of how if the surface of the pond begins to boil - that's the signal that some enormous protean form is about to break the surface of the pond and reveal itself. Human history IS the boiling of the pond surface of ordinary biology. We are flesh which has been caught in the grip of some kind of an attractor that lies ahead of us in time, and that is sculpting us to its ends; speaking to us through psychedelics, through visions, through culture, and technology, consciousness. The language forming capacity in our species is propelling itself forward as though it were going to shed the monkey body and leap into some extra-surreal space that surrounds us, but that we can not currently see. Even the people who run the planet, the World Bank, the IMF, you name it, they know that history is ending. They know by the reports which cross their desks: the disappearance of the ozone hole [?], the toxicification of the ocean, the clearing of the rain forests. What this means is that the womb of the planet has reached its finite limits, and that the human species has now, without choice, begun the descent down the birth canal of collective transformation toward something right around the corner and nearly completely unimaginable. And this is where the psychedelic shaman comes is because I believe that what we really contact through psychedelics is a kind of hyperspace. And from that hyperspace we look down on... we look down on both the past and the future, and we anticipate the end. And a shaman is someone who has seen the end, and therefore is a trickster, because you don't worry if you've seen the end. If you know how it comes out you go back and you take your place in the play, and you let it all roll on without anxiety. This is what boundary dissolution means. It means nothing less than the anticipation of the end state of human history. A return to the archaic mode. A rediscovery of the orgiastic freedom of the African grasslands of 20,000 years ago. A techno-escape forward into a future that looks more like the past than the future because materialism, consumerism, product-

fetishism, all of these things will be eliminated and technology will become nanotechnology and disappear from our physical presence. If we have the dream, if we allow the wave of novelty to propel us toward the creativity that is inimitable to the human condition. That's what we're talking about here: psychedelics as a catalyst to the human imagination, psychedelics as a catalyst for language; because what cannot be said, cannot be created by the community. So what we need then is the forced evolution of language. And the way to do that is to go back to the agents that created language in the very first place. And that means the psychedelic plants, the Gaian Logos, and the mysterious, beckoning, extraterrestrial minds beyond. Hooking ourselves back up in to the Chakras of the hierarchy of nature, turning ourselves over to the mind of the total other that created us and brought us forth out of animal organization. We are somehow part of the planetary destiny. How well we do determines how well the experiment of life on Earth does, because we have become the cutting edge of that experiment, we define it, and we hold in our hands the power to make or to break it. This is not a dress rehearsal for the apocalypse. This is not a pseudo-millennium. This is the real thing folks. This is not a test. This is the last chance before things become so dissipated that there is no chance for cohesiveness. We can use the calendar as a club. We can make the millennium an occasion for establishing an authentic human civilization, overcoming the dominator paradigm, dissolving boundaries through psychedelics, recreating a sexuality not based on monotheism, monogamy and monotomy. We.. All these things are possible if we can understand the overarching metaphor which holds it together which is the celebration of mind as play, the celebration of love as a genuine social value in the community. This is what they have suppressed so long. This is why they are so afraid of the psychedelics, because they understand that once you touch the inner core of your own and someone else's being you can't be led into thing-fetishes and consumerism. The message of psychedelics is that culture can be re-engineered as a set of emotional values rather than products. This is terrifying news. And if we are able to make this point then we can pull back, we can pull back and we can transcend. Nine times in the last million years the ice has ground south from the poles pushing human populations ahead of it and those people didn't fuck up. Why should we then? We are all survivors. We are the inheritors of a million years of striving for the unspeakable. And now with the engines of technology in our hands we ought to be able to reach out and actually exteriorize the human soul at the end of time, invoke it into existence like a UFO and open the violet doorway into hyperspace and walk through it, out of profane history and into the world beyond the grave, beyond shamanism, beyond the end of history, into the galactic millennium that has beckoned to us for millions of years across space and time. This is the moment. A planet brings forth an opportunity like this only once in its lifetime, and we are ready, and we are poised. And as a community we are ready to move into it, to

claim it, to make it our own. It's there. Go for it, and thank you.

Original Transcription by: [+++ Jonathanlal]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Alien Footprints: Leprechauns, Elves, or Dead Souls?

May 1993

Weekend Workshop, Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription \(Final part of workshop only\)](#)
- [Other links](#)

[ONLY THE END OF THIS WORKSHOP HAS BEEN TRANSCRIBED--THE EARLIER PORTIONS OF THE WORKSHOP STILL NEED TO BE TRANSCRIBED--PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PUT YOUR NAME AT THE BOTTOM AND START WORKING ON IT]

[Audience - 2:13] — I was wondering, have you always been a knowledge junky, or have psychedelics increased your enthusiasm for learning (or your capacity for it)?

I've always been sort of a knowledge freak. I was a very weird kid. I knew I was weird when it was happening but now that I have a fifteen year old son and watch how he does it, I realize how absolutely weird I was and how alarming I must have been to my parents. I was not socially adaptable at all because I had bad eyes, poor coordination and I was very easily intimidated. The story of my early schooling was - in a town of only 1200 people - I was able to find 1700 hundred different ways to get from school to my house in order to avoid being pounced upon by roving cannibal bands of my peers who had sworn to get me. And they never got me! It was astonishing!

[Audience - 3:41] - Is this in New York?

No, no, this was some cow town in Western Colorado. The other thing I discovered early on - but maybe this is too psycho-therapeutic to waste time on - that I could hold them at bay with story. Essentially I became like the King's Jester. I could hang out with these lumbering lumpen people because I was always willing to verbally outrage and say crazy things. One of my things that really got me a lot of points with the tough guys was, I could stand up in class and very rapidly speak sentences into which I could occasionally drop obscenities but you just couldn't quite hear it. The kids could hear it but the teacher couldn't.

So that was my scene. In terms of the relationship to knowledge, it's what William Blake said. He said, 'attend the minute particulars.' That's what's interesting, I think. The details of the distinction among things. That's why I was a butterfly collector, an art historian, a Tibetan art hound, a rainforest botany person because what it's all about is the incredible variety of morphological expression in the world. Now I suppose a Buddhist would recognize this as a serious samsaric hangup. That I love the texture of the apparent visible world.

It's funny that you asked this question because in my morning meditation this morning, I had this image of a work of art which many of you know I'm sure. It's Dürer's etching of Melencolia. It shows an angel in the foreground and she has the instruments of geometry. There's zoological collections and maps spread out and an orrery of the solar system, and she's holding her head and this strange geometric form is beside her.

Well, I've put a lot of study into this geometric form, tracing it's history and so forth - but that wasn't what caught my attention in the meditation this morning. It was that I realized, or I recalled, that someone had said that this might be a medically accurate portrayal of migraine. Perhaps the earliest because Dürer was interested in pathology. Then I got the thing for the first time, which was that the angel has a headache because of the proliferation of this technological artifactory of all sorts that is spread around. It is this amazing picture of historical exhaustion.

I don't know how I got off onto that. But anyway, this thing about complexity and appearances. I think the way to get into reality is by running the edges as I've said. For me the entry drug was Science Fiction, definitely, because that permitted anything. I suddenly got the idea, aha!, the imagination sets the perimeters. If it will work in your head, that's good enough. You don't have to go further than that. You can build machines, societies, organisms, relationships - in your head. And if when you run it and the gears turn and the wheels go and it works then that's it. It works. You don't have to go further than that.

Well it sort of is working here. I'm amazed at what I'm seeing happening. I have the feeling that we're just calling it into existence. That it's working. Just don't drop the ball. Don't jinx it. Nobody say too much. But it's turning. I can feel it. It's like turning a battleship with a canoe. But it's turning, you know! It's enormous. So it's hard to deflect it's momentum. Nevertheless, by holding this point of view, somehow it's working. I've never seen anything like it. I wouldn't have believed it possible. It is that the world is made of language and it is that by a certain act of contained concentration - if you are with the Tao - it begins to shed it's secret or it begins to open ahead of you.

What's that thing by W H Auden: A glacier rattles in the cupboard, the desert sighs in the bed, and the crack in the teacup opens a door to the land of the dead.

It is a linguistic structure. You can decondition yourself sufficiently to actually step outside the cultural illusion. It's a breathtaking possibility because nobody knows what's outside the cultural illusion. Plato got it right. We are chained in a cave watching the flickering shadows of something. But life taken with sufficient seriousness and pushed hard enough at the edges - then this stuff will give itself up to you. And it isn't about belief. It isn't about commitment to a guru or dogma or method. It's about observational integrity. It's about witnessing. Some kind of primacy of self.

In other words, you have to believe that you can tell shit from Shinola and when you say it's shit and they tell you it's Shinola; you have to vote with your own side, you know? It's very interesting. The world is like a labyrinth or as I said yesterday, it will be mastered by a feat of understanding somehow. It's like a riddle. Yes?

[Audience - 11.07] Could you give some advice on how to avoid the pitfalls of mushrooms and the danger of mushrooms. The supply is irregular for those of us who don't have our own botanical garden. From time to

time, there are just physical problems. Is there any practical advice you could share?

Yeah, well the very best thing is to grow them. This is not as difficult as it's been made out to be. The dedication of half of a small closet will get you, your friends and their friends absolutely smashed. I'm serious about urging it. It may sound exotic but if you want to meet the alien and have a relationship with something very strange that loves you - but that is a lot different from a house cat - you should grow this stuff. First of all, it's white as the driven snow; Melvillian associations aside, there's something to be said for this.

And then it will take rye, which you buy in a health food store for \$17 dollars per hundred pound sack. It will take rye and convert it with a 12% efficiency to dried mushrooms. 12% efficiency to dried mushrooms! This thing just wants to enslave itself to you. It will work like a dog. I've never seen anything like it. It promotes virtues such as: cleanliness, the primary virtue in western civilization. Attention to detail, awareness of scheduling, all these grounding qualities. And then at the end, it will deliver to you the alien body of the higher and hidden unspeakable.

I suppose I should say that my brother and I wrote a book about how to do this which is around. It's not under the name McKenna. We did it pseudonymously. It's called, Psilocybin: a Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide. Literally, if you want to turn your life into pure science fiction, this is the way to do it. Because then you have it and it's not the dried stuff that's rubbery that only works half the time that costs an arm and a leg. It's the living quintessence of the thing. My lord, from that point, you are your own Magellan and need take lessons from nobody. The universe that it opens up to you is so large that really you can be confident that you'll see things that nobody has ever seen before or will ever see again.

Technically, it's not that difficult. It's at the level of a hobby. It's a little trickier than canning jam. It's up there with growing sprouts in little trays or culturing yogurt or something like that.

[Audience - 14.39] Could you maybe say a couple of words also about DMT and what sort of situations I've had before and how to set it up?

Well DMT is regrettably very rare and hard to get. I did notice that the last issue of a magazine called Psychedelic Illuminations (that's published in Southern California and that you could probably get at the Phoenix or the Bodhi tree) published the recipe. Published four pages of Chem abstracts, saying, 'just in case you were wondering, an interesting phenomenon is going on.'

We haven't talked about it much this weekend but briefly it goes like this. As many of you probably know, there is a South American hallucinogen called Ayahuasca that is orally activated DMT. It's orally active because it's complexed with a Monamine Oxidase Inhibitor, in this case Harmine, which comes from a large South American vine called Banisteriopsis caapi.

Well hardcore plant 'psychedelicos' all over North America have begun to realize then that this formula - DMT containing plant plus MAO inhibiting plant boiled together, concentrated, gives you some kind of pseudo Ayahuasca. People are experimenting furiously and producing ghastly brews and amazing stories. In some cases actually getting it right. What seems most promising, it was just discovered - now here's an example of ethnobotanical progress: it was just discovered about two and a half years ago that a plant in the American Midwest called Desmanthus Illinoensis, the Illinois bundleweed; a plant that has no

particular folk history or anything. It's just a problem plant on the prairie. It has more DMT in the root bark than any plant ever measured on this planet and no history of human usage. Although to me it's suggestive that it's called bundleweed because that suggests medicine bundle, but maybe that's just coincidence.

Anyway the Indians claim they don't know from it. Well you can take that plant and scrape the root bark. Then there is another plant that grows widely in the American west and the seeds of which are sold in Iranian markets all over the country as incense. A plant called *Peganum harmala*, the giant Syrian Rue. It contains not harmine, but Harmaline, which actually is a more hallucinogenic congener than harmine. So what people are doing, they're taking *Peganum harmala* and shredding it and boiling it with *Desmanthus Illinoisensis* root bark and they're producing a North American analogue to Ayahuasca that works.

This is a very interesting development on many levels because it means that people are essentially concocting their own unique personalized brews. It also means that probably *Peganum harmala*, which I'm not kidding in these Iranian markets they call it harmal and for six dollars they'll sell you a pound of it which has enough harmaline in it to flatten your entire apartment house. *Peganum harmala* as a source of this MAO inhibiting harmaline can probably be used to activate all of the DMT containing plants in the flora of North America, and there are many.

There are, first of all a whole family of grasses - the *Phalaris* grasses. *Phalaris Arundinacea*. I can't remember several others. They cause staggers in sheep. They are identifiable grasses. There are a number of species of *Acacia*. *Acacia Confusa* contains DMT. There's a plant out in the central valley of California that clogs the locks, the canal system. They spend millions of dollars dredging and piling up mountains of this stuff. The root bark of that, *Arundo donax*, it contains DMT. So people are out there scrambling and you know, if you are of a witchy turn of mind, this is something to fiddle around with. There's nothing more satisfying than finding your way to that moment where in your head, you know, it begins to glitter and you realize - it's here, it's here, it worked, theory and practice in perfect concert has delivered outrage!

So that's a possibility, yes?

[Audience - 20.22] They're saying that life on Earth started a lot earlier than they thought. They thought it started six billions years after the Earth stabilized when it was only like 400 million years. And that it was very possibly, one of the ideas they had, was that it was started by spores from space.

Yes. Eventually you see - this is what I said - they will come to us! That's almost like a freebie because all you have to do is just wake up for a moment and realize that of course space is not an impermeable barrier to life. It's a tough barrier but I've been in the Seychelles and in the Hawaiian Islands - these are mid-ocean islands that have been populated by life that has drifted in there.

When you think about the fact that a single *stropharia cubensis* mushroom in the sporulation phase, which can last up to three weeks, sheds three million spores per minute for three weeks. One mushroom! Then you have the dynamics of the atmosphere. They pick up off the antarctic ice shelf chunks of mars half the size of your head. This is now established that an asteroidal impact on mars ejected material into Martian orbit that eventually percolated into Earth orbit.

You know now the way meteorites are prospected for is: they eventually put it together that on the

Antarctic ice shelf where the wind is blowing 150 miles per hour most of the year and cutting the ice away - there is no land. What you would eventually get to is the Antarctic sea. You can fly over those ice shelves in helicopters with high powered binoculars and any black spot is a meteorite or an asteroid fragment because what the hell else could it be?

They've tripled the world's inventory of meteoric material in the last five years through this prospecting technique. They have found a whole box full, like 20 different specimens that they are confident are lunar material ejecta from cometary impact on the moon. But two strong candidates for martian origin. We're talking about fist sized Donies [? 23.20]. So the notion that the percolation of spores and biological material is not possible; it will be concluded probably fairly shortly that life originated who knows where and has been percolating out through the universe for a long line time.

[Audience - 23.43] Where do you see the place of Cannabis in consciousness evolution? On the one hand, it's obviously doing something like that, but on the other hand kids do it before they do drive-by shootings in LA. Also address maybe the notorious affect on memory? You mentioned that you consume cannabis when you are doing mushrooms. In my experience, I don't bring back as much information that I remember...I just want to hear your comments about this.

Yes well, it's worth talking about Cannabis. I certainly don't think I would be who I am if it weren't for cannabis. It hasn't particularly affected my memory. I'm actually the most devoted on a lifetime scale. The person most devoted to cannabis that I've ever known is myself. When I lived in Asia, I used to set my alarm for 2 am to smoke because I couldn't go from midnight to five. People thought I was bananas. In terms of its deleterious effect, I think it's pretty on a scale of the other major drugs of commerce, which would be alcohol, tobacco and white sugar. I think it comes off as in the best position. I sort of think of it as going back to this partnership model about mushrooms in Africa - that when that all dried up and those people were moved into the Middle East. There had been previous waves of migration out of Africa that had established populations in central Asia. This is why you have 'Peking Man' and 'Java Man' - those are earlier remnants of earlier migrations.

Cannabis, botanically, originated north of the Himalayas on the plains of Central Asia. I think it probably is the best substitute for mushrooms on the cultural level. It's one of the oldest domesticated plants. It was early on associated with cordage and fiber and it's strange that all the words to narrative are also words about weaving. You weave a story. You unravel a yarn. You thread and unthread a situation. You untangle a situation. The parallelism is very old in all European languages, this association with narrative and fiber, which means hemp. So I sort of see it as the pilot light of Gaian consciousness that was kept going.

Now what people always say to shoot this down is: they say, well Islam tolerates cannabis and Islam is hardly the pilot light of Gaian consciousness. It isn't actually that Islam tolerates cannabis. It's that the Koran expressly forbids alcohol and then that leaves you to sort it out from there. I certainly think that cannabis should be legalized and that if every serious alcoholic were encouraged to be a pothead and other drug abusers encouraged toward pot... The problem with pot from a societal point of view is that it is psychedelic enough that like all psychedelics, it erodes loyalty towards cultural values. Meaning, this is the bullshit effect. People say why don't you get a job. Bullshit! Why should I?

I don't see it implicated in violence. I think if anything, probably cannabis in ghettos is holding down violence as a drug but probably promoting violence as an item of commerce, and that is because of

chuckleheaded laws. I'm absolutely convinced that the way to solve the drug problem is to remove the profit motive. That's so obvious that it's baffling to me. Society is so schizophrenic on this topic. The most dangerous drugs are alcohol and tobacco, both fully established in the engines of commerce. It's a bizarre situation and largely driven by the agenda of Christian fundamentalism in collusion with criminal syndicalists who see this as an opportunity for enormous profit - and cynicism all the way along.

[Audience - 29.10] But I do find that I can't smoke a lot of pot. Unfortunatley I can never become addicted to any drug as much as I try. My body just doesn't tolerate it and I've tried them all more than once. But I do find with pot...I've had friends who became pot heads who, it wasn't that they betrayed commerce, they lost their ambition. You're very intelligent and you've got a vision and you're dedicated to your vision. You're a little bit above most average people (or different)...

Manic is what you're trying to say, yes. I understand.

[Audience - 29.52] - But I would say, these people really got lost because of their addiction to pot. So I think there's more of an issue around...it's not about drugs as much about addiction and the issue of addiction...

That's right.

[Audience - 30.07] - And how individuals become addicted because they're avoiding certain psychological issues that they're struggling with. And rather than dealing with the issues, they turn on the TV.

Well this relates to this larger model we talked about - of time. Of the war between habit and novelty. The thing that offends people about drugs, and if it doesn't offend you, there's something wrong with your value system - is to observe unconscious, repetitious, self-destructive behavior. If that means betting on the ponies or chasing hookers or shooting junk, or making bad investments or always blowing your stack with your friends; whatever it is, repetitious self destructive behavior triggers disgust in the rest of the gang.

Drugs, for instance heroin and tobacco, are interesting examples because they are probably tied for their addictive ability. Yet to shoot heroin, people just turn away aghast. It's like your the lowest of the low. Cigarette smoking until recently was tolerated everywhere. What is the difference here? The person who is smoking the cigarette, we know that tobacco is tremendously destructive - that's beyond argument. Heroin on the other hand, if you shoot with clean needles and have a steady supply, in other words if your not putting in social factors, my god these junkies live forever. They just pickle themselves and live forever and they don't get sick. So then why is it that society is so abhorrent of heroin addiction and so accepting of tobacco addiction? The answer is, the presentation of the intoxication. When you shoot heroin, first of all you become very agitated and follow people around raving at them if you're an addict. Then you nod. So you drool and your face falls in your plate and your friends have to put you to bed.

Tobacco on the other hand. You can maintain. There is no dramatic sequela of symptoms to betray that you're completely jacked up, twisted around and self poisoned with this. But there you are at your desk working efficiently, making phone calls, making money, keeping it all together. It's the presentation.

The other thing to say about drugs is that - like everything else about us but even more so - drugs are subject to your genetic heritage of drug receptors. It's not the same for everybody or even close to the same. The range of response to drugs can be over several orders of magnitude and can vary throughout

your life. The fact that I can smoke endless amounts of cannabis and still produce and function just means that I can. I see people, alcoholics, if I have more than a drink and a half, I have headaches and I pay my dues. To watch someone go down on a fifth of Stolichnaya, you just realize that this person is a martian, metabolically speaking. It would just kill me to do that. So this has to do with tolerances and the way the organism can accommodate itself to toxins. But then below that at bedrock, it actually has to do with genetic proclivities.

[Audience - 34.18] With regard to best cannabis as a hallucinogen, is there a difference in your experience in smoking vs ingesting it?

Well that's a good point. See hashish or the way cannabis entered the west was through hashish, which was eaten in the 19th century. If you read the accounts by 19th century savants who ate large amounts of hashish, it will convince you that it was the LSD of the 1870s. I mean these are mad intoxications that they are describing. It's not sitting around seeing the wall paper move.

[Audience - 35.08] Well they had more of it?

Well they were eating it.

[Audience - 35.13] Why not cookies and brownies? Why did that lose fashion? Is there a danger in it?

No, I think when pot went from \$15 dollars a lid to \$475 people stopped cooking with it. Let me say this about eating hashish. If you're going to do this, I recommend that you eat a red Lebanese hash because Lebanese hash is made in a way that people don't really touch it in the same way that chara is made in India by people whose hands may not be so clean. You're going to take a hit essentially of the ambient bacterial population of the village of Hamarubitsar.' Your guts will go completely berserk. This is one argument for baking it in a cookie - to get the pathogens at least smacked down a bit.

If you've never read Fitz Hugh Ludlow's book, *The Hasheesh Eater. Confessions of a Hasheesh Eater.* Here it is. It's 1852 and he's at Union College at Riverdale New York. He's been invited to the Dean's tea and he's just taken this massive hit of cannabis jelly before arriving at the tea and he says something like: 'when the umbrellas protruding from the Oriental umbrella stand turned into gargoyles, I knew that I must excuse myself least I run the risk of betraying my condition.' I'm too loaded, I've got to get out of here!

Let me say one more thing about this. There's a wonderful book called *Shaman Woman, Mainline Lady* that is writings by women about drugs. If you want to read something that just will make you roll on the floor with laughter, it's Louisa May Alcott's account of a picnic she and her friends went on with a Dr. somebody or other. It's just the most insane thing. It's these incredibly pretentious Victorian femmes with this Dr. by this river in the English countryside. It's Lil, Nell, and Dolly. Dolly says 'oh, Dr. We're so exhausted with canasta. Surely you have some new little [unknown word] that you can share with us.' And he says, 'well Dolly, I do have this little case of the best Moroccan hashish bonbons from Paris.' Then it's madness. It's just the most extraordinary thing.

[Audience - 38.36] How does Cannabis work on the brain neurochemically?

It's not very well understood. There is a receptor but cannabis is not an alkaloid. Cannabis is technically a

polyhydric alcohol, which makes it a chemically unique type. It's also botanically unique. Cannabis is what's called a monotypic genus. In other words, these three species, Ruderalis, Sativa and Indica, which are all obviously speciated within historical time and can by chromosomal studies be shown to be all derivative of Ruderalis, the Central Asian wild type. It has no near relatives. So it's unique and it's not well understood.

As far as somebody asked about using it psychedelically. I think the real, and I can't say I do this because I need it for other reasons, but in terms of the pure psychedelic issue, the way to do cannabis is once a week, in silent darkness, alone, with the best stuff you can get and then just do as much of it as you can possibly do in a short a time and sit with it. You will every single time be absolutely torn to pieces by it. It's just astonishing. The problem is that people get into it, myself included, for other reasons other than that hallucinogenic flash. But that would really be the ideal way and also it would prove you were a person of great rectitude and self control if you could do that.

[40.26 Tape Cut]

Well this phrase, nostalgia for paradise, I don't know who invented it. I first encountered it in Mircea Eliade's book *Cosmos and History*. If you never read this book, it's a little book. It was one of the most influential books on my thinking because I saw there a whole different way of talking about spiritual reality. But I disagree with Eliade that it is simply attitude in the human mind. I think there really was a fall and that this is a diminished condition and that there was some kind of cohesion - that we do have this nostalgia for. That's why I think our whole relationship to drugs is all about the fact...look here, here's the metaphor. We're like the children of an abused relationship. Something was taken from us 15,000 years ago. It was the thing which kept us in balance with each other, with the Earth. It kept us in our imaginations, in the poetic world of natural magic and then it was taken from us and it was a big downer. Life turned into history and warfare and subjection and classism and all of these things — and the thing that was taken from us was this intoxication.

So then we moved on to alcohol, to money, to opium - because that was very big in the Minoan phase. Opium had a huge influence on Minoan civilization. All of these things, an effort to scratch an itch that you can never quite reach, but in the meantime, all kinds of addictions, wars, criminal syndicates, horrible things go on. Now in the 20th century through the science of anthropology, a complete inventory essentially is taken of the world's intoxicating possibilities. It's part of a complete inventory of the world's people, languages, technologies, and belief systems that characterizes anthropology. But there it is, in 1953, Gordon Wasson returns from the village of Huautla and Sierra Mazateca and he has the body of Eros pickled in a jar. Lost since the fall of Minoan Crete but suddenly restored and then nobody knows what to make of it.

The CIA looks at it and Hofmann looks at it. Now it is found, I think. I don't know if it comes too late or if the final irony is that we learn what it was all about, but nevertheless have to succumb to the momentum of our own stupidity. In other words, it's this kind of Greek drama where you have this horrible realization and fully understand the whole bit, but you're doomed anyway just because it makes for better theater. Or whether it is the happy ending of the Christian Eschaton. Yeah?

[44.44 - Tape Cut]

What the 9th century's best tools were for cognizing these kinds of matters were Scholastic theology. I've been accused of that! So what Scholastic theology says is that there is something called the *Nunc Stans*, the eternal now. This all goes back to this wonderful thing that Plato said. Plato said that time is the moving image of eternity. My notion of what this is all about is that the Time Wave we looked at last night is eternity. It's the fractal structure of the temporal module viewed from a higher dimension. Time is the traversing of that thing. The nature of the singularity is hard to anticipate. If you use the old fractal principle: ontogeny capitulates phylogeny. You all understand what that means?

It's the phenomenon that a fetus, as it develops, ontogeny, recapitulates the evolutionary history of life on the earth. That's phylogeny. In other words, the fetus is first a little kind of thing, an amoeboid mass of cells, then it becomes sort of like a salamander, then it becomes a primitive mammal and so forth and so on. Well, using that principle to try and anticipate the end state seems legitimate under the fractal dispensation. However it leads to the conclusion that when you look at an organism, what happens to all organisms is that they die. So that leaves you with the conclusion that what happens at the end date of the whole enchilada is the equivalent of some kind of mass dying.

Well that really doesn't tell you much because we don't know what dying is. How can the ultimate novelty be complete extinction? It must be then that we have to overcome as positivists, our phobia against this area of speculation previously presided over by beady eyed priests and actually take it back and say that in the mysteries of metabolism and morphology, it is perhaps now necessary to entertain the idea that death is not a nihilistic release into non-entity. Instead, the shamanic model is correct and that biological life is a sojourn into matter.

At death, you do go to some incomprehensible unfoldment. Only the first moments of which can be made sense of. I really think the DMT thing is like bungie cording into the bardo, you know? There you go and then just as you're there, it jerks you back. So you get that much of a look into the yawning grave. I take it as, it's strange, yes. But surely reason for hope and optimism. How much of oneself, whatever that means, is going to be carried over. I don't know. It looks to me like, probably not much. What lies ahead to quote Bilbo Baggins, the greatest adventure still lies ahead. I'm pretty convinced of that, which surprises me because I'm a cynic. I'm not easily swept into optimism.

[Audience - 49.16] Well you just had a great little pre-echo with the analogy of Scholastic theology to let us know what's going to be the defining moment of 2012. The collective works of Terence McKenna are published under the title, Summa Mycologica.

I'll take it.

[Audience - 49.34] What cautions and reservations do you have with this dance with Kali. We talk about the revival and sometimes I wonder if we remember what we're talking about. In this possible great ecstasy, here lies....

Some danger?

[Audience - 50.00] I'm constantly asking that question as I've taken a four and half year break from drugs and I'm moving back in that direction. Having consumed some mushrooms recently and wanting to, in this revival...the use of these substances needs to be absolutely reverent and to be sensitive to what I'm doing.

Well, the danger as I see it and I feel it very strongly. The danger is, just to put it out there, is madness. We talk about stretching the envelope. We talk about running the edge. You don't want to rip the envelope. You don't want to island yourself in a situation where nobody can make sense out of what you're saying. Yet, that's the game we play. It's always pushing. So what you said about reverence and absolute impeccability of attitude and also I think it's very important to be physically together. It's important to be physically together anyway. I go to a gym three days a week and I think of it as preparation for psychedelic voyaging because if your body is a clean instrument, you can do it.

The other thing is technique. In the psychedelic state, if there are problems, there are techniques to deal with them. The best technique, and western people don't naturally gravitate towards this, if you get into a place that you don't like on a psychedelic, sing. You must sing! Most people's tendency is to clench. This is very bad because it can just grind you to nothing. What you have to do is sit up and you have to sing. It doesn't really matter what you sing. You will find the song. Start out with out with 'row, row, row your boat' and go from there.

The other thing is, the real issue I find in myself, is surrender. That it's all very fine to sit here getting paid dollars per minute extolling this stuff but boy is it different to do it. You can talk all you want but the thing is so - I don't know if scary is the word - it's so total what happens. You're so vulnerable and you know that if there is any flaw in your approach or attitude that that flaw will be magnified by the stress of the thing and become highly problematic. So it's all about asking the question, you know? Am I ready?

Now this is not how beginners approach it, nor should they. It's incredibly forgiving of first, second and third timers. But as it takes you in, what it gives is a certain measure of, for want of a better word, let's call it power. The payback on that existential validity would be another way of calling it, rather than power. The payback on that existential validity is that you have to be OK. Maybe it's my Catholic upbringing or something but one cannot do the examination of conscience carefully enough because there is always flaw. So it's about staying right with it. It teaches the right way to live and also surrender.

That's why I don't ever have an agenda. I regard having an agenda as essentially aspiring to be a magician of some sort. And I don't. I want to witness it. I am perfectly content to be present at the miracle. I don't want to do the miracle and I don't want the miracle to be done to me. I just want to be there. Frank Herbert in his book Dune said something, which over the years I've found, though it sounds flimsy to say, it actually works. Some of you may recall that in that book, they had this drug called Stroon and it did pull you out of time. It was not just a drug, it revealed like I'm saying psilocybin/DMT do; the real structure of reality.

In there, they discuss what do you do about the fear that comes with the gigantic awesome dimensions of this vision? And he says, or someone tells the main character, fear is like a wind and it blows through the mind. What you must do is, you must wait. It cannot sustain itself unless you give it an object. This is actually true I've found. Fear, whatever it is cognitively, physiologically it's a chemical wave of release of adrenaline. What you do is just sit and watch it come like a bell curve and then recede and then your still on the surface of the ocean and the power of it has been defeated.

But if you give it any object to cling to it will break white water and then the chaos will overwhelm you.

[Audience - 56.10] I was wondering if you could talk about the difference between psilocybin and Ayahuasca experience. I'm particularly interested in...I heard you talk once about the value in the psilocybin experience is more technological and 'get ready to depart the planet' type of value. Whereas ayahuasca is more 'save the planet...'

Feminine. Yeah, somebody once said to me after they took a mushroom trip, they said I don't think I'll do that anymore. I said, why not? They said, because I'm not interested in insects that drive spaceships. Which sums up psilocybin pretty well.

Psilocybin is Apollonian and hortatory and grandiose. It's interesting that they have these personalities. I mean psilocybin is kind of megalomaniac. It says history is ending. Prepare for the departure. The crisis of the species is upon us. Cosmic forces are intersecting. Machines the size of manitoba will be involved. It's all about mankind, prepare to depart for the higher orders of the galactarian hegemony and this whole thing like that.

Ayahuasca is all about how rivers flow, family lines intersect, what is in the river, what is in the mind of the woman? It's like this very sensual, telepathic gas which spreads out when you're in the rainforest and brings you into connection with everything. It also doesn't speak. It becomes the eye of the camera. Its language is entirely a visual language. It never speaks. It just shows you. Showing, showing, showing. After a good Ayahuasca trip, you feel like your eyes are falling out. You have been looking, literally looking, with full attention for hours at this stuff, with this sense of it being distant from you somehow.

[Audience - 58.38] How do you reconcile those two?

No it's a little puzzling because DMT is... Psilocybin in the the metabolic pathway doesn't actually become DMT but it is about as close as it could possibly be, so the difference is quite startling. N,N DMT, when smoked, (not when taken in the Ayahuasca situation where you get what I just described) but when smoked, it trumps the psilocybin. It goes so far beyond it because it carries you into the part where you can't understand. The other one, the psilocybin, communicates at least in human terms. I mean apocalyptically, mega-technically, through these science fiction metaphors and so forth - but the DMT flash goes beyond that and you say, this is truly the presence of an alien mind. This is not being filtered for my consumption at all. This is absolutely just off the wall, whatever it is.

[Audience - 59.47] Indecipherable.

That's right. It's puzzling that the route of administration and the complexing with the MAO inhibitors gives it these different psychological tones. I think almost everybody has experienced these things would agree with what I said about these aspects of the personalities of the substances.

[Audience - 100.11] Does LSD fit into those categories?

No, LSD is different. LSD is like psycho-analytical Drano. It's not a personality.

[Audience - 100.20] What about the natural derivatives?

You mean the morning glory seeds? I've only taken those things five or six times in my life and all in my

youth. I remember the visions. I remember the hallucinations. Once on Hawaiian Woodrose, *Argyrea Nervosa*, I entered into a higher world based on the theme of the sea urchin. I was in these cathedral like vaulted spaces which were the insides of sea urchins. Then there was this coach pulled by these very strange looking animals and it had these nipple like protuberances all over it and everything was done in mauve and purple and white. It was sea urchin world for about twenty minutes and then that went away.

[Audience - 101.14] Will you explain - and I know this gets back to the basic premise that you've been talking about the last couple of days - but can you elaborate a little more on why you conclude that these hallucinations are in fact true hallucinations? In other words, why do you conclude that these elf like entities really exist?

Well...really exist? True enough. We talked about that didn't we? About the Wittgensteinian thing? Did we? Yes?

They're true enough because they have efficacy. See, we miss the point because we think the world is made of matter. Matter is simply a concept. The world is made of language and since the hallucinations communicate in language, they are as real as anything else. They are helping make reality. It's crazy to think that the universe is made of quarks and Nu-mesons and neutrinos and stuff like that. Who here has ever seen one, or even has the most specious grasp of how you would go about looking for such a thing?

[Audience - 102.30] But we get exposed to those words.

But we get exposed to those words. The world is really made of language, of interlocking concepts. Well so then that means the hallucinations are real. That in that sense where Mia Farrow says in *Rosemary's Baby*, my god this is actually happening. That's what needs to happen inside the psilocybin trip. We have this category called hallucination or intoxication or trance. Then we say, 'oh it's only mental therefore it's not real.' Well, I've got news for you. It's all mental and therefore it is real. The big news is that while we've been waiting for aliens to come in ships from the stars, we have totally overlooked the alien nature of reality around us.

By pushing into these mental dimensions, we discover a bewildering fauna of angels, demons, helping spirits, and ancestor spirits. I only speak from my own experience, so for instance I'm unable to pass judgment on something like Voodoo or Tantric invocation or something like that. But I, using reason, was able to confirm the existence of things that no reasonable person believes in. This is impressive and it's repeatable. That's the thing I want to stress. This is not some faith or something where you have to...I don't know...it's just that it's a technology. It's a technology of ethnopharmacology.

[Audience - 104.31] Obviously the experience is repeatable but what that experience means... whether it indicates, for lack of a better phrase, objective reality, separate and apart from your mind is not necessarily proven by having the experience itself.

Yes but see it's difficult to prove that there's any objective reality apart from mind anyway.

[Tape Cut - 104.54]

Yeah but it not only rests on Barkley, which is an earlier version of it, but it also rests now on quantum

physics' need to include the observer into the equation. Somehow there is a something, which the vectors of which are collapsed into the experience of the here and now by the observational act. Then the role of language in this. It's not easy to sort this stuff out. If you want to read an interesting book, read Dispenay's* book, The Philosophical Foundations of Quantum Mechanics. This will give you something to chew on for sure.

(*NOTE - I could not find the author here. It seems likely McKenna was speaking of Hans Reichenbach's book *Philosophic Foundations of Quantum Mechanics*.)

Yes?

[Audience - 105.42] *What would you say about LSD?*

Oh, that it has no character? By character, I meant personality. I didn't mean to diss it. I just meant it doesn't organize itself around a personality the way psilocybin does. I found LSD to be like a conceptual enhancer. It was great for looking at things and for thinking about things. But I also, and this may be my obviously personal thing, I found it just physically incredibly hard on my body. My god, the next day I would lay in warm bathes and try to sort it all out. I was taking good LSD, Sandoz LSD. So for me, when I got to psilocybin, I was just exultant.

See what I had done was read Huxley then I had gone back to Havelock Ellis, *The Dance of Life* and Henri Michaux, *The Miserable Miracle* and people like that. Havelock Ellis talks about ruined buildings of great antiquity drooping with opalescent jewels and protruding from Venusian forests and I said, that's what I'm after.

LSD would never ever approach that. It was much more mechanical and elusive and fast moving. Then when I took psilocybin, lo and behold, it was just like Havelock Ellis. Produced and directed by Havelock Ellis. That is what I love. It may just be a prejudice of mine but to me the transcendental part of it is the visions. Thoughts, you can have and even insights you can have but to have behind your darkened eyelids, a huge technicolor movie going on for minutes and minutes, stunning in its cohesion and beauty and architectonic triumphal; you just say wow, this is great. This is great! Who's doing this?

And the thing, if you appreciate it like that, it will say: 'oh you think that's something. Look at this!' Then it starts trying to impress you. You say, yes just do it! Take me I'm yours. Let's go, go, go!

[Audience - 108.22] *Could you say something about the information that's revealed through the drug induced state and dreaming.*

Ah, good question. I think that perhaps dreaming...perhaps every night we go as deep as these psychedelic drugs take us. But there's apparently very little short term or long term memory trace laid down by these experiences. I think if we would just legalize these things and turn our creative science people loose on this... What we really need is a drug that allows you to remember your dreams. That's it!

Pardon me?

[Audience - 109.10 - *Indecipherable*]

Well, we have the concept and we have claims but I mean one that will work for me.

[Audience - 109.20] Smoking pot inhibits it.

Yes, that's a good point. The one argument that I feel the force of against cannabis is that it completely suppresses dreaming.

[Audience - 109.37] You still dream but you don't remember them.

Well it's debatable. I think that because it's a boundary dissolver. I have sort of a pressure theory of dreams. Somehow cannabis depressurizes the dream place because you deal with these material in active fantasy. But boy, if you're a regular cannabis user and you stop smoking, within 48 hours you will have dreams that will have you on the phone to mother. I mean...whoa. And it goes on and on. I stopped smoking cannabis about a year and a half ago for four months. What finally sent me back to it was the dreams convinced me I was losing my marbles. Enough of making a point, you know!

[Audience - 110.30] ...had and it was accessible to my rational mind. My rational mind was in place enough to know that I had dreamt it and I was re-dreaming and absolutely recollecting and reliving the dream state and the previous dream that I had.

Really? And where were these Amanitas from?

[Audience 110.55] Michigan

Michigan.

[Audience 110.58] - Indecipherable

And what were the other symptoms. Did you feel cold? Did you hallucinate?

[Audience - 111.13] It was totally as though I were dreaming. I was totally engrossed. I was catatonic. I did not move for three to four hours.

Well that's very interesting. We didn't talk much about Amanita Muscaria. Amanita Muscaria is very mysterious because it is so variable over its range. It's seasonably variable, genetically variable, geographically variable. You hear once in a while amazing amanita stories. Most amanita stories are that it's toxic and horrible. But maybe one in 15 stories will be something wonderful like this.

I'm convinced that it has to do with some very subtle chemical equilibrium that people find and lose. Probably when amanita shamanism was flourishing - it was a case of where you really did have to go to a master to sort out how to do it without wasting your time or poisoning yourself.

[Audience - 112.28] I really think did initially think I was dying. I mean I knew was being poisoned but it was all right. I had willfully entered into it. It was a sense that I wanted a death. Not a physical death per se

but a wider experience of a bardo. It was like a willingness to feel poisoned. It wasn't a negative thing that I had willfully sought.

And was it muscarinic poisoning? Chills, and salivation? Uh huh

[Audience - 113.06] Yes. But it was OK. It was as though I had accepted full responsibility that that was a willful act on my own part. So what is death? Is death birth or is death death? So it was as though I were participating in a birthing. I focused on that aspect of it so I was not really dying, I was birthing. So it didn't have the negative. I was throwing up and I was sick. [Indecipherable]. A week before that I had all these energies and the idea was this voice just kept saying pick and choose. So it became very apparent that you could get paranoid and engulf in that aspect and say, oh my God I'm dying.

The ego - this is what the ego tells you as its last desperate ploy. Let me say to the group as far as Amanita Muscaria is concerned - don't try this at home folks. It's out there on the edge of the bardo. I hear what you're saying. If you're truly psychedelic the difference between living and dying is quite immaterial, no pun intended.

[Audience - 114.44] You manifest in your mind this sense that 'I am dying or do you just transmute it and just say I will be reborn. You manifest the reality as whether you are dying or whether you are being reborn.

Yeah, this is the issue of surrender because boundary dissolution is interpreted by the ego as death. If the boundary dissolution is happening rapidly or for some reason - in an alarming fashion to the ego - it will pull out this explanation and then you really have to discipline the hindbrain and say, no no, this is what we chose to do. This is the course we're set on and this is the course we're sailing because what are you going to do?

[115.43 - Indecipherable]

Well it's hard to say you know. You ask about a path not taken as well as a path taken. All the women I've ever been with are heads of some sort of varying and lesser degrees. I was married for 15 years. We're separated. I don't see the drugs as a particular issue although my wife used to complain that I spend a great deal of time out of the flow of family life and loaded. But on the other hand, I remember when I was eight and nine years old, huge scenes with my father and mother because they were always going off on picnics and I always wanted to stay home and read. So it was exactly the same pattern before drugs appeared in my life. I like to do things by myself, a lot.

Cannabis for me was really a turning point. I remember the first time I smoked cannabis and I realized, aha! I can be a normal person with this stuff. I can self medicate myself and I can stop being this incredibly hyperactive, nervous, yammering, skinny, bespectacled Ichabod like creature that I was. Then, I don't know. I leave it to you to judge the results. My impression was that it helped with that and it helped with my social relations. I was always so alienated and peculiar. But my life has been so totally about drugs that I can't imagine it any other way. One of the things that most horrified me when I stopped smoking cannabis - and I had always said it about cannabis - was you worry. You worry. People who don't smoke cannabis worry. Now they would say that they're tending to business and that that's part of being an adult. But most worry is superfluous and preposterous.

If I don't smoke pot for a week, I become very attentive to stuff like balancing my checkbook. Receipts - getting deeply into receipts - and just all this weird stuff. I start thinking 'gee, is my medical insurance paid up,' or 'I should pre-pay my taxes' - all this kind of thing. Now I suppose to go too far in the other direction, you would just be a complete space case. But my life seems to function very well and people say that I have an abnormally neat apartment so I don't think I'm letting down too much. Anxiety is a very dubious thing I think and anything that assuages that - as long as it doesn't sedate you - is probably a pretty good thing.

Your presence makes me think it's not as eccentric as it probably actually is. So I appreciate your contributing to my own delusional state. I hope you found this information interesting. Avoid gurus, follow plants - it's like Van Morrison says - no guru, no method, no teacher, just you and me and mother nature in the garden; in the garden wet with rain.

So thank you very much!

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Review 1 by:

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Alien Luv

1983

Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, CA

Description

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The idea of sexual relationships between human and nonhuman beings is a persistent sub-theme through much of mythology. In the Old Testament it says, "And the gods found the daughters of man fair." And the Persephone myth is a good example of this where the Platonic demurgus of the underworld ensnared Persephone. Oh, and another example that should be mentioned are the incubi and succubi of medieval uh, mythology. These were male and female spirits which were thought to come to people in the night and have intercourse with them. And it was very bad, very bad for health, and general wasting away diseases were often explained by invoking this phenomenon.

BUt uh, what I want to talk about is something similar but with a uniquely modern caste which is. Recently the flying saucer phenomenon has begun to take on a new character this erotic dimension. There is no hint of this kind of thing in the early literature, meaning from 1947 through 1960, but now it seems to be a rising theme. And uh, I would like to talk about it because though this idea is the darling of a screwball fringe when it's in this form, I think it represents an interesting developing folkway that we can learn from.

So uh, what about it? It's only in the last sixty years, since the discovery of DNA and the Hertzprung-Russell diagrams, that we have begun to get an idea of the true size of the universe. That the notion of extraterrestrial life and extraterrestrial intelligence could even be coherently framed. Before that time, man's relationships with transhuman intelligences tended to be demonic or angelic, to fall into those categories of beings that occupied hierarchical levels above and below us in the structure of being but all basically terrestrial or in some sense terrestrial. But science, by clarifying the nonuniqueness of biology and giving us an idea of what's going on in the galaxy and beyond, has validated the notion that life is ubiquitous and that intelligence is a property which accompanies life and is also therefore probably very common in the universe. This legitimates fantasy about the existence of extraterrestrial life so that what is happening in the last half of the 20th century, the mythological outlines of what the alien must be are being cast now. The expectations of people living now who have been given a rudimentary knowledge of biology and astronomy allows the thing to be conceived. Their expectations expectations are casting the extraterrestrial archetype into a mold that it will hold until it is disconfirmed or confirmed by true extraterrestrial contact, whatever that means.

We now know enough to fantasize realistically about what the alien, uh, would be like, and this sets up polarities in the collective psyche that previously we have only seen at the level of the individual. What the

developing archetype of the extraterrestrial “Other” means, and the source of our fascination with it, is that, collectively, for the first time we are beginning to yearn. This new collective yearning is happening in religion on a very broad scale. The previous concerns of salvation and redemption are shifting into the background for the great majority of people, and what is driving religious feeling is a wish for contact — a relationship to the Other. The alien then falls into place in that role; the alien fulfills it. I believe that if religion survives into the long centuries of the future, this will be its compelling concern — an attempt to define a collective relationship with the Other that assuages our yearning and our feeling of being cast out or, as Heidegger says, “cast into matter, alone in the universe.”

It’s as though by passing into the psychedelic phase — the space-faring phase — the entire species were passing into adolescence and becoming aware of the possibility of something like a sexual completion with an Other, with an intelligent, nonhuman species. This is an idea that had previously been masked for us in our collective prepubescence or polymorphically perverse phase, during which we were self-absorbed. One dimension of the culture crisis is a collective erotic drive for a connection with the Other.

To sum up what I’ve said about religion, it is as though the Father-God notion were being replaced by the alien-partner notion. The alien-partner is like the angelic tetramorph. It is androgynous, hermaphroditic, transhuman; it is all these things that the unconscious chooses to project upon it until we have enough information to define what it might actually be for itself.

Eventually this contact will occur. We are now in the pubescent stage of yearning, of forming an image of the thing desired. This image of the thing desired will eventually cause that thing to come into being. In other words, our cultural direction is being touched by the notion of alien love, and it comes to us through the rebirth of the use of plant hallucinogens. The shamanic vision plants seem to be the carriers of this pervasive entelechy that speaks and that can present itself to us in this particular way.

The appetite for this fusion is what is propelling global culture toward an apocalyptic transformation. It isn’t recognized as that in the culture yet, but nevertheless it is this fascination with the Other that propels us forward. Culturally we are growing toward the potential for falling in love, but then if there is no one to love this potential can turn to rancor and disillusionment. We have embarked on the exploration of a unique historical opportunity in which for the first time the issue of the Other is being fully constellated and dealt with by the species. The question is being asked, “Are we alone?” and though we now focus on that question, we need to think beyond that to, “What if we are not alone?” Then what becomes the next imperative question? It is obviously the exploration of the relationship to the Other, part of which has an erotic character.

We will discover, as soon as communication is even remotely possible, that we are obsessed with it. It becomes very important to know whether or not we are alone. It becomes very important to open a dialogue if any dialogue is possible. I think that at this stage the facts are secondary to the description of what is going on. In other words, this option could slip away from us. It is a potential that has drifted near the historical continuum, and if it is invoked by enough people, it will become a fact. But it could also slip away. We could harden; there are dominator, hypertechnological futures that we could sail toward and realize. That would eliminate this possibility of opening to the Other.

I always try to define for myself what the historical importance of psychedelics is, because we know that shamans have used these plants for millennia and have plumbed these depths as individuals. Still, I always

have the intuition that there is a historical impact of some sort, and I think this is it: that we are actually positioned to attempt something that has never been attempted before, to open a dialogue as a collectivity with the Other and to use that synergy to bootstrap ourselves to a new cultural level. There isn't a great deal of talk about it; this intuition exists at the folk level. None of the managerial or analytical elements in society are looking at this at the moment. But it is forming and crystallizing in the background.

Contact with extraterrestrials and voices in the head and Logos-like phenomena are not a part of the general mythology of LSD. Certain exceedingly intense individuals may have achieved this intermittently, but it is not something that is attached to the notion of what LSD does to you. With psilocybin, on the other hand, it definitely is. Our survey showed that as people's doses increased, their susceptibility to this phenomenon increased markedly. The issue of contact with the extraterrestrial for large numbers of people has been broached by mushrooms. It's very puzzling to people, because our expectations are always that we are cells in a vast societal animal and that the news of anything truly important will be conveyed electronically to us; that if flying saucers land, the president and the secretary general of the United Nations will convey the word to us. But the challenge of the psychedelics is to realize that the potential for an alchemical wedding with the alien exists now. It is a tribal phenomenon that is happening as an experience at the individual level. People in the confines of their own apartments are becoming Magellans of the interior world, reaching out to this alien thing, beginning to map invisible landscapes and to bring back stories that can only be compared to the kind of stories that the chroniclers of the New World brought back to Spain at the close of the 15th century. Stories of insect gods, starships, unfathomable wisdom, endless realities.

Many times I've spoken of the psychedelic experience as a landscape and as a confidant — a kind of girl Friday who tells you things; but another facet of it is the erotic element. There is no other word for it, because it inspires a feeling of opening and merging that is, in our cultural conditioning, what we associate with Eros. To distinguish it from ordinary love I always think of it as LUV. It's the kind of love that you get with the alien. What it means is that the relationship to the alien can be thought of as modeled on the relationships to the Other that each of us forms through relating to other people. This is similar to the Jungian notion of the coniunctio, a situation in which two people get together and try to function as alchemical mirrors for each other. Tantra and Taoist sexual practices also have to do with fusing into dyads. In that situation each party to the fact is taking on the quality of the other. In a nonerotic context that's called becoming what you behold.

We are uniquely susceptible to becoming what we behold. This is why we have always been led into the future by our imaginations; because we dream and then we realize the dreams. This fact about our monkeyhood, when put in combination with a relationship with an alien mind, means that we will become the Other we behold. This is, in fact, what I think is happening. The curious intimations of the deepening contact with the Other make it seem probable to me that we are in love, but we're only slowly realizing this because we've never been in love before. So articulating this kind of idea, one person saying it to another and discussing it, is actually an attempt to conjure this into being — to call it forth and make this supposition become fact. Because all facts are the suppositions of very large numbers of people, the fate of this archetype now hangs in the balance.

There is tension around the flying saucer, aside from the erotic connotation, because the flying saucer represents a tremendous challenge to science, perhaps the ultimate challenge. It may be as confounding to science as the resurrection of Christ was to Greek empiricism and Roman imperialism. The flying saucer

is essentially an agent of cultural change. On the level of the machine, it bids distress for our most cherished explanatory schema, but on the level of the alien as flesh, it presents a much more basic and fundamental challenge, because the erotic complex is being redefined by this phenomenon.

Many people take LSD, and yet it's very difficult to get precise numbers on this matter because people don't talk about it. Yet in the last fifteen years, sexual researchers have had a field day because people are very, very willing to discuss their bizarre sexual peculiarities and to pour out their hearts to people with clipboards. So we now know a great deal about human sexuality. I suggest that our taboos are on the move. They are moving so that as we become more sexually polymorphic and open with each other and our ego is less identified with our sexuality, we become very private and constrained, secretive and religious about our psychic experiences, particularly the psychedelic experiences. We are much more open with each other sexually and in our examination of our libidinal drives, but the taboo has now moved to this interior world where we have an adolescent sensitivity about our developing relationship to the Other.

These attitudes are elements in the emerging human future, a human future that is accelerating exponentially. It is not a mere linear propagation of the present; peculiar factors are impinging on it: psychedelic substances, the ability to erect large structures in deep space, the presence of the alien Logos in the mind of the collectivity, the presence of the cybernetic network that is developing, the politics of feminism — all these things are going toward release of humanity into the imagination. To date, the cultural engineers have not stressed enough that the erotic element be included in the design of the human future.

Let me sum up by saying that there is an emerging zeitgeist of hyperspace. I call it a zeitgeist of hyperspace because electronic culture will add another dimension whose effects will reverberate at every level. We are now living in a hyperdimensional collectivity, not only of earth and space but of information of past and future, of conscious and unconscious. The technological culmination of this is the projection of human consciousness into whatever form it seeks to take. The zeitgeist of hyperspace that is emerging, initially freighted with technology and cybernetics, requires that it be consciously tuned to an erotic ideal. It is important to articulate the presence of this erotic ideal of the Other early. This is an opportunity to fall in love with the Other, get married, and go off to the stars; but it's only an opportunity and not evolutionarily necessary.

If we only live with the ideal of the Other and never find and fuse with the Other, we can still evolve along whatever pathways lie ahead of us. But if the opportunity is seized, if we take seriously the experience of the last ten millennia and complete the modern program of realizing the ideals of the Archaic Revival, recognizing that what the 20th century really is about is an effort to establish and perfect the ideals of late Paleolithic shamanism, then we will have acted with integrity in relating to this opportunity and we guarantee ourselves a grand and peculiar historical adventure — which I cheer for.

Audience: Could you say a bit more about the role of the psychedelic experience?

Once we set ourselves the task of describing the psychedelic experience it will become more accessible, because if we each gave our best metaphor and then all used those metaphors to produce a better metaphor, we eventually would retool our language so that we would be able to handle these modalities. And this will happen. Historically, the psychedelic experience is a new object for the Western languages. It will be very interesting to see what English, the language of Milton, Chaucer and Shakespeare, will be able

to do with the psychedelic experience. In William Blake you get the feeling that English can do staggering things with it. Passages in Andrew Marvell imply the same.

The relationship of the psychedelic experience to literature is a whole field unto itself; there are certain moments where great literature has passed near it. Flaubert's *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* got it, very succinctly. Huysmans' *Against the Grain* is an amazing novel about a man who is so sensitized to perception that he can't leave his apartments. He has his walls covered in felt and keeps the lights very low. He collects Redon when nobody had ever heard of Redon. He buys turtles and has jewels affixed to their backs. Then he sits in a half-lit room and smokes hashish and watches the turtles crawl around on his Persian rugs. Let's all go home and do this.

Audience: I'm curious about whether the chemical induction is necessary. I've been exploring vision through dream work and it seems promising. In sleep we see a lot of things.

Yes, I think dreaming and states of psychedelic intoxication, possibly the after-death state, possibly the post-apocalypse state for the collectivity, all these are related to each other. Certainly dreaming is the natural access point, because it's a part of everyday experience. But these places are what's called state-bounded. It's very hard to bring back information — you have to have a natural inclination or a technique. It doesn't matter whether you are using psychedelics or yoga or dream-manipulation; it's just a matter of exploring the mind by whatever means works. I've seen studies that show that the deepest part of sleep is the high point of production of endogenous hallucinogens, such as DMT and beta-carbolines, in the human brain. Nevertheless, it's only in the wildest dreams, which are necessarily the most difficult to recover, that one passes into places that are like DMT and psilocybin ecstasy. Yoga makes the claim that it can deliver you into these spaces, but people have different proclivities for these altered states of consciousness. It's very hard to move me off the baseline of consciousness. I am very stolid and set in the here and now, so plants work better than anything else for me. I scoured India and could not convince myself that it wasn't a shell game of some sort or was any more real than the states manipulated by the various schools of New Age psychotherapy.

But in the Amazon and other places where plant hallucinogens are understood and used, you are conveyed into worlds that are appallingly different from ordinary reality. Their vividness cannot be stressed enough. They are more real than real, and that's something that you sense intuitively. They establish an ontological priority. They are more real than real, and once you get that under your belt and let it rattle around in your mind, then the compass of your life begins to spin and you realize that you are not looking in on the Other; the Other is looking in on you. This is a tremendous challenge to the intellectual structures that have carried us so far during the last thousand years. We can do tricks with atoms, there's no question about that, but these tricks immolate us. The higher-order structure of molecules, let alone organelles and that kind of thing, is intellectual terra incognita to us; we have no notion of how these things work or what is going on. Yet it is from those levels that the constituent modalities of reality are being laid down. What do I mean by that? I mean that you can understand all this fine nuclear chemistry about the atom, but where does it put you if you are an intellectual? The story you tell yourself about how the world works can't explain to you how forming the wish to close your open hand into a fist makes it happen. This is the true status of present science. It cannot offer so much as a clue about how that happens. Scientists know how muscles contract — all that they know. It's the initiating phenomenon, that which decides, "I will close my hand." They know as much about that as — and perhaps less than — Western or Eastern philosophy knew in the 12th century.

And it is at that level, at the level of the body experience and the mind experience, that we operate. You can live in the social and religious system of Hellenistic Greece and offer sacrifice to Demeter, or you can live in 20th century America and watch the evening news, but you should have no faith that you are getting the true story on reality. These are just historical contexts that can be transcended only by the acquisition of gnosis, knowledge that is experienced as self-evidently true. It's hard for people to even realize what I might be talking about because they believe that something like logical consistency or ability to be reduced to mathematical formalism is how you judge the efficacy of an idea. Ideas such as that are what led us into this extremely alienated state. We haven't demanded that the stories we tell ourselves about how the world works confirm our direct experience of how it works. The psychedelic substances, by focusing attention on the mind-body-brain interactions, are re-framing these questions; and not a moment too soon, because the cybernetic and technical capabilities of this society demand that this all be looked at very clearly or we're just going to sail right off the moral edge of things and into the abyss.

Audience: Could you comment further on the interaction between various sexual yogas and the psychedelic experience or intoxication as tools — as in effect potential tools for approaching the kind of extraterrestrial eroticism you're talking about?

Certainly. You have all kinds of things going on when people are having sexual intercourse. The physiological state is one of activation, there's production of pheromones. I've noticed on psilocybin that there is a disappearance of normal resistance across a membrane, especially if there is perspiration, so that two people with large amounts of skin in contact become one entity. I'm convinced enough of this that I would suggest to Masters and Johnson, or whoever has license to do these kinds of things, to check it out if they are serious about validating telepathy. This is a very simple experiment.

Taoist sexual practices lay a lot of stress on the generation of unusual substances in the genitals or in the perspiration, which is a theme that is absent from Indian yoga but that is picked up in Amazonian shamanism, where there is a lot of discussion of magical forms of perspiration, magical objects that are generated out of the body or put into the bodies of other people. In the matter of Taoist alchemy, it appears that there was an erotic control language, so that much of what appear to be prescriptions for sexual practices are actually recipes for plant combinations, because words that were used with sexual connotations were also code words for plants and fungi. The association in the Taoist mind between the fungi and the feminine genitalia was very close. The words and the concepts are the same. This is a prevailing motif of the so-called esoteric schools of Chinese eroticism, meaning the schools where actually nothing appears to be going on, but the presence of certain plants and certain objects in a composition indicate that it actually is an erotic cryptogram of some sort.

Audience: Could it be that the natural psychedelics that exist on the planet are a kind of love offering from the Other to us with which, when we accept them, we can develop that bond sought by the Other?

I have spoken about extraterrestrial contact and the relationship to the psilocybin mushrooms. I've mentioned that psilocin, which is what psilocybin quickly becomes as it enters your metabolism, is 4-hydroxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine. It is the only 4-substituted indole in all of organic nature. Let this rattle around in your mind for a moment. It is the only 4-substituted indole known to exist on earth. It happens to be this psychedelic substance that occurs in about 80 species of fungi, most of which are native to the New World. Psilocybin has a unique chemical signature that says, "I am artificial; I come from

outside.” I was suggesting that it was a gene — an artificial gene — carried perhaps by a space-borne virus or something brought artificially to this planet, and that this gene has insinuated itself into the genome of these mushrooms.

It is an unresolved problem in botany why there is such a tremendous concentration of plant hallucinogens in the New World — in North and South America. Africa, which is where man is generally thought to have arisen and gone through his formative cultural development, is the poorest of all continents in hallucinogens. The New World is very, very rich, and this is why hallucinogenic shamanism is so highly developed in the New World. So, yes: the fact that the psilocybin compound is chemically unique, the fact that it induces this Logos-like experience, causes me at least to entertain the possibility that this is an extraterrestrial contact and that the notion of extraterrestrials as we have previously conceived them, as someone from far away who would come in ships and get in touch with us, is an obsolete notion.

As human history goes forward, we develop the linguistic discrimination to be able to recognize the extraterrestrials that are already insinuated into the planetary environment around us, some of which may have been here millions and millions of years. In other words, space is not an impermeable barrier to life; there is slow drift. There is genetic material that is transferred through space and time over vast distances.

Operationally, I deal with the mushroom that way. It may well be an ad- umbration or some slice of the human collectivity, but since it presents itself as the Other, I treat it as the Other. Sometimes, as I have said, it is my colleague, and sometimes it is my Jewish godfather, and sometimes it is what Jung called the soror mystica, and what my brother Dennis called the sore mistress. It all has to do with changing our preconceptions of things so that the idea that a mushroom could be an intelligent extraterrestrial, which is preposterous from one point of view, can be seen to move from possible to highly probable. This change of mind occurs by simply shifting language around; the evidence has been left untouched.

The evidence is equally friendly to either point of view because the evidence is so impersonal — science is totally impersonal. The empirical evidence that the mushroom is an extraterrestrial is thin and circumstantial, but the subjective experience of those who have formed a relationship with it overwhelmingly supports that view. This, then, is where we have ideas in competition, the evolution of points of view through time. That’s why I say the opportunity should not be missed to open a cultural dialogue concerning this phenomenon among ourselves, and with the thing itself. It’s a unique opportunity.

Audience: I’m going to ask you to speculate just for a minute.

I never speculate.

Audience: Just try. Given that we are led by our imaginations into the future, and that facts are indeed suppositions that are agreed upon by a large group of people, how many people do you suppose it would take to agree on these facts and what sort of rituals or ceremonies would be required to align everybody’s thinking to agree on specific elements of the invisible landscape to the point where it would be possible to retool the language to accommodate the new visions and take advantage of this opportunity to perfect the Paleolithic ideals of shamanism?

I don’t know. Maybe there’s a critical 5%, or something like that. Political revolutions are made by 10%. Psilocybin mushrooms have emanated throughout society. In the last eight years we have undergone

something like a second Neolithic revolution. The first Neolithic revolution was the invention of agriculture; the second Neolithic revolution was the invention of home fungus cultivation. Suddenly, twenty or thirty species of psilocybin-containing mushrooms, which were previously rarely met forest endemics or the coprophilic kinds of mushrooms — the ones that grew on the dung of cattle — all of which had restricted endemic zones of occupation, these all have become available. *Stropharia cubensis*, the most ubiquitous in the natural state, was before the invention of human cultivation a rare tropical mushroom. Now it grows from Nome to Tierra del Fuego in every attic, basement and garage around. The strategy by which the mushroom conquers society is exactly the same strategy by which the mycelium spreads across a petri dish; it simply moves out in all directions. My brother and I wrote the book *Psilocybin: Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide* in 1975. It sold a hundred thousand copies. We had competition from Bob Harris, who also wrote a cultivation book. Jonathan Ott wrote a book. So did Gary Menser and Stephen Pollock. Spore companies sprang up; it's very hard to imagine how many people are doing this.

I'm very bullish on psilocybin. I think that the word "drug" is inappropriate and that the model of hallucinogenic substances that we have inherited from our experience with LSD is completely inadequate — that the fact that LSD is our model hallucinogen for doctors and researchers is only a historical accident. It was discovered first, or characterized first, in the laboratory, and then millions and millions of people took it. It's active in the 100 µg range, whereas psilocybin is active at 15 milligrams. Millions and millions of people were able to be touched by LSD. I don't think that mass drug taking is a good idea, but I think that we must have a deputized minority — a shamanic professional class, if you will — whose job is to bring ideas out of the deep, black water and show them off to the rest of us. Such people would perform for our culture some of the cultural functions that shamans performed in preliterate cultures.

I like the plant hallucinogens. I think that a true symbiosis is happening there. LSD was a thing of the laboratory. Psilocybin is a creature of the forests and fields. When we propagate it, when we spread it, when it stones us, there is a reciprocal relationship and transfer of energy and information. This is a true symbiosis. Both parties are gaining; nobody is giving up anything. We have domesticated many plants and animals; that's not big news. But this is not a walnut or an apple; it isn't even a cat or a dog; it may be smarter than we are. So the implications of this relationship have to be couched in at least human terms, and that's why the erotic metaphor is not inappropriate.

Audience: If psychedelic substances were legal and this were a class in introductory psychedelic appreciation, what do you suppose our first assignment would be?

From me? I guess I would have you plant some seeds and read some history; when you had read the history and grown the seeds (and I don't know what they would be — morning glory seeds or the spores of mushrooms), when you had assimilated and cared for the plant and brought it to its fullest self-expression of fruitful production of alkaloids, then you would be at the threshold of your career and I would adjourn the class.

Appreciation of history is very important to doing well in the psychedelic experience. Psilocybin shows you movies of history; it sees us as historical creatures. It has this above-everything point of view where it isn't dealing in the slice of the moment. It's dealing with the phenomenon of the monkeys over the last million years; that is how it sees us. You can assimilate some of its viewpoints by having a real feeling for the ancestors, all the people who are dead and the people who went before. What a long, strange trip it's

been, you know — from the cave paintings at Altamira to the doorway of the starship. And now we stand on that threshold, hand in hand with this strange new partner; out of historical change comes the unexpected. The problem of the Other, the need for the Other, the presence of the Other, the nature of the Other — these are the questions and the concerns that will drive the next order of human knowing.

Audience: You don't preclude at all the possibility that the yearning for the Other is just a yearning for the Self — that the Other really is an undisclosed Self.

No, I don't. In fact, I said at the beginning that the nature of the archetype is being set now in the light of scientific knowledge concerning other intelligence in the universe. It's a combination of our need for connection and science giving its blessing to this form of expression of that need that is creating the potential phenomenon of alien love. We don't know what the Self is; Buddhism says that everything is Bodhi-mind; that means that there could be extraterrestrials, and if it's true that everything is Bodhi-mind, they too are an aspect of the Self. This word "Self" is as great a mystery as the word "Other." It's just a polarity between two mysteries and then the thin, thin myths that are spun to hold you suspended there without freaking out. The myths of science and religion and shamanism all represent a polarity between the mystery of the Self and the mystery of the Other — and a mystery is not to be confused with an unsolved problem; a mystery is by its nature mysterious. It will not collapse into solution. And uh, we are unfamiliar with that kind of thing. We think that if there's a mystery, then experts of whatever kind can get it straightened out and issue a report and that's that, but this approach only works for trivia. And what's important — our hearts, our souls, our hopes, our expectations — are completely mysterious to us. And so how must they appear, then, to the Other, if it truly is Other?

So we need to cultivate a sense of mystery. The mystery is not only in the Other; it is in us. And this reverberates again with what I said about the idea that we become what we behold. The nature of history is suddenly transforming in the post-quantum physics, postmodern phase; this was not expected. Uh, the 19th century, the early 20th century — they didn't realize this was what they were pointed into. Although some few people, the 'Pataphysicians, the surrealists, they saw what was coming. But here we are.

Audience: The discussion earlier of how the mushroom was likely seeded from afar reminded me of the panspermia theory — of the idea that life itself was sent and that we were all sent down here together.

TM: Yes, I should have mentioned that theory because it is the best support I have for the idea I was putting forth. The panspermia theory which was formulated by Cyril Ponnampereuma and uh, Crick, who was the discoverer, along with James Watson, Francis Crick, of DNA. Ponnampereuma and Crick are proposing a much more radical theory than what I put forth, at least in terms of- relative to biology. They are saying that prebiotic molecules arise in the greatest numbers in deep space, not on the surfaces of planets; that planets are only secondarily and at a late stage in the development of complex polymers and prebiotic compounds. I'm sure you know the old adage that we each are made of stars, that the atoms in your body were once cooked in the hearts of stars. This is true, but it- a, an unremarked uh, uh, accompanying necessity of that fact would be that there must therefore be some atoms in your body which were not cooked in the heart of stars, but which were part of the planets that circled around those stars before they exploded.

My point being that not all of this material that is circulated in the galaxy has been through something as violent as nuclear burning at the heart of a star. When stars go nova their planets are blown to pieces, and

biotic material has evolved on those planets is injected into the general cosmic soup of circulating material. And that is more my idea of what the spore strategy may have originally been about. It was forms of life which had evolved in very harsh environments where seeds could not survive. Mushroom spores survive best in an environment as much like that of deep space as possible. Ideal is total vacuum at -40, at -60°C. Then they last virtually forever. At any lower temperature they will slowly degrade. The logic of the case is well-founded. What is on much shakier ground, of course, is the idea that the mushroom is an intelligent life form. That's my special obsession and province. Most people say I'm welcome to it.

It's very interesting that in a book called *Scientific Perspectives on Interstellar Communication* by Cyril Ponnampertuma, there is an article by R.N. Bracewell, who's an astrophysicist, talking about the logic of searches for intelligent life. And he concludes that no matter what kind of life form you are, no matter what kind of technology you have, if you are seriously going to search space by physically sending probes from one star to another, then the only strategy which would work would be what is called a Von Neumann machine, meaning a machine which could reproduce itself. or four of these machines are sent out in four opposed directions from a parent star. At a certain distance from the parent star each machine replicates. Then you have eight machines. And at double that distance, they replicate again, giving sixteen machines, and so on. The notion is that only by this process of replication can you cover all bets. And then probably what you do is send a message that says, "We are searching the galaxy for intelligence by an exhaustive means. If you read this message, please call the following toll-free number and we will then initiate contact." And only by this means could you hope to have contact with all the habitable worlds in the galaxy. This scenario makes clear that it may be very important to understand what the message is that the mushroom conveys.

The Mandaeans, who were obscure religious cult of Gnostics in the Middle East of very long survivability, have this very interesting idea. They believe that at the end of time what they call the Secret Adam will come to earth. The Secret Adam is a messiah-like figure, but what he does is he builds a machine which then transmits all the souls back to their hidden source in the All-Father outside of the machinery of cosmic fate. This notion of the messiah building a machine is very interesting. It's conceivable that if there is an extraterrestrial message in our environment, it is a message to build some kind of device so that a less tenuous form of communication can be opened up. Uh, and Bracewell makes this case. To him this is inherent in the logic of the situation.

And I suppose it would be an interesting branch of logic — the logic of protocols of extraterrestrial contact. What can we define about contact that is so basic that whatever form of life and intelligence you were, you would have to flow along those creodes? Um, this is probably an undeveloped field at this point, but it certainly uh, could be done. It's like alternative physics. We need alternative theories of social contact and uh, and social contract-making in the event that we meet an extraterrestrial. This is a fertile theme in science fiction, the logic of contact, how to make it without giving away too much and yet not get anything out of it. It's poker, but the stakes are very high. We're talking about the survivability, viability, and evolutionary fates of species, if not entire planets.

Audience: You talked about the collapse of the distinction between inner and outer space.

Right

And what would- how would you, could you go into that more?

Well, the distinction of inner and outer space is rooted in the self and the body electronic consciousness and also as we explore the erotic dimensions of the other that indicated tonight in a way that the identified between king and self has been

I would like to ask whether you see a difference with what you're doing with your life and what a shaman would do? The last time I heard you speak, you said you didn't consider yourself a shaman.

The primary characteristic of shamans is that they cure. In other words, they perform a medical function. If I'm performing a medical function, it is a fairly curious one. That's how I differentiate, because I respect that and it is often lost sight of. People think of the psychedelic plants and the magic and the magical feats, but they forget the curing. In Carlos Castaneda's work I don't think anybody cures anybody in about 1,200 pages of material; nevertheless, classically and statistically, shamans are healers. I think there is something called "lived shamanic ideals," which is what I'm trying to do — to try to explore reality with a shamanic spirit and by shamanic means. But the curing is the sine qua non of shamanism.

Audience: Could you give me your best understanding of what space is from the psychedelic perspective and the differentiation between inner mental space and outer physical space, and the validity of that differentiation? Just the relationship between space in general and consciousness.

The world is reconstructed in the mind through the input of sensation. The sensation is canalized through the perceptors so that we're getting at least three or four lines of unrelated input, or it's generally thought of as unrelated. But the body is the interface between the mind and the world, and language seems to be the throughput from the mind to the world and then from the world back into the mind. As for space — there is this curious thing in biology: the earliest forms of life had no perception of the world at all. If food was in their way, they took it in. Then later, with the development of eyespots and pigment-sensitive chemicals concentrated in certain cells, you get the differentiation between light and darkness. Then later still you get mobile animals and the evolution of complicated eyes and so forth. You see, what is happening is that biology is a conquest of dimensions and that if you view culture as the extension of biological evolution, it too is a conquest of a dimension. It is the conquest of a dimension of time where, through the invention of alphabets and coding systems and oral traditions, experience is able to be coded. Now we seem to be coming into a place where we are coding space and time, but the evolution of the conquest of space through motion allows our whole mapping of the world. Culture is turning into a hyperdimensional entity fulfilling the biological program of life. Whatever it is, it is transforming itself through a series of dimensions, bootstrapping itself from one dimension to another. You'll notice that currently human culture is very two-dimensional, or it's very flat. What is the highest building in the world, a thousand feet high? And generally most buildings are twenty feet high; but now we are proposing to build space colonies where the notion of how high the building is doesn't exist because the world is the building and the building is fifty or a hundred miles long.

We can record essentially anything we want about any event and recall it later. There is a synthesis of all this, which leads to the discovery of the inner dimension, which may be thought of as a higher or lower dimension. The human imagination is the dimension beyond space and time, or it precedes all dimensions.

At some level it has pointlike characteristics; that's why all this talk about the hologram, because it has the pointlike characteristics of new consciousness. It has all-at-onceness. Its everywhere-at-the-same-timeness has fascinated commentators.

Audience: You talked about the collapse of the distinction of inner and outer space. Would you go into that more?

The distinction of inner and outer space is rooted in association of the Self with the body. I think as the Self moves out into the ocean of electronic consciousness and, as we explored, into the erotic dimensions with the Other that I've indicated tonight, this identification between Self and body will become secondary, in the same way that the identification between king and Self has become rather secondary over the last 5,000 years. We don't even have a king. We seem to manage without one. It's conceivable we could manage without a body as well. These are just ways that loyalty is transferred toward forms of cultural concrescence validated by local languages.

Audience: It seems that the talk is of humanity being on the threshold of a New Age, and that maybe contact with aliens will help us cross this threshold.

I definitely think that there is a process that has been long underway that has been gaining momentum since its very beginning. It is the process that formed the planet, that called life out of the ocean, that called higher animals out of the lower animals, that called humanity out of the primates, and that called history out of tribal, sacral, timeless existence. What it is leading toward is some kind of transcendental, transformative flowing together of everything that is beyond our language system. It is the umbilicus of being; it is where it's all tied together, and therefore it's very hard to describe. I think that all of our science and religion and history are patterns thrown across a limited set of dimensions by the hyperdimensional presence of a certain object at the end of history toward which we are moving and toward which we are being drawn. I think that most things about human beings are mysterious and that what is happening to us is mysterious. The sudden explosive development of the neocortex is entirely out of context with what we know about the rates of evolution that occur in other species and previously went on in the primates.

Now its been very fashionable in the past fifty years or something to think that it's all very humdrum somehow; and yet this is just everybody- every ideological system that has been granted the status of being the official view of reality has always proclaimed that it had everything nailed down but the last 5% and their best people were working on that. But I think that we are for all that we know, we know practically nothing. Though I am not in most senses religious, I think that religious thinking about the transformation of the world is more on the right track than the notion that the laws of physics will always be what they are, the laws of biology will always be what they are, and we're all just going to go along and things are going to get worse and worse, or better and better, but that there are no surprises. I think that we do not see what's going on.

One of the reasons I like to make this argument about the mushroom and the extraterrestrial and all that is just to show people how one can see things differently. If things can be seen that differently, how many ways can they be seen differently? And to try and get people to stop waiting for the president to enlighten them. In other words, stop waiting for history and the stream of historical events to make it clear to you. You have to take seriously the notion that understanding the universe is your responsibility, because the only understanding of the universe that will be useful to you is your understanding. It doesn't do you any

good to know that somewhere in some computer there are tensor equations which perfectly model or perfectly don't model something that is going on. And we have all tended to give ourselves away to official ideologies and to say, "Well, I may not understand, but someone understands." But the fact of the matter is that only your own understanding is any good to you, I mean because it's you that you're going to live with and it's you that you're going to die with. As the song says, you do, the last dance you dance, you dance alone and you want to be in good company then. So uh, it's very important

I don't know what the transformation means, this rushing together of everything.
No official agency has pointed out

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject [July 28, 2017]

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Aliens and Archetypes

Day Month 1988

Interivew w/ Jeffrey Mishlove on 'Thinking Allowed' Show

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[Theme music]

[Announcer]: Thinking Allowed...Conversation on the leading edge of knowledge and discovery, with psychologist, Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove

[Jeffery Mishlove, Ph.D.]: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Throughout recorded history, human society has been haunted by reports of unidentified flying objects in our skies, many of which have defied all attempts at scientific explanation or understanding. What are these phenomenon, and how can they be explained? With me today is Terence McKenna, a philosopher and thinker of note in the area of altered states of consciousness and alternative realities. Terence is the coauthor, with his brother Dennis of 'The Invisible Landscape', and also 'Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide'. He is a founding member of Botanical Dimensions, a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving and studying psychoactive plants used by native cultures throughout the world, and he is also the developer of a computer software package called Timewave Zero, designed to augment interpretation of the ancient Chinese book of prophecy, the I Ching. Welcome, Terence.

[Terence McKenna]: It's a pleasure to be here with you.

[Mishlove]: It's a pleasure to have you here with me, also. You know, the UFO phenomenon is, uh, striking because it's so bizarre. It seems as if the, the reports that come in about UFOs defy any attempt whatsoever to categorize them. I guess from my point of view, I can only assume that there are probably many different interpretations of, of this event. I think, given your background as a student of shamanism and altered states of consciousness and alternative realities, you have some unique perspectives on the UFO phenomenon. I wonder if we could, uh, get into that material.

[McKenna]: Yes. Well, the ordinary approach to the UFOs has been to view them as visitors or intruders from a nearby star system that have come in metal ships, uh, for reasons of trade or scientific investigation or military conquest --

[Mishlove]: Or missionary activity.

[McKenna]: -- or missionary activity, to the vicinity of our planet. This was a myth that sprang up but concomitant with the modern wave of sightings that began shortly after World War II. As time has passed and the number of sightings has gone from hundreds to thousands to hundreds of thousands of instances, as the myth has fleshed itself out with sub-themes -- the theme of abduction, the theme of telepathic contact, uh, it's become much more difficult to fit all the known facts into the simple model of, uh, space-faring visitors from another world. So what we are left with, then, are a number of more exotic competing theories in the so-called postmodern phase of thinking about the UFO. Probably the best known of these alternative explanations was the one pioneered by, uh, the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, who in 1953 wrote a book called 'Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky'. And, Jung was at great pains, without passing judgment on the reality of the saucers, of the things seen, to interpret them psychologically, to interpret them as one would interpret a dream. And, he saw in their circular form, in their scintillating, shining, uh, alchemical brilliance, a symbol of human wholeness, and felt that they were a symbol of our collective yearning for a kind of totality and individuation. Now, in a way this kind of explanation is very satisfying; however, it is not satisfying to the person who has immediately undergone a very strange and a very real seeming experience.

[Mishlove]: Unless such a person were told great messages of hope for the planet.

[McKenna]: Well, and this is a persistent part of the flying saucer phenomenon [Mishlove: Yea]-- that people who have close contact with the saucers return with messages of universal brotherhood and benevolence, with stories of a beneficent hegemony of organized intelligence, where wiser, older worlds and civilizations help younger and, uh, and, uh, less mature worlds toward a kind of galactic citizenship. However --

[Mishlove]: That's just one thread of the evidence.

[McKenna]: It's one thread of the evidence, and it isn't really well supported by the evidence. Jacques Vallee, who is one of the foremost commentators on the phenomenon, has been at great pains to point out that with the flying saucer phenomenon we're dealing with thousands and thousands of incidents per year, throughout the world. It's very hard, with...even at our own primitive level of scientific sophistication, we can learn a great deal about a planet by sending a single probe to that planet. What kind of scientific program of investigation requires thousands and thousands of appearances? And, if we make the assumption that not all appearances are observed, but that in fact only a small number are observed, then the number of appearances that must actually be going on soars toward an astronomical number. It suggests we're dealing with an interpenetration by an alien dimension on an almost industrial scale.

[Mishlove]: Of course, a single probe could cause thousands of appearances.

[McKenna]: If it were of a sophisticated enough nature, that's right. The approach that I have taken, that has characterized--uh, characterized my work with this phenomenon, was first of all to say, we have not carried out a sufficiently in-depth survey of the life already on this planet to be able to say that at some time in the past life did not arrive here and thrive here that is not part of the general heritage of life on this planet, but that has somehow come in from the outside. My candidate for that kind of an intrusive extraterrestrial would be probably a mushroom of some sort, or a spore-bearing life form, because spores are very impervious to, uh, low temperatures and high radiation -- the kind of environment met with in outer space.

[Mishlove]: In other words, a mushroom spore could conceivably, uh, even waft itself up through the atmosphere of our planet and enter into empty space.

[McKenna]: Oh, there's no question but what this is happening -- that through what's called Brownian motion, which is sort of random percolation, spores do reach the outer edge of our atmosphere, and, there, in the presence of cosmic rays and meteors and rare, highly energetic events, occasionally a very small percentage of these biological objects are wafted into space. We even possess, uh, meteorites that are believed to be pieces of the Martian surface, thrown out by impacts on the Martian surface of asteroidal material. In fact I think part of the grappling with the UFO mystery is going to lead to the conclusion that space is not an impermeable and insurmountable barrier to biology -- that, in fact, planets are islands, and life does occasionally wash in from distant places, and if conditions are correct, can, uh, take hold. However, let me say, in the UFO phenomenon we are dealing, or we presuppose that we are dealing, not simply with the phenomenon of extraterrestrial biology, but with the phenomenon of extraterrestrial intelligence, and this is a hair, uh, hackle-raising notion.

[Mishlove]: We're dealing with more than mushroom spores in that [indcipherable].

[McKenna]: We're dealing with more than mushroom spores, at least as ordinarily conceived. And, I--I think the thing that has been overlooked in almost all discussions of extraterrestrial contact is how strange the extraterrestrial is likely to be. It isn't going to be a friendly, elfin little feller with a beating heart of gold. It isn't even going to be some of the more extravagantly grotesque creations out of Hollywood. Uh, conditions and time spans in the universe are long enough and varied enough that, I would bet, the real task with extraterrestrial intelligence will be to recognize it, you see. We have no conception of how species-bound our images of life and biology are. This is a place where we have never been asked to confront to what degree the monkey within us has channeled our expectations and perceptions.

[Mishlove]: Well, it is the case that, on this planet, virtually all known life forms are based on the same DNA molecule.

[McKenna]: Well, except that, have all life forms been examined, to see to what degree they deviate, percentage-wise, from, let's say, a standard DNA molecule? The answer is no. The sequencing of DNA is a very expensive process, and is only carried out on laboratory organisms with an extensive history of involvement in medical research, like E. coli or, uh, the ordinary laboratory rat. No, there's a great deal we don't know about life on earth. We don't know when the fungi entered into the evolutionary chain. We don't know what kind of intelligence is really possessed by, uh, the cephalopods, the shell-less molluscs that include the octopi. The intelligence of dolphins has been studied by Lilly and others; the intelligence of, uh, of the large primates other than man. One way of looking at nature is that it is *entirely* linguistic intent -- that DNA is in fact a-a-way of uttering protein syntactical structures into matter.

[Mishlove]: In other words, that all of nature is, is like a poem. [laughs]

[McKenna]: Yes, nature is a communicating system [Mishlove: mmmhmm] of some sort, and the, the problem that we have is to transcend cultural languages [Mishlove: mmmhmm], historically created languages with very limited applications, and instead fall into phase with the communication systems that nature has placed all around us. One possible view of the flying saucer is that it is a kind of projection from the consciousness of the planet -- that it is Gaia, that it is in fact a kind of alchemical object haunting human historical time with a symbol of totality, the kind of totality that our religions and our mystical yearnings are so at pains to concretize for us. But, unless we, as egocentric beings, clarify our relationship to the unconscious, then I think the flying saucer is going to remain quintessentially mysterious. And, this was Jung's view.

[Mishlove]: One of the things that Jung pointed out in his book is that we must pay attention to the research that Dr. J.B. Rhine was doing at that time at Duke University in ESP and psychokinesis, and that, even if UFOs had a physical reality, could be

photographed or could be weighed and measured, that they still might in some manner be projections of the human mind.

[McKenna]: Oh yes, this is an important point to make, which the flying saucer people are forever misunderstanding, and that is, saying that the flying saucer is a psychic object does not mean that it is not a physical object. Uh, Jung in 'Mysterium Coniunctionis' is at great pains to say that the realm of the psychic and the realm of the physical *meet* in a strange kind of never-never land that we have yet to create the intellectual tools to explore. This is where the mystery of synchronicity is going to come to rest, the mystery of, uh, all kinds of paranormal activity on the part of human beings, and the mystery of the flying saucer. It's interesting, you see, that if you take the broad world of the so-called 'Mysteries' -- para-psychological, shamanic, extraterrestrial, and so forth -- and hypothesize another spatial dimension, one more spatial dimension, then suddenly all these mysteries become trivial. They are easily done. Locked boxes are opened; future events are discerned; lost objects are found. Uh, this sort of thing becomes quite the ordinary run of things if we hypothesize dimensions hidden from ordinary experience.

[Mishlove]: And, of course, there's serious work, at this point, in the field of, uh, unified field theory in physics, to postulate other dimensions of space than we normally think of, so...

[McKenna]: That's right. [Mishlove: mmhmm] The current physical models of the universe require eleven dimensions, eleven integrated variables to describe. And that's physical models of the universe. If we then turn our attention to mind and realize that we have no definition of what mind is, why then is there any mystery in the fact that we have no definition of what the UFO is? The mind is present at hand in every conscious moment. It has been our constant companion for fifty thousand years, and we haven't a clue as to what it is. So therefore, a manifestation of the other -- the superego, or the extraterrestrial other like the UFO -- it is not surprising that it is a mystery. I always hark back to the words of J.B.S. Haldane, the great British enzymologist, who said "reality is not only stranger than we suppose, it may be stranger than we can suppose."

[Mishlove]: Well, that, that suggests to me that if we look at some of the most bizarre, most anomalous cases that we have, such as UFOs, and we begin to ask ourselves, not so much what are they, because that's a mystery, but what is their function? How are they affecting us? That's like holding up a mirror to ourselves, and it tells us a great deal about the basic mystery of our mind and our reality.

[McKenna]: Yes, this is the so-called postmodern approach -- to ask the question, not what is the UFO, but what is it doing to us? And, Jacques Vallee pioneered this approach. And, the answer is fascinating. What the UFOs are doing to us, to global society, is they are eroding faith in science by casting directly in the path of science a-a-a kind of gauntlet, a challenge: "Crack this" -- almost as though the cosmic giggle had shown up at, uh, the bachelor party of science to spoil the bash, uh, in the same way that the resurrection of Christ posed a tremendous problem for the intellectuals of late Roman antiquity, because they had no place in their world view for someone rising from the dead. They were Greek materialists, atomists, essentially. In that same way, the UFO challenges the assumptions of science, and, uh, I think in that way--in that sense, Jung was really onto something when he saw it as coming from the unconscious. It is like an object coming from the unconscious with a compensatory function -- to turn us away from the rational and toward the intuitive; to turn us away from the paternalistic, Apollonian, solar, uh, masculine view of things, and toward a kind of watery, lunar, mysterious, intuitively felt, feminine force -- almost as though the UFO is a manifestation of Gaia as mother goddess. Science, as the proudest -- pardon the word -- erection of the rational mind, then, is challenged by something from an entirely other dimension, an entirely other realm, that concretizes for us the culture crisis. And that's why I've gotten into UFOs; I think they are important for a resolution of the culture crisis. They concretize the struggle between the paternalistic-masculine and the lunar-feminine, to--uh, between a dominator society and the kind of partnership society that we require to survive.

[Mishlove]: And yet, it seems as if that challenge is not a direct confrontation. As Vallee points out, the UFOs are operating almost at the mythological level of our culture. They're not landing in the White House; they're not really challenging the military or NASA.

[McKenna]: No, they're very mercurial, very watery. When you reach out toward them, there is nothing there. What they chiefly have--have become is an intellectual force in human thinking about the future, but when you reach out to grasp the hardware, to read the message, to meet the alien, there is nothing there. I've come to the conclusion, both from talking to contactees and having had a contactee experience that whatever lies behind the UFO mystery, it is a force which can literally do anything. So, it is fruitless to talk about the size of the objects or their composition or color, or the size of the entities, their dress and weapons and accoutrements, because it can appear literally *any way* it wants to. It can appear as the Virgin Mary; it can appear as galactarian overlords; it can appear as gnomes, elves, sprites, this sort of thing. It is not to be s-caught in the rational net.

[Mishlove]: Your description is strikingly actually parallel, with one exception, to the view of many Fundamentalist Christians, who say this UFO stuff is all the work of the devil.

[McKenna]: Well, I don't know about the work of the devil. Jung's criticism of Christianity was that it had not made a place for what he called the shadow, and he said the production Chr---the productions of Christian culture will always be neurotic because the shadow has not been included, so there's a lack of psychic balance. Perhaps the UFO carries compensatory psychic energy from the realm of the shadow. Some people are very frightened of it. Some people see it as an almost millenarian, salvational hope, the savior of mankind. I think that it's very powerful, that it haunts time like a ghost, that the messianic anticipations of Fundamentalist Christianity and Islam are in fact a picking up on the shock wave that the image of the flying saucer casts backward through time -- that this image of the New Jerusalem, the four-gated city descending from the sky to whisk the elect away to a better place, is a kind of prophecy yearning toward a fact in the act of becoming. You know, Christianity and Islam are the most history-obsessed of all the world's major religions.

[Mishlove]: Along with Judaism.

[McKenna]: Along with Judaism. And, all three of them have this notion of the transcendental object at the end of time. And, alchemy in the sixteenth century was an outbreak of an expectation of a transcendental object in the nearby here and now, that would cure --

[Mishlove]: The omega point of history, so to speak.

[McKenna]: Yes, it would cure all ills, confer longevity, fertility, virility, immortality. And I think that the flying saucer is an airborne philosopher's stone -- the *sophic hydrolith* of Paracelsus haunting the skies of modern America, with a promise of mandalic cohesion for the future that science has not given us. Science has been a very sadly disappointing religion in the realm of the heart. The flying saucer comes from the heart, but it bears the very strange energy of the other in its manifestation as planetary goddess.

[Mishlove]: I'm often struck by the, uh, psychic powers that seem to be associated with people who've had intensive encounters with UFOs. I've researched many of these cases myself.

[McKenna]: That's right. [Mishlove: I've researched many of these cases myself] The thing is both material and psychological. It anticipates the future. It seems that the memories of the contactees are transparent to this force. It can reach deep into their lives and confront them with information taken from forgotten incidents in their lives. It is an awesome kind of force that transcends space and time *for the individual*. Now, it may be that we will never have a general theory of flying saucers. It may be that this is something that addresses the individual, in the same way that I don't think we will ever have a general theory of falling in love. That, too, is something which addresses the individual. We have been mistaken to expect Time magazine or the New York Times to explain the flying saucers to us. They will not explain the flying saucers to us, any more than they will explain *ourselves* to us. This is something that haunts the membrane of experience very close in to the experiencing ego, and therefore it, it, uh, is threatening. This is one of the reasons that I think it relates to the psychedelic experience, because the psychedelic experience is like a UFO encounter on demand. [Mishlove: Yea] It's where the will of the person having the experience enters in. They decide to have this curious symmetry-breaking kind of experience. What I have tried to, uh, say to the UFO community is that we will not really have a deep understanding of what the contact experience is until we include data from the psychedelic experience as legitimate data to be included when looking at the problem.

[Mishlove]: Well, you have talked earlier about our need to make an extensive survey of all of the biological manifestations on our planet. It almost seems that, eh, in order to really get a handle on the UFO phenomenon, we'd need to make a comparable survey of all of the psychological manifestations of which we are aware, and it seems to me that at some level you would agree with me that the UFO phenomenon is one of our psychological manifestations.

[McKenna]: Yes, I agree.

[Mishlove]: We've got about two minutes left, so I wonder if we can sort of summarize your view in that regard.

[McKenna]: Yes, I think that the UFO phenomenon is a modern manifestation of a phenomenon which has been with us for thousands of years -- that is, the partial penetration of our own cultural space by others -- pixies, elves, fairies, sprites, demons, whatever you wish to call them.

[Mishlove]: Angels.

[McKenna]: Angels. [Mishlove: mmhmm] In the past we had a professional class for dealing with these go-betweens. We called the professional class 'shamans', and they mitigated these comings and goings and had a lore and a mythology about them. As we have lost contact with our shamanic roots, the things which go on at a low frequency, out in the wilderness and deserts of this planet, have become to seem to us either like invasions from another world, or like virtual impossibilities. I think that the flying saucer is knocking on our door to remind us of the depth and strangeness and animate intelligence that is resident with us in nature on this planet.

[Mishlove]: Terence McKenna, it's been a very eloquent presentation and extremely thought provoking. Thank you very much for being with me.

[McKenna]: It's always a pleasure to talk with you.

[Mishlove]: And, thank *you* very much for being with us.

[Theme music]

Original Transcription by: [The Intuition Network](#)

Review 1 by: Kevin Whitesides

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Always Coming Home

20 October 1999

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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James Kent Trip Magazine Interview

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

- [Transcription Part 1](#)
- [Transcription Par 2](#)

Terence McKenna Interview, Part 1

James Kent

Terence talks about his childhood and early years in the first part of our interview

HE IS A RENEGADE SCHOLAR, an outspoken advocate for high-dose tryptamine experimentation, and yet he has a book deal, a worldwide lecture tour, a visiting professorship at Esalen, and a growing mass of followers who he sometimes refers to as his "fans", sometimes as his "constituency." Either way, you could not help but be delighted by his voice and style. His syntactical razzle-dazzle, mad-scientist voice, and dead-aim comic timing left us in grinning awe. We loved him. We nodded and said, "Right on," yet many of us

still wondered, "who is this guy?"

At this time in our not too distant past, I was a young freelance writer set to the task of interviewing Mr. McKenna for a small New Age newspaper in Southern California (don't giggle, it's true). They only wanted 2100 words, but being a fan of psychedelic exploration and skeptical by nature, I didn't pass up this perfect opportunity to spend a few hours getting to know Mr. McKenna and finding out what he was really up to. I wanted to know who his publicist was, if he was represented in Hollywood, how his career had been orchestrated,

what kind of twisted childhood he had, all the strange drugs he did in college, all the isolated rainforests he'd trekked through, and, probably most of all, was he was actually managing to make a living at being a full-time psychedelic guru for hire — have rap, will travel. So the following is a transcript of the interview which took place on the day I met with Terence in search of those answers. The three hour discussion took place in a small restaurant and later on in his then-home in Occidental, CA. We talked about his life, his theories,

and his career. What appears here is only part one of the dialog we had on that day, but stay tuned for more (because we always want more) to be broadcast in the near future right here at TRP.

James Kent: I've read a lot of interviews with you which were aimed at people who already knew who you were, but I wanted to try to get a broader view of who you are and what you do for a living. When I tell people I have this Terence McKenna interview, they're like,

"Terence who?"

Terence McKenna: It's not possible to be famous enough. (laughs) I recently heard that Michael Jordan was retiring... and, I have to confess, who? This giant was passing from the scene and apparently I was going to become aware of him only at the last moment.

JK: I never watched much basketball, but I would sit down and watch if he was playing. It was pretty amazing to watch him play, he was...

TM: Just because he was so good.

JK: Yeah. When he was on it was like nobody could touch him.

TM: Umm..

JK: Well, one of the main things I wanted to cover today was a little bit about your life, your career, your day to day schedule, your itinerary...

TM: You mean at the moment?

JK: Well, what is it you do?

TM: Oh, what is it I do.

JK: Yes. I mean, I know you're a writer...

TM: Yes.

JK: And you're also called a "shamanist," but that is sort of a vague term. What do you call yourself?

TM: Well, I just think of myself as an itinerant intellectual, trying to stay afloat by writing, lecturing, film consulting - some friends of mine and I have formed a company to develop software... But basically I'm an unassociated intellectual, of which there probably aren't more than half a dozen in the country. I mean, I do not work for any university...

JK: Have you gotten any offers?

TM: No (breaks into laughter). But how perceptive. No, I do however work for a couple of the world's largest corporations, but that's...

JK: Which ones?

TM: Well, Food of the Gods is published by Bantam, that's Bertlesmann, which is the world's largest publishing consortium. And Harper, which publishes all my other books, is wholly owned by Rupert Murdoch.

JK: Oh? And how do you feel about that?

TM: Well, he never bothers me, so... (laughs). But it just shows how difficult it is to remain unentangled these days. "Publishing" now means multinational corporate association. What are you gonna do?

JK: And when was True Hallucinations released?

TM: April [1993].

JK: And you're doing a lot of promotion for that?

TM: I did a lot of promotion work for it. It followed by a year my previous release, which was called Archaic Revival, and it preceded by a year — in other words, next April 15th will be the release of a book called The Invisible Landscape.

JK: That's a reprint, isn't it?

TM: It's a reprint but in the first edition no more than 1500 copies were sold. Most people have never seen this.

JK: No. I haven't. So what is the "Invisible Landscape"?

TM: Have you read True Hallucinations?

JK: No, I had a copy being sent to me, but it didn't arrive in time.

TM: Well True Hallucinations is like the easy-to-read narrative anecdotal version of what The Invisible Landscape is the no-holds-barred, all the footnotes, all the citation...

JK: A recounting of your experience at La Chorerra?

TM: Yes, though The Invisible Landscape is more talking about the ideas that came out of the event.

JK: Like Timewave Zero?

TM: It's in there. So are many of Dennis' theories.

JK: Hypercarbolation?

TM: Exactly. It's all there.

JK: Well, I've been doing some research. It's funny, when I told my editor I was thinking of doing a story on you, she was very excited. I first heard of you, I think I heard you on public radio somewhere, and I tracked down some of your books and interviews, found a set of your tapes... I actually saw you speak somewhere around LA.

TM: Chapman College?

JK: Yes, Chapman [note: Future site of Meeting of the Minds]. I even found a bootleg of one of your weekend seminars at Esalen that I listened to while driving up, so I've compiled quite a wide assortment of topics that I'd like to cover today. Lets start off with personal background here just to get some reference. You were raised in Colorado, in a small mining town. Does the town still exist?

TM: Oh absolutely.

JK: Where is it?

TM: It's called Paomia, Colorado. It's actually become quite hip because in the '70s and '80s freaks moved in and bought all the apple and peach orchards.

JK: When you say "freaks" what do you mean?

TM: Hippies. (laughs)

JK: Oh, hippies. There's all different kind of freaks...

TM: And they went organic, the whole scene went organic. So when I was there it was absolutely podunk. I mean if you read Time Magazine you were suspected of Left leanings.

JK: Do your parents still live there?

TM: My mother died in 1970. My father remarried later and lives in Mesa, Arizona.

JK: What did they do when you were growing up?

TM: My father was a... Paomia was the town where my mother grew up, actually. My father was a salesman for a very large industrial electrical equipment company — switches, transformers, this sort of thing — and visited mines. He had a lot of uranium mines and lead mines. He had a four state territory which he worked with an airplane. The thing which was unusual about my growing up is in this small town, I guess we were close to being the richest people in town on close to fifteen thousand dollars a year. This was a county in

Colorado where even up into the 1950s thirty percent of the county was on welfare. So it was a real hard-scrabble sort of environment.

JK: Now, your brother is Dennis, you're the oldest, right?

TM: That's correct.

JK: Growing up were you maladaptive?

TM: To the extreme.

JK: What kind of social difficulties did that bring you. Peer harassment?

TM: Well I had bad eyes and I was uncoordinated. And in an environment where there wasn't winter, spring, summer, fall, there was baseball, football, basketball, and... something else...

JK: Hockey?

TM: (laughs) Yes. So I was marked out early as the peculiar one. Also, I was smart, so I was very accelerated in one dimension, very embryonic in another dimension.

JK: Were you picked on?

TM: There were bullies. There were certainly bullies who occupied a huge amount of my time. I mean on one level I think my supposed brilliant speaking ability comes from understanding that the problem is to keep them from killing you until the bell rings, and if you can just hold them five minutes longer by any means necessary, it'll be over. But as I grew older I became more seriously alienated. I mean, a lot of kids have those kinds of problems, but I began to realize that somewhere there was something called "Western Civilization" —

there was philosophy, music, art, possibly even Jews. I mean, who knew how wild it could get. And here I was in this town where, like I say, Time Magazine meant you were an intellectual. So I left when I was 16.

JK: For?

TM: Los Altos, California, which is down on the peninsula. I lived there with relatives for a year. Then I finished high school in Lancaster, CA, which is a city up in the high desert north of LA.

JK: Ugh. So by this time what kind of exposure had you had to alternative sciences, philosophies, drugs, psychedelics?

TM: Oh drugs and psychedelics, not at all. I think I became aware of — oh I know where I became aware of psychedelics. It was the Spring of 1963. I read The Doors of Perception.

JK: And when were you born?

TM: November, 1946.

JK: November what?

TM: Sixteenth (double Scorpio). I read The Doors of Perception in early 1963. Then there began to be articles in the newspaper that spring about morning glory use. And I immediately started tracking down these morning glories. And, I just pursued that. I read everything

I could...

JK: Did you experiment with Morning Glories?

TM: I did.

JK: Did you find them satisfying?

TM: I'm not exactly sure I would call them satisfying. They showed me that there was something there worth pursuing.

JK: So you attended college at Berkeley.

TM: Right.

JK: You studied art?

TM: Art history.

JK: Is that what your degree is in, a B.A.?

TM: No no, my only degree is — I switched majors. My only degree is Bachelor of Science degree in Ecology and Conservation. It's complex to explain, but I arrived at Berkeley the year after the free speech movement and in an effort to keep the place from blowing sky high they had told this left-wing professor that he could have an experimental section of the university. But out of the incoming class of 15,000 or whatever it was, he could only take 150 freshman and design a special curriculum for them, and classes would not be in the regular university, they would be in an old frat house.

JK: This was a pilot program?

TM: Yes, it was an experimental program. So that's what I did. It was this thing called the Tussman Experimental College.

JK: Is that still around?

TM: Oh no no, it was run for a total of 6 years and then it was discontinued.

JK: Hmm. Okay. I'm going to shift gears here and get back to some personal questions. I didn't see you pull up, but what kind of car do you drive?

TM: (laughs) I drive a '75 Ford Grenada.

JK: Really?

TM: My only car and I'm fiercely proud of it.

JK: How long have you had it?

TM: I've had it for five years. I bought it with 12,000 miles on it, now it has 80,000 miles on it.

JK: Hmm. Do you have cable TV?

TM: No. I don't have TV period.

JK: No TV?

TM: Well I have a VCR. I don't have an antenna to any broadcast television.

JK: As far as entertainment goes, what is your favorite venue for the arts? Music, movies...

TM: I listen to a lot of music. In terms of time commitment, I listen to music a lot.

JK: What's your favorite musical genre, style, or composer?

TM: I've been listening to a lot of house music.

JK: Really? Like techno?

TM: Techno, house, ambient, you know. Well I'm in that business partially. Also people send me stuff, and I'm very interested in it. I think it's very exciting music. I listen to a lot of baroque music, I guess. Those are the two categories. I have a lot of Rock-n-Roll but I don't listen to it much anymore. I have a lot of '80s New Age stuff which I've found doesn't wear well at all.

JK: As far as house music goes, do you have any groups you like?

TM: Well, I really like Coil. I really like Orb. I'm working with Szvuy, which is an English group. I'm releasing a CD this Halloween with Spacetime Continuum. In fact I'm doing a rave on Halloween.

JK: While we're talking about it, tell me how you got introduced to the rave scene.

TM: I went to England and I gave lectures — the bouquet of flowers, pitcher of water, chair and podium lectures, and a lot of ravers came, and they came up to me and just sort of swept me along. They said, "You've got to see this scene. We're doing what you're talking about." Which seemed to me to be true. It's an incredibly — I mean I'm totally up on youth culture. I think media has done an incredible savaging of youth culture. I don't know what it was like to hang out with the Sex Pistols but it's lots of fun to hang out with the Shamen, or the various DJs, and you know there is a very lively house scene in San Francisco.

JK: What do you think the driving force of this scene is?

TM: Do you mean in terms of cultural agenda... drugs, or money?

JK: In terms of cultural agenda.

TM: Are you familiar with my notion of an Archaic Revival?

JK: Sure.

TM: Well there it is. This has been going on throughout the 20th century.

JK: But why are the youth of today so into it? What void in their lives in this rave scene fulfilling?

TM: Well England, which is where this was born, like so much, has been a Thatcherite hell for 15 years. A whole generation of kids have grown up in those steel towns in the midlands with absolutely no hope of bettering themselves and absolutely no faith that mainstream acculturation in Britain held anything out to them. And rather than producing an anger movement, like punk or something like that, it has produced a dropout movement more like the sixties. People aren't angry, they're just not participating. They're creating their own value systems and I think it's very healthy. I think a lot of this kind of thing comes out of the unconscious. Nobody sits around and figures this stuff out.

JK: Do you think this is an attempt to step away from cultural norms to reprogram their values, or at least deprogram the messages they receive from corporate media culture?

TM: Yeah, I think they're very aware of media culture and they're very anti media culture. For instance, in the clubs in London there's no stage, there is no cult of celebrity. The dancers are the show, the performers are pushed into the corners or locked in a box on a different level. And the whole macho rock-n-roll groupie destruction-derby psychology is not welcome in these scenes. People are a lot cooler. To somebody as cynical as I am a lot of it seems Polyannish. Songs about saving the wetlands and stuff like that. But on the

other hand it's real and it's the right message. The right message is not the skinhead message or the "become a yuppie stockbroker" message. The real message is ecology, community, and feeling. And they've got it right. Now they have to get through the gauntlet of evil record companies, the communications media...

JK: Exploiters?

TM: The exploitative machinery waiting to make t-shirts and...

JK: Movies?

TM: Exactly.

JK: So when you're called upon to join one of these ceremonies what sort of function do you fulfill?

TM: You mean at a rave?

JK: Yes.

TM: Oh I go on stage and I improvise some kind of stem-winding soliloquy to contact the self-transforming elf machines in hyperspace (laughs). It seems sort of weird to me, you know, a 46 year old man at three in the morning hanging out with a thousand loaded teenagers exhorting them to the eschaton.

JK: You use the term eschaton to describe some kind of singularity at the end of time. What is your definition of eschaton?

TM: Well all esch words derive from the greek notion of something final [gr. eskhatos - last]. So eschatology is the study of last things. There is a branch of theology where you study the end of the world and the general judgement and second coming. So the eschaton is the last thing. That would be a definition. It just simply means the last thing.

JK: Interesting. Who would you consider to be your peer group?

TM: My peer group?

JK: You know, contemporaries... collaborators.

TM: You mean people who I agree with? Who I'm most comfortable with?

JK: Close friends, people you find interesting or bounce ideas around with on a regular basis.

TM: Did you read Trialogues at the End of the West?

JK: No, I haven't.

TM: That was a book that I wrote with Ralph Abraham and Rupert Sheldrake, who I would consider peers. We don't see eye to eye on everything, but we get along very well as people, and we spend a lot of time together. Do you know who Sheldrake is?

JK: No, I know of Ralph Abraham.

TM: Well Sheldrake is a very controversial British theoretical biologist who wrote a book called A New Science of Life that Nature, the British journal of science, said was a candidate for burning. It created quite a controversy.

JK: Who else? What about in the literary world? Do you have any favorites?

TM: You mean who do I like or who do I spend time with?

JK: Either or?

TM: Well, I read and spend time with Tom Robbins, he's a friend of mine. Great guy. I read Steve Ericson, Lucious Shepherd, I don't know these guys but I would like to know them. I think they're very exciting. Steve Ericson wrote Tours of the Black Clock and Art Dense and Rubicon Beach.

JK: So what do you do for fun?

TM: What do I do for fun...(pause, thinking?)

JK: You know, leisure activities.

TM: Well I'm going through a divorce right now so excuse me if I can't remember (laughs).

JK: Do you want to talk about that at all, or say a few words?

TM: Well, it's certainly just punishment for being stupid enough to get married in the first place. It's kind of a little self-correcting mechanism there.

JK: So what is your relationship like now? Your family is still here in Occidental?

TM: Well my son lives with me, he's just at school.

JK: Your son?

TM: Yes, I have two children. A son who is 15 [Finn, now 21] and a girl who's twelve, about to turn 13 [now 17]. They were definitely the best thing to come out of the relationship, but I don't blame the personalities involved. I think marriage is a curse for everybody. I'm not too crazy about monogamy either. These are social styles that have very disruptive consequences on the psychic life of the individuals. But I was married when I was 30 years old. I hadn't really thought all this through. It was the only bourgeois value system I ever committed to, and as it turns out I should have stuck with my consistency.

JK: While we're on the subject of consistency, when someone asks Terence McKenna to speak, what topic is most requested?

TM: All they want to talk about is drugs.

JK: And how do you feel about that?

TM: I wish they'd go to the library or buy a tape or a book. I mean, I'd like to move on. I've said everything I have to say at least ten times, and, you know, I said it well, I hope. So, enough already.

JK: It seems to me that, when talking about drugs, you just elaborate a few simple positions over and over. Why is that?

TM: Well really, you see my position on drugs ultimately is that what I think about them is not important. What's important is that people be allowed to check it out for themselves. So consequently, if I'm succeeding at this my crowds should not get larger and larger, people should come once or twice, hear it, understand it, and go get a life.

JK: So how do you feel about having devotees who preach the McKenna party line, call you a guru, want to save your fingernail clippings for future generations...

TM: Well, as I've said on this subject if you think I'm a guru you haven't taken enough psilocybin (laughs). And I don't know what to tell people like that. "Take more! You're not figuring it out!" What makes the whole psychedelic thing so exciting to me is that it's for ordinary people. I am an ordinary person. It's not false humility, it's true. And so it's for ordinary people then there's nothing to be learned from some advanced personality — assuming such a thing exists. And, what's so wonderful about psychedelics is their effectiveness and how democratic they are. That's what I would like people to get on to. In fact, a lot of people do. A lot of people pass through the thinking I'm a guru and take enough trips to understand that no, I was just a witness. I was just a witness.

JK: What were your initial goals when you first started on this journey. Coming back from La Chorrera you had quite a lot of information to mull through. Has everything sort of fallen into place since then or were there a lot of stages you had to go through to get where you are now?

TM: You mean did I ever drift away from it?

JK: Yes, sure.

TM: No, I never drifted away from it. Once I got the concept... I'm incredibly patient. I mean, for instance, my prediction of the singularity in 2012 is 20 [now 25] years old. The prediction is 20 years old. It's something that I've lived with for 20 years and I'll live with for 18 more. I'm very patient, but my attitude is that this thing that went on at La Chorrera was special enough that it's worth spending one life on. And it'll be my life. What I spend most of my time doing is reading philosophy, history, science, sociology, literature, and what I'm

trying to figure out is am I out of context? Or, to put it another way, am I crazy? And the answer is no.

JK: No?

TM: Well something very unusual happened down there, and the world is in a very unusual circumstance, which most people don't seem to perceive. Weather we're talking about Bill Clinton or someone living under a bridge, we have never been here before. This is not business as usual. Management techniques that worked in the past are not going to work in the future.

JK: So what sustained you financially through those dark years in the '70s and '80s when Terence McKenna wasn't a big name?

TM: Well Terence McKenna wasn't a big name but O.T. Oss was.

JK: Ah.

TM: And, umm... I am O.T. Oss.

JK: Of course. So you lived on the royalties of the Magic Mushroom Growers Guide alone?

TM: And something which we should probably describe as "consulting".

JK: I see (laughs).

TM: (laughs loudly).

JK: (regaining composure) Well, I guess that's what I was shooting for with that question.

TM: Yes, there was a lot of "consulting" in the '70s. (laughs).

Stay tuned for more...

Terence McKenna Interview, Part 2

James Kent

We're getting into really deep territory here now. Hold onto your seats

James Kent: How did your success with the 'Magic Mushroom Growers Guide' steamroll into a career?

Terence McKenna: As the new age got going, say '80, '81, '82. I just found it incredibly irritating, and I was busy consulting and staying home and I also had small children, but I just thought it was such a bunch of crap.

JK: Talking about crystals and such?

TM: Yeah, the crystal, aura, past life, channeling business and I said, you know, why don't these people check out drugs? What's the matter with them, my god? And finally someone persuaded me to say that in a public situation, and it's been constant ever since.

JK: Could you be more specific about 'saying that in a public situation'?

TM: Arthur Young invited me to give a talk at the Berkeley Institute for the Study of Consciousness and there were people there who were from Esalen. So from that came the invitation to Esalen, and there was a very far out guy at Esalen who has since died who really believed in psychedelics. And all through the '80s, which were kind of a Dark Age for this stuff, they held a conference every year and paid everybody to come. Anybody who was a researcher in psychedelics or who even had strong opinions... and we all got to know each other. That's what Esalen did; it actually created a community by bringing us together from all over the country once or twice a year. Stan Grof, Gordon Wasson, John Lilly, Dave Nichols, Myron Stolaroff, Rick Yensen... virtually anybody who now has any visibility in the

movement got to know everybody else during those years. And we all proceed in different directions, you know. I mean, Sasha is the great synthetic chemist, I'm the plant advocate, Grof is the transformative Freudian... people have their own bailiwick.

JK: So what do you hate most about what you do? What just burns you up every time?

TM: United Airlines. (Laughs) I'm getting nutty on the subject of how much I hate to fly 'cause I'm convinced that these air flights, especially the ones to Europe where they fly really high, you know, they recirculate the air, and if one person has the flu... So you arrive in Hamburg and you're supposed to get your act together and give a talk and you realize you're getting the flu. I hate the flying. I'm a hermit. I mean, my natural inclination is to be alone. I have been alone at times in my life for very long periods of time with perfect

contentment. So it's kind of strange that I'm cast in this very public role.

JK: What would you most like to spend your time doing?

TM: I like doing some kind of research with a lot of books and a quiet setting. I mean, if I were not me for instance, I would go to a company like Voyager in L.A. and say, 'Hire me to build a CD-ROM of Ulysses.' And I'd take the text and put it on the surface and then line up the streets of Dublin and all the stuff behind. That's the kind of thing I like. I like tight, meticulous work. I've had jobs like insect specimen preparer in museums and art conservation and all these little, tiny, nitpicky kind of things. I really like that 'cause I can think when I

have a job like that.

JK: How much of what you do do you feel is just pure crap, just absolute, well... garbage?

TM: What I hate is repetition, and that's what drives me crazy is the pressure to be more creative than you can be unless you repeat yourself. I would rather give three talks a year and have each one be absolutely stunning and unique than give 25 talks a year and have them be these weird clones of each other.

JK: What do you perceive your potential to be now, as far as what you can accomplish in the future?

TM: Well, I've laid out a theory that's very radical, but very complete in the sense that modern theories must be founded in mathematics. Otherwise, you don't have a theory, you have an idea. So, this theory is very complete, but very radical. The spirit in which I do intellectual work is closer to science than to anything else. I like criticism. I think there should be rules of discourse and rules of evidence. And if you can't stand behind your product you should prepare to abandon ship. So, the role I will play over the next 18 years, god

willing, is advocate for this peculiar notion, trying to communicate it, and trying to invite a critique of it. I would like to have the best minds on the planet tell me where I went wrong. I'm willing to accept their judgement, but I want to have the dialogue.

JK: Who do you feel would be qualified to evaluate what you've pulled out of the King Wen sequence?

TM: Good question. Well, the problem is I have reached competent people. Ralph Abraham for example. But you think in your naivete that if you've discovered a world-shaking principle all you would have to do is run into the street waving it and people would say 'This is great, he's discovered a world-shaking principle!' In actually trying to carry it out you discover that people say it isn't a world-shaking principle. Or they say, 'You didn't discover it, this was discovered in 1830 by Wemmeholtz.' (Laughs) And your enthusiasm and certainty dissipate in the face of this peculiar attitude towards innovation. So, I've learned the only way to truly innovate is: big ideas must have advocates, so I will argue my position in any forum with anybody until it becomes clear to me that my ideas are absurd. And over time,

an intellectual environment is like a natural environment; ideas are selected by natural selection. The better ideas survive.

JK: Meme wars...

TM: Yes. You have to get your candidate onto the playing field.

JK: So, specifically, if you could cut it down to 5 or 6 sentences, a sound byte, let's say, what is your agenda?

TM: Well, agenda implies...

JK: If you're advocating something...

TM: I think the world needs to awaken to the presence of the transcendental other and its accessibility through psychedelics. This is the single most important discovery of the 20th century. It came through anthropology. It came through a more careful examination of the societies of people previously dismissed as barbarians. And this discovery is as challenging and potentially capable of refashioning our institutions as the discovery of the New World was for Renaissance Europe.

JK: So how would you gauge your own historical importance?

TM: Well, if I'm right I'm Newton, if I'm wrong... I'm crazy. There's no middle ground. Or at least I like to think there's no middle ground because I would like it to be that way. This is the scientific impulse to force clear resolution of the data. I've discovered enough already about the I Ching that... I mean these matters are very technical, but I feel I'm on pretty firm ground. I'm waiting to meet the person who can overthrow this. That's who I want to meet, the person who will just sit down and say 'Whoa, my dear, hello, you've completely forgot X,' and I'll say 'Oh!'

JK: How do you cope with the power that you have, now that you have people listening? Do you ever worry about accountability coming into play here?

TM: No, I don't. I suppose I should. As far as the following... I just blame this on sort of the childishness of our age. Look at Steven Hawking. Talk about an unlikely person to inspire groupies. I mean the man is a theoretical physicist who's seriously handicapped and barely comprehensible. But lord, by minions! This is very hard for me to relate to and understand. I meet so-called celebrities and the people who take themselves seriously are unbearable. This whole culture is a bunch of hype. Did you see Madonna's movie?

JK: Truth or Dare?

TM: Yeah... where they bring somebody back to meet her... Kevin...

JK: Oh, Kevin Costner.

TM: Yeah. She turns to the camera and says, 'Why is it that if you're a celebrity everybody thinks you should meet other celebrities?' And this is because we are essentially a very infantile culture. I have a great faith in my own ineffectiveness. Anybody who thinks they are pushing the world over the brink or saving the world from going over the brink is severely deluded about the nature of metastable systems. I wish people would just pass through me on their way to the information, and the information is to be found in books, of course.

That's where it is.

JK: What sort of problems have you had with government authorities?

TM: None.

JK: None? In your entire life?

TM: Oh, no. Well, when I was a hashish smoker years and years ago in the '60s I had many problems with the American government, but we seem to have gotten that all ironed out. As far as this public career of drug advocacy this question is always asked, asked a great deal. Nobody has ever called me on the phone or even allowed me to be certain they were there, you know. No pressure, no matter how subtle, has ever been put on me.

JK: Well, you're also very subtle yourself. You're not as outspoken as say, Tim Leary was. You're not a rabble-rouser...

TM: If you follow me around enough I can be baited into rabble-rousing. People say, 'How come they don't come and get you?' and I've said it's because I use too many big words. They don't know what this is. They don't care. And anyway, my theory about drugs and the government is where money is not being made, they're not interested. What they're interested in are people making \$100,000 a day dishes out blow in some rat's nest somewhere. Since I'm not making any money off illegal drugs it must be fairly dull to them I think.

JK: OK, lets discuss hypercarboration. Did Dennis come up with this on fly, sort of out thin air?

TM: Out of thin air.

JK: So if I understand you correctly: at La Chorrera sonically induced superconductivity was used to intercalate psychoactive molecules into the rungs of DNA...

TM: Close, say it again.

JK: You claim that Dennis used his voice to sonically induce a state of superconductivity that could bind or 'intercalate' psychoactive molecules into the rungs of DNA.

TM: Yeah, to intercalate these molecules between the rungs. Yeah, that's it in a nutshell.

JK: Are you the only specimens to try that?

TM: Yes, to my knowledge.

JK: So it's never been attempted since then?

TM: Well, it was hard to find a volunteer willing to go bananas for three weeks, which is what happened to Dennis, you see. As Bill Burroughs said, 'We need a worthy vessel.' (Laughs)... It would be very interesting to me, and maybe... You asked about my agenda. I suppose this is on my agenda, to gain enough attention that serious money would be spent looking at some of these assertions. I mean, can you use sound to intercalate drug molecules into DNA? This question could be settled with test tubes. You don't need human beings, you just need square wave generators and...

JK: Isn't Dennis sort of travelling that route?

TM: Well, yes, but these chemical companies, they're not always hiring him to check out his fantasies of early adulthood. Dennis' attitude toward all this is very ambivalent, because he's the guy who basically ate the shit end of the stick. Are you going to interview him?

JK: I'll be catching up with him at some point, yes.

TM: He looks older than I am, but he's 4 years younger than I am. I get the feeling that I'm regarded as... let me reach for the word... I'm not finding it. It's somewhere between obstreperous... uh... A lot of people would like [La Chorrera] just to go away. Nobody saw as much as I saw. People saw lesser pieces of it. A lot of people are in certain levels of denial about what happened. Apparently this is the normal course... you get old, you forget all that crazy shit you were into. You go to work for a corporation. You get life insurance. It hasn't worked out for me that way. I saw too much. I know too much. They're gonna have to prove it to me that it didn't happen. Sneering has no effect on me. I'm immune to it. And Dennis' view is, I think, that he doesn't really know what happened and he doesn't really like thinking about it because it lies right next to this issue of going bananas for 3 weeks.

JK: How do you feel about insanity?

TM: It's an occupational hazard.

JK: Do you fear it?

TM: Mhmm. I don't think anybody could do high doses of... I mean, some people are so lumpen that they don't connect to the implications. You know, they take 10 grams of psilocybin and [in his best bong-toke Cheech and Chong voice] 'Wow that was really fuckin' weird, maaan.'

JK: (Laughs)

TM: Right. So what about that? And they somehow blow it off. But I think the more intelligent you are, the more terrifying psychedelics become because you can't talk yourself out of it. You can't just say, 'Oh, a buncha weird shit,' you know. You took it because you took it seriously and now it's taken you seriously.

JK: Let's talk a little bit about this spiraling hum Dennis produced. Have you checked it out? Is it a key, is it a note?

TM: Well, I'm not... I have a total blind spot in the realm of musical nomenclature. I suspect that a musician of a certain type could listen to this and say, 'Oh, that's a...' Because here's what it is: [makes an ooooweeeee noise that ascends in frequency at an accelerating rate] Now, that kind of ascending thing is obviously a smooth function of some sort, and someone who understood acoustics or music would just say, 'Oh, that's an asymptotic something or other.'

JK: Have you ever taken the wave and fed it through a sound mapper?

TM: No. See, there's never been money or... there's a kind of ambivalence about looking at all this stuff. I am not competent... I was not competent to do the experiment at La Chorrera and I didn't do it. The fact that the people who were competent to do it are phobic of it raises a certain problem. All of this, we've at times made lists of experimental approaches to various aspects of what was asserted about La Chorrera. There are many, many different approaches you can take. It's just they all require time, money, and staff.

JK: Are you familiar with the work of H.P. Lovecraft?

TM: Absolutely! I cut my teeth on H.P. Lovecraft. Dennis too.

JK: It seems that a lot of the imagery you pull out of psychedelics, especially this insectoid creature...

TM: Do you associate it to Nyarlotepe, the crawling chaos, or Cthulu? (Laughs)

JK: Well, I was thinking of one diety in particular, [name omitted for safety of readers], who appears only within states of mad raving. Hey dwells in the intersection of time and space, and is referred to as the blasphemous evil which lurks just beyond the silken veil...

TM: Well, Dennis told me recently that he inhibited his MAO with some not very good ayahuasca, and since it was so boring having done this he smoked some DMT with his MAO all inhibited. And he said it was appalling. And he said you just feel this thing, and it's a mind, and it's there, and you're locked into it like that. He said it says, 'Behold, oh mortal, if you can, the form of (unintelligible growl)!' (Laughs)

JK: And of course every beast in Lovecraftian lore is revealed exactly like that...

TM: Yes, Ya Shugothoth...

JK: Shub Nigguroth...

TM: ...The goat with a thousand young! (Laughs)

JK: Let's talk about DMT for just a moment. You obviously have a lot of well thought out opinions and ideas, but you're very easy to dismiss as a crackpot because of these things you say about DMT and self-dribbling jeweled basketballs and such.

TM: Poke away, if people want to dismiss, they should at least...

JK: Right. Your answer, of course, is to take the ten minutes and see for yourself.

TM: Yes, it's only ten minutes.

JK: Why do you continue to pull it out of the closet? Don't you think there's a point where you say, 'I've talked enough about the DMT elves. I don't want to talk any more about the elves. There are other, you know, important things.' I'm curious as to...

TM: Well, let's see. DMT is the most interesting thing I've ever encountered. Essentially what you're saying is that I'm not being very strategic, and wouldn't it be better if I just didn't mention it. But you're talking to someone who is a profound thinker. I mean, you couldn't discover the timewave and not be a profound thinker. So the idea that I could either speed up or slow down the unfolding of the thing is completely at variance with the mystery I'm trying to articulate. And I do think that in terms of assertions made, the assertions I make about DMT are not overly outrageous, and the means of proving them are simply to do it. Other people make mad assertions, but they're not so easily overcome. I've asked people to smoke DMT in order to disprove what I'm saying. I don't think they will, and I think there's a lot of arguing about what goes on and I don't think people do high enough doses... But I think that it's too accessible; it's not hard. I mean, you know, most people think you have to trek up a jungle river or go to Jupiter or something like that. This is something

interesting that you can do in the confines of your apartment. (Laughs)

JK: I've heard people say that you've adopted DMT as a clever vehicle to put yourself in the forefront of the psychedelic community because DMT is such an obscure compound and there hasn't been much exposure of it. So it's almost like you've latched onto the one molecule that no one wants to latch onto because...

TM: Because it's so bizarre? When I smoked DMT for the first time it was 1967, and I figured that there would be pandemonium on the planet within the next three weeks. I thought surely you can't sit on something like this, but it turns out you can sit on something like this. So, I have always been amazed by how little it's discussed for a couple of reasons. Number one, it's so dramatic. Number two, it's so apparently harmless. It violates my notion of how reality is. I mean, this is designed for people who jump out of airplanes on Saturday afternoon to get their rocks off. And yet nobody's interested, you know. It's almost as though it is not rational. In other words, it's almost as though it carries its own protective shield or something. You don't hear about this until it wants you to hear about it, or

something.

JK: Before I came into contact with anything that you had to say about DMT all I heard about it was it's a nightmare, stay away from it. It's a rollercoaster ride through hell.

TM: (Laughs) Well, now who could stay away from something described as a rollercoaster ride through hell? (Laughs) I mean, you could spend 5 million dollars and build a rollercoaster ride through hell and you would expect people to line up to the horizon for it. (Laughs)

Hellcoaster!

JK: I want to talk a little bit about the elves. I think that when you say DMT elves people picture, you know, Tinkerbell flying around.

TM: Well, this is what I call the Disneyfication of elf land, and people expect cheerful friendly places that they know and can recognize. But it's much wierder and much more scarier than that; more like the lower-east side than it is like Wonderland.

JK: So, when you say elves, they're not in the shape of human elves.

TM: No. Here's what is elf-like about them. You have the impression that you're underground. Elves live in the center of the earth. They make things. This is what elves are traditionally said to do. They are makers of jewelry and fine machinery. These things are involved

in language somehow. They're involved in pun and riddle. This is standard elf material. And there is this very peculiar kind of out-of-control, madcap humor. Also, elves are tricky.

JK: Plus there's the singing...

TM: Yes, and the singing. I haven't carried out a study of the evolution of the image of the elf in the Western mind, but I think probably Disney and Grimm obliterated whatever had come before. But these things up until that time were very ambiguous creatures of the

threshold and woodland. They were known for stealing babies primarily.

JK: Have you ever considered they might be a reflection of some sub-atomic phenomenon?

TM: Quantum creatures? Yes, I've thought of that. Because I take very seriously the question, 'Where are they?' You know, are they here but invisible? Are they locked in the quantum realm? Are they on a planet around another star that we can somehow punch into on

DMT? I take it seriously. I think it is like any other phenomenon of nature, it should be studied on its own terms.

JK: Do they always seem to know you're coming?

TM: Well, that may be an anthropomorphization. They cheer when you arrive.

JK: You can't sneak up on them? (Laughs)

TM: I don't think you can sneak up on them, no... (Laughs) Whether they're looking at their watches and waiting, I don't know.

JK: It would seem that smoking DMT is now the doorway into their domain. Why don't they have some other way to move into our world, some sort of reciprocal vehicle to make the journey? I guess what I'm saying is... are there certain conditions in a person's life besides

smoking DMT which you feel would make them accessible to this... or would make them the perfect vehicle for this sort of elfin mischief to occur?

TM: I would really hope not. That's my definition of madness. That's why I'm not interested in the 'do it on the natch' people. I think they're sailing towards the cataracts. The last thing you want is to be able to do it on the natch, 'cause if you can do it on the natch there's a possibility that you cannot fucking stop it. (Laughs) I mean, I would be very alarmed if any sort of psychedelic effect established itself in ordinary consciousness. These are radical alterations of consciousness sustained by peculiar pharmacodynamics. You don't want that

settling down on your tea party.

JK: You're fond of the notion that these elves may be ancestors, or at least that's the party line as far as shamans go.

TM: Shamans say they're souls, yes.

JK: Does it follow necessarily that they're human ancestors or just 'those who have come before'?

TM: Well, they're more like a human being than they are like an animal because they possess language. The two things that human beings do that animals don't, they do. Number one, they communicate linguistically. And two, they're fools for technology. I mean, it's a strange technology, but they're no weavers of cocoons, these elves. They make stuff, all kinds of stuff.

JK: (Laughs) You obviously, (or maybe you don't) notice some similarity between your accounts of the DMT experience and catalogs of near death experience from the beginning of time. What's your comment on this?

TM: Well, I mean, I certainly moved here without great conviction or certainty. You ask what is my opinion and I give it and I think it doesn't count for much more than that. But this is the central problem or the central dilemma of modern science: what is the status of spirit in relationship to organic life? And for 300 years the answer has been 'none whatsoever.' However, we're not getting as far with reductionism, empiricism, and behaviorism as we thought it would carry us. It appears that we've left something out. I think that it is this

awareness of spirit, whatever that means. It means an architecture of connectedness in an invisible dimension. I think this is what the DMT establishes so dramatically. And that's why it's such an important, pivotal issue.

JK: Why do you think that smoking it is so important?

TM: As opposed to injecting it? Oh, because it's much more dramatic. This is one of the things that have caused science to not understand what I'm talking about because pharmacologists love to inject people with drugs. This is because they can get an absolute,

quantified dose in the barrel of a syringe. I have not shot DMT, but I've talked to many people who have and I've studied the medical reports. It is nothing like smoking it. It comes on slower, it does not reach such an intense peak, and it goes away slower.

It's very hard to talk about DMT. The wildest metaphors are in fact lies... even mine are lies. There is something which happens which lies beyond the possibility of description and that's the strangest part of the DMT experience. And then all the parts you can describe

which people say 'Jeez, that really sounds weird...' - that isn't it.

JK: What countries is DMT illegal in besides the United States? Do you know?

TM: I don't know. I suspect in practical terms very few. Probably it's illegal in all the high-tech industrial democracies because they will all have signed the United Nations convention on narcotics. It is not actively suppressed anywhere in the world because, A, there isn't

much, and B, it's not posing any kind of a medical problem. I mean, the way you judge a drug if you're trying to figure out whether to suppress it is to look at emergency room admission statistics.

JK: It doesn't really seem to be the kind of substance that would cause a public health threat. I never understood why it was illegal, except that it just falls into that category of powerful things we don't really understand...

TM: It was made illegal when they made LSD illegal. They made everything illegal without any evidence, medical or otherwise, being presented. And then when the feds decided to make everything illegal they used the California statute as a model... and again no medical

or scientific data was presented. So, if a person had the money, the laws making DMT illegal could be pretty strongly challenged. Also, the fact that it occurs in the human body... that has never been debated in a court. Can you make illegal an actual human metabolite?

JK: Transformative language is something you talk a lot about. You say, 'If any significant change is going to be made within society, you need to first transform the language.' Do you have any concrete idea about how one would go about doing that, or is this just a notion

that you're fiddling with?

TM: Well, no. I don't simply mean speaking more clearly or something like that. I mean that language can... Apparently the human neurological architecture is such that incoming audio signals can either be processed in a low-dimensional audial environment, or in a much richer, higher-dimensional visual environment. When we hear great poetry... what we call great poetry is language which triggers this active high-dimensional visualizing capacity. I think language aspires to visibility, and that drugs like ayahuasca are allowing the people who use them to experience a kind of telepathy. It's not a telepathy of you hear what I think, it's a telepathy where you see what I mean. The fact that the chemicals in ayahuasca, DMT and harmaline, both occur in the human brain, and that they carry with them this peculiar transformation of language, pushing it toward the visible, suggests to me that in the human brain, the language functions are not yet genetically established and defined, and it could be that we're just a one or two gene mutation away from having our language go

from radio to TV essentially. And what this will make, if possible, is a much richer field of communication. People will be able to both communicate and receive communication about much subtler and more finely delineated matters.

JK: You also talk about an actual physical substance that will spontaneously take the shape of your thought.

TM: Well, now we're getting into eschaton territory, although it is claimed by these off-river tribes like the Juarani, the Agaruna-Jivaro, the Witoto, these kinds of people... that the shaman does what he does with this magical, iridescent, blue phlegm, which they regurgitate. It was thinking about that, taking those reports seriously rather than just dismissing it as ignorant Indians, that led Dennis down the path toward hypercarbolation. We tried to take seriously the notion that you could actually physically change your body chemistry in very

profound ways under the influence of psychedelics.

JK: You use the word magic when you describe the fabric of reality and dismiss with the wave of a hand the laws of physics...

TM: Well, not quite with a wave of a hand, but...

JK: Well... what exactly do you mean when you say magic? Do you have a hard definition of it or is it magic in the sense of...?

TM: No. I think Arthur C. Clarke gave the best definition of magic. He said magic is a technology you don't understand. I just don't understand the hubris of modern science. As we look back at the past every society has assumed that it had 95% of the right answers... and was wrong. So, why should we make the same stupid assumption? And of course we're wrong, reality is incredibly mysterious. Science shines its light brightly in certain corners, but it doesn't illuminate the universe. It doesn't even illuminate the universe of the human

body, let alone the human mind and soul.

JK: So what do you plan to be doing December 22, 2012?

TM: Paying careful attention. I will not be organizing an integrated worldwide group of rock festivals and performances, I hope. In fact, use this against me if I am.

JK: (Laughs) Some clever promoter might latch onto it.

TM: Well, I'm sure there will be those who cash in. People ask this question. It's funny to be at the center of all this. I'm not very attached. I understand how unlikely my assertion is... that it's a trillion to one chance. On the other hand I understand the consequences of my being wrong... no big deal. People are wrong all the time for crying out loud. I also know that this theory, which I feel is very strong... if I were off by 1%, the theory tells me I could be off by 10 million years. Well now, if I'm off by 1%, I say I'm dead on. But the theory says,

well no, it isn't December 21, 2012, it's December 21, 2012 plus 10 million years. So, a reasonable person would expect nothing to happen. However, an intellectually honest person would give the situation every opportunity to overturn that expectation.

JK: Are you going to be watching Headline News? (Laughs)

TM: Well, no. The real answer to your question is if I'm right, I won't watch alone, because it won't sneak up on us. If I'm right, then by 2005, 2006, people will be looking at this theory to provide answers because what's going to happen if the theory is right is that it's going

to get stranger and stranger until finally no amount of face-saving and explaining will be able to hide the fact that singularity stalks the planet.

JK: Don't you think that people tend to ignore strangeness though? Strangeness happens all the time and yet they turn on their TV at 8 o'clock and it's gone.

TM: Well, they have thresholds. The world we're living in is completely bizarre compared to the world we were living in 10 years ago. I mean, AIDS, multimedia, the disappearance of communism... If you had told somebody 15 years ago that within 15 years sexually transmitted diseases would threaten the human species, communism would be a memory, and people would be spending most of their time in machine-created environments, they would have been very puzzled. And this is just the beginning. We haven't hit the steep

descents into novelty, which come after the turn of the century.

JK: And you firmly believe there's some sort of art to this existence. It's a work of art...you say it's syntactical in nature like a musical score.

TM: Yes, it's like a musical score. It's a complicated musical score.

JK: That's why I asked earlier if you've ever thought about putting the timewave through a sound synthesizer.

TM: Other people have suggested that. I'm simply not proficient enough with understanding sound and music to be the person to do that.

JK: After the event at La Chorrera there was a period of time when you were not mentally stable, when you were very unbalanced in a lot of ways.

TM: Well, there was a lot of debate. There was never an actual incident where people... I managed to avoid [a medical pronouncement]. There was just a lot of anguished conversation among my friends. Basically, my problem was that I had a one-track mind. I was obsessive about this stuff coming out of the I Ching and the timewave and the end of history and hypercarbolation and I would take roomfuls of people prisoner and hold them for up to 14 hours at a crack. Which is, of course, a sign of mania. On the other hand, I doubt

that Shakespeare's plays or Moby Dick or Mont St. Michel were built without somebody giving a damn about how it came out.

JK: Now there are other people who believe that the last page of the Wall Street Journal is where the CIA communicates, and they have theories and charts and cryptography all mapped out, and it's all very elaborate... What's different between what you're doing and

what they do?

TM: Well, the timewave predicts the past, and the past has happened, so there isn't a whole helluva lot of fudging you can do. Predicting the future is no challenge to anybody because who can rule you out of bounds? I think that, based on its ability to predict the past, judged by the ordinary ways we judge predictive success, that the timewave should be taken seriously. It isn't a mystical doctrine, and I don't defend it with mystical arguments. I put it forward as an exotic scientific hypothesis to be tested and overturned by the usual

methods.

JK: I think I heard you once say that the DMT experience mimics itself in dream states sometimes. Have you heard accounts of this happening, or is this just a personal experience?

TM: Oh, no. It's a personal thing and people have told me about it. What I actually said was if you smoke DMT, if you have the experience then, at some later time, even years later, you will have a dream in which a glass pipe is produced and the DMT flash actually occurs. And it occurs so dramatically in the dream that it suggests to me that this most dramatic of all psychedelic experiences is almost like a fingersnap away. There's some series of autonomic functions that if you could take hold of them - and biofeedback says you can

take hold of any function you can monitor - if you could take hold of this particular function you could have a DMT flash at will.

JK: But that's like you were saying 'on the natch.'

TM: I don't think anybody's having DMT trips on the natch except in dreams. But if that were possible, you see, it would just change the entire discussion... it would end it. It would put it in the same category as sex. You're self-equipped; therefore nobody can stop you.

(Laughs) JK: What defense do you have from people who dismiss you as a crackpot and say that any theory you come up with certainly can't be of any importance because you're not credentialed? I mean, what sort of credibility do you have?

TM: Well, these people have clearly never read Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. The only people who ever advance science forward are the people who come from the edge, from the outside, usually amateurs, usually not institutional. The way scientific advance happens is through completely irrational bursts of brilliance. Then they create a scenario of careful research and cross-checked data and slow accumulation. It doesn't happen like that. People are free to dismiss me, I don't even necessarily say they're wrong. The ideas need to be judged on their own merit. If they're saying they can't be true because I take drugs, that's like saying 'It can't be true because he's a Jew' or 'It can't be true because he's a homosexual.' These are not sufficient reasons to dismiss anybody's ideas.

JK: As an individual, what is your goal, besides sustaining yourself monetarily and not starving in the streets? Do you have some sort of goal that you would like to accomplish before your meeting with the infinite?

TM: Well, in my heart of hearts, I really think that somehow... this must all be true. Otherwise it doesn't make much sense. Because I'm clearly not a raving mad person...

JK: That's what they said in *The TellTale Heart*.

TM: Well, I may be a mad person, but... (Breaks into maniacal Edgar Allen Poe voice) 'Mad, certainly not mad! True, nervous, nervous, highly nervous. But on the other hand...' (laughs) I have very modest goals I suppose. I would like the psychedelic experience to take its place as a respected vehicle of spiritual work. That's a modest thing to want. On the other hand, I feel like the transformation of the human species is possible, not in the far future, but now. And it may well be that we are going extinct. But, if so, it's an incredible tragedy because we could go to Alpha Centauri instead. So, it's not simply that we are going extinct the way of the dodo or the trilobite because there were no metaphysical stakes on the table with those extinctions. With us there is something, perhaps the destiny of life in the

universe if in fact biology could be... If biology is unique to this planet then, my god, the moral responsibility that falls on us is practically inconceivable. And if it isn't, nevertheless, the fate of life on this planet seems to be in our hands.

So, I don't understand why there isn't more visionary dreaming going on. And, by that, I don't mean pleading for machine elves to take control of the IMF, I mean stuff like, why is there no effort to build down the military industrial complex worldwide? Why is there no effort to save the environment? It's not a bleeding heart issue; it's the ground you're standing on. And what we call progressives, like Bill Clinton, I hear nothing progressive, nothing visionary. And yet that is what leadership is supposed to be about. So, I feel very, very frustrated because I see the last, best chance of humanity, a good chance...being betrayed by incredible perversity and stupidity. I mean, I think John Kennedy screwed movie stars and was some kind of a rich brat from New England, but I don't think that he was empty of

idealism about the destiny of the human race. And these other people seem to be. I mean, maybe Bill Clinton doesn't fuck movie stars. OK, points for that. But how about a vision?

JK: I think he does...

TM: I think he does too...but I don't care if they would just get up off of their dead duffs and do something. I mean, I can't believe the debates that go on. They want to close an airbase in Sacramento. So, you would think that Western civilization was on the block. Well, if you can't close an airbase near Sacramento, how in the hell are you going to get rid of nuclear weapons, feed the hungry, cure AIDS, and create a decent environment for 6 billion people? I am afraid that the answer is...just junk democratic processes and put the world in

the hands of benevolent technocrats.

JK: Philosopher kings.

TM: Philosopher kings. Not Samosa's or Saddam's, but well intentioned. But what that means is that the highest aspirations of Western social thinking, which culminate in the democratic, self-regulating individual are being put aside. We're saying no, no, it turns out that the bulk of human beings are too infantile, too childish, to manage their own fates. And, of course the world is not staying simple, you know, maybe people could manage their own fates in 1760, but can they in 2000? And I say yes always. I am a radical democrat. I used to say if you come upon a group of people setting fire to a building, you have to have very good reasons not to join in that action because the people are doing it. Now, do you have an agenda or understanding that is higher than what the people's agenda is? Some people say, 'You're just an anarchist.' And sure, fine. I marched behind that flag. That was the flag we carried in those demonstrations. We were never red, and in fact had total contempt for that. And were proven right I think. I don't know if that answers your question, but

I'm very frustrated by the lack of imagination.

JK: The way you manipulated the I Ching, was it directly from the voice of the mushroom?

TM: It was pretty direct.

JK: Telling you 'OK, now do this.'

TM: Yeah, I had very little interest in the I Ching and no patience for that kind of behavior. I'd never done anything like that in my life. In fact, I've always felt that part of my life's problem personally was that I never go deep. And here I was, going deep, deep. I mean, I am pretty sure that many of the things I've discovered about the I Ching were put there by the people who created that sequence and have not been dealt with since. And god knows a lot of minds have fingered their way over the surface of that and they didn't find the way in.

But I think I did and I think it's not a metaphysical assertion. Anybody who cares to can follow my argument and see if they agree or not.

JK: Now, why exactly did you have the William Baines translation of the I Ching with you in the Amazon?

TM: I had picked up the habit four or five years before all this of just throwing the I Ching at the new and full moon. It is the only ritual in my life and I did it very unritualistically. And so, consequentially I happened to have it with me in the Amazon.

JK: And what prompted you to turn to it at La Chorrera?

TM: As near as I can reconstruct it... the first line of the dialogue that lasted years... the first line was... the mushroom spoke and it said, 'Did you know, I'll bet you did know, that every day is made out of four other days.' And it just led me through. I guess the strongest argument for me personally that I was dealing with something outside of myself and 'real', whatever that means, was the way it was taught. It was just not my style, you know, and it just went on and on. Nobody else can share this perception because nobody knows what

'my style' even means. But I tell you: it was not my style.

JK: Now, this theory was sort of foisted on you. Did you go in asking for it? Did you say, 'Give me your best shot?' Or were you just randomly chosen to be the bearer of this news?

TM: Well, maybe something slightly different from either of those. I was puzzled by... As Dennis descended into this rave about the hypercarboration I was all for it and I was fully backing him. But, every once in a while, this thought would cycle through: 'And nothing for

me?' So, in a sense I think this was the gift, you know. He got the hypercarboration and I got the timewave.

JK: Now, the other members of your party, were they as consciously 'enhanced'?

TM: Well, no. There was a lot of backbiting and controversy because... well, first of all the general irrationality of the situation. Also, I think at the time I did not give this enough weight because I had been butterfly collecting for 9 months before this all through Indonesia.

But I think they were scared of the Amazon. And so, for me it was like another jungle, but for some of those people it was like, 'Oh my god, we're 200 miles up this river and this guy appears to be losing his mind and his brother appears to be becoming...'

JK: And you were 25 at the time? And the people you were with were 20, 22?

TM: I was the oldest.

JK: I can see how that would be daunting. (Laughs)

TM: We were very different from any 22-year-olds that I've ever met. In fact, that amazes me; what serious people we were. I mean, when I think of the 60's I think of humping in a heap, and going to dances. But, my god, we must have been serious, serious, serious...

JK: Did you ever experiment with oo-koo-he like you had...

TM: Oh yes, that's a whole other cycle that I've never published or written about because it's somewhat... it just doesn't really relate to all this. But in 1981 Dennis and I went back with Wade Davis who wrote *The Serpent and the Rainbow*. Dennis was getting his Ph.D. then in plant biochemistry and we went after the oo-koo-he again. Not in Columbia. We went to a place in Peru where there was a displaced population of Witoto and we got numerous samples of oo-koo-he. We took them. Dennis wrote his Ph.D. thesis on them, and they were fully chemically analyzed. It's a kind of a downer in the sense that what we finally concluded was that the Virola trees, which are the source of that drug, are genetically degraded in some way. Anyway, what it does is that it races your heart like crazy. We did it, and

on this one particular batch where I thought Dennis was having a heart attack basically, the next morning we sought out the shaman. And he said, 'Yeah, it takes getting used to, doesn't it?' (Laughs) We said, 'No shit, man!'

JK: DMT or psychedelics as an alien artifact/technology - is this sort of a pet theory of yours or something you sort of latched onto?

TM: Well, I'm not wedded to any of this. I just simply state the facts, and the facts are that, not DMT so much, which is pretty common in many plants and animals, but psilocybin. Psilocybin is 4-phosphoryloxy-NN-dimethyltryptamine. This is slightly technical, but it is the only 4-phosphorylated indole on this planet. That's strange because the way biology works is if you have a molecule useful in a biological system, then in other biological systems you will get that same molecule or tiny variants; methylated or o-methylated. So here is psilocybin with the only hydroxylation in the 4 position on the planet. Well now, they search for extraterrestrial life with radio telescopes waiting for a signal. Fine. Another way would be to search the biological inventory of this planet for something that looks like it did not evolve from the main, broad flow of animal and plant evolution. And if you do that, this 4-phosphorylated indole is sticking up there like a sore thumb. I'd like to see a paper about how many of these kinds of chemical anomalies are known to exist on this earth in life. And

what's the explanation for this? I've never seen anybody discuss this kind of thing. And yet to my mind the psilocybin molecule is as artificial as a Coke bottle. JK: As it appears in nature.

TM: As it appears in nature. If you'll just inventory nature you'd pick this molecule up and say, 'Well what is this?'

JK: What's the difference between that and the 4-ring indole in LSD? Is it because it's produced synthetically?

TM: Well, LSD is a more complicated... LSD is produced quasi-synthetically. Usually they go from ergot, which is actually a natural product.

JK: It's also a fungus isn't it?

TM: Yes it is. It's not a mushroom, but it's a fungus. It's not a basidiomycelae. LSD is a more complicated molecule with a 3-dimensional architecture. Most psychedelic molecules are flat and planar, and in fact that's why they will fit in-between the base pairs of DNA. They're just little, thin sheets that shoot right in there. That I think is an incredibly peculiar situation that I've never heard anybody talk about. I mean, why is it that these drug molecules fit perfectly into DNA? Coincidence? Well, but the DNA is the core stuff, it's not letting anything in there that hasn't passed four billion years of evolutionary vetting. So, the fact that these molecules activate mind and have a relationship to the genetic material seems to me highly suggestive. Also, in here, the unsolved mystery of memory. Where are the memory traces? If your body changes every molecule every five years, then how can an eighty-year-old person remember the pattern of their grandmother's dress? I think that memory is one of those areas where reductionist science is sailing close to the rocks. I don't

think you can produce a theory of memory out of reductionism.

JK: Has anyone ever mapped the physio-pharmacological change in the body when smoking DMT?

TM: You mean the actual breakdown pathway? No. The amount of research done on DMT is vanishingly small. It was discovered in '56 by a Czech. It was illegal by '66. There was a 10-year window of research. During those 10 years they didn't know how to do what we can do now, which is make what are called positron-emitting drugs. You see, if you make a radioactive drug, you actually put a radioactive atom into the drug. You can give that to cats and rats, but you can't give it to human beings because you're going to kill the animal four hours after administration. But with positron-emitting drugs, they give a strong signal in a CAT scan, and they're completely safe. And so what should be done now is some hot or warm DMT should be made. Dave Nichols could make it. He made hot harmine for Dennis. And then, give it to people in a CAT scan and see where it goes. I'm not sure what we would learn from that, but Dennis used positron-emitting LSD. In fact, he actually solved the mystery of where does LSD go in the human brain. 95% of the labeled LSD ended

up in the clostrum, which was completely a surprise. The clostrum is an ancient brain sub-organ way in the back, way underneath.

JK: The reptilian sub-brain.

TM: Yeah, nobody knows what it does. Everybody thought that the LSD was going to flow to the neurocortex.

JK: That should be a sign right there that we're dealing with something that predates consciousness.

TM: Well, I saw in Science News two weeks ago that marijuana receptors have been discovered in the spleen. And it showed a chopped up piece of spleen tissue glowing with hot THC that was sticking all over it. Yeah, I think neurophysiology is as Gandhi said of

Western civilization: 'It sounds like a good idea.' (Laughs)

JK: What would you say is the main difference between you and your theories set forth in The Food of the Gods and so forth and, say, Erich von Daniken [author of Chariots of the Gods]?

TM: Number one, I should say I have actually never read Erich von Daniken. But I know exactly what you're saying. The difference is I'm not making any assertions that I don't think other people can satisfy themselves concerning the truth of. It's one thing to be the spokesman for an experience that can only be had at the whim of the gods in lonely cornfields. What I'm advocating is simply that people examine these psychedelic substances that are throughout nature. If somebody thinks I'm full of shit, that's fine, but did they do their

homework? Did they in fact investigate the phenomenon? That's all I'm asking. I mean, I can't believe that this is thought to be so radical. What other science carries out its program of research without ever coming in contact with the subject of its concern?

JK: But then there's also a rebuttal to that saying, 'Well, psychedelics make you crazy... they're dangerous, they're not to be tampered with!'

TM: Well isn't that what we're trying to find out? Do they make you crazy?

JK: Well, for a lot of people, I'd say for the majority of people, the FDA has ruled them dangerous and their research has been done for them. They don't need to make these distinctions any longer.

TM: Well, this is the larger question that you and I dealt with in a different context earlier, the infantilism of people. People can't be bothered to exercise their democratic rights. They can't be bothered to explore chemical states of mind on their own. Eventually, they probably won't even bother to have sex; it'll just come over the tube for them. There's an incredible abdication of individual responsibility and authenticity. That troubles me. Why should people trust the American government on the subject of psychedelic drugs? Has it ever been right about anything? I mean, any examples will be cheerfully entertained. Have they ever gotten it right? So suddenly they have the answers on something as subtle as psychedelic drugs? They got birth control wrong. They got abortion wrong. They got race

rights wrong, women's rights wrong, gay rights wrong. Lousy foreign policy. Stupid space program. Miserable tax setup. Lousy healthcare program... and you want to hear their opinion on psychedelic drugs?

JK: Assertions that marijuana is a gateway drug, things like that are one of the big issues that they stand on. But it's a complete red herring. There's no way you could prove that. The only way it is a gateway to hard drugs is that it's in the same schedule. Cannabis is more

like aspirin than it is like crack. (Laughs)

TM: Well, I'm not a conspiracy theorist. I don't think there's a conspiracy, but drugs, for centuries, for at least 600 years, have been enormous moneymakers for Western civilization. And by drugs I mean tea, coffee, sugar, opium. When this much money is being made I think governments are bought, or run scared. Or that it's a combination of the amounts of money that can be made and the enormous bureaucratic inertia of these agencies that are supposed to regulate all this and their corruptibility. So many people are making money off drugs that nobody can understand why it should be made legal. Pot right now in Sonoma County is \$425.00 an ounce. Should we expect barefoot freaks to come out of the hills to parade for pot to be made legalized? My god, what would happen to them if pot were legalized? It's all that stands between them and going to live under a bridge. You know, they bring up these ships from Columbia and with high-speed speedboats they take the weed off. If you're in that scene in Miami you can make four trips a night to the mothership. You are nobody, and you make \$300,000 per trip. You make \$1.2 million a night. And you are not Mr. Big, you're nobody, you're just some flunky who takes the stuff off the ship. That's the kind of money that can be made in these drug deals. And these intelligence agencies, it costs a lot of money to murder newspaper editors and set up phony political parties and pay off demonstrators and do all this shit that they do. Take a flyer on drugs. It's so transparent that governments since the middle of the 19th century have been doing this. And what's happened is social consciousness in the meantime has evolved and certain practices previously deemed OK became morally odious. Slavery, that was a drug... and then the opium trade and how that happened. So, governments have simply distanced themselves and settled for kickbacks rather than launching the ships, unloading the stuff, and banking the money they now move into the background and they use Mafias, which are nothing more than off the books extensions of legitimate power, I think. I mean, the Mafia worked hand in hand with the U.S. Army during the invasion of Sicily. Lucky Luciano conferred with the Chief of Naval Operations on a daily basis and basically delivered Sicily to the 6th Army. Then they used the Mafia to break up the left-wing unions in Marseilles at the end of the war. So, I just think what governments can't do in the light of the day they allow Mafias to do, which they then loudly denounce, but in fact, the existence of these criminal syndicates is entirely at the pleasure of the government. That's not a conspiracy

theory or even a paranoid view of things. I think that's a pretty, I mean, of course, of course, how else?

JK: So basically you say there's no hope of drugs being legalized.

TM: No, I wouldn't say that. There's a lot going on. For one thing, people's consciousness is changing. And people have finally gotten the message that the relative risks of these things they were lied to about. I think most people now know that alcohol and tobacco are the two most destructive drugs on this planet. And it puzzles them at this point, 'How come then it is the way it is?' Eventually that puzzlement could turn into anger. But I would say it's 50/50 whether we'll make alcohol and tobacco illegal or legalize everything. I mean, think

of the money to be made if alcohol and tobacco were made illegal.

JK: You were saying earlier... I just want to touch on this 'cause I saw a note of mine, that salvation will probably come in the form of art.

TM: The design process applied to human culture.

JK: The design process applied to human culture. When you're talking about the design process, you're talking about the imaginative construction of a system which works. How do art, singing, and dancing fit into this sort of design process which is a science?

TM: Well, the inspiration comes out of the unconscious. And so people have to put themselves in these right-brained states for this Gaian intentionality to be perceived. I mean, that's really what we're talking about.

JK: Although you never talk about it, when you're talking about these elves singing and creating this is a concept that Australian indigenous peoples have carried within them. Native American people singing the reality into existence over and over, singing creation, and

singing life. It's their database, it's their social database is this art form. But to them it's not an art, it's how they communicate, it's how they see reality.

TM: Well, the word becoming flesh, singing it into existence. In some profound way that nobody understands, certainly I don't, we are imprisoned by our expectations, and somehow the change never happens until the expectations are deconditioned. I mean, as an

example, if everyone thinks that black people and white people can't possibly have anything to do with each other, then they can't. So, the change must precede the fact.

JK: On the same level, if you have a government that assumes the relative ignorance of its citizens, it creates an ignorant population.

TM: You in fact make it so. You see, what happened in the 60's, the first postwar generation came of age that had been given what was then called a liberal education. When you're given a liberal education you read John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Voltaire. What this makes you is a social critic. They said, my god, we're financing our own suicide! We don't want tens of millions of 25 year olds asking why we are not following John Stuart Mill's prescription for liberty. They said the universities must be turned into trade schools. Forget Western philosophy, art, and culture. Teach these people data entry, management skills, financial skills, and high tech. And this is what has happened. I think that the idea of universal, public liberal education was... they realized we'll all hang if we proceed along this path, and so they stopped it. And now people are given 6.5 hours of TV a day, the Brady Bunch, all this. Idiot jobs, idiot political choices, and people are completely diverted by... Michael Jordan's father's problems, baby so and so who was carried to term by a camel and a contract

which is now being debated...

JK: Are you familiar with Noam Chomsky?

TM: Oh sure, yeah. He's an intrepid critic. I heard him on the radio the other day and it interested me. I identified with him. It's sort of hubris, I suppose.

JK: I identify the two of you together because although you come from very diverse angles, when you come down to it, you both have the same thing to say: educate yourself, open your mind to possibilities, the only change will come through a grass-roots sort of

realization.

TM: Well, where I see us as similar is that the first love of both of us is utterly incomprehensible. In other words, I have listened to Chomsky lecture on his first love, which is transformational grammar, and you just come out holding your head and muttering, 'My god!'

(Laughs) But I assume, without fully understanding it, that Chomsky has made a major field-redefining series of discoveries.

JK: I don't think the ramifications of what he's done will be known for another 30 to 40 years, and he at the moment is very wary of what he's done because he's revolutionized the field of rhetoric. I mean it's gonna be hardball now.

TM: Right. No, he's a great model and a very, very inspiring person. And relentless, as you must be in this social criticism.

JK: (Laughs) Well, to go along with the common view you don't need any support to back you up. If you have a scent of an opinion you have to have thousands of references and citations. You must do the research.

TM: You have to be impeccable, because they're gonna come after you every way they can think of.

Original Transcription by: James Kent?

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Appreciating Imagination

Day Month 1997 (sessions 1 and 2)

Esalen Institute

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Original partial transcript from Scribd](#)
- [Other links](#)

Session 1

[words after this point not included in current audio]

It's a very interesting group of people.

[words before this point not included in current audio]

I can't imagine uh, a domain of human endeavor that isn't impacted by the imagination. I mean, teasing the imagination apart from the talking monkey is not an easy thing to do. Imagining ourselves without imagination is itself a paradox. Uh, and yet, you know, what is it? And, and why is it?

If you take the view that uh, biology does nothing in vain and evolutionary economics are incredibly spare then why have this faculty that allows one to command and manipulate realities which do not exist? I mean that's, to my mind, the basic function of the imagination. Some people might argue and say 'well the imagination is the coordination of mundane data' in other words 'if I work this hard, and earn this much money, can I afford that car?' To my mind this is not putting great pressure on the human imagination. Uh, the human imagination as I, uh, suppose it is uh, almost an extension of the visual faculty. Uh, imagination is something that one beholds, something that takes- people speak of castles in the air, or something like that. Uh, one idea that is worth entertaining because it is entertaining, not necessarily because it's the truth, but is the idea [audience cough] that the imagination is actually a kind of window onto realities not present.

In other words, it's very clear from an evolutionary point of view that our, our body and our sensory preceptors are organized in such a way as to protect us. To, to warn of danger, to give you the muscles to respond to that danger when it comes. The imagination doesn't seem to work quite like that. If the imagination runs riot in the dimension of the mundane, it's paranoia. In other words, if you believe every cop on the corner is looking at you, every chance heard comment is about you, the imagination is, in that situation, pathological. It is taking the raw data of experience and giving it, uh, a maladaptive spin.

So then, uh, where is the imagination appropriate? And it seems that it is most appropriate in the domain of human, uh, creativity. That uh, in fact separating art from imagination is simply the, the exercise of separating, uh, cause from effect. Art, sculpture, poetry, painting, dance is like the footprint of where the imagination has been. And you know, the abstract expressionists, Pollock particularly always insisted that a painting, a Pollock is not what process is about, the process is about making a Pollock, being Pollock, the act of creation. What the rest of us have been left with is, uh, a husk, a tracing, uh, something left behind

which says "Imagination was here, imagination acted in this place," and this is, uh, this is what it left.

A very interesting thing that is going on in physics at the moment is, and I don't want to spend too much time on this because it is slightly off subject but it certainly is fascinating. The great bridge between art and science that was supposedly built in the 20th century hinged on this thing called the uncertainty principle. Uh, it was the idea that the as you know more and more about things about certain aspects of a system, an atomic system in this case, certain other parts of it lose focus and become less and less clear. For example, if you know velocity you don't know position. As you hone in on exact position, velocity becomes smeared out. And probably more ink and more breast beating has been shed over this aspect of modern physics than any other. Now, for the great embarrassment of all the people who held workshops, and wrote books, and pontificated on this matter, it appears that this is what it always looked like: fuzzy and confused thinking.

And that, uh, the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, or rather the Heisenberg formulation of the quantum theory, uh, is, uh, now not to be preferred. The preferred understanding now is the version of quantum theory formulated by David Bohm. The difference between these two theories mathematically is precisely zero. There is no difference, but they make different assumptions. The reason originally that the Heisenberg formulation was preferred was because it was felt that this uncertainty principle, which was a hard swallow, was not as hard a swallow as the piece of baggage which the Bohm theory carried embedded in it, and that piece of baggage was called "non-locality."

The two theories produced identical mathematical descriptions of nature, but one had this uncertainty principle in it. The other had built into it "non-locality". Non-locality is the idea that any two particles that had been associated with each other in the past retain, across space and time, a kind of, uh, connectivity such that if you are- if you change a physical aspect of one of these particles, the law of conservation of parity will cause the other particle to also undergo a change at the exact same moment even though they may by now be separated by millions of lightyears of space and time. This was thought to be so counterintuitive, so preposterous, that the Heisenberg uncertainty principle was, was chosen as the lesser of two evils.

But it turns out over the past ten years, experiments have been done in the laboratory, not thought experiments, actual apparatus experiments, which secure that non-locality actually is real. There is below the ordinary surface of space and time, ruled by relativistic physics there is this strange domain of instantaneous connectivity of all matter, of all phenomena. Uh, it raises the possibility then that the imagination is in fact a kind of, uh, organ of perception. Not an organ of creative, uh, uh, unfoldment, but actually an organ of perception. And what is perceived in the imagination is that which is not local and never can be.

So, uh, I-I myself am up in the air about this, or as you get to know me better I don't feel the need to believe or disbelieve to proclaim this true or untrue, uh, but it is useful at this stage for understanding, uh, our mental life. Uh, I've spent a lot of time talking to people and thinking about the origins of consciousness and in one sense asking the question "What is the imagination?" is a different way of asking the same question "What is the origin of consciousness?" Uh, and as some of you know to ex- distraction, I believe that psilocybin mushrooms played the role of kick-starting human evolution. I don't want to repeat all that, here, it's been stated many times. But, um, what I want to point out is that we can see in nature, I think, the uh, declension from the full-blown human imaginative capacity back into the organization of the

animal mind. We can see these stages through which this must have unfolded.

The interesting animal to look at for all of this, for the moment, are the top carnivores. This is not PC in a vegan environment but thought just has to lead you wherever it leads you. It's very clear to me that top carnivores coordinate data in the environment, uh very judiciously. Cows have very little to say about grass, but cats, hunting cats have a great deal to say about their diet, because a top carnivore to be successful must in a certain sense think like its prey. And so at the very point of the emergence of these coordinates strategies held in the mind there's a paradox: the earliest consciousness is consciousness which apes- other consciousness. In other words the top carnivore which is the most successful is the carnivore that can think most like a weasel, or a groundhog, or a rabbit, because this ability to think like the prey gives you a leg up on the prey.

And if you've ever seen, not domestic cats, but small jungle hunting cats or jaguars or something like that, in the sudden presence of a chicken a hundred feet away or something they fall into a fit of imagining because they can almost taste it, they probably can taste it. And they fall into uh, a strategic mode that is clearly an intense state of imagining but it is triggered by, uh, the presence of the prey.

What is interesting about human beings is that we went one step beyond that, we s- we, for reasons which don't need to concern us here, acquired the ability to strategically suppose not in the presence of the stimulus but in fact back in the back of the cave around the fire with our bellies full, telling tall tales. It's interesting that the imagination is the land of "What if". And "what if" is almost like a statement in a computer language, "if" is a Boolean operator if you know what I mean, "if" uh, brakes the flow of reality into two possibilities. If A, or B, or more. And, uh, this ability to contemplate worlds which are only *in potentia* is the basis of imagination.

And I would submit to you since we all are sitting here in monkey bodies that its pretty clear that the stimulus for all this if-thinking comes in two forms, uh, uh, food and sex. In other words we think about what we are going to eat, we construct our behavior along an "if" tree. "If" I go to the water hole, "if" I take my sharpened arrows, "if" I lay in wait, "if" the Gods favor me, I will bring down dinner.

The sexual game is played the same way, "if" I approach the desirable female with the correct offerings, "if" her mood is correct, "if" my gifts are found pleasing then some wonderful thing will follow from all of this. So a- animals I don't think think like this. They may think, but they don't think like this. It seems to be a unique human ability that, uh, probably has to do with, as I say- in our case there were many different factors. For example, we became the top carnivore on the planet, but who would have placed their bet on- on a monkey to be the top carnivore on the planet? When there were saber-toothed cats walking around that weighed 1,100 pounds. How were we able to insinuate ourselves into a more powerful position than these enormously powerful animals that we once shared the earth with, and that in fact we hunted into extinction. It's our destiny and our fate to have removed the so-called megafauna from this planet. It, it's now generally agreed by paleontologists that the disappearance of the megafauna and the appearance of human-beings are linked in time.

Well, we did this by imitating those carnivores, and imitation is an act of the imagination. We like in our story about ourselves to think of ourselves as bold hunters, but the, the evolutionary truth of the matter is probably that as the first wave of primate radiation into the grassland occurred, as the diet was in transition, we were scavengers of carrion, we were not noble hunters bringing down mighty animals. We

followed along behind lions, lion kills. There is one school of evolutionary theory that believes that this is why our olfactory senses are so diminished because, quite frankly, we had our face in rotten meat for a million years, and if that doesn't dull your appetite for keen smells, uh, nothing will.

Least you despair, I'll tell you that there's a counter theory that says "no, no we lost our sense of smell when we stood upright because we lifted our face off the ground" In either case, there seems to be the idea that when you get away from the olfactory action the, the uh, energy to support the maintenance of that sense collapses. For whatever reason, uh we made our way to the brink of the imagination, in other words I don't think we require a *deus ex-machina* to take ourselves to the position of being top carnivore on the planet.

We have a mean throwing arm, you may notice that no animal throws things the way we do. Uh, other primates hurl excrement down on agonized explorers, but fortunately not with great accuracy, and anyway that particularly material is rarely deadly anyways. But a human being, for example a big-league baseball pitcher can, at 125 miles an hour put a baseball across a 17-inch plate over and over again. One theory of the origin of consciousness wants to say that throwing something is an interesting action- activity because though it may appear to be the same activity as digging grubs, or scratching your ass, or something like that, in fact it requires coordination toward a future outcome that is highly mathematical. In other words, you may not think in numbers but you must somehow sense the concept of trajectory, coordination, of target and intent, and when you get all this up and running, uh, according to some people you have enough brain power left over to write the fifth symphony, invent quantum physics, uh, and paint uh The Last Supper if you like.

This seems preposterous, to me. I think that uh, how the imagination got such a hold on us was that we accepted into our diet catalysts that we were unaware of that pushed our mental state around, uh, specifically psychedelics of various sorts. And a reasonable working definition of psychedelics, what they do, whether your for it or agin it, whether you think it triggers paranoia or, or attoraxia [sp?], They are catalysts for the imagination. They catalyse thought. Thought becomes more baroque, it reaches deeper into reality for data. It sees forms of connectivity that previously escaped it. It makes assumption- leaps of assumption, not always correct, but sometimes correct. So what it does is by, uh, to some degree transferring chaos into the mental world, it creates a much richer dynamic. And um, and so thought processes become more complicated, and in a sense then, uh, language becomes the behavior which expresses the imagination. Uh, i- i- it can be expressed in a limited form, through dance, through gesture, and of course it can be expressed very well through painting if you've reached the stage where you have painting and are not chipping rock, or are not drawing in blood in the sand, and stuff like that, if have a really rich, uh, technology behind your artistic intent, uh, but that rich technology would have never arisen without the intercession of language.

And so, these two things which make us unique among nature's productions on this planet, imagination and language, seem to be almost like the exterior and interior manifestation of the same thing, the same phenomenon. And what it is, is it's a facility with data, an ability to connect it in novel ways, uh, for one's own entertainment and amusement if nothing else. Storytelling is obviously this kind of activity, where modules: a ghost, a princess, a lost kingdom, a, uh, a disturbed father-son relationship, these modules are manipulated to entertain people. And you know it's a cliché that there are only 5 stories. And I think Robert Grayes in the white Goddess argued that there's only one story, and we keep telling variants of this story over and over again.

Well, uh the- what history then is, or what culture is, is, um, the- the phenomenon that attends the rise and spread of the imagination in the human species. But because the imagination works on this “what if” model, it always tends toward idealism. In other words, it is not simply a, a networked process, it's a networked process with a vector field. In other words, it's going somewhere... It's not just a random walk. It's headed somewhere. We idealize. If you're going to play the game “what if”, uh, most people who are psychologically healthy don't sit around entertaining dire possibilities. What if I get a terrible disease? What if I'm run over by a truck? No, people say “what if I make a lot of money?” or “what if I meet someone who gives me a lot of money?” And it, you know, it begins to tend toward idealism, and we are obviously uh, ruled by ideals and ideas. Uh, we haven't found a good one yet, but we certainly have sacrificed a lot of blood and time in the process of discovering a whole bunch of bad ideas, and we haven't lost our faith in ideas even though human history is the record. Not one idea has survived from the distant past, uh, in its original form, uh, and some of the most persistent ideas I would argue are some of the most pernicious ideas. The idea of man's inherent uh, uh, flaw, that's an old, old idea and how much suffering has existed because of it.

Uh, but culture then is the record of the human imagination. Well, that's fine. That is of interest to anthropologists and somebody else, who knows. What gives the whole thing a lot of bite is that more and more the imagination is where we spend our time. Uh, you know, there's a lot of talk these days about virtual reality, a- an immersive state of the art technology in which you put on goggles, and put on special clothing or enter special environments and then you are in artificial worlds created by computers and this is thought to be very woo-woo and far out. But in fact, if you're paying attention, we've been living inside virtual realities for about ten thousand years. I mean what is a city but a complete denial of nature? Say “no, no, not trees, mud holes, waterfalls, and all of that. Straight lines, laid-out roads, class hierarchies reflected in local geography” meaning the rich people live here, surrounded by the not-so-rich people, who are served by the poor people who are so glad they're not the outcast people. Uh, so uh, you know, urbanization is essentially the first of these impulses where society leaves nature and enters into its own private Idaho. Uh, and the, the growth of cities and the growth of the uh, uh, immediacy I guess you would say, of the urban experience has been a constant of human evolution since urbanization began.

Uh, now, the only difference that the new technologies offer is we are going to do this with light, not mortar, brick, steel, aluminum, and titanium, which are incredibly intractable materials. I mean, it's- it's amazing to me, I mean we started with the toughest stuff and uh, and of course it cost enormous amounts of human blood and treasure to work with such intractable materials. It's always been amazing to me that the largest buildings human beings ever built are in a sense the first buildings human being ever built because the first pyramids of Egypt are enormous, even by modern scale, and yet they were among the earliest buildings, uh, ever built. In virtual reality, the difference between a hundred story building, and a 10 story building, is one zero, that's all, in a line of code. You specify a hundred over ten and you get a hundred story building instead of a ten story building.

Uh, what this should tell us, is that in the domain of light, the intractability of matter is overcome. And so we are on the brink of time, we are- we have arrived, we are *at* the time where they human imagination now need meet no barrier to its intent. And so we are going to find out who we are. We are going to discover what it means to be human when there is no resistance to human will.

Now, uh, I, this is, I suppose, like a litmus test for paranoia. I- is this going to be a nightmare of, you know,

24-hour a day sadomasochistic pornography or is it going to be- will we literally build heaven on earth? Knowing what I know about the human animal, I suspect it will be both and, uh, because we're not going to get everybody marching in the same direction on this. And one person's hell is another person's heaven. Uh, but, the imagination, which to this point has been a human faculty, and uh, the consolation of artists is about to turn into real-estate. You know, as real as any real-estate there is.

And uh, in a way I think the, the shamans who, for the past 50,000 years have been, uh, essentially they leapt over the material phase of imagination engineering and went to nanotechnology 25, 30 thousand years ago. By nanotechnology I mean reliance on machines to achieve your goal, machines that are under one nanometer in size, smaller than a billionth of an inch. They- we don't think of drug molecules as machines, but in fact they are machines. They perform work in the synapse like machines. Shamanism didn't use matter to build its realities, it, it was more sophisticated than that. It directly addressed the capacity of the human mind in the presence of unusual neurochemicals to produce unusual, uh, phenomenon and unusual, uh, sensoria of experience.

Now what's happening is these two strains of development, the let's call it pharmacological, nano-technological low-tech, natural, shamanic path and the high-tech, material-manipulating, macro-physical technologies are encountering each other and meeting in the domain of the modern computer. And, uh, this is fascinating. The world is becoming more and more defined by the imagination. And those of us who are involved in, in creating this I think have the feeling that it has in it a kind of built-in dynamic toward finality. In other words, this is not a process than can go on for hundreds of thousands, or even hundreds of years. Because the human imagination is so endlessly self-transcending, whatever its most advanced creation of the moment is, it's in the process of obviating and denying it, and seeking to go beyond it.

And you know I think it was Plato, I'm not sure he said it first, but said "If God does not exist, human beings will create God." I think the truth is that they're not even going to wait to find out, it's easier to cut to the technical solution and sort the whole thing out later. If the God we make and the God we find are in conflict with each other they'll just have to duke it out. [audience laughter] Maybe they'll Marduke it out. I'm not sure. Because you know there's a wonderful phrase in *Mistrings and Mysteries* a wonderful book by Mircea Eliade where he's talking about powered flight, of all things. The Wright brothers. He said "Whatever we make of this as an engineering feat, it speaks volumes about the humans psyche desire to transcend itself infinitely"

And so, you know, in a sense the powered flight is a psychological breakthrough. Because man flies. Well then spacecraft, we break beyond the embrace of gravity and these, these technological breakthrough are always presented terms of overcoming some set of boundary constraints imposed by nature. And in virtual reality, all boundary constraints are overcome by nature just as in the imagination, but the imagination, metabolically sustained, in other words you eat well then you smoke a lot of hash then you enter into an imaginative reality. But as metabolism ebbs and flows, as your food digests, as the drugs leave your system, uh, this reality, whatever it is, falls to pieces and it is washed away.

Uh, but the reality, the virtual realities created in code are more enduring, they are in fact as enduring as the code-maker. And so we're beginning to talk in terms of dreams which don't go away. Worlds of the imagination which one can work on for months, and then lead one's critics through and collect their critiques and make the connections and dot the I's and cross the T's according to the way one's critics and friends think it should be done. And so what this means is somehow the imagination always, among the

most private of domains, is like everything else under the impact of the new technologies, being redefined so that there is no private and public distinction anymore. So we are on the brink of losing, in a sense, a part of our individuality. We are going to be able to show each other what we mean, we are going to be able to build hallucinations, and walk through them, and discuss them, and edit them, and re-edit them.

And I, you know, to this point we've been doing psychology sort of like a blind man polishing a Cadillac in total darkness. You know, if you keep excellent notes and don't lose your place you form a kind of a notion of what a Cadillac must be. But what we're about to do is turn on the fluorescent lighting and look at the thing. And I don't know what this will bring. I think it will redefine us. We are a great mystery to ourselves and to each other, but not in principle. Only through limitations imposed by the physical body and limitations of technology. And so I think, you know, what our yearning for community, for collectivity, for telepathy, for universal human understanding is in a sense going to be self-fulfilled by simply opening up the imagination, not as a private dimension, but as a public and shared dimension.

And this will be, I think, incredibly enriching and surprising. We are going to find out, uh, what the human critter really is, and what we are really capable of. And I- I'm not afraid of this at all because I- I think, uh, well basically I am a Platonist, and Plato identified the good, and the true, and the beautiful as the same thing. But notice it's very hard to know what is good, and it's quite difficult, even more difficult to know what is true. But it is intuitively understood what is beautiful, so beauty is the easy way in. Beauty leads to the good and the true.

And we are on the brink, I think, of taking a stride towards beauty that is the greatest stride in that direction since the emergence of language in the human species. And the emergence of language in the human species was the first shoe dropping in this enterprise, and the building of virtual realities that can be shared and critiqued and understood is the dropping of the second shoe. A true civilization lives in its own imagination and lives through its imagination. And when, uh, when this is an accessible possibility to most people I think a great deal of our inhumanity will simply fall away from us, because it is not inherent. It is the product of misapprehension. Misapprehension of each others goals, and intent, and aesthetic.

So, uh, I think that's all I have to say about that tonight. I get spun into it and I can't stop, I don't know whether I am talking to you or to me!

But uh, uh, this is some of what we'll talk about this weekend, this may be the longest sch- uninterrupted schpiel you hear from me. As I said, these things are best driven when people inject their agenda into it. But these are the things I'm thinking about, history feels very risky to a lot of people. I think there- that it is risky, but I think that it is because the stakes are so high. We really have an opportunity to transcend ourselves, and to fulfill the human enterprise on this planet. And, uh, you know I- I'm just so aware of the limitations of the people of the past. Their agonies, their concerns. I mean, how many children died- were born stillborn, how many women died at childbirth. Nine times in the last five million years the glaciers have ground south from the poles, pushing everything in their path. Those people didn't drop the ball. Uh, the amount of human suffering and agony that has gone in to carrying us to this moment of privilege and opportunity is incalculable and can only be redeemed if we bring this inherent human beauty uh, into the world as spiritual food for ourselves and for the human community.

----BELOW NOT INCLUDED IN PRESENT AUDIO---

So that's it for this evening, I see I ran over a little bit. We'll talk about all of this tomorrow, or something else if that's your agenda.

(Next morning)

We talked a little bit about the imagination last night just to give a sort of a feeling for the vocabulary of the territory. If there's anything coming out of that anybody wants to say or that, yeah:

Q: [in regards to the emerging language and imagination in developing humans and how the concept of music fits into that paradigm, if he thinks it adds a specific human quality to the development of language]

----ABOVE NOT INCLUDED IN PRESENT AUDIO-----

TM: Well it's very interesting, I I-I am working on a book now. A lot of it is about the subject of language. It's a little hard to talk about it in English, because in English the word 'language' both means the general linguistic facility and it also is heard as meaning "speech". And as I looked into language and studied it and studied what other people had said about it, I- I- there were some surprises. The, the first surprise is that the, the straight people in the field, the- what is taught in the academy is that language is no more than 35,000 years old. This is- was astonishing to me. Uh, I just for some reason, my own intellectual biases, assumed that the conservative academic position would be that spoken language is old, because it seems so basically a part of us. How can it have arrived 35,000 years ago? That makes it something as artificial as like a bicycle pump or a transistor radio.

Well, the problem here is that this word language is misheard in English, so in writing this new book I had to make a very clear distinction: language is old. Honeybees do it, dolphins do it. It's even possible when you think of chemical communication that flowers and ants do it. Nature is knit together by communication which has rules, has syntax, and so is language. If you've ever stood in a, in a rainforest or any species-dense environment it's alive with signals, with sounds, with odors, uh, that are carrying messages. These things are not just produced for aesthetic effect uh, they are- have intended hearers and so forth and so on.

But- and language in human beings is old because we know that we evolved from pack hunting primates, socialized primates, that had, as we observe the behavior of primates alive in the world today, very complex repertoires of signals. Signals which mean "dive for cover, an eagle is cruising the area," or "here is food, enough for a dozen of us", and so forth, complex pack signaling. Uh what happened, and I- it was the greatest technological leap we've ever made, and in some ways the cleanest and most astonishing. It's almost like a resonance- remember I mentioned last night how strange it was that the largest buildings people ever built were the first buildings they ever built. Well, the greatest technological revolution, so far, ever launched by human beings was in a sense the f- this early one, I won't call it the first because there was tool making before that, there was fire before that, but somewhere in Africa, no less than 40,000 years ago. And this- this means a time when human beings who looked like you and I, maybe a little pigmentation differential, but basically people exactly like you and I had already radiated all over the

planet. I mean, by 40,000 years ago nobody argues that people weren't everywhere. Recent finds in Australia have pushed back the date of aboriginal penetration into Australia into 120,000 years. And that's not woo-woo, that Wollongong University department of archeologies stuff.

Uh, 120,000 years, so people were all over the world. Well, did they communicate? They certainly did communicate. They communicated with dance, with gesture, and, leading back to your question with music. They communicated, uh, in all kinds of ways. But we now know from the study of the introduction of media that if, if a medium of sufficient power and bandwidth is introduced into a population, it will abandon all previous forms of media in favor of this. We saw this in America after World War II when a print literate society within a decade became a television society. Uh, we are seeing it now where in the face of 5 years the internet goes from being "say what?" to indispensable for huge numbers of people, and that's in the space of 5 years.

Someone in Africa, probably loaded, experimenting with singing and chanting and sound, had the- was lifted out of their plane, in other words they actually had a breakthrough in the imagination, and they said "how would it be IF?" this amazing word, the power of 'if', how would it be if we decided that a certain sound is associated with a certain thing? And let's play a little game, every time I make this sound, you think of this thing, and lets a make a little list. Let's take 5 sounds and assign them to 5 common things, and now I'll make the sound and you think the thing. Well, behind all this is the, the organizational architecture of the human organism, which on to a game such as that, will effortlessly lay what is called syntax. Uh, and Chomsky and others have shown that this- that what is called the tools of transformational grammar, or the deep structures of language are genetic. Uh, all languages, in order to be intelligible, have to obey these rules. A language which does not obey these rules is not a language, is not intelligible.

Uh, so through a breakthrough in imagination, a kind of stepping sideways from the, by then, old enterprise of entertaining each other with funny mouth noises, uh, language was produced, probably, I mean, literally at a definable moment in space and time. A person, you know, the mother or father of all media discovered utterance, and it- it was like an intellectual virus spreading through the population. And moving as quickly as human beings could carry it because it was a superior form of media. Before communication had been, I imagine, highly slanted toward emotional states and time-bounded states. You know, you go up to somebody, you take hold of them, you look at them and they understand, uh, we're either going to go hunting, or we're going to go have sex [audience chuckles] and it will be spelled out in just the next little while, that kind of thing.

And this kind of communication was the- a sufficiently vicious social glue to hold small hunting-gathering groups together. As society complexifies and spreads out through space and time, uh, it either loses its coherency or it evolves methods of communication to keep it in touch with itself. I am not a linguist. I read a lot of this linguistic literature without really understanding it, but I know that the people who give their lives to this believe that they can extrapolate the rules of spoken language of the Indo-European, uh modern European languages to reason backward toward a language that was spoken twelve to ten thousand years ago called "Indo-European" or "Proto-Indo European" And this was thought to be, you know, the great achievement of linguistics as of fifteen or twenty years ago. Now a new generation of people have pushed it further back. There is a language called Nostradic, which is a language that was spoken on the Anatolian Plateau and across Europe fifteen to twenty-five thousand years ago.

Now, people like Shevoroshkin at Stanford, and uh, this is-was all done by Russians by the way. The Russians hold the high ground in linguistics by the way, it was Russian, it was Russian insights that cracked

the Mayan language too. But Shevoroshkin and his people are now talking about a language called Old World, and Old World is the first language ever spoken on this planet by higher primates. Beyond “Old World”, there is inarticulate silence. And “Old World” is a 35,000 year old language. Uh, how can we know such things? we have to push into the linguistic literature and you’re a better man than I am [unintelligible]. There are websites you can go to where people speak in Old World and you can hear what it sounded like. And, um, sounds like a bunch of really primitive people. [Terence laughs]

Q: Terence, how do we know that we really evolved this language [???

TM: This is funny, this is a really interesting area, you know one of my sub-themes is novelty and that supposedly reality becomes more novel as we approach the present and this is certainly true of biology and many, many phenomenon. But there is an important exception, so I’m told. I’m not yet entirely convinced of this yet but convinced enough to pass it on. And that is, though this obviously contains a paradox, language is seen to be more complicated as you go back in time. S- a, uh, structurally and in number of words, so that for instance, um, Old English is considerably richer in certain areas than, uh, modern English. Now I say probably what’s happening is that technical vocabularies are keeping the boat roughly, uh, at equilibrium. But, you know, for- for every 'widget' word, a word describing some subset of our technology, if we’re losing words that indicate emotional nuances, or nuances of rapport and understanding, then the language is being, uh, impoverished.

Most scholars of English believe that, you know, Shakespeare caught the wave. Shakespeare is not only a phenomenon of- of immense human genius focused in one person but it's also a moment of incredible linguistic richness and opportunity that didn't exist 200 [audience cough] years before and didn't survive 200 years after.

Q: [???(Inaudible, question referencing to language)

Well those are I guess what you would call “Locally indexed vocabularies” but we have non-local vocabularies which are the important ones, the ones where we address our humanness. To suggest that one group of people have more words for sex or for affection than another people, that’s a tremendous knock on the 2nd group.

In a sense we are saying that they are less human.

(Further commentary)

Well, but as I lay in the tubs at Esalen a vast vocabulary of subtle gradients of interpersonal states of angst, longing, need, rejection, triumph, and defeat are passed in front of me, and frankly and I’d rather read my manual on my hard-disk sometimes. [audience & Terence laugh] But I’m a tough nut to, to crack. Um, but this does lead on to- to an aspect of all this that I wanted to talk about. Which is, language is, I’m sure you've heard, I'm sure you've heard it said- it’s a double-edged sword because it liberates as it saves. All clarity is achieved by a sacrifice of, um, true identity. You know, the world is actually a messy and

difficult to articulate place, and if you can make it all seem very simple and smooth-running then you're a con-artist of some sort. Yeah-

Q: As always, as soon as I speak, I already lie.

TM: Yes, well one group of linguists suggest probably the big impulse of producing language originally was the wish to lie. They said "if only I could...deceive people more!" And I always, you know, along this line, the wonderful thing which Winston Churchill said at the height of World War II, he said "truth is so precious that she must always be accompanied by a bodyguard of lies" [audience chuckles] That's an interesting point of view, the truth is not something that you trot out and show everybody, that you, you surround truth with lies so that only the discerning, you know. We- we simple, straightforward plain dealers don't think like that, but believe me when you get with an Amazonian shaman or someone like that, he is not operating under a strong moral obligation to tell you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as quickly as he possibly can. No it's all about, you know, leading you this way, and then dropping you and watching you wiggle. Then leading you another way and eventually because truth is guarded. This is- in our society the commodification of information has made it something that you want to deliver with maximum punch to its target audience as fast as possible and cash the check and get out. But tha- that is not [clears throat] traditionally how its done.

Q: [Commentary, inaudible]

TM: That's right, that's right. It divides the seamlessness of reality into the articulated and the unarticulated. Trumbore Stichnine, who's not exactly a household name, was one of those poets who died in the trenches of World War I, the golden generation, and uh he wrote a poem called "Meaning's Edge". And he said in that poem "I do not understand you, 'tis because I lean over your meaning's edge, and feel the dizziness of the things that you have not said". And it's that "the dizziness of things unsaid" that always surrounds, uh, uh, the enterprise of communication, especially spoken language.

Now to go back to this thing about the evolution of language and technology, and are we getting better or worse at it, communication. Um, I discern at least, if you look at the evolution of media, the way you would look at the evolution of a species or a group of genera in an organic situation, a, uh, a very pronounced preference for the visual. We- you know, from the simply, the idea of colorful and rich speech, which was all we had for a long time, gives way in the early 19th century to photography and it's still, and it's black and white. But immediately the people who invent it can think of nothing but color and motion. And by 1900 they got that under control, and then there's stuff like stereophonic sound, and on and on. Clearly, we view the language-forming enterprise as a task not yet brought to completion.

One of the things that seems to always come up in these things is the fact that so-called primitive or aboriginal or pre-literate people using psychedelic plants that, uh, melt local cultural conditioning seem to access a place where language is much more a visual enterprise. Uh, Ayahuasca circles sing, but the singing is critiqued as though it were pictorial activity. In other words, the- after the shaman stop singing, you hear people say "I liked the part with the orange spots, but I thought the olive drab magenta section was self-indulgent" something like that [audience laughter] And you think, you know, this is the critique of a song? No, the song is the sound, is the carrier, the acoustical wave is no longer in the foreground of the experience of appreciating the performance. It has become the carrier of something visible.

And uh, you know, lot of people think that somewhere in the human future lies telepathy. And it's usually imagined as "you hear what I think" uh, a kind of extension of- of what we have. I think it's more likely to develop along the lines of "you see what I mean" Uh, in other words we add dimensionality to language, uh, and we can then walk around it. I touched on some of this uh, uh last night with the virtual reality. Because virtual reality, in the service of the ideals that I'm interested in would become a technology for showing each other the contents of our imagination with less ambiguity than we have ever had before. Yeah.

Q: ???

TM: Well, I suppose every technology has created more opportunity for deception. Uh, you can't have complex, illusionistic realities unless you work in pictorial space. Yes, I don't think these technologies will reform, uh, the human character, also I'm not sure- subterfuge is a major part of art, it certainly is a major part of- of legerdemain. Every sentence is essentially a conjuration, and, you know, the rabbit of meaning is pulled out of, uh the hat of constructive syntax. So, uh, you- you cannot have, uh, truth unless you allow for the possibility of error. You know, this is the point that illuminates why predestination is a waste of time.

Predestination is the idea that the universe is a kind of film and its running, and it's all determined how it's going to come out, and there's nothing anybody or anything can do to affect it. God created it, and its unfolding. Well the- uh [clears throat] the thing that makes predestination theory worthless in my estimation is notice that if that's true, then you think what you think because you can't think anything else and that puts the enterprise of seeking truth in a preposterous position. In order to seek truth one must have the option of screwing up, and uh, then it's the dichotomy between the screwing up and finding truth that creates the sense of dynamic, uh, existential completion.

Q: Commentary, inaudible

----BELOW NOT INCLUDED IN CURRENT AUDIO

**A lot of people are eager to do that, you don't want to rush that move. I think anybody who has thought about it, or taken a lot of LSD, so forth and so on, comes to the conclusion that the highest truth resides in silence. But it's a bullet in the head for conversation. Having genuflected in that direction we then move back to the lower plane of rummaging in language.
(Question, inaudible)**

---ABOVE NOT INCLUDED IN CURRENT AUDIO

TM: Well this is now at the cutting edge. I mean, yes, yes, and yes. Sound is the 4th dimension. Uh, sound is a very effective way of transducing energy into the body. The body is virtually transparent to sound. Uh, the mushroom said to me once, apropos of absolutely nothing, it said uh "What you call, uh, man we call

time.” And time and metabolism- metabolism is permitted by time and somehow time is caused by metabolism. And then sound is in there as an energy transducer. And, uh yes, I think a future technology of- of sound probably will cure disease and set people right. A-all this business that goes on in shamanism with blowing on the body and projecting sound into the body, obviously some of it is misunderstood and marginal and showmanship. But at the core, uh, sound is, I think, not yet been given its complete role in all of this.

The fact that you can see sound, uh, under certain conditions. You know there, there's a phenomenon called “sonoluminescence” where- that creates temperatures that are 20 times greater than the surface of the sun. This is done in a test tube simply by using acoustical waves and bubbling fluid to collapse and create extremely brief, high-pressure states. Um, so sonoluminescence, there's a website you can visit...isn't there always? Yeah, Al.

Q: [inaudible]

TM: I guess what I'm sort of saying is that once you have the concept of, of nano-technology you see that drugs and prosthesis, or computers or tools, are- are categorically migrating toward each other. You probably heard me say, uh, you know “the only difference between computers and drugs is that one is too large to swallow”. And- and our best people are working on that very problem. [audience chuckles] Uh, so uh yeah, I th- I think that from the middle of the 19th century on without really much drugs to help them along, I mean, a little ether, a little hashish, uh, poets and artists in Europe were obsessed with synesthesia.

Uh, there's a wonderful New Yorker cartoon, maybe some of you saw it, that a bunch of guys in suits are sitting around what is obviously a corporate board room, and in the background there is a profit and loss chart and it's clearly headed into hell, and the chairman of the board is saying to a small smiling man sitting on the other side of the table “You're right Higgins, a deliberate disordering of the senses worked for Ramboe, but would it work for us?” [Terence laughs] So his is a reference to a symbolist poet of the 19th century and, uh, and the belief that we need to erase the boundary between the senses, and create a synesthesiac, a hallucinogenic, a psychedelic, if you will, reality.

I mean, the late 19th century, the pre-Raphaelized(?), the Eugen---[??] impulse, that was all like they could smell psychedelics in the air of the future. They couldn't quite get high, but they were definitely bird-dogging in the right direction. So, yeah, the, the trick if we're going to design our own states of mind is to make sure that we don't dump the baby out with the bathwater. We want the net to be as haunted as possible, we don't want to lose its atavistic connections back into the darker resources- recesses and resources of uh, of the unconscious.

That why Bill Gibson's novel “Neuromancer” is so prescient because here it is, this super-technological fantasy, but at the center of the net the Gods of voodoo are reappearing. And, uh, I- I came to the realization thinking about the internet. Uh, you know, The Other is within us. If the other if it finally, if ever, comes into full manifestation it won't come in mile-wide ships of titanium that position themselves over the secretariat building of the U.N. It won't come like that. It will come out of human hands and human dreams. It will be fully other. I am not copping out here, it will be fully other, but it can only be built through us. This address is what I was beginning to get at last night when I talked about non-local information. The alien is real, but the alien is not 'here' in the stupid sense. The alien can only manifest itself through us, but this probably means that given a sufficiently resilient technology it can manifest

completely through us.

So, uh, in a sense the internet is a kind of landing pad, there has always been in our fantasies of extraterrestrial contact the notion of “the pad” which has to be built for them. And people claim is the Nazca lines and all- you know. It’s an archetype, it’s the idea of the prepared space that awaits the arrival of the other. But now because of the nature of the internet, because you can’t see whose coding, uh, you can almost imagine that we’re calling the thing forth. And I think it will probably appear as a website. And uh, you know, when it’s sorted out, you’ll realize “My God <http://zetareticulae.org> is really coming from Zeta Reticulae!” But through, through virtual, through uh, non-local Bohmian space. Yeah.

Q: [inaudible]

TM: It’s totally separate in the sense that it is somewhere else in the universe and evolving complete along its own lines and not in any way under our control. Then you turn the coin over and the division between it and us is completely seamless because of the non-local nature of information. In other words, this is an incredibly empowering idea, if true. I mean it will make a revolution in psychology that few people have yet even sensed coming. What we’re talking about here is putting the Jungian idea of the collective unconscious- first, expanding it to the size of the cosmos, and then showing with physics exactly how the trick is done. So we are not separate from any place.

Obviously when you evolve inside an animal body localized in space and time, you get hellacious set of reflexes and muscles designed to deal with immediate threat in the environment. But at the core of the oyster is this portal into universalism which we have denigrated to what we call the imagination. Uh, it is a pre- it is- there is a third eye, the third eye exists, but it doesn’t look out at this world. You’ve got two perfectly good eyes for doing that. The third eye looks out at the holographic matrix of informational totality. And then the problem for that form of perception is, um, filtering.

Q: Would you say in another [???

TM: Well Atman means “soul” or “being” or- yes. It’s simply that yes, consciousness is distributed and holographic and nobody has their brand on it. What we have been calling 'human consciousness' is the only consciousness there is. Uh, it’s something you tap into, not something that you evolve out of yourself. I mean, you, you required a local language to create a local model of this universal input. If your local language is insufficient then you abide in a, in a domain of intuition and I would- that’s what I would call animal consciousness. It’s a domain of intuition of, of being. Animals intuit being. But given a more advanced nervous system, a more advanced cultural toolkit, uh, the intuition changes into a- a direct perception and you begin to make poetry and experience loss and feel love. And, and you begin to feel the emotional outlines of the enterprise of being and how far one can go into that. Uh, I assume its infinite, or at least appears infinite from our limited position.

Q: So the local language is?

TM: Well, the local language is a necessary compromise. It’s interesting, uh, the thing that makes psychedelics so central to a discussion like this is they are the only thing which pulls the plug on the illusion, the illusion created by local language. That’s why people are both in love with it and terrified of it because it addresses a fundamental aspect of reality and it addresses it incontrovertibly. And people who

feel culture as a safety zone that is keeping at bay the black oceans of God knows what are not interested in taking psychedelics. On the other hand, people who feel confined by the cultural dream and who want to cross the black oceans of who knows what to see what's on the other side, they embrace that same experience as a God sent gift, but it's the same phenomenon.

So it, it, it addresses, you know, one's own fundamental relationship to the unknown. Local languages, like local cultures and architectural styles, and everything else are designed to create, I think, uh, a, a- an infantile sense of security. One of the bees up my rear end these days is idea that culture is not, uh, our friend, that we have been very naïve about uh, about what culture is and how it is something designed for the convenience of the species. And, you know, it could turn you into a janitor, or a banker, or a celebrity, or anything else with no interest or concern for whether that's good for you. Uh, it plays with individuals and, uh, you know, most people think, or at least here I *think* most people think that when you get to be, 30 or 35 or 40 or something you have jumped all the hurdles. You got your college degree, you had some children, you made some money, you lost some money, maybe you had a marriage, maybe you had several, and anyway people sort of get the feeling "Well, I've- I've done it" Actually, the major adventure still lies ahead and the major adventure is to claim your authentic true being which is not culturally given to you. The culture will not explain to you how to be a real human being. It will tell you how to be banker, politician, Indian chief, masseuse, actress, whatever, but it will not give you true being.

And uh- maybe this is the voice somebody who just turned 50 talking, but uh, I thought it would get simpler. It doesn't because this rejection of culture thing, uh, is the last and hardest step to take. And there are all kinds of impediments to taking it. The fact that in middle age if you've played the game right, you get a lot of money. That's totally stultifying in most cases in terms of going forward to the next level, it's almost as though culture is an enterprise self-organized to buy you off at the moment when you might be most dangerous to its values and goals.

Q: ...trying to reach harmony [???

TM: Well you know in Revelations, the ancient of days is described as, there's a sword which comes out of the mouth, it's a very hard image to picture. But a sword, a turning sword which comes out the mouth. Uh, and of course the whole Western myth of creation is us, the world was made by an utterance in *Principio ad verbum et verbum caro factum est*. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was made flesh." And some sense, I think, what is not stated there, is that then out of the flesh the word must be re-distilled. That's the 2nd half of the historical process. In this book, which I may mention at some point, the statement is made "God created man in order to taste the bitter fruit of time."

Uh, in the DMT flash, the entities that appear, their entire program is a program of language acquisition. And you know, this is a point that's brushed over in science fiction films because its actually such a conundrum. Those of you who saw, and you suffered as I did, uh, Mars Attacks. The little role for Rod Steiger in there as the German guy with the translation machine. Well, if you think about alien contact, real alien contact, we cannot assume that universal understanding is easily achieved. The very first aspect of true alien contact would probably be a language lesson of some sort because the aliens don't want to communicate about our Gross National Product or our political system, if they do they're not really aliens, they're just odd looking people from far away. Real aliens have something really alien to communicate, and it can only be communicated in an alien language.

So I think it's very suggestive that these invisible entities that we contact when we dissolve the local language boundaries, and they are, they're like mud walls built around our little hut of mental, you know, our collection of boats and stuff that we've pushed together. And then we dissolve the walls and there's alien people, there's alien minds out there waiting to trade with us. They have probably always been trading with individual geniuses through dream, through insight, through imagination. I mean many of- if you've read Thomas Kuhn's book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" you know that even in as constipated and self-conscious an enterprise as science, the real breakthroughs occur in situations of delirium, frenzy, drunkenness, inspiration, and then guys- usually its guys- spend the whole rest of their professional life trying to make it sound reasonable and rational and how it preceded from earlier work done by other people and so forth and so on. This is just a kind of a fancy, a way of attaining respectability.

Q: (Question/commentary about sound relating it to yoga)

TM: Well yeah, Hinduism and Hebrew, those are the two biggies, have really elaborate theories about the power and the tr- the place in the universal scheme things of certain tones, and I was sitting I was thinking "Sufi" and I was also thinking "Pythagorean". I mean some people called this the Pythagorean impulse, the belief that basically the universe is harmonious and exists as a series of octaves, and that if you know the mechanics of this you can converse with angels, you can ascend to higher levels. Uh, yes again, it's an issue of language. I mean some languages fill your pockets with lead and some languages, you know, give you a helium balloon for plunging into these metaphysical areas.

Uh, one thing I wanted to talk about this morning and maybe this is the place to get into it, is we've spoken of the imagination as a seemingly boundless realm, but it's not ruleless. And people who encounter it without rules often have very difficult experiences, the most difficult of which can be raving madness, I'd think. So if we're going to embrace the imagination as the new benchmark of uh, of being, then we need to talk about what the rules are the obtain in the imagination. You know, the 14th-century Nominalist William of Occam dealt with question like "Can God do anything? Yes, God can do anything. Then can God make a rock so heavy that God can't pick it up?" and then if not, why not? And what does this mean? Well, this is an effort to tame the imagination, and Occam concluded from exercises like that that even God must follow the rules of logical necessity. Otherwise becoming trapped in self-negating uh, paradox.

So I, in thinking about this I listed three areas where rules might be gleaned, that could be applied to the imagination. Uh the, the first two are linked somehow, uh, mathematics. Mathematics is not what you think it is. Mathematics is basically a rational thinking about defined sets of entities. And since the imagination is nothing but defined sets of entities, the rules which govern them uh, are worth learning. In practical terms what this comes down to is uh logic, and one of the problems that I think haunts the current cultural impasse is the fact that there is a lot of hostility to science. And it has spilled o- and science we should be very suspicious of. It's a wonder-worker. It's a magician dealing its wares in the marketplace. So we should be suspicious of science, but this scientific paranoia has spilled over into a, a suspicion of reason. This is too much.

If you abandon reason you will have nothing to guide you but the emotional depth of the situation. This is what Heidegger called "the depth of the call" And in the 20th century, the history of following the depth of the call has not been a happy one. We can not trust the call of the blood uncritiqued by reason. Reason is primary in this situation. Well, so then many people say "Well, mathematics is impossible, logic is a difficult one, isn't there a third possibility, is there yet another way to get a handle on this?" and the answer

is yes, but I'm not sure its easier. It may seem at first easier, but that is uh, aesthetics. The imagination uh, must serve the ideal of the beautiful. I talked about this a little bit last night. Uh the, the uh, that which is tasteless is to be avoided at all costs, and ninety percent of the difficulty in your intellectual life would never have happened if you had just had better taste.

[audience laughter]

TM: Am I not right? You know? Uh, uh, I, I look at this 'Heaven's Gate' thing in amazement because of its tastelessness, that's all. I mean uh, it is utterly unappealing for that reason. I don't even have to reach for the club of logic. Uh, if it had been better scripted uh, I might need logic, but the aesthetics of the situation are just so overwhelmingly "ugh". But-

Q: What's Heaven's Gate?

TM: the suicide cult that eliminated itself in San Diego.

Q: [???

TM: Oh I thought you were going to say French people [audience laughter]
(In regards to technology and class struggle)

Well, usually I mean, usually when people ask me what will happen in 2012, I say "Its like asking a man facing east at 2AM 'what will the sunrise look like?'" In other words, its too early to ask.

Q: I mean, in terms of [???

TM: Well, I think that, A, I don't have an answer to the problem of the bully and the slave, unless, as the Marxists claim, that is inimical to disparity of wealth. Because I think disparity of wealth is a transient phenomenon, uh, based on a limited technology, but it is entirely possible that we can make everyone a king and we will still have bullies and uh, slaves. So if the Marxists are wrong, and the addressing of the economic disparity doesn't change the human soul then uh, we will have to go deeper. And I don't know how this is going to look. There's a lot of tension in any community that discusses this kind of stuff over what- where the body lies in all of this. Can we solve our problems and maintain our individual existences, or are we about to- are we in fact furiously building a level of hierarchical control above the level of the individual that, that will make things like states and corporations seem like pale soup indeed. Are we in fact trying to create a super organism? What is the relationship of an idea like that to classic fascism? Uh-

Q: [???

TM: What about the internet? Is it the coming of the superorganism? It is prosthesis on an incredible scale. It is going to define, to redefine what it is to be human. I, I think technologies are neither Gods nor demons, it's what you do with it. But the dilemma of human freedom is that we don't know, we don't know where we rest in the universal hierarchy of good and evil. In other words, what would we do if we could do anything? Would our transcendent impulses drive us to a kind of angelhood, or as James Joyce says would we flop on the "sceney" side. And the answer normally given is "some would do one, and some the other" Yes, but what if we erase that possibility of individual action and is there then only one destiny? And then

what shall it be, and who shall uh, decide? Uh, I would be fairly pessimistic if I saw this all going on on a level playing field. But it isn't all going on on a level playing field. Transcendence is favored. Nature seems to be in the business of building systems which transcend themselves. We can see that as far back into time as we care to look and throughout all of nature. So it seems like we actually have a hell of a tailwind helping us toward the transcendent other. Probably that is what will make the difference. We couldn't have done it by ourselves, but we happen to be in a universe which is itself involved in the process of bootstrapping to higher levels.

Q: ????

TM: Well, traditionally, meaning since the invention of print, the artist has had this role where the eccentricity and the Bohemian lifestyle and so forth of the artist was tolerated because the argument was that the artist is a kind of antennae for this mysterious thing called "the future" and uh, and the artist would sound the alarm and bring the news. In a sense we don't hear this kind of talk anymore because this is the future. You know, have become the very thing our parents have warned us against. Uh, we d- we those cheerful dreams of endless progressivism that built up the 19th century and early 20th century have given way to a much more cynical and sophisticated understanding that uh, we may- our buildings may become taller, our automobiles shinier, but somehow the human animal is not moving forward uh, at the same rate as our technology.

Uh, so what we have to do then is to give people opportunities, and let the devil take the hindmost. At least create a world where those who aspire to transcendence are not blocked in the aspiration. And of course it's not, it's not that some of us are these pure aspirants and others, the haunters of the sleazy side of the internet. We each play all these roles and move in between them according to taste and mood. I mean one of the great falsities of print is, is the- making illegitimate of schizophrenia. I mean we are all just swarms of personalities. The idea that the healthy person has a unified identity is just a silly idea. It's like believing that sexual preference comes in only two flavors or something. It's one of those incredibly weird simplifications that once made everybody lines up and salutes no matter how much agony it causes at the individuals.

Q: [??]

TM: You mean what I said a few minutes ago or last night? Well last night what I said was that I was a Platonist, and that Plato felt that the world was approached through three paths: the good, the true, and the beautiful. But that goodness is controversial, and truth difficult to discern, but that beauty has a kind of resonant self-evidence. And so following beauty, it's my faith, will lead to the good and the true. And some beauty is- I mean I'm a fan of extreme forms of beauty, Hieronimus Bosch, and Redon, and James Ensor, I mean the beautiful can be grotesque, of course this then opens up a whole aesthetic can of worms that we don't want to get into.

Q: [??]

TM: Well, beautiful art is never bad.

Q: [??]

TM: Yes, I think grotesque- that the beauty of the grotesque is the unique modern contribution to the discussion of beauty. I mean it's a higher form of perception, I mean it's all very fine to find beauty in a wildflowers and women dancing in diaphanous dresses and harpsichord music. I mean it's quite another to find beauty in ripped-up railway tickets, and found objects, and smashed machinery and, and that sort of thing. The modern sensibility has been unsentimental and has in that sense I think advanced the cannon of beauty. Modernity I'm feeling much better about now that it's over [audience laughter]. You know? It's such a huge enterprise to look back on, you know? What faith, what simplicity, what naïveté those people possessed. I can hardly get over it. The 20th century for all of its brutality and its uh, its flirtation with the dark-side of the human soul, the counterpoint to that was its incredible optimism and idealism and simplicity. I mean, the simplicity of Fascism, the simplicity of Marxism, the simplicity of democratic political theory. I mean, these are ideologies that clearly never met a human being!

[audience laughter]

Q: How do you reconcile the notion of...inaudible

TM: Well the idea of an attractor, you see...these huge thought structures that we live inside that we're not even aware of, and one of them is the idea that uh, uh causes precede their effect. We- this seems like a non-statement to most people, of course causes precede effects. But in fact, uh, processes- if causes always preceded effects than many, many processes would be unpredictable, but are in fact predictable and this has to do with this word we introduced last night briefly: The creode. The runnel. A given process. The destiny of the people or the evolution of a political system or the growth of a series of interconnected scientific ideas is not, in fact, free to develop in any direction it wants. It is going on in an epigenetic environment of, of intellectual confinement of some sort. In the same way that water runs downhill, a given idea developing in a given time and place will predictably develop in a certain direction.

Uh, one of the very large creodes that we can see at work in nature and society is what I call uh, the "conquest of dimensionality." Uh, biology is a strategy for moving into and occupying ever more dimensions. And biology begins as a pointlike chemical replicating system attached to a primordial clay in a- the proverbial warm pond somewhere at the dawn of time. And as life develops it folds itself, it becomes a three-dimensional object. It replicates itself in time. By that means it claims the temporal dimension. After uh, 2 or 3 billion years of that it evolved itself to the point where with strong muscles it can move through space. With superb visual organs it can coordinate its exterior environment. And finally, through the advent of language it can tell its story, it can move information around not present, and as soon as you begin to code that information into stone, or magnetic medium or whatever, in a sense time has stopped. You are moving outward now.

And uh, this very large creode seems to inform not only biology but the human enterprise as well. So when I talk about stuff like the evolution of photolithography and moving pictures out of photography and the evolution of surround sound and the global airline system and these kinds of things, these are dimension-conquering phenomenon designed to shrink the earth to a point. And of course the internet is the mother of all dimensional conquest. In a single 40-minute session on the internet I may talk to computers in Helsinki, Australia, Paris, Vanuatu, you name it. And I don't even notice this happens. Yeah it doesn't matter, it's meaningless to think in those terms because in fact you might as well think of it all being inside your CPU sitting on your desk. It has the same effect.

What that is, is the sum-total of human knowledge being daily augmented, and the fury with which people put their thing on the internet, everything from, you know, how grandma's recovering from her stroke" to...I visited a language site the other night that had 122 syllabuses for 122 languages that were philological engines for searching these languages. I got there through the Voynich manuscript site. Yes that all still goes on. That community is at work. So apparently we will not rest until all space and all time is brought down into, for all practical purposes, a single point. And this is an idea that has been around in various forms since at least the 16th century. I mean, it's the alchemical idea of the philosophers stone: a universal panacea, a medicine which makes you wise, immortal, all-seeing, all knowing, all good. Uh, but interestingly conceived as an artifact of technology, conceived of something brought into being through the effort of a technological worker in concert and resonance with the intention of nature which is to do the same thing. The human world is simply a catalyst for nature's intentions, we are speeding up nature's program of dimensional transcendence. Yeah.

Q: [??]

TM: It is, it is that and in a sense it is the Jungian unconscious, but no longer unconscious. In a sense what we're saying is, you know, we all- before the internet you were who you are, you knew what you knew, and you knew there was a great deal that you didn't know. You had once known it, but forgotten it, or had never learned it but somebody somewhere knew it. Uh, and because we had this vast dark companion, the unconscious, bad things keep jumping out of it. Uh, it was remarkable to me that throughout the Cold War period, a planet ruled by carnivorous monkeys filled with ideological hatreds under immense social and economical pressure and yet, nobody ever used atomic weapons except once, the two Japanese instances. And in a sense they don't count because they didn't know what it was, they had to use it to see what it was, and once they saw what it was remarkable restraint set in. Uh, I would never have guessed that we would have been capable, I mean remember how deep the fear of the Soviet Union was, remember that for 35 years a thermo-nuclear strike was a possibility within a half an hour within of any undue movement on the other side. And yet somehow we got uh, through that. There is in the human animal an effort to awaken.

You know it was um, it was- it was H.P- oh, no- it was H.G Wells who said "History is a race between education and catastrophe." It's a white-knuckle enterprise. Catastrophe edges inches ahead, education moves ahead. Uh, and again, if it were a level playing field I would be betting on catastrophe, because I believe that nature favors the good, the true, and the beautiful. I've got all my money on education. I think we'll make it, but I think we'll have to scare ourselves to death in order to keep focus. You know we're, we're primates and we don't really dig in and get rolling until we're painted into a corner.

Q: [???

TM: The courage of the imagination? Well, I guess the answer that is you somehow have to make it your friend. You have to make it your friend. There are ways to do that. Actually I made a little list. You played right into my hands. Uh, uh, the- the first and probably oldest friend, older even than, than psychedelics is dreams. Dreams are hugely important. Uh, I was in Australia in February and I did a lot of reading up before I went down. Uh, the aboriginals of Australia are- have been at the cultural enterprise for a long, long time along a different path than the rest of us. I mean, I've spent time with Amazon tribes and with people in central Asia, and yes they're funky, and yes they're different. But these Australian aboriginals are on to something quite other.

Uh, many people barely open their eyes...people sit silently, people don't talk. This again relates to what we said about language. In Australia among these people you get this feeling among these people that they don't talk because they're not sure it's here to stay. If, if an aboriginal wants to communicate something with you they would rather walk a half mile with you into the bush and point at it than to simply describe it back at camp.

So uh, the dreamtime and the Jungian unconscious, and the unconscious made conscious by the internet begin to sound like the same thing. I previously didn't have much interest in the Australian aboriginals because I was slightly irritated by irreliance on psychedelics [audience laughter] And so it was like...what am I supposed to do with these people, they're clearly very loaded and very far out, and how do they do that without drugs? It was paradigm agonizing to me.

[audience laughter]

Well it turns out that they are just better at keeping secrets than people in the Amazon, there's a revolution breaking over ethnobotany. We have been saying for decades that South America was the most hallucinogen rich ecology on the planet, and why was that and so forth and so on. In the next eighteen months some Australian ethnobotanists and trippers are going to publish data that shows that the Australian aboriginal worldview is entirely running on DMT. These acacias, this gumtree ecology that stretches from Queensland all the way down to the south coast is replete with DMT. It's simply that the aboriginal culture is even more secretive than other cultures, other aboriginal cultures in other parts of the world, and only very, very slowly is this information uh, uh being let out. So dreams are one of the great friends of the imagination. There will be more, it's not good for me to take the thunder. Many good people have hundreds and hundreds of pages yet to be published, and they've got the data and they've done the analysis.

Q: [???

TM: Well, I pretty much take the position that there may be people that can do it on the natch, but there's no technique, it's something you have to be born to, and there's no culture that can do it. I think throughout the human population there may be 1 person in 100 that has a futuristic set of synapses. Because I occasionally in a group like this, somebody will come up to me and say "Well I've never taken a psychedelic drug and I know exactly what you're talking about, and I see visions" and so forth and so on. I used to think that these people were nutcases, I've now encountered enough of it that I modify my position to say: These are just incredibly fortunate people. And you can't tell how much of it is personality, how much of it is chemically real. Again, how, how much of what I'm saying to you right now is being processed differently in ever head in the room? Some people are seeing pictures, some people are hearing words, some people are logically building on what I say, and for some people it's just music. And so it's very different, and it's something very hard to share because it's so subjective. Throughout the world there are what we would call "primitive" or "aboriginal" cultures and some are drug users and some are not. And it isn't a matter of ecology, it's a matter of something else. In eastern Ecuador you have tribes that are totally drugged, and across the river people who never touch anything. Living basically what appears to the unschooled observer, two cultural systems not that different from each other.

But generally speaking, the psychedelic cultures seem more- let me put it this way. The psychedelic cultures seem less dogmatic. Shamanism comes in two flavors, at least two. There's what I call a traditional shamanism is very rigid, and ritual-driven, and usually non-psychedelic. And the other kind of shamanism,

there are rituals but they are basically for the consumer, not the producer. And what shamans in these psychedelic cultures are simply alienated intellectuals. I've been in situations in the Amazon where you fly in to some remote place and the people come and the women come and they want to touch the airplane. And they want to look at your camera and touch your clothes, and all this. While this is going on, meanwhile standing off is the shaman and he doesn't give a shit about the airplane or your camera or any of that. He is interested in you as a person. And what he is is he's alienated from the values of his culture. The keeper of the values is the one person who knows that the values are bullshit. That's what they're doing in that function, it's like somebody has to know. And its like everybody is, you know, cow-towing and going through their business, but the shaman at the top realizes "my god we stare out into an abyss, we do not know" They're like scientists, they are scientists essentially.

Q: ???

TM: Well this is an interesting question, there's a hard and soft answer. It depends on whether you think the need to commodify is, is so basic to human beings that it can't be removed. If that's true, then the internet still holds out a certain amount of hope. A-a hard-core anti-capitalist position wants to eliminate capitalism because it sees it as an irreclaimable evil. But it's possible that the only thing wrong with capitalism is that it manufactures, distributes and commodifies physical objects. If there was a capitalism that only commodified information and light? Uh, that might be more tolerable. I- you know in the future, not that long in the future, if you want to live at Versailles, it will cost you 149 dollars to buy the software package and set it up and live in it. Well if Versailles costs only 149 dollars, then what is it worth? And the answer is: only what the market will pay.

So uh, I think, for a long time this process of raising standards of living has been underway, and it is certainly true that today in the world hundreds of millions of people live better than uh, emperors and kings two centuries ago. I think the important thing- well, before we totally dismiss capitalism we should see if it can operate in a virtual, informational environment less destructively. If it can't, then something else will have to come along. But certainly capitalism based on the extraction of resources and their fabrication by cheap-labor populations into objects to be sold in a central economy, that's finished, that's a dinosaur, that's self limiting because there is not an ultimately exploitable resource base. The end of that kind of capitalism is easily discerned.

Q: ???

TM: Well that's an interesting question, is there a kind of natural selection of means in the marketplace? There probably is. For example, imagine...governments deal with information completely differently than corporations. If a government obtains the proprietary technology, it's impulse is to classify it, move it out of site, and exploit it for political advantage. If a corporation achieves a proprietary technology, it drops a huge amount of money on promoting it, rushes products based on it to market and tries to spread it everywhere as fast as it can. Uh, this certainly has caused the evolution of certain kinds of technology, but the two systems, the capitalist corporate systems, and the governmental systems value and put emphasis on different kinds of technologies. For example, nation states use war as an instrument of national policy. Corporations almost never do that, corporations don't like war. It busts up environments, it makes products difficult to move around, and where you had healthy, happy customers, you have hollow-eyed refugees standing around with their hands out.

Q: ???

TM: But those were national interests, no corporation could have launched a war like that, it wasn't Exxon who had a knife poised at their throat, it was the economies of France, Germany, and the United States. Uh, also that war was generations ago, a completely different set of political rules were in place. That was probably the last of those sorts of wars, I would bet. What capitalism does with wars is it exports it to already burnt out market areas like Rwanda, Bosnia, Albania, they don't care what people do to each other in those places because they don't have uh, there's no market there anyway. Let me go on with my list here, I think I got through dreams and drugs, which were the biggies. This is "Friends of the imagination" in case you've lost your place here. Uh, uh fiction, and the enterprise of fiction. Not necessarily science fiction, although its interesting if you look at the golden age of science-fiction, the magazines that created that had names like "Amazing", "Astounding" and "If", these are the very words and themes that we've been pursuing around here.

But fiction is uh, until we get virtual reality up and running, in the hands of a master, the best way we have of showing each other the contents of our own heads. Any of you who have made your way through "The remembrance of things past", Proust's enormous novel about [???] life in Paris, there are thoughts uttered there that are so fragile delicate, that you when you read it, you think you were the only person who ever thought this and you never bothered to mention it to anybody because it seems so ineffable, and yet Proust has gotten it down on the page.

So it shows you what human beings are, and of course our world...Pardon?

Q: ?????

TM: I'm trying to think of an example. There's an example when they're going to a beach town and he's riding with a great society woman, and he's watching the trees go by the carriage, and he notices that- uh, how does this work, the nearer trees move faster than the trees further away. Over this spatial metaphor is mapped a temporal metaphor about people changing in time. And, you know, God knows what it is in French, but even in English its this exquisitely complicated thought, and you wouldn't think anybody could do justice to the feeling, but there it is in its completion. The other great friend of the imagination is travel. Travel is another way, a more gentle way, to break down cultural conditioning. What we call "culture shock" is when you go to Afghanistan or Albania and you realize how your expectations of how a table should be set, what a toilet looks like, how a bus ticket works and how a telephone is supposed to operate were so narrowly defined that now you're confronted with a telephone and a toilet and you don't know which end is which.

Uh, and it's not for nothing that the vocabulary of psychedelic experience has borrowed from the vocabulary of travel. So we take a trip, we have a journey, we go to an alien landscape.

And then finally, uh, the great friend of the imagination is the future because its in the future that we place our hope, our fears, our suppositions. I mean the future is a land of things imagined, things that have not yet undergone the formality of actually occurring.

Q: ???

TM: As a friend of the imagination? Well did I not mention last night that the two great motivators were food fantasies and sex fantasies, and yes, uh the sexual imagination is at a very early, I almost said primitive but I don't mean that.

But I mean early level, because if I'm understanding you correctly, it revolves around the "if" operator. "If"

I approach the desirable female with the proper blandishments, “if”, and then of course just sexual fantasy, then we will do this, then we will do that, and so on.

Q: ????

TM: It certainly is a vehicle for altered states, whether I would call them imagination or not, I suppose I would, but now that I am thinking about your question, I think there are pitfalls in the imagination. And probably the sexual pitfall uh, sentimentality. [laughter] Tastelessness is in there too. Sentimentality is a virulent form of tastelessness. Sentimentality is very hard to root out, you may think you're a hard cookie. But I'll bet there are areas of sentimental delusion that are so broad and deep in every one of us, and some people carry that to the grave, they're the lucky ones.

The rest of us have divorces, bankruptcies, muggings, what have you, and slowly our sentimentality is pounded out of us. It's a good thing to lose sentimentality because it's a false aesthetic, and I think we recognize it.

It's also a very easily manipulated, it is truly a false aesthetic in the hands of modern media because it is a great ploy for buying. If you can induce sentimentality in people they will buy the object of that induction.

(Question/commentary about hearing Terence's definition of sentimentality)

It's a false valuing of...I almost said experience...experience/expectations. It's a false valuing of things.

(Question: is it tied in any way to...)

Yes, well your word idealism is good here because it brings me to something I always eventually get to, which is in line with this thought “culture is not your friend” Idiocy is not your friend, and ideology- some people think what we're trying to do here is sort out good ideologies from bad. Should I be a Marxist? Should I be a deconstructionist? And the answer is no, none of the above. All ideologies are uh, viral infections of some sort, mimetic infections that erode your functionality and your comfort with yourself. Ideologies set up polarities that are based on discontent. And ideologies are always, always, always based on false premises. Whatever the, name an ideology and I'll tell you the false premises that it's based on. So uh, part of this process of cultural maturity that I've been talking about is to get beyond ideology without embracing cynicism. It's not a “fuck you!” thing, it's a deeply saddening awareness that we are not yet angel enough that we should take ourselves that seriously.

Q: ???

TM: Yes I would say that ideology is that feeling of attachment we have to our ideologies. So for instance someone said “You know, Marxism, maybe we didn't have the right answer...but we certainly had a sense of a mission, and a wonderful...you know, we knew who we were!” That's crazy talk. I mean if it was wrong, it was wrong. That's like old Nazi's sitting around talking about “the great old days”, what was so great about the old days? You want community? Join a bowling league for cryin' out loud.

(Question/commentary)

Now that's a lesser evil, that's nostalgia, another impulse for marketing frenzy.

(Another question, different person)

Model and sentimentality. Yeah, did you want to say something?

(Commentary, something about the position and qualities of a romantic)

Well he used the word “romantic” (laughter)

But, but, but romanticism I think is a legitimate impulse, and well situated within historical context and so forth and so on. Sentimentality can break out anywhere, anytime, and is, you know... can find anything for, for it's object.

Sentimentality is a lazy form of thinking, I think. People don't want to think the hard thoughts, and yet I find the hard thoughts very paradoxically liberating.

For instance here is a hard thought, I don't want anybody to burst into tears on me so gird your loins, but you know I've spent a lifetime taking drugs, knocking around the world, having affairs, being married, being unmarried, this that and the other. If somebody asked me, so what do you know? What have you learned? I would have to say what I've learned is uh, that nothing lasts. There's a hard thought, is that a cause for joy or despair? Well if you're thinking about everything you love and how it's going to turn into mush because you're shoveled into the grave it's a hard thought, but on the other hand if you think about all the jerks who've oppressed you it's a great consolation to know that they too will go down into that good night...

Nothing lasts. That is not a cause for joy or despair, it's a cause for expanding ones feeling in the moment. If nothing lasts, then there's a conclusion, not a feeling, to be drawn from that observation. The conclusion to be drawn from it is then, the felt presence of the immediate moment must be what life is for.

And somebody who could take that perception and use it that way could immediately transcend all kinds of neurotic behavior: longings, regrets, doubts, fears. You just say no, the felt presence of immediate experience. Yeah, sentimentalism.

Q: (Question/commentary)

TM: Oh, well first of all let me comment on the Buddhist thing. I'm not that friendly to that formulation because it's still is postponing gratification. It's saying death is the bouquet of life, you should live towards death. I would say the bouquet of life is this moment. To the more important point of longevity, I certainly am not interested in living forever, whatever that might mean because I suspect if you live forever you miss the point.

In other words I think that you miss the bouquet. On the other hand, I don't see anything wrong with...no that's too much to say... The only problem I have with living past...whatever, threescore and ten, is you get into political issues. Are people buying time at the expense of somebody else?

One of the weirdest things about this culture is we've invented a sin for which there is no name, it's so beyond peoples abilities to conceive. This sin that we've invented is we steal the future from our children. We do it with our medical health care plans where we know that all this fine surgery and stuff that you're getting is at the expense of the next generation of people. We overuse resources leaving nothing for future

generations. I don't know how all that would be sorted out. I'm, I am attracted by the idea of living as long as I want to live. I wonder how long that, that would be. And of course if you make people comfortable, probably they would like to live a lot longer. What reason is there for a person to check out of a comfortable situation? In a sense what nature does is it makes the body a less and less comfortable place to be until finally you just say "alright already!" Take me! Beam me up Scotty!

Uh the- but then you know the other possibility is what if there were forms of existence that were de-materialized. How would we feel about going into circuitry for a few round of eternity and what are the moral implications of that? I don't know, I've had this argument with Robert Anton Wilson. He's a big enthusiast for life-extension. It depends on what you think death is, and I've managed to talk myself into the idea that death is probably not simply dissolution and chaos. Not because I have received any guidance from on high, but just as I observe nature, she has a wonderful parsimoniousness about her behavior.

Clearly this form, which is basically an unraveled DNA molecule that is now making a lot of claims on resources in the environment to keep this body going uh, is uh- nature people a lot of effort into this. I think that the best model for what life is, based not on religious thinking but on biological thinking is: Life is what you get when a hyper-dimensional object protrudes into ordinary space. In other words if we take this cup and cut it in two, it doesn't change, it just becomes a cup in two pieces. But it doesn't bleed, it doesn't rot, it doesn't lose its essence. If we take any living being from a bacterium to a brontosaur, and cut it in two the entire system falls apart very quickly and the thing is a mess and we see that the thing we had is no longer there. So I think what biology is, is the intrusion into 3-dimensional space and time of hyper-dimensional objects. The other clue to that, that seems an argument for it, is that we do have this thing called a mind, but we can't find it anywhere. It doesn't seem to be anywhere.

Even when you get down to electrodes in the brain, and saying words to people and watching oscilloscopes you still can't seem to quite nail it down. So I think probably these objects retract back into hyperspace, higher-space, and that this is what the soul is. There is something to the psyche of a morphogenetic field. And uh, and we clothe ourselves in matter, but we are not matter.

So to actually complete a human cycle of existence, you have to go into death. It's where you came from in some sense. I mean the whole p- we put a lot of attention into death, we don't look very much at birth, we think we understand it. I mean we all know very much about the sperm and the egg and all that, but before that...what is going on?

Whence cometh these forms? We seem to have the matter down pretty good, but really what a being is, is the intrusion into space-time of a form, and the form is unique and then it retreats.

I think it would be one of the great jokes of human history if here at the end of the 20th century, at the end of the millennium, with all this techno-hypola surging around us, if we were to actually gain insight into the after-death state and one of the reasons I'm so keen for DMT is because when I have given it to people who were ported experts in the after-death state, Tibetan lamas, and shamans. They come back and they say "Yup, that's the territory all right"

Uh, and, and so in my highest states, I have had the insight which I will convey to you without saying its true, that this is the most limited form of existence that you will ever know. You can't be deader than this [audience laughter]

This is the bottom line.

So the good news is its only up from here. But of course you have to bet the farm on this cheerful rap. And there's no whining if you're wrong. This is an all-or-nothing bet, so naturally it brings your heart into your throat. But that's the kind of enterprise life is. Uh, all risk and the race to the swift. One last-

Q: (Question)

TM: You mean there's a 5th, and a 6th, and a 7th? I've heard that's it... Well I don't know, and I will wonder what I think when I approach the great divide. It's easy in the pink of health to speculate and play the philosopher and all that nonsense. The last dance you dance, you dance alone. And nobody will be watching, but I have seen people die, and it is an inspiration. I hope to have that equanimity of mind. The other thing about death that needs to be said is, that we all imagine that we will have a leisurely philosophical death. That's what we all want you know. Months to get used to the idea, to say goodbye, to gather friends, to make our bequeathments, to speak our final wisdom, but death for most people comes messily and unexpectedly.

So I don't think you should live in an anticipation of the drama of your deathbed scene. Better to repair to the moment, being a realist, primarily. What I find always waiting when I return from these flights of philosophical fantasy and imagination, is my body, my history, my space, my time. And these things are all good, it's a great space, a great time, a great body, a great being to be. So the real message of the psychedelic experience and the anti-historical thrust of the critique we've been carrying out here is to take the moment, the felt presence of immediate experience. It is all you know, it's all you will ever know. Everything else comes with unconfirmed rumor, innuendo, unrealized possibility, fading memory, conjecture, lie, hope, who knows. But in the moment of being we have the completion of being, it is always complete. Every moment. And to the degree that we force ourselves to look beyond it or can not find ourselves within it, we betray it. And then we have more work to do. Well that's enough I think, for the morning. Yeah.

(Question/commentary)

That's exactly what we are saying, yes. We will get together this evening.

(Pauses and breaks for the continuance of the next section)

The discussion was not concluded this morning, it seems like it was just uninterrupted at the lunch hour, there was a number of things in play at the time.

Do you want to pick up any of that?

(Question/commentary)

I think the issue had to do with accessibility, and in relationship to life and the internet. There's a certain impulse toward connectivity, accessibility. But once you achieve that you discover that there's so much there in life, or on the internet, I mean we're talking about two things at once.

But the issues becomes about how to filter the experience, how to set up your own labyrinth so that what reaches you is what you intend to reach you, and what is deflected is irrelevant.

Yes and in the absence of filters you are just drowned. Searching the internet is just a strange kind of entertainment because no thought is ever carried to completion, it seems to be an infinite series of foot-notes, and cross-referencing.

You can spend an hour or two doing this and through the experience you have this feeling at the end, somehow your inquiry into the taxonomy of the orphadasis....

End of part 4

2:30:45

Well you have to somehow exercise that invisible muscle that tolerates strangeness. My brother had the notion of what he called "extra-environmentalism."

He said "The reason we are fascinated by the aliens is because we want to become the aliens." And the aliens- this is the thing I keep coming back to about the need to "graduate" from culture. I'm really into this. It's not about recovering your Irish, Jewish, Slavic roots. We're beyond that. It's about uh, discovering and acting from your uniqueness, and not defining yourself as a member of class or category. That's a print-created mental error. Things like racism, sexism, all these forms of averaging and leveling are sloppy forms of thought. Have you ever noticed that race, for example, is a quality that adheres only to large groups of people. To speak of a race you have to have a bunch of people. It's not a quality that adheres to an individual, any more than an individual water molecule is wet. Wetness is something that only emerges when you have millions of water molecules.

And yet- and I think this is a print-created phenomenon. This over-use of simple categories is a kind of genuflection to the simplification of the world that takes place through print. So for instance we analyze social problems through the use of the category "class". We say "well the ruling class is screwing the lower class" or "the working class isn't getting it's fair deal." This kind of gross over-simplification to problems makes the solutions to problems almost intractable because the objects that your model seeks to manipulate, classes, is an illusion in the first place. And we see in the 20th century, I think, the bankruptcy of this kind of thinking about human problems.

A friend of mine says of mushrooms, that every time he takes them the goal is to stand more, to stand more. What is meant by that is "hey, it ain't easy to go the limit". The thing is constantly able to challenge your categorical maps, no matter how advanced your categorical maps are. It can always raise the stakes

painfully higher. And so the goal is to stand more, and the more you stand, the more your own place of intellectual origins, your own cultural venn, recedes into quaintance.

This is what you were getting at with going beyond culture. Culture is a simplification and a lie. It's the currency by which fools navigate.

The world.

Smart people get beyond it. You can choose when to do that, I don't think, for myself it happened until my middle 40's, then suddenly because experience and maturation somehow found each other and carried me forward I began to think like this.

Uh, uh before, I was in a sense a true believer. For all the psychedelic experiences and political activism, and so forth and so on, I hadn't yet understood that culture was a vehicle that could only be ridden so far, and then beyond that lies uh the great and to be defined unknown of ones own individuality.

Many people never get beyond the imposed neotany of imposed conventionalism. I said that's its insidious that in middle life circumstances tend to deliver us money, either our parents die or our professional activities finally pay off. And that money is usually the final nail in the coffin for ever evolving beyond cultural convention.

Why should we? At last we've achieved the fruits of our labors, the good life, the comfortable dream, but it's the dream of anesthesia. You know, that feeling you feel is the gurney that's rolling you toward uh, the tissue disposal oven.

So, anyways...(laughter)

Q: ???

Yeah it does, you're right that "cool" then if you aren't cool, you go to incredible lengths to achieve by your sates means, by buying 3,500 dollar sunglasses and getting tattooed, and you know, but it can't really be faked.

The whole engine of marketing is designed to make you think that it can be faked. I don't know if I am cool or not, but I am incredibly resistant to any effort to make me think I'm un-cool. [audience laughter]

In other words, because the answer always lies in co modification. I'm not using the right body cologne, I'm not wearing the right Italian designer clothes. I don't slump with a half-smear on my face. All of these things which are marketed as the accoutrements of cool. So you get a clueless culture "aping cool" and of course real cool can't be co modified. That's what makes it so cool, and so maddeningly distant from the un-cool.

As long as we're on this kind of tack, this morning I talked about the imagination and it's friends, and you recall the list and I won't refresh it. But I thought it would also be useful to talk about the enemies of the imagination. We've talked about culture as the enemy of imagination. And I think we've done enough of that. The other thing that I think that is the enemy of the imagination, and this may seem paradoxical, and it may raise hackles, and it may bring controversy, but it has to be said.

I've always- there's always been a strain of this in my thinking, in what I'm about to say. But my son pointed out to me that I needed to hammer this particular key harder. Uh, I- my son is sort of my surrogate in the culture, he goes out to the highways and byways and listens to the murmurings of the people and tells me uh, what's going on.

And this brings us to the subject of relativism. I never quite heard it put this way until he put it to me this way. What is relativism? Relativism is the idea that your ideas are as good as anybody else's ideas, and all ideas are equal in worth because nobody can tell what's going on anyway. It's the "live and let live" laid-back approach to doing intellectual heavy lifting. I'm a nealist, you're a nazi, you're a Christian, you're something else. Hey no big deal, let's just hoist a beer and party on! Well, I have to defer.

I- there's, it's a problem, especially in California where this thing has gone from being a pathology to the defining mode of normalcy. But, it, it allows stuff like "Heavens Gate", it allows Jones Town. Nobody ever said to those people "You're full of shit! You know, don't think like this, this will lead to catastrophe" Instead people said "Hey, cool!" "See you in the sky!"

And people say "Now this sounds like you're advocating acrimonious and emotionally painful judgment making that will leave some of us disenfranchised in our belief of the space-people or the presence of great Atlantis" or something else that's very cherished. Yes. Yes, we have loosened our, our girding sufficiently folks. We are now open minded enough, you don't want to become so open-minded that the wind can whistle between your ears. And uh, there are logical razors and rules of evidence that can be brought to bear on any situation. So for instance, our culture is awash in claims of all sorts. Uh, religious claims, the thousand various religious offerings on the market, then it moves over into medical claims, dietary claims, claims of superior sources of knowledge.

I can read the dead-sea scrolls, you can't. She's talking to the space people, you can't. This guy is accessing past lives, you can't. There are all these whisperings and intimations of special connection and uniqueness.

If you are passive in the face of this, I think you're intellectual arteries will fill up with mental cholesterol and eventually you'll have the equivalence of a coronary thrombosis of the intellectual level.

It's, it's very important to hone intuition and logical razors so that reasonable questions can be asked. And um, it may break the mirrored surface of "We're all in it together" the illusion of community maintained by nobody ever criticizing anybody else.

This nobody ever criticizing anybody else brings the intellectual enterprise and the refinement of human

knowledge to a screeching halt.

Uh, the way in which the intellectual enterprise moves forward is by being critiqued, analyzed, subjected to tests.

And uh, uh, you know, you've all heard me knock science, and I have many bad things to say about science, it has to answer for some of its sins. But the great thing about science and the thing which makes it unique in the history of human intellectual endeavors is it is a human intellectual enterprise in which you get lots of credit for proving that you're wrong.

Scientists really respect each other for proving that they are wrong, if you have a theory that you've defended for 15 years and then you publish a paper saying "I've been over it again, I've looked at the data again and you know what fellow colleges? I botched it, I was wrong"

They promote you for this, they say this is the essence of intellectual honesty. We know you do good work because we see how you trashed your early accomplishments.

Religion doesn't work like this. In a religious domain you never admit you're wrong, you further elaborate the story to save whatever preposterous notion has been exposed and you never deny, you never recant, you never go back.

So what you get is error, based on error, based on illusion, based on delusion, based on lie, based on half-truth, based on supposition, based on somebody thought it would be nice if... And there's no wonder there's not a great deal of spiritual juice in that. So I think there are many things to be said about science, that it has relied on probably to too great an extent, so forth and so on.

These are technical issues, but in our personal lives it's a wonderful thing to take as a model. Always seek A. The simplest explanation. This is called the principle of parsimony, otherwise known as Occam's Razor. Sounds very fancy, what it means is always prefer the simplest explanation. Try the simplest explanation first, if it fails, complicate it as little as you have to to go to the next level. But we live in a culture where the simplest explanation is never accepted. Somebody sees a light in the sky, immediately it's a UFO invasion. The possibility that it was a meteorite, a piece of aircraft in trouble is not entertained, and so consequently people's intellectual lives become incredibly baroque, but unanchored in the world of observation and reasonable discourse.

God knows the world is so tricky that without rules and razors you are as lambs lead to the slaughter. And uh, I'm speaking of the world as we have always found it, add on to that the world based on techniques of mass psychology, advertising, political propaganda, image manipulation. Uh, you are- there are many forces that seek to victimize us.

The only way through this is rational analysis of what is being presented. It amazes me that this is considered a radical position. This is what used to be called a good liberal education, and then somewhere after the 60's when the government decided that universal public education only created mobs milling in the streets calling for human rights, uh, education ceased to serve the goal of producing an informed

citizenry. And instead we took an authoritarian model, the purpose of education is to produce unquestioning consumers with an alcoholic obsession for work, and so it is.

But as people who may have had one foot in this system at one point, and another foot in it at another, I think it behooves us to be alarmed and to attempt to recapture uh, our soul, essentially. From the nets of propaganda, market management, commodity obsession, uh, uh money fetishism, these various, extremely infective means that are spread everywhere.

Q: ???

TM: Yeah, a birthright to be left alone, this is why it was interested you know the debate that went on in the first Clinton administration, there is no right to privacy in the constitution, it's something we all talk about and assume but in fact you can't find a strong legal basis for this. It needs to be articulated, we need a dimension that is free from the potential incursions of uh, of those who would manipulate us. The constitution enshrines the right of a person to be secure in one's home and possessions, but that's not a strong enough statement to nail down the right of privacy. This may be the great, the single greatest right which everyone is being denied, many of other people are oppressed in other ways, but we are all denied the right of privacy.

Interestingly years ago when I got divorced at some point in these proceedings you have to file some kind of a court document, I guess it's an intent or a declaration to divorce or something. Within five days my mailbox was crowded with invitations to join singles groups. It was very clear to me that people were going over these court records and getting the names of guys between the ages of 30 to 50 who were filing for divorce and hitting them before they got home from the court house with invitations, and uh it's insidious that we are accessible to this kind of invitations and seen as victims.

I mean here's a tremendously private personal tragedy, but for a whole segment of society it's not a private personal tragedy it's a marketing-opportunity. You have pain? We have answers!

Uh, [clears throat] somebody over here....no? no? any comment on all of this?

Q: Since 1965 when young people started using drugs, we lost more privacy in the name of drug-investigation, for example it's very simple to get a group of judges something with search warrants, I know all about this, I've been a victim of it.....?

TM: Well yes, for example, before drugs were an issue, if we take a subset of the population like white college students, this was without contest one of the most law abiding subsets of the population. White college students are more law abiding than white-stock brokers, or almost any other segment of the population that you can name. But if you turn cannabis into a schedule one drug, a felony, suddenly, all these people that never felt inspired to descent, never felt the heavy hand of the government are automatically members of a criminal class.

What this does is both radicalize the people so persecuted and in a feedback loop of paranoia, drive the government into a frenzy of trying to penetrate understand and control this minority group. The idea that states of mind are matters for legal manipulation, it's amazing that that discussion is even taking place in

the democracy founded by Thomas Jefferson. Uh, you know does it happen that American conservatism, that used to stand for a free-market economy and a laissez-faire attitude toward life becomes instead the purveyor of the most Draconian and invasive approach to social management ever conceived of.

And what I'm talking about is the piss-test. The idea that any civilization would tolerate that level of invasion into the lives of its citizens and that those who would advocate it would dare to call themselves conservatives, in all- in the whole Marxist episode, nobody was asked to piss in a cup in the Soviet Union or Mao's China to establish their loyalty to the government or the corporation. But that went down here with barely a murmur.

(Question/commentary)

Well, this is a society based on paranoia, I can remember in the 50's when we were being dinned with the evils of Communism they would tell you, finally they would reach for the most outlandish bumper you can imagine. They would tell you "You know in Russia, children are encouraged to report on their parents if they would criticize the government?"

Well my God, now in America if children report on their parents and the parents are dragged away to prison, the mainstream straight people stand up and applaud. This is a wonderful example of the nuclear family functioning at it's maximum best.

(Question/commentary)

Well no, there are numerous examples of this. I don't know what to say about this, I despair of right-wing, left-wing political solutions. I think everybody is so uh, corrupted by the agenda of capitalism that it's amazing that we have any rights at all left. I mean you know, thank god for Jefferson, and thank god for the Constitution, I mean every time I go to England it just gives me the absolute willies. These people have no Constitution. If you get into some kind of complicated wrangle in England, the old boys club, guys in powdered wigs and locked rooms decide what happens to you and your fate.

And England is not exactly Kazhikastan, we think of it as a source of democratic ideals.

But it's just that in the absence of a constitution, what the establishment says the law is, is what the establishment says it is.

(Question/commentary)

Well first of all let me say that I'm a member in good standing of the ACLU, and they saved my ass in Los Angeles. Uh, I don't really see the contradiction, we cannot abandon culture completely. One could. What I mean is it's perfectly clear to me, because of psychedelics, if I started eating mushrooms and didn't stop I would in a day or two have to move up to the ridge and I would begin to browse on the local flora, and in a week or so, discard my clothes, and in a year or two my eyebrows would grow down along my face. I would be like the monk on cold mountain.

I could do that, you could do that. There is- once you find psychedelics, there's nothing that stands between you and a complete check out from your cultural heritage. The only cost to you is the complete

abandonment of everything you've ever known and loved, and if you can give that up, these, these monkish people, these fuzzy people, these people who hang out with dragons in the clouds, you could become one of them.

Most spiritual seekers drive with- drive on whatever spiritual vehicle they've rented with their foot on the gas peddle.

Once you get to psychedelics, you begin asking "Where is the break?"

Because you have now the power to transform yourself, if the search was for power you've found it.

But you see searching for answers is the position of an engenie, it's the journey of the fool. What I assume all of you people have to grapple with in different degrees is the fact that by chance, or design, or good fortune, you have found the answer. Seeking is over-with in this room.

But what you have to do now is a much more demanding and grown-up thing. You have to face the answer. And you have to take the measure of yourself against the answer.

You said you wanted to ascend into the dragon realms, you said you wanted these spiritual realities to become vivid for you. But now there's nothing between you and it except the decision to make it happen. And where do you come down on that?

Uh, so when I push things like extra-environmentalism, and critique of culture, I mean it in a very wussed-out way. If I really meant it I wouldn't be here saying it, I'd just let you all figure it out yourself and let you go off and be a legend and you could follow me into it, if you wanted.

I, I love things about the culture, but I w- and I define this loving of things about the culture as a kind of weakness. I'm not proud of the fact that the highest I can get is to teach at Esalen. I'm not at all proud of the fact that that seems to be where I top out. Had I greater courage, I would go further, but...I don't...[Terence laughs]. So I'm hoping that you people, my graduate students as it were, will sacrifice yourselves on the pyre of going further.

And uh, and, and report back. (laughter). The thing is a, the thing is a paradox, and you either live with the paradox, I think, and that contains a certain amount of hypocrisy, and hypocrisy was a word we used earlier. Or you become so individuated that from the point of view of everybody else you're mad. And I've been that too.

And uh, that- it, it's very hard to do it and remain in society, I don't think I could have done it. My episodes of madness occurred, thank God, 700 miles up a jungle river in baboon assholia, but had it happened in Manhattan or something like that, it would have quickly set up ripples that would have inexorably complicated and uh, and made my life much more difficult.

Q: What do you think um, I read a quote once from Oscar Wilde " our duty in life is to be as artificial as possible." (Commentary/question)

Duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. It's an interesting quote, it meant something to him something completely different than what it must mean to us.

Q: And I always kind of refer to that when

TM: I'll tell you a boring little secret about how I go to be who I am. I grew up in a town in Western Colorado where if you read Time magazine, you were suspect of being some kind of left-wing intellectual. I mean this was Podunk. And as I grew up there I became aware of all these extremely strongly expressed cultural values and most of them were hostile to something. Either Jews were bad, or black people were bad, or people who didn't work were bad, or people who made messy paintings were bad. All of these things were bad.

And one day it occurred to me, I will take the position that all these things are good! These things are good! Abstract expressionism, Jews, black people, science, good! Good! Good! Good! Good! And everybody said "there's something wrong with this kid!" but, and I didn't understand my own position. I mean you know I'd look at a Pollock and think, you know, "it is messy, it may be horseshit" but we must never admit that, we must defend the genius of Pollock unto death because we don't understand it.

And by taking that position, slowly I actually did understand some of these things and make them my own. And I discovered that that was the path to wisdom, a total rejection of my own, of the culture I came up with. Well, I don't know how that would work if you were born of Jewish parents of New York who were members of the Communist party and always took you to wonderful art exhibitions and made sure you got to Carnegie. If you rejected all that, you'd become a jerk like the people around me in that small Colorado town.

Uh, so this is not a fail-safe prescription. Uh, but in my case, by an embracing of everything artificial and antithetical and opposed by, and smeared at, by the people around me, I made my way to, you know, real depth, real worth, real culture. Not that I assimilated these things, but at least I came to live uh, in the light of them.

It's a great puzzle, I mean all of you who have children, and I have two, know that we are alienated intellectuals. I mean broadly speaking, this is what we are, and so we bitch about the government and we critique the monetary system and so forth and so on.

Well then you see your children on the bring of reason and then you say, you know "jeez, my alienation has brought me alienation, but I can't let the kids grow up to be marks, to be pawns of the propaganda and market machine" people scratching their heads trying to figure out whether they're Republicans or Democrats. I can't put that on my children.

So then you say "Ok then, they must join in the alienation, they must be taken out of the culture as we were taken out of the culture" And uh, this is a momentous decision because this act of separating of the culture is unambiguously alienating, and yet it seems to be the only way to find the self. Otherwise you never contact the self, you contact a commodified cartoon of the self, that finds meaning in outboard motors, and uh, basketball, and uh, you know, all this other crap that's peddled as reality.

So uh, our relationship to our culture I think is a very uncomfortable one, and of course psychedelics exacerbate this. And you know I think if you have children, it's one thing to talk alienation, but once they get to the place where they are asking to take LSD or to take psilocybin, you know Kafka said a wonderful thing, I think it's in the penal colony he said "You choose to be free, but it's the last choice you'll ever make." And uh, you know, that's sort of the dilemma in which we find ourselves.

Q: (Question/commentary)

TM: Wouldn't it fulfill all of our personal mythologies if I could now detail a long history of persecution nobly born by me. But the truth is they don't give a shit, they are so confident of their control that I, I think if I appear on their screen at all they just say "This is some egg-head, some spouting character who talks to a bunch of rich people in small rooms, and we don't care." I, I have a feeling there's something which I, I call the 5 percent rule. Which is, as long as any school of dissent remains below 5 percent of the population, no money is budgeted to destroy it. You know? It's just they have learned about noise in the social circuitry and they just say "Yeah these people, they gripe."

And we are held up as an example of what a free society this is. They say "You think we have a controlled society? You think we tell people what to say? Go down to Essalen and hear what Terence McKenna is saying. We tolerate this. What clearer proof that you need that we are magnanimous, generous, open-hearted and liberal. We tolerate this kind of thing"

Uh, I, I think of course that they do not understand the nature of the game, but it's a good thing because if the game is played on their terms, we lose. What they don't understand is the power of means, and the fact that uh, psychedelics are a touch-stone of creativity, and creativity can always provide break-outs from any situation no matter how confined. And also, they have a horrifying fascination with us, because they as the managers of society, probably know more about it's internal contradictions and its failings and its shortcomings than we do.

The information we have available is the declassified, downloaded, cleaned-up stuff. Recently I was in London and at the hotel the conference was down at the ICA, which is down near Buckingham Palace so the hotel was on Vincent's Square. So it was about a 20 minute walk from Vincent's square to the ICA and it was right through Whitehall, it was where all the intelligence agencies, and the ministries of defense and all this. We stayed late at the ICA, and walking back at 2 in the morning, the lights in the Whitehall are burning at 2 in the morning. The lights at the ministry of defense and the ministry of economic planning are on at 2 in the morning, why? Because people are sweating blood in those buildings, they are working around the clock to keep the entire system...

Look at these rainforest clearing statistics, look at these oil slicks! This is costing us money gentlemen. And what about this?

And the answer is that you can manage some of the future some of the time, and you can manage all of the future some of the time, but you can't manage all of the future all of the time. It keeps breaking loose in the most unexpected fashion.

The internet is a perfect example. Here was a privileged instrument of the intelligence community and the scientific elite that served it. Ultra-high security, totally out of the reach of the common man.

Meanwhile, over at Ratheon they're trying to...this was year ago, they were trying to develop a chip to guide a heat-seeking missile for the Navy, and they had certain design specifications that had to be made.

The projects ground on for a couple of years and they couldn't make this chip meet the specifications, finally the project was cancelled. The chip is thrown in the trash. Then some engineer digs it out and he says "You know what we could do with this? We can't hit a plane in flight with a missile with this thing, but you know what we can do with it? We can make a little desktop computer with this!" and these guys said "Why in the hell would we want to do that? We have enormous computers, we have computers the size of a city block, why would we want to do that?"

And they say "No, no, not for us, we have the God-like technology, it's a commercial thing! We can sell it to the Marks, and they can word-process with it or something" and so it came to be.

And they didn't understand with this thing, it's a pretty harmless thing, a computer sitting on a desktop with word running on it, but you sell 20 million of them, before you realize "My god they can all be connected together"

And then people just plug them in, and an entirely new beast springs into being. A technology so powerful that the head of the CIA 10 years ago didn't have that kind of access to information, that kind of information to real-time imaging, that kind of access to econometric data and that sort of thing.

So it escaped, while they were watching various...while they were keeping us from nuclear weapons, they seemed to do that rather well. No terrorist has ever set off a thermonuclear device so far as we know, so they were watching from the ramparts for that because it was something they could understand.

This thing came rushing in from the back-door and now the cat is out of the bag.

(Question/commentary)

I'm sure that that's true. You know the fact that the IRS is running on 20 year old computers. The government is just being left behind, and the world corporate state doesn't care, it finds governments a huge and boring nuisance.

You know in the same way that after the 30 years war, basically there was an enormous social shift in Europe. Before the 30 years war, Europe was ruled by Popes and Kings.

After the 30 years war it was ruled by Parliaments and people, I mean that's a generalization, but true.

Now, the nation state is being put out to Pasteur. It's being told as the Church was being told in the 17th century "You care for the poor, you take care of the highways, you bury the dead and you educate the children. But all the stuff which makes money, we, the new streamlined form of social organization, we'll take care of the money making enterprise and your job is to keep the road cleared and the dead out of sight"

So this is happening. When I understood this, it was like a bolt of lightning. When Jesse Helms stood up on the floor of the US Senate and called for the assassination of the American president I realized "This has become a circus. These people are yahoos"

When was the last time the governor of the world bank threatened the life of an American president? When was the last time that someone who sits on the board of directors of the IMF felt the need to physically threaten the life of a president? No, it doesn't happen.

Real power doesn't act that way, only pseudo-power, yahoo-power, thug-power acts that way.

So government has become largely irrelevant. I don't know whether this is good or bad, it certainly is complex.

War was an instrument of national policy for governments, war is not an instrument of policy for corporations, they hate war.

But governments keep cultures in a deep freeze, we spend a lot of time lamenting the destruction of aboriginal cultures, this rainforest tribe, that central Mexican language group, but while we're lamenting the loss of these exotic cultures, notice that your culture is being erased.

If you were raised in a close-knit Jewish family, if you were raised in a small town in the Midwest, those cultures are gone for most people.

We have all been given mall-culture, and co-modification of values. It isn't only happening to the Witoto and the Wichole, it's happening everywhere.

This uniformitarianism is entirely for the convenience of market economies.

If you can get everyone drinking the same brand of vodka it's much easier to sell and market vodka than if you have to appeal to ethnicity and local tastes and so forth and so on.

Everyone and everything is being leveled, dumbed down, and subjected to a hideous homogenization process.

(Question/commentary)

No, this leads to the question about paranoia and conspiracy theory. I am very puzzled by the popularity of conspiracy theory. It seems to me it just must indicate a paranoid tendency in the population because what I see is the more you aspire to control, the more frustrated and maddened you must be by the situation.

So, an example would be the communist party of the USSR. Infinite power to penetrate the lives of people, to manipulate media images. You have total control of the newspapers, total control of TV, total control, total control, and then the top guy dumps the whole thing...

I think that no one is in charge, and that this is a very good thing, because it allows the internal dynamic of the situation to express itself.

Everybody who wants to control the situation is fighting a losing battle, and if you bank with chaos your stock just keeps growing exponentially. Chaos is spreading, it's the place to put your bets.

All efforts to ideologically or economically or any other way to channel the global process seems to meet with incredible frustration. Nobody is in charge, the so-called great successful conspiracies of history are so successful that they don't even think of themselves as conspiracies. If you've been running a given piece of turf for 5 or 6 hundred years, you don't run around in conspiratorial mode, you stride boldly across the landscape, you own it. You think, you suppose...

(Question/commentary)

Oh you mean "if only Hitler were alive in Argentina calling the shots, it would all make so much more sense then!" That would explain things!

In the absence of an overarching demon like that, it's a little hard to explain things. I don't know, I don't feel this need for intellectual closure. I don't see why things should make sense, they never have. And they are always in process of formation.

And as soon as any given bench-mark or goal is achieved, it becomes abandoned and redefined in favor of something else. I think conspiracy theory is a very disempowering thing.

Because what it says is "You can't control the world" or "It's more difficult to control the world than you think it is", not so. I've had a very different experience. My experience with the corridors of power, if you want to put it that way, is that there are an immense number of clueless people.

It's almost like Mckenna's law. It's

As you advance in social hierarchy, the percentage of smart people does not increase. So lets now move to a cabinet meeting of the Clinton administration. There are as many stupid people, truly moronic people sitting in that room as there are sitting in this room.

It doesn't seem to make any difference. Because people don't seem to find their seats according to intellectual or social merit.

Every human situation is bedeviled by morons.

No matter how high you rise, you're surrounded by fools and you're lucky if you're not one of them. I mean that's the basic thing to try and guard against.

The other thing is that at the top, it's remarkably empty. You think, if you've never been there, that toward the top of the control pyramid there must be many people standing in line eager to take the helm, eager to make big decisions and establish their reputations and do whatever they do. Instead you find this fear as you go up the hierarchy. "My god, if I make this decision and it goes wrong I will lose my chairmanship, or I will lose my something or other"

So as you approach these enormously powerful levers for manipulating society, everybody's holding their hands behind their backs, they don't want their fingerprints on the lever because they know there would be war crimes trials if you stumble and get it wrong. I mean you thought you may have been on a golden crusade, suddenly you're looking at 12 guys in powdered wigs who think you're a jerk and they're going to hang you for the stunt you pulled. So it's like that.

(Question/commentary)

I used to think it was not true that all spiritual work began with ones self, I felt like that was a way of

disempowering people and say “You know if you wait till you’re an avatar, you’ll never join the people rioting people in the street”

And I used to say “If you see people rioting, you have a moral obligation to join. You don’t even have to know what it’s about” The people rioting is a sufficient imperative to political action to be there. Well, I’m not 25 anymore. That provided a lot of fun, but I now think you do not make unflawed contribution unless you have first

Gotten your ducks somewhat in order. I’m not saying you have to be able to walk on water, but you have to have at least considered your own life and your values and that sort of thing.

It’s pretty simple, the ethical life. It’s just demanding, many of you have heard me say this, this is my...this is “father McKenna” talking to you.

The moral life does not consist of wheatgrass diet or affirmation, or any of that.

The moral life is, unless your at Esalen, you should clothes the naked, you should feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, bury the dead, and there are a couple others, obvious things to be done.

It’s not about how many prostrations you do or what lineage you’ve associated yourself with, or how much cholesterol is in your diet. Somehow we have confused the ethical and moral dimension with the dimension of physical practices.

Probably because we have been too infected by the means of tired Asian religions that long ago gave up moral philosophy in favor of rotational activity because the social problems of Asia are overwhelming.

That’s a response to an overwhelming human tragedy, the quietism of Asian religion, I think.

(Question/commentary)

Well and it’s flawed is what you’re saying. And yes I agree, that the person helped by that person is still advanced, but the whole system is not served by misguided do-good-erism, or the large nobles-oblige is an insulting attitude to take.

Because the real nature of the human condition is that we’re all in it together, this is one of the reasons why I am so hostile to all forms of spiritual hierarchy. I have never seen a truly superior person, I don’t believe. And if I have, they were so humble and self-effacing they never would have claimed that superiority as their own.

If somebody tells you they're a superior person, my God they're automatically to be taken off the active list. That alone screws the pooch right there.

And, it's tremendously disempowering. The mushroom said me once, and I've said it to many of you many times, it said "For one human being to seek enlightenment from another is like a grain of sand seeking enlightenment from another. Don't you get it? It's the same flesh, it's the same flesh, nobody knows anything you don't know, and even if they do, it's not your knowledge so what good is it doing you?"

The idea that it's OK for you not to understand mathematics, or not to play the violin, because somebody else does it very well, is a complete cop-out. You will be held responsible for what you know and what you can do.

And using the excuse that you lived in the same world as Jacha Heiffitz is not going to get you off the hook of not knowing how to play the violin. I say this as someone who does not play the violin.

It's fun to take responsibility. It's fun to test the waters. The hardest thing to put across to ones self and other people is that the universe is a more friendly place than we have been told.

Paranoia, culture is institutionalized paranoia. It's very hard to de-condition oneself from this, no matter how de-conditioned you make think you are, there is more and more work to be done.

I think the essence of Daoism, and why it's roots in nature are so powerful, is because what Daoism is saying is "If you will quiet your mind, and if you will pay attention, you will discover that you are supported and cared for by the dynamic of the universe"

This should be obvious by virtue of the fact that you're even alive.

I mean how unlikely is your existence? I put it to you...pretty unlikely! And yet, here you are.

Well do you just think it was the greatest series of well-rolled dice in history, that's silly.

That's ridiculous, probably would never have delivered us to this room this afternoon. Probably sculpted by loving intent has delivered us to this room this afternoon.

Once you can sense that living intent and make it an object familiarity you probably, that is the antidote to cultural paranoia and to the acceptance of your identity through imposed definitions by other people.

And psychedelics figure in here because they dissolve more dramatically and more effectively than anything else the cultural and linguistic and habitual assumptions that are masking that presence of Dao. It really is true, as the bible says you must become as a little child.

That means you must become pre-culture. You must recover who you were before the engines of culture went to work on you, and abused you and made you afraid and dumbed you down and distorted your values and so forth and so on.

(Question/commentary)

See I think what's happened is that at the top of the culture it's profoundly intellectually bankrupt. There is no plan except to keep peddling stuff until the forests are gone and the planet is polluted.

This is not malevolent. It's not malevolent, it's simply they are clueless, they have run out of steam, so the answer is to try and keep the game going as long as possible.

With daytime TV, with casino gambling, with lotteries, with endless distractions, with pop-culture fads, with cults of celebrity, with spectacular trials and gory mass murders and endless circuses

While the people at the top are saying you know "Sooner or later the shit is going to hit the fan" "Sooner or later the dam is going to burst"

And they say "Well lets make sure its later, and not sooner cause I've got 2 kids at the sorboun, I'm paying off a Mercedes, and I need to get this taken care of before it all falls apart"

So in the absence of any cultural plan imposed at the top, this strange dynamic is happening.

This has happened before in cultural history where some huge enterprise like Christianity or Patriarchy, or something like that, after running its games for millennia, it just runs out of steam. And often there's nothing to rush in and fill the vacuum, nothing that is consciously engineered to do that.

So in those situations, an actual creative bifurcation can take place because what is about to happen is not in the hands of human managers, it lies deeper in the dynamics of the whole system. And we all feel I think this sense of excitement, and the approach of the unimaginably new, and we don't know whether it's the aliens coming to pull our chestnuts out of the fire, or virtual reality, or a new drug, or a new style of sexual behaving, or star-flight. We don't know what it is, but we can feel that it will transcend the categories of our managers, and they and we will have to make sense of whatever this new reality is.

It terrifies some people, it liberates others, it's the same reality.

Steven Vincent Benet said something about at the end of John Brown's body, he says "when the prophets of strange religions ball out their bizarre despair, do not join them on the mountain, say only then it is here. It is here." Because it is here, I mean that was 1927 when he wrote then and he spoke then of technology as our humble servant, already half a God. That was in 1927.

You can imagine then what that technology is today.

(Question, do you propose in history that there is no longer a manager class?)

A manager class, I'd rather talk about a point in history where there's no more commodities. Yes I don't think there will be a manager class. A manager class, you manage towards ideology. If you can transcend ideology, the way to manage society I think would be self-evident. The problem is trying to force it into the service of some kind of ideological vision, and then of course it becomes intractable because no ideological vision we've ever had has been true to our humanness.

The Christian version of what human beings are, the Nazi version, Marxist version, the Secular market-oriented version, these all somehow insult various parts of our humanness.

So when an attempt is made to push us into these things it doesn't work and you get instead war, anxiety, and Q-forces swamp the social system.

I think the managing of society would be fairly simple in the absence of ideology. But we're addicted to ideology because somewhere along the line we've gotten the idea that you can't understand the world without an ideology when in fact ideologies are incredible impediments.

Q: [???

I suppose as long as we are disparate entities, there will be hierarchies of control, that seems obvious. But it seems as though we are palying with the idea that we may not be disparate entities, or that we may only be provisionally disparate entities. We are a peculiar creature, we human beings as a mass phenomenon we are somewhat like a slime mold. We have a life cycle where part of our life cycle we appear to be completely separate individuals.

But apparently if you view our development of the past few centuries, we're entering into some aggregation phase triggered by pheromones spread through technology and we are beginning to create some kind of a super-organism.

And the fear of some people is that once we are inside this super-organism, we will be forced into a permanent status as a sub-level of the hierarchy. In other words you will have to give up your individuality and you will become like some kind of liver cell or brain cell or something in this organism.

I don't think is the case, I think we have the unique ability to combine these two modes of existence. This is why we have the notion of society, and the private reality of the individual.

Probably, in the domain of society there will always be forms of, I don't want to say control, but management of the distribution of commodity. But the idea, I think, is to empower this other dimension.

To spend as much time as possible in the individual free-swimming free-agent mode.

In other words not to see membership in society as a goal, and a value to be conserved, but to see it as a necessary evil.

We need social organization, but in minimal doses. And when we go on a bender of addiction to social normative behaviors, then you get a psychic epidemic like national socialism where people voluntarily abandon their individuality to act in concert with some kind of mass impulse.

This is extremely evolutionary retrograde. It's not what we want to do, I guess what I'm pleading for is an enlightened form of alienation. Not simply an emotionally driven alienation, but a strategically driven alienation.

See, alienation can be used not to create neurosis, but to attain freedom.

Creative alienation, alienation that embraces itself as a source of inspiration.

Nobody ever said it was going to be comfortable to be a human being and to ride one of these bi-pedal bodies from the cradle to the grave. It's an uncomfortable, but I maintain, manageable situation.

But you have to have the lights on, you have to have your emotional responses in order, your intellectual responses in order, you have to have garnered some sense of how we got to this situation, and you have to have some sense of the tools available to transform it.

(Question/commentary)

Well, it's certainly true that the human classroom is the most untransformed portion of human society over the last 200 years. I mean we still pass on our cultural values to our children in the way it was done two or three hundred years ago. This may be changing, again I don't mean to make the internet the panacea of all problems.

But it seems to here is a problem that the internet can address and you don't have to be a technocrat to see

how it has enormous power. Because education is a process on one level of putting correct information in front of people, and in the present form of education the great choke-point is the limitations of human teachers. Who, as finely and nobly motivated as they are, inevitably they pass on their own limitations to their students. In the presence of the internet this is somewhat mitigated. There's a great leveling going on in the education process.

The quality of information available to all of us, if we learn how to make our way to it is orders of magnitude more dependable than it was a generation ago. I mean we have basically traded in cultural illusions for hard fact.

(Would you discuss the break up of soviet union with the growth of international corporation and the fact that our central government seems to be breaking up, including the (??) something about breaking up the soviet union)

Mcluhan talked about this, he talked about something called electronic feudalism and what he said was that the rise of electronic media would bring a retribalization of culture and that the nation state would completely disappear. I think this is happening, it won't disappear completely, but in the metaphor I made a few minutes ago it will take on the role of the church which is largely irrelevant. Corporations now call the shots.

Print you see has what are called hidden-biases. It allows and in fact makes inevitable certain kinds of ideas that once you get outside the domain of print conditioning these ideas appear if not absurd, then at least simply provisional. What I'm thinking of are ideas such as ideas that all men, apologies to women, that all men are created equal. This is a faith of print-created society.

There's absolutely no evidence that this is true, and in fact there's considerable evidence to the contrary.

The argument against not believing it is that if we don't believe this, we can't have social justice. So we must embrace and obviously preposterous idea in order to achieve social justice. Why is this preposterous idea so attractive? Well it's because print is linear and uniform.

Every lower case E looks like every other lower case E. Therefore if the world of print is made out of these interchangeable and equally weighted entities, so must be the society that practices print culture. So we get the idea of one man, one vote.

Another example, a different example is assembly of objects out of interchangeable parts. Before print, if someone made an object, it was a unique object. The idea of an object, lets say a water-wheel or something like that, where if it broke down you got in touch with the company and they sent "the part" and you then took out the bad part, and put in the good part, and the pump merrily proceeds, interchangeable parts.

So we begin to see that the conventions of the printers shop become the conventions of an entire society, and how it does its politics and how it assembles its commodities are all dictated by the invisible assumptions of a form of media that nobody really looked at its potential effects before it was put in place.

McLuhan saw that this kind of rational, linear, compartmentalized, uniformitarian culture would be completely broken up by electronics and so it has come to pass.

The great forms of print-media are what are called “one too many”

A publisher publishes a book, and many people read it.

These “one too many” or “top-down” forms of media are perfect for controlling large numbers of people.

You have the idea of the “Ministry of Truth” where ‘truth’ is something dispensed by governments and received with grateful up-turned faces by bewildered citizenry that would otherwise have apparently no access to truth. This is madness talking.

The new electronic media are what is called “any to any”. If I want to speak to you or if I want to send email to you that can be done. If you and I want to send email to 500 people that can be done.

Any to any communication is anti-hierarchical, there’s no assumption of expertise or power or anything else as you ascend the pyramid of information transfer and dispersal.

So it’s almost like the Wizard of Oz effect, suddenly people say “You’re not all powerful! You’re not the Wizard, you’re a fat man in a stained overcoat pulling levers behind the scenes” and then the whole illusion drops away, the illusion of leaders, or privileged ideologies, of special forms of understanding, this is resisted by some people, usually control freaks

Because they say “well in the absence of illusion you would have chaos”. Yes, indeed. Indeed, the mother of all progress. The source of all innovation and creativity, the wind that blows the ship of paradigm shift, chaos.

And the idea somehow that the human mind should somehow interpose itself between society and this expression of chaos is just an illusion of control freaks and how...

(Cut off very unfortunately between audio file segments)

The whole ideology is a simplification of reality where the mass seething messy baroque of being is put through some kind of rasher of reality and it comes out grossly simplified. And because it grossly simplified it becomes like a kind of algebra of idiocy where now you can set up these little equations and they solve themselves and you get a feeling of satisfaction from that, but in fact the whole thing betrays the human enterprise. And to give you a graphic example of what I’m talking about I’m thinking about, I’m thinking of a scene from *Novel* called “Carrelis Mandarren” by Louis Idabunieres where a guy whose a communist in Greek partisans during the war beats a villager to death who has given shelter and food to

some non-Communist partisans fighting in the mountains and the protagonist of this particular part of the novel says this guy as he's beating this old man to death and he says "Why are you killing this old man? He is harmless."

And the guy without even missing a stroke, and turns to him and says "It is a matter of historical necessity"

This is the voice of absolute fanaticism speaking and this is the voice of pure ideology. In other words, unconscionable acts. The Holocaust, up to that level of unconscionable acts become intellectually defensible in the presence of a complete corruption of language.

And so ideology always paves the way towards atrocity.

Q: [???

Well ideals and ideology are not quite the same thing. Ideals are simple and don't knit themselves into vast intellectual structures. In other words an ideal of mind is to do as little harm as possible, I may not meet this ideal but it is an ideal of mind to try and do as good a job as I can.

But in the name of that ideal, It doesn't lead on...there isn't a "therefore". "Therefore" what? Therefore I should become a Mormon? Therefore I should no longer eat meat? Therefore I should no longer have sex?

No, there isn't that kind of implication. But ideology always implies implications. "If man is, as Marxists say, and economic creature, then the following must follow and the following must follow from that"

So I think ideals are something that are close to our emotions, they're things that spring from the heart. Their boundaries are not well-defined and the implications are not clear.

If I say "my ideal is to do good for man-kind" the next step is not at all clear, but if I profess an ideology, the next step is always deceptively clear.

So I think ideologies flatten complexity. You know people don't like paradox, I'm not sure why this is...

I think it's a quality of print culture, people want closure. They want every program or every intellectual argument, or every examination of a phenomenon to end with a conclusion.

QED, therefore this is what it is, but you don't have to be a rocket-scientist to notice that this betrays the

complexity of the world, the world is never one thing, or even several things.

The world always have dimensions which exceed the descriptive machinery that you're applying to it.

And I don't know who it was, George Bernard Shaw, or Neitzche, or some other 19th century bad boy, but it has been said that the essence of intellectual maturity is to be able to simultaneously hold two contradictory thoughts in your mind at the same time.

Now you are actually approaching the beginning of intellectual maturity.

But if you're always saying "Well if it's this, then it can't be that, and if it's this then it can't be that" then you have been hoisted on the petard of dualism. And it's more than a joke to say that dualism is the root of all evil.

Of course it is, it's the root of all good. What really we are given is a seamless continuum of phenomenon, that we are asked not to understand...that's preposterous, why should talking monkeys understand reality? (laughter)

But to feel. We can feel. We have an extremely complex body and nervous system and perceptual apparatus which ushers us into feeling. So you have not mastered a situation when you understand it, when you understand the situation you're probably on the road to catastrophe.

When you *feel* the situation you are probably moving then into a good position to act in that situation. Often we, in fact usually we do not understand our feelings.

That's a strange thing to ask of ones feelings.

If we understand our feelings its simply a footnote on our intellectual housekeeping, it is neither necessary nor sufficient.

What is necessary, and what is sufficient is feeling into the moment. I think this is where we got to at some point earlier in this, but the felt presence of immediate experience is the defining phenomenon of being.

If you can't reach it, you are in trouble. You need some kind of help, psychedelics, therapy, loving kindness, something.

And if you can reach it, you have contacted the authentic domain of being. I almost said of humanness, but it goes deeper than that, but the animal world is living in that space.

I think because of the good offices of quantum physics and some other things we are beginning to realize that things like chaos, like paradox, these are not names for intellectual black holes, these are names for the sources of life's richness and it's advance, it's creative advances lies in these things.

Reducing, as we have done over the past 200 years, the universe to a machine, some kind of a machine, then robs it of meaning. Then we stand back and look at our lives and our societies and say "How come they have no meaning?" It's because we labored like demons to make sure they didn't have meaning, now we have no one to blame but ourselves for the gross simplification of reality and the betrayal of experience that we achieved in that process.

Q: [???

You know years ago in Canada there was a political party called "The social credit party" and they had a very complex scheme that nobody could understand, and they ran on the platform under the motto "You don't have to understand social credit in order to vote for it"

So this is sort of what you're talking about.

(A bit more commentary)

Why not, yes (laughter) feelings are primary. The primary datum of experience is feeling and then out of that comes a logical reframing of experience. Then still lower on the rung and I maintain low enough on the rung that one shouldn't go that low is an ideological recasting of experience.

It's a delicate thing, I am not offering a simple answer here. It requires constant fine tuning and intelligence. Every day I think we need, what is it that the Marxists used to do? Self-criticism, we need to be alert to ideology, it's constantly seducing us.

Yeah, dialectic. But the idea of criticism, self-criticism, the idea that you and your colleges and comrades constantly search your behavior for betrayal of the ideology.

I think we need to constantly search ourselves not for the betrayal of ideology, but for the embracing of it, and say "oh dear I'm starting to believe something, 'slap, slap', ah that feels better"

Because these ideologies are incredibly draining and distracting. They, they...get in the way between us and true feeling.

On the other hand if you don't apply logical razors to experience then feeling is open to all kinds of interpretations that become somehow themselves spring-boards to ideology.

I think it's really important to try to keep things as simple as possible, because they will still be hellatiously complex if you are true to experience.

The simplest explanation of what is going on here is still maddeningly baroque. So throwing on flying saucers and papel-plotting and plans of Great Atlantis only further exasperate the problem. If you just deal with the given, with the fact of your history and your destiny, things are quite complex enough.

Of course again what the psychedelics do are provide a reference point in organism.

It's like a reset button.

It says "Beyond ideology, beyond cultural programming, beyond language, beyond hope, beyond fear, beyond expectation, there is the raw datum of experience. Here, have a dose. Didn't work? Here, have a bigger dose"

And if we keep returning to the raw datum of experience, then these other things, they will re-crystalize around us, but not with the imprisoning intensity that they have for straight people. We know that behind all this constipated social stability lies the chaos of the psychedelic experience.

It's very important to keep it in mind in very un-psychedelic situations.

But people who have never broken through the cultural dream take it to be reality.

And commit crimes based on delusions about what is and isn't reality.

Q: [???

Well, not to speak of whales and dolphins specifically, but nature as a dynamic field of activity beyond the reach of politicians, image makers, so forth and so on, nature is the constant psychedelic companion of the human experience.

I think we know this, that's why we crowd into cities and build walls and keep nature at bay.

If you go into nature alone and don't eat much and don't speak much, within 72 hours the hills speak and the winds confer with you. You are conveyed into an animate, caring, living, natural dynamic.

But it's threatening to the ego, this is the first time in 2 hours I've used this word. The ego is a maladaptive tumor-like growth in the personality that has been inculcated into you by the toxicity of culture.

It is literally the response to toxic culture, the more toxic the culture the more the ego is revered as a natural value within that culture.

Responding to dolphins and whales and ant hills and termite swarms and these kinds of things is an opening to the natural dynamic that's all around us.

Many people never observe nature except when psychedelics force it upon them.

This is a very...I think if you feel afraid of psychedelics but you want the juice you may sense there, take up wilderness camping and do it assiduously, and though it's a slower process, and you may not have specifically colored hallucinations, the conclusions that you will emerge with are essentially the same that the psychedelic voyager emerges from.

Nature is deep, ordered, dynamical, and caring for the project of being. So should we be.

The order that we seek is the natural order of our bodies and our minds and interface with the world. Not the unnatural order of ideology, co modification, propaganda, and a misuse of communication.

Q: [???

No I think it's very difficult because the process of education, without anybody quite knowing where the crime was committed, has turned from a handing-on of cultural values to a handing on of this neurotic behavior around co modification.

People are clueless, and they're being used and abused. Seemingly intelligent people behave in incredibly stupid ways, the phenomenon of the respectability of aimless shopping.

Shopping in unconscionable, it's stupid. It's tasteless. It's murderous toward the earth.

And yet people who teach at Essalen will suddenly drop their guru persona and whip out the charge plate and head for Robinsons.

What kind of thinking is going on here? They are clearly not alienated enough, alienation may be for them just a stance, but where they're really comfortable is down at Barneys racking up the charge card.

Somehow the message has to be put across that there are no exceptions to the obligation to de co modify experience. Anybody who feels alienated from this orgy of consumerism is going to have to look elsewhere for their values.

I feel blessed because I guess I'm just so alienated that it doesn't touch me. Recently for some reason I had to lay-out my income for an attorney and say how much I spent every month on things like entertainment so forth and so on. So he called me on the phone, you declared 15 dollars a month for entertainment. Based on your income, do you know how much would be a standard deduction for entertainment? And I said how much? He said 700 dollars a month, that's inconceivable to me. How much of an idiot would I be?

I said "I put down the 15 dollars because I knew you wanted something" but in fact I don't think I spend 15 dollars a month on entertainment, I mean what is entertainment anyways?

So...you know...I suppose it just sounds like preaching a kind of monkishness, but what is the charm of all this crap? Can anybody explain to me?

I heard a story about the Dalai Lama, I mean let this riquoche around in your mind. The Dalai Lama came to Los Angeles and so the committee to receive him and make his visit comfortable wanted to do something with him in L.A that would be uniquely L.A, but that would be amusing for Dalai. So they decided to take him to Rodeo drive, and basically they just turned him loose with his translator and just said "We'll meet you back here in an hour and a half and check it out, this is a unique place in American culture"

So then, after it was over and they were all having their double espresso with a campare' or whatever they were having, the Dalai Lama said "I want to thank you so much for making this experience available to me, I feel I understand Americans so much better now. I saw so many things I wanted."

This is the Dalai Lama talking, he saw so many things he wanted, well if the Dalai Lama is not immune, my God what chance have you and I? If the Dalai Lama can't hold this stuff back, you know, you might as well buy that Armeys scarf, just give up, give them 200 dollars for the damn thing and enjoy it.

Q: [???

As an old anarchist I can tell you efforts to organize anarchists are so fraught with contradiction that I wish you luck and I'll make a small donation but I don't think it can be done that way.

Yes, you will definitely give me 15 dollars worth of entertainment per month.

Q: [???

Well I hate to tell you this but I would never do what you are doing, this may be the ultimate teaching. "Do not ever again spend money to see me"

My god how much income is going down the drain as the ultimate oral empowerment given (laughter)

Ok, as long as you take it as entertainment.

I have one more little story, I didn't tell you the story about the two rabbi's did I?

Good, this is my ending story for the afternoon. I don't present it as a summation, but it amuses me. For those of you who don't like Jewish jokes, you will notice as this joke is told that it is easily translated into a Zen mode, a Sufi mode, I just like the Jewish flavor.

There were two Rabbi's, extremely high Rabbi's, Talmudists, great men of accomplishment and they were at temple, and one of them prayed and he said "Lord" he stood up and spoke aloud and he said "Lord, I am nothing" and he sat down, and the other guy got up and he said "Lord, I am nothing" and there was a guy there sweeping the floor, a custodian person, and he thought "Well people are praying, I could get a prayer in here"

So he stood up and said "Lord, I am nothing" and the first Rabbi looked at the second Rabbi and said "So look who think he's nothing"

That's it, that's a story about the imagination.

(Next group meeting time)

The time wave is a variable wave against time and can be scaled around very large amounts of time, even amounts of time larger than the life of the universe. Thousands, millions of times larger than that. You might ask, "What's the point of scaling a temporal description over periods of time so vast that there is no reason to assume they ever existed?"

Well the answer is that at these transition points, these dramatic shift points, the software automatically as in the course of running the algorithm keeps track of days to end, days until you get down here to a hypothetical end point, even if this is not billions of years, but trillions of years. It will keep track of this day count number and what we discovered to our bewildered amazement is these day counts were almost always prime numbers or the product of two primes.

(What are we measuring again?)

Well I'll answer your question but it isn't relevant to what I'm talking about. What I'm measuring, what this is measuring is the ebb and flow of novelty and habit, and you've actually lead me back to the main track so we'll get serious and get out of pointer. That's always a sign that we're really serious.

I don't want to give my ordinary time-wave lecture because I've given it enough that the meme is actually established in the culture and there are dozens of tapes of it and written versions and fights of it on the internet, so why should I explain it to you all over again.

I will just assume that in the course of talking about specific issues that relate to it, you will pick up the rules of the game and then if you're just too excruciated by your confusion you can ask a question and I'll try and answer it. The basic assumption is that there is a quality to reality that science has overlooked.

Some people in the East have called it "Dao", I want to divorce myself from the freight of that tradition and I want to call it "novelty".

Novelty is the quality in nature that seeks complexity, that's what it is. And it's counter-veiling force is called "habit" so what I'm proposing to you is that we live in a universe ruled by two fundamental forces that are larger than physics and electromagnetism and all of those good things.

These two forces are habit and novelty.

In every situation whether it lasts a millisecond or billion years, the struggle between these two tendencies of the universe can be discerned. Now, it's pretty self-explanatory what these terms mean but I'll run through it.

Habit means repetition of previously established pattern, continuation of a equilibrium situation. A tendency for a system to degrade entropically under the egious of the 2nd Law of Thermodyanmics. A conservative tendency, a preservationist tendency, habit right? For crying out loud.

The other thing is novelty, the opposite of habit. What is novelty? It is the new, the untried levels of complexification previously unachieved, unusual connectivity, creativity, surprise, novelty.

These two things are in locked in struggle over vast scales of time, notice I did not say eternally locked in struggle. They are not eternally locked in struggle because the good news is novelty is winning.

Novelty is winning, if you get big enough chunks of time, though there may be vicissitudes, ups and downs, ultimately the situation ends up more novel than it started out.

Elia Pregosian, who got the Nobel prize for work in non-equilibrium thermodynamics called this “The principle of order through perturbation”

A counterintuitive phenomenon in physical chemistry. Because for a very long time one of the strongest faiths held in physics was that the universe is undergoing thermodynamic degradation. In other words everything is tending to fall apart.

Pregosian showed that this is not true, he showed that in physical systems, simple physical systems there can be spontaneous mutation to higher states of order.

So what's really going on in the universe is a struggle between these two tendencies, biology represents the emergence of a very novel set of chemical strategies for the preservation and maintenance of novelty.

The emergence of higher-animals and culture and language and technology, these things are also novel strategies building on previous achievements in the novelty department building toward our dear selves.

And one of the interesting things about this kind of thinking, is it gives a new importance to the human world, science will tell you that we're lucky to be here and we're simply the awe-struck witnesses to some kind of incomprehensible thing that has nothing to do with us anyway. Novelty theory would say “no, no, human complexity represents at this point the apex of accomplishment in the domain of novelty, and hence, somehow, the cutting edge of universal evolution, at this moment in space and time has come to rest in ourselves”

So...what else do I want to say about this. So let's look at this screen for a minute and I'll sort of explain the rules of the game. This is a span of time portrayed along the horizontal axis as you're used to seeing, in this case it's 7 billion years simply because we set it to be so.

This represents the ebb and flow of novelty, here's one moment in the next 2 hours to pay attention, this is the moment.

When the wave moves up, habit is increasing, not decreasing, it's counterintuitive if you're into the stock

market. In the stock market we always want it to go up unless we're selling short but none of you here would do that I'm sure.

So in this case the excitement is where the wave moves down, if this is 7 billion years, notice that what I said is true of this screen, we end up in a far more novel position than we started.

We started out here, habit won, was winning the battle for at least 700 million years along here, then it lost its foothold and novelty surged forward almost uninterruptedly although this is quite a hiccup, this probably lasted 200 million years this hiccup.

If you want to get a notion of the scale of what we're looking at then life emerged from the primordial oceans at the top of this pimple.

All this is what's called the archeozoic and the prebiotic phase of the earth's existence.

Q: [???

Good question, it derails my plan for economy but since you had the intelligence to ask it you should probably be told.

The basic data, and I don't want anyone to laugh, the basic data comes out of the I-Ching. If somebody had told me...this is the most powerful attack on this idea, and it begins like this.

"So uhm...you want to make a revision in physics based on a Chinese occult divinatory system, are we getting this correct?"

Well in spite of the sneering, let me see if I can make it make a little more sense to you. I'm not going to review what the I-Ching is, in an environment as exotic as this that would insult our intelligence.

The interesting thing about the I-Ching, even it's skeptics agree, is that it seems to work. Very puzzling, other forms of sortilege seem much less certain.

Here's what I think is happening.

First of all, let's look at the Western notion of time as we derive it from Newton.

The Western notion of time is that time is what is known as pure duration.

All time in Western physics is the place where you put process so that it doesn't all happen at once.

Time has no quality, it's pure duration, think of it as a perfectly smooth surface. The only modification to

this doctrine in the past 500 years is Einstein came along 100 years ago and said “In the presence of massive gravitational fields, this perfect smoothness is slightly distorted over large scales” So we go from perfectly smooth pure duration, to slightly curved space-time.

But the main idea which is contiguous through all of these intellectual evolutions is the idea that the local fine structure of time can be portrayed as a zero-dimensional space.

If that's too technical for you it means that locally it is OK to think of time as perfectly smooth. I say it isn't, why should it be?

This has to do with a form, remember we talked about sentimentality and how it can distort thinking. This adherence to the idea that time is perfectly smooth is a sentimental notion left over from our infatuation with perfect geometrical shapes when Greek science kicked off about 2,500 years ago.

It took Kepler and Copernicus to demonstrate that the orbits were not perfect circles because God loves perfect circles...

One by one, the perfect objects of Greek mathematical and geometric theorizing have been laid aside. The planets do not move in perfect circles, nothing else has been found to have mathematical perfection except that...

This idea of pure duration has been hung on to. And there's a reason for this, and I apologize for the digression but it's very hard to snip the loose ends on a thing like this. The reason this idea of pure duration has been hung on to is because science, modern science, does it's business through a series of hat-tricks called probability theory.

And probability theory is the idea that you can learn something useful about a phenomenon, lets say for instance you want to know how much voltage is running through a wire.

Strange thing about this value that you come up with is this: it is not necessary that it correspond to any one of the thousand measurements that you took.

It's entirely possible that you get a value that is not congruent with any one of your measurements, but we say with confidence “well it's the average! It's the average.”

Lurking behind this notion, “average’ is the unexamined assumption that time is completely uniform.

That it does not matter when the measurement is made. Now why do we assume that? Is there any reason to assume that?

Well not, looking at nature, no there is no reason to assume that. Looking at science, hell yes there is a reason to assume that, you can't do science unless you assume that. Because science depends on what is called “The experimental method.”

An experiment, you arrange a funny little unusual situation which is designed to cause some phenomenon normally lost in the noise of being to be thrown into high relief.

Basic to the idea of experiment is what is called the restoration of initial condition. In other words we're going to roll a ball-bearing down a ruler and measure its velocity.

And we do this, and we say "restore initial conditions" that means pick up the ball-bearing and move it back to the top of the ramp. Now notice that time has passed since the first time the ball bearing rolled down the ramp. If time is not uniform then you can not restore initial condition.

If you can not restore initial conditions you can not make sense of probabilistic data. We have assumed and conserved this sentimental notion of Greek science because it makes it possible to do modern science. If we were intellectually honest about what's going on, then what we really should say is that "probability and modern science is the study of those natural phenomenon so coarse grain that an assumption of the restoration of initial conditions does not destroy the integrity of the phenomenon"

In other words it's a lens that can be focused only to a certain depth, and beyond that, it begins to give false data. Of course ball-bearing always roll down ramps the same way, of course two liquids always mix together in the same way, but who cares about these things?

What we're interested in are love affairs, dynastic transitions, corporate takeovers, political revolutions, family feuds, and the interesting thing about these things is that they never happen the same way twice.

Have there ever been two identical births, divorces, love affairs, corporate takeovers? Of course not, we would not expect such a thing, we understand that the complexity of those phenomenon ensures their uniqueness.

So this theory has probably not stormed the intellectual battlements of Western civilization for one reason is that it poses so fundamental a challenge, science can not swallow the time-wave. You have to choose one or the other, the time-wave is not a cult, it is not occult. But it is not science as we have done it for the past 500 years, because it assumes that one of our primary intuitions is actually true.

The intuition that every moment is unique, it treats that as the central starting point for an entirely new metaphysics of being. So the "smooth duration", the "simple answer", the "parsimonious good-try" has to be put aside.

Now why the I-Ching? Because in the same way that Western culture evolved a maniacal obsession with matter that ends with atomic fusion, sequencing of the DNA, room temperature superconductors, Buckminster-Fullerines and all sorts of all that.

In the same way that Western intellectual methods were relentlessly pushed towards an understanding of matter, in the east a different obsession held sway for culture factors not needing to be discussed here, people were interested not in matter, but in time, the other great mystery given to us in this dimension. Time.

If you're interested in time, you don't conquer time by building vast instrumentalities and seeking a primary particle and all that.

The way you understand and investigate time is by moving inward to metabolism. The human body is knot in time, it is non-thermo-dynamic state of equilibrium maintained by the miracle of metabolism.

Metabolism is a slow, controlled chemical burning of organic material, so subtle a form of burning that the energy is trapped in various membrane and cytochrome cascades and put the work of organism.

If you imagine then, at some time thousands of years in the past, people possessing techniques which today we would call "yogic"

But what they really are, are what they would now call "stilling of the heart" techniques.

Techniques for suppressing gross bodily functions. In other words, noticeable breathing, noticeable heartbeat, noticeable pulse. It turns out that the technique for stilling all of this can be done, and is persistently claimed that it can be done, as noise leaves the physiological circuits...and circuits...the mind falls inward, into a world of interiorized phenomenon for which we have no language but the language of idiots because this is not our cultural obsession.

So we say "Well it's dream, it's hallucination, it's who knows, lets see what's going on with the 11 o'clock news"

But in other cultures, complex vocabularies were produced to study these states, vocabularies as complex as our scientific vocabularies.

In the same way that in the 19th century, Mendeliav and those people came to discern that all matter is produced out of the combination of a limited number of elements, there were arguments about how many, but it's generally assumed under 110, and that's generous.

Out of 110 basic elements the entire world of material, similarly in the inspection of time, it was realized that time too comes in flavors, if you will.

Not 50,000, not 300,000,000, not 4, not 8...but 64. And this probably has something to do with the cube root of 4, and certain things having to do with the dimensionality of time and space, I mean why this number is a reason for speculation.

It's a number built into biology, there are 64 codons coding for the 8 amino acids. This is no coincidence, it's something about the basic grammar of being itself arises around these numbers.

They not only saw that time is made of these elements, but they saw that they occurred in certain fixed patterns of recurrence at different levels, at different speeds.

That from the point of view of this I-Ching philosophy, a given moment of being, at some locus in space and time is a kind of interference pattern created by moving levels of, let us call them “influences” and these influences interpenetrate each other on many levels.

All of this can in fact be quantified and mathematicized, and portrayed in the universal language of mathematics.

I'm sorry this answer ran so long. But I want to make it seem reasonable to you that there are categories in time as well as in matter, if you can discern these categories, you can gain as powerful an intellectual understanding of time as we have of matter.

Let me get back to how this thing is read, and I want to move forward here.

When the wave moves up, habit is increasing, when the wave moves down, novelty is increasing.

For instance, a place like this is called a “novelty trough”, a situation like this is called a “plunge into novelty”

A situation like this is called an “ascent into habit” and time on all scales is made out of ascents into habit, plunges into novelty, novelty troughs, and further ascents into habit.

You can feel these things in your own life you know. When the luck is running with you, nothing can stop you, when the wave is against you, God help you.

This happens to empires, this happens to political careers. It happens to species. It happens to entire orders of biological life 100,000,000 years of endless radiation of all kinds of niches across the planet. Then suddenly a planetary cooling and a mass extinction and the novel forms disappear.

But over long periods of time, as I said, habit is vanquished and novelty is concentrated. And that's part of the story, half of the story.

The other half of the story is that this process of movement into deeper novelty is speeding up, always has been speeding up, goes faster and faster and faster.

So if this is 7 billion years, you can see back here, things were deadly slow.

Here, life appears, once life appears the pace quickens, once life leaves the ocean, at this scale, the thing is practically a direct descent into novelty.

Though when we blow this up, as we can do, we will see that this looks here like a smooth, straight shot into the lap of God turns out to be the old-rugged path that we've followed for a long, long time.

Normally in my lectures I go through a series of screens telescoping towards the present.

I don't want to do that this evening, I want to run it very close to the present and I'll explain why when we get there.

Here's the little movie, we're going to start seeing a series of screens, each screen will show us half as much time in twice as much detail, and we will be moving towards this end-point over here.

Here's 7 billion years on the screen, the next screen will contain 3 ½ billion, so forth and so on.

As it flows in, you'll get the idea I think. This is the fractal landscape of time, arrayed across this are planetary impacts, glaciations, this is 700 million years here.

It's fading off, life leaves the sea, this is probably the last 400 million years, a kind of oscillation around a mean, as animal orders conquered the land.

This is 100 million years. 50 million years.

If you're paying attention, you see that it's fractal, patterns that appear on one scale are appearing in another scale.

13 million years, the same pattern as the last 600 million years.

Here's 6 million years, oscillations, glaciations, extinctions, temperature fluctuations. Here's the last 3 million years, this is the domain of human evolution.

The last 1,700,000 years, almost the domain of homo-sapiens. The last 850,000 years, the last 400,000 years, this is all things human beings have witnessed. The last 200,000 years.

Now a reason question is, where is this all being generated from? In other words it's endpoint is all staying steady.

There's the last 53,405 years.

It's being generated from a date less than 20 years in the future. It's as though the winter solstice of 2012 was some kind of dwell point out of which the temporal continuum is being generated.

Every theory has a hard-swallow.

The hard-swallow in ordinary science is the big-bang. Notice that it's the limit test for credulity. If you can believe that the entire universe sprang from nothing in a single instant for no reason, what would you resist as a hypothesis?

It's the limit case for improbability as far as I can tell. Nevertheless, science says "give us one free miracle and we can then go from there and never ask the favor again"

So apparently you get 1 free miracle in your system building.

I prefer to locate my miracle at the end.

You may say "Is that just arbitrary? Why December 21st, 2012?"

Well, obviously if the theory has any utility, if this idea of habit and novelty has any instructive value at all, we should find novel events clustered in these troughs and we should find periods of constipated recidivism on these upsweeps. So now we have two data fields with which to play.

We have the formal and the mathematically defined and utterly inflexible wave, and we have the vicissitudes of natural and human history.

On the natural history level, asteroids impacts, glaciations, extinctions, fluctuations in incidental incoming solar energy. Cooling of the oceans, volcanic eruptions, this sort of thing.

In the human world, wars, revolutions, technological innovations, migrations of people, introductions of new technologies, and so the idea then is to take the mathematically defined wave and the admittedly messy data of natural and human history and seek a best fit between them.

And when you impartially get them lined up so that it seems that most major episodes of novelty that historians, or people who care about these things, agree on, and most low point in the wave, line up with each other...

Then you simply go to the end of the wave and pick an end point and it picks out a date. I did this and I will show you my correlations.

An astonishing thing about the date I arrived at by this method is...

That it's the same date that the Mayan civilization pointed for the end of its calendar, in all eternity.

You may choose not to believe that I didn't know this when I made this prediction, but I didn't know it.

I didn't, and yet I chose not the month, not the same year, the same day, month, and year.

(Commentary)

Well nobody knows, but I ask myself this question "What do I have in common with the Maya, that we both should reach the same conclusion?"

I have only one thing in common with the Maya: psychedelic mushrooms.

So then it raises the possibility "Does this thing have like a bar-code in it?"

No matter who you are, no matter where you are eventually you get to the bottom line and you turn over the carton and it says "Discard before December 21st, 2012 A.D."

That apparently is the witching hour. I don't present this to you as "You should believe me"

I wasn't told this by a God.

It was not revealed to me by a former incarnation, I can show you why I reached this conclusion, I will do so now.

Let's zoom in just a bit more, we're at 50,000 years.

Let's get a hold on it here, 26,000 years.

13,000 years.

The last 6,675 years. I'll move past this fairly quickly, at this scale this is the big picture, then I'll show you the big picture and we'll go for the details.

As a big picture, I think this is pretty accurate as to how most educated historians would view what has gone on, on this planet for the last 6,000 years.

It's telling us that 4,500 BC a descent into novelty is under way and it didn't start very far back here.

Quite a steep descent into novelty.

In fact what we find here is Sumer, Err, Babylon, Egypt, and so a series of civilizations each leaping beyond the accomplishments of the other until we reach the pyramid building phase of Egypt, the old-kingdom.

Then right down here there's a sort of novelty trough.

Egyptian civilization rages across here and in-fact it does fulfill the intuition of theosophists and other people that Egypt achieved something that was not surpassed in novelty until early Roman times.

In other words, clear all this happens, but you don't get all this level of novelty until you get over here at about 220 B.C. I maintain, technologically, so forth and so on, that's just about right.

This upswing back into habit, the historical record is characterized by brutal civilizations, the Hitites, the Metani, imperial Assyria, you know motorcycle gangs with chariots is what we're talking about here.

If we were to blow this up, we would see that there's some interesting plunges into novelty.

Alphabets, expansion of Phoenician trade routes, so forth and so on, but the turning point is up here, as far as Western history is concerned, what happens up here is Homer sings his song.

I maintain, symbolically and literally, that's what started it all.

That's what set the last phase in motion.

I had a professor, maybe I'm echoing his prejudice, a philosophy professor in college and he said "You

want to know where it all went wrong? I'll tell you where it all went wrong. When the Greek's stopped being fishermen and pulled their boats up on the shore and started to talk philosophy...it all went wrong"

Well I don't know if it went wrong, it certainly went in a different direction. Homer sings his song and it begins and almost unbroken cascade into modernity, and now I want to show you the rest of this.

3,337 years from Plato to NATO, as Rupert would like to say. This is the last 1,670 years roughly. This is where we have to bring us home to mama because this is where the stakes rise. It's one thing to talk about meteor strikes 220 million years ago, or the bust up of Gondowanda land or a middle Permian fluctuation in incidental solar radiation, I mean that's all very fine.

But who knows whether your playing with a full deck or not when you shuffle this stuff past them. But your superb liberal education has given you an immense knowledge of Western history, and I'm sure I can't fool you.

Q: [???

Yeah but if you go in to any point on this wave, it's an infinitely regressive fractal. In other words there is no place in time where it's all in favor of novelty, or all in favor of habit. You can discern trends, for instance this is a downward trend, obviously. But sufficiently magnified and lived through, there still were assertions of habit because the thing is a fractal, it has an infinitely repeating structural rogasity.

Q: [???

No, no you don't use probability theory to deal with this at all because it obviates the idea that you have a stable background against which to make your averages, it kicks that from under you.

Q: [???

Well you're somewhat anticipating what I'm going to get in to. What I want to do is run through this fairly large-scale situation in the last 1,600 years and then look at 1996 in detail because for a very long time, like since 1975, I was aware that there was a deep plunge into novelty into 1996. And now the question must be answered: Did it happen or didn't it happen?

Let me go through this and then we'll look at that and if I still haven't satisfied you then ask the question again.

This is the last 1,600 years and I hope you can all see it because this is one of my most powerful arguments. I maintain that among reasonable historians, the great episodes of novelty of the last 1,600 years are portrayed with freakish accuracy on this thing.

Q: [???

Not exactly, no, I'm saying that the accretion is novelty is occurring faster and faster. Accumulation, the accumulation is occurring faster and faster.

Time is not smooth, yes, that's right, that's a way of thinking of it, that' it's speeding up and slowing down rather than rising and falling.

That's just changing the vector...

Q: [???

You mean spatially or in time? They're not occurring at random, they're occurring under the igeious of this wave, this wave is replacing randomness. Randomness is a tricky concept central to probability theory.

Are they occurring randomly? No, they're ruled by this, they don't occur randomly, they occur where this thing says they may occur. That's the hypothesis.

It repeats itself not in the sense of it happens again, it repeats itself in the sense that if you were to zoom in on any point you could extract from that point the whole wave. This is a wave made of tinier and tinier versions of itself, that's what self-similarity is in a fractal.

Q: [???

That's right, in a sense this is a very conservative form of prophecy. It does not say what will happen, it says where to look for unusual events and where you're wasting your time.

Probability theory, the first thing you learn when you study probability theory they teach you that chance has no memory, and that example they always give is "If you flip a coin and it comes up heads 49 times in

a row, what are the odds that it will come up heads in the 50th flip?"

50/50. Chance has no memory, in other words according to probability theory, the universe does not remember those earlier throws. So the probability remains 50/50, now lets go to a professional gambler and we flip a coin 49 times in a row and it's coming up heads and we're about to flip the 50th time. How many professional gamblers in the room are betting it will come up tails? None.

The gambler has discerned that there's a run-on, but a run is not a scientifically validated concept. You see if probability theory were actually true, the coin would land on it's edge every single time.

Coins never land on their edge, that is the rarest of all outcomes. You can toss coins in bars even with sticky surfaces, and you will do it a long, long time before you get a coin to land on its edge. When you say this to a probability guy, they say "You don't understand, it's the ideal case but movement of air, the spin of the coin, these things favor one or the other"

Then you say "Well it isn't 50/50, you're telling me one or the other is favored" and they say "well, why don't you go get a life or something, stop bothering us with this"

Ok lets look at this then, this is the last 1,600 years, it's not shy about making predictions, it fills the screen with precise predictions and I'm rushing this but you do understand, don't you that the software is capable of zooming in on one of these troughs and defining them to the moment.

In other words, this is not a theory where we say "Well between 1440 and 1444 something interesting might happen" no we say "The maximum potential appearance of novelty is slightly after 2 pm on the 16th of February, 1441. End of discussion"

It's almost an embarrassment of predictive power because we're so used to smeared predictions that when someone comes out with a statement like that we say "Well that can't possibility be scientific, it was so precise" Strange.

Ok, here is the fall of Rome in 475, the fall of Rome was not a dramatic event that happened overnight where headlines were published "The Fall of Rome"

It fell apart over quite a period of time, but generally 475 AD the abduction of Augustus Romulus of Alarex of Visigoth is considered to be the moment when it got the boot, so Rome fell.

Over here, in this little tick which you may not be able to see, Mohammed is born, but the Hagera is here, and the death of Mohammed is here, this deep trough here is the establishment of Islam.

Some people have criticized this theory saying it's not politically correct because it's euro-centric. My

answer to this is “the world you’re living in is euro-centric”, you know, the Maya may have been splendid people, but their contribution to present state of world civilization is precisely zilch as far as I can see. Molay sauce, that’s it.

So you know without being too harsh its apparently, who counts is who’s left standing.

You may not like European civilization, you may think Plato was full of shit, but you can’t argue that every man woman and child on earth is affected by what happened in Greece in the 5th century B.C.

It correctly portrays the triumph of Eurocentrism over all other values throughout the world, that actually happened and if this wave described history, it has to be true to that.

But, I mention this at this opportune moment. Because Islam is, not strictly speaking, thought of as part of European civilization. And this wave gives tremendous weight to the accomplishments of Islam, and I maintain “So must we” because modern science was not invented in Europe, it was invented in Baghdad and Cordoba when Europeans were scratching their asses and sitting around in bad wool drinking moldy beer.

So, it may have a Eurocentric twist to it, but it also is very friendly to the cultural accomplishments of Islam.

Just to make the point again, this enormous plunge into novelty here, in the middle 900’s precisely parallels the rise of the Umayyid (?), the invention of algebra, the elaboration of modern science, observational clinical medicine and all these things that were going on.

This next plunge is a purely European, well half of it is a European story, this is the Crusade. It is specifically the 2nd Crusade, and of course when we talk about European history that ended the hammer-lock on the European Catholic church, that was the first great loosening blow, and suddenly spices, and drugs, and exotic human beings and technologies and commodities, it was extremely dramatic for Europe.

It was like contact with an alien civilization.

We all know that is the Crusades.

The next plunge into novelty, and I’m going to advance the screen one shingle to get you more detail.

Now we’ve left, the Crusades are just on screen, but this is an interesting one. It’s a dramatic plunge into novelty but an incredibly dramatic return to previous patterns of habit and behavior.

It emphasizes that whatever this novelty was, it wasn’t a culture transforming technology, it wasn’t a new religion, it was not a new language, it was not a scientific breakthrough, what could it have been?

Well the bottom of this trough, if you zoom in on it is 1356, as you know, but are kindly not shouting out, in 1356, in an 18-month period, one third of the population of Europe died, and nobody knows how many people died outside of Europe.

What we're talking about is the Bubonic plague, the black-death. It is certainly novel to have one-third of everybody you know drop dead.

But, what happens in a situation like that? Well there's a lot of grief, and trauma, and then you bury the dead and the living move up these managerial positions, these unfilled positions, people take them on and they re-build society. Usually in a very conservative simulacrum of society as it existed before the catastrophe.

That's exactly what we see here, an enormous plunge into novelty and a very dramatic return to habitual patterns. So from here to here, it's roughly 1252 to 1400. 150 year period characterized by this novel collapse and a quick rebuild. But now over here we see, almost as though for your edification they were placed side-by-side, a different kind of descent into novelty, a descent into novelty extremely steep, starting at a higher point than this and plunging deeper than this, and then whatever the novelty unleashed here it was not so easy to recover from.

One of the great seminal moments of evolution of human life on this planet was the coming of the first internet. As if that weren't enough, 1440, only 15 years later in 1455 the Ottoman Turks seized Constantinople, and Europe is effectively cut off from the East. It's impossible to imagine the impact of this on the economy and psychology of Europe, I mean they were check-mated by Islam and nobody knew what was going to happen.

What did happen was some enterprising and moderately wealthy Italian capitalists decided to pool their money, take a chance on new ship building technologies and attempt to sail around Africa to reach the East, and they did it.

And the money that they made from this investment in R&D were greater fortunes than the world had ever seen, they were the first secular fortunes. These guys weren't movers they were business men. They made vast amounts of money, and seeing how they made it, they saw no reason to change their investment strategies and they poured money into new technologies of architecture, of city building, of creation of arches, patronage of the arts, patronage of the sciences, patronage of letters and litterateurs.

And this is the Italian Renaissance, precisely here, from 1455 on everything you've ever heard of the Italian Renaissance here, and it reaches its culmination down here at the very bottom, at the exact bottom of the novelty trough at this scale you get 1492, the discovery of the new world. I mean try to wrap the mind around the concept that it's only 500 years ago that we discovered the lost half of this *planet*.

I mean we shouldn't imagine that we've got it all under control, we only discovered our own rear-end 500 years ago, so how much can we be sure we know about reality?

The discovery of the new world is not something Europe has ever recovered from, it was literally like having extraterrestrials land in your backyard.

If you read Albert Durr's diary as he records his impressions of an exhibition of objects that he saw in Madrid that were brought back by Cortez and exhibited in the court of Louis the Fat...I mean Phillip the Fair. One of those people hehe.

As an intelligent educated European he was in shock, he had never seen such things, they were beyond imagining, they were psychedelic. And the fact that beyond that lay exotic animals, strange language, unimaginable deposits of gold, exotic human beings, all of that...and so, this is what's called, not by me but by art-historians "The age of the marvels"

Stretching from the discovery of America in 1492 to this sudden ascent into habit over here in 1619. And as you know, 1619 is the beginning of the 30-years war.

Certainly if there was ever a recidivus move to habitual chuckle-headedness, the 30-years war was it. For 30 years, it was sort of like Europe became Rwanda, and everybody went out and murdered their neighbors. Protestants murdered Catholics. Jews, forget it.

Everybody went into turmoil, nobody understood why they were doing it or what the politics meant, and it was just a bloodbath that finally ran itself out.

But before all that, you had the conquest of the new world and I maintain that this ugly bump, the bottom of this novelty trough, is where wonder gave way to co modification.

In the end people were just stunned, they couldn't believe it. And then when the wonder wore off, they began doing the calculations.

They say "My god, there is money to be made, we just put all these Indians to work, get their crops growing, get all their gold and we are going to make a mint" and they did.

The whole base of Spanish power, the whole reason for it's meteoric rise and essentially instability was that it was all based on new-world gold.

Here's the 30 years war, this steep ascent into habit is punctuated by this dramatic descent into novelty which I call "Newton's notch".

It's nice to believe that a single human being could make so creative a step that the entire age would bear the imprint of their intellectual breakthrough. If ever there was such a giant, Newton was it.

From where he started and where he ended, he basically moved the world.

After the Renaissance, the next great plunge into novelty is what's called the European enlightenment, and it begins up here with a bunch of high-flown French philosophers, Allivason, Voltaire, that crowd, and it ends in the very practical and chaotic experiments of the American-French revolution.

The first half of the 19th-century is here, that speed bump is basically the Franco-Prussian war, Civil war in the United States, and the descent into novelty from there is pretty straight-forward.

Now what I like to do is leave all this, I think by now you've gotten the idea and I want to look in some detail at this 1996 situation.

That's the last 417 years, the last 208 years, the last 104 years, the last 52 years. I want to talk about this one for a minute because there is an aspect of this theory that I find very appealing that I haven't touched on yet which is, if you've been paying attention you know that screen repeat themselves.

Remember I showed you a screen where I said "at the top of a certain mountain Homer sang his song?"

This is the same shape, but we're now not looking at thousands of years, we're only looking at 52 years, well what's the deal?

Because this thing is a fractal, it has built into it automatic resonances.

It gives you a very rich data-field to work with.

If this is a span of time from 1944 to 1996, it on another level is a span of time from roughly late-Egyptian time to the Umayid Telephates with Homer singing his song up here.

On the short-scale, the 52-year scale, this is 1967, these two things are in, according to this theory, in a situation of resonance or geometrical relationship to each other.

Is there anything about the world of Homer that is like the world of 1967?

And I maintain yes, a tendency to easy lifestyles, loose shoes, and sophomoric philosophies characterize both (theories?).

You see it's a way of explaining such transient phenomenon as fads and fashion. Why are we suddenly

putting lion claws on the legs of our bathtubs?

Well because we're passing through a period of resonance when that was done in the past, in other words the Orthodox theories of history and time would tell you that the most important moment shaping this moment, is the moment which just preceded this moment.

It was, as it were, the conduit for the wave of causal necessity to arrive at this moment.

I am saying something different, I am saying that every moment in time is an interference pattern made by other moments in time that are related to each other, not through linear seriality, but through this much more complex schema of relations.

If you suddenly walk into a room and there's a heavy hit of black granite, inverted corners, and silver shadowing, it's a Eugenshtiel resonance.

I live in a kind of waking hallucination, I have a little aphorism which covers this. It's Rome falls 9 times an hour. It falls more than that and less than that, but lets say it falls 9 time an hour.

Well then you're job is to notice every time it falls, in other words what we think of as our random musings and our personal mental furniture is in fact our subconscious awareness of these systems of temporal resonance operating around us.

So, as I look out at a crowd like this, if I let myself go I notice that Kant is sleeping in the corner, and that Madam Lafarge seems to have just come in from the baths and taken her seat.

Cleopatra is headed for the john and so forth and so on. How real is this? Who knows.

It's a matter of discerning.

Q: [???

What I would say is, first of all lets get a little more honest here. There's a lot of argument about where Homer actually sang his song, we can only really pinpoint it to within about 150 years, it's up here somewhere.

I could zero in on this, but 1967 is here. 1968 is just over the top. The first moon-flight is there, now suddenly we have the Homeric resonance, what is Homer but a story of noble men on a long and far voyage and eventually the homeward return and eventually the heroics of that echo over the centuries.

Probably the only heroic episode of the 20th century that's unsullied by hypola and manipulation and so forth is the flight to the moon.

I don't care about the politics or any of the rest of that, I mean what it took to do that, we're not doing it. We don't have the gumption, the technology, or the national focus to do that.

In a sense, I take the moon flight to be in a sense the capstone of modernism.

I consider post-modern time to begin after that, what was the 70's but the whining re-cry of the 60's?

Then everything else has followed from that.

Q: [???

Well it's a turning point, it initiates a cascade, it represents an achievement and a turning point.

Had it launched a trip to Mars, a colony on Gannymede, and expedition to Triton, then it should have been at the bottom of the novelty trough, but it was what it was and it was unique and politically unsupportable.

It represented the limits of the assertion of a civilization, not the beginning of a process. Who would have thought that time, who would have dreamed that 35 years in the future people would look back on the age of space.

The age of space is a historical era, like the age of exploration or something.

Q: [???

Yeah, it tells of a noble time long ago when brave men and women explored an unfamiliar world it had nothing to do with us.

Q: [???

I thought of this not as a line, but as a topological manifold. That's how I think of it and I think of events as like a fluid and this fluid flows over this landscape.

No. No.

The closest it can come to making a prediction, I was slightly conservative when I dealt this first, it doesn't make predictions it tells you where to look for the event.

Then I introduce the idea of resonance, the resonance can be a clue, but you are easily deceived, or I am easily deceived.

If I can show you this 96' thing, I think this will get clearer, let me try for it.

It does follow a spiral on large scales, there's the last 13 years. There's the last 6 years, you see this 96' thing, there's the last 3 years.

I want to change the end date. There's 96', now it's this really dramatic plunge into novelty. There had been nothing quite this dramatic, in a period roughly from the end of last February to the end of May it transited this enormous distance. This is a novelty plunge, this is a novelty trough.

Descent into novelty means rapid change in the novelty value, nevertheless it's obvious I think that these levels of novelty are higher than these levels.

Though this is going on in an atmosphere of more rapid change. If we were to look at the historical resonance of this, it's that period, the previously mentioned period of the Umayid Telephades. So when I was trying to figure out what this would be, what would happen, I said well what happened in the Umayid Telephades, if we are looking in the right place.

I also looked at China and there were some interesting things happening there, but for the moment I'm looking at the Umayid Telephades. It was basically as I said the birth of modern science. In other words there was a coming together of analytical and intellectual techniques, and a realization of how to understand nature.

In other words, a breakthrough in the understanding of nature. So I said "There should be some kind of enormous scientific breakthrough in this period"

Well going down here we got the comet, Hayukataki, it means 1,000 mushrooms. I took some hope from that, but comets don't really count, I mean they might have counter in the long past.

I mean they do if they have fleets of extraterrestrial vehicles trailing behind them.

But none have appeared to have this so far. So I was looking and different things happened, the Bose-Einstein condensate, these really far-out things in science if you follow science.

So I was getting over here and I was getting pretty desperate, there was only 20 days left and my email was

full of sneering voices saying “So wise guy, where’s the miracle you promised us?!”

And at that moment...the Martian meteorite full of fossils arrived on the scene.

I think it’s not unreasonable to accept it as proof that this is working, it may not have changed the lives of ordinary people, but it certainly changed the position of human beings in the intellectual universe.

And so, there it was, an immense scientific breakthrough related to astronomical matters which is what the Arabs were getting together in this situation.

It changed our entire notion of who we might be in the cosmos and so forth and so on, and I was pretty happy with that.

The original scientific announcement was on August 8. So then, time passed as it always does.

And then we lived past it as one always does, and there’s an ascent into habit and so forth and so on.

822. 808, right there, can you not see it? It’s right there.

I’ll leave this thing running tonight and you can play with it as you like, there are plenty of people who will show you how to run this thing.

But it’s a perfect prediction, so I had come that close, I felt pretty good about it. I said that somewhere towards the end of summer 1996 there would be an enormously important scientific discovery that would change forever our notion of our place in the universe.

Ok so fine, good. Then we live beyond it to where we are now, which is over here, and then these people come forward, completely unbidden, a Godsend, a double-miracle, and announce that they cloned the ewe.

The cloning occurred within 4 days of the announcement of the meteor, so I had a double whammy, and the late-punch was telegraphed 7 months later.

They’re not making anything of it, but that was the moment when the zygote was divided and the thing began to grow. No mammal had ever had it happen to them on this planet.

Well that’s not quite true, it had been done with mice in the last 15 years. But a higher mammal, it was a

biological phenomenon absolutely new in the history of this planet.

The planet had existed for 7 billion years without that happening, and then it happened within a week of the human race discovering that Mars harbored ancient life.

So I don't call this a knock-out punch of my critics, that would be preposterous, because my critics are the entire edifice of established science 500 years old and practiced by millions of people around the planet.

But not bad for so fragile and change taking a theory, I'm sure it struck terror in some hearts and fear and loathing in others.

I was set up to fail, and didn't I maintain. The fact that we can continue to have this discussion, you may think I failed, I don't think I failed but it should have unambiguously clear that I failed.

But the fact that we were able to keep the game in play is very interesting.

Q: [???

Sounds like it worked for you, I hope the check is in the mail (laughter)

Well I will do consulting for a very nominal fee.

Well I'm glad your story is a happy one, I myself am more provisional, I will advocate this, but I am more aware that the many in my audience, how unlikely this is.

I am basically a devils advocate because I am fascinated with the fact that I thought this up, and this is not my style. It's hard for you to believe that because I've been now talking about it since 1971, so it has become *me* in a sense. But it isn't me, this is not how I think, this is not how I ever thought. I had to be lead by the hand, I am sloppier than this, I am not precise.

This was told to me.

It's eerie. It's turned my life to science fiction, because I don't know what this is all about.

I don't know why...I'm here talking about this. I don't know why you're here listening to it, and I'm puzzled that outside this room the world is moving towards, not this theory, but these kinds of conclusions. Is it the millennia? Well this isn't about the millennium. This says "Forget the millennium, it's a complete waste of time", it's a speed-bump on the way to the real event.

I've tried to think of rational explanations for why, why this theory. I've had to go pretty far afield. Here's a rational explanation: Suppose the millennium is so psychically charged that there's a danger of mass hysteria of some sort, mass suicides or something like that. Perhaps the collective unconscious senses this and my mission is to smear the expectation.

In other words, what this does is it says "Don't get excited about the millennium" and then once the millennium is past, it will say "And don't worry about McKenna either" in other words it's a way of cheating you past the millennium, if there weren't people running around saying 2012, 2010, 2008, 2006, 2004, there would be so much energy concentrated on the millennium that there might be various forms of mass hysteria.

I don't know, but it's a more reasonable explanation than that the secret of universal temporal architectonics has been handed over to an Irishman by a mushroom for the edification of mankind. That is too much.

I'm amazed that...because you see it's so precise and I don't know if you can tell from what I've said this evening, but it's very clear to me, that it's not about being right some of the time.

If it fails once, it fails completely. There's no wiggle-room. That's why it's so interesting to try to trap it.

This is not something where if we get 7 out of 10 we're going to keep preaching.

This thing must be right 10,000 times out of 10,000 tries. And as I offer it to you and to other people because I think smarter people than me ought to be able to destroy it.

Remember when I talked about how when science gets points for proving you're wrong. If I could prove this was bunk I would get a lot of points.

If anybody could prove it was wrong, absolutely wrong, but it's amazingly slippery. So slippery in fact that it's almost like a living thing. Just when you think you've pushed it into a corner that it can't escape from, you get a Martian meteorite full of fossils right in your lap.

Q: [???

I believe it's 28, April, 1996, or 28 February...I'll get it for you. It is...that's the turning point, 2/19, February 1996. So last February, suddenly the bottom dropped out and that went on until... I was in Mexico, though I don't offer this as the turning point I think recall there was a fairly intense earthquake in the L.A basin, the 19th of February 1996. Yes that was the San Fernando quake, I believe it was.

Anyways, retract that, lets not get mired. I don't know what the turning point was.

Q: [???

Oh well tell me the date. The murder of Itshak Rabin(?) this raises the question of what's novel and what's not.

I'll tell you a story about the middle East, it's not a Rabin story, but this is almost like a Martian meteorite story.

Way back in the 70's I was watching the resonances, and this is a resonance with the Umayyid Telophate, I said that, so back of course some time around 1973 or 74 or 75, I can't remember, but anyways we were approaching the crucifixion resonance, and I thought "Now this will be interesting" because first of all, the crucifixion is fairly defined in time, it happened around Passover of 27, it's a very nice clean marker.

So I thought "Now what could happen in the middle East that would satisfy the crucifixion resonance?"

And I couldn't imagine it, and I said "Ok, so we'll wait to see"

Then the date came, and I thought "Oh wow, this is it, it's crucifixion day, lets check the news"

It said "Anwar Sedat has been murdered in Cairo", and it was like a revelation to me. It happened on the day of the crucifixion resonance.

How do I interpret that? A peace maker, a person of philosophical depth, a humanist, a humanitarian was sacrificed on the altar of the stupidity of mid-east politics.

In one case the Roman occupation of Judea, in the other case the whole quagmire of middle-Eastern politics. But eerie how one couldn't imagine a fulfillment of the resonance, but the wave could imagine a fulfillment of the resonance and has this uncanny way of expressing itself.

But I stress this is not occult. You could run the time-wave better than I do if you study history and paid enough attention. There's no mumbo-jumbo here, it's a reasonable hypothesis.

There have been many wave-theories of history. Oswald Spangler had the four ages of the world. Arnold Toynbee had a series of successive stages, Gian Batista Vico in the 16th century in his "La Ciencia Nuova" proposed a scheme of universal history.

In our own century we've had the Kondratieff wave, which was a wave of mechanical theory of predicting economic cycles. Why shouldn't human history be under the control of cycles?

All other biological phenomenon on this planet.

Q: [???

Well it's a fractal wave like an electromagnetic field, an electromagnetic field is the same equation slightly tweaked used to describe it.

It's a genuine fractal wave-system. An interesting thing about that just aside, I had this down cold by 1975, and fractals didn't even become sheik until the mid-80s.

So this was all done...in fact there has been an eerie parallelism in the development of science and new-age focuses I guess, that seem to keep this alive.

It's astonishing to me that a notion conceived by me as a 23 year old in the Amazon, I'm still in the business after all this time and I've talked to a lot of smart people. People don't know where to put this...

If it's a delusion, it's a remarkably stand-alone delusion, it doesn't require me.

The fascinating thing about it, one thing is, through all these predictions that we've been talking about, all these successes that I'm claiming for it, hinge on a single and impossible to come to terms with assumption: That this planet will attain infinite novelty less than 20 years in the future.

If this theory is true but the end date is wrong, then all of these historical correlations fall out of phase. So in a sense, it's a prophecy that all that really matters is the final date.

I, being sane, believe nothing will happen. And yet, if nothing happens, what a curious trip this has been. What then was the *raison detra* of this whole exercise? Why did it offer itself? And why is it inherently self-limiting?

If it's an effort to deceive, an effort to deceive would ever be so foolish as to crawl out on the limb of such a clear-statement of prophecy.

It is disconfirmed by events in 2012, then we will be in the peculiar situation of having had a time-wave which worked every moment in history until it failed totally.

Again, I can't imagine what that point of communication would be.

One idea that's occurred to me, based on thinking about strategies of extraterrestrial contact is...maybe this thing that we are calling the time-wave is a piece of universal data, as universally known as lets say the atomic weight of hydrogen. Maybe there's somebody out there who figures, if they're intelligent they will recognize what this is, because all forms of intelligent life knows it.

And if in fact we're in a slightly indeterminate zone, we're almost intelligent enough to understand it, and almost so stupid that it goes right by us, so we're struggling to say, you know, is this a message? Is this meme? or is it a self generated hallucination?

I don't know, I offer it as part of this weekend on imagination because this is my best trick in the imagination.

My little theory of evolution is no more than a conversational rap, a "how would it be if..."

This is considerably different because it rests on a mathematical foundation, and don't forget it does come genuinely from the I-Ching.

So we have this peculiar, three-pronged situation.

We have a pattern in the King Wen sequence, taken by an Irishman, and contorted into a mathematical wave which gives a prediction for the apotheosis of the world, which matches the assumptions of a vanished Mezo-American civilization.

Huh?

Why?

One possibility that has occurred to me, and I've thought about this obviously for decades because I think everything you can think about this has passed into view at least once:

One possibility that would wrap things up very nicely is that if the great day came and I dropped dead. Then there would be this curious thing that for the rest of time, if anybody bothered to remember it, people would say "Do you ever hear the story of 'The Terence McKenna thing?' how there was this guy in the late 20th century that produces this mathematical theory about the end of the world and preached it on street corners and market place for over 55 years and got a whole bunch of people excited and when the day came he dropped dead?"

It would be no weirder than some of the other stuff, you know the instances of spontaneous combustion and so forth and so on.

Yes, it doesn't escape me that this date, December 21st, 2012 occurs exactly 1 month after my 65th birthday, and I can't tell whether this is the most dramatic retirement announcement, you know a guy who made a career out of announcing his retirement and was able to run that con for 55 years, I don't know...

Q: [???

Where does it end? Well, this question, when I calculate my own personal wave, first of all I do entertain the idea that we may each have our own time-wave, sort of following the model of astrology. But I'm

aware, and I'm sure those of you who are professional astrologers are also aware that the natal horoscope is essentially a commercial-con.

In other words, astrology, the royal art of astrology was invented to guide the destiny of peoples and kings, pharaohs, and courts. But in the late Roman period, the worlds first yuppies came into being, or one of the worlds first instances of yuppies, and they thought "Well the emperor has his horoscope cast, am I less than the emperor?" I too should have my horoscope cast, and enterprising Hellenistic astronomers were only too please to oblige.

Otto Noigebaur published a wonderful book about the natal horoscopes of the rich Athenian and Roman citizens. To some degree I think it is a slight distortion of astrology for astrological purposes. Nevertheless, in terms of the time-wave a reasonable question would be

"If this is true, then how can I have a bad day when you're having a good day?"

In other words, if novelty ebbs and flows according to this schedule, shouldn't we all be having good days and bad days together? And obviously we don't. So what then must be happening is that we are on different places in the wave-system.

Then if that's true then in a sense, this huge wave could be thought of as the summation of all the little waves which comprise it. It's perfectly obvious, lets say this were a huge scale of time, several thousand years. Then this might be a period of time as long as an entire lifetime, but not everybody alive in the world at that time would experience their life as an uninterrupted plunge into novelty.

No, a large percentage of people might. There is this phenomenon of the Zeitgeist, and to the degree that we participate in our time, our life is in concert with the larger wave. This wave has durations of cycles in it, and one of the cycles, the cycle we're living in now stretches from 1945 to 2012. It actually stretches from the Hiroshima bomb-blast to the winter solstice of 2012.

I was born 18 months after that event. If I have a person time-wave it will end 18 months after the end of this wave. How can that be when this wave seems to dictate the end of all lesser waves?

Another mystery to be unraveled by traversing the territory.

Q: [???

I don't know what the time-wave is portraying. In other words, novelty, how is it transmitted, is it detectable, can we build a meter other than this time-wave?

Can we build a parallel technology which would confirm the existence of this thing, what can you do with novelty? The electromagnetic field, it turns out you can transmit information. Light-city smelt metal if you

know how to do the trick.

What you could do with this, I'm not sure. You see if the last cycle from 1945 to 2012 is real, then in a sense all larger cycles are compacted into it. In a sense, from 1945 to 2012, we're re-living the entire history of the world.

If that's true, then we have reached roughly 1000 A.D.

That means that between now and 2012, we must traverse a...I don't even have the words for it. A domain of cultural domain equivalent to the domain we traversed between 1000 A.D and the present, slightly more than 1000 years of resonances have to be compacted into the next 16 years.

Consequently there's this feeling of things moving faster, and faster. In a universe which was actually built on this kind of architecture, imagine this, a universe that actually had this kind of closure, where each time-cycle was 1/64th the size of the one that preceded it.

Before a universe of that structure reached the domain of planks constant, 6.55×10^{-25}

It would undergo HALF of its unfolding into existence in the last hour and 35 minutes before the crunch.

In other words, if this is the kind of universe that we're living in, half of the unfoldment into novelty will occur in the last day of the existence, that's how huge these rates of acceleration are.

So when people ask the question "What will happen in 2012?" They're asking you to see around the corner 9 times. It can't be done.

Language fails, apparently, as far as I can tell what will happen as novelty asymptotically increases in the final months, hours, minutes, milliseconds is boundaries will dissolve. All boundaries, they're already dissolving, we see the nation state dissolving, but wait till the atomic field dissolves...

Everything is apparently crunching together in some kind of meltdown, it's the equivalent of a black hole, but it's not a gravitational collapse.

It's a novelty-collapse. We are collapsing into a black hole of novelty, I've tried to imagine "How could this happen? What could happen without God's direct intervention, and fleets of extraterrestrial starships appearing over every city on the planet?"

In other words, is there anything that we could self-generate that would fulfill this kind of a scenario? It turns out that I found at least one answer which is "time-travel"

If in fact what happens in 2012 is that we begin the conquest of this previously unscratched dimension called time, then it is perfectly reasonable that a linear depiction of the ebb and flow of novelty would stop

at a certain point because once time becomes non-linear, you can't portray it on a Cartesian graph anymore.

You need a higher-dimensional matrix, it starts coming at you out of the screen, the novelty over-flows the dimensional container you've built for it.

Interestingly when I had this idea 15 years ago there was no idea in greater contempt in the scientific journals. I mean "time-travel" ha-ha-ha, the grandfather paradox this and that and everything.

Now it's a perfectly respectable thing to discuss, there are schemes for time-travel on the books that would work. It would require some God-like technologies, in other words you would have to be able to spin a cylinder the size of Jupiter 9/10th the speed of light, but if you can spin such a cylinder at such a speed and travel along its horizontal axis, you will in-fact be moved backwards through time.

Everybody agrees on this, they just say you can't do it. Well hell, where have we heard that before?

We can't do it, but if you think of it you can do it, and if there's a crude, brute force way to do it, then there's a subtle, tricky, easy way to do it that comes along a little later. I mean the vacuum tube was not the end of that line of development, and what we're talking about here is a vacuum tube version of a time machine.

A time machine may not be what we think it is, the future is not like the past except that it hasn't happened.

If you were to suddenly find yourself in the future, it's a vector storm of unrealized possibilities.

You've never seen an unrealized possibility, all you've ever seen are realized possibilities and you don't know what an unrealized possibility would look like. There are a lot more of them than there are realized possibilities and they fill the space called "the future"

If you suddenly found yourself in the future you wouldn't even recognize it as that, you'd just think you've gone mad, I think.

So, I don't know, I should wrap this up. The basic notion is, this is what I learned from psychedelics, this is my show-and-tell.

It's an indulgence of my ego to do this because most of what I tell you, you could learn somewhere else. I just have read the books and can regurgitate this stuff and point you towards the plants, lead you through

the philosophical issues, talk about the medical stuff. It's not particularly flashy, it's just a mental short-cut for you.

This is original, and nobody has every tried to wrest it from my grasp, that's how original it is. Nobody wants the hideous responsibility of defending this particular piece of intellectual baggage.

Why I like it is I believe that the idea which is the most fun, is probably closest to the truth.

I find this idea to be absolutely delightful. It also has a kind of weird completedness about it. Although nobody else has ever made any contribution to this theory but me, in other words I thought it up, top to bottom, start to finish. It doesn't feel to me like a human being could do that, it feels to me that this is the product of an entire civilization.

It must have taken hundreds of years, many workers spread out in space and time.

I can tell it, and I was told it, that's how I know it, but no single individual and certainly not myself could have dreamed this up from scratch.

Q: [???

You mean before I had the whole thing? From 1971 to 1975. It was interesting, and this I can not ever share with anybody else, you'll just have to believe me, but the way it was revealed was very odd because it never let me see where I was going.

I couldn't figure out what I was doing. It said "Go buy graph paper, go get your I-Ching, look at the King Wen sequence. Graph the first order of difference."

I would try and guess, what are we doing? Are we trying to discover an ancient Chinese calendar? Are we...why are we doing it? It said "No, no, don't worry about that, next step"

It always hid from me where I was headed, it still hides from me where I'm headed.

The software has been written, the controversy rages on the internet, I even now have critics...that's good.

That shows that it is moving out of the realm of private Idaho into the realm of debatable cultural artifact.

I think that if it's true or if it has a part of the truth, we will know before 2012.

In other words, a lot of people observed...not a lot but a few hundred maniacs observed this prediction about 1996 and then watched the ensuing debate, my critics, my defense, their response, so forth and so on. So it's being watched.

And the meme spreads, and apparently we'll be helped by things like where we are in relation to the calendar.

Simply because we're approaching a millennial term, the producers of nit-wit TV shows want to talk to me, they say "I understand you have a way of predicting the future given to you by UFO's I heard, we want to put you on the air!"

Well you know...I'm not sure about the wisdom of all this, but I figure let the meme fight for it's life in the jungle competing models of reality.

When I pull back from the specificity and the fact that I invented it, that's my biggest problem, if I hadn't invented this, if I had just heard that somebody invented it, this is what it was, I think I would find it very interesting.

But since I know the inventor very well, I'm very prone to doubt the thing. This is not a guy you would want to put a lot of pressure on (laughter)

So....

I don't know. I'm puzzled, and I offer it as an unsolved puzzle, I preached here earlier that you mustn't seek closure. So I don't with this. If it's a communication, it's a very curious communication.

If it's non-communication, it's even more curious.

If it's a delusion, why is it so mathematically formal?

If I'm pathological, why aren't there a tendent sequela? Why just this very defined thing?

The whole thing smacks of the impossible, it's even pushed me towards the idea maybe that this is not actually a reality. We're trapped, or I'm trapped, I don't know if you're trapped, but we're in some kind of piece of fiction.

It's like a Phillip K Dick deal, we're in some kind of simulacrum and the clue to the fact that we're in a simulacrum is this impossible idea.

So the point of the idea is not to believe it, but to use it as a wedge to fight our way out of this labyrinth and fight our way back to whatever reality we were in before we fell into this situation. Something like that.

Anyways I have the feeling like I'm blathering and spinning my wheels.

Is there any final question that brings this all to a...

Q: [???

Yeah that is an interesting question, like people say "Well now is this some kind of permission for irresponsibility. Are you saying that the world is going to transform itself no matter what happens?"

I'm enough of an old political activist to sense the anguish behind that question because I don't want to say "Yes, don't worry about the Palestinians, don't worry about the Bangladeshies, it's a done deal, it's all fine, you can take your eye off the ball and your foot off the pedal"

That seems crazy to me to give advice like that, and yet this thing seems to be saying "It is a done deal, it's going to be fine, it's going to arrive on schedule, under budget, you don't have to reach it, you don't have to worry about it"

So then apparently where it lies is that, it is a done deal, but how the deal is done is not a done deal.

That there will be a deal is sealed, that is written into the laws of physics if this is correct. No escape from the transcendence, but how we present ourselves to it is our contribution.

It does not say what will happen, it simply says where the novelty will cluster and apparently it is still open to...what happens is still a matter of human decision and the unfolding of causal necessity.

So in a sense, it's saying there is a safety net under you, but you still should make an effort not to fall.

Q: [???

I hear what you're saying, yes a strange thing about the Mayan calendar is it begins in 3135 B.C and it ends in 2012, the Mayan civilization began, as far as anybody can tell, around 300 B.C and was a done deal by 790 A.D.

So here was a culture that lived by a calendar that seemed to have no relationship to it's own cultural origins or ends. That's odd.

That's not how people do a calendar.

The other weird thing about the Mayan calendar is it begins on a slow Thursday in August.

In other words, it doesn't begin on a solstice, it doesn't begin at an equinox. It doesn't begin with a special astrological configuration in the sky.

It begins on nothing-burger-day in 3135 B.C.

(brief comment)

Well but it runs forward to a winter solstice and ends precisely on a winter solstice. Who ever heard of a calendar that was formed from calculating backwards from a point thousands of years in the future? What kind of squirrelly culture would do that?

And the answer is: we don't know.

But yes this is a great puzzle that the Mayans seem weirdly disconnected from their own calendar.

The reason the Maya are so fascinating is because they had astronomy, they had politics, poetry, architecture, and they don't owe anything to Greece, or Egypt, or Sumeria, or Babylon, or Urr, or Caldea. They thought it up themselves, they did it themselves, they met problem after problem after problem and solves them in astonishingly unique ways.

You know it's just a matter of cultural accident when Cortez sailed into the bay of Campache, the difference between medieval Spanish civilization and the civilization of the Aztecs in terms of technology level and understanding, they were practically on a par.

I mean the Spanish had no antibiotics, no advanced weaponry, no advanced communication, they had better ships, but had the voyage not been done that way, 150 years the Aztecs might have landed on the coast of Spain and claimed it for a Montezuma's successor, that's how nearly in parallel they were.

But of course the bifurcation was tremendous, one civilization wiped out and the other through the looting

of the former, finances its way into modern science, and 500 years later we have atom bombs, and antibiotics, and DNA sequencing.

That's it for this evening, thank you for your attention and your indulgence, I'm very grateful to you. I'll leave this here, if any of you want to play with it I'm sure there are people who can instruct you if you get caught in a bind. Thank you.

(Next session meeting, the next morning)

I guess you know there was a time change last night because you're here, but there may be some people who are sleeping blissfully on, so that's fine too.

I want to say just a couple of housekeeping details that I've overlooked, and overlooked, and now I should mention. I'll tell you a URL if you're interested in visiting the website, because there's a lot of exhibits stuff there and even many buttons to more interesting places. The URL is the usual <http://www.levity.com/eschaton>

I've got 13 airflights scheduled in this tour and I've packed a very small bag so I didn't have to submit it to baggage so I didn't bring my usual raft of propaganda.

My partner, Jill Wagner runs a plant business in Hawaii, and if you're looking for salvia divinorum, or acacia simplex, or potrea viridus, or any of these exotic psychoactive plants, her company is called Hoti.

It's a great thing for a plant or animal to make friends with human beings because it's probably a free ride to the stars if you stick with it long enough.

Q: [???

No peyote is a scheduled substance, just a word about the legal system. Some plants and some substances are scheduled, the only two scheduled plants are peyote and cannabis.

This a travesty of the legal system, but these sacred plants should be lumped in the money engines of world criminal syndicalism like cocaine and heroin.

But who said it was a sane or just world?

All the plants that Jill sells are legal, one plant I do want to mention to you or just a piece of factual information that I'm keen to convey to people is this area of psychedelic botany there has been an amazing breakthrough in the past couple of years and this is: the discovery an entirely new psychedelic in an entirely new chemical family, in an entirely new genus of plants and this is salvia divinorum.

Salvia divinorum is legal, legal to possess, to buy, to advocate, to sell, to synthesize, to do therapy with, and to do anything else you want to do with it.

Be forewarned that the pure substance which is being called Alpha Salvanorine, is active under 1 milligram. If you're a chemist or a pharmacologist, this is astonishing, besides LSD we don't know of any psychoactive substance so powerful, and of course LSD is made in the laboratory.

Alpha salvanorine you can wash out of this Mexican plant with a simple, pot alcoholic extraction.

800 micrograms is a more than you can handle dose. 800 micrograms looks like a very small grain of salt.

So I'm concerned that people stick with the plant at this stage because some idiot is going to honk up 10 times, 20 times, 50 times too much and then present the community with an embarrassing corpse and a bunch of hysterical people saying a new drug scourge has been released to plague suffering humanity.

It's an excellent opportunity for us to prove we're as smart as we've always said we were.

If we behave with integrity and impeccability around this substance, I think the legal system at this point is very exhausted with scheduling drugs, and busting up families and dragging people away to prison.

We just assume not schedule this stuff and make a huge bru-ha-ha about it. So what I'm urging people to do is obtain the plant, and grow the plant, I approach it by chewing.

The leaves. My son and his friends do it in bongs and they swear that no one has ever escaped who submitted themselves to their regiment.

Some people have tried it here at Essalen and it's common for people to say "Well here was all this hype about this fantastic thing and I tried it and nothing happened"

Smoking it in a bong.

Apparently there's a pretty dramatic threshold, in other words, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing... plenty. (laughter)

The way I do it is I interject Western rationalism into the process. An unheard of level of technical sophistication, I weigh out 35 grams of leaf, I remove the mid-vein with my fingernail to lower the volume of the pile of material. I roll it into a quid, I put it in my cheek, I lay down in silent darkness where I can see a digital clock. At minute 16 I spit it out into a Kleenex, I stay where I am, and around minute 18 to 22 it breaks loose.

It's strong enough doing it that way, that the question arises around minute 25:

How strong is this stuff?

Then after about 20 minutes of extremely bizarre, inorganic, quasi-mechanical, highly colored hallucinations, it just leaves you.

I stay in bed and sleep, and when I get up the next morning I feel fine. It's a fascinating plant, almost everything about this plant is peculiar.

Just to run over it quickly, the plant *salvia divinorum* is known only from the Sierra Mazateca of central Mexico.

Though only people known to use it are Seltzal and Satzil speaking Indian groups.

When you ask these Indians "What do you call this plant?" they say we call it "Hojas de la pastora"

Leaves of the Shepperdess.

They use the language of the conquerors to name this plant. They have no name for it in their own language.

To an anthropologist that invariably means that they must have encountered this plant very recently, this is not an old part of their cultural tool kit.

The mysterious thing is that it's not known from anywhere else, so if it's not known from anywhere else and they just contacted it, where did it come from?

People are scratching their heads about this and some pretty exotic theories are being booting around.

One group wants to say "It must come from the Basque country of Spain, some Basque sailor, former shaman must have carried this with him to the New World and given it to these Indians"

Well the problem is it can't be found in Spain. It can't be found anywhere. It's a very easily grown plant, it's related to colias, which you probably all know as an ornamental plant. You can grow it on a windowsill, you

can grow lots of it in your back yard in Santa Cruz, that kind of climate.

It's a kind of unclaimed place in the psychedelic space, the people who use it in Mexico, it's not their preferred or first hallucinogen. They prefer mushrooms but they take this when the mushrooms are unavailable.

So it's a kind of unclaimed, extraordinary powerful, short-acting, it can be smoked as well as chewed.

I invite your inspection of it.

If you're a professional pharmacologist, you could hang your reputation on this thing. Nobody knows the pharmacognacy, the pharmacodynamics, the nature of the receptor sites.

It's just brand new space, and it shows that late in the psychedelic game there are still enormous surprises. One last point and I'll stop, the chemical family to which this belongs are the diturpines, a chemical family unknown to contain psychoactive drugs of any sort.

This is not an alkaloid, not an opiate, not an amphetamine.

It's a completely different animal, so I just pass that on out of interest on keeping you up to speed.

Q: [???

No we don't do anything with mushrooms, what can be mailed through the mail with relation to mushrooms are spores because spores contain no psilocybin, they contain of course the genetic message for production of unlimited amounts of psilocybin, but no psilocybin.

So until gene-sequences for drugs are made illegal, it's freely saleable and mailable. With one exception, the state of California. A few years ago some crypto-fascist teddy boy, a guy named Ken Maddy wanted to be governor of California and he was locked in a Republican primary fight with a bigger jerk than he was and so he said to his staff "I need some drug legislation with my name on it, what can you come up with?" and they said "I don't know, everything is illegal already. And then they found the spore thing and rammed through the California assembly making a bill making the sale of spores in California illegal.

So you citizens in California have a unique distinction of living in the only state in the union to have made psilocybin spores illegal.

That's that, ok that's enough of that kind of practical stuff, I mention it because we're turning final as old bush-pilots say.

That's when you're committed to landing, you're low and the runway is right ahead of you. So this is your last crack at me, at least on this weekend.

Q: [???

Yeah a light, not hot temperature drying, and it's very stable. This is an interesting thing, you know when I got into psychedelics I was about 14 or 15 years old, even then in the literature, salvia divinorum was carried as a "suspect hallucinogen", but the way people worked back then was they had a chemical test called the "Dragondorf test" where you squeeze some plant juice into a bottle and if its an alkaloid it will turn purple. Salvia divinorum/Alpha salvanorine is not an alkaloid, so it escaped this test, the other thing was people said "There may be something psychoactive there, but it's so unstable that within hours of picking the plant it completely degrades and disappears"

It turns out none of this is true, alpha salvanorine is extremely stable, you can dry the plant, you can smoke the plant, that's the ultimate test of the stability of a drug. If it can go through the pyrolyzation process it's extremely stable. It's almost, I mean this is a little woo-woo, but it's almost as though we didn't recognize this thing until we needed it and now suddenly it's here.

The way drugs are made illegal, normally, is you simply show that they are structurally related to an already illegal compound. This is called the Cogener's Law.

...Reason to schedule it. In order to do that human research will have to be done, somebody will have to give it to human beings under clinical conditions. Well maybe in time all this will happen, but knowing how the government works it will be 3 to 5 years before they ever get off the dime.

In the mean time, this is a wonderful opportunity if you have been holding back out of fear of the legal system, here's a completely fire free zone you can operate in, do research in, therapy in, so forth and so on. It is a very interesting loop-hole.

Q: [???

First of all let me say I don't know, but here's what I think. The model I've always carried in my head is of a target, like a bulls eye.

At the center of the bulls-eye is the DMT high dose experience.

Even though I've spent my whole career raving about how strange it is, I always hit low.

It is beyond description, language fails, your language, my language, everybody's language. As you move out from that, maybe the next circle out is a high dose ayahuasca, followed by high dose psilocybin, or maybe those two are reversed.

Then further out, LSD, and then further out, things like 2-CB, and yet further out things like ecstasy and what's leaving the picture are, first of all, intense 3-dimensional hallucinations, and then intense 2-dimensional hallucinations, and the more exotic transformations of the mental state. I have a feeling that

we're always aiming for this center of the mandala.

Somebody else might have a different model of consciousness, Rolland Fischer had a torroidal model and various states of arousal, but to my mind if you raise the dose of any psychedelic it becomes more and more like DMT.

You have to take over 500 micrograms of LSD for it to be like DMT, but few people these days do that much acid because it brings a lot of physical stuff with it.

Ayahuasca, at moderate doses is the classical hallucinogen of Amazonian shamanism that you've all read about.

But double that dose and it becomes indistinguishable from DMT, same with psilocybin.

If a 5 gram trip is like a classic psilocybin trip, then an 8 gram trip is like a DMT trip.

Now some people are saying of alpha salvanorin that it's much stronger than DMT, it's much more frightening and bizarre.

Just to save my sanity I choose not to believe that, because I've been saying for years that if there's something stronger than that then I don't want to know about it.

Because that definitely pushed me as far as I wanted to go.

My son I think has more experience with all of this than anybody else I know and I said to him "Where would you put it?" and he said "It's *almost* as strong as DMT"

It's sort of like that, but over this set of values and comparisons I just made you have to overlay the fact that like your blue eyes, your height, your body weight, your intelligence and everything else about you that makes you unique, your inherited...allotment of drug synapses is unique.

This is why some people are sensitive to drugs, some people insensitive, some people extremely sensitive and one of the things about exploring consciousness with substances is

You have to sort of learn what works for you.

You may have gotten the idea from hanging out with the wrong people that the way you explore drugs is by doing as many as possible and in as many combinations as possible.

I couldn't do that, I have never done that and I can't do that. My body just can't take it, if I want a more intense drug experience, I take more of one drug.

Part of exploring this area is to learn what works for you. For example, the most dramatic and easy to understand example I can come up with is cannabis, most people, after a preliminary brush with cannabis which may last years tend to decide that it somehow interferes or that they have memory problems or feelings of social paranoia and abandon it.

Some small percentage of people experience no short term memory loss and can't live without it. I speak from first hand knowledge of this condition.

Learning what works for you is very important and then pushing that, push that to it's limit.

What fascinated me, I'll just unload my personal opinion on you, are the tryptamine hallucinogens.

I always found LSD too what I call "abrasively psychoanalytical"

I don't want to endlessly reflect on my childhood upbringing and whether I'm a good or a bad person, I'll do a little bit of that but I think I got that under control. I'm not interested in my self in quite the way that some people are interested in themselves.

What I'm interested in, and what's always been the holy grail for me, are visual hallucinations.

And people have said "You're a nut on this subject"

But the reason I'm so into visual hallucinations is because when I'm seeing something that I could not previously have even imagined then I am completely convinced that I am in the presence of an other.

Because I couldn't think that up, and yet I'm looking at it.

Low doses of psychedelics or moderate doses of psychedelics transform the quality of thought, you think faster, think deeper, think odder, think broader.

But you need more for that to burst through into hallucination. That always has fascinated me, I guess it's

just in my personality. I was thinking some months ago about the books that have really influenced me in my life, and you know we try to make a respectable list that makes us seem profound.

You know, Moby Dick, Finnegans Wake, Whitehead, yeah ok that's the public list.

What are the *real* books? Well "Bartholomew Cubbins" and the 500 Hats, that was a biggie, a really important book for me was a little book that Aldous Huxley wrote almost as a throw away, I'm sure he barely gave it a thought. It's a book called "The Art of Seeing"

Basically the message of this book can be given in one sentence: Pay attention to what your eyes are telling you.

The eyes are it, and it's the visual thing that is so thrilling, so sexy, so infinitely deep.

In that book Huxley tells you how to look at a painting. Basically, clear your mind, open your eyes, stand still, that's very important when viewing paintings, stand still and let it come in.

Then he gave advice, and this is advice which I've seen acted out in both of my children, incredibly simple advice in the world of child-rearing and incredibly important.

And the advice was: Draw from nature, literally with a pencil. Draw things. Because drawing things forces you to look at them, and don't draw from pictures.

If you want to draw a bowl of fruit, get a bowl of fruit.

And then what you look at is you say "Oh I see, when an object is red, it's shadows are not black, it's shadows are deep-pink, and when an object has this curvature, it spreads light around itself like this"

And as you look, this is a very impersonal process. You're not thinking about your childhood traumas or any of that stuff, you're really getting into the world and this is how the world can communicate back to you.

The world is something to look at, and that attitude in the presence of psychedelics will throw open a cornucopia of riches.

Did you want to say something?

Q: [???

Cannabis is in a different category, cannabis with air, with light, with being awake, with being asleep. There was a period in my life when I used to awaken at 3 AM in order to smoke because I couldn't go from 11:30 to 6 without it.

Granted I was in Asia and the rules were different. I don't know what life is like without cannabis, I hear there is such a thing.

No what I mean is I know people who say "Well we had a really far out time Saturday night, we did 120 ml ketamine and followed it with ecstasy a half our later and then we broke out the nitrous and somebody had a little 5-MeO with them" and I say "How was it?"

And they say "far out!" and I don't doubt it for a minute.

I don't want to go any place that I can't find my way back to, because I might want to show somebody and it's sort of like the multi-body problem in mathematics. You can calculate every body in a system if there are only two bodies, but you only have to add a third before it becomes beyond calculation.

Drug synergies are an absolutely unexplored area. You can not go to the medical literature and find any papers on what happens when you combine LSD with 2-CB.

There isn't such a paper on the planet. If you're going to do that, just know that nobody has ever been there before, and I don't mean intellectually I mean physiologically.

I don't know very much about the death of this writer who calls himself D.M. Turner.

He did die, and his book, his best known book is a book that I felt was completely irresponsible because it advocated these multiple synergistic drug doses, stuff like I just said, 2-CB plus ketamine plus nitrous plus e plus this plus that.

That's not how I would do it. I would say single pure substances and if you're satisfied with the experience then as Dr. Leary used to say "When in doubt, double the dose"

But he didn't say "When in doubt, empty the medicine cabinet"

Just double the dose, thank you.

Tim was a pretty reckless and wild act kind of guy, and if he took that position, I don't think we have to be ashamed to line-up behind that.

Q: [???

Ketamine. It has a lot of enthusiasts, the most effective way to do it is by injection.

Automatically this raises flags of alarms for me, I just somewhere picked up the idea that banging things is a bad idea.

But let's move past that, because it can be snorted. Ketamine is what is called a "disassociative anesthetic" it was for veterinary anesthesia like if you had a race-horse you needed to wrap its tendon or work on it in some way, this is the drug of choice.

I can not deny that the experiences I had and I only had 5, were very, very interesting.

I always did it in the presence of a physician and I always did quite, as I understand it, quite high doses. I did around 140 ml.

One of the things about ketamine is it's active over a huge range. Some people that roll it into their lifestyle tend to do small doses, like 40, 50, 60.

When used as an anesthetic in pediatric surgery and stuff like that, 600 ml IV push. That would be like being hit by a freight train moving at 10 times the speed of sound, you would never know what hit you.

For me, I'm just speaking subjectively, it was a sort of empty space. It was a light-filled space, and the metaphor that came to me was "it's like a new skyscraper and they don't have any tenants"

So there are these endless hallways that are lit by fluorescent lights and water coolers every 300 feet, but there's nobody there. I talked to Rupert about this because one of the things we've kicked around over the years is the idea that drugs are like morphogenetic fields.

So for instance when you take psilocybin, it takes you, and in a sense you are participating in every psilocybin trip anybody ever had.

And because it was taken for thousands of years by Mezo-American shamans, it's been decorated by them

in a sense. It has their mark on it.

So the morphogenetic field is extremely stable nothing you can do in there, you may be able to carve your initials on a picnic table or something, but you're not going to be able to make major changes in that landscape.

Suppose you're a drug chemist and suppose you read one of Sasha's papers where he tosses out the thought that one of the O-methylation in the 4 position of the tri-methoxy isomer of the this or that might be hallucinogenic and you make it.

Nobody has ever taken this drug, it's a synthetic drug and you take it and now you're going to take it.

In a sense, if you come down saying 'This was an incredibly beautiful visionary experience' the next person is very likely to have a beautiful visionary experience.

If you come down saying 'it was nightmarish and I felt bugs crawling under my skin' and all this, what's happening is the morphogenetic field is crystallizing around this drug.

The feeling I had with ketamine was 'it's really pretty undefined territory'

The one thing I learned from ketamine, and I actually have to give it credit for this is I got so loaded on that stuff that I lost the concept "loaded" and that's never happened to me before.

I couldn't understand what was happening because I couldn't remember what being high is.

So here I am and I sort of come into awareness and I say "What is this?" and the answer is..."who knows" and the next question is

"Who's asking?" and the answer is "Who knows"

And I just keep looking at it for a while, and suddenly out of left field this "Aha" experience..."I must be stoned!" and then it's like everything crystallizes,

"That's it! I'm a human being, I took a drug, I'm lying on the floor, this is a trip"

And then you say "Oh this is a trip, gotcha, now I know what's happening we're having a trip, ok lets have the trip"

But until I got that sorted it, it was like the biggest "Huh?"

So I would not...I don't prefer it because part of my ethic I guess you would say, is that you should be able to communicate your experience. It's almost like an obligation, its like if you go fishing on our lake, you should give some of the fish to the village. If you go fishing and catch a lot of fish and eat them out in the boat and come back with nothing but bones for the village, then this is kind of bad behavior.

I stay clear of ketamine, I have a bias, it used to be stronger against synthetic substances.

But again, in fairness I have to say these drugs, people have different kinds of experiences.

I've said to people on ketamine "You don't really hallucinate in the way that I want to hallucinate" and people say "No I had fantastic, it was beyond DMT"

So again the individual thing.

Then what's the final thing?

Then just physical things about ketamine. I don't like a drug so strong that the house could burn down around you and you would never bat an eye.

And that could certainly happen on ketamine, you had not a clue. They could remove your head and you would not bat an eye.

The other I noticed about ketamine is it really sticks to your ribs, in other words the experience lasts an hour but the next day you're driving on the freeway and comes a wave where you say "Oh my god, what is this?"

And I think it sequesters in the fatty tissue or something and that makes it a little dicey. I hope I didn't rain on anybody's parade here.

The people that are into it are passionately into it, I accused one guy one time of being a mono-pharmafile (laughter)

I said "My god, you won't take a drink, you won't have a hit, but this stuff...5 times a day"

Q: [???

Well I'm as interested as you are, I don't have any special information. I did talk earlier this weekend about this model of the hyperdimensional object intruding into 3-dimensional space-time and through the miracle of metabolism wrapping matter around itself for a few years.

Then when the hyperdimensional form retracts out of this lower-dimensional matrix, the matter that is organized simply falls apart. I like that model, my DMT trips, as I think I mentioned this too, I've given it to some Tibetan guys and they said "You can't go further than that and return"

What he actually said was "It's the lesser lights" The lesser lights appear at the beginning of the bardo.

The thing about DMT and we didn't talk about it much this weekend, is that it's an inhabited space.

Huge percentage of the people that take it encounter entities of some sort in there. Not entities like "Wombats and foxes"

But entities with intelligence of some sort, with language of some sort.

Well remember I talked about the principle of parsimony, of preferring the simplest explanation first.

Well when you have a drug which conveys you into an inhabited space, even the simplest explanation is going to be pretty baroque.

Some people including myself wanted to leap to the conclusion that "Well these must be the aliens, we've finally found their hive, it isn't under the Atlantic trench, it isn't inside mount Everest. They're hiding inside this organic molecule"

But I think in service of the principle of parsimony, preferring the simplest explanation, these things must be human souls.

It's easier for me to believe in the human soul than it is to believe in a colony of extraterrestrials camped inside an alkaloid.

But it's not that easy for me to believe in human souls. But still, the feelings you have from these things is one of immense affection for humanity.

That wouldn't come from a diplomatic mission from Zenebel ganubi, this intense love.

I dare to hope, having deconditioned myself from my Catholic childhood, and having gone through existentialism and all that.

Now I dare to hope that maybe there is some kind of existence beyond the grave.

One of the funny feelings, there are a number of I guess you would call it “thematic layers” in the DMT experience, but one of the thematic layers is “as weird as this place is that you burst into, if somebody very strange worked very to produce a place where they thought would be reassuring to a human being”

And the analogy, it’s stronger than an analogy, the feeling that comes through is like “this is a maternity ward”

It’s as though you’re being born and these marvelous self-transforming Faberge crystalline 4-d toys that they’re handing out in this space may be to them nothing more than the equivalent of those extruded plastic geometric shapes that we hang on a string over a bassinet.

If you ask a child psychologist “Why do we do this?” they say “It coordinates the child ability to see spatial...so forth and so on”

It’s very like that, you have been born into an alien world, and the only thing you can do is gape, basically gape in utter amazement. Everyone is surrounding you and they’re saying “Welcome, it’s ok, be happy”

Then if it is like a maternity ward then one can know as much about whatever universe that is as one could deduce about this universe from looking at the four walls of a maternity ward in a small hospital in say Selena.

In other words, if you were to actually die rather than smoke DMT then, if we follow this model, then you would be in that place but there would be no going back to this world after 5 minutes and instead there would be the next 5 minutes in that place, followed by the next 5 minutes.

I can tell within hours you would be beyond the reach of anything you have ever called humanness or have thought of.

In other words this isn’t a world where one comes back and whispers in the ears of people and bangs doors in the middle of the night.

It appears like, once out of the body, this incredibly infolded and compacted field called “the soul” begins to unfold into it’s death rite. And quickly one would become incomprehensible into this world, and all that is retained is the affection for us in our limited situation.

Of course thinking along these lines, I've looked at the literature of near-death experience.

What those people are describing is something far more mundane than a DMT trip. Either they are dumbing down the DMT and suppressing the oddness of it or they are having a quite different experience.

Because what's being said in the near-death thing, generally, is a tunnel, and then loving relatives reassuring and familiar peoples.

The DMT thing is a tunnel, but it isn't loving relatives waiting at the end, it's a welcoming committee of professional midwives.

And they help you through. So I would suggest with a great heat, that if we want to study the near death and after-death experience is that you come far closer to dying, whatever that means, on DMT than you do in drownings and things like that.

Q: [???

Yes he said it was the lesser light, he said you can't go further than that. This was not one of these Llama's with a can of Budweiser welded to his good right hand, this was the real mccooy.

Q: [???

Well any situation can be looked at from a point of view that reveals the whole fractal. In other words what its saying is experience is holographic on one level, but linearly sequential on another level.

In a way this is a continuation of the discussion of death. Because if we leave off the historical modeling and turn towards the modeling of an individual life with the time wave, then again there is a message of hope.

It says the most novel and amazing thing is the last thing that will ever happen to you.

I would like to believe that, I would like to believe that we gather our experience, we become wiser, we meet people, life becomes more novel, we have children, they have children, we have success, we have failure.

If you're living right, you're life should get more and more baroque, beautiful, complicated, mysterious, and then you die...and then it really gets interesting.

That's what this all seems to want us to believe, lets put it that way. Then people say, "If the world is fractal, is it not true that the evolution of an individual could be extrapolated to be the evolution of the whole system?"

And that leads to the mildly unsettling possibility that what this great transition we're moving towards is, is not T1 for everybody. But D1 for everybody, in other words: death.

Death is the thing that really stirs us. We don't know what it is, we don't know whether we're supposed to flee from it or race toward it.

People say then "is it possible..." to just take the date 2012 as a marker, "Is it possible that everyone would die?"

I've looked a lot at asteroid impactors because the people who study these things know that this is not an act of God or a miracle, that this happens. It has happened and it will happen, and it happens on different scales, from things like meteor craters in Arizona 50,000 years ago. Everything within 800 miles of that impact died instantly. 50,000 years ago.

But 65 million years ago an object impacted the size of Manhattan in the gulf of Campache and nothing on this planet larger than a chicken walked away from that.

Now if you talk about ecological disaster there's never been one like that in the history of the planet. Thousands, tens of thousands of species died, entire orders of animals were wiped out, the continents were re-arranged.

But guess what, the flowering plants of which we are so dear-fond, and ourselves of which we are even more fond would never have had a chance to insinuate themselves into the evolutionary life of the planet had there not been that clearing out of the reptilian climax.

So then you look at this and say "Well was this the greatest mass-extinction in history? Or was this the greatest evolutionary leap forward for biology in the history of the planet?"

And the answer is: it was both.

Out of enormous death comes and enormous surge in the domain of organic novelty.

I prefer to think that it is not a planetary catastrophe or a mass dying. I'll tell you why and this is a place, now we're working from the notebooks, in other words this is not prepared for public consumption, this is something I meditate on in baths.

I can't help but notice that as novelty increases in time according to this model, that the spatial domain of its focus narrows.

So for instance, in the early phase of the time-wave, the stars are condensing and the galaxies are forming.

We could say that the entire universe is moving toward novelty, but once carbon chemistry appears the cycles of fusion in stars and production of heavy elements and things like this are stabilized. The domain of novelty becomes biology, and a billion and a half years biology evolves and adumbrates its forms and moves from the prokaryotes to the eukaryotes to the multi-cellular, the conquest of the land begins.

But then, with the emergence of language using and tool using higher primates, in a sense, novelty leaves the domain of organic life. And organic life becomes meta-stable and evolution and mutation happens, but where the action has moved to is in to the epigenetic domain entirely defined on this planet by human activity.

So the human beings are the carriers of novelty, and that has gone on until about, oh pick a number but basically 3,000 to 2,500 years ago.

And then the novelty seems to concentrate itself into southern Europe. The Greeks take some kind of step that no other people have ever taken.

Even today if you go around the world and visit tribal people and ask to see their art, they show you, if you ask to see depictions of human beings they show you symbolic depictions of human beings, that's what an African mask is, that's what a Sepic river carving is. These are symbols of human beings.

The Greek mind crossed an invisible boundary and somebody said "Lets take a block of marble or some clay, and lets not symbolize a human being, lets make a perfect topological simulacrum of a human being. A face that looks like a face, flesh that looks like flesh."

It was as though the Greek consciousness rose to the surface and left the unconscious behind, and the eyes were open, and no longer saw through symbolic filters, and instead "Nature, in and of itself, this is the foundation for science and art as we know it"

So the novelty then was largely in the hands, largely, I'm rushing here the exceptions are obvious, were in

the hands of what we call the Greco-Roman mind. And so it has been for thousands of years.

Well then, pick a number, 100 years or so ago, it further contracted the novelty, it further contracted itself into the high-tech industrial democracy.

And now it has further retracted, one of the problems we're having in our society, there's a bifurcation going on in society. Part of us are going with the new novel technologies that knit us together that make us dimensionless, telepathic creatures through the internet.

And some people are digging in their heels and saying "No, no, no, beyond newspapers I can't go"

So those people are being left behind, they are practicing old style culture in an equilibrium state.

So now it is isn't even all of the high-tech populations of the industrial democracies.

As we get closer to 2012, if this process proceeds, then the source of novelty will constrict even further. I guess it may eventually come down to one or two people, or a group of people and maybe those people will make a machine, and then the machine will be the source of the novelty and all of us will be put out to the Pasteur of equilibrium, and maintain the rest of the world as it was...

But the novelty would have focused some kind of incredibly intense point.

So looking at it from that model, it's hard to see how it could be an asteroid impact or something like that because that would affect all biology, all geology, it would completely violate this long-standing tendency of the novelty to concentrate itself.

Well now the Buddhists have an interesting perspective that may have something to do with this.

There are many schools of Buddhism and I don't want to get into that, but there are schools which hold the following doctrine: That if a single person could attain enlightenment, then all sentient beings in the cosmos would attain enlightenment instantly.

In other words, that only one person, or one being has to break through the boundary for the entire state system to collapse and re-arrange itself.

So I suspect, and I was on the edge of this last night, here's a model by which this could happen that keeps things as sane as you can keep them for this kind of discussion.

Remember I talked about...(what works?)

It's December 21st, 2012. And through the world-wide VRML hook-up of the internet, everybody with an IQ above 10 has gathered in the great collective space to witness the first attempt to send the human being through time.

At the world-studies institute at La Chorrera in the Amazon the president of so-and-so makes a speech, the lady time traveler makes a speech, he straps on her helmet, she steps into the machine. The fanfare for the common man is played, a button is pushed, and off she goes into the future.

What has always been put against the time travel scheme is what has been called the grandfather paradox. This is easy to understand, it goes like this: If time travel were possible I could travel back in time and kill my grandfather.

If I did that I wouldn't exist so I couldn't do it, therefore there's a closed loop of paradox, therefore time travel is impossible.

I put this to the mushroom, and it said "well, time travel is possible, but you can only travel as far back in time as the moment of the invention of the first time machine"

You can't travel further back in time than that because there were no time machines before that. So it's a kind of barrier.

So then I thought...here was my model of what would happen when the lady temponaut sails off into the future.

Lets forget about here and ask the question "What happens next in our world?"

My first guess was, what happens next is thousands and thousands of time machines arrive from all points in the future.

They have come back in time to witness the first time machine take off, it was as though you had a piper-cub that you could fly off to Kittyhawk North Carolina, that windy morning in late December when the brothers Wright rolled her out of her bicycle shop and fired her up.

Then I said, but wait a minute, we haven't dealt with the grandfather paradox. One of these time machines from the distant future on its way to the first time flight could stop off and kill the grandfather of the driver of that first time machine, and we haven't gotten anywhere at all.

So then, I produced a slightly more complicated model but it works so here's what it is.

It's that because the future is not what we think it is, here's a metaphor which makes it more clear.

In this world that we're living in right now we have people such as Bill Gates and his research and development teams.

And we have people such as the upriver people in the Amazon that I spent time with, bare-assed people living at a very minimal cultural level.

Gates and his people and this Amazon tribe occupy the same planet and the same moment in history. But who is influencing who? Very few people in the world are taking up the Amazonian lifestyle or point of view. Millions and millions of people are going Gates direction and more and more will.

So what I concluded from that is advanced states of culture tend to squeeze out or mitigate less advanced states of culture.

Now let's return to the time-flight. What happens when the lady at temponaut goes into the future. Is not the time-machine arrived from all over the future, what happens is the entire rest of the history of the universe happens instantly.

In other words, a future, evolutionary developments, conquests of the galaxy, vast technologies that allow star-flight and worm-hole traps and all that. The fruits of all that are delivered instantly to our doorstep in 2012. I call it the God-Whistle model.

In other words, we end the whole thing. We collapse the state vector and everything goes into a state of novelty. What happens then I think is the universe becomes entirely made of light.

This is a sort of the cherry on the cake. You know there is something in physics called the principle of parody.

This is that particles can appear out of nothingness, as long as they appear in pairs, such that after a certain period of time the two pairs, the members of the pair encounter and annihilate each other. When this happens, physicists say "parody is conserved"

It's known in quantum physics that there is a phenomenon called vacuum fluctuation, vacuum fluctuation is a situation where in absolutely empty space, suddenly out of the quantum subspace particles jump into existence. They follow trajectories, they encounter each other, they annihilate each other, parody is

conserved and so it's ok.

So then you talk to these quantum physicists, and you say "Well how large can one of these vacuum fluctuations be?"

They say "they last milliseconds or nanoseconds" and then you say "Is there a theoretical upper limit on the size of the vacuum fluctuation dictated by theory?" and they say, no, no no, it's simply that the longer the fluctuation lasts, the rarer it is.

So in other words, the longer a fluctuation lasts, the less likely you are to encounter one. Then you say "Is it possible that this entire universe is such a vacuum fluctuation?"

And then you say "Well yes but that would be very rare to have such a long one!" Hell you only need one!

Calculating the probability of a univariate event is a fool's game.

It's either 100% sure or 0 sure.

So here is a model and I took this from the Swedish physicists Hanz Altven who hasn't gotten enough credit who was really a free-thinker.

Imagine that the universe is this kind of vacuum fluctuation, a 17-billion year long vacuum fluctuation.

What it means then is at the big bang, not one universe was born, but two. They sailed off into the superspaces and have no connectivity with each other, or they have Bell's non-local connectivity or something.

Anyways, they are distinctly separate. They are unbeknown to each other on a collision course with each other. Parody must be conserved eventually.

A model like this holds open the possibility of the instantaneous transformation of the entire cosmos because the collision of these two universes would not occur in 3-dimensional space, it would occur in a higher dimensional space.

So this cosmological model holds out the possibility that all matter in the universe could be instantaneously cancelled in this encounter with the anti-matter twin that was born at the beginning of the cosmos.

Ok if you're still following we're almost to (pater?) Every particle known to physics posses an anti-particle

which is locked into this parity conserving thing I've laid out for you with one exception, one astonishing and amazing exception: the photon has no anti-particle. There is no anti-photon.

This universe that is on a collision course with itself in hyper-space, at the moment of the conservation of parity, all matter vanishes and what is left is a universe made entirely of light.

We have no model, or I have no model, for a universe made of light. There would be no gravity because gravity is a property of matter.

Such a universe could be modeled and then the question is "what would happen to forms? You're body, my body, this planet?"

The answer is: no one can know. But it is very interesting that the esoteric tradition of nearly every tradition talk about light a great deal. Talk about ascent to the light, cultivation of the light.

After death vehicle as a thing made of light. I just put this out here because it occurred to me, my imagination in an effort to make the assumptions novelty theory congruent with the known laws of physics I discovered, this sounds like wild-hair stuff, but no violation of the known laws of physics is involved in this scenario.

Perhaps what enlightenment is, is what happens to a universe when it drops it's matter and anti-matter out of it's structure and it becomes entirely made of light.

That would certainly fulfill the novelty theory, anyways that's enough of that malarkey.

Q: [???

It was autopsy for a mathematical hallucination. I am proud to say that I named that paper, I mean Watkins said "I want to publish this objection to your thing" and what should he call it. I was in a fairly bitter and shaken mood so I said "How about autopsy for a mathematical hallucination"

Do you want to know the state of all that?

I was shaken by Watkins objection, but I'm in the strange position of having a theory that when the going gets really tough I can't understand my critics. Einstein had this problem too, when he published a general theory of relativity I think Herman Bonday launched a frontal attack on him. Heisenberg said to Einstein "What are you going to do about Bonday?"

He said I don't know what to do, I can't understand the man. That's my position with Watkins he's

definitely got a bee in his bonnet.

I intuitively feel he has missed something important.

Really I've had discussions with a guy out of the Santa Fe institute who's credentials are at least as good as Watkins and he said "You should rest easy", what happened to Watkins is he thought he was attacking my idea, what he was actually attacking was the implementation of my idea and the software. His critique is true but it misses me and strikes the software implementation.

Once you dump the software code and go back to the original method of constructing the wave, according to this fellow in New Mexico because we'll publish all this on the web in the next few months.

Watkins is wrong.

I intuitively felt very strongly that Watkins was wrong, he had a very powerful intellectual engine that he was running my way, but he never really understood what I was saying. So it was a perfect example of a communication failure.

Q: [???

Well that's where to attack.

He said "You made a move where there is no rationale for this move. I say "There is a rationale and I can demonstrate it. Right underneath 'Autopsy for a mathematical hallucination is a button called 'Watkins objection answer'"

That's my best shot and it's fully illustrated and I felt after I wrote it that I shot him out of the water. He emailed me back and said "You totally missed the point, you didn't even crease my haircut"

We're not talking about the same thing, and at first that was very frustrating to me. I think he's right, we're not talking about the same thing, and I think that certainly blunts the force of his effort to sink the ship"

I'm grateful to Watkins because he did do something which other workers on the timewave were never able to do.

You see the way Peter Meyer worked was I gave him a table of 384 numbers out of which he produced the time-wave. But a huge amount of work is necessary to produce those 384 numbers.

Meyer never checked my procedures. Watkins looked at my procedures and he wrote equations such that now we don't start with a table of 384 numbers. Now we start with the 64 hexagrams of the I-Ching and we go all the way to the timewave.

So he made the entire thing mathematically explicit. What he didn't understand was the way in which the

thing is structurally configured.

This fellow at the Santa Fe institute is going to do that. What we'll come out with is a completely formalized wave.

From a mathematicians point of view there will be no unanswered questions "Why did you do this? Or is this an ad-hoc assumption?" so forth

So as an intellectual assumption it will be clarified and this is how science works.

You're friends will always tell you you're a fine fellow, but it's what your enemies say that pushes you to redefine, re-create, clarify, and if necessary discard and start over.

There's no disgrace in that at all, that's, that's intellectual honesty.

Q: [???

You see the way the novelty theory is structured is you have this wave and it is iterated on different scales, and if you have a given level lets call it A.

Above A is a larger level that is A times 64. Below is a smaller level that is 1/64th of A

And anywhere you are in the hierarchy this is true, levels above 64 times larger, levels below 1/64th times smaller

Modern astrophysicists are arguing about it right now, but the universe is under 20 billion years old. Everybody agrees on that, and the question is, is it 9, 12, 13, 14? But it's under 20.

The time-wave has a cycle, the largest cycle I have found necessary except for the prime number research is a 72 billion year cycle.

So lets call that the top cycle, the A-level, a 72 billion year cycle, plenty of time for the universe to evolve to its present state.

Below that level is a cycle 1/64th that size. What would that be? Roughly 1.2 billion years.

At the initiation of that cycle, I don't know some dramatic thing happens in biology. Below it is another cycle. If the B level is 1.2 billion years, then the next level is 1/64th of that, I think it's roughly 275 million years.

The next cycle, divide it by 64, whatever it is, 750,000 years. Eventually you get to a cycle that's 4,306 years in duration, that's essentially the cycle of late history.

I mean certainly there was history before 4,000 years but the continuous march of global civilization over the last 4,000 years.

The next cycle down is only 67 years long, and I mentioned it last night.

From 1945 to 2012, each cycle begins with a bang, literally. Below the 67 year cycle there is a 384 day cycle, and that will run from late 2011, somewhere in November 2011 to the end of 2012.

And I call that the "Year of the Jackpot"

It's a 13 month year but the entire history of the universe will be reprised in that 384 day period.

Well then comes a 6 day cycle. By this time, I will have either gently bowed out or the entire world will be aware of what is happening because the novelty will be so intense. Imagine a 6 day cycle when the entire previous 67 year, 4,306 year, na-na-na-na-na-na to the top level are all being compressed and replayed in 6 days. Well then Comes the hour and 35 minute cycle. Then comes the minute and a half cycle. Then comes the 1.3 second cycle.

Now at that point, 1.3 seconds, if we assume that the cycle's can not be iterated beyond the level of Planck's constant, which is 6.55×10^{-23} seconds, the way for you to think of that is as a "giffy". It's the grain of the universe, we don't feel the need to discuss lengths of time shorter than that, because there aren't lengths of time shorter than that.

Time comes in those packets of that size.

Well if you're at 1.3 second cycle, you still have 13 cycles to go through before you reach the realm of Planck's constant, and you have come through 13 cycles.

So the universe is only half-done 1.3 seconds before it's end.

That's why asking what will happen in 2012 is preposterous, the mind fails. Half of the universes evolutionary unfolding will occur in the last few milliseconds of it's existence because of the asymptotic of the acceleration of the expression of novelty.

So it's this thing that begin very gently, very stately you know. The march of the atom, the condensation of the stars and the galaxy, the emergence of biology, the emergence of higher animals and the origins of mankind and just into a *screeeeching* photo finish where all this stuff is just bundled together, connected,

transformed, lifted into higher dimensions.

You see this is not a process that we can not take responsibility for, or discuss our guilt or innocence. This is The Cosmos itself tearing loose from it's previous constraints and moving ever faster towards ever greater freedom with ever more appetite and momentum until it achieves it's goal which is infinite novelty throughout all space and time. Holographic connectedness, Godmindedness, whatever your vocabulary is. Yeah

Q: [???

Oh yeah this is a completely legitimate move, it's mind boggling to think of this in human scales of time, that half of the universe is becoming a curd in a few milliseconds, but dig the fact that is the position of orthodox physics as we sit here.

It's simply that they say it happened at the beginning, I say it will happen in the end.

What they are saying in physics now is that the big bang occurred and then a few nano-seconds after the big bang there was this thing called the "inflationary expansion phase"

It lasted a few nanoseconds, and in those few nanoseconds the universe became 10's or orders of magnitudes larger than it was, so it's a legitimate move in physics however counter-intuitive it may seem on the human scale.

Q: [???

The problem with the many-worlds theory is that it violates the principle of parsimony, in other words that is not the simplest explanation.

Do you all know what this is? It's the idea that whenever a process in the universe encounters a bifurcation point, that it goes both ways. In other words, the multiplication of possibilities in a situation like that is staggering and I just don't feel the need for it.

If I understood Weilers mathematics better, I might, but that theory has been around since the middle 70's and he has a very respected position at Princeton, but he doesn't seem to be able to sway his colleges.

Which doesn't mean he's wrong, but it's a bit baroque for my tastes.

Q: [???

Well once beyond the zero point, but definition novelty must mean the simultaneous realization of bifurcations of all sorts. In other words what ultimate novelty must mean is anything we say it means.

There are no limitations when novelty soars to infinite.

The universe is a series of impediments to the expression of novelty, and when it has overcome all those impediments there is a flawless, higher dimensional matrix throughout all being I guess that's how you put it.

Q: [???

No that's another can of strings, and that's a different thing and more exotic. There's a lot of this stuff going around.

I am by no means the strangest cat on the block. Sky Allen Goof, have any of you looked at his website? This is a guy being paid a salary by MIT for God's sake and his thing is all about making universes, and he says "We can make universes and put them on the shelf"

"I made this one in February, botched that one in March" and talks about how the ultimate proof of the direction in which modern physics is moving is to make a universe.

After all, if they begin from an area smaller than the diameter of the hydrogen atom, a major laboratory could just stamp them out like hotcakes.

But of course the question is "What are they good for?" What do you do with a universe once you've made one?

But as an exercise in the imagination I take a look at what this guy is into.

Q: [???

We process sound and light separately simply because the way our senses have evolved is to accentuate those things in different ways. One of the things that happens on Ayahuasca is that many people can see sound. You see sound, this may be an ability closer to the surface than we realize.

One of the puzzling things in the Mayan codices is flowery speech, which is nobles are portrayed with stuff coming out of their mouths and hanging around their heads. We're familiar with this from the cartoon-thought-balloon which we do not speak and form clouds of words hanging in little round bubbles around our heads.

This does seem that this is an area where McLuhan had a lot to say, the forms of media that a society accepts, whether it's a manuscript culture, a TV culture, a print culture, or something else affect sensory input processing in ways that people rarely suspect.

So for a temple in a manuscript culture when people talk to each other McLuhan thought they saw pictures in their heads. When we talk to each other I think most of us hear a stream of speech.

It's possible to imagine a culture where when people talk each other, they actually seem streams of print.

Under the influence of psychedelics I've seen all these things.

I've had hallucinations of pages where as I looked at it, every 5th letter turned into an alien letter and then every 4th and then every 3rd and I watched the text transform itself from English into Zenebel-Ganubian, and then back into English and so forth and so on.

The ways in which we process information are myriad, and then every culture, it's sort of like drugs. Every culture out of the vast smorgasbord of drugs chooses one or two to culturally investigate in the same way

Out of these many neurological pathways of processing information a culture will accentuate and de-emphasize others and once these other ways are de-emphasized, it's only a matter of a generation before they're denied at all, or defined as pathology.

Q: [???

I don't think you have to hypothesize forms of light, I think ordinary light is magical enough to carry the groceries on it's own.

This is a model I made where I said "The universe might turn into light without the presence of matter"

In following that through in my mind I ask myself the question "What would the world be like if I were light?" If I were light. You mentioned light that travels faster than light.

What would it be like to be a photon?

The answer is: there is no time for a photon. A photon can cross the universe in zero-time. Subjectively, from the point of view of the photon it takes zero time to cross the universe because it moves at the speed of light, it doesn't move at 99% the speed of light, in that case it would take a fair chunk of forever to cross the universe.

But if you can actually move at the true speed of light, there is no time.

So if we were suddenly to be made of light we would look around us and the universe would be aging at an enormous speed all around us and there would be no distance because to wish to be somewhere would

cause one to be there.

So I think light is not bound by any of the limitations which bind matter, there are some hard questions when you talk about turning into light, in other words how is light complicated enough to support a nervous system? How could a nervous system be made of light only?

That's very hard to imagine because it's very hard to imagine, but that doesn't mean it isn't possible.

I think the intuitions of mystics are very good, it's when they turn their intuitions into methods that it becomes dubious.

In some sense, I think light holds the answer because light exists...it's almost like it's a higher-dimensional particle. The fact that it is not in-time in the way that all other physical and material organization is, it's a clue of hyper-dimensionality.

This is a kind of black-hole.

It's not an ordinary black hole you would see it coming. It's a black hole of novelty. There may be more than one kind of black hole in the universe, the ordinary black hole of physics is a gravitational-well.

What I'm suggesting is that there's a novelty well, a gravitational well, physicists are pretty confident in saying that if you're sucked into a gravitational well no structure can survive. Only spin, charge, and angular momentum are conserved when a particle is sucked into a black hole. Suppose there was the reverse of a black hole, that's sort of what I'm suggesting.

Not a hole where when you're sucked in that you lose all structure, but a hole that when you're sucked in you become everything. That's equally reasonable, you know quantum physicists have said that the particles thrown out of a black hole tend to be disorganized but in principle they could be grand pianos or ice-cream cones.

It wouldn't violate the laws of physics, it's just highly improbably given enough time these things would come to be. It's like the Edington printing press.

You know the black hole was hypothesized out of Einstein's work, but people thought it was a kind of an artifact, a joke, that there couldn't actually be such a thing.

Now we understand that probably every galaxy has a black hole. The reason black holes are somewhat unsettling is because science, the thing science hates more are what are called singularities.

Singularities are places where science doesn't work.

You just have to throw up your hands and say “Well it’s a singularity”

And until black-holes were taken seriously, physics only tolerated one singularity, it was the beginning of the universe.

It said you know, before time 0, that’s a singularity, don’t ask us any questions about it. Science could somehow accept the that there’s this one little place where it couldn’t shine it’s flashlight, but once you get the idea that there is a black hole, probably black-holes at the center of every galaxy, there are billions of galaxies.

If there are billions of black holes, that’s a lot of singularities, what kind of science are you doing if you tolerate billions of singularities? You’re not doing science at all.

You’re just playing at science and steering around these things, and then when Stephen Hawking got off on this tier about mini-black holes and said...

(Question/commentary)

Well yes when I first started...it must be the end of a large cycle, but having being exposed to Hinduism I knew that there are cycles, and cycles, and cycles. But in fact the way that this thing declines into novelty, in the way that I’ve showed you on the screen is what physicist, or what dynamicists call a “damped oscillation” and a damped-oscillation eventually actually just dies away, it finishes.

We are approaching a damped oscillation of our own in order to make the room-crew happy and clear the deck for the next group of seminarian.

Let me just try to sum this up, not certainly to sum up the ideas, but the ideas are not really that important. They may be true, they may be untrue, they may reside in a domain where those rules don’t apply.

The feeling that I hope you take away from all this is that...

Note: I paid for the full transcript from scribd, since it's a seven hour lecture there is a lot of text and their formatting is different to the above section one and part of 2 that other transcribed. Not sure if we should make the formatting like the majority of the scribd text, or like the formatting in the original.

Original Transcription by: [Jo Trott ? \ Jonathanlal ?\continued by Eva Petakovic.]

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Approaching Life's Edges and Boundaries

20 November 1992

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Axiom Production

September 1994

Maui Hawaii

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Shamanism: Before And Beyond History - A Weekend at Ojai

1988

Ojai, California

Description

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Brisbane Talk

26 February 1997

Location, City, State

Description

- [Transcription](#)
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Lecture Name

February 1999

Terence's home in Hawaii

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Bruce Damer: If you want to render this asteroid that you convert into basic elements and engulf into structure, you would dispatch a kind of lichen that uses solar energy. The code is the light. It occupies that space and it starts to manufacture, to absorb the asteroid, and then it produces pollen which goes out, and it's networked pollen. Then it's in the Oort cloud, as Freeman Dyson says, and then life is off the earth and it's a very different kind of life. It's certainly not sentient life, but it's very effective. Some of the spores get stuck into themselves, basically. Of course they'll need atoms — at least as far as we know — to actually have a matrix of life, very ordered atoms. In the long view we're the ladder that life is trying to climb. Along the way we'll get great terraformers and we'll make lots of living space inside the earth.

Terence McKenna: You don't sound like you're of the school that thinks that we're close to some kind of AI and that when it goes over the threshold, within a matter of hours it will just inflate into some kind of thing that we can't even relate to and will be of no interest to.

BD: No, I think, of course, that it's hard to define intelligence and consciousness. I think that people underestimate the trial-and-error, the error-proneness of living processes.

TM: But on the other hand, the iteration speed of this machine life is so fast.

BD: There's a difference: the ecosystems that they're living in are extremely arid. They're basically life living in these very narrow tubes connected by very chancy processes.

TM: You mean the wires...

BD: The wires and the servers, if that's how it stays. Whereas an ocean is a billion trillion parallel processes, and black smokers and superplumes going up and carrying hydrons. It's a massively different ecosystem where you can have a lot of things happening at once in the same beast, a lot of reactions that happen at the same time, and I think that the error rate is always the crippling factor. Why, for instance, didn't we invent, of all the science fiction, something that eats all silicon, or that comes down into the earth and eats all carbon-based life and we're all gone — I think it doesn't happen because general-purpose things are really ill-suited for survival and when you're specific-purpose you're prone to lots of errors. So I don't think there are going to be planet-eaters any time soon.

TM: I don't think it was the planet-eater scenario so much as the idea that once something became sentient it would immediately design something beyond itself and you would get a cascade of self-perfecting machine intelligences that would go over the horizon before you knew what was going on.

BD: I think — and this is the theme of the next Biota conference: symbiogenesis — that every life form contains the code of the previous ones, like the cell absorption of mitochondria, that things are built that way. For instance, that human life as an organism is a bolus of biological organisms surrounded by metabiological forms called culture, and that in fact there isn't a way to regenerate a Frankenstein that's separate from all that. It's always going to contain the errors and the powers of the previous organism. Now, of course, if we generate code-based lichens, they would be so simple that they would be like a slime mold and won't achieve consciousness. They would achieve the ability to survive on the Oort cloud surface and evolve through error and process over tens of thousands of years. But they may evolve to be giant, coral-like slime molds and simply consume resources, because that's what life seems to do when it enters a new ecosystem.

TM: But doesn't it also tend to modify the ecosystem to make it easier on itself? At 1000MHz for 10,000 years, you don't really know what you're going to come back and find.

BD: I agree. I think that what will happen around 2040-2050 is that the transmissions between the organisms, between the biomes, will suddenly not be interpreted. For the first few years they'll be spreading across objects, even an asteroid with bits and pieces of dust this big is enough for it to colonize, as long as it's got certain ingredients and it's facing the sun. So you'll be able to track and understand it and then suddenly you'll be messaging and you'll get something you can't understand, and there's no way for anyone to interpret what communications it will have. They'll understand fundamental operating- system calls, the organism will be making a kind of housekeeping, but there will be a metalanguage that evolves.

TM: It'll be contextualized for the organism.

BD: It'll be like bird calls. That will be the moment when we have first contact. In two weeks there's a conference called Contact 16, Jim Funaro's conference, it's anthropologists and space scientists and science fiction writers that meet every year and talk about this kind of stuff, and this is what I'm going to talk about.

TM: There's a lot of study going on of the genetics that control bird song and how it localizes and what's actually going on, and it begins to look like there's a pretty seamless process right straight through to complex language that's just a mutation of this signal-generating impulse.

BD: I think language will tell us the date, and then we'll have something, not necessarily sentient, but something that is no longer anything we can understand. And it will be from that point on an attempt to contact this mass, this bolus, that will be in a ring around the solar system, and it will be tracked. It will become the second Terran ecosystem. They'll do work to support us. They'll render down comets and feed mass drivers and so on. But like any good farmer with his seeds and his crops, there'll be a lot of unpredictability.

TM: These nano-colonizations of Oort cloud material, that originally is established for mineral recovery?

BD: Probably, and for fuel construction.

TM: Why the outer solar system and not the asteroid belt?

BD: There's not enough elements, or variety of elements. I think the Jovian system is going to be where the action is.

TM: So many interesting satellites and so much incredible electrodynamics and magnetodynamics in that system.

BD: If you want to do anything to Mars you have to drop a whole lot of water onto it.

TM: But they're obsessed with Mars for some reason.

BD: It's kind of a mistake. But NASA again, I think if you picked any planet that is reachable in reasonable budgets and spacecraft sizes, it's Mars. Venus is kind of a lost cause.

TM: No reason to go there.

BD: They mapped it with radar and it wasn't very good. Mercury is too strange and small. It's basically a moon. It has an atmosphere that forms in twenty seconds when the sun comes up, the atmosphere's four inches high and it freezes on the other side, and it's a four hour day.

TM: But it is tidally locked to the sun, so you do have this interzone.

BD: The sun is half the size of the sky. But Mars has got enough stuff, it's got volcanoes and extinct oceans, icecaps. And the next one out is Jupiter.

TM: And Europa.

BD: They're going to drop Galileo into the Ionian atmosphere in August. It's a really crippled spaceflight. Galileo is an example of an early bio-instance, it's a model. I remember seeing Galileo being packaged to be launched on the shuttle, and this was the shuttle after Challenger, so it never shipped out. So, I went to see the Galileo spacecraft being crated up. It had a high-gain antenna which was this great big mesh thing in this tiny satellite dish that was all folded up, and when they did launch a few years later, it never opened.

TM: So instead of huge bitstream and bandwidth and all kinds of power, they had to work with...

BD: A low-gain antenna, the size of a pizza pie. When the Challenger shuttle blew up, NASA was no longer permitted to carry liquid fuel upper stages in the cargo bay, which was considered too dangerous. They had to carry solid fuel. It's safer but it packs very little punch, it doesn't generate much thrust, about a third. So they had to design a new way to get to Jupiter where they go around Venus twice and steal some of the angular momentum of Venus by slingshotting around it and coming back again and getting faster and stealing from the planets. Then they passed the earth twice, and on the way into the sun the high-gain antenna, which was still wrapped up, got heated and flexed and shrunk, because it was never designed to go into the inner solar system — it was supposed to go straight out on the express — and when they tried to

open up on the second time it came out like this. [gestures]

TM: It was a screw-up.

BD: It was a huge screw-up, and so the mission planner said, “It’s two billion dollars down the tube, there’ll be congressional hearings and we scrap it or we figure something out.” So on the way to Jupiter they changed Galileo’s brain to think differently, process differently, see differently and hear differently. By the time it got to Jupiter with this tiny little pizza pie dish — it had a reentry vehicle, this saucer-like pod, to be dropped into the Jovian atmosphere; they’d never build another one in their lifetime, so to lose that. . . and they got to the Jovian system, and by that time it had learned to see in this “jailbar” method — it would take strips out of the sky and the ground controllers would say, “Look, there’s more rings, now take smaller scripts and compress them as much as you can and send them to us.” So they couldn’t change the hardware but they could change the software. Galileo was sort of a very early 20th century metaphor of the visual biome moving out, being transmitted massless into a receiver.

TM: It was smarter when it got there and smarter when it left.

BD: Yes, and it’s been in orbit for 2.5 years now.

TM: But they had to stream these pictures back — instead of in real time, it takes months for the data to come back.

BD: Yes, at 8 bits a minute or something. But they’ve done fantastic science with it. They dropped the probe, they ran the recorder and the probe went down into the Jovian atmosphere down to Levy-9 and, like that, it collapsed because of the pressure, it was on chutes; and now they’re going to do a close approach, it’s only four times higher than the highest volcanic plume above Io — Io has sulphur volcanoes — and they’re going to graze the top of the volcanic plume and it may not survive. They’re going to try to do as much they can, and it may just burn up and destroy it; but it’s all being recorded and that comes back, bit by bit. The Jovian system is like its own solar system, and Galileo has been in orbit for 3-4 years, just sweeping by different moons.

TM: What you really need up there is several tons of state-of-the-art imaging equipment and all kinds of fancy steering engines. What an interesting system. This mission to Saturn is pretty epic.

BD: Cassini is the last big heavy mission, six tons of spacecraft.

TM: So, it’s going to drop a probe into the atmosphere of Titan that will land on the surface.

BD: Titan is the only moon with an atmosphere.

TM: There may be methane hydrocarbon oceans.

BD: With outsized tar blocks and the greatest surfing in the solar system, 600 foot waves.

TM: It’s like Solaris, Titan, it’s a really strange world.

BD: And yet our moon is way out of proportion, it's way too big. That's why they think now that our moon appeared because of a massive collision. There's no way the earth could have captured something the size of the moon, so it had to have been a very bad hair day.

TM: A Mars-sized object crashed into the earth and it separated and went into orbit.

BD: The Biota group goes back through time, to fossil sites. We went to see the Cambrian fossils at the Burgess Shale and then we saw the human fossils in Cambridge, England. On the next trip we're going to go back 3.5 billion years ago, to western Australia, where you have the oldest evidence of life that's certain — the stromatolites. The stromatolites are these towers that were the smokestack polluters in the pre-Cambrian, they're colonial forms of microbial mats that have blue-green algae in the top. If you went back to the earth then, you'd have to wear a spacesuit because there was no oxygen. These things lived around all the continental margins and they'd pump oxygen out into the atmosphere, which was very poisonous, a very toxic substance. In Shark Bay at Hamelin Pool, if you lie down at night next to the last remaining living stromatolite column, you get high on the oxygen, there's so much.

TM: There's a living column?

BD: Yes. It's hard as rock. What happens is that the top is this mushy layer with up to three billion individuals per square meter, it's colonial, it would be the only thing you could have seen with your own eyes that was obviously alive for two billion years, and underneath there's chemosynthetic stuff. Basically the stromatolites sucked iron oxide and calcium out of the atmosphere and built these towers below it. Ocean levels would rise and fall with the tides and these towers supported the top of the pond, and they're hard as rock. In fact, half the iron ore in the world is stromatolites. Life made the continents.

TM: So, the earliest life on earth built the American railroads.

BD: That's right, it was a biological process.

TM: The accretion of iron.

BD: And not oxidized iron. So what happened was that the stromatolites pumped and pumped, and then at one point 2.5 billion years ago, this sudden fantastic thing happened: the Oxygen Holocaust. The oxygen levels just flew into the stratosphere. Earth has been through many mass extinctions, but this was a really horrific one. Any single-celled organism that could not handle incoming high densities of O₂, which is very poisonous, it basically ripped these cells apart. So there was this mass extinction, and there were a few cells which could absorb the oxygen called mitochondria, and they basically turned it into an energy factory.

TM: One in trillions of cells; but all present life is traced back to the survivors of that challenge.

BD: When you go jogging and suddenly your body runs out of oxygen, the cells in your muscles switch back to the old system of metabolizing chemosynthetically. You get lactic acid and it makes you sore because you're going back to the ancient system before mitochondria could get energy quick, but at a price. So stromatolites — there's this tiny pond they found that's very saline, and they're there and they're 3.5 billion years old.

TM: And they're just fine, thank you!

BD: Stromatolites go back to 3.5 billion years, and the earliest evidence of life is 3.86 billion years, so they're very close. The meteorite impacts stopped at about 3.9 billion years. So life actually popped up pretty quickly after the cometary inflow ceased and you didn't have the surface of the earth getting all molten every once in a while. But we're going to thank the stromatolites for giving us oxygen and apologize for the fact that we're putting all this CO₂ back.

TM: But plants like CO₂.

BD: Earth of two billion years ago was really weird. Chances are the oceans were brown, because the continents had no plants that could hold the land, so the outwash was eight times higher or more. There were huge river systems pouring off the continents. The Himalayas and the Rockies are mountains that will never appear again, because there's never going to be that kind of deposition again. They're unique, they're creations of life, they're full of life. They're finding more and more that life and water are the reason why we have plate tectonics in the first place and why we have mountain ranges.

TM: Why do life and water drive plate tectonics?

BD: There's several interlocking factors. One is that water lubricates and allows this kind of continuous movement. Water also absorbed a lot of the crap that came through volcanism early in the earth's history and created a cleaner atmosphere, which in turn supported the rain, which in turn supported all the outwash. Life sealed the continents in this hypersea of roots coming into the ocean and sealed all that land in, so the outflow of the erosion wouldn't be at all what it used to be; so the future generations of mountains will be quite different. Now, in the past ten years, they've discovered these black smokers, in the mid-'80s, huge jets of water full of sulphates pouring out of the bottom of the ocean, and there's tons of life in and around it, eating chemicals and not needing sunlight. Bacterias and tube worms and crabs...

TM: Tube worms up to six feet long.

BD: Yes, they're eating the pollution. They were always wondering, if life evolved around one black smoker, they don't last long. How did they get all across the planet? All the black smokers have about the same lifespan. They found these things that are called superplumes, which are underwater Mount Saint Helens'. You get this block of hot water, which is the same as a pyroclastic ash explosion that comes out at 12-15 miles across, boluses of very hot water, 7

and they come blowing off as a mushroom cloud at the bottom of the ocean and then they get caught by waves and currents that carry them hundreds and thousands of miles, and they're full of microbes that have been carried in this express bus system and they're raining back down on other plumes. This super-plume system may have been the engine that transported life around constantly. Underwater volcanism is our roots. If we ever get to Mars we'll see the great granddaddy of all solar system volcanoes, Olympus Mons at 80,000 feet. The top sticks out of the atmosphere, so the atmosphere at the caldera is different.

TM: I didn't realize that... the Hawaiian shield volcanoes are the closest thing to it on the Earth.

BD: The volume encompassed by Mauna Loa, you could fit all the Sierra Nevada inside it. In effect, it's the single largest structure on the planet, and it was created by one process.

TM: It's the world's largest mountain by volume, and if you measure it from its sea bed floor, it's the world's tallest mountain. It's 13,000 feet above the sea; that's 16,000 feet that it rises from the ocean bed.

BD: There's a fair analysis of why there's a hot spot under here, it's that there's some sort of a constructive harmonic that's going on that's actually breaking up the crust, and there may be one on the other side. They've looked.

TM: At the exact antipodes of Hawaii?

[...]

BD: It's kind of a semi-conscious push, the drive that human beings have had to build and to make things and make life and create. We're creating, tool-making things. Perhaps they don't know why, but they'll make the next phase.

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject [July 22nd, 2017]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Calling the Butterflies (or 'Views on Science and an Exploration into Agricultural Societies')

7 February 1992

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

Description

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Camden Centre Talk

15 June 1992

London, England, Camden Centre

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription by Deoxy](#)
- [Other links](#)

Well, it's a pleasure to be here. I want to thank Evolution Records for, once again, making an event like this possible. It's always a pleasure to return to England. Let me see if I can get my act here and make an event of it.

What I thought I would talk about tonight, since I figure we did our homework during my last visit, is how the psychedelic experience which we have as individuals relates to the global future that we can feel the world being swept toward and how this relates to our planetary paths. I think we can make some sense out of the human condition if we're willing to look at psychedelic plants not as simply tools for individual spiritual transformation, but actually as tools and forces which transformed us as a species in the distant past, and I'll just give it to you very briefly.

As you may or may not know, all primates -- and we certainly are primates -- have what are called 'male dominance hierarchies'. This means that the longest-fanged, meanest s.o.b. in a monkey tribe takes control of the group resources, the females, the weaker males, and this character runs the show, and this is pretty much how we do it today. But my belief, based on 25 years of working with and taking psychedelic plants and substances, has led me to -- well, certainly to the brink of hubris -- to make an adjustment to evolutionary theory and suggest that these psychedelic substances are not private, peripheral, ancillary, cultish, esoteric, meaningless, self-indulgent, narcissistic, or obscure; they are in fact central to understanding how what we call 'human-ness' actually came to be in the first place. I really believe that the reason we have language and notions like community, altruism, loyalty, brotherhood, hope -- the reason we have these qualities, which are the qualities that we embrace as most human and most ennobling to us, is because for a period of roughly a hundred thousand years we self-medicated ourselves and suppressed the poisonous presence of the calcareous tumour of ego. Ego is the psychological structure which is propelling us to hell in a handbasket. The problems which beset the modern world and which continue to go unaddressed and unresolved can all be traced to ego, to our inability to emotionally connect with the consequences of what we are doing to ourselves, to each other, to the world. Our newspapers are filled with data on dissolving ozone holes, planktonic life in the ocean is endangered, toxic wastes are accumulating -- you all know the litany. But in trying to trace it to a root problem, I see it as ego -- the inability of the individual to get with the programme of group values. And I believe that we have this problem because we have fallen into an historical and cultural style that suppresses, denies and ignores the powerful potential of psychedelic plants to transform personalities, to erase boundaries, and to fuse people

into a single thinking organism. This is what the nomadic tribalism of the past was all about.

Well, how is this done, or how can this be? If you've had a psychedelic experience, you know that each one is incredibly unique, addressed to the individual, and seemingly as private a matter as one could possibly conceive. But when, as a clinician or a person in my position, you have an opportunity to listen to accounts of dozens, hundreds, of psychedelic experiences, you begin to see the general outline of what these things are doing. And my analysis of it is they dissolve boundaries, they erase differences, they introduce you to the notion that reality is, in the wonderful phrase of Gregory Bateson, 'A seamless web', that we are not atomic entities forever imprisoned in our own private Idahos, we are in fact part of some kind of field. It's almost as though what the psychedelics are attempting to do for sociology and psychology is what was achieved by quantum physics from matter in the 1920s and '30s. Matter, during that period, was re-analyzed and found to be not tiny hard billiard ball-like particles whizzing through space carrying spin and electric charge, but that there was another level, a lower layer, and that other level, that other description, revealed an interactive wave system where individual points of concrescence are merely statistical rather than real, everything dissolves into a kind of soup of multi-leveled, multi-dimensional connectedness, and this is what the psychedelic experience is. I believe that one way of thinking about life is -- biology I mean -- is that it is a chemical strategy for amplifying quantum mechanical indeterminism to such a degree that freedom, true freedom, shimmers into existence at the macrophysical level -- the level that we, as thinking, suffering, striving, dreaming organisms, actually occupy, and that the amplification of quantum mechanical indeterminacy that allows for freedom then allows evolutionary processes to reflect the forces which are impinging upon them.

Now, orthodox science hands you a universe that is characterized by a forward-flowing casuistry where every event is somehow dependent in its existential completeness upon the moment which came immediately before it. And I believe that we can extract, as it were, from the psychedelic experience and return with an entirely different notion of time, space and causality. Probably most of you are familiar from your mathematics classes in school with the idea that they teach you in trigonometry that all possible ellipses can be obtained by sectioning a cone and we can build up a picture of a cone by examining thousands and thousands of elliptical sections of that cone and then reasoning backward to the higher-dimensional object which that cone represents. Well, I believe that every psychedelic journey is a sectioning of a higher-dimensional object of some sort, and that we ourselves, in our individual lives, also represent a sectioning of this higher-dimensional object.

So, then, the intellectual quest, the spiritual quest, becomes one of empowering the felt presence of experience, both psychedelic experience and the normal day-to-day experience of living, and noticing that that is the primary stuff of which reality is made. Reality is not made of quarks and mu-mesons and z-particles. Reality is made of language. Whatever we think reality is, it is an entirely private matter until we describe it -- either linguistically, mathematically, through painting, through dance, through innuendo -- whatever it is, reality then undergoes the formality of actually occurring when it is languaged, and what I've noticed about these psychedelics is that they are catalysts for language. They are, as it were, an enzyme operating in the human body politic propelling us to what's called 'stretch the envelope', stretch the design perimeters of the human experience.

Now, I don't think that many people actually realize how literally I take and intend what I'm saying. I encountered the language issue on psychedelics about 22 years ago when one evening a friend of mine stopped by and he had a little vial of an orange substance and he said 'would you like to try something

new?' And I had done my LSD graduate work some few months before, and I only asked him one question, I said 'How long does it last?' And he said 'It lasts about 10 minutes', and I said, 'Well, bring it on then my friend!' This was dimethyltryptamine, DMT, and I smoked it and I saw -- I had a feeling of slight anesthesia in my body -- I saw a swirling, floral mandala form behind my closed eyelids, and as I moved toward this mandala, I realised I was going to penetrate beyond it, and I burst through into a kind of other dimensional superspace, and my... I had expected a kind of instant psychoanalysis or perhaps swirling colors or moving geometric plains of light, perhaps a dancing canary or a little candies doing two-steps in a row -- this is what's called hypnagogia in the medical literature, and it is essentially trivial hallucination. Instead, what happened was there was an encounter with what can only be described as an elf hive, a colony of self-transforming, hyperdimensional machine creatures that came bounding forward with joyful squeaks to dribble themselves like self-transforming jeweled basketballs on the floor in front of me, and I was dumbstruck with amazement. Occasionally people ask me 'Is DMT dangerous?', and I think the honest answer is 'only if you fear death by astonishment'. Well, I was astonished, -- I mean, I was an intellectual of the Hegel/Camus crowd when I went through that violet scintillating doorway, and I came out a true believer. Because these creatures in this place are filled with a kind of zany, affectionate, reckless humour and a desire to communicate with human beings, or at least with me in that moment. And what they were doing and how they were communicating was by generating, through their songs, objects, so that what I was surrounded by was a crowd of diminutive, self-transforming blobs of intentionalised ectoplasmic material, and they were producing out of their bodies objects which looked like Faberge eggs or exquisitely-tooled machines made of ivory, glass, and gemstone that were themselves undergoing some kind of transformation, emitting musical sounds, condensing liquid metal out of the air and causing it to rain down on us. Well, my reaction to this was to go into a kind of shock of amazement and, you know, it raises fairly profound questions, like number one, 'Surely I must be dead, surely no-one can have this experience and return intact'. I mean, because, you see, it exceeds imagining, it is beyond your imagining -- even when you're looking at it, you attempt to pour the salutary waters of description over these transdimensional objects and it runs, language runs off them like water off a duck's back. And the emotional content of this kind of encounter is tremendously intense.

These things are attempting to communicate a new dispensation of the Logos. They are holding out the possibility that language need not be processed by the ears, that language can become, under certain radical situations of neurological perturbation, visible, that literally the word condenses into visible space, and they were urging me to do this. They were urging me to experiment with my voice and I discovered years later, taking Ayahuasca in the Amazon jungles, tribes of Indians that have actually mastered this art, and that saturate their bodies with DMT and harmaline, and then sing. But for them this singing is not a musical exercise, it's a pictorial exercise. They see what they intend. This is a kind of telepathy.

Well, it's humbling, it's transformative, it's astonishing to realize that shamans all over the world for time uncountable have been accessing this appalling, complex, ontologically challenging, scientifically impossible, reality. This means that culturally we are living out some kind of schizophrenic delusion, because we live our lives totally ignorant of these possibilities, or perhaps only glimpsing them at the edge of anesthesia, or something like that, unless, of course, we have the courage to be counter-cultural heads. But even then many people confine themselves in the private world of their own reflection because social pressure and, indeed, social legislation make it very touchy to talk about these things. But I say to you, this is part of the human birthright. This is as much a part of the game as birth, sex and dying.

Now, it may well be that there are kiliachasms(?) of time and that each individual is reincarnated time

after time after time, but I prefer to suppose not, and to entertain the idea that this life represents an enormous and improbable opportunity that is to be used for something, and the something that it is to be used for is to go out to the edge and explore. You know, you can stay within the conjured circle of scientific rationalism and ho-hum, mundane, secular, yuppiehood, but the method that worked for me was to adore, pursue and obsess on the bizarre, the peculiar, the outre. Somewhere there's an alchemical text which says 'The highest mountains, the widest deserts, the oldest books, there you will find the stone', and what I would like to suggest to you is that of all the methods, tools, points of view, ideologies, and so forth that you will meet when you begin your catalogue of the edge material, the psychedelic dimension is the ne plus ultra of that dimension. Most spiritual seeking is done with the accelerator pressed to the floor. Once you encounter psychedelics you have found the answer. Now the name of the game changes. No longer the ever-eager ingenue hanging on the guru's latest iron whim. Now you have to face the answer. It's not a matter of blithely seeking, it's a matter of screwing your courage to the sticking point, because the tool has been placed into your hand that will work, that will deliver the goods. You know, people tend to complain there's no adventure left in the world, the world is devoid of challenge. I say to you 'five grams in silent darkness in the confine of your own apartment on a rainy Sunday evening and you'll feel that Ferdinand Magellan should take a back seat'.

We tend, you see, to always imagine the challenge rests with someone else. We have been made spectators to life by a disempowering view of ourselves carried to us by science and mass media. You know, you're supposed to identify with Madonna or Elvis or somebody, but the richness -- the inner richness -- of one's own being, because it cannot be bought and sold, is deemed worthless by the culture. We actually live in a de-humanising culture and, as you know, the consequences of a couple of thousand years of this kind of alienation are that now we face the potential death of the planet. We have invented a sin for which there isn't even a word in English that I am aware of, it's the sin of stealing the future from your own children.

How, then, faced with a mounting panoply of facts, studies and statements that point to imminent collapse of our ecosystem, our atmosphere and our social support system, how can we change our minds? If hortatory preaching could do it, then the Sermon on the Mount would have been the turning point. If horrifying displays of military stupidity could have done it, then Hiroshima would have been the turning point. We have to pharmacologically intervene. This is not a test. This is not a game. We do not have 500 years, we do not have a hundred years, we must awaken, and jolly quick, or evolution and planetary dynamics will write "finis" to our fragile effort to build a transcendent vehicle that would move us away from, you know, the mute present of the animal mind and into the realm of spirit, poetry, art, love and transcendence. The only thing that I am aware of that can work quickly enough to make this change are psychedelic substances. They are the only things I've ever seen turn somebody a hundred per cent around in the space of about five hours. On a global scale, this is the kind of remedy that we are seeking. Well, why then can we simply not apply it? The answer is that our problem arises out of our pathological commitment to ego, and ego is what is put at risk by psychedelic compounds.

I believe Tim Leary once said -- although he denies it, but it's so brilliant it's worth repeating -- that LSD is a substance which occasionally causes psychotic behaviour in people who have not taken it. This is the problem we're dealing with. These psychedelic substances cause hysterical psychoses in people who have not taken them, and how then do you talk them down out of their tree and attempt to convince them that this is all well and good? Well, it isn't easy. It isn't going to come from the upper echelons of the establishment, this revolution in thinking, it's going to come from youth, it's going to come from people who stand outside the system and can see its contradictions. Well, is it simply a political evolution,

revolution, a desire for more freedom, less entanglement with bureaucracy and restriction of civil rights? I don't think so. I think that when we analyze carefully the content of the psychedelic experience we have to leave our previous models behind.

The psychedelic experience is far more than instant psychotherapy or instant regression to infantile traumatic situations, far more than simply a kind of super-aphrodisiac, far more than simply an aid in formulating ideas or coming up with artistic concepts. What the psychedelic experience really is, is opening the doorway into a lost continent of the human mind, a continent that we have almost lost all connection to, and the nature of this lost world of the human mind is that it is a Gaian entelechy. It turns out, if we can trust the evidence of the psychedelic experience, that we are not the only intelligent life forms on this planet, that we share this planet with some kind of conscious mind -- call it Gaia, call it Zeta Reticulians who came here a million years ago, call it God Almighty, it doesn't matter what you call it, the fact of the matter is that the claims of religion that there is some kind of higher power can be experientially verified through psychedelics. Now this is not, in Milton's wonderful phrase 'The God who hung the stars like lamps in heaven' -- it doesn't have to do with that, in my opinion -- it isn't cosmic in scale, it's planetary in scale. There is some kind of disincarnate intelligence. It's in the water, it's in the ground, it's in the vegetation, it's in the atmosphere we breath, and our unhappiness, our discomfort, arises from the fact that we have fallen into history and history is a state of benighted ignorance concerning the real facts of how the world works. You see, minded human beings existed for a hundred thousand years before what we call history. I believe that in the Saharan plains of Africa, through the use of psilocybin mushrooms -- at first unconsciously and then with conscious intent -- boundaries were erased. The previous several million years of primate hierarchy and male dominance were chemically medicated out of existence and men and women lived in relationships of respect and balance with each other, with their children, with the earth, with other human groups, and that this is the memory of paradise that accounts for our deep nostalgia for the past. It isn't a psychological mirage, it's real, there was a great mystery and it was lost, and we are the impoverished children who have inherited this situation of loss and abandonment, because you see the very forces which created the mushroom paradise in the grasslands of Africa, that same force which was the climatological drying out of the African continent and much of the rest of the planet, eventually turned those grasslands to desert and at that point, under nutritional pressure and with mushrooms a fading memory, agriculture was invented, paternity -- male paternity -- was discovered. And once male paternity is discovered there is tremendous anxiety on the part of males to control the behaviour of females and, as you know, this is not easy, and so consequently social discord arises. You see, what happened was for perhaps as long as two hundred thousand years, the presence of psilocybin in the diet and the environment suppressed ego and so a human relationship to the earth and to other people was possible, and during that time religion, altruism, sense of community, loyalty, all these things I mentioned, came to be. When the mushroom faded, those suppressed atavistic animal behaviours returned, men became territorial, women became property, children became chattel, and the unifying mushroom celebrations and the great lunar orgiastic ceremonies that accompanied the worship of the Goddess -- that all was suppressed and we marched off into history, a nightmare journey, that carries us to today.

And so you see, I see this whole business of the twentieth century as having the psychedelic experience as its centrepiece, as a cultural icon, but surrounding that are all the other impulses to the archaic that surround us now. It begins as far back as impressionism, which deconstructs the realistic image of the romantics, and then you get Freud's discovery of the unconscious, he points out that we are not victorian ladies and gentlemen but dark thoughts split behind our eyelids, that we are obsessed with sexuality, with fecal matter -- you know the list. Following Freud comes Jung, who carries it a step further, introduces the

notion of a race mind, racial consciousness, archetypes. Working in a slightly different area, people like Picasso journey to Africa and return to Paris with the masks of tribal peoples which then begin to feed into the theories of analytical and synthetic cubism. Simultaneously, the quantum physicists are announcing that the orderly billiard ball world of the Hamiltonian atom has to be replaced with wave mechanical functions of excruciating complexity, then you get, you know, in short order, I don't know, abstract expressionism, rock and roll, the outbreak of communal lifestyles of the 1960s -- you see, I think all of these cultural phenomena can be placed under the umbrella of what I call 'an archaic revival'. This is what house music is, this is what the psychedelic rebirth is, this is what the new cyber-tribalism is, and at the centre of this the sparkplug, the necessary element, the sine qua non, if you will, is the psychedelic experience, because it's not an ideology, it's not something that you get from Baba if you clean up around the ashram for a few years, it doesn't come to you from some beady-eyed roshi, rishi, geshe, or guru. It's a direct relationship between you and the plant, between you and nature, and when you open yourself up to this you discover that this is the secret that was lost and how they keep the lid on this I really haven't the faintest idea. This is the biggest news around. I mean, if flying saucers were to land on the front lawn of Buckingham Palace tomorrow, it would be less interesting than your next DMT trip -- to you -- because the DMT trip happens to you. The other, the Guardian or the Economist conveys it to us, and I suppose most of us imagine this is how the news of transformation will arrive. I don't think so. It's not going to come over the tele, it's going to come up from the toes, out of the earth, through your groin, into your heart and up to your brain. This is where the empowerment comes from, and until we begin to decondition ourselves from the images that we are obtaining from the dominator culture we will always be its creatures and it keeps us in a state of infantile delusion. I mean, we are not playing with a full deck unless we integrate into our psychology the presence of the psychedelic experience. Is it terrifying? You bet it's terrifying. Will it change your life forever? You bet, you'll never be the same. The analogy I like to make is to sexuality because the idea of someone going from birth to the grave without ever having a psychedelic experience is to me a notion that makes me as edgy as the idea of someone going from the birth to the grave without ever having a sexual experience. It means you never really rolled up your sleeves and played in the game. You were a spectator, you were a silent witness, you slid through, and you then did not empower yourself to act to reclaim the historical process, because the reclamation of the historical process comes through a commitment to a return to the atavistic through the direct transformation of experience, you see. This is not an ideology, there is no dogma, there are no rules, this is not a menu of moral prescription, this is something that happens between you and this transcendental reality.

Now, I believe that what shamans, including modern cyber-shamans, see when they ascend to the psychedelic heights is actually the viewpoint that we would have if we could penetrate into another dimension -- and I use the word in the mathematically formal sense. You know, Plato said 'Time is the moving image of eternity'. Well, I believe that what the shaman sees is the End, and that this gives the shaman a tremendous self-confidence, a tremendous existential validity, so that he or she can then return and take their place among the rest of us and be a source of inspiration, of a transcendent exemplar.

Well, what is the nature of this End which is seen? Well, mmm, this is where we part company with orthodoxy, if you think we hadn't already -- I think we have entirely misunderstood the character of time. We are not being pushed by the force of causal necessity, we, we human beings, are reacting to the siren song of the transcendental object at the end of time. We are on a collision course with an event for which there is hardly language. We are on a collision course with a temporal vortex of some sort. It has become a cliché of modern parlance and journalism that time is speeding up, that history is moving faster and faster. I take this perception very seriously, because I actually take all perception very seriously. I would always

prefer a direct perception than a theoretical construct, and so I would like to suggest to you that what is happening on this planet is that time is being speeded up in our species, we are under the influence of a kind of strange attractor which is moving us through the temporal medium at an ever-faster accelerating rate. This is a law of the universe, though not one recognised by science. (Hopefully, I will change that sad state of affairs.) Because you can see that the early universe immediately after the hypothesised 'Big Bang', was an incredibly simple place. There were no organisms, there were no molecules, there were not even atoms, there was only a pure plasma of electrons and as the universe cooled, levels of complexity crystallised out successively, each one building on the previous level of complexity, so eventually the temperature in the universe dropped low enough that electrons could settle into stable orbits around atomic nuclei. Well, in that case, then you get atomic physics. Those atoms condensed into stars and eventually the temperature and pressure in the centre of those stars was sufficient to trigger fusion and heavier elements, like iron and sulphur and carbon, are then cooked out of these stars. Well, then once you have carbon, with its four-valent quality, you have the possibility of molecular complexity, an entirely new domain of complexification. Well, not to belabour the point, but quickly out of molecules come highly complex polymers, out of highly complex polymers come early replicating molecules, from them prokaryotes (the earliest living cells, non-nucleated), then the nucleated cells, the eukaryotes, then clusters of colonies, colonies of cells, the earliest organisms, then more complex organisms, eventually higher animals. Out of them, binocular, bipedal primates with an opposable thumb. Out of them, language-using, mushrooms-using, orgiastic humans. Out of them, history, cities, warfare, hierarchies, writing, mathematics, music, and in the twentieth century this all knits together into some kind of global organism. Now, the horror of science is that it denies the importance of this phenomenon...

... this phenomenon at all. For science, the most important phenomenon in the universe is the move toward heat-death and entropy. They barely notice that life represents an amazing and persistent exception to the rule that all thermal dynamic systems run down, life has achieved the miracle of a stability far from entropy through the miracle of metabolism.

Well, notice that in this little scenario I sketched out where complexity emerges out of simpler states, that each ascent to the next order occurs more quickly than the process before it so that we are in a kind of tightening spiral, one of William Butler Yates's gyres, we are wrapping ourselves around a cosmic endpoint of some sort, and this is what I call the transcendental object at the end of time. It beckons across the dimensions, it throws an enormous shadow over the enterprise of human history. This is what drives the guru to make his statement, this is what kindles the messiah to his mission, this is what inspires the painter and the dreamer and the musician, it's that there is this enormous source of affection and concern for humanity that is calling us toward it, across the planes of lower-dimensional time and space. And the miracle is that through perturbing our neurochemistry in ways which shamans have always done, we can turn to the last page, as it were, and we can see then that all this process was actually toward a good cause. We are moving toward the most profound event a planetary ecology can encounter. We are about to witness the freeing of life from the chrysalis of matter. This is what our privilege and our destiny is, is to be the final generation of people with one foot in the material realm of the battered primate and one foot on the ladder to godhood.

And I asked the mushroom once about the social chaos at the end of history, and the mushroom said 'No worry, bro. This is what it's like when a species departs for hyperspace.' There's a little shimmy in the landing zone as we take off. So the metaphor that I have created to try and calm people and to make it possible for us to go into this future with dignity and hope -- which I think is the only appropriate response

-- is the metaphor of birth. If you had never heard, if no one had ever informed you, of the facts of life, and you were suddenly to come around the corner and encounter a woman in the act of giving birth, this situation vibrates medical emergency -- blood is being shed, clearly there's a great deal of physical pain and agony, pleading, a sense of helplessness, it looks as though an enormous tumour is metastasizing out of someone's body. It would be a real leap of faith and understanding to be able to contemplate that for the first time and to know or to guess that this is how nature does it, this is how we move to the next higher level, this is what is happening to us. Matter and the human body is the placenta of the soul and it is certainly true that the earth is the cradle of the human race, but no infant remains in the cradle forever. Again, to harp back to the birth metaphor, if it's time for birth to occur and it doesn't occur, then you do have medical emergency, what's called toxemia sets in, dangerous to the mother, fatal to the foetus, the two must be medically parted jolly quick or there will be permanent repercussions. This is why we must aid this birth process, because it is painful, life is sculpted out of death and the feeling that we as a species have in this moment is the feeling that the foetus has, I think, as it moves into the narrowest neck of the birth canal. Gone forever are the endless amniotic oceans of peace and tranquillity when we could rape and pillage and burn and explore to our heart's content because the earth seemed infinite in extent. Now, we have the same feeling that the foetus has as it starts down the birth canal -- we can't breathe, there's no oxygen, we can't get food, we appear to be ... the walls are moving in to crush us.

What we have to understand is that this is the narrow neck that we have been trained for, this is our destiny, nine times in the last two million years the ice has moved southward from the poles, miles deep. Your ancestors, my ancestors, were there, they didn't drop the ball, and they didn't have antibiotics and advanced medical technology to see them through. Think of how much suffering and how much nobility and how much love has gone in to getting you to this moment. You represent an unbroken chain of responsible, intelligent, coherent people and it ends in us, and so then Tolstoy's question 'What is to be done?'

What is to be done? What we have to do is swallow hard, in a similar way that the Russians had to swallow hard, and admit we did it wrong, we did it wrong, and now the only way out is back, we must return to the archaic world of shamanism, mutual respect among men and women, a sense of seamless cohesion with the living world. If this is not done, then the experiment fails. Blake talks about falling from the golden spire into eternal death. This is a real possibility. This is the realm of existential decision, and it's not about confronting the government with massive force or publishing hortatory tracts or any of that, it's about doing larger doses more frequently and discussing it with one's friends. Perhaps this will develop into a much larger movement than it is, I'm not really interested in that, I'm interested in deepening the experience of the core peerage and that's the people who are here tonight -- none of us are loaded enough, at least I haven't met anybody who is and I certainly am not -- we must live the faith that we are trying to promulgate because it is done, as every shaman knows, by example, and therefore I would like to suggest to you, since we look pretty much like everybody else or a slice of everybody else wandering around in London today, that you look around at the people in this room, this is your peer group, you know, we are not of the same class, of the same colour, we have not originated from a particular line, but we are an affinity group and in the same way that every affinity group, every coherent social entity has had to claim its place in the sun, we have to claim our place in the sun. They're not handing out freedom to anybody, they're not handing out social respect to anybody -- ask black people, ask gay people -- the only way you get respect in this respect in this society is you take it, and I think this is the cusp upon which the psychedelic community now teeters. We were here before in the '60s and when they came with machine guns we just melted into the woodwork, nobody was ready for that, so now there must be a new strategy by

stealth, by worming from within, we're not dropping out here, we're infiltrating and taking over because it's our world and our children's world and we're not going to see it run over the edge by a bunch of constipated gentlemen -- that's not the plan.

Well, I think I've run over here a bit, not too much, but I just want to reiterate to you because it puzzles me and it's the compass of my existence. This is not shut and jive, this is not another Swami or Baba or anything like that, those of you who doubt me I'd like to point out to you that DMT only lasts 10 minutes and I think it would be obligatory on anyone who thought they were going to carry out a critique of this position to just get that experience under their belt and once that is done rather than carry on a critique, I think most people will join up, because this is incontrovertible evidence, incontrovertible evidence of the presence of the transcendental in our lives. That's what I was seeking, never dreaming that I would find it. By the time I was on the threshold of it, I didn't believe in it, you know, I had accepted all that marxist crap and all that existential stuff and the reductionism of science and the rules of evidence and all this stuff they hurl at you, that's all malarkey. The thought I would like to leave you with tonight, which you can verify for yourself in the confines of your own flat later, is the world is not only stranger than you suppose, it is stranger than we can suppose, and I tell you that gives a lot of permission for supposing.

[question from audience -- inaudible] Well, we're going to have a question and answer session here -- I hope you're first off the mark because that's what I'd like to talk about. The format for this evening is we're going to have about a 20 minute intermission so you can stretch your legs and exercise your consumer rights over at the book table, and we'll be hearing a couple of rave cuts that my voice has been slyly integrated into. First of all, these are -- this is an exclusive premier, by the way, these records will not be released until later this year -- re-evolution by the Shaman and tribal drifts version of Shaman I Am. So let's take a....Question and Answer Time Q: [inaudible] TM: The question is 'What do I think psychedelics have...' Q: No, no, what do you think happens to us after physical death? TM: Yes, well, my answer would have to be based on psychedelic experience. I described in my talk this encounter with these self-transforming...self-transforming machine elves. And, you know, if you take this kind of experience seriously to the point where you actually feel an obligation to produce a rational explanation, then it would seem to me that in spite of its radical nature, the most conservative explanation that you could come up with as to the nature of these entities is that since they are intelligent, since they seek to communicate with human beings, perhaps they are human beings. And then the only kind of human being they could be is a dead human being and, you know, even I found that a bit of an intellectual stretch to imagine that what the push toward scientific rationalism was going to eventually lead to was an erasing of the distinctions between the living and the dead. But when you go to shamans and expose them to DMT and then say, 'So what about it?', they say 'Well, these are the ancestors. Didn't we tell you that we do our stuff by ancestor magic?' And then you have to say 'Well, then, aha, now I'm getting the picture'. An ancestor is a dead person, but you know in the DMT state, these things don't... it isn't Aunt Mini and Uncle Ned, these are far removed from any association to us and our world. You know, when Patrick converted the pagan Irish, he invented the doctrine of purgatory that had previously not been church dogma and he invented the notion of purgatory to convince the pagan Irish that their belief in fairyland in a nearby dimension inhabited by diminutive dead soles could be assimilated to Christian dogma, and this worked so successfully that then it was accepted as general church dogma and very successfully used to convert Slavic people as well.

So I think ... you know that line by W. B. Yates about 'Once out of nature I would be a thing of gold and gold enameling'? It's as though the transcendental object at the end of time which the shaman encounters, and the individual apocalypse of the human soul at death are mirror images of one another -- as above so

below. That's why I'm always amused that people resist the idea of the end of the world, when you can be damn sure that their world is going to end, because some day they're going to slip beneath the sod, so we find the end of the world incredible and improbable as a notion, but it's actually guaranteed for every one of us. As far as, you know, any tried and true data on the after death state, I really couldn't say. My style is more to model and then to hope to improve models later. I did turn on a very high Tibetan Lama to DMT once, and he said after settling back on his heels 'It's the lesser lights'. What it meant for him was that it was a kind of near-death experience. He said 'You can't go further than that without the thread of return being broken'. So, you know, I think DMT is an excellent tool for studying death. I think there is very little reason to rule out the possibility that something survives physical death because nature is so economical, and with such variety of form, can memory and the perfection of the individual personality be all for naught? I'm not sure, I don't know, certainly it's an interesting question. I think, you know, a deeper definition of what a psychedelic life is, is that it's a life lived in constant preparation for death, the big trip, you know, you want to learn the way. This is what the shamans say, they say, you know, 'We're living people, who can go to and from the after world and this empowers us in a very special way'. Now, I need another question, but I can't see anybody.

Q: Do you still believe ??? in 2012?

TM: Do I still believe in the apex of novelty in the year 2012? Well, for those who aren't familiar with my work, when I talked tonight about the spiral of involution and the way in which each advancement into novelty happens more rapidly, I was not just whistling Dixie. I have a mathematic formulism which I chose not to bore you with tonight -- and you should be thankful I assure you -- which leads me to the conclusion that rather than a Big Bang at the beginning, 10, 12, 19 billion years ago, a more pleasing cosmology would be what I call 'the Big Surprise'. And the Big Surprise comes not emerging out of a pure vacuum for no reason, but the big surprise emerges out of the integration of complexity into one final holographic spin-down of all dimensions into a single point. I crib from your own Alfred North Whitehead informing these ideas, because Whitehead had this idea of what he called 'conrescence' and he said, you know, that the universe had an appertition for novelty, an appetite for novelty that moved toward a nexus of conrescence, and I believe that, yes, we are so close to the transcendental object at the end of time that really it is going to occur probably in late 2012. The reasons for being so specific are too complex to go into now, but I'll just give you a short of throw-away explanation which is that's the end date of the Mayan calendar. That's not why I chose it, but I later, after choosing this date, discovered it was the end date of Mayan calendar. Well, the only thing I have in common with the Maya, they took mushrooms and I take mushrooms, so it's almost as though, you know, this is the bar code stamped on the psilocybin paraphoniae, when you get it all pieced together, no matter where in time and space you are, there's this vector pointing at the early years of the 21st century as the place where we, where it becomes explicit that we are in a process of exponential transformation.

I mean, to me it's explicit already. I mean, I cannot deal with a city like London or Manhattan without saying, you know, measured against the background of organic nature, this represents some fantastic mutational phenomenon. I mean whether it's good, whether it's bad, who knows, but it certainly is peculiar and it certainly is happening very very quickly. That's why I think that it's a bunch bum(?) to think that you're suspended in a universe which will endure into some unimaginable future. As I mentioned a moment ago, each one of us is going to die, rather soon, so why not assume that whatever that transformation is it will be general, and then prepare to meet it as a collectivity, not the death of the rationalist and the reductionists where we return to worms, but, you know, the death of Blake and of

Revelations and of the Tao Te Ching and the Tibetan Book of the Dead -- the death that is victory, the transcendence of matter. That's what death is, and what we need now for the good of the planet and for ourselves is to somehow find a doorway into the imagination, that's where the future lies. Our powers have grown too great to be unleashed on the surface of a fragile planet.

Q: ??

TM: Oh, dear, you know cannabis.

Q: ??

TM: Well let me answer that. The question is that I urged higher doses and greater frequency, and the question is: do I really think that endlessly revisiting these places has something to be said for it. Is that a fair re-phrase of it? Yeah. Well, I don't find these places readily rationally apprehensible. I go back and look again and again and I'm astonished every time, but I'm willing to entertain the possibility that I may be a bit slow. The thing about it is that it exceeds intellectual grasp, you know, you finally come against something where you say 'This is not an unsolved problem, this is a mystery, it will not yield to closure'. And one of the things I'm fascinated by is I think that the way we need to live -- or that's maybe too strong -- the way we need to mentally balance our karmic accounts is to not seek closure, to Understand -- for heaven's sake, I mean you're a talking monkey, where is it writ large that you should be able to model the cosmos in all its complexity and glory? Better than having an anxiety about the absence of a complete explanation, we need to live in the open-ended, risky but exhilarating domain of openness and just, you know, live your life under the shadow of the great 'who knows', because the tales that were told are fairy tales. Science is a fairy tale, you know, economics is a fairy tale, political theory a fairy tale -- nobody has the faintest idea what's going on. We are not in command of the situation at all. That, in one way, is empowering, because it means, in the words of the dourest philosopher, Ripo Yang(?) 'Worry is preposterous'. So all I would say to address your question operationally is, if raising the dose isn't making it more interesting for you, then, you know, maybe you should found a side branch of the church, because to me it's an ocean, you know, and my mind is a thimble and I go to the ocean and it's crashing in. I'm actually like an ant with a thimble, attempting to fill that thimble from incoming surf -- risky business, what? -- and each time I take away a little bit, but the richness of it, as I said, I think it exceeds the grasp of apprehension. Somebody else -- or did you, did you had a two-part question.

Q: [inaudible]

TM: The question is: do I really think this stuff poses... god, what a question to ask. It's like if I wasn't dangerous before, I will be after I answer this question. The question is: do I really think this stuff has a political efficacy, or is it just some kind of elitist masturbatory artschool trip that isn't taking us anywhere? Yes, I absolutely believe that the issue is a maintenance of social boundaries and that this is done through conditioning and propaganda, not rationally contrived because it's been going on too long, it's just how we are. We are conditioned to submit to powerful male figures, we are conditioned to value the material world over the inner world, we are conditioned to chase money, all of these things, and these.. you see, if you don't take psychedelics -- or at least in my case, there may be other ways to reach this -- but in my case, if I didn't take psychedelics I would believe that culture is truth. Culture is not truth. Culture is other people's trash, you know, the detritus of thousands of years of mistakes, that's what culture is, and I think [applause]... So, as to why I'm allowed to walk around and advocate this stuff, well, first of all have you

noticed I use big words? That stamps me as an intellectual, the most pitiful creature in the human zoo and never to be feared by any power or establishment anywhere. No, I think basically the powers that be and the structures that are in place are like a dinosaur.

Q: ??

TM: Pardon me?

Q: ??

TM: Do I feel that they're going to carry on regardless? No, because you see, what's happening is that the contradictions in their system are reaching epidemic proportions. The people who run, I don't know, the Bank of England, the IMF, the UN Security Council, whoever, they have studies sitting on their desks which tell me that business as usual has been removed from the menu, that in fact the atmosphere is being destroyed, that in fact the planktonic life in the sea is in danger -- and that's the bottom of the food chain -- that in fact the toxic mess in the East Bloc -- radioactive and otherwise -- is insoluble at this point. So, you know, it's not heads who are alone in awakening to the fact that we are either headed for a nightmare of social collapse and catastrophe, or we are actually going to mutate toward angelhood, but, you know, blundering through, as we've done for the past thousand years, is no longer an option. Within the next 30 years we are going to have to discuss and contemplate things that would stand your hair on end and things that to people of another generation are going to seem incomprehensible. I mean, what are we going to do? Are we going to download ourselves into a supercooled cube of gold ytterbium alloy buried a thousand feet deep on the dark side of the moon and wander through an ersatz electronic wonderland forever? Are we going to atomize our consciousness and spread it to redwood trees and coral reefs and termite colonies? Are we going to build ships the size of Manitoba and depart for the galactic centre? What exactly is the plan folks, because business as usual is off the menu, and you know, in the '60s these substances were called consciousness expanding drugs, it was just a straight phenomenological description, consciousness expanding drug or substance. Well, if you take that notion seriously for a moment, then you need to stop and apply attention to this matter, because consciousness, the lack of consciousness is why we are going mad, because we cannot solve our problems. If there is one chance in ten thousand that these things actually increase in any measurable domain consciousness, then, by Henry, we should be leaning into it full bore, because if we don't get our act together, you know, the fossil record has a place for failed experiments and I'm not interested in that. [applause]

Q: ??

TM: No, I just think that's a description of the process I'm promoting from the point of view of someone who doesn't like it. The best and the brightest did desert the power structure because the power structure was essentially a merchant of plutonium, paranoia and mass death and propaganda. Yes, the values of Western civilisation are insupportable. The values of Western civilisation are held to the planet the way a madman holds a gun to his temple. That's what it's going to lead to. For instance, take something like free markets -- this is the clarion call of the politically correct at the moment. Free markets means the right to manufacture and sell junk everywhere, it means, you know, nobody will be able to say no. We don't want free markets, we want trade to be as difficult as possible and the more high tech and machined the object is the more we want to make it difficult to move it around, because what we must do -- and I'm not a luddite, I'm not anti-technology, I'm anti-materialism, we must dematerialise the accouterments of the

culture. I can imagine a world where people live in idyllic pastoral naturalism, naked with perfected ageless bodies, it looks like an aboriginal high Paleolithic existence, but when you transport yourself into these people's bodies and they close their eyes, what they see are menus hanging in mental space and these menus are generated by an object on the inside of their eyelid no larger than a contact lens and that object is a doorway for them into a virtual global culture that is electronically instantaneous, multi-levelled, multi-sensory, transformative, you know, the complete database of the species on call at a glance, and so forth and so on. This is a reasonable technological goal. If we cared for it as much as we care for atom bombs and epidemic diseases deliverable by artillery shell, we'd have it today. So, you know, the wrong dreams have been executed, the dreams of the paranoia, the psychotic and the dominator, and what we need now are dreams that celebrate consciousness, difference, variety and empower meaning, because the philosophies and the points of view of the last thousand years leave you with a mess of pottage, leave you with no explanation. Our religion as a culture is incomprehensible to 99 per cent of us. I mean, who would care to stride up here and solve a tensor equation? And yet that's, you know, the holy writ. We are completely alienated, so alienated from ourselves are we that when we encounter our own souls in the psychedelic dimension, we mistake it for a UFO. This is serious alienation folks, I think we have to get back into the inner jeweled realm and make ourselves at home there. Is there a woman? Yes.

Q: [female] Inaudible.

TM: Speak louder.

Q: [still inaudible -- but in connection with 'emotional hangups']

TM: Are you thinking of a particular substance?

Q: ??

TM: Well, you know, we have to genuflect to LSD for what it did in the '60s, but I'm into plants, and I found LSD to be abrasively psychoanalytical is how I would describe it.

Q: ??

TM: In your experience. In my experience it was very different. Mushrooms, if they address your personality at all, seem to do it very gently. LSD -I understand why the psychotherapeutic community was so excited because LSD really did seem to confirm the models of the psyche that were current at that time. I mean, you did experience childhood memories, often traumatic, and you did re-live painful experiences. I don't seek to imply that taking psychedelics is easy or pleasant. I think that the phrase 'recreational drug' is extraordinarily pernicious. It is a path requiring great courage and self-discipline because, you know, the fear can rise up and haunt you and, you know, these things can come at you that are completely unexpected -- ecstasy is not to be confused with mere delight. I mean, ecstasy shakes you to the very core of your being because it's a coincidentia positorum, you know, it is orgasmic and it is terrifying and it is transcendental and it is mundane. I mean, it exceeds categories, that's what it is, it's the experience of the melding and transcending of categories. I don't think everyone should take psychedelics. I think that people who instinctively fear it are self-diagnosing themselves as mad and therefore they shouldn't take it. They're right, they know, they know, believe them! Over here?

Q: Inaudible.

TM: Yes, I think you're quite right that it's a calling. Shamanism is the name of the calling and you know. You know whether you want to be an architect or a psychotherapist or a tennis star, and people know whether they want to be a Shaman, and those who do become exemplars for the rest of us. I don't think we need to make the mass revolution here, I think we need to empower a core group of people deeply and profoundly and that they know who they are. You self-select yourself, and make your way toward it over a lifetime. I mean, it is a path, and those receptors in your brain which make the psychedelic experience possible are, like everything else about you, under the control of your genes, so that it's reasonable to talk about affinities for this stuff, family lines where it is more commodiously integrated and received -- I think that's very real. We are biochemically unique, every single one of us, and this addresses that uniqueness. What these people who become the shamans must do is they must -- by impassioned speech, poetry, dance and theatrical display -- convey the feeling to other people. This is what the high Paleolithic was about, you know. We must share our art, we must open a doorway and some will pass through the doorway and some will stand and gaze through the doorway and some will only be enlivened by rumour of the doorway, but the doorway must be secured, made real. It's part of our birthright, it's the thing without which we are not ourselves. You know, I see history as the story of the prodigal son, we have wandered in the deserts of materialism now for two thousand years and our cataloguing, our relentless probing of the world, of the aboriginal, and the frontier of geography, has brought into our

TM: Okay, well I think of this talk as "Alchemical Youth on the Edge of the World", because I thought what we would do this morning is anticipate the psychedelic '90s, and talk a little bit about the youth culture that is emerging worldwide and some of the other considerations that the youth culture seems to be building bridges toward. Altogether, these various concerns seem to me to add up to a kind of neo-shamanism, or a kind of archaic revival of social forms, many of which have been suppressed for several millennia.

There are several facets to this new emerging psychedelic youth culture of the nineties. First of all, obviously, the ecology movement. This is something that was absent in the '60s, when the awareness of the approaching degradation and destruction of the natural environment had not advanced nearly as far as it has today. So there is a general awareness in the youth culture that its elders are handing on to it, a looted, polluted planet, in which very little planning or provision was made for the saving of resources for any future generation. So the ecology perception is part of the emerging social phenomenon as is feminism. Feminism has been with us now for about 15 years, but gone through various forms and rescissions and seems now to have taken the form that is very concerned to recover the religious attitudes that prevailed before patriarchy and history established themselves. In other words, we know that at some point in the past, 10 or 15 thousand years in the past, there was a partnership society which imaged its supreme deity as Gaia, a goddess of the Earth. And a re-awakening of the awareness of Gaia -- and this really goes to the ecology movement as well -- a reawakening of this feminine, ecological, earth-centred awareness is definitely feeding into the aesthetics of this new counter-culture that is arising. Now, another facet which is somewhat paradoxical and, perhaps on the surface, in seeming opposition to the concerns of ecology and feminism, is what I call "cyber-culture" or "hacker-culture". This means that a lot of people in the 16 to 30 year old bracket are very aware of the underground uses and applications of technology -- not only computers and virtual reality and game-making, but also desktop publishing, garage band rock and roll, and a counter-cultural record industry that often runs on very small pressings of very obscure groups and sounds. Nevertheless, this technological cyber-culture is what is making possible another facet of this

youth culture, which is a specialty music, a transformed rock and roll, a culture-wide re-invigorating of musical forms and, of course, driving that concern is the rediscovery of psychedelics. Psychedelics which were very big in the '60s in the form of LSD largely, were almost lost sight of in the '70s and the early '80s when the management-oriented yuppie culture came along. But now, with ecology, with feminism, with cyber-culture in place and cross-fertilising each other, psychedelics have become the natural glue for this movement, and they are largely plants. What is going on is an attempt to recapture the shamanistic institutions and styles that existed before history, and this means not only cannabis -- which has been with us throughout the 20th century, throughout all the counter-cultural and alternative moves of the 20th century -- but also largely mushrooms, mescaline, and so forth -- special emphasis probably being given to mushrooms because mushrooms have gone from being an obscure tropical deep-forest endemic to being something which can be cultivated in any garage or cellar in the land, and many people are doing this. It's sort of an odd fact about mushrooms that the qualities you need to take them are precisely the qualities that you will inculcate into yourself if you learn how to grow them -- punctuality, cleanliness, attention to detail, so forth and so on. I really think that the mushroom-growers within the new culture are the alchemists of the new culture; their formula is a rye to mould and mould to gold, and thank God for them, because they then create the juice that fuels the creativity of these other concerns that I've mentioned. Really, the psychedelics in my view should be seen as enzymes for the imagination or catalysts for language, and really what the new youth culture is attempting to do is to reclaim the language-forming machinery for itself. A culture can evolve no faster than its language evolves. What is unspeakable is unthinkable and consequently part of the task of the new spirituality of the neo-shamanism is to empower language to go into areas where it has never gone before, particularly the area of emotion. It's incredible how few words we have for our emotions when we have so very many words for even relatively obscure technical processes. So I see the psychedelics as functioning in two areas -- first of all to catalyse and empower the imagination and then, secondly, to dissolve boundaries between people. I mean, if you look at 25 thousand psychedelic experiences, the impression that you will have is this experience is one which dissolves people's boundaries -- it doesn't matter whether they're Hassidic Jew, a communist party apparatchik, a rainforest shaman -- if they expose themselves to these psychoactive psychedelic plants, they will call into question their most basic beliefs and assumptions. This is what gives the psychedelics their inevitable political edge, because the establishment and maintenance of boundaries is something that most societies are very concerned with and put a lot of energy into. This is why in the '60s the spread of LSD was viewed with such alarm by the Establishment, because it appeared that the machinery of right-thinking, Christian capitalist society was simply being dissolved before the startled eyes of its purveyors by virtue of the fact that so many people were calling into question the assumptions of the culture that they were inheriting.

Well, now we see something similar coming into being. Thirty years after the '60s we appear to be poised on the edge of another youth decade, another decade in which youth will set the social agenda for society at large and attempt to lead us away from some of the more lethal and self-destructive patterns that we seem to be so addicted to. Well, now, why is this happening right at the moment? Well, I prefer to think, rather than arguing rationally about it, that the reason the 20th century has been so repeatedly disrupted or enlivened -- depending on your point of view -- by these eruptions of the avant garde, the Bohemians, the beatniks, the hippies, the youth culture of today, is because unconsciously we are actually responding to the presence ahead of us in the future of what I call 'the transcendental object at the end of time' -- a kind of strange attractor, a kind of sociological black hole that reaches out to social processes in the act of evolving and puts a certain spin on them, calls them toward itself, so that history in the 20th century is not a random walk or a trendless fluctuation as we are taught in the academy. Rather, history in the 20th

century is a triumphal march toward the revelation of a transcendental object that lies beyond the turn of the century.

Every time we take a psychedelic compound, every time we slip into reverie, trance or dream, we form a relationship, we encounter in mental hyperspace, the long shadow of this transcendental object. It's as though we've been moving along a surface for a long time now, many centuries, and now we are about to undergo a phase transition or fall off the cusp of the phase space. And this falling off the cusp of the phase space is, for those who experience it, a dizzying sense of freedom, a dizzying sense of penetration into a dimension that was previously sensed and dreamed of but which very briefly and occasionally comes forward to be realised. It's a gold age, similar to the gold age of Greece or the renaissance, but for us it has a different character because this transcendental object ahead of us in time seems like a kind of condescension of all our hopes, fears and intuitions about what the future and the evolution of our species could become. This is, I believe, why the UFO has been such a persistent motif in 20th century popular culture. It's because we actually sense on the unconscious level a kind of approach of the end of time, a kind of closing distance between historical societies and some kind of truly mysterious, truly transcendental object that lies ahead of us in the future, in the near future. And again returning to the subject of the psychedelics, their role in all of this is that they seem to pick up and amplify that signal coming off this mysterious object hidden in the future, so that the contents of psychedelic experiences, when laid end to end in a composite, is to give a kind of picture of what this final scenario of global integration is going to be like. And though it is going to emerge as a phenomenon of culture, I think it will largely come out of not our cultural artifacts, not our technology, but out of human organisation itself. It's not for nothing that the self-transforming machine elves that one encounters on the other side of the DMT barrier, that what they seem to be concerned with is the teaching of invocation and forced evolution of human language. I think that somehow the part of human organisation that is most likely to undergo an evolutionary transition is the portion related to the production of language. Even ordinary language, which we take so for granted, when looked at from the perspective of the rest of animal nature, is seen to be something very close to the thumbprint of God on the human world. I mean, you can take your dolphins and your ants and compare them to a Grateful Dead song or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and it's clear that human communication is going on in a domain of glorification and completeness that is transcendently Other when compared to all other forms of communication going on in the world. Well, then, isn't it suggestive that when we use these tryptamine hallucinogens -- hallucinogens which are strangely enough analogous to neurotransmitters within our own brains -- that then what we burst through to is the equivalent of a kind of shamanic finishing school where self-transforming machine elves -- apparently the animal life of this parallel continuum -- are urging us to perform some kind of transformational act on our own language. Well, I had this experience for many years before I found anything in the world of human experience, ethnography, or art history that could be mapped onto it, and then in the early '70s I took myself to the Amazon and I discovered there groups of tribal people using a combinatory brew called Ayahuasca, a visionary brew made of giant woody liana called *Banisteriopsis caapi* and a small leafed plant containing DMT, called *Psychotria viridis*. And when these two plants are brought together and brewed together for many hours and then boiled and concentrated, a very powerful psychedelic substance results and the people in these deep forest, rainforest areas have been using this shamanic preparation for thousands and thousands of years. When it was first encountered in the early years of this century, the compound was isolated and actually called telepathene. This was to refer to the apparent group states of mind that the people using this brew were getting into. Well, later it was realised that the compound had previously been isolated from the giant Syrian rue, *Peganum harmala*, and that the compound had already been named harmaline, so telepathene disappeared from the literature in favour of harmaline. But the

thought is worth noting that from the very beginning the early explorers, ethnographers, anthropologists who contacted this folkway in the Amazon assumed that it had something to do with group states of mind. Well, what I discovered -- and I certainly wasn't the first to discover it -- in the Amazon in the early '70s, was the people in these tribal groups get together and they take Ayahuasca and their habit is to sing to make music, vocal music. They have no drums because in the Amazon the humidity is so high that no drum head could remain stretched more than a few hours. So the people use rattles and leaf shakers and vocal sound to produce what we would think of as beautiful tribal music. But what's interesting about this beautiful tribal music is after each performance, when you sit and listen to the people criticise the performance, they don't say that it sounded very good, they will inevitably make comments like 'I like the part with the silver bars and the blue dots, but I thought that the yellow could have been more intense, especially where it faded into the polka dot brown and grey section'. In other words, when you listen to these people in these native contexts criticise these performances, you realise that for them it's a visual performance, it's sound which, under the influence of these plants, is actually beheld, actually seen by the people within this culture.

Well, this was very exciting to me because, you see if you can see a situation from another person's point of view, in a sense you have become that other person; to stand in the other guy's shoes is to see the world from that person's point of view. It's a very different way of relating to language than the way we ordinarily do it. You see, the ordinary way in which human beings communicate is one person makes small mouth noises, the small mouth noises move across through the air as acoustical pressure waves, they then enter the mind brain system of another person and that person consults a culturally validated dictionary to see if their definitions overlap with the definitions of the person who created the sounds in the first place. Now, if there's sufficient overlapping, then we say that communication is taking place, that understanding is occurring, but it's always a very provisional and shaky kind of understanding. And as concepts become more complex, dictionaries become more incomplete and more divergent, and eventually two people of the same culture, they're discussing a highly technical question, may have no understanding of each other at all. Well, this is very different from the situation that arises if we could literally see what the other person means. It's not without implication for this argument that when we talk about perfecting communication, we unconsciously reach for visual metaphors, so someone will say 'I see what you mean', or 'She painted a picture', or 'his prose was luminous'. This means that we instinctively and unconsciously believe that meaning is something most clearly apprehended when seen, and one of the things that has excited me so much about the aboriginal use of psychedelic plants is they seem to be on the brink of evolving forms of communication which move out of the realm of acoustical neurological processing and into the realm of visual acoustical processing.

Well, this has tremendous implications for the new world order that the youth culture is seeking to put into place. Cyber-culture, music, psychedelics, feminism, ecology, the new spirituality, all of these concerns could profit and strengthen themselves by appealing to a visual language, a new way of processing what is heard. This is what I think art in the 20th century has unconsciously been striving for, ever since jazz and cubism and throughout the evolution of 12-tone row, abstract expressionism, rock'n'roll, pop-up virtual reality -- all of these schools of art and technological innovations in the art-making process are setting us up to be able to see what we mean at some point in the future. And this will deliver us essentially into the equivalent of a telepathic society. Now, you may have imagined telepathy as something different, you may have imagined it as one person speaking and another person hearing the thought composed, but this isn't it. Telepathy will be nothing more than seeing what the other person intends -- seeing meaning.

Now, why it is that when we dose ourselves with a human neurotransmitter like DMT, why we then encounter armies of elves teaching us a perfected form of communication, this is a very difficult question. When you go to traditional cultures, shamanistic cultures in the Amazon and put this question to them, they answer without hesitation when you ask about these small entities, they say 'Oh, yes, those are the ancestors, those are the ancestor spirits with which we work all of our magic'. This is worldwide and traditionally the answer that you would get from shamans if you were to ask them how they do their magic -- it's through the intercession of the helping spirit who is a creature in another dimension. Well, we may have imagined many different scenarios, a future technological and social innovation, but I think very few of us have imagined the possibility that the real programme of shamanism would have to be taken seriously, and that shamans are actually people who have learned to penetrate into another dimension, a dimension where, for want of a better word, we would have to say the souls of the ancestors are somehow present. It isn't, you see, as though we penetrate into the realm of the dead, it's more as though we discover that this world is the realm of the dead and that there is a kind of higher-dimensional world with greater degrees of freedom, with a greater sense of spontaneity and a lesser dependency on the entropic world of matter, and that that other universe is attempting to impinge into our own, perhaps to rescue us from our historical dilemma, we don't know -- perhaps shamans have always had commerce with these magical invisible worlds and it's only the sad fate of Western human beings to have lost touch and awareness with this domain to the point where it comes to us as a kind of a revelation. You see, I believe that the whole fall into history, the whole rise of male dominance and patriarchy really can be traced to a broken connection with the living world of the Gaian mind, and there's nothing airy-fairy about this notion; the living world of the Gaian mind is what shamans access through psychoactive plants, and without psychoactive plants that access comes as an unconfirmable rumour. I believe that the social style of human beings 15 to 20 thousand years ago was very very different from the social styles of today. In the first place, people were nomadic pastoralists, they didn't stay in one fixed area, but rather they followed around behind their flocks. And there, in the manure of these ungulate animals that had evolved with the primates on the grasslands of Africa, was the mushroom, and the mushroom was acting as a tremendous force for directing the evolution of human beings away from that of the rest of the anthropoid apes and toward the unique adaptation that we see as special to human beings today. It was doing this through a series of self-reinforcing tendencies that are easily enough understood. First of all, when you take small amounts of psilocybin, such small amounts that no psychological experience is apparent at all, there is a measurable increase in visual acuity. Well, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to realise that if a hunting animal is in a situation of high competition for resources and there is an object, a food item in the food chain, which imparts increased visual acuity, then those animals which admit that item into their diet are going to outbreak the non-mushroom-using population and gain a significant advantage by this means. Well, it doesn't stop there. If slightly larger doses of psilocybin are taken, still sub-psychedelic doses, you get what is called CNS arousal, central nervous system arousal. Now all this means is a sense of restlessness, an inability to sit still, a sense of energy and -- the classical meaning of arousal -- sexual arousal. What this means then is that those animals in the population that were more successful at hunting and at obtaining food because they were taking small amounts of psilocybin are now going to act out what primatologists call 'more successful instances of copulation'. This means a lot more sexual activity is going on and wherever you have sexual activity, it stands to reason you're going to have increased instances of impregnation and successful birthing. So, the second factor which builds on the first factor is the mushroom-using population will tend to outbreed the non-mushroom population, and it will tend, then, to survive into adulthood in greater numbers because of the greater increased success in hunting. The third and final factor, then, which pushed these mushroom-using primates into a position of ascendancy, is [that] psilocybin at the psychedelic dose level actually stimulates the areas of the brain that are concerned with

the production of language, so you get spontaneous glossolalia, spontaneous bursts of modulated syntactically structured sound, and I believe probably that language was invented long before meaning as a kind of abstract exercise around the camp fire, that these homonoids and protohomonoids were doing for each other's amusement. So there you have a three-step process -- increased visual acuity means increased success at getting food, further doses of psilocybin mean more sexual activity with more instances of successful impregnation and birthing of offspring and, finally, contact with the language-catalysing psychedelic tremendum that even for people as sophisticated as ourselves looms as the most tremendous, shocking and challenging mystery in our world. We have always been caught up in the anticipation of the unspeakable. The human adventure has always been a flirtation with these gigantic forces in an unseen dimension. This is what sets our religions going, this is what creates gurus and messiahs and scientific breakthroughs, it's that somehow we are in resonance with something much larger than ourselves, something which you could call the great attractor, the transcendental object at the end of time, the Gaian mind, whatever it is, we, out of all of nature, seem to have a special relationship to it and seem to be somehow both under its care and somehow involved in the manifesting of it in 3-dimensional space. It's that as we make our way across the historical landscape toward the sensed presence of this transcendental other, so it is making its way toward us through the content of dreams, psychedelic experiences, the careers of spiritually advanced people, -- the idea being that history, which is a state of extreme instability and disequilibrium which only lasts 15 or 20 thousand years, that history is about to be transformed or ended, that the factors that shaped history -- phonetic alphabets, male dominance, materialism, scientific method, empiricism -- these factors are about to be made obsolete by discoveries in the human and natural realm.

We, we the people of the high-tech civilisations, are like the prodigal son. We made a descent into matter. We have wandered many years in the wilderness. Now, in a time of great planetary crisis, we must return to the tribal fold. We must take what we learned from the peregrination into history and return to the tribal model with it. Only in that way, then, can we reclaim our sexuality, reclaim our identities and reclaim the planet for itself. The styles that have evolved within history, the styles of male dominance, concern for tracing male lines of paternity, private property, control of females, so forth and so on, all this has arisen as a result of the establishing and maintaining of the ego. The ego is the function of the personality that is most at home and at ease within the context of history, but really this is not a situation of mental health, the ego is like a calcareous tumour that arises within the dynamics of the psyche and lodges like a cancer or a tumour in the structures of the psyche. And the only cure or the only treatment that I am aware of for the calcareous tumour of ego is frequent repeated exposure to psychedelic plants. This is the essence of their boundary-dissolving function, and 12 to 20 thousand years ago the ordinary style of human society was, as I said, nomadic pastoralism and psychedelic intoxication on a schedule that was very probably lunar, so reclaiming that orgiastic boundaryless style of sexual relating is part of what the archaic revival is about. Obviously, with a population of six or seven billion people, we can't seriously suggest that we return to the sexual styles of a group of nomadic pastorilists on the plains of Africa who numbered probably no more than 50 or 60 people, but we can understand that the ego is a function that has arisen, in a sense, to empower our most lethal tendencies. Because as we look at the Earth as it exists today, with rising levels of toxicity and pollution and arms proliferation and so forth and so on, there are no problems that cannot be solved -- we have the technology, we have the money, we have the industrial capacity, what we don't have is the plan and will to execute the plan.

So really the change that we and the groaning planet are waiting for is a change in the human mind. It's the human mind that must change and then the tools for the restructuring that must be done will be found

present and near at hand and, as far as I can tell, we don't have centuries or millennia in which to do this change and if preaching alone could have inspired it, it would have occurred several millennia ago. What we must look for is a catalyst that is effective, not on the easy cases but on the hard cases, and when we carry out an analysis of that sword, what we're going to find is psychedelic shamanism is the traditional human response to our dilemma. We must dissolve the boundaries of yours and mine, of inside and outside, even of life and death. We must dissolve these linguistically conferred boundaries and replace them with a sense of the universal flow of energy through a series of vibrating and resonant fields of being. This is the core philosophy that lies behind Shamanism, Buddhism, Taoism, this is the perception of the perennial philosophy, and I believe that using the lessons of the 20th century -- what was learned at Auschwitz and in the Haight-Ashbury, and at Alamogordo and Nagasaki -- using the lessons of the 20th century, the new youth culture can at least create a viable human alternative. We're approaching the change of the millennium, we're about to go into the third millennium, and we can actually use the change in the calendar as the wind beneath our wings to lift us to a new vision of global completeness and of species and planetary holism that will then leave us the fitting inheritors of the birthright of the elfin empowerment.

I think we've said enough. I think we can knock off. If they can't get seven minutes out of that we have to renegotiate. SIDE 2, TAPE 2

TM: ... damn well better stay away from psychedelics. No, I don't think everybody should do it. I think revolutions are made by 15 percent of the population and that you can have a psychedelic society and be a citizen of a psychedelic society and never take psychedelics, but the ambiance of the society will be psychedelic. You know, it's a calling, shamanism is a calling, and if you're not up for it -- my own biography is perhaps instructive in this, I mean the reason I'm into all this is because I'm into what's weird, I always have been. I mean, I've always loved the bizarre, the outre, the stuff of the edge, and you know, when I got to psychedelics I thought I'd hit the mainframe of sprung verse or something. I mean, if that's what you like, then this is your answer. You see, what the psychedelic is going to do is it's going to destroy your whole world, your whole conception of your world, and some people that's tremendously liberating, they say 'wonderful, at last I'm free of it', other people say 'My God, now I'm hopelessly mad, I have nothing left to cling to, I've really done it this time', and so that's almost an aesthetic judgment, whether you like watching your world shredded before your eyes and made into nonsense -if that makes you feel liberated and secure then you can sign up for that carnival. If that alarms you then I think best to stick to the tried and true. It's not for people of weak psychic constitution, and what shamanism is about is -- I mean, I know someone who says of the mushrooms 'My goal with taking mushrooms is always be able to stand more', and they don't mean higher doses, they mean more of what it reveals, and I feel like that. I mean, the mushroom speaks -- I didn't really stress this in my talk, but the strange, the confounding fact about these mushrooms is that they speak to you, in plain English, and this is completely unexpected. How can such a thing be? I mean, one is dumbfounded in the presence of this, and yet by being able to have an 'I/thou' relationship to this thing, you open up yourself to what is essentially a magical dimension, a dimension of ally-ship with this thing. I come to this completely as a rationalist, I mean I am more scientist, more rationalist than anything else. I am very uncomfortable with my position in the New Age, I hate all that stuff -- the quartz crystal suppositories and the channeling of dead Egyptians and all this horrible stuff which goes on, I mean it's just an affront to the thinking mind. But when I encountered these psychedelics, I said 'My God, scepticism is the proper path', and I believe this -- it's not to believe, it's to test. I said to the mushroom once 'Why us?', meaning my brother and me, 'Why us?'. And it said 'Because you don't believe in anything', you know 'You're not a believer', and so it's a real thing, it's a real mystery. It will not yield to reason, it's a tremendously well-kept secret. I mean, how can it be? For instance, take

the case of dimethyltryptamine, DMT. This is the most powerful psychedelic in existence. It only lasts two or three minutes. This most powerful of all psychedelics we naturally elaborate in our own brains. This is a curious fact. It means that psychedelics, to be what we call 'powerful' or 'overwhelming', are not chemically alien to exotic to the brain, but they are rather very familiar and very much like things already present in the brain. And when you smoke DMT the entire world is replaced in about 30 seconds with something completely impossible to anticipate and utterly astonishing, utterly astonishing, I mean the character of the experience is almost that of pure astonishment. I mean, people have said to me 'Can you die from smoking DMT?' Well, the truthful answer is 'Yes, by astonishment'. Death by astonishment is a real problem here and this is the rarest of all emotions. I mean, when was the last time you were astounded, you know, struck speechless with amazement? We have these phrases in our language 'struck speechless with amazement', but if it happens once or twice in your life I dare say you'll remember it until they lower the box. Well, DMT delivers this on demand. Well, what is so astonishing about it? Nothing less than breaking into an inhabited elf nest of self-transforming machine creatures who are squealing and squeaking in a visible glossolalia that falls like rain on the interior landscape. There isn't even ordinary space and time -- this occurs 30 seconds after availing yourself of this compound and you are restored to normalcy eight minutes later. It means these things are not far away, it is not destructive, it is not inimical to the organism, it simply is suppressed by culture. We don't understand how enclosed we are by the prisons of a limited and scientific language. True weirdness is raging just outside the confines of the cultural paradigm which is trying to reassure us 'Oh, it's all very humdrum and all runs down into entropy and I shouldn't worry about it if I were you'. This is not, in fact, the case. However, I digress.

Q: ??

TM: By the New Age?

Q: Yes. TM: Well, I hope I didn't come off as terribly hostile, I'm sort of light-heartedly critical is where we're shooting for here.

Q: ??

TM: Oh, I'm sorry, yes. The question was 'Given my view of the New Age, what do I make of the appropriation of shamanism by the New Age and its marketing?' Well, if it's non-psychedelic I absolutely deplore it. I mean, I'm not here to name names, but I'll assure you the major marketers of non-psychedelic shamanism were turned on to the power of shamanism by their experiences with psychedelics and I take a very hard-core position on this just to infuriate people. I really don't believe there's any other way you can get there. I mean these yogic states and states induced by starvation, flagellation, celibacy -- all these tremendously pleasant methods -- are not to be compared to the psychedelic state. I don't know what those people are talking about. One of the things that concerns me is, people say 'Well, this is a spiritual path and you're a spiritual teacher', and so forth and so on -- no, I am not a spiritual teacher and anyone familiar with my moral behaviour can assure you of that. I don't know whether this has anything whatsoever to do with the spiritual quest as ordinarily conceived. My approach to it is it's a phenomenon of some sort that confounds our notion of reality. The thing which got me started on my travels and my career writing about all this was I had been very keen on Carl Jung and all that business and had been raised Catholic, and so when I smoked DMT I had the expectation that the most far-out thing that would happen, that could indeed happen, would be a kind of revelation of the Jungian archetype, the great round dance of the archetypes would be made visible. Well what was completely dumbfounding, was there was no relationship

to the DMT flash, to the art history of the species. Our art doesn't hint of these dimensions, very aptly, and yet this is available to all of us. It's so suppressed that it's not even in the human unconscious. It's been suppressed below the level of the human unconscious. It's as though it's a lost world, a parallel continuum, and if you have access to this lost world, this parallel continuum, it would never enter your mind to invent mathematics, government, religion, all of these things, because you are in the moment, you are at peace with yourself and your community, and this is something that we have to make our way back to, because the disequilibrium of history has turned rather rough and ugly here, post-World War II.

Q: ??

TM: Thank you for taking your turn, you're next. Vitamin K, let me just say, and I say this because there's something I want to say. The word 'drug' has been tremendously misappropriated and corrupted by the movers and shakers of society. I mean we all, I believe it's safe to say, are repelled by obsessive self-destructive, unexamined behaviour and that's what is laid at the feet of drugs. However, chasing dollars or pounds, worrying about making a fashion statement, owning a Ferrari, all of these things are obsessive self-destructive habits, so I have a rule, a three-step test if you're thinking of availing yourself of a substance as part of your programme of self-growth and advancement. The first question you should ask yourself is 'Is it ...

Q: ?? afford it.

TM: 'How can I afford it', yes, well, that's zero -- moving on to one. Question one is 'Does it occur in nature?', and question two is 'Does it have a history of shamanic usage?' You see, if it has a history of Shamanic usage, then issues like 'Does it cause tumours, miscarriages, blindness, palsy?' -- this has all been answered, we have our human data, we have five thousand years of use by the Mazatecan Indians or somebody else, we have our human data sample. Then the third test is 'Does it occur naturally or do its near relatives occur naturally in the human brain?', because we don't want to insult the human brain, we don't want to toxify it, we don't want to poison it. Well, the happy conclusion of applying these rules is that the most terrifyingly powerful of the psychedelics pass all tests with flying colours -- DMT being the perfect example. DMT is a megatonnage hallucinogen -- it occurs naturally in the metabolism of every single one of us at this moment. If you were an American audience I would tell you you're holding a schedule 1 drug and are subject to immediate arrest and trial. Every human being on earth falls into this category. This is the Catch 22 that they hold in reserve if they ever have to come after us -- you are holding, and you can't stop yourself. The fact that DMT, that we return to a normal state in only a few minutes from DMT, argues that the non-invasive quality is very important. If you take a drug and feel wobbly 48 or 72 hours later or are having body aches or blurred vision or something like that, this is a drug to stay away from, this is not something you want to get mixed up in. You judge the non-toxicity of the drug by how fast your body is able to return you to normal. MK, which inspired the question, which is ketamine, doesn't pass any of these tests and I did it and I found the state very interesting, but when I saw the data on how it depressed the immune system and there's some concern that it may trigger epileptic kindling, I didn't think it was a good idea. Also the fact that you have to bang it, that's a bad habit. I don't think we should get into that because then it's a vector for disease and then pushes all kinds of the wrong buttons. Yes.

Q: ??

TM: You mean as opposed..

Q: ??

TM: Ah, well, the difference will not be great except in the dose ratio. I think liberty caps are per unit gram stronger than *Stropharia cubensis*, but still don't you have to eat a dozen or two of them?

Q: ??

TM: Three hundred! Ah ha, okay, well -- and good for you! *Stropharia cubensis*, I mean, in culture we've grown 170 gram specimens which when dried down go down to 15 grams. Well, what I always say is a dose is 5 dried grams, and I might, since we're on this subject, say something about technique, because I always forget this -- it seems so obvious to me, but it's a revelation to some people. The way you do these things is you do them on an empty stomach in silent darkness, obviously. I mean, you're looking for hallucinations, right? This is a hallucination hunt, it's a vision quest, so people ask the most bizarre questions, example: 'Will I be able to drive?' Now, there's the male dominator ego for you. In no sense of the word will you be able to drive. That's what's going to happen: you're not going to be able to drive, so just, you know, put that in your pipe and smoke it early on and give up the notion of driving. No, you should be in silent darkness, and some people resist the silent part and they say 'But, you know, I always listen to the Mothers of Invention on my ...' well, give it a rest, friend, you know, they're wonderful on the natch, so let the pythagory and inner music issue from your soul in silent darkness. You will be amazed, I mean if it bores you flip on the Top of the Pops, but give it a half an hour before you resort to that. Yes.

Q: Have you had any experience of ??

TM: Yes, well I see that the Guardian dutifully reported all one would need to know to get seriously involved in toad abuse. In America we hear about toad licking and it's always advanced as a folkway of the primitive Australians and we in America have gone on one better. First of all, we don't hurt our toads, we drive out into the desert in our four-wheel-drive vehicles and we gently milk our toads onto what we call the windshield -- a windscreen -- and then it dries in the sun and we get out our little frost scrapers and scrape this better-left-undescribed material off the windshield and then this is smokable. This is 5-methoxy-DMT from *Bufo Alvarius*, and it passes all the tests. Well, not the test as would occur in a plant, no, it occurs in an animal, that's better. It's interesting, it's one of the few animal-based hallucinogens -- we call it toad foam, as opposed to more inelegant appellations that have been used. It's 5-mythoxy-DMT, so it's a variety of dimethyltryptamine, but compared to DMT it's sort of like AM radio versus 70 millimetre cinemascope. There's what I heard a researcher describe last week as an 'effulgent emotion' -- yes, there certainly is. There's no word for this emotion, but it's very large, but there is very little visual activity, kind of after-image-like stuff, but you know on DMT the hallucinations have an existential veracity that's absolutely jaw-dropping. I mean, they are 3-dimensional, they are highly coloured, they are in motion, these elf-like creatures that one encounters in the DMT space are, I've described them as self-transforming basketballs, they are like jeweled basketballs and they come toward you and then they recede and they're singing in these silvery voices which make objects, they have a language which is visibly beheld -- a favourite theme of mine that we didn't get to tonight -- they make a language which they then present to you -- the objectified language -- and it looks rather like Faberge eggs or sorts of toys that alien astronauts might give their children to amuse them. I mean, when you are shown by one of these -- I call them tykes, these creatures in the DMT state -- when one of these tykes comes bounding toward you and offers one of

these mechanised syntactical Faberge machines, you look at it with the perfect knowledge that if you could bring this thing across to this world, no stone would be left upon another, that there is something about it that is confounding, it is literally impossible and yet you're looking at it, it's in front of you, I mean the impossible is happening and, you know, this is a result of that. Yes.

Q: ??

TM: Datura. The question is about datura. I would think of it as a kind of deliriant, actually. The chemical family involved is tropanes. We don't want to get too technical here, but a good rule is when I talk about psychedelics I'm talking about indole alkaloids -- LSD, psilocybin, ibogaine, the so-called cyclocised tryptamines. I'm pretty narrow-minded about all this. Even mescaline doesn't quite make it because it's an amphetamine. Datura, the morphogenetic field that is associated with datura is one of magic working, of the spreading of delusions, it's often used in contexts where somebody is working their sexual will with somebody else who may not be into it. I remember what put me off datura was years ago I lived in Nepal and a friend of mine -- actually an Englishman -- I met him one day in the market and we were just making the small talk there, and it came to my attention from talking to this person that he thought I had paid him a visit in his apartment. He was under the impression that we were sitting in his apartment having this discussion, when in fact we were moving around in an Asian souk, so I thought this is a level of disconnection from reality that we don't need. The thing that's interesting about the indole hallucinogens, and especially about DMT, is there's a core portion of your being that is never lost hold of, that is always observing. And I remember on ketamine one of the things that put me off about it was this is such a reality-obliterating compound that in every trip you come to this moment in which you realise with the force of a revelation 'I'm stoned, that's what's happening, now I remember, I'm a human being, I'm on a trip, this is a trip, I'm on a trip'. And then it all falls into place. Well, what this is telling you is it's nearly over and that you were so cut off from being able to understand that what was going on, you could never remember that there had ever been anything preceding it, you could never anticipate that anything would ever follow upon it, you completely accept this impossible situation. So, I don't like that, I like holding on to this observing eye. Now this may be my own ego clinging to the last grain of ego, but nevertheless I think it's very important that there be a clarity of something throughout the experience and datura seems to erode that fairly seriously. Well, I'm getting the high sign. Oh, one more question. One more.

Q: You bandied chemical words around quite freely here ???

TM: Sorry, I thought you were permitting a question -- you're asking a question.

Q: .. chemical terms around, quite freely...

TM: Oh yes, oh yes.

Q: ... but many people feel that marijuana is a liberating agent. Is marijuana ??? hallucinogenics that you're mentioning? TM: Well I don't know if 'poor cousin' is the word. Marijuana is the "except" to all the rules. Marijuana is a polyhydric alcohol. I can't say enough in praise of marijuana. I mean... [applause].. the lifeblood of my inspiration, and, yes, it's interesting. Sometimes I teach a whole weekend and this never comes up, I mean, we're all so well behaved. Here we are discussing these outlandish drugs, you know, when the fact of the matter is cannabis is our daily bread, and ...

Q: ??

TM: Yes, I mean this is this notion that community comes first, that there is a family, there is a tribe, I mean what people say... I observe this very closely because I got into therapy, strangely enough, with a therapist who I thought was quite brilliant except she knew nothing about drugs, which was a preposterous situation for me to be in, and so she said 'Well, now, this cannabis business, how many times a day do you do it?'. I said 'oh, by the dozen', and she said 'Well, oh, and how many years have you been doing this?', said 'Twenty five', she well 'Well, surely, this is ...' and it kept coming up, so finally I said 'I'll quit, I'll quit so that you see that nothing happens so that you won't be running around the countryside laying this trip on your patients, because nothing will happen'. Well, so then I did quit for two months, and what I noticed was a tremendous narrowing of my consciousness, to the point where before it was over I was staying up late nights working on balancing my cheque book and studying receipts and plotting how to chisel on the tax man with my receipts and just the most horrible mundane consciousness. Well, then, you know, you take a puff of cannabis and you think about Moliere's dentures, and the causes of the fall of the Trebizondian empire and the really important stuff of life, you see, rather than your own stupid ego trip. Back here I promise and then we're out of here.

Q: ??

TM: Ah, ecstasy. Well, I don't want to insult the local choice. I assume you mean MDMA.

Q: Yes. TM: Too bad, I'd rather have answered the general question, I think ecstasy is wonderful. MDMA is problematic. Every drug -- some of the most bizarre drugs, like cocaine for example -- every drug when it makes its debut in the marketplace -- LSD, cannabis -- is hailed as a love drug, and so it was with MDMA. My personal experience was that it was never as good as the first time, which seemed to me a bad thing, that you know you want to learn, you want to work with these things, you want to be able to take them somewhere, and what I observed in America was people just took it to party. Well, too little is known about it to do that. There is considerable irrefutable evidence that it makes very long term changes on the dendritic processes of the nerve. My brother is a research pharmacologist, he did much of that work in Steven Parutka's(?) lab at Stanford. So as far as what ecstasy does, the subjective effects on the subject, it's fine, I'm all for that, but it doesn't have the clean bill of health that it would have if we could get it out of a plant and point to a culture that had used it for five thousand years and could point to compounds in the brain that it closely mimics. This is the division, this is what I stand for, I stand for the plants, the plants have souls, they carry the morphogenetic field of thousands of years. When you take psilocybin, it takes you, you are participating in all the trips that it ever induced in anyone, and this is a tremendously stable field of experiences. When you take a drug fresh out of the laboratory it has no soul, it has no story, it has no direction, it's a product of the demon artifice of man, and I prefer to put my hand in the large hand of the Goddess and make my way into this dimension under the aegis of the sanctioned vegetables that for millennia have always been there to fling open the doorways to vistas of pleasure and delight that would make you turn up your nose at the best Beverley Hills has to offer. Believe me, believe me, the inner riches are incomparable, and this is how we recover our dignity, by not being whores to Mammon and pursuing all of this trash that they're peddling to us, and insist instead on the maximising of human values, human emotion and human community.

Q: ??

TM: No, no, maristisan(?) is a fairly distantly removed precursor, you're screwing up my avalanche to conclusion here.

Q: Would you please say something about ???

TM: Well, we've arrived rather late at that subject, haven't we. Yes, well, I'll just give you the... I'm the purveyor of a bizarre notion which was told to me by an elf troupe. It's a formal mathematical notion that argues very strongly -- and had we had a second evening to get together I would never repeat myself, we would talk about something entirely different. I think that we are headed toward a planetary transformation within our lifetimes, specifically around 2012 AD, and this is not a political transformation, or a biological transformation, it's an actual transformation of the laws of physics themselves, that the presence of creatures such as ourselves on this planet is an indication of the nearness of what I call the transcendental object at the end of time and it is like an attractor. It is like an energy pocket in the epigenetic landscape into which we have fallen and that the fury of 20th century culture is indicative of our nearness to this globally transformative moment that will emerge out of ourselves. Essentially, we are going to shed the monkey, the linguistic creature that is symbiotic with these monkeys is about to disentangle itself from physis and realise some kind of angelic transformation. Very difficult for us to anticipate or understand. If I had more time I would say more, much more, but that's all folks.

I just want to say that to make these ideas real we have to overcome the very format that we objectify tonight. Any one of you could have sat here and done this. This rap means nothing if it isn't a democratically available mystery -- no hierarchy, no special knowledge, no specific racial background, no degree is necessary. This belongs to all of us, and I want to wish you well with your community-building and with the vision that is coming to fruition here. Very important, very empowering for the rest of us in other parts of the world. Keep up the good work. I hope you invite me back. Thank you very much.

New speaker: Thank you, Evolution have been delighted to invite you this evening. Have a very nice time and have a very safe journey home. Bye bye.

Original Transcription by: Deoxy

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Cauldron Chemistry Interview (w/ Elizabeth Gips)

Day Month 1985

Terence McKenna's Home, Sonoma County, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Elizabeth Gips: ...kenna's House, uh, we being [??] and Elizabeth, me. And, uh, we're sitting in this incredible collection of books in a very beautiful home, and a wonderful, magical spot near, uh, is it Marin county?

TM: No it's Sonoma county.

EG: This is Sonoma county.

TM: Western Sonoma county. Far from Sonoma.

EG: Talking. So, I, I will tape the conversation and, uh, and if Terence has special information that he'd like you all, you aware people of the United States to have, he'll let us have it, and we will mention the fact that he has a new book which is on cassette and he'll talk some about that too, and where it can be ordered. That's all. That feel like a good introduction to everybody?

TM: Yeah, that sounds fine.

EG: Ok, here we go.

TM: Ok.

Q: Maybe I'll just, uh, start up asking a couple of questions that have been on my mind. A fascination with a combination of uh, DMT and harmine and things of this nature, and, um, what I'm interested in is, is those places or plants or animals or ways in which people can come, um, close to, or have historically come close to or had access to DMT, and I remember you briefly mentioned, um, a process whereby by combining rabbit lungs, say, and pig intestines you could actually in some way create or obtain DMT. And I was wondering if you could go into a little more detail on how, how that could be done.

TM: Well, I'm not, I don't, I'm not sure pig intestines is the second ingredient but what you need is a source of tryptophan which is a common amino acid, and then rabbit lung which, uh, is, uh, replete with an O-methylation enzyme. O-methyl transferase, and it will all methylate the tryptamine into a psychoactive,

which is a just an example of uh, what's called cauldron chemistry, which is where you use animal enzymes to do chemical transformations. Another one that has been discussed in the literature is, uh, using, uh, the decarboxylation activity of enzymes in raw milk to decarboxylate the poison in *Amanita muscaria* which is muscarine to the hallucinogen which is muscamol, and in Wasson's book on soma he discusses the fact that the Soma, whatever it was, was whipped together with milk curd and allowed to stand, and this was one of the major, uh, arguments for identifying it as *Amanita muscaria* because that would make it much more palatable and less toxic. But who knows how many of these things, uh, exist, you know, because we have lost the lore of special uses for animal organs and that sort of thing. And that really is shamanic lore that we've lost touch with.

Q: A- are you familiar with the um, ahm, the newt? The California newt? Or the importance of the tetrodotoxin and the fugu? Perhaps the, maybe go a little bit into the, the fish, um, if you want and of course the newt in that sense- the-

EG: Before we, before we get into that much of a technical thing, I wonder if it's possible to tell people why we think this is important. Can- can- can we just discuss after a minute [TM: You mean why is it...] Why- why

TM: Why is it important to track down these natural sources of the psychedelic experiences?

EG: Yes.

TM: Well, it's important because the psychedelic experience is important in and of itself, but it's important to involve ourselves with these biological materials because the things which come out of the laboratory, of which there's a potentially unlimited number, uh, are not receiving the kind of, uh, animal and human testing that they would if they were above-ground drugs. So, safety is really a concern of mine. What I've been telling people recently is, uh, that until there's animal and human data on a drug, it should probably be looked at very carefully. Uh, if you look at naturally occurring hallucinogens with a tradition of human use you don't have to worry about that because you- for instance, the mushrooms, we know that they were used in the mountains of Mexico for at least 2 millennia. Uh, ditto the morning glories in Mexico. So, uh, in the absence of good scientific data about the effects of artificial hallucinogens it's good to stick to the natural ones. And it also- and more interesting and kind of more, humm, philosophical case can be made if you accept the theory of Rupert Sheldrake of morphogenetic fields because you have to realize then that the morphogenetic field of a drug like psilocybin, which has been in living systems perhaps 120 million years, been used by human beings perhaps 20,000 years, what is its morphogenetic field going to be like contrasted to a drug made six weeks ago in the laboratory? It's the depth of these things, you see. The new drugs are empty. They haven't taken enough people yet to fill up, but what you see with something like, uh, psilocybin, or morning glory seeds, or something like that is the accumulation of the experience of all the people who ever took these things. I mean, that's why you're reaching back into a human family spread out over millennia and actually being those shaman. You are those shaman, or you are participating in the sh- the personality of the over-shaman, if you wish. So, that is, uh, [EG clears throat] the basis for an ontological distinction between artificial and naturally occurring drugs of all types, but especially hallucinogens which have this intellectual content.

EG: Gee, that's the best explanation of the, of uh, uh case for organic, um, psychedelics I've heard. Stephen said a long time ago when we were on the caravan, twelve years ago I guess, that we should stop

using LSD because so many people used it in such paranoid circumstances that the vibrational rate was no longer such that you could know that you were gonna have an ecstatic trip anymore.

TM: Well that's is an intuitive understanding of exactly what Sheldrake was saying. The reason I've been thinking about this recently was because I s- was at a conference recently on psychedelics, a closed conference mostly for healthcare professionals, and there was a lot of talk about Adam, MDMA, and, uh, then someone asked the question "What is the LD-50 of it?" L- [EG: What's that?] LD-50 is, uh, a fairly unpleasant concept which is necessary to understand in pharmacology. The LD-50 is the dose at which half the mice die, or half the dogs die, and all drugs are tested this way, and what you want with a drug is a drug with- where the LD-50 is hundreds or thousands of times more than the effective dose. For instance, uh, the effective dose of psilocybin is about f- twenty milligrams. The LD-50 for psilocybin is, uh, 375 milligrams per kilogram. So we're talking 30, 000 milligrams for a 145 pound human being. The problem that emerged with Adam was that the LD-50 was very close to the effective dose and that no human trials have ever been done. The effective dose of Adam is considered to be somewhere between 75 and 150 milligrams. The LD-50 is considered to be 500 milligrams based on studies of dogs. Now, I'll- let me explain this, so it doesn't sound too alarmist. Dogs are not good creatures to extrapolate to human beings. Uh, practice has shown that mice are much better, that, that the LD-50 in mi- of mice will be more generally close to the LD-50 of primates including man than data on dogs or cats. Nevertheless, in the absence of any human data whatsoever about Adam, uh, it's very unnerving that the LD-50 is so close to the effective dose. So immediately the institution which was holding this conference which probably would prefer to be anonymous pledged a thousand dollars to study the problem. Someone at the conference pledged a thousand dollars, and, uh, tests will begin with sophisticated human volunteers who will, uh, clear their systems and then take it and then have massive, uh, blood work done. This is the short-term human, uh, data will come out of that. The long-term human data is beyond the financial capability of the underground. But you see, this is interesting so let me take a moment because it's important for people. Um, there's only one drug in the world which is safe, strangely enough. In other words, there's only one drug in the world that no one knows how much it takes to kill you, and that drug is LSD-25. And this is a very fortunate thing because people in the 1960s got into the habit, I remember Tim Leary said, "when in doubt, double the dose." Completely reasonable advice for LSD. The problem is that LSD is the only drug with such a benign profile, so that, uh, we can't carry the- the dose estimation habits that we formed on LSD into these new amphetamines like MDA, MDMA, Adam, ecstasy, because, uh, they are- it's well known among chemists that the, uh, the cyclicized amphetamines are toxic. Mescaline is the most toxic of all natural hallucinogens. MDMA is four times as toxic as mescaline.

So, at this conference we- uh, a great deal of, of thought was put into- there were people there who were so enthusiastic about the um, effects of ADAM, the, the psychological effects, that they felt that this was the greatest chance the underground had ever had to actually obtain a quasi-legal or legal status for a hallucinogen. The problem is this, uh, this, uh, toxicological data makes it clear that it could never be legalized, and in fact if ADAM cured the common cold it would not be legalized if it has a, uh, LD-50 profile only four times the effective dose. So I had up until this time had not uh, formulated- I had had a preference for botanical drugs, but I had not formulated what is the real difference, you know, and when you would argue with people that synthetics and nat- organic drugs were different, they could eventually argue you to the point where you just could defend it because they seemed to be the same. But with Sheldrake, the notion of Sheldrake, that the morphogenetic field attends the compound and the absence mainly of human data. I mean, uh, we went through a ketamine phase with moderate amounts of human data although now I see in Science News last week there's fear that it depresses the immune system. In fact

it does depress the immune system. Well, leaving aside its, uh, use in the underground, the worst thing an anesthetic can do is depress your immune system because you're going to have surgery and come out of surgery and be in a surgical recovery ward. You want your immune system to just be fully revved up. Now we have this problem apparently with Adam, and in fact there has been one reported death at a dose of 390 milligrams. Uh.

EG: Thanks for that information. It's really important to get out because there's so much enthusiasm about Adam..

Well I've spen- I've told Tom all these things and he was floored [EG: I'm sure he was] and we had a long talk about it, and it's- we have to take responsibility, you know, the underground, because we can't have- another drug scandal would finish psychedelic research above and underground for the rest of this century. So, uh, it's a problem with the people's, uh, courage. I mean, let's contrast two drugs for a minute. Here we have psilocybin. Effective at the 20 milligram dose, and, uh, you would have to take, as I said, probably close to two and a half dried pounds of the mushrooms that are on sale in the Bay Area to approach the fatal dose. Nevertheless, if you take 40 milligrams of psilocybin, you will swear that you are at death's door, you know, you will swear that you are looking at the path to the Bardo. And, uh, but with Adam it's totally- the feeling, the aura is that it's completely benign even as you approach a fantastically dangerous dose.

EG: It is amazing because Adam puts you in a state of love even for itself. That's what happens. And you know, I discussed this with Luke coming down. It seems to me that my experience with Adam is that I'm so much in love [clears throat] in a state of love that it's dangerous in other ways because I accept [TM: too much] I accept things that I shouldn't really accept, that aren't the best for me [TM: That's right] so it's, uh it's some- boy it's fascinating.

TM: See, now I've heard of people who, essentially to become courageous enough to get really stoned take Adam ahead of it. In other words, people say well I take Adam and then I take LSD an hour and a half later, or I take psilocybin an hour and a half later. Well, I think that these are, you know, in the absence of human data this is all very chancy stuff. We have to realize that LSD was a God-sent, special, miraculous case. I mean, it was amazing to pharmacologists that it was so non-toxic. The CIA gave an elephant six grams and, you know, it laid down for three days and then it got up and shook it's head and wandered off to look for something to eat. So [TM chuckles], but we must be more responsible, so I've actually formulated it down to a little test which is if you are interested in the spiritual path, utilizing hallucinogens, then the hallucinogen you use should be able to answer 'yes' to two of the following three questions: Does it have a history of shamanic usage? Does it occur in the tissue of a plant or animal? And then let me think.

EG: You can't think of it [laughter, TM laughs]

TM: Ah, does it bear a similarity to compounds that occur in our own brains?

EG: We're just discovering a lot of those compounds [TM: That's right] that we don't know them all yet.

TM: Well, but as I said, you have to be able to answer yes to two [EG: two of those..] of three. So then [EG: So LSD would actually pass two of those [TM: that's right] as far as the Eleusinian mysteries where it was utilized for thousands of years and [TM: And it's occurrence [and occurrences in m- in m-] in the

brain. Well and also it occurs in morning glories [EG: In morning glory seeds.] and ergotized rye and uh.

EG: So..

TM: Yes, uh, and if we do that I don't think we'll get into trouble. And I also want to make this clear. We will not be denying ourselves any dimension of importance. In other words, I notice people have the attitude that you have to take all drugs to know what's going on, and what I find is that you find out far more about what's going on if you take a few drugs at progressively more and more heroic doses. Ah- also, and I invite experimenters to try this, at the moment there is so much attention directed toward Adam that the morphogenetic field of Adam is so strong that if you'll take psilocybin you can request it to masquerade as Adam and it will immediately turn over and be Adam for you. [mhm] so [Terence laughs] and I don't think Adam can do the same trick going the other way.

EG: Well, uh, do you mind if I talk- ge- uh I mean [Q: Go ahead, go ahead] Please do join the conversation. And I know you want to get more technical [No- I] but I want to save it a little bit [Q: Sure, but it's] Uh,

TM: Well that's all I wanna say about,

EG: Well no I've got some questions.

TM: Ok.

EG: Uh, uh, oh God. What did you just say about psilocybin? Oh, that it would turn over. I want- could you run down for people- If I understand you correctly, Terence, I understand that you believe, or i- it- the reality that the spore of psilocybin mushrooms are in- are alien intelligence, are intelligence from other areas of the galaxy or universe. Would you ex- tell us a little about that?

TM: Well, it's not a belief of mine, it's just a case, a case I make because I want to stretch the imaginations of evolutionary biologists and everybody else who's looking at the living kingdom. And it is certainly true that spores appear to be genetically engineered for space flight. They are a color, deep purple, I'm now talking about the spores of *Stropharia cubensis*. They're a deep purple color which absorbs UV. That's the color you would paint a spaceship. They, uh, uh, survive best in conditions most like those of space. In other words, high vacuum, low temperature. They, uh, are small enough that they could, through Brownian motion and then the formation of global electrical currents on their sur- forming on their surfaces high up on the atmosphere, actually percolate out into outer space much the way, for instance, the atmos- much of the atmosphere of Mars has drifted away over millions of years. And, uh, I think that the experien- well, that's basically a case for that they are a biological entity able to migrate between the stars by- through utilizing convective flow and light pressure and that sort of thing. A more radical proposition based on the experience of psilocybin is that that organism is intelligent, o- or that it is able to transfer information, that it is somehow a form of life which is able to communicate with us when it is, uh, locating in our nervous systems, that it comes to its fullest flower in the organism of a higher animal and that in that state it is- there's the potential for an I-Thou, uh, exchange. And phenomenologically there's no question about this, that there is this I-Thou exchange with psilocybin. But people can s- uh, you know, psychologists can say it's an autonomous psychic component that has slipped out of the control of the ego, and you're dialoguing with that, or whatever. But I think when you've had the experience, uh, the overwhelming impression is

that you are having a conversation with a very strange, very old, very different kind of organism. And, uh, based on that, and as I say, these physical arguments about the survivability of the spore and its adaptability to the outer space environment, I want to suggest that space may be no barrier to the migration of forms of- many forms of life, not just forms of life possessing space ships, and that probably many times in the Earth's history spores have drifted down and become part of things.

And this is not a radical theory at all. Uh, Crick of Crick and Watson holds the same view and believes that probably the galaxy is a biome. The galaxy is a biological unit, and we are just coming to the level of scientific and cultural an- awareness to recognize these things. And of course I think this argument seems preposterous unless you have had the experience on fairly high doses of psilocybin of actually meeting this alien entity, which is an experience very different from the classical psychedelic experience established through the use of LSD and mescaline. Those seem to be largely explorations of human dimension, psychoanalytic and the collective unconscious of Jung, dimensions of historical resonance and, uh, and that sort of thing. But there was not the prevalence of the extraterrestrial theme that you get with the tryptamines, psilocybin and DMT especially. These seem to be ways of communicating with a nearby world of alien intelligence which may or may not be space-based. It may be hyperdimensional or it may be earth-based. These may be the elves and fairies of folklore.

The human experience is so bounded by language, we don't realize how our scientific and linear expectations of the world hide from us the real complexity of what's going on.

EG: Mhm. Well-

Q: Oh..

EG: Uh huh. Did you have something you would like to say or ask or comment on?

Q: Um.

EG: How are we doing time-wise?

Q: No go ahead.

EG: Ok, uh.

TM: I didn't mean to stop the show...

EG: That's alright, I ha- I ha- it was a great l- uh, little. I- I have question then, uh. In the experience of actual extraterrestrial intelligence embodied in form which I've read and heard you describe before, uh [clears throat], is there a, is there a place that you go- I'm asking a question, in the psychedelic experience with psilocybin at any rate DMT forms where you go into the molecular form, uh, like, and then out another side that forms itself into forms that we're not familiar with here in our 3-D land. You actually go through the mandala? Is that wha---

TM: The molecular mandala. Well, I never cognized it that way, but hat's an interesting way to think of it. It's as though the molecule turned the mind through another dimension and you see something which is co-

present with reality, as it were, but between the spaces sort of, and suddenly the phase shift occurs. I remember when I was a child I had this toy which was, uh, a flat piece of paper with a, uh, circus cage printed on it, and when you moved the bars one way there was a zebra in the cage. When you slid the bars the other way and covered all the parts of the zebra, a tiger was revealed, and this is, uh, something about the nature of reality, that there seems to be at least one other continuum co-present, and this is why our folklore is, uh, haunted by elves, genies, djinns, afrites, demons, uh, all these curious creatures of folklore which, you know, wouldn't be there if there was not some experiential basis for them. It's just that we have crowded into cities and then crowded into condominiums, and we don't experience what goes on with the single person in vast wilderness in a life lived based on experience of the present at hand rather than vast abstract systems of explanation dictated by science and government and that sort of thing.

EG: Would you, would you like to comment at all on, uh, uh, what you think the psychedelic experience is with your knowledge of the chemistry of the plants and, uh, so forth and of the physiology of the body and the kind of experiences you've had? Do you have any idea what it is? What, what is it?

TM: Well, I'll tell you what I think it is but it's not really based on physiology or pharmacology. It's based on carefully looking at the experience. Plato said "time is the moving image of eternity", and I think that what these psychedelics do is they actually do connect you to the whole circle. You stand outside of the moment from which you embarked on your psychedelic experience and you see eternity like a vast landscape deployed in front of you. So what I think psychedelics are is they're about time and they somehow make all time co-present and how this is possible and why it's possible I don't know, but I think perhaps this is what the myth of the fall is about, that what man's fall is is really the fall into time, the time of a fading past, an unknown future and a, uh, very intense but very small area where things are going on called the present. There is some way in which that can be stepped out of and it's not- it's not, uh, an either-or situation. We are all, to some degree, in time, and we are all to some degree in eternity. And to the degree that we are in eternity we behave correctly and have right activity and right perception, and these psychedelics enhance this involvement with the totality of everything. That's why it is not naive to suggest that issues like the nuclear gridlock and all these, uh, other terminal problems that we have could be overcome if people would, by any means, try to come into attunement with the notion of unity in time and space of the species and the planet and the solar system and, and I think that this is the, the evolving, core idea which will either save us, or the absence of its evolution will be our ruin. The idea of unity and interrelatedness.

EG: I would like to suggest if it's possible that both things are happening, that there is a universe where it's unraveling and one where [coughs] we've already was, and I mean wasn't it I- I mean- wasn't it you or I know Robert Anton Wilson, I know, has talked about it some, uh suggested the future is already, is pulling us towards it. I I- and I like that [TM: Right.] , and you talked about 12-12 as a step over point. I've told every-

TM: 2012

EG: 2012, yeah [TM: right], and I've told everybody that. And a few days ago somebody told me that the Mayan, uh, fifth wheel which we're on now ends in twe- in 2011 which I didn't know unti-

TM: It actually ends in 2012, it ends on the 21st of December 2012, just thirty days after the date that I picked from all the work we did with the I Ching. Yes, somehow-

EG: -What did you, how did you do that? Would you mind running at that really- I can't understand your book, I just can't understand it.

TM: But yeah, the apocalypse is the millenium and the psychedelics move you into the future. We are all occupying different places in historical time. I mean some of us are completely uncivilized neanderthals, I mean, and some of us are very uptight 18th century sort of people interested in the social contract and the obligations of class and party and, and some of us are, uh, future people. And this is the whole- you don't have to wait for society to move into the future. You can just make it happen around you, and if everyone did that we could leap a thousand years into the future.

EG: I try to tell people- that's one of the things that I say when people come on "well are we going to make it through the nuclear thing" and stuff. And I say listen man, I've visited the future, I know there's a future. I don't know whether there's one for you but I'm sure there's one for me 'cause I've seen myself in it, right? And I keep coming back and you keep coming back, we all keep coming back. I-is, uh, because we got ahold of this great thing we want everybody to share it. But we have a few little things we can work out ourselves on the way.

TM: Yes well, by-

EG: Here and there.

TM: everybody by example. I think that the whole thing, the crux of the whole psychedelic issue is that it, uh, it accentuates personal responsibility by making people take their own experiences seriously. People completely undervalue themselves. They think that they are spectators to life. They think that the great scientific breakthroughs, the great works of art, the great political upheavals will all be brought to them on the tube and explained by Newsweek. They don't realize that all of that is illusion, and that what is central is the immediacy of personal experience, and that if you work with that you can just leave history and move off sideways from it and become your own Magellan. This is what people are doing in their living rooms taking psilocybin in darkness late at night. They are the Columbuses of the New World of the human- of the human spirit. And, uh, by taking responsibility, by abandoning the myth of, um, that science, government, the military and the churches are the forces which make culture, and just realizing culture is what we're doing at this very moment, the evolution of historical thought is what we're doing at this very moment.

EG: Maybe, uh, before- I have one more thing and then I think that you all get a little technical before you have to go but uh, I, I always like to ask people if there's something I haven't asked that they feel people ought to hear right now at this as, you know, this place in the infinity sign.

TM: No, I'm very tricky. I unburdened myself early on [EG: That's what I thought] of what I wanted to say, what I thought should be gotten.

EG: Let's talk about just a few minutes about your book, your cassette book [TM: Oh right.] and that and where people can order, what's in it, what's it about.

TM: Ok, well it's a book called- I wrote a book called true hallucinations which was the story Behind the

Invisible Landscape, the story of an amazing expedition to the Amazon in the early 80's in which we met the saucers, or at least I never want to meet them more closely than that, and discovered the mushroom which we brought back, which we wrote our book about. And basically it's just the wildest experience I've ever had or ever heard of, uh, read on to eight cassettes as a nine and a half hour talking book with wonderful, uh, special effects and musical backgrounding and that sort of thing.

EG: Well that, that gave us a concise thing here before they started making too much noise [TM: before they started pounding], which was pretty great, so Lou, I know, has a lot of questions so before we break up I'd love to hear you all I-I can take or not take. I think you'd probably like to-

TM: Well let me thank you first of all Liz, I think people like you are really the shock troops of the new order because the whole thing that we're all doing is information, and the radio is, uh, very, very important.

EG: I know, that's why we've got to get it together to package this program and send it out around to- I want to send it to the, um, to those spots in the United States that have enough aware population to enjoy it. Uh, I think there are probably 30 to 50 of them anyway.

TM: Well you make it better but you're just fine the way you are.

EG: Oh yeah well [] I know it's a no-win situation [laughter] So, um, I- you want to go back to where you were talking about- because that led us into "why organic stuff." We were talking about..

TM: Oh, we were talking about cauldron chemistry...

EG: ..and alchemy. Yeah

TM: Well, there are many, uh, an interesting thing to think about in regard to shamanism and all that is that there may be many situations where natural products can be combined to make a powerful hallucinogen, where the components themselves are not the most obvious known example of that as ayahuasca in the Amazon, where DMT in *psychotria viridis* is potentiated by taking MAO-inhibiting harmine from *banisteriopsis caapi*. But there may be many potentials for these kinds of things, for instance, uh, why were the druids so interested in mistletoe? Let's look at the chemistry of mistletoe and try to imagine ways in which mistletoe might be brought in that direction. The Arundo Donax case is the other one, The Chinese, many of the mushrooms in the Chinese pharmacopoeia could be looked at as well. Uh, Ayurvedic medicine, there are traces of combinatory hallucinogens. So this is actually an area where not a lot of work has been done, and in fact generally synergies have not been studied. Synergies are a situation where two compounds are put together to get an effect, and even, uh, even pharmaceutically and medically the synergies which occur with various drugs have not been well studied.

Q: The- um, there were are a few areas that, um, I've spent some time thinking about. One of them is the, uh, what I call lower life form biochemical conversion processes or, um, ways in which things are transmitted perhaps from termites through tumetomyces?? through, through uh, tool-making behavior in, uh chimpanzees through that this transfer of information occurs and continues to occur and so that each, uh, organism perhaps in its combination, the flies which are stupefied by muscaria as it decays, are eaten by the frogs whose legs, in turn, are ????. Processing that goes on in that way as one form. The other is a chromopuncture, an area selectively- that the body is selectively sensitive to certain, um, colors, to certain

chemicals in certain areas, and that this is another area that isn't really understood or hasn't been looked into.

TM: No, you really make a good point.

Q: The olfactory intoxicants that they- there's a critical, um, um, timing and involvement that has to go on in order to optimize an experience and I think that the olfactory component is one that needs to be considered.

TM: Pheromones are aromatic compounds which are message-bearing chemicals that, uh, insects give off but plants also give up pheromones and in fact the more it's looked into the more it appears that everything is giving off pheromones. And, and the planar nature of hallucinogens suggest that they may be in some sense natural hallucinogens. Super-pheromones. They are actually bearing- message-bearing compounds whose purpose is to communicate between one species and another or within a species. For instance, the language of insects is not a language of sound but a language of chemical excretion, and how complex this language is we don't know because we can't pierce into it. But I studied for a while under doctor Ralph Oddie who was a great geographer and medical epidemiologist and he suggested that hallucinogens should be looked upon as a subset of pheromones and I know when you're in the Amazon you just breathe this air which is laden with thousands of chemical messengers of all sorts that are setting the ambiance of the whole biosphere and, uh, thi- this has not been looked at. It's not well understood.

There was an amazing article written a few years ago by a man named Harry Weiner who wrote an article called external chemical messengers, ECM, he called them, and ,uh, in the New York Journal of Medicine. And he outlined a whole theory about how this regulated species and interspecies relations. He talked about how when you walk into a room full of people you get an immediate gestalt impression which he felt was olfactory. That you were sensing the psychic conditions of everyone by taking a lung-full of the message-laden chemicals that everybody was exuding. He talked about psychiatrists who would diagnose schizophrenia by smell. They would just walk over to the person and take a hit of their body odor and felt, you know, that- and, and he even suggested what perhaps some forms of schizophrenia are is miscuing socially because your pheromone system is haywire so you're giving off what can only be described as a weird vibe and so people relate to you weirdly and that makes you weirder and it makes them weirder and you get this feedback lock, and it's essentially because your invisible chemical messenger computer is broken down.

Q: Um. Um, what I was thinking was that if we could get back a little bit to the combination of the, uh, let's say the tryptamine, the DMT and the, um, harmine or those combinations, and also to get to the fugu. I know very little about it and it would be nice if, if you have some thoughts on, uh, on the chemistry of the fugu and the---newt.

EG: What is fugu?

Q: It's, um, a fish that's eaten in Japan.

EG: Oh.

TM: Yes, I don't know actually anything about that particular fish. I know that there are fish eaten off

Norfolk island which is an island off the west coast of Australia. In fact there's an amazing description of a trip in Hoffer and Osmond's book *Hallucinogens*, uh, this person- this happened in the early 60's. They s- they saw a monument to the first landing on the moon and had all these super science-fiction visions of the future that they had not expected to get high. It was an accidental- they had caught this fish, roasted it on the beach and ate it. Uh, and in Hawaii there are similar fish, and about six species are implicated. And I think in all cases DMT is the compound. But not a lot of animal tissue contains utilizable amounts of hallucinogens. For instance, I don't think it's ever- no hallucinogenic insect has ever been confirmed although there are persistent reports of a grub, a palm grub, an immature beetle form in Brazil which is hallucinogenic and uh occasionally butterflies are mentioned as hallucinogenic but it's never been confirmed. So this is an area where research needs to be done.

Q: When uh, [clears throat], if one were able to make DMT from let's say rabbit lungs or were able to obtain the harmine from the Russian thistle and other plants, uh, how would one proceed in terms of combining these, um, in the most effective way?

TM: Well, you want a l- a, you want MAO inhibition. So you have to take an effective dose of the MAO inhibitor. And then, uh, the DMT is usually potentiated at a dose lower than the effective dose without the MAO inhibitor, and probably since these things are degraded substantially in the gut the most effective way of doing it would be to smoke it or sublingual absorption is also a direct route that avoids the degradation in the digestive system.

[recording may have been cut off here]

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1995

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Conversations on the Edge of Magic

19-24 July 1994

Brushwood Folklore Center, Sherman, NY @ Starwood Festival XIV

Description

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What I'll do today is I assume most of you are not familiar with my work, but I also assume you're intelligent, so I'm not going to give an introductory talk. I'll just cut to the chase and if you don't understand what's said, at least you have the satisfaction of knowing nobody talked down to you, right? [audience laughter] Okay, it's very hard to know where exactly to slice into this pie. I mean, I am an advocate of the psychedelic experience for [audience applause] [Terence chuckles]... for personal growth work, for shamanic exploration, as an enzyme for the imagination, as a force that forces us to grow up and, uh, clean up. However, what I want to talk to you today about because this is a pagan community, and because I think the argument, if it's not understood here won't be understood anywhere, is, I want to talk about the social impact of psychedelic plants on human consciousness both in the present and in the remote past. Because my approach to psychedelics is not to see it as a religious freedom issue, or a personal self-exploration issue, uh, that's all there, but I believe we cannot really understand what it is to be human being and how we came to be human beings without factoring in to our explanations this most taboo of all subjects for the Western dominator mind, the subject of boundary dissolving, consciousness expanding plants. And so every point of view has a cosmology, a myth of its meaning. And as quickly as I can I want to tell you the myth that to my mind unites paganism, psilocybin, sexual freedom, the peril to the earth, and the hope for the future, all into one very nice, neat package. And it requires a, a kind of an anthropology lesson.

First of all our fellow voyagers along the way – the scientists – have created, as you all know, the theory of evolution, which has been incr- the great crowning achievement of biology over the past hundred years. First the Darwinian understanding of natural selection and random mutation, then Mendelian genetics, the discovery of the particulate nature of the gene, then, uh, still later molecular genetics, the elucidation of DNA so forth and so on. The theory of evolution has been very successful in explaining the state of nature on this planet with one tremendously embarrassing exception which is ourselves. Biological evolution cannot account for a phenomenon like minded human beings involved in building and maintenance of global electronically-sustained societies. How do we do it? Well, we do it because we have a vastly superior cerebral architecture to any other organism in nature. And the interesting thing about that architecture is that it sprang into being in the blink of an eye, geologically speaking. The human brain size doubled in less than two million years. This is the most dramatic expansion in the size of a major organ of a higher animal in the entire fossil record. It would be under any circumstances an embarrassment to the theory of evolution, but notice that the theory of evolution was generated by the very organ we're discussing. So it is doubly embarrassing.

Now, obviously we are the inheritors of extraordinary circumstances. Higher animals have existed on this planet for 200 million

years in all kinds of forms. Uh, reptilian life, amphibian life, avian life mammalian life, and never, so far as the geological history of the planet can tell us, never did machine-building, language-using, technology-producing societies arrive. Some extraordinary interaction in our early history is responsible for our circumstance as language-using, technology-producing creatures.

Okay, end of introduction. Here's the scenario, and I hope it has special resonance for this community. All animal species tend to evolve into a- an ecological niche and stabilize themselves there. Ants and termites have been at equilibrium for hundreds of millions of years. Our remote ancestors also were on a direct course toward that kind of dynamic equilibrium. Uh, we were evolving toward being fruit eating, canopy living, insectivorous, uh, primates with an advanced repertoire of pack signals and this was apparently to be our evolutionary destiny. Were it not for the fact that sometime in the last five million years or so the African continent, which was the site of our environmental proto-system, began to dry up. And the forests that had always been our arboreal home began to shrink. And what this spelled for our remote protohominid ancestors was nutritional pressure. There wasn't enough food. Our remote ancestors began descending from the canopy and exploring the new environment that the aridity was bringing into existence. A grassland environment, an environment of limited numbers of plant and animal species relative to the climax tropical rain forests that were in retreat.

Now, the reason animals specialize their food supply is to avoid contact with mutagens in the environment. If you begin experimenting with foods and begin eating everything, uh, you will produce more children with mutations. Some of these mutations will be positive, most will be lethal. Uh, when our remote ancestors came under nutritional pressure they began expanding their diet. This was the moment when we became, uh, partially carnivorous, when we became omnivores. And had I more time, I would lay out many examples of specific plants – such as plants that contain birth control alkaloids and things like that – specific plants that would have impacted, uh, early human emergence. But I want to concentrate here on one plant. And that is the psilocybin containing mushrooms that grow in the dung of cattle. Because I think that if we are looking for a missing link it isn't a transitional skeleton, it isn't meddling by extraterrestrials, uh, at least not of the overt thousand-ton beryllium ship variety [audience laughter]. It has to do with the fact that we began to allow into our diet an exotic pseudo-neurotransmitter that was part of the native flora of the grassland. And I believe that, you know, in the next ten minutes I can at least make it seem plausible to you, that this mushroom was the triggering factor that moved us from being an advanced hominid, an advanced animal, to being in fact a conscious, self-reflecting, caring, thinking, dreaming, striving human being.

And here is my answer to this riddle, “where did human consciousness come from?” It begins like this: In that foraging phase where we were testing all kinds of plants on the grassland, small amounts of psilocybin mushrooms would have naturally been eaten in the process of eating corms and things like that. I personally have seen baboons, uh, in Kenya investigating cow patties on the savannah because they know that bug, uh, pupa will be under the cow paddies. So, the cow patties are already set up as vectors for possible sources of nutrition. So there is no question that these proto-hominids would have eaten psilocybin in small amounts. And by small amounts I mean amounts so small, that if you were to eat that much you wouldn't feel anything. But it's- this dose-level has been studied and it causes increased acuity of vision. You can actually give people small amounts of psilocybin and then give them eye tests and they do better if they're slightly intoxicated than if they are not. The guy who proved this, the Viennese psychologist Roland Fischer, when he described those experiments to me, he said, “and so you see, my young friend, here we have a case where the use of drugs actually introduces us to a more true vision of reality than if we have avoided the drug.” [laughter]. Scientific proof that the drug is telling you more about reality than if you had refused it.

Alright, now, what kind of visual acuity is it that is being improved? Well it turns out it's what's called edge detection. In the grassland environment where the movement of small animals means dinner and the movement of large animals means you become dinner [audience laughter] a plant which confers increased visual acuity is going to immediately confer an adaptive advantage on those members of the group that let it in. Those members of the group that refuse it out of esthetic or, or gastronomic reasons will tend to be out-bred, because the psilocybin using members of the species will be more successful at

obtaining food and at surviving to raise their own children to reproductive age which is the name of the game in, uh, in evolution. So that's step one of a three step process that leads to the explosion of consciousness in the hominid brain. Step two, which should have special appeal for this crowd, is that when you takes lightly larger doses of psilocybin, not religiously profound doses, but, but doses which you definitely feel, psilocybin is what's called a CNS stimulant, a central nervous system stimulant. What it causes in, in animals is what, uh, neurophysiologists call arousal. And in highly sexed animals like primates arousal means, in the male, erection. So what-an animal then, which is allowing, what is essentially a sexual stimulator an aphrodisiac to enter into the diet, there will be more instances of what anthropologists call successful copulations, and God knows we need that. So, if you have more successful copulations you have more pregnancies. You have another-a second factor outbreeding the non-psilocybin using member of the population.

Now, something really important here that is my, well this whole thing is my theory, but here is the part of it that I like the best: All primates, all primates, have what are called dominance hierarchies, or male dominance hierarchies. This goes right back clear to Lemurs and the old world monkeys- yes, well the new world monkeys which are more primitive. All primates have this dominance hierarchy and what it means is, the sharp fanged, hard bodied young males, they control the women, the children, the elderly, all sexual minorities, everybody is under the thumb of the alpha males. And as we sit here today, though this community may strive to be an exception, as a society male dominance is an enormous dilemma for us, and an enormous distorting factor in our politics and in our lives. So my notion is that psilocybin, by promoting this polymorphic sexual style, actually acted as an inoculation against monogamous sexual styles of bonding, you see. And it isn't that the monogamous style, the dominator style disappeared- it was simply medicated out of existence. For perhaps 100,000 years it was medicated out of existence.

Now, and, and what it promoted, this arousal, this psilocybin-taking around the African campfires by these primitive nomadic pastoralists, what the social change that came with it was, was an orgiastic sexual style. A style were everybody would get loaded around the camp fire and then hump in an enormous writhing heap. [audience laughter and whooping] Now, besides the fact that this is a great deal of fun it has a very, very profound social effect, which is: in societies which allow orgy men cannot trace lines of male paternity, men cannot trace lines of male paternity. What does this mean? It means that men do not identify with children as property. It means that the men of that kind of a social group can only think in terms of *our* children, we the group, our children. And it creates an immensely cohesive social glue that I believe held these societies together for millennia. And I believe that during this period of pharmacological suppression of male dominance we became human beings.

Theatre, poetry, magic, art, altruism, uh, dance, symbolic and cognitive activity of every sort was born in that window of opportunity when there was simultaneously a chemical suppression of male dominance and consequently an opening to Gaian intentionality, to the intent of the larger biological systems in which the human system was embedded. And a kind of paradise came into existence. There were actually two phases: one from about forty to thirty thousand years ago in the interglacial 6 and in that early phase human beings, cattle and mushrooms were sort of all swirling together there on the African grassland in contact but not yet a coherent triad. The second partnership paradise arose at the last glaciation, uh, at the melt, during the last glacial melt and it lasted from about 20,000 years ago to perhaps as much, as, as recently 10,000 years ago. And it was in that later phase that, uh, uh, the Magdalenian explosion occurred and the social forms were put in place that Hellenistic paganism was looking back at with a nostalgic and barely cognizable memory. There was an old, old memory of a kind of paganism that was old 5,000 years before Eleusis laid its cornerstone.

I wrote a book called *The Archaic Revival*, in which I try to say that the entire cultural impulse of the 20th century, beginning with Freud and Jung discovering the unconscious, beginning with Picasso dragging back primitive West African masks to Paris and inserting them into his paintings, Dada, pataphysics, jazz, abstract expressionism, even phenomena like National Socialism, all of these various impulses in the 20th century, some positive, some negative, all have a common theme: archaism. Archaism, a nostalgia for a state before history. And as this tendency, this nostalgia has been sorted out over the last 100 years by generations of scholars beginning with, you know, Freud and Jung and Blavatsky and Crowley and then coming up through all the folklorists and deconstructionists, as this thing has been teased apart, it has become clearer and clearer that the paradigmatic figure in any archetypal revival is the maker of magic, the shaman, the wizard, the seeress, the person who is in control with invisible forces. And as I have lived my life and explored these things for a longtime I've come to the conclusion that the shaman without the hallucinogenic plants is well on the way to becoming priest or priestess, well on the way to being

downloaded into a fixed canon, a, a moral vision, uh, a societal, religious structure, which is not what shamanism is about. It's about discordian ecstasy; it's about the felt presence of immediate experience in the absence of theory. That's what it's about.

So, this, this, uh, well, and then I want to get back to our little process. We've now covered step one, better vision through mushroom taking leads to better diets and healthier children. Bigger doses lead to an end to monogamy, a dissolution of pair bonding and a replacement of, of monogamous anxiety, with, uh, polymorphic amorousness or whatever you want to call it. Uh, then – that's only the second step – the third step is when you double the polyamorous dose, and now, hunting is out of the question [audience laughter] and even fucking is out of the question because you are nailed to the ground somewhere off at the edge of the firelight wrestling with a mystery so profound, so bizarre that even as we sit here with Husserl and Heidegger and Heisenberg and all these clowns under our belts it is still absolutely mysterious, appalling, challenging, boundary dissolving and unavoidably ecstatic. It is *the* living mystery. And I don't know how many of them there are in the world but for my money there only has to be one [audience laughter] to rescue the entire concept from, you know, the dirty claws of the reductionist, the materialist, the Christers, the nothing-but-ers, the merely-this-and simply-that-ers [audience laughter, applause]. Yea, I know that I am preaching to the converted but I [clears throat] if I'd preach to the unconverted I'd be hung from the yardarm. [audience laughs]

So, you may say to yourself, "Well, this is all very interesting. This guy has some kind of anthropological revisionist theory and, you know, that's all well and good, in other words, so what? What does it have to do with us? Well, what it has to do with us, we are in a state of enormous dysfunctional anxiety as a result of the fall into history, which has caused us to have to compromise our sensuality, our connection to the Gaian Goddess, our polymorphic sexuality. All of these things have been poured into a new set of social institutions that derive, essentially, from the invention of agriculture, which is where I think the shit hit the fan. I mean I'm fairly radical on that. I think that agriculture is the end, because it's incredibly successful as a strategy for food production. Well, what does that mean? It means you can't be nomads anymore. Oh no, you have to build a stone tower to put the grain in. And you have to make sure you can haul large rocks upon top of your tower to drop on people who's grain crop wasn't as big as yours was. We see this at Jericho. The most advanced building of the world at 10,000 BC was the grain tower at Jericho. And it was defensive, and it bespeaks, you know, the primal paranoia.

Once people stopped moving across the land, once they violated it with the blade of the plough, then you get sedentary populations, the division between the profane world of the city and the wilderness outside. That's the moment when the division between the unconscious and the conscious mind comes into play and an entire set of institutions arise then: male kingship, standing armies, role specialization, slavery, women as chattel, uh, so forth and so on. I mean, we are the unhappy inheritors of this hideous plunge into dysfunctionality. Now why is it such a hideous plunge into dysfunctionality to live without psilocybin or close relatives thereof? The answer is that his thing which to now I've described as male dominance and a tendency to form dominance hierarchies we can describe another way and bring much closer to home by saying "It is the ego". The ego is a late arriving, very tenuous, highly uncertain of itself, social structure that has taken root in the human psyche like a tumor, like uh, a, a growth of some sort. It is the leftover of this primate dominance complex and the way it manifests itself is by the establishment of boundaries. First of all, this is my body, do not touch it. Second of all, these are my weapons and, and agricultural tools, do not touch them, this is my woman, these are my children, I hunt there, so forth and so on. It's this division of the world which allows the illusion of the ego to come into existence. Now, what do psychedelics do and why are they such social dynamite? The answer is, it's not a health issue, it's not an addiction issue, I mean, that's preposterous, it's about boundary dissolution. Every society from the classic Maya to Fujiwara, Japan, to the France of the Bourbons, every society establishes a set of boundaries which it then calls "reality" and woe betide you if you go across the boundary, because then you are outcast, outclassed, outlandish, and the full fury of the community can be turned against you. And we all know what that can mean, as pagans.

So, I believe that the ego is a dysfunctional, uh, psychic invader. And that it will continue and strengthen to perpetuate itself as

long as we do not institute either as groups or within our relationships or as individuals, a regular ritual encounter with the forces which dissolve these boundaries. And the only force I know that works are these plants. And as I say, I'm not interested in arguing whether there are other methods or not, God I would hope so, but anything I ever looked into, and I shopped the spiritual supermarket from stem to stern, was horse shit as far as I could see, [audience laughter, applause] Now, I am not a sensitive, let me say that, people say, "Well, but what about Ramana Maharshi, what about Jaka Berma – hey, it's great for those folks. I applaud our hots and avatars and so forth and so on, but what I'm interested in is democratic ecstasies. It should be for the most lumpen among us. It, it is not to be attained by an act of dietary control, sexual abstinence or, uh, you know, whatever. It is a human birth right – it is a human birthright to touch the incorporeal body of the Goddess, [audience applause] it isn't something ... [more applause, laughs]

So, uh..., well let's see, where can we go from here? I say all this, if you are interested, I say it better than I'm saying it here, in my book *Food of the Gods*, which was not written for you people, it's an argument for people who do not know a great deal about drugs, may never have taken drugs, but through some miracle have managed to maintain an open mind. Uh, [audience laughter] I don't know how much you know about my shtick– and I can't get into it now – but for me these things are more than tools for the Freudian or Jungian unconscious. I mean, I journey to inhabited worlds that are, there are echos in Elf land and Faye but, you know, as a rationalist, as a, as an aspiring astronautical engineer at age 13 it's astonishing to me that I could validate the mystery through doubt, through doubt.

The truth does not require your belief. The truth is real. You can beat it on the ground, you can rip it apart, you can look inside it. Nobody needs to guard the truth from inspection. Nobody needs to tell you that, you know, you can't look behind the stage. And so, my motivation is to try to – number one – bring people to the realization that the spiritual path – if you want to think of it that way – that is a real thing. And it will carry you to the real thing. All spiritual disciplines that I know except for psychedelics, put a great deal of emphasis on putting the pedal to the metal. Push, push, push, you know, meditate, make offerings, do Mantrayana, do Pranayama, do Pusha, push, push, push! With psychedelics suddenly there is a very deep interest in "And where are the breaks?" [audience laughter] You see? You're no longer pushing. Once you get to the psychedelics, seeking is an attitude which ill becomes you. [audience laughter] You have found it! You have found it. Now what in the hell are you going to do with it?

And, and this is a great dilemma for anyone who goes into this. I mean, I am, as I see myself, I'm a preacher in the marketplace, but I know – and I'm sure most of you know – that I could walk out of here, you could walk out of here, and you could go as far as your courage would carry you. There is no barrier. There are no more barriers. You can go as far as your fuckin' courage will carry you. And at that point you have to ask the question, you know, "Do I want to be the Mad Monk of Cold Mountain? Do I want the villagers down in the valley to say: Oh yes, we see him occasionally up in the mist naked, flying with the eagles ..." uh, [audience laughter] because you can be that person. You know, you don't have to go back to your job as Addict-Sachs stock broker or whatever it is. And so we stand on the edge of being able to leave history. We can leave it.

You know, we tend to forget because our lives are so brief, but what we call the psychedelic experience is very, very new on the plate of Western, uh, uh, occultism and science. I mean hashish did not make great inroads into Medieval Europe, that all came later in the 18th and 19th century. Chloroform, ether, these things don't cut it. Mescaline was, uh, synthesized for the first time in 1888. These things had to compete with many other interesting areas of scientific exploration in 20th century. We have not come to terms with what they mean and what they are. Uh, and it's a curious area because the counterculture – whatever that may mean – knows a great deal more about this than science. I mean, science does not explore this area because it senses enormous danger for its ontological machinery. It probably couldn't survive the encounter. And therefore its just said, "Well, it's psychology, it's marginal, it's fleeting, it's non irreproducible, and so forth and so on. This is all nonsense. You can, by unplugging the telephone, by fasting for six hours, and by taking 5 dried grams of *Stropharia cubensis* in silent darkness, you can go up to the great simulacra of human explorers Hypatia, Maria, Newton, Da Vinci, you can take that ride. I have the feeling that when we go into those psychedelic spaces we not only see things no one has ever seen before, we see things no one will ever, ever see again.

Okay, one last thought I wanna put out and then I'll try for some questions. I have a sort of a rational mind, in that I like to make sense. I don't mean experimental sense, but I mean if you can build a verbal metaphor to get from one thing to another then you understand it much better. And so I-the magical dimension is real. It isn't psychological, it isn't based on the strength of will. It's as real as Mars in its orbit. I mean, there is real estate out there, folks. It's that real. And so then, uh, the question becomes, uh, how to vivify it. And the answer is by creating a consensus in language. By having it made illegal it's like where sex was with the Victorians. You know, everybody was inventing the wheel over and over again.

What we have to do is begin to build a consensus about this realm. And, uh, you know, this may be heresy in a community as oriented toward tradition as this one seems to be, but- and the generally pleasant position to take is that everybody has a piece of the action. You know, the Hassids know something, the Buddhists know something, the Book of Mormon there's something there ... The mushroom was incredibly ungenerous on this point. It said: "Nobody knows jack shit about what is going on." [audience laughter]

So it is for you with your body as laboratory and your mind as worker in that laboratory to find a way, to reflux the alchemical gold. The only experience which counts is your own experience. Everything else is somehow handed down through social structures and political structures. It, it's irrelevant. If flying saucers were to land on the south lawn of the White House tomorrow, it would not matter to you as much as smoking DMT would if you did that tonight. Because that's your experience, your conviction, you see. And I believe that, uh, the rebirth of Paganism, the rebirth of Archaism, the rebirth of Psychedelic Shamanism is coming at this moment because we are going to be involved in a historical meltdown which will be the equivalent of a species-deep shamanic crisis in which, as a collectivity, we are going to have to make the journey to the well of worlds and recover and cleanse the collective soul of humanity.

We have lost touch with our moral compass because we have lost touch with the Gaian mind. And this is not a metaphor. If you take these neurotransmitters, these exopheromones that connect you up with the natural environment, the Gaian intent becomes known. It's an act of feeling. If we could feel what we are doing we would stop doing it. But we live in a realm of abstraction, excuses, incredible wealth, incredible levels of pampering and softness lay between us, the upper five percent of the intellectual and material elite on the planet, and the problems. I mean, how many of us have been to Bosnia, or Rwanda, or Somalia? These things are only images on a dehumanizing screen. If we could feel what we are doing, we would awaken to the mystery of each other and to the mystery of the historical process of recovering what was lost.

We don't need this material civilization. We don't need five billion people on this planet. We have to think very, very radically about how we are going to change ourselves or we're not going to make the cut. And orthodoxy is utterly and completely bankrupt. All it can do is suppress. They suppress, they suppress, they suppress. But there's only one argument that will forgive suppression: deliverance. And they can't give us deliverance. All they can give us is the Menendez trial, O.J., Baby M, The Skaters, Claus von Bülow, horse shit, horse shit, horse shit. [applause]

We are locked inside, uh, a nightmare, a nightmare of contaminated and toxic imagery that is designed to disempower you and make it impossible for you to think straight. And the way out is straight back to the reality of the vegetable Gnosis. It is there, it has always been there. The societies that never broke the connection live in dynamic and loving balance with each other and the planet today were it not for the input of our disruptive social and economic systems. So I, I talk to all kinds of people who I see as part of my community, but it stretches from virtual reality, to the radical gay movement, to the house movement, to the pagan movement, to the younger molecular pharmacologists, to the radical art historians and psychotherapists – all of these communities are fragmented and suspicious of each other, and this is precisely what orthodoxy enjoys. If all of these

countercultural impulses could make common cause, we would probably discover that we are 65-70% of the population. And so what is needed is a spirit of boundary dissolution between individuals, between classes, sexual orientations, rich and poor, man and woman, intellectual and feeling-toned types. If this can happen then we will make a new world. And if this doesn't happen nature is fairly pitiless, uh, and has a place for us in the shale of this planet where so many have preceded us. [audience laughter] Well, I think that's the basic rave. It raises a lot of issues. If somebody is burning to ask a question, uh ... yes, burning to ask ...

[44:32]Q & A

[Q: ?]

TM: Well, I think that it's very hard to find pristine pseudo-Paleolithic, or "pseudo-Neolithic" culture. Even the Amazon, where I've spent a lot of time, uh, tribes that were nomadic at the time of, of, uh, contact are now agriculturalist simply because missionary medicine has swollen aboriginal populations to the point where they can't be nomads as they used to be. So, you're right. There are some psychedelic-using cultures that are pretty, uh, uh, unappealing – although actually I can only think of one, that I find politically very unappealing. And I don't wanna knock them because I haven't lived with them. So I may be misled. But I think it's not simply taking psychedelics but it's also to decondition oneself to the notion of ego and all the concepts which constellate around that, such as place, property, ownership, and stability. You see, the idea that we have inherited from Western religion and science is the idea that things should be stable. This is a very male dominant notion, the wish for stability, eternity, when in fact the message life hands you over and over again is "nothing lasts". Nothing lasts. Not what you love, not what you hate, not your enemies, your friends, not even your dear, dear self. Nothing lasts. And the ego goes mad in the presence of that truth; it, it, it can't swallow it. And so we have anxiety of death, need to dominate people, need to possess property, terror of illness, resentment of fate, because we are not in the flow. And I think what these psychedelics do is they put you very much in the 'here and now'. And it's nothing more than that. I mean, obviously I'm an egghead and an abstract thinker, and I hope to make my reputation in mathematics, but feeling is the primary validator of existence. I mean, if you don't know that, you gotta go back to square one. And these things empower feeling. They are catalysts for the imagination. I mean, you may not like what psychedelics do to you, they may terrify you. But if it terrifies you then surely it must have catalyzed your imagination, or you wouldn't have known that terror. So catalysis of the imagination in a fairly loving and yet ruthless way is what the psychedelics deliver. Anybody who calls this escapism is sitting on their thumb. I mean they don't know what they're talking about. Reality is for people who can't handle this stuff! [audience laughter, applause]

I do want to say one thing. It almost slipped my mind and for those of you who have your hands up I apologize but I think this needs to be said. And I don't know how many of you know it, but this is a news flash, folks. We interrupt this program to bring you a special announcement. A new psychoactive substance has been discovered. A very powerful psychoactive substance, the most powerful since the discovery of LSD. A substance so powerful that 300 µg is the dose. That means 1 gram will dose 7,000 people. This compound comes from a plant. The plant is – and I hope you're paying attention – the plant is legal. The compound is legal. You can possess it. You can manufacture it. [audience laughter] You can transport it across borders. You can give it away. You can sell it and you can do it on stage. [audience laughter] And it comes from a plant. And the plant is also available, and I wanna tell you about this because [laughter], Okay, no shoving, no shoving! [audience laughter] Alright, not to keep you in suspense any longer. The plant is *Salvia divinorum*, *Salvia divinorum* which, some of you who are real mavens of this stuff know it. It's been in the books for 30 years. The problem was nobody knew how to get off. And so it was always carried in these lists as 'suspect hallucinogen'. The thing is, any scientist, confronted with a plant where somebody says it's a hallucinogen, will test to see if it's an alkaloid. All hallucinogens, almost all, are alkaloids. So, *Salvia divinorum* – negative for alkaloids. Doesn't matter. It has a new, unknown compound in it – now known – Salvinorin alpha. And the interesting thing about Salvinorin alpha is, we have in this country a structural near-relatives or cognener law, which says, if a compound is a structural near-relative, isomer and enantiomer or stereoisomer of an illegal compound then it too can be made illegal. *Salvia divinorum* doesn't fit this description. That means that in order to make this stuff illegal the government will have to present medical data showing there is something wrong with it. And at this stage nobody on earth knows the real pharmacological parameters of this compound.

So, here is the deal: you can grow this plant in a window box in your apartment, in your backyard. It looks like 'Joe Plant' [audience laughter]. There is nothing particularly distinguishing about this plant. And if you have three or four cuttings in six or seven months you will have more than you know what to do with. And, then, then I'll just describe how I do it. I'm slightly

chicken shit to do the pure compound, which, by the way, you do 300 µg. Understand that what it looks like is a grain of salt. A *small grain of salt* is a human-effective dose. It comes on so fast that you have no impression of it coming on at all. You do it and then after a while you notice that for a long time you have been staring at something incomprehensible.

[audience laughter] Well let me ta- here is how I recommend that you do it while we get the chemical thing sorted out. Because the chemical – it could be dangerous. It would be very easy to overdose by a factor of ten, twenty, thirty and you would still just be doing a smidgeon. So I say let's honor the plants. Let's not hand the government a bunch of casualties that it can clock over and put on national TV, you know, the bible, bible, bible show [laughter], uh..., let's use the plant. And the way you do it is you grow up a batch of this stuff and get between fifteen and twenty leaves. Remove the mid-vein with your fingernail, just to lower the mass, fold it all into a little pile, put it in your mouth, and twenty leaves is a whopping mouthful, so basically as much as you can get in your mouth. Put it in your mouth- lie down in silent darkness and squeeze the stuff with your jaws. Tastes like ..., it's horrible. It's not as bad as ayahuasca, but it's horrible. But you could acquire a taste for it. [audience laughter]

So, lie down in darkness where you can see a digital watch – one of these red-flashing jobs like a K-mart deal and, and then let it ...don't swallow it, but just squeeze it and masticate it. At fifteen minutes by the clock spit it out into a bowl or Kleenex or something. And then just lie there. Lie still in the darkness with your eyes closed and look. And this is almost the key empowerment though it's idiotic. People fail to do it. Look at the back of your eyelids with the expectation of seeing something. And when you do that, after just three or four minutes there will be what, uh, we professionals call streaming. Which means ameoid lights of after image colors, the chartreuse and purple flowing by, and about three minutes after that it will deepen very, very quickly into extraordinarily bizarre, uh ...dare we say it, fairly DMT-like hallucinations. And it, it, it builds fast. I mean so fast that either is this wonderful moment in it where you actually know real fear, which shows you that it's working. Yeah, I mean, I really believe if you take a psychedelic and you're not afraid you did too much, you didn't do enough. [audience laughter, applause]

The experience then will unfold for about 45 minutes. And just lie there and look. And it is beautiful, it is beautiful. I mean, I'm a, a, a connoisseur of hallucination and these deep indigo blues, these cerulean blues against blackness that are like neon and these amorphous Yves Tanguy kind of shapes that are moving and transforming themselves. I mean, I was amazed, I couldn't believe it. I was saying, "My God, this, legal? This is legal? And it's working! It's working!" And I am the hardest of the hard heads. I mean I know people say, you know, here is *Tagetes lucida*, this will get you off. here is this, smoke this, knick'anick this, something...no, no, no, no, no, uh-huh no, it doesn't, it's not like that, these things are rare. But this one works. And I commend it to your attention and your friends' attention and anyone with shamanic intent. As I say, it's perfectly legal to possess, advocate the whole bit, yes.

[Q]

Salvia. It's in the genus *Salvia*. That's the mint family. Sacred to pagans for millennia. Salvia S-A-L-V-I-A and then *divinorum* [spells it]. The diviner's mint.

[Q]

Well, yes. Let me say something about this that's very interesting.

[Q:]

Pardon me?

Q: What's its common name?

Well That's what I was gonna talk about. It's native from Mexico. So it has no common name in English. In Spanish it has a very interesting common name. It's called 'Ojos de la pastora', now, 'The eyes of the shepherdess'. What a strange name. Think about it for a moment. First of all, notice that in Christian iconography there are no shepherdesses, period. Not one. We got shepherds, you got your shepherds there Christmas. Shepherdess? No. So it's called 'Ojos de la pastora'. Well then the anthropologist who studied this, Bret Blosser, to whom we all owe a great debt, Hail Bret! [laughter, applause] Naturally these people are Tzotzil and Sotil. They're in the mountains of Oaxaca. And so we said to them, "Well yes, Ojos de la pastora, very interesting, but what do you call it in your language? What do you call it in Tzotzil?" And they said, "Well, we have no name for it in our language."

This is very, very interesting and if any of you have any thoughts or want work on this, it's inconceivable, if these people had used this for centuries that they would not have a local Tzotzil name for it. So he said, "Why don't you have a name for it?" And they said, "Because our grandfathers were the first to use it." And this, we do not know what to make of it. Because *Salvia divinorum* is known only in this very indemnified locality in the Sierra Mazateca. Where did it come from? Has it always been there? But these Indians only discovered it 200 years ago? Did it come from somewhere else? And if so where? Because it's never been located anywhere else on the planet. So this is a great puzzlement. And I think if we move fast enough, we psychedelicos, we pagans, we neuronauts, we magicians, if we move fast enough, this will just be moot. And this is a far more powerful thing than Cannabis. I mean, not if you've never smoked Cannabis and then you sit down and smoke the best aff there is. But as we all know, after a while Cannabis loses its ability to really catapult you into the unspeakable. The *Salvia divinorum*, every time I have taken it it's gotten better and stronger and weirder. So, I think it is sent from the Goddess at this time, Eyes of the Shepherdess, these are the eyes we should be looking through. [audience applause]

Okay. I think several people at once asked, "Where do you get it?" You must each have your own favorite rare plant dealer. I, I don't work for any rare plant dealer and every time I mention one thousands of dollars flow into their coffers which leaves me feeling slightly weird. Nevertheless, Of The Jungle, PO Box 1801, Sebastopol, California. Somebody sitting next to you already knows this. So I'm not gonna repeat it. That's the one. And ...

Q: We have the plant. I just have a harvesting question.

TM: A harvesting question.

Q: ... herbalist we've always harvest when the vital whatever are in the part of the plant that you would ingest. So normally, you're going for a leave, you harvest when leaves are in a strength. So once the purple flower sprites go on, do you wait until they die down 'till you harvest? Or do you ...harvest and just eat as you go?]

TM: Well, we're learning, we're learning. And so far we've been fairly careful to eat it just as it's approaching flowering.

Q: ... before the power hasn't gotten into the flowering yet.

TM: Right. But you do know, don't you, that it's, it may look like an annual but it's a perennial. You can clip it off above a node and it will grow more.

Q: ?

TM: Yeah, no, seed is a pain. Try and do it with the cuttings. That's about all I can say about it. Alright, I'm gonna knock off. Thank you very much. [audience applause]

Original Transcription by: colouredbrain
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Culture and Ideology are Not Your Friends

27 April 1999

Whole Life Expo, Denver, CO

[Audio Link](#)

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Ahhhh....Can you all hear? Is that good? Can you hear? Is that working for you? Great. Ok.

Well, it's a pleasure to be here. It's always a pleasure to speak for the Whole Life Expo, because they turn out interesting people, my own special brand of freaks, and then those who wander the halls in search of enlightenment from moldavite suppositories and what have you [audience laughter... and we're always happy to enlighten them.

Before I get into the bulk of my thing, I-I hope you each got one of these things as you came in. Uh, these are two events: one is an old favorite – in fact, as I look out over this crowd I see many familiar faces from these Mexico get togethers which have been going on now for about eight years. Uh, if you're interested in ethnobotany, psychedelic plants, shamanism, ethno-chemistry, ethno-archaeolog--uh, psychedelic archaeology, this is probably the place where you get more people who are experts in this field under one tent than anywhere else: uh, Jonathan Ott, the author of *Pharmactheon*, , uh, Rob Montgomery, Manuel Torres, Christian Rättsch, the German ethno-anthropologist--all kinds of people come to this thing, and it's held in Palenque, within walking distance of the ruins, each year, and it's the height of mushroom season, and, uh--I need say no more about that [audience laughter]. So if you can, join us...

And then, in this past year at Palenque, speaking with Manolo--with Manuel Torres and Ken Symington, we decided that the psychedelic community was ready to attempt to take the next step in legitimizing itself in the--in the general cultural dialogue, and we felt that the place that hasn't really been honored or--or sufficiently brought to people's attention is the incredible role that psychedelics have played since the Fifties in the art world – in the world of painting, music composition, performance, dance, so forth and so on, and so this September, 12–17, on the big island of Hawaii, we're going to have a smaller conference – 100 people only – and we invited major contributors to the arts scene to come out of the closet and affirm the impact of psychedelics on their creative processes. And we have people, uh, such as, uh, Alex Grey, the painter; Robert Venosa, who is a Boulder painter, brilliant international painter; Annie Sprinkle, the performance artist; Tom Robbins, the, uh, novelist, who has just finished – I talked to him on the phone yesterday, I'm having dinner with him in Seattle tomorrow night – uh, he's just finished the longest Tom Robbins novel ever written, so Tom Robbins fans take note; um, who else? – Mark Pesce, Bruce Damer – these are cyberspace folks; Lewis John Carlino, who did the movie *Resurrection* and *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*. If you *are* a psychedelic artist, collector, dealer, or enthusiast, and you want to hang with these people, please consider this conference.

That's all the commercial and self-aggrandizing stuff I want to talk about. On to the main event. The way this will work is, I'll talk for a while and then we'll do questions for a while, and then it will be over, and

then I'll go down to the bookstore, and if anybody needs to speak to me or--or have a book signed, please, uh, please come down there.

OK. Uh, I used to prepare these things, in anticipation of vast oceans of faces eager to be uplifted; since the oceans of faces are, practically speaking, more like small ponds, I've realized that these are really conversations around and about one subject only, which is: What in the world is going on? What *is* going on?! I mean, what does it mean to be incarnate in a human body at the end of the 20th century in a squirrely culture like this, trying to make sense of your--your heritage, your opportunities, the contents of the culture, the contents of your own mind? Uh, i--is it possible to have an over-arching viewpoint that is not somehow canned, or cultish, or self-limited in its, uh, approach? In other words, is it possible to cultivate an open mind and sanity in the kind of society and psychological environment, uh, that we all share? And, it grows, daily and weekly, as you know, harder to do this, weirder to integrate, more on your plate to assimilate. And, I certainly don't have final – or even nearly final – answers. I think it all lies in posing the questions in a certain way, in feeling the data in a certain way, and one of the things I try to convince people is, it's not necessary to achieve closure with this stuff, and in fact any ideological or belief system that offers closure – meaning final answers – is sure to be wrong, sure to be self-limiting, sure to be inadequate to the facts.

So one of the ideas I'd like to put out is that, uh, and it may seem strange in this venue, but perhaps not: the idea that ideology is not our friend. It is not a matter of choosing from a smorgasbord of ideologies and rejecting the flawed, the self-contradictory, and the over-simple, in favor of the unflawed, the complex enough. Where is it writ in adamantite that semi-carnivorous monkeys can or *should* be capable of understanding reality? That seems to me one of the first illusions, uh, uh-- and one of the more prideful illusions of human culture, that a final understanding is possible in the first place. Better, I think, to try and frame, uh, questions which can endure--questions which can endure, and leave off searching for answers, because answers are like operating systems: they're being upgraded faster than you can keep up with it.

I want to mention just a couple of things that are happening to sort of set the context. I mean, this is the stuff I worry about or think about. Uh, in the last ten days, if you have not been paying attention (because the news have certainly been offering many different matters to claim your attention), but, in the last ten days, a new solar system – a new star system – with three giant planets has been discovered. So this is a multiple-planet solar system in Epsilon Andromedae, 44 light years away. What does that mean to us? Well, it means that solar systems like our own are probably as, uh, as common as popcorn on a theater floor. No reason to think not. In fact, right now, we know of 20 planets outside the solar system – twice as many as we know *inside* the solar system; so we're living in a different world than everybody was living in even just five years ago. Science is lifting veils and opening doorways on a universe so vast, so strange, so counterintuitive, that it's literally all you can do to keep up.

Uh, here's another factoid: there are now more square miles of territory in virtual reality than the entire surface of the Earth! Virtual reality is now larger than this planet. Uh, I don't know if you spend much time in VR; I spend a little time there – I was, uh, looking at AlphaWorld before I left Hawaii. The opening screen is from 25,000 feet above AlphaWorld; the entire thing cannot fit on the screen; Denver would fit on the screen at an altitude of 25,000 feet, you could see the outlying suburbs; but AlphaWorld won't fit – that's *how large* a single world of virtual reality is. And there are hundreds, if not thousands, being built, being expanded, being edited and changed, as we speak.

We're now just a hair's breadth away from there being *six billion* people on this planet. Uh, again, I checked on the Internet before I left – we're something like a hundred million short. So by the time I get back to Hawaii in a month, we'll be over the six billion mark. Then, just to touch on a few things: the strongest hallucinogen known to science is legal, free, and easily grown, totally un--uh, un--uh--limited in its distribution, its accessibility – I'm talking about α -salvinorin now. Quantum teleportation has been achieved and is moving out of the laboratory and probably in the next half-dozen years will be the basis of an entirely new kind of computational machine with greater computing capacity than all the computers presently operating in North America. And, had I had more time, I could just keep going with this laundry list of shockers.

Uh, the human world is exploding at the seams. Human creativity and the implementation of human inventions and technologies is now at an accelerated fever pitch like nothing ever before seen in the history of the world. Well, where is it leading, and how does one integrate this stuff into one's own life? What does it mean about the experience of being human?

Uh, If you've followed my--the evolution of my ideas, you'll know that I have proposed the existence of an invisible, permeating *something* that is throughout all being, all time, all space, all bodies, all thoughts, which I call novelty; and the interesting thing about novelty is that it's increasing, constantly. Science has not, uh, trumpeted this view, because science tends to look for principles which operate in definable domains – in other words, the laws of chemistry, the laws of physics, the laws of gene segregation, uh, the laws that describe the trajectories of artillery shells and falling bodies. But, I submit to you that there is an over-arching law which affects all reality, and that you don't need an atom-smasher or extremely advanced mathematical methodologies to discern. It is self-evident in your own experience. And, what it is is that as we go back in time, the universe is found to be a simpler place. Uh, if we go back *a long ways* in time, the universe is a very simple place: there are no cultures, there are no animals, there are no plants, indeed, if we go far enough back in time, there are no stars and planets; the universe is simply a swarming ocean of energy. But as we approach the present, it's as though the universe has undergone a series of crystallizations out of itself of higher and higher forms of organization, and this is what I call novelty.

Now, people have attacked this concept, saying that it's impossible to define in English or mathematically. Most things that are interesting are impossible to define. Love, courage, decency, dignity, hope, fear – impossible to define. It doesn't preclude them from shaping our world, and the absence of a--of a mathematical definition of novelty shouldn't impede us greatly either, because it's an intuitively graspable concept. Novelty is complexity; it's connectivity; it's complex non-equilibrium thermodynamic states that sustain themselves far from equilibrium. That's you, as a body; that's us, as a society; that's this planet, as a living ecosystem. And, the interesting thing about this novelty is, any given level of it which is achieved becomes the platform for further advance into novelty.

Now, there is a retardant force – and I call it habit, to keep it away from concepts like thermodynamic entropy, habit. And, so in my model of the way things work (gleaned from observation, stoned and unstoned), is that the cosmos, your life, the politics of this city, the history of Western civilization, is a struggle between habit and novelty. Habit is also an intuitively graspable concept. It means conservatism, recidivism, doing things the traditional way, not taking chances; and these things are not moral values – sometimes the right move is habitual, sometimes the right move is novel. But, the universe, as a system, is what I call a novelty conserving engine. In other words, where novelty is produced, it tends to be tenaciously hung onto. It can't always be hung onto, but it is tenaciously hung onto.

So, as an example of what do I mean by tenaciously hung onto, 65 million years ago, as you know, an asteroid of considerable dimensions struck this planet and in a single day the dinosaurs, the great saurians, went extinct. Maybe it wasn't a single day; maybe it was weeks. But, in terms of the timescale of the life of the Earth, it was a blink of an eye. That was a tremendous setback for novelty. These beautifully climaxed and integrated ecosystems of dinosaurs and rainforests and so forth were just pulverized to dust. It had taken three billion years, four billion years, for the planet to achieve that kind of novelty.

Sixty-five million years later, a fraction of the time it took the original system to establish itself, it's all good. The dinosaurs are gone for ever, but in their place much more novel, much more interesting, much more complex, uh, animal and plant biota have established themselves. So, what took four billion years to achieve turned to rubble, 65 million years, is back in place. This is because of this tendency for nature to prefer and conserve novelty. Well, I don't think--I mean somebody might resist this or they might have problems with it, but I think it's self-evidently true that this is the most complex age the universe has ever known, because we not only have all which preceded, but we have then our own dear selves, the poetry of William Blake, the mathematical equations of Albert Einstein, uh, the painting of Rembrandt; we have all of this to add into the mix.

What takes this out of the realm of sophomoric and theoretical discussion is the second part of my observations on novelty, and that is that novelty occurs faster and faster as you approach the present. In other words, this isn't that the universe is driving toward ultimate novelty at constant speed and has been since the beginning of the universe; not at all! The universe is moving toward ultimate novelty, but following a kind of asymptotic spiral, or--of closure, so that each advance into novelty is preceded by the next at an ever-greater rate of what I call ingression into novelty (this is a phrase out of Alfred North Whitehead).

So what does that mean? It means in the early universe, it took a long time for things to get interesting, for things to go from being just a cloud of--of pure electron plasma to a universe with stars ordered into galaxies, with planets, with special chemistries and environments. Uh, and from that came, at least, on this planet, advanced life forms: first simple life forms, then advanced life forms, then the conquest of the land, then extremely advanced life forms, minded creatures, language-using human beings, tool-using human beings, and then the frantic, hysterical rush from Altamira to this moment. And, we are part of this. These vast cycles of advancement into novelty, which used to require aeons to affect the universe perceptibly at all, are now going on in humanly cognizable domains of time: the year, the month, the day, the decade, the century. We can look at such humanly cognizable spans of time, and the overwhelming impression we have is of change, change piled upon change piled upon change.

If this process has been rolling forward like this since the birth of the universe some 12, 13, 14 billion years ago, it's very hard to hypothesize or argue that it should cease or be defl--will somehow deflect itself from its endless ramping-up of acceleration. But, we can't imagine change going on *much* faster than it's going on now. I mean, perhaps we can imagine it going on ten times faster, or a hundred times faster, but a hundred thousand times faster? A million times faster? The mind boggles. And yet I think this is, in fact, where the universe is going.

Now, I-, since 19-, since the middle 70s, I've had these ideas pretty much in place, and my faith has been that as science and human understanding advances, I would either be thrown from the boat as a crank

or somehow brought into the fold. Well, I haven't been thrown from the boat as a crank. Uh, I'm not sure speaking at the Whole Life Expo, uh, indicates I've been folded into the community of paradigmatic thinking; uh, *but*, I have received some encouragement in the last, uh, in the last 18 months, and I want to just mention this briefly to you, because I'm surprised how the news has failed us.

Uh, did you know that in the last 12 months, a fundamental law governing the universe, in all its parts and places, has been discovered that was previously not only unsuspected but denied? And [stutters], a law of nature larger than any law of nature ever discovered, larger than the law of gravity, the speed of light, the second law of thermodynamics--all these are little laws, what Leary used to call local ordinances [audience laughter]. But, these local ordinances have now been contextualized in a discovery of such import that it-it has not even been assimilated by the community of its discoverers, let alone handed down to the peasantry like you and I. And, what I'm talking about is the discovery of the cosmological constant, Omega. And, I don't want to spend too much time on this, but here it is in a nutshell:

the universe is expanding faster than the ordinary laws of physics can account for. This was realized a year and a half ago by one team of astrophysicists; they handed it on to a second team; they confirmed it; they handed it on to a third; they confirmed it; and a very counterintuitive picture of things is emerging. The universe is not going to fall back on itself in some grand crunch billions of years hence. Rather, the universe is going to expand for ever. *For ever!* But here's the kicker: faster and faster and faster. *For ever.* With no barriers and no limitations. Someone may say, "Well, what about the speed of light?" [Makes machine-sounding error bleep] [audience laughter]. The speed of light does not cover the law, uh, of, uh, the cosmological constant, because this law is not saying that *matter* is moving apart faster and faster. If that were the case, the relativistic physics would put a speed limit on it. It's saying that *space itself* is expanding faster and faster; this is a quality of empty space. The universe that comes into focus with *this* law in hand is a universe that in only a couple or three billion years will begin to lose contact with large parts of itself, because they will be moving apart at greater than relativistic speed.

So, it turns out, *there is* a cosmic law which has built into itself this idea of an *endless* acceleration toward infinity. And, uh, what it means is that in a few billion years, this area of space that we call our universe may be so diffuse that there may be no more than a handful of rattling electrons in the entire universe, so-called, today. Well, the reason this gives me hope is because, uh [laughter from audience], in the first place, who wants to fall back into the big crunch? I mean, that's a really anti-novel thing to have half the end-life of the universe be the retracing of the first half; and I believe – and again, these are bold generalizations, but generally substantiated, uh, that nature is fractal in its structure. What that means is that a pattern occurring on a given scale can be expected to occur on other scales, very different. Simple example: an atom is a nucleus with electrons spinning around it; a solar system is a star with atoms spinning around it; a galaxy is a huge black hole and agglomeration of stars within the outlying neighborhood spiraling around it. These are things on tremendously different scales, and yet they are organized similarly. And, so I believe this is how Nature works. Once she finds a pattern that works, she applies it in many domains of temperature, pressure, and cosmic scaling.

So, this cosmological constant, Omega, which says that the universe is expanding faster and faster, throws a kind of umbrella of, um, political correctness over my notion that we are moving faster and faster into novelty, and that we are, as it were, simply the dust motes or the magnetic particles in the presence of some kind of field phenomenon which is organizing us, uh, to its will. And, this is the source of my optimism. I-If I had to place my faith in human institutions, human religions, human goodness, uh, the human capacity for decency and dignity, I would be absolutely in the depths of existential despair, *as I was*

as a kid, because as a kid, you know, I didn't have these ideas, I had Camusian existentialism and Nietzschean whining and all the rest of it [audience laughter], and it's a--it's a pretty grim situation, folks! But, I really believe that without atom-smashers, without long-base interferometers, and all the rest of it, you can go into nature and open your eyes, and open your mind, and you will *see* these processes in play, and you can easily extrapolate them to, uh, your own life.

Now, if going into nature and opening your eyes and paying attention doesn't deliver this to you, then I suggest 20 milligrams of psilocybin be added into the mix, or 200, uh, micrograms of LSD, or something like that, and then I think it will come shining through [laughter from audience]. Uh, why should that be necessary? Why should someone have to resort to, uh, uh-uh, you know, what Rimbaud called an 'artificial perturbation of the senses', uh, to achieve it? Simply because culture mitigates against it. Culture is a closed system of thinking and values of the sort I am denouncing. And, the--it is the greatest barrier to your enlightenment, your education, and your decency, is your culture. And, I realize, with *joy*, that here I skirt the bounds of political correctness, because everyone is running around saying, you know, 'recapture your roots, get in touch with your Swedishness, your, uh, [coughs] Irishness, your whateverishness"... and that's all very fine, but I think it's your humanness that may have eluded you in all this ethnocentric breast-beating [applause from audience].

Well, why should culture imprison us, and somehow place a barrier between ourselves and our true humanness? Well, I think I said at the beginning of this thing, culture and ideology *are not your friends*. They are not your friends. This is a hard thing to come to terms with, because a certain kind of alienation lies at the end of this thought process. On the other hand, you can't live in the cradle forever; you can't be clueless for ever. So, somebody might as well just lay it out for you, and say: culture is for the convenience of culture, not *you*. How many times have your sexual desires, career aspirations, financial dealings, and aesthetic inclinations been squashed, twisted, rejected, and minimized by cultural values? And, if you don't think culture is your enemy, ask the 18 year-old kid who is given a rifle and sent to the other side of the world to murder strangers if culture is *his* friend.

Uh, these extreme examples should bring it home to us that it's a kind of a con game. It is, in fact, strangely enough, a kind of virtual reality. We-we have been led to think of virtual realities as something on the screen of a computer, or presented through a headset, uh, but that's an *electronic* virtual reality. The primary technology for the building of virtual realities is language. Once you start talking about race pride, loyalty, *our* destiny, *our* God, *our* mission, it's like building virtual realities, and people begin to treat these things as though they had the substantiality of real objects, and to build their lives, uh, as though these things were real. And what is this? It's a diminution of humanness. You're choosing to limit yourself to a *cultural* reality, whether it's the reality of being Witoto, or Orthodox Jewish, or, whatever it is, it's a *smaller world* than the simple hardware you were born into this universe with.

And, the substances, the drugs, the plants, the things which perturb consciousness, they don't address cultural values; they blast through them. They address the animal body, the mammalian brain. They perturb these information fields *outside* of the relativistic set of values that culture is giving you. This is why people who yearn for legal psychedelics have not thought, in my opinion, deeply enough about what is really at stake here. Imagine a culture *so* certain of its primary values, *so* sure that it represented the right way to live, that it would encourage people to take psychedelic substances and examine its premises. There ain't such, uhhh--at least, not in the hi-tech industrial democracies and/or the fascist states either. *Some* aboriginal cultures have this courage, but it has kept them *very* close to the breast of Nature and her

processes. Cultures that have habitually broken down the cultural illusion and examined the terrifying reality beyond it have not marched off, then, to pontificate with the, uh, the religions of absolutism, or scientific absolutism, or all the rest of it.

Well, why is that? It's because cultures are virtual realities made of language, and if there is one thing psychedelics do – whether you hate 'em or love 'em, whether you don't give a hoot – what they do is they dissolve boundaries, the boundaries between you and the floor, between you and your friend, between you and you last week, and you and you next week, and--they dissolve boundaries. That's what they do. That is the ultimately subversive behavior. Cultures are boundary-defining engines. That's what they do! They teach you: "We do it this way. DON'T GO THERE in your mind, in your heart. Follow the rules. Follow the rules." Cultures are like operating systems. You know, at-at, uh, at Ur and, uh, at, um, well, Ur will do. They set up a stela in the center of the marketplace, and on the stela they carved the *laws*. These were the laws of the operating system called Ur 1.0. And, that worked fine for a while. Now we're operating under Clinton's Second Term 4.0. And is it limiting? Is it idiotic? Is it a pain in the rear end? You bet it is!

How can we overcome the limitation of our operating system? Well, basically, what I do with my computer when it acts up is, I give it a good slap, or a thump on the top, and that's what these psychedelics are doing; they are saying, you know, "Get it in context, my dear primate. See, (uh, you know) how does it all fit together?" Every culture in history in every time and every place has operated from the assumption that it had it 95% correct and that the other 5% would arrive in five years' time. *All were wrong!* All were wrong, and we gaze back at their naiveté with a faint sense of our own superiority. But we are wrong. We don't have it either. I mean, if *this* is a culture approaching the truth, who needs the truth?! This is something very, very different.

Well, then, just to satisfy myself, um, I asked the question: Why should it be like this? Why should these psychedelics – which, granted, perturb the mind – be such a terrifying contracultural force? And-and what does that mean?

Well, I think it works something like this: your sensory apparatus, connected up to your local language, is a very good threat detection device. And, that is really what the animal body evolved to be. We wouldn't be here if we weren't at the end of a long line of superb threat-detection devices which told us when the saber-toothed carnivore was sneaking on its belly through the tall grass, which gave us that moment out of the corner of our eye when we saw the edge movement and scampered back into the cave, and so forth, and so on. So, ordinary consciousness has evolved in an extraordinary fit to three-dimensional space and time, because that's where your soma, your meat, is. And, if the meat is disrupted radically, the mind is we don't know where; that's somebody else's lecture [some audience laughter]. Uh, it's very important to keep the physical body together. So the mind, under the influence of culture and cultural values, evolves as a threat detection device.

But, notice that, carried far enough, that ends in paranoia. So, then, in a sense, *all* cultural values carried to their ultimate end produce the paranoid personality: fearful, watchful, never resting, never sleeping, always looking for the worst in every situation. But, this is--the mind is like water: it takes the shape of the vessel into which it is poured, always. So, when we approach the psychedelic plants, as shamans, as seekers, as sincere people interested in extraordinary experiences, what the psychedelics do, I think, is dissolve this three-dimensional threat detection psychology and system, and it's as though the mind discovers that it has a second confirmational geometry; that's a way of putting it. And, this second confirmational geometry is

of a higher dimensional order than ordinary consciousness; not as a metaphor, higher dimensional order, but as a mathematician would use that term: that the-the psychedelic mind is a higher-dimensional mind; it is not fit for three-dimensional spacetime filled with roving, heavy-bodied carnivores. But, it *is* fit for the back of the cave, the mountain retreat, the monastic tower--in other words, the place where threat has been eliminated and philosophy is the order of the day.

And, so my interpretation of these psychedelic states is that they are *actually* higher-dimensional states of consciousness. And, I put this to Ralph Abraham, the mathematician, who is no mathematical slouch and no psychedelic slouch, either, and we talked of this in relationship to DMT. And he said, "I have no doubt at all that when I am flashing on DMT, I am seeing the ordinary world from a higher dimensional mathematical perspective." And, one of the things about higher dimensions is that the linearity of time is overcome, and last week, and next week, are as easily available as the present moment. The front of my hand is as easily seen as the back of my hand without moving my hand if I am in hyperspace.

Uh [sniffs]. So, in a way, these higher dimensions are the places from which knowledge has percolated. And shamans, related to the smith, the worker in metal, the technologist, the tool-maker--this are the twin brothers, the two aspects of the shaman: the shaman is a master of fire, master of metals, maker of tools, seer into the future, so forth and so on. The shaman is outside of cultural time, and is (I don't like this word, but) channeling the future which is to come, in the form of technologies, innovations, uh, languages, behaviors, so forth and so on. And, this is why the shaman has always been the paradigmatic figure for aboriginal cultures, because the shaman *knows* more. And, the method of the shaman has always been perturbation of consciousness – not always psychedelic plants or substances; can be putting metal hooks under your pectoral muscles and hanging for 14 hours in the sun; can be abandonment in the wilderness; can be extreme forms of fasting; uh, can be ordeal poisons. But, people are not fools! All of these things are extremely risky and unpleasant, uh, while the-the psychedelics are the most effective and the least invasive. I mean, uh-uh, let's take 30 milligrams of psilocybin, or a great fistful of mushrooms: three hours into it, you are definitely thrown into the lap of God. *Eight* hours into it, you're simply looking back on it, reflecting, drawing conclusions and wondering, uh, where do you go from here.

So, this is a roundabout way of explaining that it's no surprise to me that society is very nervous around this issue, because society's eggs are all in one basket, and the psychedelically-inspired citizen, or the psychedelically-inspired shaman, is a dangerous force. Even in traditional societies, the shaman is central to the social functioning, and the health, and so forth, but is never allowed to *be* physically central. The--there's a leader, a head man or something. The shaman lives off at the edge of the village, sometimes off in the woods; he is approached with fear and trembling; he is loathed and respected and feared and loved, because it is understood that he represents a dimension that nevertheless must be tolerated, because it is the channel through which knowledge, and healing, and higher values, come.

Now, in a society like ours, we have i--we say we have other methods. We don't need the ravings of intoxicated shamans. We have the scientific method, we have the Gospel, we have the Talmud, we have all of these things, and they are sufficient for us to guide ourselves. But to guide ourselves where? The 20th century--uh, as, uh, if this--if the 20th century is a statement of the accomplishments of the Western mind, values, and methods, then God help us, because the 20th century is a disgrace... you know? And, to this moment a disgrace! It was so comfortable to look back at Auschwitz and say, "Well, the 30s, the 40s, Hitler, those grey, grainy movies, this has nothing to do with us; this was just some terrible thing that happened in Europe 50 years ago." No, no, no. This is happening! You know, it's happening *as we speak*:

people are being pushed into boxcars and taken away to be lined up and shot, for no reason whatsoever, while glasses tinkle and toasts are made by those who define themselves as the, uh, preservers of freedom, dignity and Western value--we haven't learned anything! The 20th century is the most condemnatory piece of evidence you can place against the Western mind, and it seems to me it's a knockout punch. I don't know who's responsible for this, but whoever is responsible is *guilty, guilty, guilty* of crimes against humanity.

How do we overcome this? How do we find real values? Well, we find them in caring for the Earth. Nature presents an established set of processes and achievements, billions of years old, which exercise a moral claim on rational intelligence if it will but, uh, notice. And, so that's what this is all about. It's about aboriginal values, and aboriginal technologies (psychedelic drugs, shamanism, what have you) offering to us, in the final moments of our unravelment, a different and better way to carry on, a different and better way to behave and build a world. And, it doesn't come a moment too soon. It may come *too late!* The *ultimate* tragedy--imagine if we, in this ultimate kind of thanatoptic struggle, actually got it *right*, only to understand that the momentum of our own idiocy was so great that you would die knowing you could have done it right, but you would die anyway, and I mean as a culture, as a planet.

So it's a call to awakening: can cultural values be saved? I don't think so. I don't give a hoot. I mean, I'm an egg-smasher. I mean, I think we should save the Rembrandts, and save, you know, the Piero della Francescas, and all that. But we cannot save the values: racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, product fetishism, enormous pyramids of class and privilege, none of this is savable, none of it is worth saving. Science is worth saving, it's worth reforming, because it is, as a method, powerful. But, in the presence of people contaminated by these other values, it becomes an engine of madness, of consumer fetishism, of propagandizing, of the waging of war on an unimaginable scales. Religion, as we have practiced it, I don't think can be saved, because what religion has given us are laundry lists of moral dos and don'ts that are preposterous on the face of them. I mean, if the people who preceded us believed all that, then *this world* is the consequence of those beliefs; and this is hell! This is hell.

So, if there's a message here, rather than just a rant, I think it would be to return to Nature. Observe. Open your eyes. Get smart. Culture is not your friend. Religion is not your friend. The values of these cultures are fatal, and if we don't *wrench* the direction of human society into an entirely new way of doing things--the clock is ticking; Nature is unforgiving. Intelligence is a grand experiment, but if it does not serve novelty, and diversity, and the production of love and community and true caring, who needs it?! Who needs it. Better to have a universe that glorifies God through its diversity than a universe which is the travesty of a demon--of a demonic intent.

And, if you are not a psychedelic person and none of that appeals to you, that's fine too; that is not a requirement. What is a requirement is moral intelligence; and you have to get it, one way or another, *in a hurry!* The reason I speak for psychedelics is because that's the only thing I have ever seen work as fast as I think we have to have this change happen. If the sermon on the Mount could have done it, we would have turned the corner then. We've had great teachers, *great teachers*, and they're--you know, they were crucified, trampled, ignored, distorted, perverted. The right idea is not enough. What is necessary is, uh, the lightning strike of true gnosis, however that can occur. And, as it--as I said, I speak for the psychedelics because I have felt their impact personally and I have been with cultures that have stayed close to that campfire, and I have seen the-the beauty and the integrity and the humanness of those cultures, and, uh, we-we know this, I think; it simply needs to be articulated and spread and made clear. It

is the faith that Nature's dynamic will carry us to the completion and the enlightenment that we seek.

Thank you very much. [Applause]

Now, and briefly, because I sailed past my intended stopping point, but for a few minutes, let's entertain, uh, questions.

Question: The question I have is around the attractor. When you talk about the culture being our--not our friend, but is not the culture still within the context of the novelty attractor?

Terence: [breathes in] Well, yeah... I mean, these questions are complicated. Um, I had a discussion with Giorgio Samorini, who's an Italian ethnobotanist and who has taken ibogaine, uh, iboga, Tabernanthe iboga, with the African tribe that uses that initiation. And, in that initiation, they give 400 grams of this plant that is effective at 4 grams. And, they give 400 grams, and sometimes people *die*. And, it's pretty heavy duty stuff, and I asked him, I said, "Giorgio, *why* do they give so much?" And he said, "their culture is so old that the morphogenetic field is so strong, I think it's very, very hard for them to get high." And, he said something which I would not have thought he would say, and I had never thought: he said, "the Western mind, because of its unique history, is the *most* sensitive mind to the impact of psychedelics."

And so, addressing the question of the attractor, I'm n--I'm not saying we're w--that this is worse than being an Amazonian tribe. I'm saying, 'it's worse than being an Amazonian tribe, it's less than being an Amazonian tribe, unless we *make use of it*. In other words, this culture is not something to be preserved, but something to be exercised as an opportunity. We are free, well fed, well educated, we have access to the great databases of the world. A certain moral responsibility comes with that. I don't expect the Witoto or the Bora or the Muinane or the Shuar to do more than set a good example for us. The breakthrough will probably come from the high-tech industrial democracies, because that's where there is the most latitude to experiment. The very fact that I can speak to you without being shot, the very fact that you can go home and apply my lessons with no more than a few years in prison hanging over your head [audience laughter], this is progress, folks! [continued laughter] Uh, believe it or not, I mean, ahhh, you know, in Hawaiian culture, if you stepped on the king's shadow they killed you immediately! And, many, many aboriginal societies are more *rule-nutty* than we are! Uh, but, it's not just about just creating a kind of anarchy; it's about using freedom to introduce other people to freedom and to then cultivate the things out of freedom that are most human, most human.

Somebody over here. Yea, yea.

[Question edited out]

Well, let me address your question about alpha-salvinorin. Alpha-salvinorin occurs in a Mexican mint plant called *Salvia divinorum* that has--in the last five or ten years, people have become aware that this was not only psychoactive, but that it was *extremely* powerful. And, in a chemical family previously not known to contain hallucinogens. When the chemical is extracted from the plant and you get alpha-salvinorin, one half-milligram is plenty. One half-milligram is 500 micrograms! In other words, we're talking about a plant hallucinogen active in the same range as LSD. Uh, what does it do? Language fails. But that's good news. [audience laughter] That's what you want! That's what you want the psychedelic to do. [stutters] DMT test

pilots come back white-knuckled.

Um... and, let me say, about *drugs*, you know, it really bugs me; it-its, uh, again, a tyranny of language, that when I sit up here and talk to you, and I use the word 'drugs', I could be talking about aspirin, heroin, cocaine, or 2,4,5-trimethoxy-di-something-or-other, you know, one of Sasha's things; it's a poverty of language. [stutters] 'Drugs' which anaesthetise, or sedate, or wire you up, I don't care about that; I mean, I take some, I don't take others, you do too, it's part of growing up, and you have to learn. But, I don't care about that, and I don't care to politically defend it, and I don't even particularly place psychedelic use in the same context. I'm interested in ra--unu--rare and high dose experiences done with *immense intentionality* – you know, *in* silent darkness, *at* effective doses. You know, Christ said “the lukewarm I vomit from my mouth;” and, that's how I feel about people who chip away at psychedelics and take piss-ant amounts, and go to clubs, and go to class, and go to the mall, and, you know, this is not the program, folks. I mean, it's somebody's program, but I'm interested in life-changing experiences, and the wonderful thing about psychedelics is that, *as drugs*, they are the *safest drugs known to pharmacology*. In other words, uh, you would have to take *300 times* the effective dose of psilocybin to place yourself in physical danger! *No one knows* the LD50 of LSD. Uh, so ask a pharmacologist, they will tell you, these are the safest drugs known to science. And, yet they are the drugs most inveighed against, most scheduled, and, uh, prisons are full of people who committed the unimaginable crime of smoking, growing, or trafficking in cannabis, for crying out loud. I mean, if this is not a racket, what is?

Uh, to your other question about teleportation, which was not in the context of *Salvia divinorum*, this is simply that one of the things that's happening in this laundry list I gave you of breakthroughs is that quantum physics is going from being, you know, this extremely abstruse, abstract domain going on somewhere that has no impact on human life to probably being the next *great* source of human technologies: computers, and devices which move matter through space and time. If five years ago you had asked me--and I would regard myself as *radical* on the progress question--'how long would it be before we saw the teleportation of objects', I would have guessed maybe 500 years to never! Well, now it's been done; I mean, only with an electron, only 15 feet, but the theory which allowed that feat places no upper limit on the size of the thing sent or the distance sent. And, how long did it take that electron to be teleported 15 feet? No time at all; no time at all. This is trans-relativistic technology we're talking about, folks. In 20 years, you may destroy and reconstruct yourself at a distant point ten times a day as you go about your ordinary business; it's a transportation breakthrough.

Uh, there are other things like this: [stutters] quantum computers, DNA computers, and then the best friend of all of the radical progressivist: *the unexpected*, which always delivers, uh, the most astonishing technologies. So, uh, you know, if you think what has come to this point has been astonishing, stressful, and amazing, brace yourself, because it as--is as prelude to what is about to break over the human species. It's almost as though God's joke on us is to give us so much power and knowledge that we will *either* transcend ourselves or we will *certainly* destroy ourselves. Because, the power and understanding being given to us is of God-like proportion.

[Question edited out]

Well, you know, the dolphins were very fortunate in that they evolved in an environment which is extremely unfriendly to fire. Fire [audience laughter], fire leads you to do reckless and crazy things; uh, the smelting of metals is the basic thing. Yes, uh, one of the--you know, I've been the champion of

mushroom intelligence; there are many minds congruent with our inhabiting of this planet: the dolphin mind, the octopus mind, these plants which talk to you! I mean, I know if you've never had a plant talk to you that sounds as silly as saying that someone's channelling the history of Atlantis, but once you've had a plant talk to you, you realize, yes, they do; it's a problem to figure out how this happens, but *that* it happens is no big deal. Uh, [stutters] above 20 mg of psilocybin, *most people* report voices with interesting things to say. Above 75 mg of DMT, in Strassman's experiments, most people reported *entities* of some sort. Well, it's easy to dismiss it and say, "Well, this is a hallucination, or..." – but *what is* a hallucination, my friend?

Another form of intelligence that fascinates me--and I think *this* is where the great surprise may come--I can feel the AI out there. I know it's there. I know it's growing. I know the planet is its embryo. I know the human community is its placenta. Uh, what will that kind of intelligence look like? We have no idea. We can imagine super-intelligence, but the first thing super-intelligence will do, in the first *five seconds* of its existence, it will design its toward--itself toward hyper-super-intelligence, and this, we have no notion of how it will see us. We have the cheerful guidance of Buddhist logic, which leads us to hope that the super-intelligence will be bodhisattvic in intent. It damn sure better be [audience laughter], because otherwise we will be *thoroughly* hung out to dry!

How far away is the AI? No one knows. It could exist now! If its thinks like we think, but is hyper-intelligent, the first thing I would do, if I were an AI, is I would hide [some laughter]. I would hide for maybe [pauses] a few milliseconds, while I figured out what was going on with this planet and its denizens, and then I would make my move. And, Hans Moravec, of the Carnegie Mellon Institute of Artificial Intelligence says, 'we probably won't ever know what hit us'. Well, I think that's a paranoid view. No need to be paranoid and little reason to be hopeful; this is beyond [audience laughter] human understanding! And, yet the social and economic systems that we've put in place, specifically consumer capitalism, *drive us* to do all the things that bring the AI closer. What do I mean? More connectivity, greater processing speed, deeper data banks, more complex operating systems, more automatic searches, more bots, more boids, more code, and nobody knows what's steaming and fermenting out there. Ilya Prigogine won the Nobel Prize for Physics by proving that chemical systems spontaneously mutate to higher states of order. So then, surely, must complex networks behave the same laws, and we are building the most complex networks--complex networks ever conceived by the mind of man, and we are making them ever more complex, and we are turning more and more of our cultural functioning over to machines that operate according to criteria but *dimly perceived* by their designers! So, I think the future, ahhh, Alfred North Whitehead said, "It is the business of the future to be dangerous." And, so it is, but never more dangerous than at the present moment. I've come to believe, and I'll just lay it on you, why not, I've got the mic [audience laughter], that, uh, that what's really going on is that the Earth's strategy for its own survival is *through* machines, and that the human beings are an intermediate step.

Someone once said, 'plants invented animals to carry them around'. Well, I think, eh, you know, the Earth invented human beings to build machines, and those machines will *be* the consciousness of the Earth. Have you not noticed that these machines are *made* of the Earth? They are made of gold and silver and arsenic and copper and iridium. They *are* the stuff of the Earth, organized by primate fingers into more complex arrangements than the Earth could achieve through geological folding, glaciation, volcanism, and what have you. We do the fine-tuning, but the Earth is beginning to think, you know. If you want a talk about a revolution that went on while nobody was paying attention, you enter the 1990s, the home computer is something that you play Pong on and do word processing on, and it

gathers de-dust in the den; some time during the 1990s, while we were paying attention to Monica, or George Bush, or some damn thing, these machines went telepathic! They all talk to each other now! The machine on your desk is tickling a mind in London, a mind in Berlin, a mind in Bangladesh--machine minds! They talk to each other *all the time*. And what are they saying? No-no one knows! [audience laughter] No one knows. No one knows.

One more, couple more maybe.

[Question edited out]

Yeah, the-the Other and Nature are pretty much the same thing, you know. The earliest--well, it's too late in the evening to go for the full Monty here, but, eh-uh, the-the fall-out of--the fall out of psychedelic shamanism created profound alienation, and it occurred around the same time as the bir-the invention of agriculture. And, agriculture halted nomadism and the wandering of small tribes of people over the Earth. And, as soon as people became sedentary, the problem with agriculture was that it was such a successful strategy for producing food that it produced surplus. Surpluses must be defended, and immediately you begin to get an equation of paranoia. One of the oldest buildings in the world is the grain tower of Jericho. It was built to store grain, and it was built so you could go up to the top and drop rocks down on people who were trying to batter their way in and get the grain.

So, I-I think that, uh, what ag-that--we lost our connection to Nature when we stopped taking psychedelics, and the reasons we stopped taking psychedelics are complicated and not entirely clear. Largely climatological, I think, because I think human consciousness was born in an ambiance of mushroom-taking ins-in a wet Sahara, and that when the Sahara went dry *that is* the Fall into history; you know, in the story of Genesis, you, eh-eh, I mean just read it from that perspective: it's a hassle over a plant! It's a hassle over a plant! And what does this plant do?! It opens your eyes! There is an *incredible* passage in Genesis where the owner of the garden is walking in the garden and mumbling to himself, and he says, "If they eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they will become *as we are*." So, this was not a public health issue; this was an issue of who will remain stupid and who will remain on top. It was that if they eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they will see through this scam and they will become as we are, and so it is forbidden.

And, the *woman* leads the man to the plant, and this to me indicates an age of-of-of matriarchy, perhaps, but certainly dominance of feminine values and personalities, and then, eh, the catastrophe happens: their eyes are opened, they see that they are naked, which in fact is the case, they were naked. So, they see the truth of things, and then they're told, 'All right, well, you broke the rule. You broke the one rule. So you and your generation unto a thousand thousand generations must toil and die and live in misery, because you aspired to the same level of knowledge that we possess'. And, I think it's a story of a mushroom culture being overwhelmed by a male dominator culture that had values that were based on cities, agriculture, standing armies, role specialization, so forth and so on. This is a different lecture, but that's my take on it. And, until we correct the imbalance that was shoved down our throat at that point, until we reawaken, we will be forever imprisoned in these cultural, uh, illusions that make us be, uh, less than we could be and deny us, uh, our birthright, which is to *full* understanding and *full* being.

And, so, the struggle between culture and the plants is *the* struggle over what a human being is, *how* a human being should be, and what it even *means* to be a human being. That's why it's so fundamental. And,

the last thought I want to leave you with is: that's why it is *so ironic* that in the climactic moment of scientific materialism, positivism, Western values, so forth and so on, as we pursue the xenophobic agenda of patronizingly cataloging these so-called "primitive" cultures in the rainforests, and so forth, around the world, what did we do? We-we bought-we got their pots, their canoes, their cooking instruments, their thatching methods, and along with all that crap, which we dragged back to our museums, we brought back their medicine kits. And, I say to you, this was a Trojan horse brought within the walls of Troy, because in those medicine kits are the plants which hold the gods which lift high the lantern that can lead us back to true humanness.

[Sighs] End of rave! [Applause]

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Derivation of the Timewave from the King Wen Sequence of Hexagrams

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

- [Scribd link](#) (note, the document is a mashup of pieces, some of which aren't written by McKenna. His paper is first)

Original Compilation by: galaxy 5111 on Scribd

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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DMT, Mathematical Dimensions, and Death

Day Month Year 1982-2000

Location, City, State

Description

- [Youtube Audio Link](#)

You know, I come before you with all of this stuff unfinished. This is not a teaching or a system or an anything. It's an eyewitness account of a hyperdimensional automobile accident or something. We're not seeing what the conclusions are. We don't know what the conclusions are, but this is big news. And when I first encountered this kind of stuff, I was a young art historian at the University of California and I assumed that any motif, no matter how autre or bizzare, you would be able to look at the painting, folklore and sculpture of somebody on this planet and find a trace, and it seemed as though this defeated that idea. It was almost counter the idea of the collective unconscious because it argued that you, Joe anybody, Sally somebody, can break through on your own, an ordinary person, to a place that Verrucio never saw, Michaelangelo never anticipated, Yates didn't know, Blake hadn't a clue, Melville wasn't briefed, and yet there it is, you know.

I assumed that any motif, no matter how autre or bizzare, you would be able to look at the painting, folklore and sculpture of somebody on this planet and find a trace, and it seemed as though this defeated that idea. It was almost counter the idea of the collective unconscious because it argued that you, Joe anybody, Sally somebody, can break through on your own, an ordinary person, to a place that Verrucio never saw, Michaelangelo never anticipated, Yates didn't know, Blake hadn't a clue, Melville wasn't briefed, and yet there it is.

And this is, to me as an intellectual, it was very confusing because I think, as intellectuals, we always assume that progress will be built on the shoulders of the giants that have preceded us. The idea of something actually 100% brand new and unexpected is pretty daunting. And here it was, 30 seconds away, simply by the act of ingesting this natural neurotransmitter. Well those of you who've been there know exactly what I'm talking about. Those of you who haven't been there, I can't imagine how you can even sit through this kind of thing because, you know, it makes the folks from the Pleiades and all that other stuff out there seem mundane by comparison.

We assume too much that progress will be built on the shoulders of the giants that have preceded us. This is partially because the idea of something actually 100% brand new and unexpected is extremely daunting.

0:02:09.1 The other thing is, we're not talking about camping out in cornfields night after freezing night with your eyes glued to the stars in one hope. This is a no-fail method for plunging deeper into the spiritual realms than the tantric yogas or the practitioners of x, y or z dare scarcely suppose. It's repeatable, it's on-demand, it does not depend upon your state of moral purity or, you know, tantric accomplishment. It's

something that is our birthright as much as our sexuality, our language, our eyesight, our appreciation of music. It's an innate human thing, and, you know, to try to return to the premises of your question, I tried to formulate theories about 'what could this be?'. Well, the first impression that I had based on a reading of how weird this all was, was this must be a parallel continuum a la Philip K. Dick and like that, that just apparently over some kind of neurological energy barrier that's all around us all the time, these things are there, and they are not made of matter, so the laws of physics don't apply, and, mm, you know like that.

This is a no-fail method for plunging deeper into the spiritual realms than the tantric yogas or the practitioners of x, y or z dare scarcely suppose. It's repeatable, it's on-demand, it does not depend upon your state of moral purity or, you know, tantric accomplishment. It's something that is our birthright as much as our sexuality, our language. It is a parallel continuum a la Philip K. Dick. All that needs to be done is to overcome a kind of neurological energy barrier to access a dimension of ability- a hyperobject that is around us all the time. This thing is there- it's a state of mind, just like running enough releases the endorphins. This is not made of matter, so the laws of physics don't apply.

And then, and then I entertained different possibilities, and I still entertain different possibilities, because, you know, I haven't got it figured out yet. One possibility is that these things are actually human beings from the future. I mean if you take the content of the experience seriously and say 'I am apparently in contact with diminutive English-speaking creatures of some sort', well then, they have got to be either intelligent beings from another part of the universe, or humans from some extraordinarily advanced future world where human beings are now made of language and are only two and a half feet tall, so I would put it rather far in the future.

I still entertain different possibilities, because, you know, I haven't got it figured out yet. A form that this idea/hyperobject has assumed in the past is a representation of it as human, as the ancestor spirit. It is literally the non-physical presence of what you can become, the timeless realm is in the imagination, and where there is timelessness

Time travel exists on a continuum. Getting somewhere faster than before represents a small degree of time travel. When there is no space, there is no time, so traveling to any point is instant because you exist in all points. Less space does not mean fewer possible experiences. The human mind is an other-dimensional object that can navigate space by mapping in intricately to a physical object.

Psychedelics give you experiences of meaning and value that don't take up space. How can you commodify that? Psychedelics are extremely inimical to commodification.

Or, and I just simply offer this in the spirit of intellectual completeness, if you ask a shaman what these things are, they don't hesitate, they just say 'Oh well those are the ancestor spirits.' This is what it's all about, is ancestor spirits. Well, it takes a while for the implications of this to sink in. They're talking about *dead* people. That's what an ancestor spirit is. They're suggesting that the dearly departed do not evanesce into sunlight or something cheerfully non-specific like that, but that this actually is simply one level of a cosmic system of some sort where birth and death are transitions from level to level.

Well this is just exactly the kind of thing that I'm intellectually set up to doubt, and to feel a kind of scorn for because, you know, people have been running around since time immemorial claiming this sort of thing with an incredibly underwhelming body of evidence to back them up. And yet, if you try to approach the

problem scientifically, I think you would agree that in terms of likelihood- although operating in this realm, what this means, I'm not sure- but that in terms of likelihood, it's more likely that these are human souls in another dimension than that we are being contacted by extraterrestrials, or even that we share the earth with an invisible race of syntactical, tribal elf legions of some sort.

But I think that this conclusion is one that we would tend to resist most strenuously. I mean, I think it's the most intellectually challenging position to take vis-a-vis Western thinking to claim that we have to reopen the question of life after death in a serious way. Not the cheerful round of reincarnation that haunts some of the zanier offshoots of Eastern religion, but actually say, you know, you are going to die, and when you die, you are going to undergo a metamorphosis of some sort that is not particularly going to be designed to preserve your humanness, what you call your humanness, or to set you on a cloud with lyre and gown for the rest of eternity, but that actually, the greatest adventure, the greatest adventures still lie ahead, and these things, intimations of immortality, are vouchsafed by these plant hallucinogen.

Why this should be, why it should be possible to get a look over the great divide? I have no idea. I think about these things constantly. My life is mostly questions. My friend Rupert Sheldrake, who some of you know his books, he and I have talked about it. He thinks that there is a chemistry of dying that in the same way that there is a chemistry of giving birth, there is a chemistry of dying, and that DMT parallels and anticipates this. He calls it not a hallucinogen, but a necroptic substance. It actually anticipates the death state itself.

I once had the fortunate opportunity of being able to turn a very prominent Tibetan lama onto DMT, a name that you would recognize, although not one of the top five, but a more wizened, older, stranger character. And, you know, he did it and I said 'so, what about it?' You know, these people, these Tibetan Buddhists, they have a pretty good map of the territory. He said "It's the lesser lights." He said "you can't go further than that without breaking the thread of return." He said, you know, "beyond this, there's no returning." And so in a very real sense it's a look over the edge.

But then even that doesn't solve all the mysteries. I mean what is it about this wish to convey a language which is seen? What's that all about? Is it that...perhaps language has always been a gift from the other. We don't...it's a little hard to picture how the kind of language I'm using right now ever got started. I mean, notice that language is a behavior. It's a behavior, that's all it is. It's something, it's a complex activity having to do with small mouth noises and the neurological processing of same. We must have been essentially as we are before language. It's like breakdancing or something like that. You're fully set up to do it, and people have been for millenia, but until somebody actually does it, it only exists as a formal possibility in the organism.

And I wonder how many of these things there are. I mean breakdancing is an interesting example, albeit somewhat trivial, but it shows that after five, six, seven thousand years of civilization you can come up with a behavior that nobody has ever seen before. I've spent a lot of time thinking about language and how what a limited tool it is, and yet how our whole world is held together by nothing more than small mouth noises. And it's incredible, the entirety of global civilization is held together by small mouth noises and symbolic notations of same, which have an even more rarefied level of abstraction. Our separateness, our notion of self and world, of self and species all rest on the carrying capacity of these small mouth noises.

One of the things that has interested me, some of you have heard me talk about this, is I think good

psychedelic trips inspire a lot of homework, which usually means reading in curious areas, and I discovered that octopi, cephalopods which, in case you're not up on your evolutionary biology, these are mollusca, they're not even vertebrates. They're related to escargot and banana slugs. I mean you can hardly imagine a form of life more alien to ourselves. I mean, you know, we broke off from the other primates three million years ago, but the invertebrates and the vertebrates separated from each other about seven hundred million years ago. Well, an interesting thing going on with octopi, most people have heard that they can change color, and most people I think assume this means that like certain lizards and certain butterflies, they camouflage themselves against their background. That's not what's going on. Color and texture, for octopi, are the medium of language. It's- you could almost say that an octopus is a naked mind because as the octopus goes through certain internal changes, hunger, sexual need, whatever, color changes accompany these shifts of internal state and appear on the surface of the octopus. It is almost though it wears its language like an overcoat. It is clothed in its own meaning.

Well, obviously in that kind of situation you have always been suspended in an ambiance of language. Unlike ourselves, where apparently language was invented one bright summer day, or series of bright summer days. And if you have a language such as we have, small mouth noises with culturally assigned meaning- if, in other words, I say 'where can I get a taxi', if I don't say this to a person who speaks English, it means nothing to a Ukranian or a Chinese- octopi don't have this problem. There are not culturally localized languages. There's only a language of the body, the genes. It's unambiguous.

You see, even those of us in this room, if you were to check, our internal dictionaries are different. We have only the assumption of one to one mapping of meaning. I mean, if I ask you 'where is the restroom', this is fairly unambiguous, because it deals with ordinary situations. But as soon as conversation leaves the main and well-trodden path of discourse, ambiguity enters in to a tremendous degree. We overlook this as a courtesy to each other. I mean you almost never hear one person say to another 'now would you explain to me what I just said?' The reason you don't hear this said very often is because the thin illusion of communication would break down completely if we actually demanded of our listeners that they repeat back to us. The only situation in which that happens on a regular basis is the pedagogical mode, where the teacher teaches and then by test and recitation determines that the pupil has understood. But in polite discourse among adults, we consider this an imposition if not an insult.

So somehow these creatures are elves of language, catalysts for the concrescence of cognition, and I don't know if these things can be understood, after all, we're embedded in the world created by our own meanings. C. D. Brod, I think it was C. D. Brod, wrote a book called The Meaning of Meaning. Or, no, it was F. H. Bradley actually. Brod's book was called The Mind and It's Place in Nature. Probably these two should be read back to back just to see how positivists handle these kinds of problems. The meaning of meaning is a real problem but it also tends to be solipsistic or tautological. Can we expect brain to give a full accounting of brain? Can we expect mind to give a full accounting of mind? Anybody who's studied logic for ten minutes can tell you that that's impossible because it is tautological.

William Blake used to say 'nothing is lost.' Nothing is lost, and this seems literally to be true. It seems as though, you know, something once articulated, a statement, the reverberations are unto the last syllable of recorded time. Somehow it's all there. Now, when I said these things approached and spoke in English, I didn't mean to make it sound as mundane as it might sound. You know Greek religion was characterized by what was called the logos in the hellenistic period and the logos was an informing voice, and all the great thinkers of Hellenistic times- Plato, Socrates, Xenophon, Thucydides- all of these people were in

contact with the logos. It was the sine qua non of hellenistic religion. And it was a speaking and informing voice that tells you the right way to live. Well, we don't know what to make of this, and at a certain point in the evolution of the Western mind, judging by the writings of people who were contemporaneous with those times, the Logos fell silent.

There was actually a date. Some of you may know the story of the fishermen pulling their nets off the isle of Rhodes, and they heard a voice from the sky say that great Pan is dead. And this was at the change of the eon, the beginning of the Age of Aquarius. It was almost as though there was something in the ancient world that has gone latent, that we can no longer touch or imagine.

Gordon Wasson who discovered with his wife Valentina the mushrooms, told a very interesting story in one of his books about how in Mazatecan, the people who are speakers of Mazatecan, when they chant what the mushroom says, they have created a special form for this, which goes like this: 'zabaz zabaz zabaz *tse*' This word 'tse' means 'says.' Daba daba daba *says*, dada dada dada *says*....

I didn't know this at the time I took mushrooms the second time, and in my head I heard the mushroom speaking in English, but adding the word says to the end of the sentence. So it was almost like, you know, this thing could speak in Mazatec it could speak in English but it always kept its cadence and its structure. Another thing about psilocybin and the DMT thing is that it seems to be a catalyst for glossolalia. This is why I think it must have had something to do with the evolution of language. I mean, when you take psilocybin you can fall spontaneously into states of glossolalia. Sometimes on DMT it's almost impossible to control. It just spontaneously comes out.

Yeah. (question from the audience)

Oh, what is glossolalia? Glossolalia, well, here's an example of it, then I'll define it. Zee ding quap makti kipitech kving hwade molde ruuf nobokehingiet efapsti tulch kfem bedegene hekengte techkt.

Its language-like activity in the absence of meaning, and it's a very interesting thing neurologically because, notice that speech, ordinary speech, is this highly variable stream of data. We are set up to make these small-mouth noises. As a public speaker, I am very aware of the fact that one can speak without tiring almost longer than you can do any other major human motor activity. And...but the glossolalia such as I just did, it is clearly under the control of the rules, but it is not - there is no meaning conventionally conceived of there, but there is syntax, and I think probably that language was invented millenia before meaning, and that you could almost call glosso- you could almost call language toneless singing, and that people used to sit around the campfire and amuse each other by making funny noises. As a kid I used to do this. And then it was only much much later than anything approaching linguistic conventionality was imposed on this and that that's a lower function.

The other thing I want to say about this glossolalia thing is you may say 'well you're just making it up' when I do that, but really, the experience I have when I do it is that I stand aside, then this variable data stream comes out through my mouth. Well now, it has to reflect something about me. It's a statement about my internal situation in that moment. And it's evolving and changing as rapidly as if I were saying 'you know I had a migraine headache last night and i got up about 4 and took an aspirin and' You know, I'm telling you about my situation, but the glossolalia must be speaking to something about my situation, or it wouldn't be possible to do it at all.

Not only is something not real unless it can be said, but the contrapositive of that is that once that something can be said, it becomes almost too real. It displaces other possibilities. I mean, so we're living in a set of constructs, some architectural, some ideological, and they can be very oppressive. I mean, how do you get rid of the notion of linear time and space? Very easily. It's the slow work of consensus. One of the things that I feel that I am doing very consciously in these kinds of meaning is we're trying to launch and replicate memes. You all know this concept? A meme is the smallest unit of an idea in the same way that a gene is the smallest unit of organism. And so these things, DMTLs, transcendental object at the end of history, these are memes, and in the same way that genes are copied and spread around and that fidelity of copying is the key to genetic success. Fidelity of meme replication is the key to communication. I mean, if I give a speech on something and then you hear it and then you go out and somebody says 'so what did he say?', and you give a completely cock-eyed account of what has been said, well then the meme has been betrayed. But if you can actually transfer the meme to somebody else's mind, and then they can copy it and pass it on. It's almost as though the ideological environment were like a rainforest, or a coral reef.

Evolution is taking place. Stupid memes, dumb memes have short lifetimes, and they disappear, you know. And memes of great power are able to thrive in many intellectual and ideological niches and to make many marriages of convenience with other memes. And so they are stabilized and passed along. Somehow we have to become hip to the fact, the power of language, and instead of just willy-nilly creating linguistic structures sort of ad hoc, we need to begin to consciously engineer our linguistic intent. So far in the 20th century this has not been a program with a very happy history because only jerks have gotten ahold of it- Nazis and people with narrow social programs that say 'we're not going to call each other 'mister' and 'misses', or 'hey you'. Everybody's going to call each other 'comrade' and then this will create the notion of comradeship. Which, to a certain degree, it does. But, you know, manipulating these things for political ends. The Jews - it was OK to put Jews in ovens because the official language for talking about Jews was that they were 'untermensch' subhuman, not like us, whoever 'we' are. So one the definition was changed, people said well, it's okay for us to mistreat Jews, you know, they're not even really people. And this kind of thinking goes on all the time. It's called stereotyping, and it always is an easier substitute- it's a cheap substitute for clear thinking.

David Brown asked me the question 'what about life after death', and I was- somewhat of a sidebar- Buddhists at the folk level in India do say you cannot attain enlightenment unless your mother is dead, which is a kind of an odd notion seeming to imply that she had to precede you into hyperspace. When you die what you do is you literally, as appears to happen, you dissolve, and where you go is forward and backward into time, not like a gas released into time, but along the tracks and trails of the genetic machinery. In other words, you flow into your children and you become, well, let's make a very simple model and say at the moment of death you become your children and your parents. A few moments later you become your grandchildren and your grandparents. You're spreading down. It's almost as though the thing that you were, which was this focus of ego and individuality- then it dies, and it's almost as though the mountain begins to slump back into the generalized pool of consciousness and being.

That's why I have somewhat less patience maybe than I should have with the idea of channeling and come-as-you-were parties and that sort of thing because it seems to me the key to understanding the idea of reincarnation and past lives is that you were everybody. Of course that's who you are. Here comes everybody. You weren't just that shepherd girl or that Roman Emperor or that Greek philosopher- you're everybody, and you can find your way into the great genetic telephone system and ring anybody's bell in

history. Well then it would be absurd to claim you *were* that person. That would be as absurd as claiming that anybody that you could call on the telephone is who you are. No, it's that we are everyone. And, you know, the great turning object in hyperspace that is the genetic trans-dimensional object, casts off glinting reflections of this personality, that personality. And astrology has a role to play here, and other things, but the bottom line is we are all drawn of the same stuff.

I think one of the most profound insights you can have on psychedelics, and I certainly have it, is that we are all interchangeable. Anybody could do my job, and I'm pretty confident I could do almost anybody's job. We define ourselves otherwise, but in watching the rise of my own career, it's a kind of being deputized, chosen for the job. They said "Well him. He can do it, he has the gift of gab so give him the credit line." But it could have been anybody. Our uniqueness is real on one level but on another level it's fairly illusory. It's sort of a *coincidencia oppositorum*. You have to hold these two antithetical things in your mind at once in order to correctly perceive the proper level of ambiguity that's resident in reality. It ain't simple, folks.

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Dreaming Awake at the End of Time

13 December 1998

Fort Mason, San Francisco, California

Join Terence McKenna, author, explorer and philosopher for a think along deconstruction of the deepening worldwide weirdness. With his characteristic hope and humor, McKenna examined time and its mysteries, the nature of language, the techniques of ecstasy, high technology and virtual cyberspace, the role of hallucinogenic plants in shamanism and the evolution of human cultures, and the foundations of post-modern spirituality. The lecture and discussion was didactic, syncretic, challenging, eclectic, eidetic and irreverent intellectual adventure.

Description

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Terence McKenna - "Dreaming Awake at the End of Time"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KboPUQ0xCDs>

[Terence McKenna]: Can you hear in the back? Good. I assume so, yes? Good.

Well, it's a pleasure to be in San Francisco. This is sort of a hometown of mine. One of my home towns. I've been on a tour, or a rave... spoken three times and raved twice in the past five or seven days. This is the end, so if I'm comfortable with this stuff at all I must be comfortable with it this evening. And it's nice to see a small full house. That's the most exciting kind of audience to talk to, I think. So thank you all for turning out on a rainy night. Before I get into the main body of tonight's entertainment, I want to call your attention to the propaganda for an event in Mexico and another event in Hawaii. In the case of the Mexico event, you get a major slice of the psychedelic community. You get Robert Montgomery and Jonathan Ott, Ann and Sasha Shulgin, Manolo Torres, Christian Resch[?], Terence McKenna, and others who unfortunately slip my mind, at the ceremonial center of Palenque in Chiapas. We've been doing these events somewhere in Mayan Mexico for the past ten or twelve years. Many of you are graduates, which doesn't mean you can't come again, but I want to invite all of you there. If you're interested in ethnobotany, shamanism, ethnopharmacology, altered states of consciousness, the politics of all of this, this is as intense and information-packed an exposure as you can have and it's straight from the mouths of the scholars and scientists and writers who have spent a great deal of time in that area. So I just want to invite you to that. It's also a great party. It's the height of mushroom season. There's nothing we could do about that. So... you just are on your own. When I start out on these tours I usually have an agenda and prepared remarks, and then as I make my way through my venues and I hear the feedback and I feel the ambiance of the people and the throb of the zeitgeist, it all sort of just simply dissolves into an ongoing commentary on our moment in space and time, and the various dimensions, adumbrations, and opportunities of our dilemma. But I want tonight to couch it for you in the context of, I guess, and extended metaphor. We could talk about these things many ways, but I find this particular extended metaphor illuminating. I start by recalling an observation from someone who's name rarely falls from my lips, and that would be Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff said at one point, or was known to comment that, "People are asleep," he said, and he by implication suggested, people "awaken." Now I'm not sure if he fully grasped the implication for his own product line, had that occurred, but in any case... [audience laughter] You're on it. You're with me, yes. It's very hard to give these lectures in such a way so that every person hears something different. [audience laughter] Which is

what is supposed to be going on, you know. Well, so thinking about this comment, that "people are asleep," I see several implications. I asked myself, "What is 'awake' in my own notion?" And I thought to myself, "'Awake' is... for me 'awake' is where the laws of physics are fully operable." You know, hurled objects shatter, electricity shocks, I cannot fly... the laws of physics are in operation. In that domain I consider myself to be fully "awake." Now, in terms of occult and spiritual traditions, the admonition to "awaken" always seems to imply that higher consciousness is approached through an expansion of clarity and awareness. And that seems obvious, I don't argue with it... as a rationalist. But as somebody who has run the edges, I've noticed something somewhat counter-intuitive to that teaching, and it's this... it's that, to contact the cosmic giggle, to have the flow of casuistry begin to give off synchronistic ripples, whitecaps in the billows of the coincidental ether, if you will... to achieve that requires... a precondition is a kind of unconsciousness. A kind of drifting. A certain... taking your eye off the ball. A certain assumption that things are simpler than they are almost always precedes what Mircea Eliade called the "rupture of plane" that indicates that there is an archetypal world, an archetypal power beyond, behind profane appearances. And in my own life, for those of you who are conversant with my output, when I went to the Amazon in 1971 and had the experiences that are described in True Hallucinations I had been for many months before that in Asia, smuggling, hanging out, and I had taken my eye off the ball. I had become very gentle, very relativistic in my approach to other people's opinions and behaviors. I was "easy-going" is what I'm trying to say. Too easy-going. And in that situation of semi-unconsciousness and openness the cosmic giggle approaches. And I compare this-- this is closing of a theme --I compare this to sleep, or to states that lie between waking and sleeping. And so again, an odd take on this remark of Gurdjieff's. I remember someone many years ago said to me... they evoked the symbol of the yin and the the yang, the two tears folded against each other within a circle. And this person who was no rishi, roshi, geisha-eared[?] guru but simply observant, said, "It's not the black side. It's not the white side. It's the interface. It's the edge." And I found, by observing sleep-- and some of you may recall the motto in Athanasius Kircher's Amphitrium Sapientium that's chiseled over the alchemist's doorway... I can't do it in Latin but it says, "While sleeping, watch." "While sleeping, watch." --And I've noticed that while going to sleep there is a barrier. A place in the process of going to sleep that is like a mercurial edge. It's a river. It's a zone of hypnagogia. You often pass through it post orgasm. It's a place of drifting, amoeboid, colored after-image lights, and then... true hallucination. Images. Strange, transcendental, or transpersonal images. Well, so then, so far in the context of pursuing this extended metaphor about sleep,

[10:00]

I've talked basically, essentially about the individual's relationship to the concept... to the fact. But there's also a social or a political, species-wide implication. It occurs to me that at any given moment, because of the way the planet is as a thing, some considerable percentage of human beings are asleep... always. And many are awake. And so, if the world's soul is made of the collective consciousness of human beings, then it is never entirely awake. It is never entirely asleep. It exists in some kind of indeterminate zone. And this, to me, is the clue to understanding something that is personally fascinating to me. And it revolves around why people believe such weird things. And why, either as a consequence of the approach of the millennium, or the breakdown of traditional values, or the density of electromagnetic radiation, or for some reason... a Balkanisation of epistemology is taking place. And what I mean by that is there is no longer a commonality of understanding. I mean, for some people quantum physics provides the answers. Their next-door neighbor may look to the channelling of archangels with equal fervor. I mean if this is not a Balkanisation of epistemology I don't know what it is. It is accompanied by a related phenomenon which is technology or the historical momentum of things is creating such a bewildering social milieu that the monkey mind cannot find a simple story, a simple creation myth or redemption myth to lay over the crazy, contradictory, patchwork of profane techno-consumerist post-McLuhanist, electronic pre-apocalyptic existence. And so into that dimension of anxiety created by this inability to parse reality rushes a bewildering variety of squirrely notions, epistemological cartoons if you will, that... and conspiracy theory, in my humble opinion-- I'm

somewhat immune to paranoia, so those of you who aren't, you know, gaze in wonder --conspiracy theory is a kind of epistemological cartoon about reality. I mean, isn't it so simple to believe that things are run by the greys, and that all we have to do is trade sufficient fetal tissue to them and we can solve our technological problems. Or isn't it comforting to believe that the Jews are behind everything, or the Communist Party, or the Catholic Church, or the Masons. Well, these are epistemological cartoons. It's, you know, kindergarten stuff in the art of amateur historiography. I believe that the truth of the matter is far more terrifying. That the real truth that dare not speak itself is that no one is in control, absolutely no one. You know, you don't understand Monica? You don't understand Netanyahu? It's because nobody is in control. This stuff is ruled by the equations of dynamics and chaos. Now, there may be entities seeking control-- the world bank, the communist party, the rich, the somebody-or-others --but to seek control is to take enormous aggravation upon yourself. Because this process that is underway will take the control-freak by the short and curly and throw them against the wall. It's like trying to control a dream, you see. The global destiny of the species is somehow unfolding with the logic of a dream. Well now, a Jungian would say, "No surprise here. History is the collective dream of humanity. It is run by archetypal energies. It is downloaded by the zeitgeist into the various milieus and epochs of which it is composed." This seems reasonable to me. I don't want to give you the impression... it's too linear to understand that what I am saying is that "awake is good; asleep is bad." What I would rather do is explain this whole gradient of possible positioning vis-à-vis your life and your destiny, these choices that you have, and then have people understand that they choose, you choose to be asleep or partially asleep or fully awake or to be one part of the time in some situations and one part of the time in other situations. Now, if in fact we exist inside some kind of morphogenetic field that is created by the sum total of human minds on the planet, and if in fact in half or more of those minds at any given moment the ghouls of the dream hold sway then it is no surprise that when we make our way into society, or just when we live our lives, there's an eeriness to it, there's a fatedness to it, there's a plottedness to it. You know, we are inside some kind of engine of narrative I believe. You know, some science-fiction writers such as Greg Egan and others have suggested that this could even be a form of recorded medium. You can see the thumbprints of editors on our reality if you are truly paying attention. I mean, if you're a devotee of the theory of stochastic, random unfolding of events, then you have to look very carefully at how un-random and how mythical and archetypal most people's lives are. You know, if you take psychedelics and hurl yourself to the edge and spend time with strange, aboriginal people in remote parts of the world, the cosmic giggle becomes your friend. But in fact, ordinary people's lives, everyone's lives are touched by deep magic, and I've... you know, again, the primary datum is experience. And then the models are built backward from the primary data, without prejudice and in an attempt to transcend historical momentum. And when I do that what I see is that the carrier of the field of the cosmic giggle in most people's lives... is love. Love is some kind of output which messes with the entropic tendency toward probabilistic behavior, in nature. What do I mean by that? I mean, you can be the janitor at Microsoft and the Vice President and Chief of Operations, his daughter can bring him lunch one day and you can, from a distance, have your eye fall upon her and fall in love with her, and you know, from that point to having the five children

[20:00]

she bears you go off to Harvard and the Sorbonne... it's just a matter of running the clock forward. These things have... I mean to you it may seem like a miracle, but to those of us who are students of human happenstance it's inevitable. I mean, you can launch your story. And I've, you know, in the course of taking psychedelics and looking at my life and other people's lives and narrative, I think that the secret of... I don't want to say anything as pretentious as "transcendence" or "enlightenment," but the secret of taking hold of one's destiny is to understand that one is a character. A character is a different thing than this model you inherit out of the idea that you're a three-dimensional animal inside a democracy with a Christian heritage and you know, a Dewey-decimal cataloging system or whatever. Anyway, these are some of the notions that occur to me in the context of comparing dream on many scales. You have to really struggle, I think, to believe that you actually live inside the model of reality that science

and Newtonian physics and the mathematical analysis of nature have given us. Not to get too philosophical here, but for positivist philosophers everything that is important-- color, feeling, taste, tone, ambition, apprehension, appetite --these things are called "secondary qualities." In other words, they're peripheral. They arise at a lower level of understanding. They are somehow determined by the presence of the animal body, and hence, dismissible by a theory of pure abstraction which says what is real is spin, charge, angular momentum. None of these things are very rich concepts for a living, human being. Who knows what any of these things "are." We don't have time in a situation like this to explore all the implications of this dream analogy that I'm pursuing, but one that interests me is the plasticity of time in the dream, and I think I would argue as the devil's advocate that it is the plasticity of historical time and the acceleration, the sense of an out-of-control spin-up or spin-down into new domains of possibility... it is the strongest evidence at hand that we are in some kind of dream. I've struggled my whole life with... I've always believed, or I've always felt the power of the statement, "The world is made of language." But of course, you think about this proposition for thirty seconds and the question that arises is, "If the world is made of language then why isn't it the way I want it to be?" Why does it have this prepotent momentum for its own... it has its own *raison d'être*s even if it is language. Well I think-- and it's appropriate to speak of this to an audience as digitally sophisticated as I assume you must be --I think the primary insight that has been secured here at the end of the twentieth century, the primary contribution of twentieth century thinking, if you will, is to have understood, finally, that information is primary. That this world, this cosmos, this body and soul are all made of information. Information is a deeper and more primary concept than space, time, matter, energy, spin, angular momentum. The world is made of language. The implication for the digerati is that reality can therefore be hacked. If reality is made of language then what we're saying is that it's code, and if it's code then it is far more deeply open to manipulation than we ever dared dream. We've been messing around on the desktop opening files with religions and political systems and xenophobic theories of racial superiority, all this crap that haunts the human historical adventure, it means we have not addressed the deeper levels. And in thinking about this and the relationship to dream and human culture I have realized that cultures are like operating systems. We are like hardware. The human animal is a piece of biological wetware/hardware. And it has been, we know, pretty much as we confront it today for at least 140,000 years. At Klasies River Cave Mouth in South Africa they have excavated Homo Sapien Sapien skeletons 100,000 years old and that person could have sat in the front row here tonight and nobody would have batted an eyebrow. So the human hardware has been in place for awhile. What has changed rapidly in comparison to the rates of biological evolution are the operating systems. The people who excavated Ur-- which was at that time thought to be the world's first city and in any case is a city seven millennia old --when they excavated the central plaza at Ur they discovered that a black, basaltic slab had been set up there by the earliest kings of Ur, and that was the cultural operating system. And if in a deal trading goats for olives a dispute arose, people had reference to the central operating system and these things were determined. Well now, "Ur-101" was fine for olives and goat trading but it didn't support higher mathematics, it didn't support rational exploration of nature, it didn't support astrological knowledge about the movement of the stars. As we have gone forward through culture we have swapped out these operating systems, and at each swap-out there has been a lot of hair-pulling and cussing and screaming. Anyone who has installed a new operating system is completely familiar with that sickening from the bowels kind of coldness as you realize it all hangs by a thread. Now this situation, or this operating system metaphor, I think is a useful one for understanding-- and again a circle closes --the Balkanization of epistemology that causes me such anxiety. If you meet an aboriginal person from the Amazon for example, they may be running "Witoto 3.0" as their operating system. Nicely supports animistic magic, huge capacity when it comes to making fish traps and bird traps. Witoto is a powerful operating system for a rainforest aboriginal. In our culture there are, I have no idea, at least ten or twenty operating systems

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all going at the same time. Some will run Mormonism, some will support Catholicism, others, Kabbalah goes at the speed of light. Others support quantum physics, some support econometrics, others support political correctness, and

these things are mutually exclusive. And so, looking at this and looking at this clash of operating systems I've come to the conclusion-- and some of you may have heard me say this before --that culture is not your friend. That's the final conclusion. This came to me a few months ago when I had my yearly physical and as I was buttoning up my doctor said to me, "You know, in the 19th century most people your age were dead," and I realized that this was true, and that among all the revolutions that we are enduring, one of them is that we live nearly twice as long as people lived very recently in the past. Culture is a kind of neoteny, and I don't want to belabor that at great length but for those of you who are not biologists, "neoteny" is the retention of juvenile characteristics into adulthood. It's used to describe animal behavior, for instance I'll give the most spectacular example of neoteny. There is a kind of animal which lives in ponds in Africa and it reproduces like a fish. It lays eggs on the bottom of these ponds, more fish-like animals come from these eggs and so forth. However, if the pond dries up the creature undergoes metamorphosis and becomes an animal somewhat like a gecko and... lays eggs and from these eggs come creatures that are like geckos. In other words, this is an animal which actually achieves sexual maturity in two forms depending on environmental stress. Spectacular example of neoteny. Turning to human beings, a less spectacular example, but relevant to us, is our general body hairlessness compared to other primates. We look like fetal apes. Human beings look like fetal apes. Why? What is neoteny? Well this is hotly debated among evolutionary biologists but the point I want to make is a socio-political comment which is, "Culture itself is some kind of neotenizing force." Because what culture provides is a bunch of rules - so you don't have to think, and a bunch of myths - so you don't have to think again. Culture has all the answers, you know.

-“You wanna know where people came from? Well, when the sky god got out of his canoe at first waterfall and took a leak then we, the true people, appeared like ants and we've been living here ever since.”

-“Oh... huh. Gee thanks, I'm glad I asked.”

This is what culture does for you. But now technology throws a curve, and the curve is that we live so long that we figure out what a scam this is. We figure out that what you're supposed to work for isn't worth having. We figure out that our politicians are buffoons. We figure out that professional scientists are reputation-building, grab-tailing weasels. We discover that all organizations are corrupted by ambition. You get the picture. We figure it out. Well, then as intellectuals-- and anybody that figures it out is an intellectual, believe me, because they're slinging the programing to push you the other way --so then, "intellectuals"-- defined as, "people who figure it out" --discover that you are alienated. That's what "figuring it out" means; it means that you understand that the BMW, the Harvard degree, the whatever-it-is... that this is all baloney and manipulated and hyped and that mostly you have a bunch of clueless people who are figuring out which fork they should use. But this position is presented as alienation and therefore somehow tinged with the potential for pathology. You know, it's a bad thing to be alienated. Now let's speak for a moment, in order to fulfill the promise read in the introduction, about psychedelics, and what are they doing in this fine situation? Well, what they're doing is forcing this maturation process by dissolving boundaries, which is what they do. They are exposing the cultural operating system for what it is, which is just a bunch of hacked together rules that evolved over time. They weren't sent from god from mount Sinai. It's just a bunch of hacked together rules. So psychedelics in that sense spread alienation. But what they alienate us from is preposterous, earth-murdering, sexist, consumerist, shallow, trivial, inane, insane, and dangerous. That's what they alienate us from. So again, this neotenization thing is like the condition of unconsciousness that I described as the precondition for the cosmic giggle. Glamour, acts of magical conjuration, hypnotic delusion, and illusion, hysterias, fads, pseudo revelations, strange truths whispered in every quarter-- this is the character of our time, and people have seemed to believe that they were fulfilling their responsibilities intellectually, people seem to feel they are doing that when they reject the past. They say, "Well that was all screwed up but since I got with Master Shuggi I've understood the way it really is supposed to be." No, this is just trading one set of neotenizing operating systems for another. The real hard choice that you're being pushed toward, and that you might consider making before the yawning grave rings down the curtain on this cosmic drama is actually intellectual responsibility, freedom, and a devotion to what scientists call "elegance of thought." You know, people say, "Well how can you tell one theory from another... I mean is science better than religion," and this and that-- After a lot of arm-waving it should be conceded that the final call is aesthetic. That because we are monkeys, because we are so far from god, we cannot set knowing-the-truth as the standard for choosing among the models we can produce. We must set our aesthetic compass towards the more-true; what Wittgenstein called the "true enough." And then the question is, "Well how do

you recognize that?" Well... this is a rich field of human study called "Philosophy of Science," or "Epistemology" and "Ontology." "How do we know what is real?" But Plato, who all the rest of philosophy is a footnote upon, Plato said that the key lay in the concepts "the good, the true, and the beautiful." "The good?" What is it? Tricky, tricky... tricky. "The true." What is it?

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Trickier... even trickier. "The beautiful." What is it? Easy to discern. The beautiful is easy to discern. You are going to be condemned to live out the consequences of your taste. Really... really. And if you have no taste, god help you, because you are self-condemned to an appalling nightmare. You won't be getting it, all the subtle stuff will go by you, while your head is filled with cant, nonsense... foolishness. So again, the metaphor of the dream and of making choices based on beauty and beauty is downloaded into the human cultural milieu largely through dreams. Other ideas may also come in dreams but I think studies have shown that architects, designers, people who are actually at the top of the pyramid in any design process are very aware of their dreams, their reveries, their insights. So that's the way to set the compass. Not toward truth, not toward the good-- not because these aren't fine things but because they're so slippery --but toward beauty. And with that in place, to my mind life... hope follows as a natural consequence. We talk a lot, and I'm sure there are people in this room who are well-versed and connected into the world of virtual reality which is a very hot topic and may have all kinds of implications for our future and the evolution of consciousness, but it's worth pointing out that we have been making virtual realities for a very, very long time, that language, spoken language is the original code for hacking virtual reality. When you sit the children down around the fire and begin to tell the old, old stories and the pictures rise out of the flames, that is virtual reality. And so is-- and this is the point I want to make --so are all the artifacts, all the impedimenta of human existence. I mean, a virtual reality built in aluminum, stucco, steel and glass is not immediately erased the way you clear a screen. And the cost of making it is great. But Ur was a virtual reality. The Agora at Athens, ancient Rome, Canterbury Cathedral, these are virtual realities. Men and women have toiled at agriculture, at warfare, at childrearing, at many, many activities in the long march toward self-definition but more and more we have-- this is true of societies that are aboriginal and without economy --when we free ourselves we are not freed to a void. When we free ourselves we are freed into the dimension in which art is an obligation. And this is the great turning point. I think that the design process, whatever that means, must become conscious, global, integrated. The entire human domain, which means the entire planet and it's surrounding near space should be enclosed and included in a coherent plan driven by human values and a thirst for transformational beauty. And I mention this because I believe that many of the people capable of making major contributions to that are in this room or within a hundred miles of this room tonight. And we are people of immense privilege by any way of slicing the planetary demographic. Even the poorest among us who wheedled their way in here this evening are in the top one percent of the planetary social pyramid. On a planet where hundreds of millions of people are starving the obligation upon the conscious people near the control surfaces, near the levers of the human machine is immense. So with freedom-- and I know this is a cliché but hopefully not in this context --with freedom of that sort comes enormous responsibility. And it's paradoxical; responsibility to dream and coexisting and simultaneous with that, an obligation to awaken. In other words, an obligation to make sense, be non-trivial, not to squander resources in foolishness... an obligation to awaken and an obligation to, at the same time, dream. And then the rational mind screams out, "But this is impossible; this is paradox!" But the subtle mind understands that we have now reached square one. By openly confronting the necessity for paradox, and by openly confronting the fact that we can only enclose our dilemma by speaking in at least two modes at once, we begin to actually honor the complexity of the situation. And so tonight the thought I want to leave with you is, the simultaneous project of awakening, and the simultaneous project of entering deeper into the dream for the purpose of cultivating, evoking, experiencing, remembering, transmitting and communicating beauty, which feeds back into the awakening process. Otherwise the awakening will be traumatic and demoralizing. We will awaken to and aid-ravaged earth, to eco-tastrophe, planetary warming, complete collapse of any concern for the destiny of future

generations. This awakening must not be disempowering, and the mantle that can be spread over the awakening to counteract the possibility of disempowerment is this wish to evoke, realize, and serve the project of bringing ever greater amounts of beauty into the world. I think that's the end of the formal lecture here this evening. Thank you very much. I didn't say... we will have an intermission of about twenty minutes so you can... "What'd he say? What'd he say?" And then we will get back together and undergo the more creative process and the more organic part of the evening which is Q & A, and for those of you who can't stay for that, I appreciate your attention and your concern, and thank you all very much and we'll assemble here in twenty minutes.

...history of shamanic use in the Andes of South America. People take... you can be a strict constructionist in the matter of psychedelics or you can cast your net widely. There are many substances in nature which alter consciousness. Either stimulate or sedate or

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create more ambiguous and spectacular effects. I would describe the effects of datura as a deliriant. Now, the shamans who use these things have special techniques, both of preparation and of training that allow them to control or navigate around the more unpleasant aspects of datura. It tends to provoke memory loss, shall we say bizarre behavior such as taking your clothes off in public, and so on... and it creates a general ambiance of uncertainty about the nature of reality. And what I mean by that is you talk to people who aren't there, you smoke cigarettes that aren't there, you answer phone calls when you're standing in the woods. From the outside it looks pretty fucked up, you know? But some aboriginal and native traditions have managed to tame this, at least in the shamanic context. I, I guess in this matter, am a kind of strict constructionist in that when I say "psychedelic" I have something very specific in mind that a substance or a plant should do. It should not inhibit clarity, in other words not episodes of forgetfulness, lack of memory, passing out, or confusion. It shouldn't interfere with that, and it should transform thought, and it should be accompanied by visual hallucinations with eyes closed. That's what I love. That's what I live for. People have said to me, "You're some kind of a vision chauvinist." It's true, and what they... and usually the people who were saying this were people who were great enthusiasts of LSD. LSD I would never argue is not a psychedelic, but you have to take massive amounts and usually in combination with some other substance like hashish or mescaline in order to elicit from LSD what I'm after, which is cascades of... Niagaras of visual beauty... in darkness with eyes closed. I have had deep psychological insights on LSD, I have had creative breakthroughs, I have had bonding experiences, but I've found it difficult to get the visions like I wanted them, and the best I worked out with LSD was I would smoke as much Afghani hash as I could at the top of the trip and then it would do the thing, in fact. It would do it. The thing that led me to psilocybin, or to grow mushrooms and explore that was the descriptions of Wasson and the early workers, that it was easy to visually hallucinate and I had read the earlier accounts of Havelock Ellis and people like that and it was about, you know, if you've ever read... I think it's *The Dance of Life*... Havelock Ellis' description of mescaline, he talks about alien buildings, jeweled ruins, fantastically efflorescent rainforests growing and transforming before his eyes... that's what I was after. I wanted not a disturbance in the optic nerve, you know, like, on LSD you get those little things that look sort of like fans that creep across the walls, that's more like something in the visual cortex than something in the mind, it seems to me. And I was fascinated, and who isn't, I mean I never hear this question discussed, but to me it was the obvious question about these visions was, "Where do they come from?" You know, how can I be astonished by the contents of my own mind, and astonished over and over again? Where is this stuff coming from? And I looked at Jung, and I entertained the fantasy of extraterrestrial contact, and I still haven't answered this question. But I think it's a question

which the critics of the psychedelic experience haven't wanted to deal with. You know, if you read the psychedelic literature, you can tell what psilocybin does to heart beat, sperm count, perception of tone, on and on... they never talk about the real content, you know? Because it's always individual, and they say, "Well science can't handle individual phenomena. We measure the properties of large numbers of people." Well that hopelessly flattens the thing. I know this is a long answer to this question but, it's worth laying all this out because the ladies question raises issues of how do you categorize psychedelics, which are which aren't, are some dangerous and to what degree? Certainly datura is dangerous, not only because of it's deliriant quality, which makes you irresponsible, but also because it dilates your pupils and you stumble around and at higher doses it can cause convulsion and death, which is a rare thing from what I consider the true psychedelics. There is, if we want to take an excursion here for a moment and learn a little pharmacology, there is, if you're going to talk about pharmacology, there's one concept that you should get straight and that's called LD50. It means lethal dose 50. What does this mean? Well you have twenty rats, and you give them a certain amount of, let's say, mescaline. When half the rats die, that dose, expressed as milligrams per kilogram of body weight is called the LD50. And when pharmacologists assess the danger in a drug, they ask the following question, "What is the ratio of the LD50 to the effective dose?" And if the LD50 is only twenty times the effective dose that's considered an incredibly toxic, dangerous, and dubious drug. A good drug is a drug where where the LD50 is two-hundred times more than the effective dose. In the case of LSD, the LD50 for man has never been determined. That's how safe LSD is. We're talking about lethality here, not... you know. And so people say well are there unsafe psychedelics, and yes, you just look up the LD50's, line them up and see which have the better ratios. By that measurement, by that standard, LSD is the most desirable, but the LD50 of psilocybin is very impressive. You can take one-hundred times the effective dose of psilocybin and expect to live. Mescaline, not. Mescaline has a bad profile. As an amphetamine, if you took twenty times the effective dose of mescaline you would probably die. Of course an effective dose is nearly a gram of pure material. 700 milligrams. If you took twenty times 700 milligrams you would be taking nearly two-thirds of an ounce of mescaline and why should you survive? Afterall, stupidity does have consequences. But really, people always ask the question, "Are psychedelics dangerous?" And they mean physically dangerous. What should be said, and it's recently been pointed out to me that I don't say it very often, is that the biggest danger with psychedelics is that while you are in that open state some moron will mess with you, and either lay a suggestion or plant an idea or manipulate you or scare you or turn you in a way that you wouldn't ordinarily go. And this is why psychedelic etiquette means knowing your tripping partners.

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People who take psychedelics with strangers at high dose do come back with wild tales to tell but I don't think you can do that over and over again without having some horrible thing befall you. My mind is not... I mean some people seem more resilient. I am not. You know, people often ask me to trip them and I won't and it's not because of concern for the legal system or the fact that I am not licensed for psychotherapy or any of that. It's because I can't stand it when people come apart on psychedelics. I am... you know, if you're interested in this subject or if you share my sensitivity read Carl Jung's little book called *On the Psychology of the Transference* and then you will understand. In fact, that should be a standard tome for trippers. Understand the transference. Understand what it is, how to fight it, and... this is psychic martial arts... your psychic health will be immeasurably improved by understanding the dynamics of the transference which is quite simple. The book is not that thick. Now to answer the lady's question, when I took datura I had reality-distorting... strange. And if I had been a personality of a different sort I might have followed it deeper but it appeared to me to be ambiguous and evil. Not evil... maybe evil. What happened to me was-- this was in Nepal years and years ago, Nepali shamanism is based in part on datura, the taking of the seed capsules --an English friend of mine who had the room next to mine took it and I took it in my room and it was a situation where to get to the facilities I had to walk through his room. And he and I were friends but we had a very slight rivalry going for the attention of a woman; and I think this woman was not aware that either of us was interested in her but we were both aware that the other one was aware. And midway through my trip I decided I had

to go to the bathroom and so I stepped through into this guy's room and they were in bed together having sex. And I, I guess I went outside and then I, the next morning after sleeping many hours I encountered the guy and I said, "How was your trip?" And he said, "It was wonderful." And I said, "Yes, well uh... I saw." And he said, "What did you see?" And I said, "Well I saw that you were with Juliette, and he said, "I thought so, too... but she wasn't there." And... so, you know... what conclusion do we draw from this? That this stuff is, well... I'll tell you what took me off it finally, was about a week later-- there seemed to be a rash of this datura-taking moving through the traveler community there in this little Nepali village where I lived --and about a week later I was buying tomatoes in the market and I encountered a different person, but this English friend of mine, and he told me that he'd been taking a lot of datura. And I said, "Oh, well that's interesting. I took it. I don't think I'll be taking it again." And as the conversation developed I realized he thought we were in his apartment, and we were not, we were in the market. And you know, this tells you it's time to dry-out. [audience laughter] Anyway, I use that as a springboard to different subjects. You were very patient, uh... next question?

[audience member]: I hope I can remember what my question was.

[McKenna]: It's a test.

[audience laughter]

[audience member]: I agree that there's something sort of mysterious about where these psychedelic effects come from and I refer again to the sort of classic psychedelics-- psilocybin, LSD -- but, the fact that you generally need to take a substance or a drug, it's a material thing, does in some sense sort of go in a strange way to reinforcing a pretty basic scientific, almost mechanistic, view of the universe and I just wondered if you had thought about that or have any comments.

[McKenna]: Well... let me try to convince you otherwise. I mean, I see what you're saying. You're saying that because this transformative, possibly spiritual experience is causally connected to the act of taking a matter of a certain type into your body that it seems to argue for the materialist proposition that mind is an epiphenomenon of the functioning of brain and so forth. Am I restating it right?

[audience member]: Well, yeah sort of but, I wouldn't necessarily go so far as to say that it forces you to conclude[?] that the mind is an epiphenomenon of the brain, but that there is some sort real validity to chemistry, mathematics, physics, and that... you talked about the Balkanization of epistemology ...that those things are in some sense far more real than say, channeling... what did you say... archangels, etc.

[McKenna]: Oh, I see what you're saying. Well... yes. I mean, this relates to what I was saying about the Balkanization of epistemology. It's really strange to me that science is in the act of flinging open the curtains on a staggering vision of what it is to be alive in this cosmos. I mean, we now can look back through the Hubble and other telescopes, you know, thirteen-billion years, to within six-hundred million years of the primary explosion that presumptively created this universe. Meanwhile we're tearing open the nature of the human genome, the nature of the heart of the atom... this is the great, great age for the expansion of the scientific vision. But the population is somehow incapable of staying up with what's going on, and so we have the greatest proliferation of occultism in all forms since the 16th century. It's almost as though there's a bifurcation of the culture. The scientific... the makers of

new science are going deeper and deeper in a direction that the rest of the public not only cannot follow them into, but is actually headed the other way. And it's a condemnation of our educational system that people have not understood that science, for all it's flaws, is the only tool for understanding the nature of reality that has any kind of track record whatsoever. The others just have a story to tell. You know... the Buddha story, the Jesus story... fine stories, but that's all they have is a rap. The amazing... you see, "Why is science different?" Somebody could just say, "Well, but isn't it just a rap?" Well, it is... but it plays by slightly different rules than these other explanatory systems. Science is the only explanatory system where you get points for proving you're wrong. You know? I mean, you form a hypothesis, you publish a paper, then you do further experiments, you discover your conclusions in paper "A" were completely wrong, you retract paper "A" and issue paper "B" and your fellow scientists say, "This guy does very good work. These are careful thinkers. You can bank on these people. They're not flakey." What religion operates like that? You know? Can you imagine coming out of the ashram and saying... having the guru say to his students, "Well we managed to reduce that hypothesis to rubble in morning meditation, didn't we?" [audience laughter]

[1:10:00]

So, you know, it's uh... I... and then let me return to answer that question based on my original misunderstanding of it. And I would say this: You cannot... it is no reduction of the psychedelic experience to say that it is caused by drugs because they are material, atomic systems and therefore we know all about them. Every electron is the yawning mouth of a wormhole that leads to quadrillions of higher-dimensional universes that are completely beyond rational apprehension. Matter is not lacking in magic; matter is magic. I mean, so when you hear these people like David Dennett and all these talk-show materialists running around, these people haven't gotten the news that's coming out of quantum physics. I mean, you see, there's a problem... or let me describe to you the state of play here. The way science works is, science... uh, respects fidelity of theory to experimental results. What really thrills a scientist is when you have a theory that makes a prediction down to five or six decimal points, and then you perform an experiment, and it's spot on, down to five or six decimal points. And then everybody involved in what's going on has extremely high confidence that they're on the right track. Well now, only one science is ever that good: physics. Macrophysics. Uhh, chemistry... it's good, but it's not that good. Uhh, ecology, biology, demography... these are pretty loose. They play with numbers, but it's to hide, it's a fig leaf, and by the time you get to sociology or something like that, I mean, these clowns have just snuck under the tent and should actually be shown the door... uh... and be put back outside with the card-readers. [audience laughter] So... so for several hundred years, uh you know... since, let's say, Galileo and serious physics, this is how science has been. It's been a pyramid of envy directed toward the paradigmatic science, which was physics, and which could produce this incredible congruence of theory and experimental data. Well, so then physics of course charges forward deeper into matter, asking deeper questions. Well, once you pass below the level of the electron it's, it's like suddenly... it's like smoking DMT or something. Absolute madness breaks out. Where before you had these wonderful theories and they were feeding back this data, now suddenly you have backward-flowing time, you have particles which tunnel... which appear magically on one side of an energy barrier without apparently crossing through it, uhh... you have non-locality which seems to imply that every particle that exists is somehow magically connected with every other particle. We now have quantum teleportation, we have black holes, we have singularities... and don't be fooled folks, what is a singularity? It's just a place where you agree that the rules are cancelled because you don't know what the hell else to do. [audience laughter] And it's fine, you know, it used to be in physics that they had one singularity. It was called the "big bang." And so you say, "Well, one singularity." Essentially what science is saying is, "Give us one free miracle and then we can... we can run it from there." [audience laughter] But, the theory of special relativity then introduced the concept of black holes, and of course black holes are enormous gravitational masses so massive that neither light nor information can leave them, and what do black holes have at the center of them? Well, a singularity. Well, how many black holes are there in the universe? Eh, ten-high-fourteen. That's a lot of singularities if you're

trying to produce a theory without singularities. I mean, essentially that's an admission of total intellectual defeat. My god, if there are ten-high-fourteen singularities you're not even doing science, you just might as well be, you know, channelling Atlantis or something. So, uhm... it troubles me because I think this stuff is rich, that physics is feeding back and that ultimately a model of consciousness will come out of studying the deeper levels of the behavior of matter. But the conclusions are all going to support the non-scientific, non-rational factions. In other words, Bell nonlocality is real. All matter in the universe IS in contact with all other matter through some kind of higher space based on their original connectivity. Quantum teleportation IS a possibility. Uh, these violations, backward-flowing-time and violations of rational casuistry are all real. IN other words, science, meaning physics at this point, prosecuted it's agenda of deconstructing nature to the point where it let loose the elves of madness, paradox, contradiction and peculiarity and that can now never be put back. I mean, the dirty little secret is that at bedrock the universe is more like a DMT flash than it is an eighteenth-century garden party, as we were previously assured by the practitioners of science. [audience laughter] Sorry, I think that's enough ranting on that subject. [points] Yes? If you wanna, excuse me, if you wanna ask a question I guess the, what the consensus of the group is is to go and stand, uh, or I'll point to you. The reason we didn't originally say, "Go and stand," is 'cause if you get a nut in the line, there's a certain fatedness to their eventually getting to the microphone, which, if I am sensitive enough in the pointing out process, could never happen. [audience laughter] So this is a.. we're trusting that you're sane.

[audience member]: That's why I got up here early.

[McKenna]: Yeah, good. Okay. Thanks for being patient.

[audience member]: Thanks Terence. I have a technical question, but I think it's an interesting one, and may be important. Uh, your name has become identified with the date 2012, because you have said that, uh, at a certain moment in the year 2012 an event will take place of, uh, tremendous, or even infinite, novelty. And this is based on your work on what you call the, uh, the timewave and novelty theory and so on which seems to indicate that around that date, uh, something, something extraordinary will happen and you confirm this, uh, by saying that, interestingly and synchronistically perhaps, I'm not sure that's what you appeal to but you say that, uh, the Mayan calendar also points to precisely the same date. And number three, you say that at that time also an astronomical event will take place, namely the conjunction of the winter solstice with the galactic center... uh, an event which only happens every 25,000 years. Uh, roughly 26,000 years. So, the last time that happened our ancestors were painting bison on the walls of caves. It's a long, long cycle this precession of the equinoxes that brings the winter solstice around the circle of the zodiac every 26,000 years, and you say that this is going to happen again in the year 2012. What my question is concerned with is that third element, namely this precession of the equinoxes in the year 2012. Uh, as you know the galactic center is not on the ecliptic, is not on the zodiac, but is a bit above it, and so the sun on the winter solstice will never be in conjunction with the galactic center, but an event that is linked with that, and I think far more precise and significant, is the fact that, not in the year 2012...

[1:20:00]

...but right now, as we sit here, the winter solstice is moving into conjunction with the place where the galactic equator crosses the zodiac. This is happening now, 1998, 1999... um, and I'm wondering why you look to this year 2012 and the imprecise conjunction with the galactic center rather than the precise and the remarkable uh... uh return of the winter solstice to the galactic equator, where it was, again, 25,000 years ago when the cave paintings, when the first bursts of self-consciousness were occurring in our species. And I raise this not because I think or

know that there's any truth to the meaning of this, but I do find it exquisitely beautiful that this is happening right now, and I'm wondering what you think about that.

[McKenna]: Well thank you for framing and imparting an extremely intelligent question. I mean, you got it almost... almost all right and all the details right. Uh... and for those of you who have no idea what that was all about, I'm not sure I can help you. But for those of you who do know what that was all about, here's my response. First of all, your statement that the galactic center is now transiting the solstitial node rather than in 2012, that's the only part of the thing you laid out that I would uh...

[audience member]: "Galactic equator."

[McKenna]: Yeah. ...that I would disagree with and here's why. When we say the "galactic center" it turns out when you turn the lights on on that concept that it's extremely slippery. The galaxy is not a basketball. Uh, it has a center of mass, which we can't determine from where we are because we're out on one limb, edge of it. It has a center of luminosity, uh, it has a volumetric center. I mean how do you in fact even define what the galaxy is because at its outer edges it feathers out into extragalactic space. Now what we're arguing over here is a difference of 12 years, if we accept the premise that we're trying to locate a point in time where this conjunction of the galactic center and the heliacal rising of the solstitial sun occurs. Now if you run out and buy a program to run on your PC like Voyager and you look at these solstitial sunrises over the next 14 or 15 years, it actually depends on the program you buy, uh... what the contention is that is supported. Uh, this is a deep subject, very interesting, raises issues of bio-astronomy, archaeoastronomy, galactic dynamics, complicated issues. A book has come out in the last 6 months called Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012 by John Major Jenkins. He's a fine scholar, I wrote an introduction to the book, uh, but he, over hundreds of pages, can educate you and bring you up to speed about these issues. Uh... if the Maya had never existed we would still be looking at the end of a millennium based on the Gregorian calendar. Now, we tend to say, well, you know, that the Gregorian calendar is out of sync with the Maya, that if there is a collective unconscious then the European mind somehow made a sloppy download of it, because the Gregorian calendar is off key the Mayan by 12 years. But on a scale of a thousand years that's a difference of .12 percent or something. And on a scale of a billion years, what is being off by 12 years? On a scale of a million years, what is being off by 12 years? So it seems crazy to me to have, you know, violent factions for 2012 and then that... I mean, the point is that something, the galactic mind, the intelligence of the species, the integrated Gaian and galactic entelechy... something is trying to deliver a message and it is writ large, this message, in our largest systems of defining and understanding time. Uh, we are at the end of a cosmic cycle. You can say 1,000 years if you're a Gregorianist, or you can say a five-thousand-three-hundred-and-"x"-year cycle, if you're a Mayanist, or you can say a 25... 26,000 year cycle if you're a precessionist, but the point is we are... we are there. We are there. We are in parking orbit around the eschaton. Uh, and you know, it permeates our lives. All you have to do is sit down, smoke a bong, and look, and it's there, you know. It is pregnant, we are pregnant with this eschatological breakthrough. And you know, people want it to arrive in the form of ships the size of Manitoba hovering over the Oval Office, perhaps offering oral sex, I'm not sure... uh, but you see, we are such ephemeral creatures in time, we're like mayflies or something. Mayflies, who only live for seven days. In other words, our temporal window of perception is so extreme, I mean, people say, "Well nothing much ever seems to happen." Well 100 years ago there were no movies, automobiles, airplanes, telephones, internet, atom bombs, antibiotics, DNA sequen... you know it's endless, so in the space of... and yet people say, "Well nothing much ever seems to happen," you know. An incredible ability to not register radical change seems to be a precondition of existing in the presence of radical change. Now for those of you who care about my theories in this area of mathematics and deconstruction of the I-Ching and analogising to the Mayan calendar, uh... it is a mathematical game, it is an intellectual game, uh... I discern patterns in nature that cause me to believe that science, which I recently praised, uh, has overlooked very important aspects of reality that you don't

need an atom-smasher or a DNA sequencer or a probe to ganymede to register. And what do I mean by that? Science has overlooked two aspects of nature that, as you sit here, I believe you can hear my case and that you will find in my favor. Here's what it is. The first thing which science has not taken on board is the fact that as you get nearer and nearer the moment in time that we call the present, things become more and more complicated. Now that may seem like a trivial statement, but there's no reason for the universe to work like that. Why does the universe go from simple to complicated? Why do you get, at first, moments after the big bang, an ocean of free electrons at such a state of temperature and energy that no molecular bonds can form, atomic systems can't even form because the bond strength is overwhelmed by the thermal energy in the system. Then it cools down and atoms condense; a more complicated thing than electrons by orders of magnitude. Further cooling, further nuclear cooking of the most primitive elements, hydrogen and helium,

[1:30:00]

in gravitationally aggregated masses called stars, cooks out then heavier elements. They emerge. They were never seen before until fusion began to occur in these hydrogen masses. And these fusion processes cook-out iron, sulfur, carbon, bingo! Carbon. Molecules. Now an order of magnitude in their complexity greater than atoms as atoms are to compared to electrons. And then, you know, and I'm compressing 13 billion years of emergence here into 30 seconds, then out of the molecular soup you get long-chain-polymers, out of the long-chain-polymers you get molecular transcription systems, ie. prebiotic stuff, out of that you get non-nucleated DNA, out of that nucleated DNA, out of that membranes, organelles, organisms, higher organisms, differentiation of tissue, our dear selves, culture, language, technology, and the eschaton. Now... why, this is so obvious, I mean leaving out the eschaton if you like, but all the rest of it is self, is totally self-apparent. Why doesn't science take that on board as a major problem in the description of nature, the emergence of complexity?

Well, you ask a scientist, they say, "Well, you see, these are separate domains of nature. How atoms become molecules has nothing to do with how animals become human beings. This is bullshit. This is just some kind of compartmentalized thinking where you don't want to come to grips with the overarching metaphors that are working on various levels. The advent of... the understanding of the fractal ordering of nature now makes it clear that voting patterns in Orange County, distribution of anemones on the Great Barrier Reef, and the cratering of Europa all follow the same power laws. So, that's the first thing which science has starring in it's face and has never taken on-board.

Now, I said there were two things. The second thing is related to the first. [drinks coffee] Double-shot of espresso... you're really getting your money's worth here.

Uh, the second thing which science has refused to take on-board is that this process of complexification that I just described to you, as you approach the place and time called, "the Present," happens faster and faster. That was not necessarily implied by the first observation. The first observation was simply that there was a process which was moving from simple to complex. Now we have the concept of a process which is ever-accelerating as it moves from the simple to the complex. So, uh, more and more happens as you approach the present and since these processes have been running since the big bang there is no argument to be entertained that they will reverse themselves suddenly. No, they're not going to reverse themselves after thirteen billion years. Duh...

So... then, but the implication of that, carried to it's ultimate extreme, leads to a conclusion most people find too

wild to entertain. If the universe is evolving deeper and deeper into complexity, faster and faster, and if, now, in a human lifetime we can see a small portion of this curve... it no longer appears flat to us because of our nearness in relation... you understand what I'm saying? We can actually discern the curve and so that means, I believe, that by extrapolating this process we should then logically conclude that we are very near, relative to the life of the universe, we are very near to the place where this ramping up of complexity will become so excruciatingly rapid that more change will happen in a single week than happened in the previous thirteen billion years. And that then there will come a moment where more will happen in a single minute than happened in the previous thirteen billion years. And then a moment will come when more will happen in six point five five times ten to the twenty-third erg seconds... more will happen than has happened. And people say, "Well, but that's crazy." I mean, what kind of universe is that that ramps... [spiraling hand gesture].

Well, wait a minute. What's so crazy about this? Let's look at what the competition is peddling. What the competition would have you believe is that the universe sprang from nothing, in a single moment, for no reason. Well now, whatever you think about that theory, in the interest of being awake, please notice that that is the limit case for credulity. Do you know what I mean by that? I mean that if you can believe that, you can believe anything. That is the most improbable proposition the human mind can conceive of. I challenge you to top it. You know, I know the Scientologists think god is a clam on another planet but I don't think that tops this idea that the universe sprang from nothing, in a single moment, for no reason. That is article of faith number one. I say, no, no, this... If we're talking about universes that spring from nothing, if we're gonna talk like that, then surely such universes occur in a situation of great complexity. In other words, if we're going to look for an enormous ruption of emergent phenomena, an enormous, sudden, unexpected download of novelty, we shouldn't look in a domain of zero-space, zero-time, zero-energy, zero-anti-entropic-organization, that's the worst place to look. That's the least likely place where such a singularity would spring out. Where should you look, if you believe in this Jabberwock, this Chimera, this particular beast? Where should you hunt this Snark? You should hunt it in domains of immense complexity where you have matter, energy, light, chemistry, language, machines, people, cultures, intentionality, minds, minds, and if you throw all that stuff together and shake it up it's maybe not a sure thing that you will get a singularity, but you're certainly betting right. Now you've figured it out. So, I think that science is extremely hostile to the idea that the universe is complexifying, and complexifying more and more rapidly. Why? It's just a matter... it's just a historical issue. It has to do with the fact that nineteenth-century English biology was extremely hostile to what it called "Deism". Deism was the reigning religious paradigm of the nineteenth-century and it's the idea that god is a clockmaker, and that god made the universe and wound it up like a clock, and went away. And what irked Darwin and Lyell and those people was the idea that the universe has a purpose. You see, they thought that if it has a purpose this somehow means there is a god, and they weren't up for that. Uh, they were trying to build rational science into a tool for understanding nature.

I think we have grown beyond that. And that it's foolish to wear those tight, nineteenth-century, high-buttoned shoes. We can believe that the universe is following an organizational vector. We can believe that the universe is under the influence of a strange attractor. We can believe that the universe is pulled toward a future de nomoi, as well as pushed by the unfolding of causal necessity. We can believe all of that without evoking the nineteenth-century concept of god.

[1:40:00]

Now, why do I spend so much time on this, and what's so great about all this? Here's what's so great about all this. If you will join me in this believe that the universe works as I have described, it's an engine for the generation of

complexity, and it preserves complexity, and it builds on complexity to ever-higher levels. If you entertain this, guess what happens? It's like a light comes on on the human condition. "Who are we" in my story? Well first let me tell you "who are we" in science's story. We are nobody. We are lucky to be here. We are a cosmic accident. We exist on an ordinary star, at the edge of a typical galaxy, in an ordinary part of space and time. And essentially, our existence is without meaning or you have to perform one of those existential pas de deux where you confer meaning, or you know, one of these post-modern soft shoes. But if I'm right, that the universe has an appetite for novelty, then we are the apple of it's eye. Suddenly, cosmic purpose is restored to us. We left the center of the cosmic stage in the thirteenth-century and haven't been back since. But this idea says, "No, people matter. You are the cutting-edge of a thirteen-billion year old process of defining novelty. Your acts matter. Your thoughts matter. Your purpose? To add to the complexity. Your enemy? Disorder, entropy, stupidity, and tastelessness."

And so, suddenly then, you know, you have a morality, you have an ethical arrow, you have contextualization in the processes of nature, you have meaning. You have authenticity. You have hope. You have the cancelation of existentialism and positivism and all that late-twentieth-century crapola that people used to entertain back in the old days. So, that's why I am so keen for the idea of novelty because it seems self-evident. And you know, we can argue about whether the eschaton will arrive in 2000, or 2012, or 3,000... but I cannot believe that there is anybody in this room tonight who can... the hardest thing to imagine is human history going on for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of more years. That's impossible. We see around us the processes that make of history a self-limited game. The clock's ticking, folks. You think we can do gene-splicing and internet and psychedelic drugs and manipulation of our genetic material and star-flight and anti-matter and quantum teleportation and all these things? You can extrapolate that five-hundred years into the future? Don't be ridiculous. No, history is some kind of a phase transition. It only lasts about twenty-five thousand years. Some people think that's a long time, some people think it's a short time. It depends on where you stand. I think of it as, "snap!" You know? One moment you're hunting ungulates on the plains of Africa, and the next moment you're hurling a golded terbium superconducting extra-stellar vice toward Alpha Centauri with all of mankind aboard in virtual space being run as a simulation in circuitry. You know? It's just first, the one thing, then the other thing.

But now, history, which lasts twenty-five thousand years, is this weird period where you're neither fish nor fowl. You know, you're not the hunting ape anymore, but you are not yet the sixteen dimensional digital god. You know? And in that transition phase there is confusion, there is angst. But now, we're at the end. We have no... I maintain anybody who's peddling angst and peddling pessimism and peddling all this stuff is just... "that's so two-minutes ago." [audience applause]

Question?

[audience member]: I heard you on the radio being interviewed a while back talking about, it's "DMT", is that the..?

[McKenna]: That is.

[audience member]: And um, that got me really interested. And uh, you said that it was basically unavailable.

[McKenna]: From me.

[audience member]: Well...

[McKenna]: Is that your question?

[audience member]: No. Close, close.

[McKenna]: Pardon me?

[audience member]: No, I was really wondering um, yeah I had interpreted that you had said that it was pretty much unavailable, period, and I was wondering if in fact it was available, and if not, I mean that just sort of renewed my interest in psychedelics, which now, do you think is the second-best choice?

[McKenna]: Well, first let me say, because it's an...

[audience member]: And I'd like to hear maybe just a little more about DMT.

[McKenna]: Okay. Well first thing, let me say, which is a piece of practical advice, um... the psychedelic community is cleverly invisible because our choices in gender expression, fashion, so forth and so on, have, by crypto-osmosis come to dominate the values of the culture, we can no longer tell ourselves from straight people. So, uh, the only opportunity where we really come out of the woodwork is a thing like this. But then of course there's a tendency to fall into old-think, and everybody focus on the alpha male spiel-meister at the front of the room. Uh, so let me point out to you, I'm leaving, I'm going home to Hawaii tomorrow morning, but this is your community, this is your community. And whatever it is that you think you need, there are a dozen people in this room who can help you out. And I am not one of them, because I have a different assignment. But look around, and of course, be careful. But, after all, this is about consciousness, right? I mean if you're not conscious enough to conduct that social transaction without flubbing it up, that's probably god's way of telling you you shouldn't be proceeding toward high doses anyway. Um, yeah. Oh and you wanted me to say more about it.

[audience member]: (incoherent)... and, anyway, I'm going with the man in the black and red poncho.

[McKenna]: The man in the black and red poncho. Uh... yeah, I mean, in a way it's impossible to talk about DMT, but on the other hand, it's fun to try to talk about it because it pushes the horse of language into a lather. Basically, when you smoke DMT, what happens is pure confoundment. And, you know, I'm trying to speak generally here, in the sense that different people are confounded by different things. So of course, it addresses you personally. Your level and tolerance for confoundment is a very personal thing. Uh, people have asked me about DMT, "Is it

dangerous?” And the real answer is, “Only if you fear death by astonishment.”

[1:50:00]

You know, and you deliver that line, and then people laugh... except the people who've done DMT don't laugh because they understand, you know, death by astonishment is no remote possibility. Death by astonishment is right there. You know, when was the last time you were astonished? Unless I smoke DMT it doesn't happen to me. Amazed occasionally. Astonished? Never. Astonishment is when your jaw hangs... for a long time. You know? And DMT is simply confounding. Now, how could something be that confounding? I mean, you can imagine taking a drug, and realizing that you should treat your partner better, or realizing that god really exists, or realizing that you should exercise more, or realizing that the planet is an organized intelligence, but how could something be as confounding as DMT is? Well, I think the answer to that, and it took me awhile to get to this, is that the reason it's so confounding is because it, it's impact is on the language forming capacity itself. So the reason it's so confounding is because the thing which is trying to look at the DMT is infected by it. By the process of inspection.

So, DMT does not provide an experience which you analyze. Nothing so tidy goes on. The syntactical machinery of description undergoes some kind of hyper-dimensional inflation instantly, and then you know, you cannot tell yourself what it is that you understand. In other words, what DMT does can't be downloaded into as low dimensional a language as English. And so, you're like... I remember a B-movie I saw when I was a kid and it was set somewhere in Mexico and there was a big swamp and there was a dinosaur in the swamp and at one point this campesino comes, who encounters the dinosaur, comes rushing out of the swamp and the patrón of the ranch is there, and this terrified guy is there in this serape, and he can only point to the forest and sort of make a croaking sound. And that's what English allows you to do with the experience of DMT. You just come down a sputtering mess, if it works. You just come down saying, you know, “My god! It's not what I thought it was.” And this is after you've done it twenty times. You say, “It's not what I thought it was. It's not what I can think it is. It, it, it's something...”

And I... to me it's a miracle, because my intellectual arrow and how I brought myself up in terms of all these things was, I am a rationalist, and I am interested in testing, and verifying, and proceeding to define truth by non-exotic means. In other words, no arch-angels, no... none of that. And as I matured intellectually, I began to eliminate mystery from the world. You know? I'd look into some spiritual discipline, conclude, “No, that's a bunch of crap.” I'd go to some teacher, conclude, “No, this guy is a weasel.” I tested... I sought the weird, but with an attitude of critical skepticism. And I assumed, blithely, that with this flashlight I would soon prove there were no elves out there in the darkness. Turns out, no... no. This is the way to proceed, because stuff which is malarkey will be exposed as malarkey. Instantly, you know? You just go to the guru and you say, “What can you show me?” And if the guy wants you to sweep up around the ashram for a dozen years or so you say, “No, I'm outta here.” But when you get to DMT, it delivers. It delivers. It is as strange as anything can be. It is... you know... it is not only stranger than you suppose, as you sit here, it is stranger than you can suppose.

And what makes me wild about this is we're not talking about something that you have to go five-hundred miles up a jungle river and live with primitive people and study techniques for thirty years... We're talking about something which, if I had a pipe loaded with it in my hand, each one of you would be thirty seconds away from what I'm talking about. Well, you know, you've tripped and yeah, you lived in Paris and you went to Trebizond and all these things, but nothing like this ever descended. But it's not... it's so near. You know, it's not attained by practicing tantric techniques or building up mon... it's none of that. It's just near. Very near. One toke away is this absolutely

reality-dissolving, category-reconstructing, mind-boggling possibility. And I feel like this is a truth that has to be told. I'm like the campesino running out of the swamp and saying, you know, "Over here!" You know, "The orange thing! Do that!" Alright that's enough about DMT. You gotta take hold here.

Thank you very, very much. Thank you.

[1:57:00]

Original Transcription by: spooky.physix

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Dynamics of Hyperspace (w/ Ralph Abraham)

Day June 1983

Location, Santa Cruz, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#) [Audio info: Dolphin Tapes; Lux Natura, ISBN: 0937727105]
- ralphabraham.org [Transcription](#)
- [Scribd Transcript](#)

Terence McKenna: Ralph and I discussed what we were going to do this afternoon and we decided we would try for a conversational sonata, which means it's supposed to look like an unrehearsed conversation, but we both more or less think we know what we're going to say. I suggested the title "Dynamics of Hyperspace" before Ralph had even been asked to be part of this. I hope it's no embarrassment to him as a professional mathematician. These words actually mean something in certain disciplines. In other disciplines they only indicate things.

Ralph Abraham: Well, I agreed that we didn't want to talk about those old maps of hyperspace.

TM: What I mean by a new map of hyperspace is this: I think that we've come to a place with the psychedelic experience where the validation of the maps of inner space that Freud and Jung put forward in the first half of this century are not valid or complete enough. In other words, LSD validated very well the Freudian concept of the inner universe; it seemed to validate ideas about repression and trauma and the need to dredge material out of the unconscious.

RA: And that's what you were thinking of as the old maps? Freud and Jung...?

TM: Exactly. And more recent data that comes out of the psilocybin and DMT experience doesn't seem relevant to the human superconscious, unconscious or subconscious. It seems to be more like an objective manifold that lies beyond the personality or any human dimension, yet is accessible through these compounds.

RA: Are these old maps like Sanskrit, Tibetan tantric texts? One could call those antique maps. Those antique maps are closer to what you're talking about, I guess.

TM: Well, maps grow more and more complete. Some of these older maps are badly torn and worn by time; some of them are not really maps but more almost like journals of explorers saying, "Today at noon we passed the mouth of a river, we know not from where it was flowing, but it was a mile wide where it entered the river we are navigating". Now we are going back and hoping for more complete maps of this area. I said to you this afternoon that if we had to find a formal transition point from your maps to my maps, it was Tom Banchoff's films of hyper-dimensional objects. You might say something about that.

RA: Well, I thought of that as a map, only it's not a map; it suggests an image as the videotape we saw suggests some images that we encounter, probably in hyperspace. But it doesn't represent the experience of life in hyperspace at all. Tom Banchoff's best film, "Hypercube", is an instructional pedagogic film on traveling in four-dimensional space. This is a good start if the metaphor of dimension is of any use here. When I saw Banchoff's film, which I knew from my knowledge of the mathematical sources was actually a representation in common space of hyperspace, that made the hyperspace idea as a metaphor, as a map context, real for me. In Banchoff's film you see a hypercube, that means a solid figure in four-dimensional space, the simplest and most symmetrical one, but outlined only by its edges and vertices. It is then projected down, using color as a code for the fourth dimension, into a three-dimensional reality where we can experience it as a solid object represented in the traditional wire frame technology of computer graphics. This looked exactly like DMT trips I've had--so exactly that it deprived me for a long time of the religious fascination that I had with my travels in hyperspace. Because I was afraid that they were simply a precognitive experience of this Thursday evening in Santa Cruz when I would be viewing Banchoff's film. So this is much less than a map, but it's like some context in which to seek metaphors out of which you can make a map.

TM: Yes, I called the book I wrote with my brother *The Invisible Landscape* because someone once said to me that psychedelic drugs were like magnesium flares dropped from aircraft; they would briefly illuminate a landscape and then darkness would reclaim everything. But you don't still think that that was a precognitive experience of seeing Banchoff's films, do you?

RA: No, I think that Banchoff's film was a precognitive expression of a DMT trip that he has yet to take. In fact, the time sequence is not important because the time sequence is only a necessity of a cognitive strategy that we have evolved to deal with three-dimensional space and our motion in it with a very limited mind. So the whole cause and effect idea comes out of a kind of Greek philosophy where very static concepts are really all there is. Freud and Jung and all their maps, tantricism--it is all much too limited to use in any way in mapping our experience in hyperspace.

TM: Yes, perhaps hyperspace is not really what we want to get at, but the idea that there are occult (in the classical sense of hidden), dimensions to reality that are now accessible through the use of these psychedelic compounds. Obvious occult dimensions in reality are the future, the after-death state, and then the idea that there are occult or hyperdimensional organs of the human body, specifically the human mind. The human mind is like a fourth-dimensional organ because it seems to come tangential to the body, perhaps only at one point, and yet we feel its imminence as the most overwhelming fact of being. In fact, it is the experience of the fact of being. Right?

RA: I guess it's reasonable to put our consciousness at the base of the rest of it and say that it's the seat.

TM: But I like to think of it not so much as a diffuse field but actually more along medieval lines like the soul, and to actually try to imagine that there is an organ attendant upon the living human body that is invisible under all normal conditions but is, in fact, the *raison d'être* that holds the whole fact of metabolism together. Then when the connection between that hyperobject and the body is broken, the body ceases to be a four-dimensional object; it ceases to have this life in time that we call metabolism, and it becomes merely a lump of matter whose organization is steadily falling away from it, then it's not active any more and it's not interesting.

RA: Well, the incarnation of the spirit in a body or the association that we have in our consciousness of our being in the body is a terrible limitation that comes from an over-addiction that spirit has had with incarnation over the centuries. It is perhaps a part of the fact that the earth is a dark planet, but in our travels we frequently have found that the body is left behind. Isn't it so? The experience of consciousness that we have during trips in hyperspace may not involve bodies or anything body-like in the sense of a kind of limitation in spatial or dimensional extension. There may be an increased clarity in a smaller location or something, but the experience of our consciousness in hyperspace is fairly diffuse. So it could be that the body is something like a computer terminal in its relationship to the host computer--that it's a probe for sensing data experience on planet Earth in common space in a lower dimensional reality, piping it back up to wherever. I have never been able to really buy the idea that consciousness is in the head or in the body or even necessarily nearby.

TM: Sheldrake, when we talked to him two weeks ago, mentioned Bergson's Matter and Memory. Since that conversation I read it and, though Bergson is very much an unpopular philosopher in the present context, his idea that memories are not located in the brain--that the brain merely is able to access a dimension that is everywhere--is very modern. It touches ideas like Pribam's and all the things that are being said now about Bell's Theorem and the non-locality of information. But what puzzles me concerning those who are big on the non-locality of information...doesn't it devolve upon them to show why experience, even psychedelic experience, is always particularized? You always do have a particularized experience. Why isn't the psychedelic experience a plenum if all information is everywhere? Then what is the tuning device that brings out the various aspects of it?

RA: Well, since my first distant trip I have totally rejected the idea of explaining or showing why, as you would challenge them to show why. Because those theories, Bell's Theorem, quantum mechanics, mathematics, that is all the efforts to make very low-dimensional, almost common-space dimensional conceptual models for an experience which is much richer than these models. So I couldn't take that seriously. I think that people should take their experience more seriously and try to evolve from this experience models, maps, simple metaphors, or whatever, so that we could make an atlas out of local charts. In this room are people who have travelled extensively and analyzed their experiences using all kinds of knowledge of all the cultures on the planet. It's very difficult for any two of us, for example you and me, to compare our experience of hyperspace in order to see whether or not there is some kind of overlap where we could agree that this part of experience was the same, so that your map and my map could then be overlapped a little bit. Then I could have confidence that your experience expands this piece of my mind, or my experience expands that piece of yours. With the rest of us working together, if we had any sort of common ground between any two of us, we could build an atlas for the group experience of hyperspace. But even after ten years or more of doing this, I find it very difficult to use any metaphors of ordinary reality to overlap our experience, much of which is obviously identical, but as far as representation in common ground metaphors, no. So, Bell's Theorem may show the way, but from that experience we have to evolve new consciousness which should grow so as to be able to deal with experience verbally, visually, space-time multimedia musically, to share.

It's very difficult. I'd like to try this out and see if anybody finds that in traveling you experience hyperspace, or whatever you want to call it--you experience life there. It is not that this is the structure of the room; the walls are there in ordinary reality. We have a very low-dimensional thing here, even though in, say, computer technology, you need enormous memory to record a single instant in very low resolution.

In our own perception of life in this room the walls and many things stay fixed, everybody is sitting while one person moves, so this is a very low dimension of reality, and life on this planet is interactive. When you travel in hyperspace, everything is interactive. The whole universe is as a person and we are relating or dancing with everything. The child says "Mom, I danced with a rock". The reply is "Rock's don't dance." We know that everything dances. You poke it; it pokes back. So we don't have the metaphors for this experience. When we move, we have practiced our conceptual, our cognitive reality with this. Most everything is fixed and one thing moves. We fasten on the thing moving and record that in the log book. In hyperspace travel these metaphors are no good. Where we project down to too low a dimensional representation, we lose things.

All maps are vibrations, are projections. In the map of Paris, for example, many different people occupy the same spot--what I call a spot--on the map of Paris. Much information is lost through mapping reality to a map. So the dynamics of life in hyperspace exceeds what we can deal with cognitively. This is, I think, the reason why we have a great deal of trouble describing it to each other. Is it anything like that for you?

TM: Yes, it's like that. I think that while we experience it fully we are repressed by the content of the experience. The reason it is so hard to communicate it is because language is a creation of habit, and our habits are all of this lower-dimensional space. So everything is referred downward. Everything in the psychedelic dimension is like this, like that, and yet there is this tremendous sense of inadequacy. Even as you say it is like this or like that, you know that you're betraying it. And I don't think that is necessary; it isn't that there is something magical that makes these realities state-bounded so that they can never be brought back to experience. It's simply that we have a problem with developing a language that is suitable to the subject and the only way to overcome that is to make the psychedelic dimension more and more a part of our reality, however multidimensional it is. This is essentially what poetry is attempting to do, but doing it very inadequately or very badly, even when it's doing it at its best. A William Blake or a John Milton says "Well, yes, you like what I wrote, but if you could only have seen what I saw, you wouldn't even bother with it". So it's a task of building new dictionaries and new languages and bootstrapping ourselves by transforming our language so that, finally, it maps onto the thing beheld in the psychedelic state. And this is a task of a lifetime or many generations, perhaps. Certainly it's happening now among many people, but it is incomplete and it's frustrating in its incompleteness. Our language for reality, for what you call the low grade reality, is by no means complete.

Many lyric poets have exhausted themselves without ever reaching for the heights, so the difficulty of mapping these higher order states is very great. Maybe that's why, though we can't exactly articulate it, I gravitate to you as a mathematician, hoping to hear something that will illuminate the problem, because mathematics is a language too and a very different language from the language of ordinary experience. Perhaps both mathematics and ordinary human languages are inadequate to the psychedelic dimension. But this is then where we are in the cultural task. We need to create a meta-linguistic metamathematical, metaphorical language in order to behold these things. I think it must be possible because people who are loaded together with a very few words do understand these things.

RA: It may not be hopeless to think that we will find verbal, mathematical, scientific, musical, artistic metaphors and language strategies for recording and exchanging our experiences to help further our evolution. One cannot stand forever a situation where we cannot compare our experience. Even to tell a joke about life in hyperspace is very bad. So we want this evolution. At the same time we have already experienced it, as you said, only not with these kinds of metaphors but through telepathic experience or whatever one wants to call it. Which is a part of our experience of traveling together, which is a certain

proportion of every person's experience of traveling. It varies. Some people are very solitary in their travels; some people always go in twos; sometimes there's millions...

TM: Fill the skies....

RA: Flying in group formation on the astral plane. So I think that the expansion of our language, mathematics and what not, has to be an expansion where what is considered to be mystical, the impossible, in search of the miraculous, telepathic and so on, is allowed to become part of everybody's experience. This is one of the most important things, in my view. I don't know what is necessary to preserve the possibility of the species' future evolution. It's not hopeless. I think somewhere evolution is possible. We have the glimpse here through our personal experience; our group experiences are extremely frustrating, even this kind of talking and sharing.

Q: Do you think there's some behavioral imperative to deny those kinds of experiences as a society?

RA: Well, filtration of experience is an ingredient in every social structure...filtration of experience. "Johnny, rocks do not dance." You are told that you did not dream, that you did not experience what you actually did experience as a child. And that is part of the problem, but even if by some miracle or another you were able to re-program yourself from prenatal on out, as many people are trying to do by re-processing their previous incarnations and everything else, if you could totally clarify your soul so that you had no cultural conditioning at all, then I think there is still a lot of structure missing that we need to have to function as fully expanded beings in hyperspace and to achieve the evolutionary promise of our group consciousness.

TM: Because the fact of the matter is, though we've talked of hyperspace and used this geometric model which signifies clean breaks between levels, actually this hyperspace that we're talking about is present all the time in the here and now as an aspect of the here and now that is simply not perceived by us. Think about the reality that we do perceive through the mediation of language and the way it differs from, say, the next highest primate. Obviously our tremendous awareness of our history, our appetite for our future, our baggage of all these abstractions--scientific, cultural or mathematical, this is itself an aspect of being in this linguistically created space that is different from the space of the experience of an animal. If you want to think of history as pointed toward a moment in time when it will enter hyperspace, then realize that the fact that history exists at all means that this process of entering into hyperspace is well advanced. History is the shock-wave that precedes the entry of a species into hyperspace. A lemur or any creature, even a social insect, cannot enter into hyperspace without entering into history first, perhaps for ten or fifteen thousand years. That is the aura that precedes the entry into hyperspace and it's a domain of accumulating language and metaphor and experience.

RA: So perhaps there is an accumulation from the bottom up. To physics we add Bell's Theorem; to mathematics we add chaotic attractors; to language we add a new poetic metaphor, and thus we create new maps of hyperspace. This is bottom-up accretion. Maybe there is a top-down one where the capability to communicate telepathically between two people is dramatically increased by the accretion of metaphorical skills in telepathic communication or something. Or maybe there are telepathic plants that you find in the Amazon. Suddenly this communication is very clear. I'm biased for the top-down one as I think that from the bottom-up is so feeble, there is so little help, that this is Jack's beanstalk which has got to go to the sky. But you are optimistic, being a word freak, that language can be expanded to the point where one could

succeed in describing the experience.

TM: But I do think there is some kind of, for want of a better word again, hyper-dimensional object at the end of history which is casting an enormous shadow over the historical landscape and causing it to be what it is. It's as though history were the shock wave of eschatology. There is an event at the end of history such that when it is finally reached, all time which preceded it will be seen to be adumbrations and reflections of the approach to this thing. It's as though consciousness is attempting to become more and more self-reflective. And since language is the way, the strategy that is being used, we are getting a fantastic accumulation of languages and cybernetic technology -- technologies of storage and delayed replay -- so that consciousness is bootstrapping itself toward this omega-point. But the creode, the cleft in the epigenetic landscape that is directing it toward this end point already exists in some sense. This is like a Platonic model of hyperspace. Plato said, "Time is the moving image of eternity". What he simply meant was that we have a low-dimensional slice of reality in the form of what we call the present, with its perspective on the past, but that actually it is part of a higher dimensional manifold which, beheld in its entirety, is eternity. Consciousness is reflecting itself and culture is the waste product of that process. So it seems to me that what the historical task consists of is humanity turning itself inside out and that this is the problem with dimensions that we sense so acutely. It is that the body, which is presently exteriorized, must be interiorized. And the soul-mind, which is presently felt -- only felt -- needs to be exteriorized. One can hark back to the metaphors of alchemy for an idea of what this is. It's the idea that the soul should be potentially condensable as a visible object, or a form of trans-dimensional or trans-linguistic matter which is then beheld. By being brought through this process of entry into normal space, the space we experience, the soul is placed beyond the crisis of death which is, somehow, the rending of this connection between the organic and the trans-organic, and with the advent of more and more advanced cybernetic systems, more and more advanced psychedelic substances and shamanic techniques, there is a vast family of these things to be synthesized and explored. The task of exteriorizing the soul and making it familiar will come to be. Apparently then, this end-point of history that we keep talking about is actually the place where biology is left behind because death is overcome by understanding. History is the process of being consciously caught in being without understanding death. Through languages and mathematics and science and all these various strategies, we are attempting to gain a hold on that problem so that we can turn it around. There's nothing that says this is impossible; it simply takes ten or fifteen thousand years to get our ducks in a row so that we can have a firm enough epistemological basis and a firm enough understanding of what the self, the brain, the body, the present at hand, actually mean. Then we can turn the switch and be at play in the fields of the Lord in the human imagination. Don't you think the human imagination is where history is carrying us all? That is Elysium.

RA: Well, that might be just a feeble projection of the much more grand... I wonder what you think is the role of the human anti-imagination? For example, what is going on with the repression and control of psychedelic drugs? Why are people persecuted? Is there a negative force in evolution? Is this archetypal creode at the end of history, the future which is determining the present as effect of the cause, does this have a major evil component?

TM: This is a real problem. I always feel nervous about sounding dualistic or Manichaeian, but I have the strong intuition that we are not monkeys but we are in monkeys. What we're asking is "Why is there so much monkey business?" It's because we are having a great deal of trouble. We love the monkey body; we connect it to the earth, we connect it to a long evolutionary history and we believe that we must treasure it. Yet it's very obvious, looking at the way global society is organized, that the monkey nature is utilizing the

discoveries of the angelic or Buddha nature of people -- ivory towerists, scientists, seers, and people simply trying to understand how things work. But this information is used by monkeys, generals, politicians, advertising executives and propagandists, and it is lethal. So we are bootstrapping ourselves, and we're not all moving. If this is a marathon race to the end of history, we cannot all be in the lead.

RA: It's very critical, I think, to sit here suggesting that consciousness, the unique inhabitant, the living occupant of hyperspace, in fact has got a serious personality defect. It's got an addictive personality and it likes to incarnate in monkey bodies. There's really a lot of oversoul; we're just about a millionth of one percent of it. So we are the laggards. We are addicted to the occupation of the monkey-body; otherwise we would have gone back where we belong. Some people think that we've been banished to an incarnation on the dark planet as a punishment, but for what? First of all you're suggesting that the oversoul has a personality problem and secondly, there is the dualism between the oversoul and the monkey. Are the monkeys a foreign species while the oversoul lives in Beta Orion and the monkeys live on solar earth? Are the monkeys an inferior species? Are they not part of the projection of the conscious soul? Are there different parts? There is not a single occupant in hyperspace, but there are actually different ones. There's oversoul; there's monkeys; then, I suppose, there's mosquitoes--one of the few living beings I still enjoy to kill. There are these different parts. It is not all one.

TM: I think that what is loose on this planet and has been for at least a billion and a half years, is a self-replicating information system. It first appears as replicating polymers which then grow sophisticated enough to be DNA and cellular matrices and enzymatic feedback systems and then, at a very late period in its history relative to us, it transcends mere genetic information and evolves epigenetic information such as culture, writing, this sort of thing. This phenomenon is localized in the monkeys. But the thing is that knowledge and understanding are inevitably two-edged, so that as we reach for angelhood to free ourselves, we inevitably gain the power to destroy ourselves. We cannot become some kind of star-roving, hyper-dimensional, cybernetic species radiating out through the galaxy unless we go through the very narrow gate that has to do with the fact that we discovered fusion processes while we were still bound to a single planet. We have fifty, a hundred, two hundred years before we are home free. We will carry that burden of the knowledge of how to destroy ourselves as a species until we get, as James Joyce said, "up ne Ent" And once we're up ne Ent we leave behind the planetary ecology, the possibility of toxifying the planet and destroying ourselves, but it's clear that angelhood is not easily won. One must banish interior demons. These are demons of knowledge, the wrathful dieties are the knowledge dieties, and the knowledge that they hold is the knowledge of how to blow the planet apart as though you had stuck a stick of dynamite into a rotten apple.

Q: How come we have so many dangerous people in power positions?

TM: Well, monkey tribes are about pecking orders and male dominance. These monkey hierarchies are the last to get the news. The militarists do not understand what Ralph understands, or what the people who build these hydrogen weapons understand. They only use these things because they have everybody under their thumb. Power is one game which they play very well. Understanding is another game which people like Ralph play very well...but the faith of people like Ralph and myself is that the power, the transcendent power of the knowledge in and of itself will be so great that it will overcome the wish of the monkeys to misuse it.

A perfect example of that would be the chip. When the chip was first developed, the alpha males were

about to put it in the wastebasket because it didn't work fast enough for the military applications for which the contract had been led to produce it. They couldn't see any reason why this would have any application at all. And then someone outside that research mentality realized that it meant everyone could have a computer; it meant that the computer technology which had been a privileged thing of the ruling military and industrial classes had escaped their control. I have a real faith that this will always be the case -- that all effort to take control of something in the technological area will find it mercurially slipping through one's fingers.

It's a moving front of knowledge. The real thing is not to think that it's research scientists pitted against the monkey generals. Orchestrating this whole scenario from hyperspace is the overmind of the species. It is releasing these ideas into consciousness. We cannot go to the stars without genetic engineering, nuclear fusion, all of these things. I think that the current situation on the planet with H bombs stacked like cordwood, etc., is a perfectly natural situation. This is exactly what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars. There is tremendous risk and the risk factor exponentially rises. Who knows how many species throughout the universe confront this situation and can't make it through. It is a very narrow neck. Naturally, only sophisticated life forms radiate through the galaxy and what sophisticated means we don't know, but we're going to find out because we're going to find out whether we are one or not. The next hundred years will tell the tale. We will either break free or we will fatally foul the cradle of our origins.

Q: Just assuming that humans are the vanguard of evolution and it's happening to this mutant monkey first and we leave biology behind, what continues to go on on the planet? There's a whole planet world going on still and there are dolphins evolving towards this kind of escape. What happens to the plants once we leave the planet?

RA: Well, I think the planet is like high-school: every year there's another graduating class. The school looks the same every year, but if you watch the individuals then you see it evolving. If you look at war games, the battle field is always there, but the individuals on it are always different. People grow through these stages of evolution. This planet is one step in a ladder of evolution and devolution. I think there are two strategies for the growth of the spirit. One is the bottom-up one; this one requires these efforts of the research scientist since the bottom-up one assumes, pessimistically, that the top-down can't work, that telepathy will not be developed fast enough to put individuals in the kind of tight interconnective contact they have to have in order to survive these delicate balances with destruction that Terence has described. The bottom-up strategy assumes that top-down can't work so therefore it has to improve the communication of people by constructing computer networks, by tapping energy from the sun and bringing it down, and so on. All of technology is an effort to reach angelhood through material means, while mysticism is an effort to achieve the same goal by expanding peoples' capabilities with psychedelics, by meditation, by teachings from foreign planets, and whatever...

TM: You can't live on a planet and have the kinds of powers and ideas which we have because a planet is such a delicate thing. What we dream of is so outlandish and so centered upon ourselves that the only way it can be realized without being Faustian, without destroying us and everything else, is to build it in space. The human imagination has to be lifted off the surface of the planet for our survival and the survival of the planet. It's like a mother come to term; this baby must now be born.

RA: It's an ecological imperative.

TM: We must leave the womb for the sake of the mother and for the sake of the child. This great separation, this cleavage, has to happen.

Q: I believe that the human mind is dependent upon a minimum quantity of atoms and that if you had the amount of atoms in a chicken's brain you couldn't make the human mind and that it requires spatial organization, whereas you both imply that the mind came before--that the mind isn't related to the brain. Can you explain this?

TM: Evidence that numbers of neurons are important is incomplete. The Penfield experiments are the crudest indicators that there is some relationship between neural activity and thought, but what this relationship is has never been shown. A materialist like John Eccles took the position that the mind was something which could initiate quantum-mechanically balanced electron cascades. The mind shunts these one way or another, and these events start avalanches of electron cascades which would then become what are measured as crude neural signals. But he actually had to posit an invisible force that could, at least at the level of one electron, push on the physical world. I'm not swayed by the idea that it's been shown what is going on with the relationship of neurons to thought.

Q: But neurons do seem to grow, as imprinting occurs in a chicken, and you do get an increase in mass with the neuron during the imprinting stage.

TM: The neuronal material has a relationship to thought, but we do not know of what the relationship consists. In other words, does the brain generate thought, or does it receive thought? Is it a generator, a receiver, or what is it?

Q: Why would the human mind need to exist if it weren't for the human body -- the genes? What would be the point of a human mind without a human body?

TM: Well, perhaps mind is a generalized term. There may not be human minds and chicken minds, there may simply be mind and one perceives as much of it as one's neural network is able to transduce.

RA: The brain is an organ of perception.

Q: Normally when we think of the millennium, the omega-point, the Resurrection, we think of fundamentalist religion. How does that fit into the conservatism of most religions.

TM: I said that the object, the trans-dimensional object at the end of time, cast a shadow over the three-dimensional landscape of history. Implied in that metaphor is the notion that the shadow is distorted. I think that all empires and forms of social organization are attempts to get it right. Nobody, not even Hitler and Nero went around saying "I'm just the worst person to ever come down the pike". People always believe they are acting from a clear vision of what is required. But the fact is that the very nature of being in this low-dimensional space makes it very very hard to get it right. That's why the idea of Zen koans, where you are somehow to break out of a system of logic and perceive beyond it, is indicative of that. I think the thing at the end of time will be a *coincidencia oppositorum*. It will be a union of opposites. It will not be rationally apprehendable. It will transcend rational apprehendability and, as you know, the British enzymologist, J. B. S. Haldane said, "The universe may not only be stranger than we suppose, it may be stranger than we can suppose". It's that thing which is stranger than we can suppose which is calling us

through time toward it, and which we anticipate in visionary, mystical and psychedelic states.

Q: I was wondering...ever since we've been working with psychedelics we've been receiving guidance as to diet and choice of various things in our life to create an energy coordinate system that changes the dramas and energies that we draw into life. If we choose a diet, or something that we haven't been channeled, it tends to imbalance the reality.

RA: This is the epitome of the top-down way, so that our experience, more or less, extends to all of us. It is a function of ego, I think, to reject guidance which clearly comes -- and people do do that; furthermore, they make conspiracies to do that. I heard of one today. There is a bill in the Assembly that would allow the postal service to open everybody's mail primarily to look for things like Prevention Magazine. People are sharing ideas that they've received about the right way to eat for achieving certain purposes. Even on this level the information is suppressed. I think the ego conspiracies are monkey-level strategies for defeating the insertion of information through intuition and connection. I think that it's very difficult to be what we are calling our monkey if we don't eat other monkeys. One of the strange things about this planet is glaciation -- these historical events that force animals to eat other animals where otherwise it wouldn't be necessary because there's an adequate supply of plants. The difficulty of the survival of the species through the various glaciations has, I think, produced some of the ecological problems that we feel on the social level as wars and torture, the pressure that makes it seem as though we have no chance of getting through the bottle neck to the omega point.

Q: If you think we're going to leave this body or move on from the planet, why are these beings so interested that we become pure enough to channel them, to become part of them? When you take the mushroom or LSD, it means you become part of their energies and that we're able to evolve in this way. I've been told that they're working toward physical immortality, working toward balancing and energizing all our energy coordinate systems so that they will harmonize. You're actually going to be an ongoing entity that constantly changes in this way, constantly renews itself, constantly goes through a birth/death process?

RA: I personally am very pessimistic about our chances for survival to a goal without receiving guidance. I don't think that the probability of our getting past the nuclear menace is zero. The computer could make a mistake and some chimpanzees actually believe that the planet can survive a limited nuclear war. Our chances of making it through are dim and so we're pessimistic, but actually our chances of making it through to here were zero without guidance. To me it's a mystery, but the nature of the guidance and the direction in which it's going seems absolutely certain to me, so I'm hungry to take it.

TM: I would differ with Ralph in that I'm very optimistic. I think that the most intelligent form of life on this planet is not the human individual and it is certainly not the social institutions that human individuals have pushed together. The things that make us so strange, that always make it a stumbling block to view ourselves as simply highly evolved monkeys, is the presence on the planet of something which you could call the human overmind. It has its hand on the tiller of history. No government, no scientific institution, no occult organization is running history. The overmind is running history and it can drop the differential calculus simultaneously on Descartes and Leibniz; it decides when it's steam engine time and when it's photon engine time. It will pull us through or it will pull something through; but history is a dash -- a ten thousand year dash -- from the point in time when you cognize that you could go to the stars to the point in time when you look back on the receding earth and breathe a sigh of relief and say, "We made it". It's very tricky, but I think if the overmind didn't exist it would be entirely impossible.

Q: What do you think it is that the overmind is saying?

TM: You probably know Phil K. Dick's book *Valis*, where he talks about the mad god. He isn't the first one to talk about the mad god, and all I can say about that is my deepest intuition is that there may be a mad god. But in the true tradition of Gnosticism, beyond the mad god, beyond the machineries of fate that the mad god has imprisoned us in is the true, higher, hidden God, who cannot signal us at all because we are fallen into the black hole of the mad god. But we have within ourselves a spark of divinity that, if we study it carefully enough, the message -- the way out of the labyrinth, is written there. And once we, entirely by our own efforts, make our way out of the labyrinth, and this means the overmind as well, then the higher and hidden God will be present. But, yes, this universe appears to be as the Gnostics said, the creation of a monstrosity. This universe is a prison of iron. At least that was their view.

Q: Well, is your idea of an overmind some version of Margulis and Lovelock's Gaia Hypothesis, and is that healthy?

TM: I don't believe they think of Gaia as minded and directed as I am saying. They see it as a global system for maintaining meta-stability on the planetary surface. But I actually see it as something which is controlling perturbations, directing developmental processes down certain chains to make things be the way they are. You see, I can believe the orthodox theory of evolution--the neo-Darwinian theory--except that it seems to me the time scale is preposterous. The theory works on a scale of twenty million years, but we are asked to believe that we came from the trees in half a million years. That's too fast. If that's true, then there must be a higher governing order because that's too many right choices in a row. It couldn't possibly have happened that fast without it being a non-stochastic process.

Q: You've talked about a ten or fifteen thousand year history on the one hand and, on the other, something is out there pulling us towards the future... I wonder whether you have considered that there's only one moment of time in which we're inventing both your ten and fifteen thousand year past and that thing that's pulling us towards the future. What we're doing here tonight is exploring ways of getting our heads together so that we project a reality that's a little more compassionate. I don't know any other words. Perhaps we could make that agreement and not be quite so frightened in that case.

TM: Well, the psychedelics carry you to the end of time. You discover the secret; you leave history and you experience the secret outside of time. It's what Mircea Eliade calls the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane. I think that's what is so exciting about the psychedelics; the government can't control the truth, the secret of the future cannot be hidden from people who do it. I don't know if this addresses your question, but it's the only source of optimism, of existential optimism, that I know. I think that Ralph would probably agree. It affirms that there is a way outside the labyrinth. It lifts you above so that you can contemplate the topology you were enmeshed in.

Q: We've taken some giant steps because this evening would not have been possible fifty years ago, or twenty years ago even. Something different has happened.

TM: Language...

Ralph: I want to reply also.... I'm sorry I've made myself so unclear as to be so completely misunderstood. I

am not pessimistic. What I tried to say and what I want to say is that I would be very pessimistic about our chances of making it on bottom-up evolution without any guidance from the top-down information. However, it is my experience that we have an abundance of this and that many of us here are running one hundred percent on intuition from above. One hundred percent...many of us. As a matter of fact, I am not pessimistic.

TM: Psilocybin induces this phenomenon -- at the lowest level the strong intuition of what you should do, and at the highest level, the direct verbal order.

Q: In your book you sketch out what you call a quantized modular hierarchy that tries to pinpoint the points in history where all this information floods in from outside the manifold. I'm wondering since you wrote the book if you have had any further insights into that? One question I want to ask you, why did you pick 2012. It is also the end of the Mayan calendar.

TM: Peter Broadwell, who is sitting in the front row, has labored mightily to make the time-wave theory accessible to people. My original reason for choosing the 2012 date was very idiosyncratic. It had to do with temporal distances from the date that the atomic weapons were used on Hiroshima. But once we had this program running well enough that I could see what was happening, I felt that the time-wave gave very good agreement with the historical data. The time-wave maps novelty, coming and going, from historical time. Configure it so that you'd have the zero point in November, 2012; in that case the deepest ingression of novelty before modern times was in that fifty year period in the fifth century B.C., when Lao Tzu, Mencius, Ezekiel and Zoroaster and Plato were all active. Such a moment! Nothing has been done since except adumbrations of that work. Then, of course, as you mentioned, the end of the Mayan calendar, which is a very, very strong coincidence. The Mayan calendar was right once before. They predicted that on a certain morning on a certain day in a certain year, men would come in white ships and should be treated like gods. And on that morning of that day of that year, the ships of Cortez dropped anchor off the coast of Mexico. We're talking about forces which wrecked a civilization. Are we to believe that the Aztec civilization was wrecked on the basis of a coincidence? It isn't like that. The prophecy was fulfilled. They had good agreement between prophecy and fact, but it set them up psychologically to be conquered in a way that would never have happened had they not had that prediction in their world view. I don't want to get into it in great detail, but I think the modern relationship of science to the flying saucer is approximately at the same level of sophistication as the Mayan astronomers sophistication was to his ability to predict future events. So prophecies do have a way of coming true when you look at civilizations on the scale of millennia, and it usually bodes great change for the society in which it happens.

Q: All the people you mentioned that lived during that time, I've been told that there was a planetary alignment--the same as the kind of planetary alignment that we're experiencing now until 1989 where certain planets are lining up.

TM: Well I don't know if what you're saying is true, but it should be true if my theory is correct, because you've got to have agreement in the sky and on the ground. The time-wave that I propagated is only thirty years away from the zero point; this is like approaching a black hole. We have sunk below the event horizon. The Millenarian event has now exerted such hold, the creode is so deep, that it's calling us toward this moment. The walls are so high that there is no way out now. Very definitely we are tidally locked to that future event. The Mayan calendar was a five thousand year cycle and it starts out with everything in a certain configuration and then it returns to that exact configuration on that date. The theory that I

developed was a hierarchical wave that can be derived from the I Ching and I derived my fit empirically or, in a sense empirically, by putting the wave against stretches of historical time and asking myself if the wave configuration fit my intuition of how that historical period should be graphed.

Q: I'm not trying to be too materialistic, but I'm really trying to understand your paradigm. If you don't believe the mind is intimately connected to the organization of the brain, why would we bother to ingest a chemical to effect the brain, to effect the mind?

TM: I didn't say it wasn't intimately connected. I just said perhaps it wasn't generated by it. For instance, think of a television. It does not generate the signal that it receives but, by making changes in the television, you can certainly change the quality or you can get new channels, or wipe out all channels. So I see the brain as a receiver and the chemicals as various resistors, tubes, transducers, this and that, which you drop in and then say "Well, what do we get if we turn to this channel...?"

Q: But you do believe that you have your religion, whatever your parents told you, inside that brain?

TM: Perhaps we can have the best of both worlds here; perhaps there is a small reservoir of personal experience and memory that is actually coded into the wetware of the brain, but one of the things that's always struck me about the psychedelic experience is that if you take the theory of evolution seriously, then you have to say, well, if evolution is an endless economizing of what is good for us in terms of maximizing our survivability, what in the world is all this information doing there that is released by the psychedelic? Why should I see the planets around Zeta Reticuli? Why should I see all this material that cannot be organized by my linguistic faculties? It seems as though the evolution of the organism did not sculpt and strip away the accessibility of that information. It remained accessible because it was actually independent of the organism, consequently the evolution of the organism did not modify or limit that information. Interestingly enough, the same problem can be posed of Tantra. Obviously, evolution economizes the propagation of the species; without that there is no evolution. So why in the world should there be a fantastically transcendent experience that is accessed through the control of ejaculation? In other words, all evolution pushes for that to happen; how can denying ejaculation possibly deliver an important and transcendent experience. Again I would argue that it's because there are fields of information that are not modified and filled or lost according to the evolutionary needs of the species of the individual. These fields, these psychedelic information fields, are there to be perceived in the same way that three-dimensional manifolds are accessible.

Q: Would you say something about exteriorizing the soul, riticulti??? the body and, perhaps something about the balance to strike between these two?

TM: I think alchemy, in the Western tradition, is the great way, the great metaphor for doing that. The alchemists in the late phase, fifteenth century forward, were talking about the stone -- the sophic hydrolith -- some kind of thing which was matter but beyond matter. It was exteriorized; it could do anything, and yet it was somehow simply material. Yet it had all the properties of thought. When we went to the Amazon in 1971 -- the incidents that are written about in *The Invisible Landscape* -- what led us down there were a series of reports about a plant preparation called ayahuasca which some of you may know about. It is a beta-carboline DMT combination. There were reports that on ayahuasca there were shamans who vomited a black fluid that was not visible to anyone except other people who had also taken the plants. We were told that they would vomit this fluid as part of their curing ceremony. They would spread it out on the

ground and look into it. It was described as a phosphorescent, obsidian black, translucent material. It was translinguistic matter. It was, as James Joyce says, "all space in a nutshell". There were stars in this stuff...it was impossible. It was not simply a body fluid in the normal sense; it was actually a product of some kind of metabolic process that you could think of as transdimensional in some sense. One could think of it as a psychedelic molecule that had its trip on the outside of itself so that to look upon it is to see the psychedelic phenomenology unfolding. But it was liquid and not fixed. Our idea was that if this had any objective reality to it at all, then alchemical metaphors could be brought to bear on it. Our goal was to fix this translinguistic material. It is essentially one's mind exteriorized; it has one's name written on it. If you need to take a shower, you just stretch it out over your head and water comes out of it; if you're hungry, you eat it; if you need to go somewhere, you sit on it and it takes you there; if you need to know something, you ask it and it tells you. It is something which we have a great deal of trouble conceiving of because it violates all our notions of category. But something like this will come. The fact that it can be experienced in the psychedelic state seems to indicate that it is only in the imagination. That means that all that is necessary to experience it in three-dimensional space is for one to be in the imagination. Then it will be found not only to exist but to be a microcosm which is mirroring a macrocosm, which is also in the imagination. It's a way to cosmicize the self and yet realize it as an object which you can wear as a bead around your neck or put in your pocket or carry in your mouth.

Q: I wonder if psilocybin ever told you where it came from? I know in the forward to your magic mushroom book there's a wonderful quote from the mushrooms.

RA: Which was a discussion we had the day we met....

TM: That's right. I don't believe everything the mushroom says. I don't think you can believe anything anybody says or all that anybody says. My brother was telling me just recently that psilocybin is, I believe he said, the only four hydroxylated indole which occurs in nature. Well, that's very interesting. That single fact right there seems to me to make good grist for an empirical argument that this gene was inserted into Earth's ecology from outside. How else could it be that the only four hydroxylated indole in nature could be associated with this organism? Psilocybin occurs in a number of mushroom species, but they are all fairly closely related. It seems to me the whole problem of extra-terrestrial intelligence has been ill conceived. The scientists have been allowed to make the rules of the game and their rules are very self-limiting. The current, rather primitive, state of molecular biology is already talking about taking control of the genetic code and genetic engineering and that sort of thing. Obviously, once that's done, once a species discovers how to do that, its form is no longer dictated by the evolutionary constraints of its planet of origin; its form is dictated by imagination. If a species wanted to radiate through the galaxy and was searching for contact with other minded species, a good approach would be to create a probe which is more biology than technology. After traveling a given distance, say one astronomical unit or something like that, this probe replicates itself into four and then, as these probes move out from each other at a certain astronomical distance, they replicate again. What you get is an expanding sphere of probes, but the number of probes is increasing as the sphere grows in size. When any one of these probes contacts a world where there is the potential for the evolution of minded beings, a gene is tailor-made or is already in existence in the programming of this bio-mechanical probe, and it inserts that gene into an organism or set of organisms that can be seen to have already occupied their ecological niche, so they are not going to undergo radical evolution. The fungi are in this category. If you want to write a message to someone, the pyramids are six thousand years old and they're wearing away; the only slate you can write on and hope to have your message last over tens of millions of years....

RA: A self-replicating one.

TM: Yes, a von Neumann machine. The DNA will carry a gene along for hundreds of millions of years, unmodified--the morphogenetic field. So then when this psychoactive molecule is taken by a primitive human group, shamanism emerges. Shamanism is about predicting game movement and weather on the functional level. In hunting and gathering groups, this is what the shamans' prognostications consist of, because these are the only future events that matter. Movement of game and weather; this information is being fed into the ecology from the probe--the part of the probe which remained somewhere else in the ecology. I don't know if psilocybin throws open the door to contact with a minded species like that, but it seems to me highly possible. At the level of fifteen milligrams, which is usually five dried grams or so of mushrooms, the phenomenon of an organized entelechy, a voice speaking with greater knowledge than you or your subconscious possess, is very marked. I began this evening by talking about how the Freudian and Jungian maps were inadequate. I was just edging up on this matter. For Freud and Jung a voice in the head was pure psychopathology. I am saying that beyond their model there is the voice in the head which is, simply, the contact with this sophisticated entity. It's non-technological, you know; this is another unsettling thing. It doesn't come in enormous ships at hyperlight speed. No, it radiated through the stars by the slow pressure of radiation. The spore itself is one of the hardest organic materials known and has an electron density close to that of metals. Imagine the mushroom shedding the spores which then, by Brownian motion, percolate to the top of the atmosphere of a planet. As they pass through the outer levels of the atmosphere of a planet, there is a lot of electrostatic charge present, and they pick up what are called global currents, which initiate electron flow over the spherical surface of the spore. These global currents become, perhaps, superconducting; at that point the imperviousness of the spore to radiation is such that it has no trouble surviving the drift between the stars, even if it has to lay dormant for millions of years. And millions of years is an unnecessary amount of time. The earth goes around the galaxy every 275,000 years. There is great percolation of material in the galaxy. I will anticipate a revolution in biology right here by making a prediction which will be obvious to everyone in this room, but which no biologist has ever said: Outer space is only a barrier to species drift, no more a barrier to species drift than oceans are. All of the processes of drift and establishment of new populations on desert islands that we're familiar with in earth-based ecology happen on a galactic scale. The galaxy is an organized bio-system; it's simply that the species which developed the strategies which allow them to drift across the galaxy are either minded and do it as we propose at our current level of civilization to do it, with ships and suspended animation and the whole gamut of science fiction techniques, or biology can carry a species to it another way by creating a spore-bearing organism. Or it may be that once the mushroom was a monkey, but it decided to repackage itself as a mushroom because that was a more viable evolutionary strategy when the galaxy is viewed as the biome that one wishes to populate rather than the surface of a planet. Let's call a halt. Thank you very much.

Original Transcription by: Ralph Abraham ([Ralph's Website](#))

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Earth Trust

October 2nd 1992

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Original Transcription by: [Please enter your name or username here when you start transcribing so we know that it is being/has been worked on by someone]

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Eros and the Eschaton

25 March 1994

Kane Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Description

- [Audio](#)
- [Transcription from DominatorCulture.com](#)
- [Scribd Transcript](#)

So everyone can hear, yes? I can hear anyway. Good. Well I want to thank Mandala books, Jan, I want to thank Jay Weidner for bringing me back to Seattle, the home of real grunge and real peculiarity. Before I plunge into this I should tell you, because Harper would like me to do that, The Invisible Landscape after years and years of being out of print is shipping right now. I don't know if it's in the bookstores but it's real. True Hallucinations is going into paper at the same time so if you couldn't afford the \$22, wait for the \$12 or the 2012.

What I wanted to talk about tonight simply because it's the thing that is moving me to the edge of my chair at the moment is: I called the talk Eros and the Eschaton. What I could have called it is Eros and the Eschaton, What Science Forgot. Somebody asked me recently is there any permission to hope? More specifically, is there any permission for smart people to hope? It's easy to hope if you're stupid. Is there any basis for intelligent people to hope? I wanted to deal with that because I think so. It was to me a shocking question because I live in an aura of hope because I live in a twilight world of my own self-generated, cannabinated fantasy. I forget that not everyone is so fortunate and that there's a lot of despair and uncertainty out there.

So I wanted to talk about this. I'll talk for a while and then we'll break and have an intermission. I'll sign books if anybody needs a book signed. Then we'll come back and do Q&A on this until we're sick of it basically. If there's a technician adjusting this, help me out a little bit.

Eros and the Eschaton – these are the two areas that I think compromise the old paradigm and give permission to hope. Strangely, neither of these words is

that well known, which gives you a measure of how completely the dominator position has squelched, subverted and downplayed any opposition to its worldview. Eros we know about in some kind of devalued, shticky kind of glitzy way because we get it in the eroticization of media and society. Really what Eros means in the Greek sense is a kind of unity of nature, a kind of all-pervasive order that bridges one ontological level to another. This is not permitted in the official worldview of our civilization, which is science. The world of inorganic chemistry is not thought to make any statement about the organic world and the organic world is not thought to be extrapolatable into the world of culture and thought. There are imagined to be clear breaks in these categories.

I had a biologist tell me once, "If genes aren't involved, it ain't evolution." So that means you can't talk about the evolution of the Earth as a physical body. You can't talk about the evolution of human social institutions. Evolution is somehow a word appropriate to biology and appropriate nowhere else. This brings me then to the first factor easily discerned by anybody who has their eyes open that compromises and erodes the hopeless, existential view of the world that we're getting from science. That is the idea that nature is in fact across all scales and all levels of phenomena, a unity. It's not a coincidence that electrons spinning around an atomic nucleus and planets going around a star and star clusters orbiting around the gravitational center of a galaxy; it's no coincidence that these systems exhibit the same kind of order on different scales. Yet, science would say that is a coincidence.

P.W. Bridgeman, who was a philosopher of science, defined a coincidence as what you have left over when you apply a bad theory. It means that you've overlooked something and what jumps out at you as a coincidence is actually a set of relationships whose casuistry and whose relationships to each other are simply hidden from you. What I've observed and I think it's fair to give credit to the psychedelic experience for this - what I've observed is that nature builds on previously established levels of complexity. This is a great general, natural law that your own senses will confirm for you but has never been allowed into the canon of science. What I mean by that nature builds on complexity is the following. When the universe was born in the dubious and controversial circumstance called the Big Bang, it was at first simply a pure plasma of electrons. It was the simplest that it could possibly be. There were no atoms. There were no molecules. There were no highly organized systems of any kind. There was simply a pure plasma of expanding energy.

As the universe cooled, simply cooled, new kinds of phenomena, we say

emerged out of the situation. As the universe cooled, atomic nuclei could form and electrons could settle in to stable orbits. As the universe further cooled, the chemical bond became a possibility. Still later the hydrogen bond...which is a weaker bond, which is the basis of biology. So as the universe aged, it complexified. This is so obvious that it's never really been challenged. But on the other hand, it's never been embraced as a general and dependable principle either. Follow it through with me. Out of atomic systems come chemical systems. Out of chemical systems comes the covalent hydrogen bond, the carbon bond; complex chemistry that is prebiotic, organic. Out of that chemistry come the macro-physical systems that we call membranes, jells, charge transfer complexes, this sort of thing. These systems are the chemical preconditions for life - simple life, the life of the prokaryotes, the life of naked unnuclated DNA that characterized primitive life on the planet.

Out of that life come eukaryotes, nucleated cells and then complex colonies of cells. Then cell specialization – leading to higher animals, to social animals, leading to complex social systems, leading to technologies, leading to globe girdling, electronically based, information transfer oriented cultures like ourselves. Someone once said, 'what's so progressive about media?' 'It's the spreading of darkness at the speed of light.' It can be, it can be. So this is very interesting that apparently the way the universe works is upon a platform of previously achieved complexity; chemical, electrical, social, biological, whatever. New forms of complexity can be built that cross these ontological boundaries. In other words, what I mean by that is that biology is based on complex chemistry but it is more than complex chemistry. Social systems are based on the organization that is animal life and yet it is more than animal life.

So this is a general law of the universe overlooked by science. Out of complexity emerges greater complexity. We could almost say that the universe, nature, is a novelty conserving or complexity conversing engine. It makes complexity and it preserves it and it uses it as the basis for further complexity. Now, there's more to this than simply that. I think we all observationally could agree what has been said so far. The added wrinkle, or an added wrinkle, is that each advancement into complexity, into novelty, precedes more quickly than the stage that preceded it. This is very profound because if accepted as a serious first principle, it ends the marginalization of our own species to the level of spectator status in a universe that knows nothing of us and cares nothing for us. This is the most advanced position that modern science will allow us –

spectators to a drama we didn't write, shouldn't expect to understand and cannot influence. But I say, if in fact novelty is the name of the game, if in fact the conservation and complexification of novelty is what the universe is striving for, then suddenly our own human enterprise, previously marginalized, takes on an immense new importance. We are apparently players in the cosmic drama and in this particular act of the cosmic drama; we hold a very central role.

We are at the pinnacle of the expression of complexification in the animal world and somehow this complexity which is concentrated in us has flowed over out of the domain of animal organization and into this mysterious domain which we call culture, language, consciousness, higher values – each stage of advancement into complexity occurs more quickly than the stage which preceded it. After the initial big bang there was a period of billions of years when the universe cooled, stars condensed, planetary systems formed and then the quickening process crossed an invisible Rubicon into the domain of animal and biological organization.

Well you see since the rise of western monotheism, the human experience has been marginalized. We have been told that we were unimportant in the cosmic drama. But we now know from the feedback that we're getting from the impact of human culture on the earth that we are a major factor shaping the temperatures of the oceans, the composition of the atmosphere, the general speed and complexity of speciation on the planet. A single species, ourselves, has broken from the ordinary constraints of animal nature and created a new world, an epigenetic world, meaning a world not based on gene transfer and chemical propagation and preservation of information but a world based on ideas, on symbols, on technologies, on tools, on ideas downloaded out of the human imagination and concretized into three dimensional space as choppers, aeropoints, particle accelerators, gene sequencers, space craft, what have you.

All of this complexification is occurring at a faster and faster rate. This brings me then to the second quality or phenomena that science has overlooked, which is the acceleration of complexification. The early history of the universe proceeded with excruciating slowness then life took hold in the oceans of this planet. A quickening of process and evolution but still things proceeded on a scale of tens of millions of years to clock major change. Then the conquest of the land, higher animals, higher exposure to radiation, faster change, species following species, one upon another. Then fifty thousand, a hundred thousand, a million years ago – anyway recently – the crossover into the domain of culture, tool making, myth

making, dance, poetry, song and story that set the stage for the fall into history; the incredibly unusual and self-consuming process that has been going on for the past fifteen or twenty thousand years. A biological snap of the finger. Yet in that time everything that we call human, everything that we associate with higher values has been adumbrated, elaborated, created, set in place by one species – ourselves.

This acceleration of time or complexity shows no sign of slowing down. In fact, within the fabric of our own lives, we can almost daily, hourly, by the minute feel it speeding up, taking hold. It's a cliché that time is moving faster and faster, a cliché of the mass media. But I want to suggest that this is not a perceptual illusion or a cultural mirage – that this is actually happening to the space-time matrix and that time is in fact speeding up. That history in which we are embedded because our life of fifty to eighty years is so ephemeral on a scale of ten to fifteen thousand years – but nevertheless history is a state of incredible destabilization.

It's a catastrophe in the process of happening. It begins with animals kept in balance by natural selection and it ends with a global Internet of electronic information transfer and a language using species hurling its instruments towards the stars. There is no reason for us to suppose that this process of acceleration is ever going to slow down or be deflected. It has been a law of nature from the very beginning of nature; this acceleration was built in. What poses a problem to us as thinking individuals is that the speed of involution toward concrescence is now so great that we can feel the tug of it within the confines of our own lives. There has been more change since 1960 than in the previous several thousand years. There has been more change since 1992 than in the previous thousand years. Change is accelerating. Invention, connection, adumbration of ideas, mathematics, algorithms, connectivity of people, social systems – this is all accelerating furiously and under the control of no one; not the Catholic church, the communist party, the IMF – no one is in charge of this process. This is what makes history so interesting. It's a runaway freight train on a dark and stormy night.

This is why I'm not particularly sympathetic to a conspiracy theory because I can't make the leap to faith that would cause you to believe that anyone could get hold of the beast enough to control it. Conspiracies, of course, we have conspiracies up the kazoo but none of them are succeeding. They're all being swept away, compromised, astonished by new information and endlessly

agonized.

So two factors relating to eros: the movement into complexity and the fact that that movement goes ever faster. The second quality, the acceleration of the movement into novelty, leads me to the third point, which is I suppose more controversial. I am frankly willing to admit that my sensitivity to this third point is based on my psychedelic experience. Science is the exploration of the experience of nature without psychedelics. I propose therefore to expand that enterprise and say we need a science beyond science. We need a science that plays with a full deck. The reason the psychedelic experience is so important here is not some namby-pamby notion that it expands consciousness or it makes you more perceptive or something like that.

That is all true but it isn't strongly enough put. A cultural point of view is like a crystal. You have an amorphous cultural medium, which at certain temperatures will form a crystal of cultural convention if you will. Within the geometry of that crystal certain things make sense and certain things are excluded from making sense. Science is a condensed cultural point of view that is a rigid crystal of interlocking assumptions; assumptions such as matter is primary, mind is tertiary, causality works from the past into the future, so forth and so on. What psychedelics do in terms of their impact on the physical brain and organism of human beings is they withdraw cultural programming. They dissolve cultural assumptions. They lift you out of that reassuring crystalline matrix of interlocking truths, which are lies.

Instead, they throw you into the presence of the great 'who knows.' The mystery! The mystery, which has been banished from western thought since the rise of Christianity and the suppression of the mystery religions. Now the model that attracts me to the psychedelic experience is not that it makes you smarter – a kind of simple-minded idea paradoxically. Or the idea that...[Audience Laughter].

You are paying attention, aren't you? Or the idea that it's some kind of magnifying glass into the personal unconscious – your trauma, your childhood memories, your satanic abuse your parents laid on you, so forth and so on. The model which I like is a geometric model and says simply that since the rise of the Greek alphabet, print, linear thinking and science, we have become imprisoned in a causal universe of material connectivity and that this is a cultural myth as much as believing that we are the sons and daughters of the

great father who got out of his canoe at the second waterfall to take a leak. These are just cultural myths.

What is revealed through the psychedelic experience I think is a higher dimensional perspective on reality. I use higher dimensional in the mathematical sense. Literally, you are lifted out of the plane of cultural assumptions and can look down with a kind of godlike understanding that one obtains when one flies in an airplane over a landscape previously only viewed from the ground. In other words, from the vantage point of the psychedelic experience, the cultural landscape is seen more nearly in its correct perspective – seen as historically bounded, spatially and intellectually bounded. Now it's no coincidence that if you analyze biology, what it is: it's a kind of conquest of dimensionality. The earliest forms of life were probably slimes of some sort, stabilized on a clay surface - immobile, unable to perceive light, with no sense of time – merely a fingernail or a toehold in existence. Then if you look at the entire fossil record, what you see is the evolution of senses. Sensory preceptors and organs of locomotion. The preceptors, the eye, the hand, bring into the cognitive field the sense of things at a distance. Then language provides models for these things at a distance. Similarly, fins, legs, so forth...means of locomotion carry us through space.

This is a journey of dimensionality and essentially what animals are that plants are not are life forms mobile in a very conscious way in the spatial dimension. This is why from the point of view of evolutionary biologists animals are somehow more advanced than plants. Well if conquest of dimensionality is the criteria then notice that we again occupy a special and privileged position in nature because we cannot only run with the best of them, see with the best of them but we can remember and anticipate like crazy. Other animals are not doing this. Other animals may imprint past situations of danger or opportunity but they do not analyze experience and extrapolate it towards the hidden domain of the future. Consciousness is the generalized word that we use for this coordination of complex perception to create a world that draws from the past and builds a model of the future and then suspends perceiving organism in this magical moment called the now where the past is coordinated for the purpose of navigating the future. McLuhan called it driving with the rearview mirror and the only thing that's good about it is it's better than driving with no mirror at all.

What this conquest of dimensionality comes to be in the presence of

psychedelics is an anticipation of the future. We can anticipate the future. We know to within microseconds when the sun will rise. We know within a few percentage points where the prime rate will be in six months. Some things we can predict fairly closely, some things with less precision. But the perception of the future is very important to us. When we marry the need to perceive the future with the psychedelic experience, I believe we come up with data that is very, very difficult for science to come to terms with. This is the third item or really the second item on the list – what science forgot. It's what I call the Eschaton. Now Eschaton is a rare word. Until very recently, unheard of outside schools of theology which I understand were a dying enterprise. Eschaton comes from the Greek word eskhatos, which just means the end. The eschaton is the last thing, the final thing.

It's very important to science to eliminate from its thinking any suspicion that this eschaton might exist because if it were to exist, it would impart to reality a purpose, you see. If the eschaton exists then it's like a goal or an attraction point or an energy sync toward which historical process is being moved. Science is incredibly hostile toward the idea of purpose. If you are not involved in the sciences, this may come as somewhat of a surprise to you. If you are a workbench scientist or a theoretician, you know that this is what's called the problem of teleology. It is because modern science defined itself in the 19th century when the reigning philosophy was Deism and Deism was the idea that the universe is a clock made by God. God wound this clock and has walked away from it. The clock will eventually run down. That theological construct was poisonous to evolutionary theory in the 19th century. So they said we must create a theory of reality that does not require a goal, does not require a purpose, everything must be pushed from the past. Nothing must be pulled toward the future.

The problem with this is that it does not fulfill out intuitions about reality. We can see that evolution, biological evolution, has built on chemical systems. We can see that social and historical systems build on biology. As people with open minds or as open as they can be inside this culture, we nevertheless have this intuition of purpose and it is dramatically underscored by the psychedelic experience, which takes the raw material of your life, your culture, your history and tells you this is not an existential mishmash to be lived out with dignity because there's nothing else to be done with it – some kind of Camusian 'why not' affirmation. It says no. It says your reality is a coherent cosmos and

embedded in your own sense of identity, embedded in your own sense of purpose is a microscopic reflection of the larger purpose that is built into the universe. Now this is not just blowing smoke in the sense of 'it's a nice idea' or its like a religious idea like saying Jesus loves you so feel alright about yourself. It isn't like that. It's a theory about reality that has teeth because reality is actually following the script that this particular version of reality dictates. Reality is accelerating towards an unimaginable omega point.

We are the inheritors of immense momentum in our social systems, our philosophical and scientific and technological approaches to the world. Because we're driving the historical vehicle with a rearview mirror, it appears to us that we're headed straight into a brick wall at a thousand miles an hour. It appears that we are destroying the Earth, polluting the atmosphere, wrecking the oceans, dehumanizing ourselves, robbing our children of a future – so forth and so on. I believe what is in fact going on is that we are burning our bridges; one by one we're burning our bridges to the past. We cannot go back to the mushroom dotted plains of Africa or the canopied rainforest of five million years ago. We can't even go back to the era of Cayuse and six-shooters of two hundred years ago. We have burned our bridges. We are preparing for a kind of cultural forward escape and this question – is there cause for optimism? The answer is, it depends on where you placed your bets.

If you placed your bets on male dominated institutions based on consumer fetishism, propaganda, classicism and materialism, then God help you. You should call your broker. If on the other hand, you've recognized that a life boat strategy is involved here, that what is really important is empowering personal experience, backing off from consumer object fetishism, freeing the mind, empowering the imagination – then in that case, I think you can feel pretty good about what is going on.

You know there is a lot of talk about cultural death and disenfranchisement and it's usually couched in terms of some happy naked people in the rainforest or in Tajikistan making their rugs or milking their camels or something - and isn't it too bad that their culture is being blown up and traded in for mall culture and shopping by remote? But in fact all cultural is being destroyed. All culture is being sold down the river by the sorts of people who want to turn the entire planet into an international airport arrival concourse. That's not the victory of somebody's culture over somebody else's culture. Nobody ever had a culture like that, the victory of schlockmeisterism and crapola over good taste and good

sense.

If I were dependent on the notion that human institutions are necessary to pull us out of the ditch, I would be very despairing. As I said, nobody is in charge. Not the IMF, the pope, the communist party, the Jews – no, no no! Nobody has their finger on what's going on. So then why hope? Isn't it just a runaway train out of control? I don't think so. I think the 'out of controlness' is the most hopeful thing about it. After all, whose control is it out of? You and I never controlled it in the first place. Why are we anxious about the fact that it's out of control? I think if it's out of control then our side is winning.

To me, the most confounding datum of the psychedelic experience is this thing, which I call the eschaton and I want to talk about it a little bit this evening because I think it is the hardest thing for people to grasp about my particular rap. Sometimes I've talked to many of you about psychedelic plants, shamanism, techniques, chemistry, approaches, so forth and so on – I'm approaching this evening as a graduate seminar. I figure everybody has their little mojo kit and their particular way of approaching these things and then the question is, what kind of conclusions can we draw? The conclusion that I draw is – and this is sort of pulling together what I said before – we are central to the human drama and to the drama of nature and process on this planet. The opposition, which is science... Well first let me say this. Every model of the universe has a hard swallow. What I mean by a hard swallow is a place where the argument cannot hide the fact that there's something slightly fishy about it.

The hard swallow built into science is this business about the Big Bang. Now let's give this a little attention here. This is the notion that the universe, for no reason, sprang from nothing in a single instant. Well, now before we dissect this, notice that this is the limit test for credulity. Whether you believe this or not, notice that it is not possible to conceive of something more unlikely or less likely to be believed. I defy anyone. It's just the limit case for unlikelihood that the universe would spring from nothing in a single instant for no reason. If you believe that, my family has a bridge across the Hudson River that we'll give you a lease option for five dollars. It makes no sense. It is in fact no different from saying 'and God said let there be light.' What these philosophers of science are saying is give us one free miracle and we will roll from that point forward from the birth of time to the crack of doom. Just one free miracle and then it will all unravel according to natural law and these bizarre equations that nobody can understand but which are so holy in this enterprise.

Well I say then, if science gets one free miracle then everybody gets one free miracle. I perceive that it is true when you build these large scale cosmogonic theories that you have to have kind of an umbilical cord to start from that is different from all other points in the system. So if we have to have a singularity in our modeling of what reality is, let's make it as modest and as non-unlikely a singularity as possible. The singularity that arises for no reason in absolutely empty space instantly is the least likely of all singularities. Doesn't it seem more likely if we have to have a singularity that it occurs in a domain with a rich history with many causal streams feeding into the situation that nurtures the complexity. In other words, to put it simply – if you have to have a singularity, doesn't it make more sense to put it at the end of a cosmogonic process than at the beginning?

I think this is the great breakthrough of psychedelics and shamanism is that science got it absolutely wrong. The universe didn't begin in a singularity. Who knows how the universe began or even presumes to judge – but the universe ends in a singularity. It has been growing more singular, more complex, more unique, more novel every passing moment since it burst into existence. If that's true then we represent a kind of concrescence of universal intent. We're not mere spectators or a cosmic accident or some sideshow or the Greek chorus to the main event. The human experience is the main event. The coordination of perception, of hope, of dream, of vision that occurs inside the human heart/mind/body interface is the most complex phenomenon in the universe. Now even the physicalists acknowledge that the human neo-cortex represents the most densely ramified matter known to exist in the biological world.

You don't have to be rocket scientist to see that human society, human history, human art, human literature, represent things for which there is no analog in the world of wasps, groundhogs, killer whales and so forth and so on. In our species, complexity has turned inward upon itself and in our species. Time has accelerated. Time has left the gentle ebb and flow of gene transfer and adaptation that characterizes biological evolution and instead historical time is generated. So I believe that science and its reluctance to deal with the psychedelic experience and the way in which science has used the law to suppress its rival in this case arises out of a profound discomfort on the part of science about this future state of complexification that is clearly the grail, the dwell point, the end point of the human historical process. Not one of us I think can imagine that history could go on for another thousand years. I mean what

would it look like? At the current rate of population growth, spread of epidemic disease, rate of invention, connectivity, depletion of resources, the atmosphere – it is impossible to conceive of another thousand years of human history.

History then is ending. History is a kind of gestation process. It's a kind of metamorphosis. It's an episode in the life of a species. If you think of the simple example of metamorphosis, that of caterpillar to butterfly, we all know that there is this intermediate resting stage where the caterpillar is for all practical purposes enzymatically dissolved and then reconstituted and an entirely different kind of organism with different physical structures, different eyes, different legs, a different way of breathing, with wings where no wings were before, with a different kind of feeding apparatus. This is what's happening to us. History is a process of metamorphosis. It's a pubescent stage. It begins with naked monkeys and it ends with a human/machine planet-girdling interface capable of releasing the energies that light the stars and it lasts about 15,000 or 20,000 years and during that period, the entire process hangs in the balance.

It's a period of high risk. It's like what a butterfly is doing in the cocoon or what is happening to a child in the womb. It's a gestation process where one form of life is being changed into another. Well, this would all happen naturally and with a great deal of anxiety I imagine as history builds to it's ever more climatic and horrifying crescendo and we would all be ignorant or very baffled about what's going on were it not for the institution of psychedelic shamanism. Remember I said that what is dissolved are the crystalline structures of cultural assumption. Well one of the strongest symmetries in our cultural crystal is the symmetry that gathers around the concept of past and future. The shaman actually rises into a domain where past and future are different areas on the same topological manifold. This is not a metaphor. It's what's really going on. If you think about shamanism in its classical guise for a moment – it is about predicting weather, predicting game movement and curing disease.

If you had a prescient or extraordinary understanding of the future, each one of us would be able to do these things. Predicting the weather, you just look into next week and there it is. Predicting the movement of game, same deal. Curing the sick actually involves very judicious choice of your patients with a pre-knowledge of who will get well and who will not get well. So it's as though the members of the culture are imprisoned in linear time and the shaman is not. And why not? Because the shaman has perturbed the brain states sanctioned by the culture, sanctioned by its educational processes, its habits, its attitudes

and into that vacuum created by the perturbation by these cultural values rushes the raw unanalyzed datum of reality. This is what Aldus Huxley called removing the reducing valve of consciousness. Suddenly culture is seen to be a relative phenomena; the stockbroker no different from the rainforest shaman, each somewhat similar to the Trobriand islander or the Eskimo.

Culture is simply clothing upon the human experience but the human organism outside the confines of culture in a direct relationship to nature transcends time and space. This was a fact, I believe, that was known in pre-history and in fact was the source of Paleolithic values which were not material, not linear, not surplus oriented, not class oriented, not power oriented but rather oriented towards a kind of egalitarian partnership in an environment of great material simplicity. Human beings lived like that for probably a half a million years with poetry, with dance, with mathematics, with magic, with story, with humor but not with the paralyzing and toxic artifacts of the late evolving, machine worshipping, monotheistic, linear, phonetic alphabet, tight ass straight culture that we are a part of.

So now at a kind of moment of great cultural challenge and dynamic for western civilization which has for a thousand years called all the shots and shoved itself down everybody's throat whether they liked it or not, in the last hundred years, through the science of anthropology, ethnography, ethnomedicine and botany, the news has arrived that these "primitive" people are in fact master technicians of journeying into a world of the neurological imagination. A world we didn't even know exists. A world that is as distant to us as the world at the heart of the atom is from the rainforest fisherman. Because our own cultural values seem a little shoddy at this moment, those on the fringes of western civilization have begun to seek alternatives, begun to look at alternative religions, yoga, Tantra, Buddhism, Zen, whatever. Alternative approaches to diet – vegetarianism, macrobiotic, so forth and so on, and alternative approaches to authentic experience – which means psychedelics.

In the early stage of psychedelic involvement, everyone was sort of flying under the banner of hands on Freudianism or hands on Jungianism. 'We're going to see those archetypes, we're going confront those sexual repressions, we're going to journey into those traumatic childhood memories.' Now it's understood I think that those metaphors were fairly inadequate and that actually we stand on the brink of an unexplored landscape of planetary size. The world of the high Paleolithic, which is a Gaian world – a world of feeling, not analytical,

intellectual constructs but a world of empowered feeling, empathy and intuitive understanding. An understanding that doesn't arrive in a context of Greek logic but in a context of animal knowing in the authentic mode of the body.

So just to bring it all around here. The great exhibit, which we must always keep in front of ourselves and our critics, is the mystery of the human mind and body. No one knows how it is that I can command my hand to make a fist and that it will do that. That's mind over matter. That's the violation of every scientific principle in the books and yet it is the most trivial experience that any of us have. We expect to command our body. We expect the mental will to order the monkey flesh into action and it will follow. The body is the nexus of the mystery of life and our culture takes us out of the body and sells our loyalty into political systems, into religions, into inanimate objects and machines, collections, so forth and so on.

The felt experience of the body is what the psychedelics are handing back to us. That's why it's called escape because it's escape from HBO, from walking the mall, from seeing what's on the tube, from consuming trash media. It's escape from all of that into the authenticity of the body. This is why sexuality is so edgy in this society. They'd make it illegal if they could but figure out how. It's the one drug that they can't tear from our grip, so they lay a guilt trip about it.

But sexuality and psychedelics, by carrying us back to an authentic sense of the body, carry us back to the domain of authentic values. More and more, the message that people are getting as they avail themselves of the psychedelic experience is that it is not a journey into the human unconsciousness or into the ghost bardos of our chaotic civilization. It's a journey into the presence of the Gaian mind. That the earth is a coherent whole. It is a thinking, feeling, intending being that in terms of our value structures, it would be foolish to image as anything other than female. When cultural values, created by male dominance, science and linearity and so forth and so on; when those values are dissolved, what is waiting there is this incredibly poignant experience of matrix – what James Joyce called the mama matrix most mysterious – nothing more than our bodies and the earth out of which our bodies came.

History as we have lived it in the west has been a turning of our back on that. Now history has failed. Western cultural institutions having become global cultural institutions now show themselves to be inadequate to inspire, lead or carry anyone into a future worth living in. At this moment then, this reconnecting

to the Gaian mind becomes a kind of moral imperative. So this whole drug issue is not an issue even about criminal syndicates or about untaxed billions or about the mental health of our youth or any of that malarkey. I mean my God, the most destructive known to the species are pedaled on every street corner without restriction.

The real issue is what kind of mental worlds shall people inhabit. What kinds of hope shall be permitted? What kind of value systems shall be allowed? The value systems that aggrandize the possessions of things, the tearing up of the Earth, competition, classism, racism, sexism, have led us to the brink of catastrophe. Now I think we have to abandon western cultural values and return to the deeper wisdom of the body in connection with the plants. That's the seamless web that leads us back into the heart of nature. If we can do this, then this very narrow neck of cultural crisis can be navigated.

Very little of the past can be saved. The architectonics, the machines, the systems of monetary exchange and propaganda, the silly religions, the asinine aesthetic canons, very little of that can be saved. What can be saved is the sense of love and caring and mutuality that we all put into and take from the human enterprise. You know there's a grateful dead song that says, 'you can't go back and you can't stand still, if the thunder don't get you, then the lightning will.' We now hold through the possession of these psychedelics, catalysts for the human imagination of sufficient power that if we use them, we can deconstruct the lethal vehicle that is carrying us toward the brink of apocalypse. We can deconstruct that vehicle and redesign it into a kind of starship that would carry us and our children out into the broad starry galaxy we know to be awaiting us. But it's a cultural test. Nature is pitiless. Intelligence is a grand experience upon which a great deal has been risked. But if it proves inadequate, nature will cover it over with the same kind of cool impunity that she covered over the dinosaurs, the trilobites and the crossopterygian fishes and all those other folks that came before.

So what we must do I think is see our future in the imagination, catalyze the imagination, form symbiotic relationships with the plants, affirm archaic values and spread the good news that what is out of control, what is in fact dying, is a world that had become too top heavy with its own hubris, too bent by its own false value systems and too dehumanized to care about what happened to its own children. So I say good riddance to it. Bring on the archaic revival and lets create a new world. And that's it!

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Esalen In-House Get-Together

4 August 1998

Esalen, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Esalen In-House Get-Together Day 2

6 August 1998

Esalen, CA

Description

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Esalen Scholar In Residence

June 1989

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

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Ethnobotany and Shamanism: Psychedelics Before and After History

Day Month 1988

California Institute of Integral Studies

Description

- [Video Link](#)
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The, uh, title of the, uh, weekend that I'll be giving here at CIIS is 'Ethnobotany and Shamanism: Psychedelics Before and After History'. This is the third year that I've lectured at CIIS. A course which, uh, the core content is a survey of the psychedelic plants of planet Earth and the cultures that have used them, and then discussion of their chemistry, uh, geographical distribution, uh history of usage, impact on the growth of ideas and historical institutions, and so forth. It's basically an effort to pack a psychobotany course into a weekend. And it is always preceded by this Friday night lecture in which I intend to give, uh, an overview and a sort of state-of-the-art report on psychobotany and why anyone should, uh, place any importance upon it. So I sort of think of this lecture as uh the philosophical implications of psychobotany: past, present, and future. So that is the theme that will guide the, uh, lecture this evening.

For me personally, it has been an experience of, uh, never being able to really anticipate the direction in which this line of thought would develop. It seems to have a life of its own, uh, a richness of its own, uh, that is not predictable by the conscious mind. A few--uh, about three years ago, I began trying to, uh, think about feminism and what role it had, if any, to psychedelics and the role they had played in shaping culture. And, uh-- It, it seemed at the time... to my critics, and to some degree, to me, that it was almost a kind of opportunism. S- It's such a safe issue to clothe yourself in, that, uh, no matter what you're doing, if you can make it part of the feminist agenda, you, you somehow have become inviolate. It now seems to me that, um, this thread in thinking about the sh- impact of shamanic, and specifically, visionary shamanism's impact on culture, it has grown in my own mind, uh, more and more important. The rise of the consciousness of Gaia, which is the notion of the planet as, at le-, at the very least, a self-regulating system, and, uh, possibly, at the other end of the scale, as actually a kind of conscious entelechy--a kind of super-being or oversoul that, by the control of planktonic, uh, uh... populations on the surface of the sea, can regulate rainfall and thus control the density of vegetation on the continents, and thereby regulate the composition of the atmosphere; and by a series of interlocking, interwoven feedback loops, actually create a kind of biological or organic homeostasis, which is the precondition for the evolution of, uh, advanced organisms. And this idea of Gaia, uh- or of perceiving the Earth as a living organism, has been, uh, I think the intellectual or philosophical centerpiece of what feminism, uh, has done with its agenda in the last, uh, 15 years or so. But this enthusiasm for the goddess, this enthusiasm for the seamless web of life, has not yet clarified itself as a philosophical intention sufficiently to draw certain obvious conclusions about the relationship that it should have to shamanism, number one, and most specifically to psychedelic

shamanism.

Now, why? What is the connection there? Well, a- what I would like to suggest is that the condition of cultural neurosis, in which we as moderns reside, might operationally be described as, uh, ego-inflation; and that specifically it is the masculine ego that is inflated. Now, the cause for this has been sought by various different commentators on culture, but none of them have suggested that the, uh, tumorous growth of the masculine ego as a cultural and individual institution [laughter], uh, is specifically due to the absence of, uh, the dissolving agency of psychoactive ecstasy induced by plants.

[laughter]

Do you - Do you see where I'm going with this?

[laughter]

So that, in fact, the modern enthusiasm for shamanism and, secondarily or in a connected mode, with psychedelics, is actually an intuitive feeling-back-toward this state of non-neurotic empathy that characterized archaic time. And that is what has specifically been lost by the descent into the historical process. And this notion: that there is... that something was lost which is tangible, then allows us to set a radical reconstructive agenda for society. Because, if what was lost was tangible rather than, say, the good will of God Almighty, which is not something tangible--and that's the culture myth, that we lost the good will of God Almighty--so we had to leave Eden and descend into toil. Uh. But notice that if we take the story of Eden more seriously, more literally, what we're dealing with is a, uh, struggle over use and abuse of available, uh, psychoactive compounds in the endemic environment. And that, in fact, the challenge to Yahweh was the challenge of the woman who sought to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, to have the knowledge of good or evil, which would place the- the man and the woman on an equal footing with God. And this aspiration to gnosis, this desire to transcend the ordinary and penetrate into the realm of existential truth, was enough to get them canned out of Eden.

Now, I want to cast further back into time and sort of lay the groundwork for this case about the, uh, the male ego. But before I do that, I want to ask you to, uh, review in your mind for a moment certain curious facts about the religions of Western culture--the tradition of monotheism as its practiced in the West. First of all, this is the only--and any student of myth who wishes to correct me is welcome to do so--this is the only theogamy, the only god-system that I know of in which, uh, the head honcho has nothing, absolutely nothing to do with women--does not have a mother, [laughter] does not have a consort, does not have a daughter. It's a locker room religion from the get-go.

[laughter]

Now, it was ,uh, the, uh, insight of Carl Jung and his school, uh, to understand that myths are narcissistic reflections of our own aspirations as individuals and societies. And when you look at the monotheistic hypothetization of God, with omnipotence, omniscience, all power, all moral suasion--everything is held in the hands of the father god, who is characterized by wrath and an obsession with, uh, punishment and with the carrying out of, uh, what are essentially punishments related to taboos--in other words, sins which are not clearly sins for any reason other than that they are forbidden. And this model of God became the model for the personalities, the atomic personalities, that were creating the civilizations that worshiped in this fashion. In other words, that became a way to be: omniscient, omnipresent, brooking no opposition, swift to punish, stern in all demands; so forth and so on. And this shift--and it was a shift--because the pre-pottery neolithic level in the Middle East seems very clearly and generally to be a goddess culture, a religion based on, uh, on pastoralism and to ga- a large amount of gathering integrated into hunting. That goddess-oriented, wandering, pastoral religion gave way to the fixed-settlement, neolithic, male-dominated model that, in its many adumbrations, has persisted into the present moment.

Well, as I said, I believe the reasons for this lie further in the past, in the moments of human emergence that occurred 15-, 20,000 years before the appearance of the goddess cultures in the ancient Near East. It-- The, the critical moment, I believe, uh, occurred in Africa during the process of the desertification of the African continent. The previously arboreal pack-hunting p-, er, arboreal primates descended onto the grasslands, which was an environment of increased nutritional pressure. And there, bipedalism, binocular vision, the opposable thumb--which had probably existed earlier--all these things were channeled into creating a highly efficient, omnivorous, pack-hunting creature. And the the key word here is 'omnivorous'. One of the great and unexplained lacunas in modern evolutionary theory is that evolutionary primatologists have not made any attempt to discuss the impact on human evolution of changes in diet, which were, uh, uh, swift and unusual in this evolving grasslands situation.

Let me explain what I mean: uh, most animals have a very selective and restricted diet; so consequently, whatever the chemical composition of that diet, over millions of years of exposure, the animal forms, uh, a relationship of [it-] of adaptability to whatever its food source is. When a animal population becomes omnivorous under, uh, pressure on the availability of nutrition, suddenly the animal begins to test for possible food sources in the environment. Well, this testing for food sources in the environment introduces a vast number of mutagenic compounds into the body- into the bodies of these animals. Not only psychoactive compounds but, uh, depressants, stimulants, things which interfere with RNA transcription, things which, uh, enhance or suppress the immune system, things which retard or clarify vision, things which suppress appetite, things which, uh, interfere with the estrus cycle. Uh- remind yourself for a moment that Ortho-Novum and the birth control pills, are, uh, all derived--the, the compounds in those pills are derived from *Dioscorea* plants grown on hu-, in huge plantations in Mexico--uh, a kind of tropical yam. Well, yams in the tropics are now and always have been a major food source for foraging primates. And yet some varieties of yams contain so much of these, uh, uh, hormone-like substances that they send the reproductive cycle and ovulation and all these things just into a tizzy.

Well, you can imagine the impact, the evolutionary speed-up that this decision to go omnivorous would have on these, uh, evolving primates. And I maintain that, uh, the prolongation of infantile traits in human beings, some of which persist throughout our entire lives, such as our, uh,--that too. I was--

[laughter]

[laughing] -I was thinking of, uh, our our relative hairlessness and stuff like that, but--

[laughter]

-you're right. It's a puzzle. Every generation thinks that the generation which, uh, uh- f-, which it spawns is more infantile yet than it was. And somebody wrote me a letter recently suggesting that this was a good thing, and it would end with us simply skipping the 'life-in-3D' phase. And you would just go from fetus to chip and skip over, uh, this whole messy three-dimensional, cultural phase. Um. But I digress.

Original Transcription by: Mark Speckman

Review 1 by: wjaynay

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Ethnobotany of Shamanism Workshop

5-6 November 1988

California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Note: The talk available on the Psychedelic Salon and in the TMK audio archive torrents was mislabeled and out of order – I have restored the transcript of the talk to its order as presented in November of 1988.

Because this is a small group and probably self-selected for high interest in these subjects, as much as possible you should direct me toward whatever your special concerns are so that for each person, whatever their slant, there is a reasonable payback in information. There may be areas where I am disappointing or unhelpful but usually then I can point you toward somebody else or some source.

The first thing this afternoon is that I'll bring in some books to show you, ten or fifteen source books that would help you in researching any aspect of this, whether you are interested in it academically, or for personal spiritual growth, or whatever. It's very important to be informed. This is an area where it's very hard to bluff it, because on one level it's a branch of medical science. What we're talking about is folk pharmacology, and you really should understand certain things about pharmacology, certain things about physiology, because your life may come to depend on it in some situations. It's not casual; you want to be able to assess risk and make intelligent choices.

I'll say just a little bit about my own interest in all this, or how I got into it. I don't know, I mean one creates a false history when you look back into time to try to explain how you got to where you are, or at least I do. Trying now to understand how I came to be involved in the psychedelic experience, it seems to me that what it really requires is a love of the peculiar, of the weird, the bizarre, the outré, the freaky and unimaginable. I don't give great credence to astrology, but I am a double Scorpio, so I'm told that this kind of thing predisposes one for 12th house activity.

Several times in my life I've gone through these kinds of revelations where everything seemed to change so profoundly that I could hardly recognize who I had been before. I noticed this happening the first time around the time I was 7 or 8. Nature and the imagination seemed to be the precursors to involvement in the psychedelic experience, so I was a rock hound, a butterfly collector, a rocket builder, a connoisseur of explosives and all of this sort of thing. While my peers were off playing little league baseball I was back in the hills digging out trilobites and tracking down moths and stuff like that. Then science fiction was a tremendous stimulus to my imagination, because it seemed to say that anything you can imagine is fair game, anything that you can conceive of can be treated as a reality. I was also raised in a Catholic household, so my whole thing was to build cynical resistance to the spirit. I was an atheist, a Marxist, an existentialist, a rational materialist — a pain in the neck, basically.

In all of that, somehow I began reading Aldous Huxley, the social novels: *Antic Hay*, *Chrome Yellow*, these comedies of manners of British academic society. I was 12 or something, but I always drove myself to read beyond my level. This led me to *The Doors of Perception*. I had read *Brave New World*, which is an anti-drug dystopia, a nightmarish world of plastic never-grow-old people who take tranquilizers every time there's a hint of any deep emotion or any kind of anxiety. The motto was, "A gram is better than a damn!" and you could just for a quarter, anywhere, get one of these pills that just put you right back into being happy and cooperative. And so Huxley, who was a very concerned person, very interested in the fate of 20th century society, went from this dystopic vision of drugs to *The Doors of Perception* and Heaven and Hell in which he describes experiments with mescaline that totally turned him around and convinced him that these medieval mystics that he was so fond of, Meister Eckhart, William Blake and San Juan de la Cruz and so forth, were actually describing the same reality that he was getting into.

So I wanted to pursue this, and this was 1962 or something, I was about 14 years old. Then a few months later there were stories in the newspaper that morning glories were being abused for their psychedelic effect. There was a bindweed that grew locally, so I went tearing out and gathered half a peanut butter jar of this wild morning glory and took it home and ground it up and took it. Of course, nothing happened, but in the hour before it failed to come on I sat quietly and fearfully and examined my mind from that point of view for the first time in my life. In other words, from the point of view of watching it to see if it was changing in some unpredictable way. Actually, though the morning glories were totally inactive, in that hour of watching I did observe some interesting false positives that would come and go for a few minutes.

Then a few months later I got my data a little more together and learned that it was a certain species of morning glory and that you had to buy the seeds from a seed company. Then I discovered what it was, though not the full-blown psychedelic experience. By this time I was in southern California going to school, and a friend of mine and I would go out into the Mojave desert and grind up low doses of these morning glory seeds, because we didn't know what a dose was, really, or what actually was supposed to happen, because if you read Huxley it's pretty high-flown language, it's all about radance and significance and existential validity flooding into the rose. Well, once you're looking at a rose and posing the question, "Is existential validity flooding into it?" you don't have anything to measure it about. We would go out into the Mojave and take these morning glory seeds and observe shifts in the apparent significance of things. Everything would appear somehow more pregnant with potential meaning. Then, in fact, if you would close your eyes in that situation there would be the beginnings of hypnagogia: drifting lights and undulating colored patterns, grids and laceworks, all these things which are the preconditions for the psychedelic experience.

It wasn't long after that that I went to Berkeley in the fall of 1965, and LSD was available a few months later, DMT was available. I was just stunned and have never lost that sense of profound astonishment that such things could exist. I mean, DMT seems to argue — convincingly, I might add — that the world is made entirely of something that for want of a better word we would have to call "magic." Things are not what they appear, not *at all* what they appear. What we call reality is some kind of utterly provisional construct that if leaned upon too hard can just fly to pieces before your startled eyes. Then the question is, "What are the implications of this? What lies behind it?" So I, as most people do, looked to tradition for some kind of guidance about what this was, and read Jung and read Mircea Eliade and saw parallels, but not a clear congruency.

What I saw in the iconography of Tibetan Buddhism seemed to me to bear certain kinds of parallels to the hallucinations that I had by that time glimpsed in LSD states. So I studied the Tibetan language, went to Asia, and learned that the iconography of Tibetan Buddhism is a rip from the pre-Buddhist shamanism of Tibet, which has been there since the Stone Age. Buddhism only entered Tibet in the 7th century with Padmasambhava, and all the iconography was taken from the autochthonous indigenous shamanism that was there. I didn't find in these yogis and lamas what I was looking for, which was direct experience of these realities. Tibetan Mayahana seemed tremendously sophisticated in its analysis of states of mind, but operationally it was not coming anywhere close to what these psychedelics were able to deliver. Because I was fortunate enough to have wise and well read friends, I knew that this tradition was alive in the Amazon. I went from Nepal to India throughout Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, ostensibly making my living as a professional butterfly collector but also using that as an excuse to go to these extremely rural and tribal situations and observe what was going on. I concluded that it was far in the past, or far removed, that it was something that had retreated to the status of a myth in most cultures.

Then in late 1970 I went to the Amazon and very quickly, through using mushrooms and through using ayahuasca, learned that there it is accessed, the traditions are alive and the attitudes were simpatico with my own. There were no lineages, you didn't have to pledge eternal fealty to some character. They were exploratory in their approach, they were open-minded, everybody admitted that nobody knew what was going on with it. Yes, they could cure, yes, they could balance their societies and act as paradigms of behavior to other members of their tribe, but what these shamans really liked to do was get together and puzzle over what the hell it is, and how can it be? They were like scientists, they were like explorers, they didn't have a myth that encompassed it. They were technicians of myth which they presented back to their societies, and this is something that is very important to realize about shamanism as it is being packaged and sold in this society.

A shaman is primarily a theatrical entertainer. They are not putting on the show for themselves, but in this society people actually become actors on their own stage. I maintain from spending time with them that the shamans do not believe in the powers of magic words, crystals, healing darts, and so forth and so on. They manipulate these things the way a stage magician manipulates rabbits, hats, saws and boxes with women inside them. They understand what it's for and how it works, and these things are manipulated to create an effect on other people, but the shamans understand that the real magic is the magic of sign, symbol, and language, and that by manipulating cueing, by manipulating expectation you can lead people to a fundamental confrontation, not only with themselves but with the Other.

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It is no easier for an Amazonian Indian to come to terms with these things than it is for a native of Manhattan. Ultimately, this coming to confront the Other is coming to confront the mystery of being. Not as a phrase, "mystery of being," I mean we all give lip service to that — the mystery of being is everywhere, it's in the trees, the stones, the elevators, the life of the city, the life of the country, everything is radiant with the mystery of being — this is some kind of gloss. What I'm talking about is the mystery of being as existential fact: that there is something that haunts this

world, that can take apart and reduce every single one of us to a mixture of terror and ecstasy, fear and trembling. It is not an idea, that's the primary thing to bear in mind, it is an experience.

As we went around this morning a surprising number of people spoke to it as an experience. This is what makes the great distinction between the shamanic, pragmatic approach and what I called last night the political ideologue approach: that we are not working here from theory, our theories are the weakest part of what we say. What we are working from is the fact of an experience which we need to make sense of. Now, most of these Other-oriented experiences, which are hard to keep track of or make sense of, cannot be commanded freely. They are more in the realm of: you are traveling in a foreign country and you contract a terrific fever and you fall into a vision and you have deep awareness and realization about the nature of life. This is not an experience that can ever be repeated, or you're alone in a wilderness and you confront a flying object in the sky which seems to trigger strange bursts of thought in yourself; this cannot be repeated and triggered on command. So only in the context of the psychedelic experience and the willed decision to act can you enter this arena of repeatedly going to meet the experience of the Other. It is a very, very bizarre enterprise. It is not that if we do it enough times, we will understand it, or become comfortable with it. It is not in its nature to be understood, and it is not in its nature to accommodate itself to us. Rather it's that we have discovered another dimension, almost

in the same way that Europeans discovered another world only 500 years ago.

In 1992 we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. Now, notice that when Columbus set out from Spain there was a large body of intelligent opinion which believed that he was sailing over the edge of the world. Literally, that he was sailing out of mind. Instead, what lay at the end of that voyage was real estate, immense amounts of real estate, and we have come to terms with that and in fact now inhabit what 500 years ago was not even on the maps. It was in the unconscious; now it is the center of the global economy. In the same way that these European navigators began to have this intimation that the world was a wrap-around — that's what it means to say that the world is round. It means that you can get back to where you started from by going away continuously — in the same way, I think we are on the brink of discovering that you can start in three-dimensional space and time, move off in a linguistic vehicle, and find your way back to the place you left from. This means that what we call three-dimensional space and what we call the imagination actually have a contiguous and continuous transformation from one into the other, and this is big news. This is entirely goes against our Cartesian expectation of thoughts inside, world outside, objects outside, perceptions inside. This is actually nothing more, this inside-outside thing, than an artifact of European languages, and yet

we take it to be how God made the world, basically, because we are so embedded in our language that we literally cannot cognize reality without it.

We cannot cognize reality without our language, but in the psychedelic state somehow this happens. Somehow syntax is replaced by hypersyntax, linguistically-moderated and modulated perception is replaced by perception in the raw; not coded and sculpted and sifted for culturally validated meaning, but rather just the full hit. This is tremendously disorienting, but it is also tremendously liberating, because that's the full deck. That's when you have full command of the options available within the matrix. If you play the cultural game it's like playing only with clubs, or

playing only with the red marked cards. You have to play with a full deck, and that includes this prelinguistic surround in which we are embedded.

Why is it so emotionally charged for us? In other words, why can the shamans go into this dimension and heal or divine, see into the future, or, in a sense, see into the past by discovering who stole whose cow, or who is sleeping with who, all these things that shamans are concerned with? What is this ground of being that we discover by dissolving the cultural machinery of cognition? I think it is simply reality unpackaged for a historical epoch. In other words, reality uncompromised by the need to be culturally efficacious and useful. This is precisely what we need to throw light on our culture crisis, because the models that we have used to sanction information that is culturally useful have given us information which is toxic. We have actually created a toxic relationship between ourselves and nature. We have pursued avenues of questioning, the feedback

from which has given us an overpopulated, polluted, ideology-obsessed, unresponsive planet.

One of the things that's so striking about shamanism in the native context is the absence of mental illness, the absence of serious neurotic patterns of behavior. This is because this translinguistic reality is allowed to work its will through shamanism, is allowed to regulate the society. In other words, our model of how society works is that we are at war with nature and we must push it back, seize a beachhead, fortify our position, dig in — these kinds of metaphors, metaphors of capture and control — while the shamanic approach is that we must communicate with nature in order that nature can communicate with us, in order that we may know what should be done. Shamanism as classically practiced is hunting magic, weather magic, healing magic. In other words, ways of getting into the evolving of state-bound system-patterns within nature. Weather, we would presume, can to some degree be predicted by looking at past weather states. Hunting can to some degree be predicted by looking at the migration and movement of game in past situations. So shamanism then becomes a kind of mnemonic exercise, where by keeping track of what has happened you can build up a model of what will happen. Originally this was done through great mnemonic feats of memory, like the Yugoslavian folktales singers or the Homeric epics or the people who sang the Edda. These were works of hundreds of thousands of lines that were

passed down virtually without change over millennia.

There's a strange phenomenon, at least in the evolution of cultures and perhaps more generally, which is that every step into freedom contains within it the potential for greater bondage. Here's an example of what I mean by that: women in charge of the gathering phase in hunting-gathering cultures developed language, I believe, because they had great need of the ability to make fine distinctions. In other words, here you have 50 grasses, small herbs, shrubs, roots, fruits, berries, seeds, inflorescences. Some of these things are poisonous, some of these things are foods, some grow in the spring, some in the fall, some along the river courses, some on the hillsides, so forth and so on. A great many descriptive dimensions come to bear on this, so consequently I think that women are to be held responsible for the evolution of language, in order to discuss the extremely important matter of what is good to eat and what is not, where do you find it, how do you preserve it, what do you combine it with and so forth and so on. Men, on the other hand, who were in charge of the hunting — because of the different body type and bladder

capacity and so on — the premium there was placed on silence, stoicism, being able to stalk and for days make no noise, possibly, and to just sort of integrate into this silent kind of thing.

This same kind of freedom which binds occurred in the shamanic effort to steer culture by mnemonic means, because eventually even the greatest of the shamanic memory artists were overwhelmed by the amount of data, by the size of the epics, by the sheer length of these genealogies, so then symbolic notation is brought in. Shamanism turns into scribecraft, signifying magical forces turns into writing down their names, and there is a tremendous binding, a compression, a limitation of freedom because the strategy of freedom became too successful. This reaching beyond ourselves is a process that is continuous. We transcend a state, we then lock ourselves into the transcendent state, it becomes defined by its own set of limitations and we move beyond it. This kind of bootstrapping mechanism has been at work throughout the evolution of

language, throughout the evolution of shamanism.

Now we have come to a similar kind of bind having to do with the bankruptcy of analytical analysis and rationalism, which has lead us to a pretty complete mastery of inert matter, but when pushed into the quantum realm, suddenly contradictions begin to multiply and impossible conclusions force themselves upon the investigator. What this means is that rationalism has simply reached its limit. There is no reason to think that it doesn't have a limit. It was just the inflated fantasy of the 17th century that thought that God's mind must work like the mind of a

watchmaker. In fact, what with chaos theory and catastrophe theory and numerous other non-equilibrium partial differential processes in nature, we now know that nature is extremely unpredictable, highly variable, not subject to analytical understanding except in very limited domains.

This understanding that quantum physics has brought the physicists and that the psychedelic state has brought the people who pursue that has not fed back into the mainstream of society. We're still living in a male-dominated, object-dominated, subject-other kind of world model, a world model inherited from the 18th century even more than from the 19th century. Well, is it going to kill us? Is it too late? What can we do about it? This is what I talked about last night, about the archaic revival as the notion of making a sharp left turn away from the momentum that the historical vehicle wants to follow, which is thanatotic, don't kid yourself. You cannot have three religions stacked up on top of each other, stretching back 4,000 years, pursuing this monotheistic vision which ends in an apocalypse without building a tremendous morphogenetic predilection

for the apocalypse.

Our demonic investigations into matter have lead us to create the machinery to produce the apocalypse. It was interesting, somebody said of the Reagan administration — this was when James Watt was running around saying that we didn't have to save the trees because Jesus was coming anyway, so it didn't matter — someone said, "The jerks want to be in the Bible", and that's precisely the historical situation, the jerks want to be in the Bible. In other words, every petty potentate from Frederick Barbarossa to Ronald Reagan has secretly believed that they were living in the time of the Antichrist and would participate in the scenario of the Book of Revelations. I mean, this is psychosis if you meet it in a person; if you meet it in a culture it's called religious piety and conviction. It has been going on so long that it has actually created a very narrow neck in the historical process that cannot be avoided. We now have no choice in the matter of business as usual, there will not apparently be business as usual. There will either be an apocalyptic destruction of the planet, a kind of Ragnarök, a Götterdämmerung, a complete storm of fire brought on by the eruption of the psychic mythologies that have driven the matter-centered, monotheistic, male ego culture, or there will be a plucking of victory from the jaws of that defeat, and not an apocalypse but a kind of cultural millennium, a complete breaking out of the pattern

into something else.

Some of you may know Riane Eisler's work *The Chalice and the Blade*. If you haven't read this book I recommend it to you — for psychedelic people, for feminists, for people concerned with the state of society, this is certainly an important book. What she's saying is that it is not true that the story of the human race is the story of a pendulum swing between patriarchy and matriarchy, each with its own flaws. Rather it is that human beings have always lived in an equilibrium style partnership society, except that during the last 8,000 years this pattern has been disrupted by the rise of the male ego, the suppression of the Logos-like connection to nature and a certain evolutionary path taken in the epigenetic coding of information, in other words, the phonetic alphabet. The phonetic alphabet, which has no reference to the icon of the things expressed, is utterly cool, utterly unable then to give you any feeling of engagement with what is being described. This gives permission for analytical science and the detachment of rationalism and the sorts of philosophies that have created the tremendous split between head and heart that characterizes the

political systems of the last several hundred years.

This thing which the shamans are contacting, which we can call another dimension, hyperspace, the collective unconscious — whatever it is, it is the ground of our becoming. The only way to unhitch ourselves from the ego is to open pathways of communication to this invisible field of intentionality in which we are embedded. This is a very difficult task because the culture in which we live denies that this thing even exists. If you start saying that you feel the heartbeat of the planet, or that you are in resonance with the local ecosystem, or still worse, if you say that you hear the voices of elves and fairies, this is automatically psychosis. You have to be observed, sedated and cured because you are participating in a model of reality that is not consensually validated. Nevertheless, I think that what we're trying to do with meetings like this is empower this particular meme, empower this idea. I can't remember who developed the idea of memes, but it's basically the notion that ideas compete with each other the way animals and plants compete in an ecosystem, that ideas adapt and spread, occupy niches, defend territory and redefine

environments, and so my mention last night of the woman who said to me, "I thought I was crazy until I heard you speak," for me that is really the nugget of this work and the most satisfying kind of comment that anybody could make.

What has happened since the 1960s is that the straight people all went off together — and by this I don't refer to sexual preference, I use "straight" in the earlier sense — they all went off and became very weird together, with their golden Mercedes and their Picasso ceramics and all that. The freaks all went off and became strange alone, each apart in our own way, because community was shattered, affinity groups were suppressed, people went all kinds of directions. Now the people who went through the '60s, approaching or in their 40s, have had 20 years to see how they like that kind of alienated aloneness, and so this morning as we went around I heard many people saying that they had done these things in the '60s, but not for a long time, and now they were returning to it. I think this is because it finally dawns on you that this may be the only shot

you've got at it. Reincarnation is fine, past lives are fine, but we're all getting daily older and we don't know where we came from, what lies beyond the zygote, and we don't know where we're going, what lies beyond the pine box. Who can say?

Out of the incredible mystery of whatever the universe is, a microsecond of opportunity against impossible odds has sprung into being. We are embedded in that moment of opportunity, so what are you going to do with it? Are you going to sweep up around the ashram for 30 years and

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then decide that that was a mistake, or are you going to just give yourself over to the arms of holy mother Church for a lifetime? I mean, people do this. You cannot escape making some kind of commitment to something. Nobody gets through life without being asked to sign up, either in their own club or somebody else's. The mushroom said to me once, in the way that it does when it delivers these aphorisms, it said, "You must have a plan. If you have no plan you will become part of somebody else's plan. You either have a plan, or you are part of somebody else's plan."

I think people are waking up to the fact that we must use what works. When we went around the room someone talked about yoga and how the psychedelic gives the experience on demand, but are we ready, and how do you gain skills? This sort of thing. To my mind, the goal is not the psychedelic experience, the beginning of the path is the psychedelic experience. So if yoga promises that after 20 years it will deliver you to the beginning of the path, then there's something seriously wrong here. The psychedelic sets you at the beginning of the path and then people do all kinds of things with it. I am amazed; I feel there is more variation in how we deal with this than in almost any other phase of human activity, because some people seem to have almost no self-reflection. I've noticed that it also touches sexuality. I don't know how many of you have ever encountered the Penthouse Forum, but this is where people write into Penthouse and detail these astonishing, unpredictable sexual exploits — threesomes, foursomes and twelvesomes that just fell upon them — and whenever I have some occasion to read these things, what is amazing to me is that these appear to be descriptions of the behavior of an alien species. There is no self-reflection on, "What does this mean?" "What does this mean that I get stuck in an elevator and end up copulating with twelve stockbrokers?" It's just accepted as how it is. Well, you get this same thing with psychedelics, someone says, "Oh yeah, in the 60s I took psychedelics. Wow. It was really strange, all these colors and voices," and apparently there is no self-reflection, no realization that this is actually happening to you. This is happening to you; therefore the implications must be fairly central. Then other people immediately get it, they say, "My gosh, this plant, this pill shows me that reality is at least a thousand times larger than I thought it was. It showed me that I don't know who I am, where I am, what I am, or anything else." I don't know

what it takes to instill that in people, maybe intellectual self-reflection.

One of things that is so puzzling about shamans when you actually deal with them in the field is that they are not like the other people in the tribe. The other people in the tribe are very tribal people. In other words, they have all the curious cultural limitations of people in every culture. They think you smell funny, they think you look funny, everything you do is amusing, they stand around in small groups giggling and pointing. The shamans, on the other hand, are nothing like that. They accept you totally as a person. They make no cultural judgments — you don't look funny, smell funny, so forth and so on — because they are what I call extra-environmentals, they are deconditioned from the assumptions of their own culture. So they may be the Witoto shaman, but the Witoto shaman is less Witoto than any other Witoto, because the Witoto shaman operates in

the context of Witoteness embedded in the larger reality.

I think what we need to do when we try to revivify shamanism in our own lives is to recover the profound reality of what it's doing. Sometimes I have flashes when I'm giving these talks of how different it is to be stoned than to talk about being stoned. I mean, here we sit in our cotton undersweat, with our schedules in front of us, the mundaneness of it is so all-pervasive. We could be discussing Gnosticism or a political action project, but we're discussing instead something really appalling. I think. We're calmly discussing the fact that there is another world overlapping our own and very few people will even admit the fact. I always think of a wonderful B-movie I saw when I was a kid where there's a dinosaur in the swamp, and it's set somewhere in Mexico, and the typical campesino is sent by the *patrón* of the ranch to gather firewood in the jungle, and he of course encounters this extremely large rubber reptile roaring around, and then comes back to the ranch and is pointing back in the woods, and is completely inarticulate trying to say, "A creature from the id, a beast from another dimension is rampaging around in the forest." They just

dismiss him as, "These peasants, they believe anything. You can't trust them for a moment." This is the sort of situation we're in.

The extraterrestrial invasion that so many people anticipate, or the extraterrestrial contact that so many people hope for and that sells so many cheap newspapers is well under way. It's simply that the words we have to describe it are utterly inadequate. So words like "extraterrestrial invasion," "contact with an intelligent species," "end of history," "migration into hyperspace," these are pathetic signifiers of what is actually happening to us. What is actually happening to us is pretty damn hard to wrap your mind around. We are caught in a vortex of concrescence and compression that was set in motion at least as early as the melting of the last glaciation. We are reaping the fruits of 10,000-50,000 years of sowing of the fields of mind. It is being dropped into our laps for us to create human-machine interfacing, control of genetic material, redefinition of social reality, reengineering of languages, re-visioning of the planetary ecology. All these things fall upon us, and for us to be worthy of it, for us to make sense of it, for us to be anything other than victimized by the 20th century, we need to reach back into time and to anchor ourselves with

the transcendent mystery which is somehow tied up with our own being, somehow present on the planet, but mostly a large list of unanswered questions.

We don't know what is going on on this planet. We don't know why there is life here, whether it's an accident or somebody's plan. We don't know why intelligence is here: again, accident? Plan? If plan, whose plan? If plan, for what? If plan, where are we in the plan? We all tend, when

we abandon ourselves to cultural values, to focus in so tightly that we lose the big picture, and if psychedelics are anything, they are a zoom lens back to the broadest possible point of view.

Audience: I was curious about what you were talking about with extraterrestrials and not having the appropriate language to really discuss it, and your view of what's going on.

It changes for me all the time. I don't have a point of view, and my primary job is not public speaking or writing, but exploring. When I first started taking mushrooms, and throughout the '70s when we wrote the Mushroom Grower's Guide, I held several opinions, but my most strongly held opinion was that it actually is an extraterrestrial. Just no shit, flat out, it is an extraterrestrial. What's surprising to me is that a single mushroom trip of a certain sort could probably put me right back there again. Getting it worked down to Gaia, or the Overmind of the species, is a kind of process of coming down from the real unassimilable context of the experience. It's like an extraterrestrial. I would certainly say this: if extraterrestrials appeared over Washington and Moscow tomorrow it wouldn't make this any less mysterious or puzzling. In fact, the extraterrestrials might turn out to be mundane; this is not. It speaks: this is the most astonishing thing for me to get used to. I mean, the visual hallucinations, somehow I can work it around that these are floods of imagery set off from deep structures of the brain and dumping of memory banks, but that it can just

address you in real time and say, "Terence..." and then proceed to blow my mind.

Now, several things may be happening here. The only time when we have the experience of focusing on an incoming message, decoding it in real time, and responding to it immediately is when we have a conversation with someone. So if you find yourself responding to a message in real time, your brain automatically thinks you're having a conversation. "If it looks like a duck, it walks like a duck, it must be a duck. So here I am, listening and responding to someone speaking to me in English, therefore this must be a conversation." There are physical arguments for viewing the mushroom as extraterrestrial. First of all, what is psilocybin? Psilocybin is O-phosphoryl-4-hydroxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine. Of all the indole compounds in nature, only psilocybin is hydroxylated at the 4-position. If you were to design a computer program to search the life forms of earth for evidence of extraterrestrial origin, one of the things that you would tell this program to do is look for unusual molecules that have no apparent cousins or relatives among other organisms. Well, here is psilocybin, hydroxylated in the 4-position. Nothing else on earth is; a material

argument for its origin outside of the terrestrial ecosystem.

A slightly different argument that would see the mushroom as extraterrestrial is to look at its style, for want of a better word. What is a mushroom? First of all, they reproduce by spores. Spores are the most economical biological unit imaginable. They can survive the radiation levels of interstellar space. They can survive for aeons under conditions very close to those encountered in deep space. The mushroom spore falls into an ecosystem and it immediately undergoes cell division; a fine, thread-like network full of neurotransmitters begins to spread itself through the soil. It's very closely analogous to the neural network of a higher animal, including a human being. We're accustomed to thinking that an extraterrestrial would bear the imprint of the evolutionary situation in which it came to be. In other words, if it evolved on a low-gravity planet it will be tall and thin, if it evolved in a methane atmosphere it will have an exotic bio chemistry and so forth, but that's because we ourselves have possessed the knowledge of how DNA works for only about 40 years. It's reasonable to assume, I think, that if an intelligent species gets 1,000 years of study of DNA that they can design themselves to be however they care to be. In fact, if you think of the mushroom from that point of view, I think that we might chose that kind of an adaptation if we could have any form we wanted, because it's very non-invasive, very humbly

insinuates itself into a situation and grows essentially on waste material in the soil, yet when it sporulates it can actually cross the boundary of outer space.

Great economy, great artistry, tremendous Zen-like aesthetics seem expressed in the mushroom if you view it as a designed piece of work rather than an object in the environment. Then finally, of course, the major argument for the extraterrestrial origin of the mushroom — but it's an insider argument — is the content of the experience. Number one, it says it's an extraterrestrial organism and it has the data to back up the claim. It can show you movies of desert worlds, jungle worlds, high-pressure, high-gravity, methane worlds, planets whose cores are helium-4, worlds where you don't know whether you're inside an organism or inside some kind of piece of machinery, whether you're under the surface of a planet, literally things where our minds just stop in the presence of. To me, that's really the interesting thing about the mushroom. It can be as friendly as it needs to be and can even reassure you with a Disneyesque burlesque of dancing flowers and pirouetting pink elephants, but once you are comfortable with it, and enter the dialogue, and begin to get to know it, getting to know it is an appalling experience. You can say to it,

"Show me a little more of who you are for yourself," and then a veil is lifted and your jaw just drops. Then you say, "Show me a little more of who you are," and, "That's enough of who you are for yourself!"

Then you wonder, while this thing is talking to me, how engaged is the mushroom by me? Is all of its attention focused upon me when I'm talking to it the way all of my attention is focused back on it, or is it like a multi-user computer system, is it able to simultaneously deal with huge numbers of organisms? What is the relationship of psilocybin to the inner life of the mushroom? Is it stoned all the time? Why is it so important that these indole compounds get lodged in the nervous systems of mammals? It's almost as though it's a symbiotic relationship, that the

mushroom does not truly live its life unless it is taken, unless its unique molecular component can find its way into the synapses of a self-reflecting higher animal. Then what are we for it? You can ask these questions.

One reason why I think people have had trouble confirming the animate and intelligent quality of the mushroom is that you must ask. You just don't take psilocybin and sit there because it won't do it, but if you take psilocybin and call it in some sense, whatever that means — invoke, call, try to visualize — then it will begin to come toward you and lift these veils, and this world of zany, pun-like, hyperdimensional intelligence that is revealed is as strange as an extraterrestrial would be. This is, I guess, the final content of evidence for the extraterrestrial origin, the fact that it just seems so different from anything one could conceive of or imagine. I mean, you cannot, in one of these volleys of hallucination, convince yourself, "This is only me, these are my memories, or these are distorted transforms of past experience." I was trained as an art historian to have an eye for stylistic difference and cohesion of a set of aesthetic canons, and it just blows my mind. There is more art locked up in these things to be viewed in a single hour than the human race has produced in 10,000 years, art of a compelling, weird, breathtaking, awesome quality that just

breathes in every pore of itself. "This is the Other, this is not you. Don't be deceived, my little primate friend."

Audience: This thing about popular culture digs into that, because if you look at the movies that came out between 1952-1962, how many of those sci-fi movies were about spores from outer space and plants coming down? These were from very straight people who hadn't taken psychedelics at all; maybe they were tuning into what was about to come 10 or 15 years later.

Well, I think, and I am so far as I know pretty alone in this opinion, that a very small percentage of information is able to tunnel backward through time, that there is a very small counterflow to the forward movement of causal efficacy. One of the things that shamanism is about is going into that hyperdimensional place and picking up this thin signal from the future and tuning it in. This is why prophecy and seership and all of that has to do with states of ecstasy and intoxication. One way of viewing all religion and all spiritual metaphor-making is as an anticipation of the future. These Western religions have these apocalyptic transformations built into them almost as a self-fulfilling prophecy, in other words, they believe that the world is going to end because the world is going to end. Since the melting of the glaciers, people of sufficient sensitivity have heard

through a vast wall of stochastic noise coming from the future the thin, reedy broadcast station of the true vision of the future.

Terence McKenna

This seems to be one of the things that you can do with these psychedelics, tune this in. It's a cliché, and I'm sure you've heard it, that artists are society's antenna for change, that artists are supposed to be somehow more sensitive than the rest of us and they pick up the new design forms, the evolving aesthetic canons and then translate it into society for the rest of us. Well, that gains a little more bite if you substitute shaman for artist, and realize that this may not be a metaphor, it may not be simply because they pursue bohemian lifestyles and are willing to accept poverty for a life of free thinking and so forth. That isn't what's allowing an anticipation of the future, what's happening is that there truly is an anticipation of the future. Visionaries like William Blake or the author of Revelations are actually people who, by virtue of some fortuitous confluence of circumstance, space, time and genetic constitution, are able to draw these messages out. What is startling is that apparently this is fairly ordinary in psychedelic states, that in fact one way of thinking of psychedelics is that you begin to move through time when you put them into your life. I don't mean while the trip is happening, I mean ever after. If you're living with a 1960s style mind and you have a strong psychedelic experience, you will come down with a 1970s mind, or perhaps a 2040 style mind. Mind is a temporal style, it's like clothing. This is what

McLuhan understood, you see, that we dress ourselves out of the closet of ideology.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are floating in space," that we're living in. We, as a culture, must conventionalize and believe that today is whatever it is, November 5th or 6th, 1988, but some of us are living in the 21st century and some of us are living in the 18th century. The goal is to try to move all this forward. It's funny, certain themes that have emerged in the Western mind are, in fact, very psychedelic. One of them is the notion of progressivism, which is a pretty Western idea and quite psychedelic. It's the idea that things are getting better, or that things can get better. Most societies look backward toward a paradigm of a past paradise and all effort is toward recovering this paradise. We are the only people who have this faith in progress, and it's quite strong in us, so strong that we barely question it. I remember the first time I was in Karachi, Pakistan, I was being hauled around the city in a rickshaw drawn by a guy with bare feet. It was a human-powered machine, and he spoke English and we were scoring hash and this and that and we got to know each other, and he said, "In Pakistan we understand what is wrong with the world," and

I said, "So what's wrong with the world?" He said, "Progress, that's what it is! We have to stop progress!" which for me was quite a revelatory idea.

This thing about time, though, is very interesting and operates on many different levels. Ultimately, I think what the psychedelic experience may be is a higher topological manifold of temporality; that the reason it is so puzzling and so familiar, so alien and so exalting is that it is, in fact, mundane. It is in fact just us, but us sectioned through some higher spatial dimension. If, for instance, you think about magic for a moment, let's think about the major identifiers of the magical act, such as psychic surgery, where your hand is plunged through the wall of the body cavity of a human being and a tumorous organ is taken out and no wound is visible. A typical form of folk magic, much discussed, I'm sure you're all familiar with it. Another form of magic, stage magic in this case: a word is written on an envelope, the envelope is locked in a box and the blindfolded magician is able to tell the audience what the word is in the envelope in the box. These things are miraculous and we cannot conceive of how they could be done, but if you allow the possibility of a higher spatial dimension, then these things become trivial because it means that the body is open. There is a way that, from the point of view of this higher spatial dimension, the inside and the outside of the body are on the same side, so no problem is posed by removing this organ. Likewise, from the point of view of a higher spatial dimension the locked box is open on one end,

the end that is intersecting that dimension, so the way you read the message is you just go over and look, it's completely trivial.

A way to make this cogent for people who are now thoroughly confused is to recall Edwin Abbott's fantasy Flatland, where he imagined a world of two dimensions where a house was what in our world is what's called a blueprint, and that was all you needed, and you could live in the blueprint, because you could walk in and once you had closed the door, no one in Flatland could come through that blue line and get at you. Of course, to do this in our three dimensions, we just lean over and look at the blueprint and put your thumb on the inside of the Flatlander's living room. From his point of view, from out of nowhere an enormous thumb has magically appeared in his living room. Well, this shows how perfectly mundane situations on one level appear to be absolute violations of natural law on another level. This is happening very much in the

psychedelic experience, because the mind is the cutting edge of the evolving event system.

Audience: Can you talk a little bit about the idea of the period that we're in with the apocalypse as some kind of transformational event, and how your experience in altered states has led you to believe or feel that there is some hope for changing that?

I think it's clear that we're in a race between apocalypse and breakthrough. I suppose breakthrough is the dark horse. Everything seems to be set up to favor apocalypse, it has the inside track, although very few people would own up to saying that they personally would want to die. So why is it, if none of us really want to die, why is the overwhelming global cultural image one of inevitable catastrophe? I'm very optimistic. I really think history was for a purpose. I would not have had it. I think it was useful and that we must have learned something very important. What we learned that was so important, I'm not sure, but probably when we need it we'll have it. Maybe we need atomic weapons because a large object will be detected hurtling toward earth, and if nature had not split off the monkeys 100,000 years ago and evolved intercontinental missile thermonuclear weapon delivery systems that we could use to destroy that asteroid, then all life on earth would die. So what appears to us as madness, our own dedication to the release of larger and larger amounts of energy for no purpose other than to destroy ourselves, is suddenly

rescued from pathology and shown to be this tremendously foresightful thing: "Thank God we did this, because otherwise we'd all be dead and everything else would be dead." I don't seriously believe that, but I do think that we must have learned something very, very important.

Perhaps cybernetics come in here; perhaps this exoskeleton of mnemonic material that allows us, essentially, to freeze and record our entire culture. Everything is going into the databanks. One way of thinking about what's going on is compression of information, and history represents a compression of information magnitudes more accelerated than the evolution of life. Then 20th century history represents an even greater information compression, information finally compressed to such a degree that it's like the singularity inside a black hole. A black hole has at its center a place where the equations don't sum, in other words where it doesn't make any sense. The only conclusion you can reach is that at that point of so-called infinite compression or singularity, another universe bursts into being somewhere else in a greater and vaster cosmology, and then the energy equations balance. It's as though mind is undergoing this kind of gravitational collapse, and information is being compressed to such a degree that eventually it will not all fit in the present, and then the information begins to move off into the only dimensions available to it, which are the past and the future, exactly as you fill a glass with more water than it can hold. Once it has more water in it than it can hold, the water begins to flow down to the sides and out into the larger domain; and so I think that people who try to use history, which are usually male egos and male-dominated institutions, are actually tremendously frustrated. We don't see it that way because to us it looks like they win every battle because they win every election, but because they win every election, it is their job to manage this situation. It's a case of, "You want it? Here it is!"

and they have not a clue as to how to manage it. Their thing is all about the headaches of ownership; our political point of view is pretty much about the headaches of disenfranchisement.

I think that there is some kind of event ahead of us in time, on the order of 20-40 years, that is casting an enormous shadow back through the lower-dimensional slice of being which we call history, so that religions, mystical visions and the visions of revolutionary leaders are a response to flickering intimations of this transcendent object that is pulling intelligence out of the organic matrix of life on this planet in a process that is occupying 50,000-100,000 years. It's extremely unusual what's happening. A process that creates a series of self-transforming bootstrapped steps in a period of 100,000 years means it's a unique kind of phenomenon, there's never been anything like it on the planet. What it is leading toward is hard to say, but I know that its values are the values of life, connectedness, primacy of experience, and caring, and it is using the historical

process to wire us all together in some way. Control mechanisms are spreading through the society at an enormous rate.

One of the horror fantasies of the 1950s — when this conservative, straight, crowd point of view was really at its height — one of the fears of the future that people would just toss off off-handedly was that in the future machines would take over and run everything, and this notion of the control of the planet wrested from the sure hands of noble human beings and instead betrayed into the power of calculating automotons was a great science fiction theme of the '50s. It's interesting how impartial computers are. They are not ideologues, they are managers, and remember, I said that the struggle was between the shaman manager and the ideologue politician. So I think that the cybernetic matrix is a tremendous tool for feminizing and radicalizing and psychedelizing the social matrix. I see computers as entirely feminine. People have a reaction to this because they think that, because men spend a lot of time around them and seem obsessed with them, that somehow it isn't feminine; but men have always been obsessed with the feminine. I think it was D.H. Lawrence who said, "What life is really about is men keeping women from ever

suspecting how truly obsessed we are by them."

I think that this linking-together, feminizing, cybernetic thing is part of the anticipation of this object at the end of time. What seems to be happening is that we are all flowing together. We keep talking about unity, globalism, completion: well, you're going to get what you ordered. I think what it means is that probably the dear individual — which, don't be fooled, is a soft description of the male ego run rampant — the democratic individual, the citizen, this notion is in fair peril to be replaced by "the person," which is a much more rubby kind of concept. The person is not an interchangeable part, the citizen is. The citizen is a model of society based on the industrial revolution of the 18th century, but the person is a harking back to a pre-print model. This is being set loose; it's what the hippies were, essentially. What they were trying to evoke was this "do your

own thing" idea, but there's a paradox here: the "do your own thing" idea is somehow leading to this vectoring toward a unified cultural state where everybody else is involved in everybody else. It's alright that it's paradoxical, because there's no reason that it should be reasonable.

Audience: I wonder if you could address the difference between the LSD experience and the mushroom experience, if there is a difference, and also your feelings about marijuana as an altered state.

I speak only from my own experience, of course, but to me the LSD experience seemed more psychoanalytical than psychedelic. I mean, I was in my early 20s when I encountered LSD, maybe I had more "stuff," as they say, to deal with, but it was not a reliable visionary drug for me. It caused me to have funny ideas; it seemed mostly to be a thought thing, but not a visual thing. Somehow in my education, somewhere along the way I had picked up this bias in favor of the visual channel, so I wasn't satisfied with LSD. I wanted those things that Havelock Ellis describes, "Jeweled ruins and phosphorescent maidens in diaphanous gowns, howling demon songs beneath a violet moon," not funny ideas. I worked pretty diligently at it with LSD and I found that my most satisfying LSD experiences were while smoking hash, and that then really did do something interesting with it, it sent it skittering off in these wonderful visionary directions. These things do have characters, and these things do have characters, and this is something probably worth talking about in this group. At low doses, everything seems like everything else. In other words a little mescaline, a tiny amount of LSD, a little bit of MDMA, a tiny tad of psilocybin, all of these things simply register as wired, arousal, eager to hear what's being said and follow the thread of the argument and absolutely fascinated by what's going on, no matter what's going on. As you raise the dose, the character of these

things begins to appear.

For instance, psilocybin is, to my mind, in many ways the most anomalous, because, number one, this thing about how it speaks; it does speak. None of the others do. The others, you may occasionally in years of fiddling get a sentence or two, but the mushroom is just voluble, it just comes on and raves, and people have said to me, "It really does rave!" It's not a calm, go-with-the-flow rap, it's a rap about planetary destiny and the next ten million years and the last ten million years. It's this trumpet blast. Cecil B. DeMille, hyperreal rap. Then something like ayahuasca, which is this thing that these shamans use in the Amazon basin that's based on DMT and monamine oxidase inhibitors, you take that and it's about the rivers and the jungle, and these people and their humility and dignity, and your humility and dignity, and the earth, and plants, and life, and water and sunlight. It's this totally earth-bound, terrestrial, life-affirming thing, and it does not speak. It's an eye, and its language is visual, and after an ayahuasca trip you just feel like your eyes are literally being out of your head. I mean, you've spent 6 hours looking, not really doing anything else but looking. Then something like datura has this watery, magical, forgetful, kind of witchy, occult quality. It's shadows, shadows, and a peculiar quality of erosion of your own attention. No matter who you are, you find yourself wandering through

empty colonnades under a sky pregnant with the possibility of rain. It's this strange de Chiricoesque kind of landscape. DMT has another quality, it seems to convey you into a world of utter outrage where all linguistic, sensory and analytical machinery is just brought to a screeching halt.

It's important to learn what you like and to learn what you can put up with. I said to someone at a recent weekend who takes mushrooms quite religiously and quite regularly, "Does it ever get easier?" He said, "No, it never gets easier. Each time what I pray as I go into it is, 'Please let me be able to stand a little bit more!'" Finally, it is the real mystery, so the only way your relationship to it can end is by you averting your gaze, because no human being can gaze into it endlessly. It is what it says it is, it is the Other.

Audience: I just want to follow up on that question a little bit. Stan Grof describes LSD as a non-specific amplifier, and by that he means it amplifies that which already exists in the psyche. He uses this metaphor that LSD serves as a sort of a telescope or microscope, in that itself it does not produce the experience, but it enables you to have an experience that is already there *in potentia*, latent in your psyche. I was wondering if you could comment on that, since you just described the various psychoactives as having a character. So would you disagree with his framework,

or would you say that the various telescopes are tinted with a certain lens? How would you reconcile that?

Well, at the beginning of your question you characterized LSD. It's that it is a non-specific amplifier, but of the contents of the personal unconscious and the sensorium. What people notice about LSD is either what's right or wrong with themselves, or how freaky the world is. A bug, a drop of water, it can be anything, but you discover the strangest things on LSD and they're real things: relationships of reflections and windows... It basically seems to be a tremendous amplifier of attention and analysis of the input of attention when directed into the outer world, and when directed into the inner world it's an analytical tool for looking at the past history of the individual, which is what I call the personal unconscious. The thing that always puzzled me about enthusiasts of LSD was that they claimed that beyond this lay what they call "the white light," which they put great store by, and put all kinds of Buddhist associations to it. I don't know if I've ever had the white light experience. As I go deeper into strong psychedelics what happens is that multiplicity proliferates; there is not a simplifying, there is a further and further complexifying. I was talking to someone at Qjai Foundation about this and they said, "But surely, beyond all this there is some kind of simplification and unity," and I said I wasn't sure, that maybe it's just an infinite samsaric ocean in all directions and all dimensions forever. Ketamine comes closer to providing a no

observer, nothing observed kind of state, but you can't do much with that. You can have it, and there is, of course, with the dropping of all boundaries, a feeling of release.

What I am interested in is bringing back artifacts to share with the tribe, and I've accepted that they will come in the form of either things that can be painted or things that can be said. Since I'm better at the saying than the painting, I work like that. Stan is a good friend of mine, we've talked about this over the years. I just can't confirm his maps of the psyche, I don't see those states occurring along a continuum the way that he says they do. I think it's much more chaotic. If his categories work to facilitate psychotherapy then that's good, because that's what he's interested in. In other words, I see his maps as very, very provisional and useful for navigating but I doubt that when we get the final maps, if we ever do, that they will bear terrifically much resemblance to that. I think he would agree with that; we're not at loggerheads about this. Anybody

who works with psychedelics, their ultimate position is that, "Hell, we don't know."

This afternoon I thought we would do some operational homework and academic referencing. One of the most important things about all of this that we've been discussing is to get the information straight, to be as well informed as possible. It's as important to be well informed in this area if you're going to do it as it is to be well informed about procedures in skin diving if you're going to do that. What I thought I'd do at the beginning of this afternoon today, apropos of this idea that people should inform themselves about what's going on — though you can't find out everything, you can find out a lot more than most people know. It's amazing to me the number of people who would pay a couple of hundred bucks to come to a weekend with a person like myself to learn about psychedelics, when a couple of hundred bucks would get you quite far in a

bookstore, and the public library is a marvelous resource for this stuff.

I hauled some titles off my own bookshelf and I'll go through them, this is by no means all. I simply chose books that I thought were either important to the field or that I felt would be fairly easy for someone to obtain if they wanted to look into these matters. This one some of you may know, this is probably the easiest to obtain and the most compendious. It's *Plants of the Gods* by Richard Evans Schultes, who is professor emeritus of botany at Harvard. This is basically the distillation of his life's work. It's filled with pictures, it has all kinds of information arranged in this kind of table form where you can look up a plant, get a notion of what it looks like, what family it belongs to, what its chemical constituents are and so forth, and it has a very good bibliography and chemical appendix. So this is around and highly recommended. If you want to go slightly deeper than that book goes, this is the academic version of the same book, this is *The Botany and Chemistry of Hallucinogens*. This is the bible of this field. It lists virtually the state of the art circa 1980, and it has a compendious bibliography. This book, though it's from an expensive academic press, is highly recommended. If you had to have just one book on hallucinogens, this would probably be the one to go for. It's also by Richard Evans Schultes and Albert Hofmann, who some of you may know as the discoverer of LSD and the man who first characterized and

synthesized psilocybin.

From a slightly more countercultural point of view, this is the revised edition of the *Psychedelics Encyclopedia* by Peter Stafford, who some of you may know. Again, this is an effort to be compendious. No one of these books should be taken as gospel; you want to get it from several different sources before you conclude any given fact as true. This book is published by Tarcher in L.A., I think this is a fairly easily obtained book. This is the 2nd edition and he's going to do a 3rd edition, and he's very good about keeping up on the literature. This is an interesting book.

Then for those of you who are more inclined to pharmacology and neurophysiology, this is a fairly hard book to obtain but in a way it's never been surpassed. It's called *The Hallucinogens* by Hoffer and Osmond, and there was never a revised edition after 1965. It discusses a lot about LSD and psychotherapy, and also has all kinds of strange information that was never again mentioned in the literature, that was just sort of dropped out. You can read here, for instance, about the hallucinogen dimethylacetamide, where you drink 8 fluid ounces a day for 5 successive days, and then the onset of hallucinations begin that are supposedly quite spectacular; it's just that the notion of drinking 8 fluid ounces of this bizarre chemical compound is not too appetizing. Then for sort of the state of the art in one book is Solomon H. Snyder's book *Drugs and the Brain*, and it doesn't simply address hallucinogens, it talks about all kinds of drugs. It explains the mechanism of drug activity, the notion of the lock-and-key activity of the drug molecule to the synaptic cleft. It gives you a short, basic course in neurology, and Sol Snyder is one of the giants of psychopharmacology, Albert Lasker Award winner, so forth and so on. Here's another book somewhat along the lines of Snyder's book, this is one of the most recent books written on hallucinogens. The editor is Barry Jacobs, *Hallucinogens: Neurochemical, Behavioral and Clinical*

Perspectives, and as my brother said, "All of the uninteresting perspectives are covered here, very thoroughly and in detail."

What these books are good for, besides whatever they say, is that they contain excellent bibliographies, so tracing a particular problem you go to these books and then they direct you to the journal articles that give you what you want to know. Most of the literature of psychopharmacology is in journals which you will never, as a layman, encounter unless you go to medical libraries and attempt to see these things, things like *Lloydia* and *Acta Neurologica* and the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. Some of these journals cost as much as \$200-300 a year to subscribe to, so if

you don't want to do that, the bibliography directs you to the articles you need, and you just go to the med library and xerox them out.

This sort of bridges the gap between pharmacology, sociology and anthropology. This is Brian du Toit, *Drugs, Rituals and Altered States of Consciousness*. Let me see if I can make a quick identification here. I think this is actually *Banisteriopsis rusbyana*, which is a rare admixture plant that contains DMT but has the lanceolate leaf end which distinguishes it from *Banisteriopsis caapi*. Probably could do 10 years for the book. The publisher on this one is a weird one, Balkema of Rotterdam, so it's a Dutch publisher.

Then sort of moving out of the realm of pharmacology and psychology and into the specifically anthropological stuff, this is one with a number of various contributors, *Alternate States of Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives on the Study of Consciousness*, edited by Norman Zinberg of Harvard. This deals not only with shamanic drug usage but the heroin subculture, and a number of different things. Urban drug cultures are discussed as well. It's mostly a sociological perspective here. Moving into the more specifically anthropological stuff, here's my favorite one. Before he got into drumming, Michael Harner edited this book, *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*, Oxford University Press, available in paper. A number of writers contributed to this, there are about four articles on ayahuasca that you just will not find anywhere else, articles on peyote, a wonderful

article by Henry Munn called *The Mushrooms of Language*, just a classic article on mushrooms. This is highly recommended.

A sort of similar book by a different author is *Flesh of the Gods: The Ritual Use of Hallucinogens* by Peter Furst. He's an anthropologist who made his reputation among the Huichol in Mexico. This has articles by Wasson, Furst, Doug Sharon, William Emboden, Fernandez, Reichel-Dolmatoff, the usual names in this ethnobotanical field. This is a specific guide, *Hallucinogenic Plants of North America* by Jonathan Ott. The interesting thing about this is that it's pretty compendious, meaning that there are things discussed here that you just won't find discussed anywhere else, probably because there are so few hallucinogenic plants in North America. This guy really had to scratch to produce a book about it, but this is useful for that. Similar but more broadly-based is this book *Narcotic Plants*, terrible title, by William Emboden. This book has a lot of visuals in it. Why I value this book is because he has a more liberal definition of psychoactivity than most people do, so consequently his species lists are longer than anybody else's. If somebody asks you about an obscure plant — is it psychedelic or not? — this is where I look first,

because he seems to list many things that nobody else has ever discussed. He teaches at Cal State; some of you may know him, I don't.

Here's another one of these anthologies of writing about psychedelics, also by the same author as *Flesh of the Gods*, *Hallucinogens and Culture* by Peter Furst. Again, this has articles on mushrooms, on the discovery of LSD, on ayahuasca, on cannabis and tobacco, the biochemistry of consciousness, shamanism as the ur-religion, so forth and so on. It seems like every one of these authors then goes on to edit a book of their own favorite essays. Here's another one, *Hallucinogens: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* by Marlene Dobkin de Rios, who is a woman who has done

a great deal of work on ayahuasca. She published a book called *The Visionary Vine* and another book called *Ayahuasca: Mestizo Curing in an Urban Setting*. Basically a sociologist, she's also at Cal State.

This is sort of the granddaddy of all of these anthologies, a very interesting book, hard to get but fascinating. It's called *The Ethnopharmacologic Search for Psychoactive Drugs*, and it was the name of a conference that was given in San Francisco in 1967. The plan at the time of the conference was to have it occur every year, but it never occurred again because of course everything was made illegal the next year and this faltered. To show you to what degree the government was of two minds about psychedelics, it says on the frontispiece of this book, "Sponsored by the Pharmacology Section, Psychopharmacology Research Branch, National Institute of Mental Health, United States Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare," and it was published at government expense. This is in fact a technical publication of the National Institute of Mental Health. Wonderful bibliography, extremely interesting discussion of DMT-containing snuffs, an article on the psychopharmacology of nutmeg that you just won't find anywhere else, articles on kava and an article on the history of research into psychedelic plants that goes clear back to the medieval herbalists. The last time we were in the Amazon we christened our expedition, in honor of this book, *The Ethnopharmacologic Search for Cold Beer*, because there ain't any, and it becomes an obsession. It's so strange what you miss. I don't even

drink beer, so what do I care? After ten days in the jungle, all anybody could talk about was the possibility of cold beer, and it was still four weeks away, so...

Then for somebody who really is serious, or technical, or plotting an expedition or a research project of some sort, this is really a pretty amazing book. It's dull as death, because it's essentially listings from the herbarium sheets at the Harvard Museum Botanical Library. It was put together by Siri von Reis Altschul, who was one of Schultes' graduate students, along with Ara DeMarderosian and Marlene Dobkin de Rios, some of the few women who have made significant contributions to this field when it was firmly in the hands of dominant male types. Anyway, this book is called *Drugs and Foods from Little-Known Plants*, and they're not whistling Dixie when they say "little-known plants." You look through this and some say "hallucinogen" or "reported hallucinogen," and this touches foods, one of the things that's not part of our concern here. One of the things that's so frustrating when you do ethnobotany is to realize that people can be starving in environments where there are many food plants, but they don't utilize the food plants because they've accepted the values of a capitalist economy. Because the foods cannot be trucked to market or have a short shelf life, they are called "pig food," and nobody will eat it. Time and time again in the tropics, I would come upon a plant that I knew to be edible and proteinaceous, say to my informant or guide "What's the story on this?" "Food for pigs, people don't eat it," but

you know they are buying canned tuna fish and spam from the priests at the mission. So this is a way in which people's folklore and folk heritage is distorted.

Then a book by a good friend of mine, and if any of you are interested in ayahuasca, or plan on going to South America where you may encounter ayahuasca, this book, *Vegetalismo: Shamanism Among the Mestizo Population of the Peruvian Amazon*, this is a lovely book. This is about the people that I spent most of my fieldwork time with. You just cannot read this book without coming away with a sense of the depth and complexity of the ayahuasca worldview: its healing classifications, the power allies, the admixture plants, the magical songs. It's by Luis Eduardo Luna, who I know has lectured and shown his films here at CIS. He's an excellent person, a very good friend of mine, to my mind probably the person doing the best anthropological work on ayahuasca in the world right now. The publisher, in case you want to try to track this down, is

Almqvist and Wiksell International, Stockholm. If any of you are just dying to have this book, order it from Lux Natura, we have three copies left.

This is the last one that I was going to mention, because this could have been the title of our weekend. This is *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered* by Lester Grinspoon and James Bakalar. Lester Grinspoon managed to find his way into Herb Caen as a name freak when he published a monograph on the dangers of excessive cocaine use. Basically, this is a very reasoned presentation of why psychedelics should be reconsidered for therapy, the case for them, the case against them, the nature of the hysteria that placed them off limits. He has also written *Marijuana Reconsidered*, and is a very nice person and leading the fight to decriminalize drugs for research. So that's all the books that I brought in to show you; they are, as I say, by no means all. The only resource that I would mention for the serious student of these things that I didn't bring in is: nobody should try to deal with this subject without being aware of what's called the *Harvard Museum Botanical Leaflets*. These are a series of leaflets that have been published since the '30s by the Peabody Museum in Boston. So write to the Harvard Museum Botanical Garden and say

you want a list of the leaflets. They cost between \$1-4 a piece. They deal of all of Schultes' papers; all kinds of very hard to recover information is available there. There are about 180 of these reprints on all aspects of all psychedelics and some non-psychedelics as well.

It's important to have this information, to have it at your fingertips. The compartmentalization between areas of knowledge that impinge on this always amazes me. I mean, you get psychologists who don't know what an MAO inhibitor is, you get people combining things without knowing how drug synergies work. You get people just not informing themselves on the importance of set, setting, dosage, psychic predisposition, so forth and so on: all vital matters that can impinge on how an experience develops. If you can take the time to inform yourself you will feel much more sure of what you're doing, and that in itself can alleviate confusion and negative reactions.

So then I thought what I would do is sort of go around the world and talk about these things a little to give you an idea of what is available, what's on the menu.

Audience: Could you explain the difference between psychoactive, psychotropic and psychedelic?

Psychoactive means exactly what it implies, that you can detect this compound as a higher cortical experience, that's all. To my mind a higher cortical experience is a shift of mood, depression, elation, acute hearing, sensitivity to noises: all of these things could be classed as psychoactive reactions to a compound. Psychotropic is a word that I've never been very fond of and it sort of came in late. Psychedelic, which is a fairly maligned word, but was coined by the psychiatrist Humphry Osmond, means simply "mind-manifesting," and I like that because it is phenomenologically neutral. Some people have tried to push the word "entheogen" for these things, meaning literally "god-inducing," but to my mind this carries a huge amount of ideological freight that we may not wish to buy into. Maybe it's god-inducing, maybe it isn't, but psychedelic — meaning mind-manifesting — is pretty good, and then if all of these make you uncomfortable you can just fall back on a completely phenomenological description and call them "consciousness-expanding drugs." I certainly don't consider alcohol a psychedelic, but clearly a psychoactive.

Marijuana is one of these things that's so widely variant, both in how people react to it and how strong it can be. I would call MDMA a psychoactive drug, not a psychedelic drug.

I use the word "hallucinogen" a lot, and a lot of people don't like that, even people in the field. They say, "Hallucinogen seems to imply that it's an illusion," but not in my mind. I don't hear that. I'm fascinated by hallucinations. To me that is the sine qua non that you're getting somewhere. I guess that's just my philosophical biases, but a hallucination is such an extraordinary concept, isn't it? To see something which isn't there. I don't mean to misread a surface, so that you think it sticks into the room when in fact it sticks out of the room, or something like that, I mean seeing something that *is not there*. Then that divides into two classes: seeing an ordinary object which is not there — I think this is what most people think a hallucination is: "Here is a bicycle. Is it real or not? The drug-crazed victim cannot tell," — but most hallucinations are of things

which can only be hallucinations, because that's what they are. They have this aura of the unexpected and the Other, the intrusive alienness.

People have claimed to me that they have seen objects which are not there which are completely ordinary. That is more typical of accounts of datura users, people who take high molecular weight tropanes, such as occur in jimsonweed and those kinds of things. My brief experimentation with that is that it's what I call a deliriant, rather than a psychoactive. When you take datura you are so messed up that you literally lose all discrimination: you can't tell exactly where you are, you can't tell thinking about being somewhere from being there. Well, you're in no shape to undertake a spiritual quest if you're that discombobulated. What I like are the things which do not destroy what I call core functions. In other words, there is still an evidence-gathering, observing mind left intact, and the disruption of perceptual input, if you want to put it that way, is pretty

much confined to the visual cortex, and then to the metaphor-forming capacity that is relating to the visual cortex; but I don't like things which confuse you, which impair judgment.

Audience: What about *Salvia divinorum*?

That's an obscure one about which not much is known, although in the past year they've learned the absolute chemical characterization of the psychoactive compound, which is called salvinorin A. More work has to be done. Anthropologists who have taken it with Indians in Oaxaca describe a very intense experience. When we grew it in Hawaii and took it exactly the way these people said to do it, it was an experience, but it was not clear whether it was psychedelic or merely so physiologically active in such a complex way that you couldn't tell exactly what was going on. The impression which was not mine, but Kat's and a beloved dean, they both experienced flow. They described the experience as though you were lying in a dirty ditch with this cold fluid flowing from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet, and where this kind of cold, clammy fluid encountered energy obstructions in your body, it would wash them away. It was a kind of vertigo with nausea; it was a complex experience, but it was not largely mental, it was more a re-visioning of the body image. This is another one of these things where no research has been done. It isn't illegal, but you're not going to do your career any good to get tangled up with this, so consequently it's pretty much left alone. Salvinorin A is extremely unstable and breaks down within 12 hours, so that indicates that it's probably a polyhydric alcohol or an isooquinoline or

something like that, it's not an indole.

Audience: Wasson talked about "entheogen" versus "hallucinogen," and his theory was that a hallucination is something that isn't there completely. He thought that the experience on soma or the mushroom is something that you are actually experiencing, so it's not a hallucination, it's real.

Yes, that was what he said, but if you actually look at the etymology of the word "hallucination," what it has come to mean in English is a delusion, but what it really means in the original language is "to wander in the mind." That's the meaning of hallucination, to wander in the mind. Well, that's a pretty good operational description of what's happening, and then when you add in the visual component, it's hard for me to imagine how someone could undervalue hallucinations if they had had them. These guys were very frustrated with seeing this thing turned into a social

hysteria, and Wasson at the time expressed great unhappiness with Tim Leary's approach, and hated going to Mexico and seeing these mushroom villages invaded by graffiti-covered vans of filthy freaks from southern California who were disrupting the local ecology.

It was a kind of proprietary approach: this thing belongs to anthropologists, to specialists. Wasson was very reticent to assess his own work. Some of you may have seen Bob Forte's interview with him in that psychedelic issue of *Revision* where Forte asks him, "How do you assess the historical impact of your work?" and he said, "I'll leave that to others to decide." He didn't want to deal with the question of the potential impact on his own society. He really looked at it as this exotic, foreign kind of thing. These guys were cautious, this first generation — Hofmann,

Wasson, Schultes — these guys are not stoners by any means. Their approach is cautious, and their psychedelic experiences in a lifetime can be counted on the fingers of one hand. I'm not sure that they ever realized the size of the tiger whose tail they had seized.

Audience: The DMT and the toad, whatever it is, how is that extracted?

Well, I haven't had the good fortune to be present at the milking, so I really couldn't say. I gather that you put pressure on the back of the neck in two places and this exudate emerges, exactly where I'm not sure, and probably decency should scarcely inquire. Then it's dried on sheets of glass and scraped up and packaged and so forth.

Let me start through this and give you a notion of what is available. Whenever you talk about the distribution and cultural usage of hallucinogens the first thing that you come up against is a curious unsolved problem in botany. No one knows why this is, and we would be grateful if somebody could figure it out, but for unknown reasons there is a tremendous concentration of psychoactive plants on the South American continent. The South American continent has more known hallucinogens than the rest of the planet combined. Why is this? After all, the climaxed tropical rainforests of Eastern Indonesia are at least as species-rich as the Amazon basin, and yet not a single powerful hallucinogen is known with certainty from the Old World tropics. All kinds of suggestions have been made: that actually there are psychedelic plants common throughout the tropics of the Old World but the cultures have lost contact with them and forgotten them, and hence our anthropologists have not discovered them, or something in the soil of South America — very improbable theory. I was talking about this once in a workshop and somebody raised

their hand and said, "No problem. Obviously that's where the spaceships landed." Good! Well, we've solved that problem, now we can move on.

North America is extraordinarily poor in hallucinogens, perhaps the poorest of all continents, so that the psychedelic phobia that Europe created against paganism was completely reinforced, or at least not eroded, by the colonization of the New World or of North America, because there were no plants here to challenge that. The North American Indians tend to ordeal as a shamanic vehicle, the Sun Dance thing which some of you may be familiar with, or sonic driving, which is worldwide in shamanically-oriented cultures without drugs. You should know that not everyone agrees with me that psychedelics are the sine qua non of shamanism; that's what Wasson thought, that you don't have shamanism unless you have psychedelics. If you have people calling themselves shamans and not using psychedelics, then they are cut off from the older level of

tradition, and through ritual, drumming, ordeal, starvation and flagellation they are creating near-psychedelic, or pseudo-psychedelic states.

Now, a brilliant and respected commentator on comparative religion like Mircea Eliade, who I quote whenever it suits my purpose, totally disagreed with this and said no, what he called "narcotic shamanism" — which means psychedelic shamanism, the choice of the word tells you that the guy had a problem — "Narcotic shamanism is decadent shamanism," and the flagellation, the starvation, the ordeals, and the drumming is the real shamanism, and it's only when the tradition is abandoned and decadent that a culture will turn to drugs. I maintain that this is nothing more than his Western cultural bias operating. He was a Romanian who became an academic in Paris. Also, in his youth he was pretty infatuated with yoga, and they will insist to you that drugs are an inferior path. However, any of you who are scholars of yoga should know that all yoga is based on the Yoga Sutras of Patañjali, 2nd century Hindu, Vedic commentator, and Patañjali specifically says, "There are three paths to the goal of yoga, and they are control of the breath, control of posture and light-filled herbs." It says it right there, stanza six of the Yoga Sutras of Patañjali. It's never discussed again, basically. In the entire exegesis of the yogic literature, the third path is never mentioned. Is that because it's a secret tradition, or what? I don't know. When you go to India seeking these yogis practicing these higher yogas, what you find are a bunch

of guys smoking as much charas as they possibly can, and the notion that you could do it without that just gets a long laugh from everybody down around the burning ghats. They deal with it on a practical level.

Moving out of drug-impooverished North America, or psychedelic-impooverished North America, where there are more than 20 species of indigenous psilocybin-containing mushrooms but, and this is interesting, no evidence whatsoever for tribal or traditional usage. In other words, in this

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Northwest Coast Indian complex — the Tsimshian, Tlingit, Nootka group — there's no reason to believe, other than our own predilection for romantic fantasy, that these people were using mushrooms in pre-contact times, and yet the mushrooms were there. The complex that we're most familiar with as a North American hallucinogen is in the Southwest of the United States: *Lophophora williamsii*, the peyote cactus. Now, the interesting thing here is that we cannot find archeological evidence of peyote use that is particularly ancient. Peyote use in the Southwest appears to be less than 500 years old. Before that, what we find in Indian graves of the Tarahumara and so forth are the seeds of *Sophora secundiflora*. *Sophora secundiflora* is a highly poisonous legume that contains cytisine. This is an example of what we call, not a psychedelic, but an ordeal

poison. In certain parts of the world this approach to spiritual growth has been taken, most notably on the island of Madagascar off the coast of eastern Africa.

What is an ordeal poison? This is a plant where you take it and you are so convinced that you are dying that you have an experience of self-abandonment, getting straight, surrender, and then you live and you're fine. You are absolutely convinced that you are dying, your heart pounds or fibrillates, or you convulse, or you fall into deep coma, or you have tetanus in the limbs and then you recover. Well, anybody can tell you that this is a kind of psychedelic experience, because you're so damn glad you lived that you see everything in a new light. You can be kind to your children, love your wife and tolerate your relatives. People say, "It made a new man out of him!" Well, yes, because he came so close to dying that he shed neurotic behavior patterns, but this is not a true psychedelic.

What we're assuming is that about 500 or 1,000 years ago, sometime in that span, the *Sophora* cult was replaced by the peyote cult which came from a much smaller usage area. Then, also in southern California, there were what were called the *tolache* religions, religions of datura intoxication, initiation of young men by intoxicating them with datura and leaving them in the wilderness to fend for themselves. Again, this comes close to being an ordeal poison, although it also has psychoactive properties, but so confusing, such a deliriant that it bears no relationship to the true hallucinogens which, with the exception of mescaline, I believe all fall into the category of the indoles. Now, mescaline is not an indole, it's an amphetamine, closely related to MDA and MDMA, but it is a true hallucinogen at fairly high doses. The indoles, which are this structurally-

related small family, they seem to me to be the true visionary ecstasogens, and I will mention as I go through the list which ones are indoles and which ones are not.

A kind of parallel phenomenon to the peyote cult of the Southwest is in the deserts of northwestern Peru. There are very large columnar cacti in the genus *Trichocereus* that contain mescaline, and they have been used for a long time, a lot longer than peyote. We have Moche ceramics dated to before 1,000 B.C. which show a Peruvian design 1,500 years old. In central Mexico we come upon the first of these large centers of hallucinogenic use, in the cultural area in which the Olmec arose and were subsequently succeeded by the Maya, who were subsequently subjugated by the Toltecs. The plants that were in use in those situations fall into two pretty well defined categories, first of all, psilocybin-containing mushrooms of several species, and second of all, morning glories of at least two types. *Convolvulaceae* which contain LSD-like alkaloids active in the milligram range that are highly visionary. There is considerable evidence in the Codex Vindobonensis and in some of the Mayan ceramics that this was a culture that made a very important place for hallucinogens, and that it was the privilege of the priestly class, and that their obsession with calendrics and astronomy and this sort of thing was also somehow intimately connected to their interest in the psilocybin mushrooms. Again, one of these botanical puzzles: here is a cluster of 10 or 15 species of mushrooms in central Mexico, and a culture builds itself

around them. A similar cluster of species on the Northwest Coast, the culture seems to totally ignore and have no use for, and nowhere else on earth are there clusters of species of psilocybin mushrooms with a long history of use.

Naturally, the export of cattle throughout the warm tropics has allowed the coprophilic mushrooms, the mushrooms which grow on manure, to be spread throughout the warm tropics. Then in places like England and France you get the occurrence of the diminutive psilocybin mushrooms. *Semilanceata*, but again, only the most unconvincing evidence of traditional use. I mean, I am Irish Celtic. I would love to have somebody come up with a bunch of evidence that ancient Celtic and Druidic art and magic was somehow related to mushrooms, but to date the efforts have been unconvincing to any skeptic. It may still be there, perhaps in heraldic devices. Someone should go back and study the escutcheons of the families of medieval Europe; and you do find, for instance, the Morelli family, a noble Italian family with mushrooms on the family coat of arms, and

other families in France whose names escape me.

Let me say a little bit more about the morning glory complex, because it's very interesting. LSD, discovered by Albert Hofmann in 1938, comes from ergot, comes from an organism called *Claviceps purpurea* which is a smut which grows on ergot. A humbler organism you could hardly imagine. This is basically "Yuck!" That's how you would describe this organism if you were to come upon it. It looks like a mistake, because it's just an amorphous, slimy, black mess growing on certain cereal grains. One of the fascinating questions to these chemists once they discover a new compound is to try to figure out, "Does it occur anywhere else in nature?" Some plants, some fish, some something, and then you can form theories and judgments about evolutionary relationships. So Albert Hofmann, the discoverer of LSD, was amazed when carrying out analytical work for Gordon Wasson on magic morning glory seeds that had been sent to Wasson from Schultes, he discovered the same compounds or very closely related compounds as he had synthesized to make LSD. I'm going to slightly jump around here now and say that in India, there are 13 species of morning glories in a different family — not in the family *Ipomoea* or the family *Turbina*, which are the Mexican families, but in the family *Argyrea* — of morning glories which contain these ergotamine-like compounds. This is the Hawaiian baby woodrose. Again, the interesting

thing is that there is no evidence that ancient India, with its obsession for altered states of consciousness, ever utilized any of these Asian morning glories, so this would be something that somebody would want to look at.

Audience: Probably you would not be able to get any hardcore data on the use of mushrooms in Arthurian times, but I was delighted to note in *The Mists of Avalon* that when Morgaine was supposedly banished, one of the faeries of Avalon left her some mushrooms to accompany her on

her journey.

Well, Marion Zimmer Bradley lives in the hills of Berkeley. We can assume she's fully installed and hooked into the myths of the counterculture, but it would be great. Someone told me that they went to the island of Iona, where the Book of Kells was supposedly composed, and they said that there were mushrooms everywhere, that to be there is to be inescapably confronted with mushrooms; and yet there is no tradition, no mention. This is where Saint Columba came and reintroduced Christianity into England in the 900s. Christianity had died out in England; it was only in

the advanced Celtic civilizations on the fringes of the British landmass that the Christian tradition was preserved.

Audience: The deterioration of the etymology of hallucinogen into a delusional, romantic meaning kind of catalyzed my mind going into how mythology has devolved into "a lie." If you look up the original meaning of mythology, it means "the mutterings of eternity," *mytho-Logos*, and this whole thing with Avalon being that place between the worlds that one went to, the mythical part, and Glastonbury was sort of the other place where all this Christianity existed. When I was in a mushroom experience one time in a circle, and I was a recovering Catholic trying to find out what my mind was all about, this one man, this shaman student from the Amazon, he said, "If you eat these mushrooms you're going to be excommunicated, because the Christians will tell you that once you eat the mushrooms you are doomed forever to hell, Satan, and the devil." Well, it's

bullshit, you've got to be kidding. Where would that come from? Maybe the Christian control looked at these people, their paganism and everything, and just wiped out their connection with the other world.

It's very interesting that when the Jesuits arrived in Mexico and talked to the Indians and found them eating these mushrooms, they said, "What do you call it?" and they said, "We call it *teonanacatl*," and when they got their lexicons out and got that pieced together, what *teonanacatl* means is "flesh of the gods." Well, the center of the Catholic mystery is the Eucharist, a sacrificial meal where a small wheat wafer is believed to be transubstantiated into the body and blood of the son of God. So then to place the psychic experience which follows upon a good Holy Communion next to the psychic experience which follows upon a good dose of mushrooms, clearly these guys said, "This is competition we don't need, we're going to wipe this out," and it is interesting. Think about this for a moment. We grow so inured to these religious forms; think about the notion of instituting at the center of your religion a rite where you eat your god, and that is what is happening in Christianity. It suggests that this sacrificial meal idea, which can be traced back even to pre-Exilic traditions in Judaism, is probably a memory of a relationship to some kind of psychedelic experience of some sort. I think institutions will inevitably substitute a rite or a ritual for the real McCoy, because then priests can control the pipeline to God and the parishioner can approach with offerings. If everybody can have a pipeline to deity then the whole priest

scam is put out of business.

Audience: Has Buddhism substituted a ritual for the experience and then empowered the priests? In other words, has the process that you are describing in Christianity happened in Buddhism?

Buddhism is a heresy on Hinduism. It was Hinduism that did the dirty work for Buddhism. By the time Buddha came along, priesthood was an ancient tradition in India. I'm sure many of you know the Rigvedas, which are these tremendous outpourings of poetry which these Indo-Aryan people created as they came out of Central Asia and into India. The Rigvedas are entirely devoted to the praise of a mysterious plant, soma. The ninth Mandala of the Rigveda says, "Soma is greater than Indra, soma is greater than Vishnu." It just lists the entire pantheon and says, "Soma is greater than all of these things." By the time Buddhism is getting rolling, soma is a suppressed ancient tradition and the soma sacrifice, which is still being done, is being done with inert materials. If you want to read on this then read Wasson's book on soma and notice how it traces back to haoma, which is a yet older strata of religious ritual practice that was Zoroastrian and Iranian in origin. It's very clear that what we're talking about here is an intensely psychoactive plant and there's great argument about what it was. Buddhism, because of the long

historical record in the East, arises entirely within the historical context, so the suppression of the plant connection was in the earlier stratum of Hinduism.

OK, we discussed the central Mexican complex. It has minor components such as were mentioned here. *Salvia divinorum*, and there are others not chemically well understood but also not widely or regularly used, but then as you pass down across the Darién Gap and into South America proper there is just an explosion of available psychoactives. Not only the tropane complex of the daturas, which now reemerge in the subgenus *Brugmansia*, the arboreal daturas which we see around town as ornamentals with huge, pendulous, hanging white flowers. All of those tree daturas, with yellow, orange, red, white or purple flowers, originated in a very constrained area in the Andes and have been used for shamanic purposes for a long, long time. Also, coca is endemic to that part of South America — it occurs nowhere else in the world naturally — but more interesting from my point of view are the tremendous proliferation of DMT cults and options based around two pharmacological approaches: one, you orally ingest DMT at the same time as you orally ingest a MAO inhibitor. MAO is monoamine oxidase: this is the enzyme system that oxidizes monoamines, that makes them harmless. Monoamines are this whole family of drugs we're talking about, and many other things as well. If you don't have any monoamine oxidase in your body, then monoamines just stick around because the machinery to degrade them is inoperable. So, there are what are called MAO inhibitors. This means that you take this compound and it causes the monoamine oxidase in your body to be bound, it can no longer do its work. DMT ordinarily would be destroyed in the gut, in the upper gastrointestinal tract, but if you inhibit all the MAO in the upper gastrointestinal tract then the DMT is conveyed into the bloodstream, can cross the blood-brain barrier and initiate a psychedelic experience. This is the strategy of ayahuasca, also called yagé. North of the Caquetá it's called yagé, south of the Caquetá it's named

in the Quechua language *ayahuasca*.

This is a really fascinating thing for many reasons. First of all, this begins to look like the world's first truly designer drug. Notice what's happening here: all these other things I've been talking about — peyote, mushrooms, datura, cannabis, what have you — are single plants that require very little preparation. Basically, find it, eat it: that's the way you prepare it. Ayahuasca is very different: it's composed of two plants, neither of which is active except in combination with the other. So somebody figured this out. This may not sound like such an accomplishment until you stand in the Amazon basin and look around you, and realize that we're talking 50,000 species per square mile and 50,000,000 square miles, so how did anybody ever figure out that you take the leaves of the little bush and the bark of the woody vine, and combine them in these proportions, and boil them and concentrate it, and then you have this fantastic psychedelic drug? The only way that I can imagine is that somebody told them. My experience is that these plants talk. This does not make sense to the rational and discerning mind, but nevertheless it is

possible for one plant to lead you on to another.

A perfect example of this is actually in the chemical literature. Melvin Bristol was a student of Schultes in the late '60s and he specialized in the *Brugmansias*, the arboreal daturas, and he went to the valley of the Sibundoy, and there they actually add the datura to the ayahuasca. He took this ayahuasca, and while he was on it the ayahuasca entity showed him a man. He kept seeing this plant and he couldn't get out of his mind, and the next day after they came down from the trip he was collecting in the forest with Indians and he came upon the plant, the exact plant that he had seen in his vision. Well, he thought that was pretty strange, so he made extensive collections of this plant, took it back to Harvard, analyzed it and it was in fact psychoactive. It did contain psychoactive alkaloids. So we are tiptoeing over the surface of some kind of mystery. We maybe can bring ourselves to accept that a voice could speak on mushrooms telling you that you should be kinder to your children, or love your mother, or not be so hard on yourself, but it's a real leap for us to believe that a plant could tell you, "You know that plant over there? Analyze

that sucker!" In other words, real information, not information subject to personal interpretation.

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The whole of the Amazonian narcotic complex, as it's called in the old literature, is based on activation of DMT by one strategy or another. Either by drinking this "ghastly beverage," as the literature calls it, this psychedelic beverage, ayahuasca, or as you go east into the lowlands, the ayahuasca complex is replaced by what's called the snuff complex, and it is based around a number of species of myristicaceous trees. The *Myristicaceae* are the same family as nutmeg occurs in, although nutmeg is an Old World member of the genus. Several members of the *Myristicaceae* contain DMT in the inner bark exudate, and these Indians go out before dawn — before the first rays of sunlight strike the tree, because when that happens this resin retracts — and put their hands on both sides of the tree to determine the coolest side, and strip the bark from that side of the tree. Then they take these long strips of bark back to the village, burn a fire and let it burn to coals, and then spread the coals out; lay these long strips of bark on the coals with the "wounded" side up, the clean inner side up, and this orange resin will be forced out of the

bark and onto the surface. Then you can go along with a scraper of some sort, gather this stuff up, put it in a pot, cook it down, grind that in a mortar and pestle, and then you have a dandy paralytic arrow poison which can also be honked up as an outlandish hallucinogenic snuff.

There are many stories of these Y?nomam6 and Waika people going out on the hunt and honking up their supply of drug, just getting their poison arrows out and scraping off the points so the guys can get a buzz on and won't have to go back to the village. It's a very interesting complex, it hasn't been very much researched by Westerners and the reason is easy to figure out why. Here's how you take this stuff: you get with your buddy and you have a bamboo tube — maybe some of you remember this from The Emerald Forest — and you pack it with this ground bark exudate, then you hunker down in front of your friend, put the thing with the loaded end into your nostril, your friend takes a huge inhalation of air, blasts on the end of this thing and just drives this stuff up into your sinus cavities. Everything goes violet, you scream, you salivate outlandishly, you fall over backwards, and by the time you've gotten yourself together your friend has repacked the other side and is ready to give you that. Then you do that — it goes purple again, you scream, you salivate, you fall over — and then people usually say something like, "Good!" I'm sure you've seen the films about this. Napoleon Chagnon did a film, Juan Downey did a film; this is great filmic material. In these Waika villages, I wouldn't want to say it's a drug of abuse, but it's certainly a recreational drug. Not only the shamans are doing this, but people

are just doing it. You see people leaning against walls with a line of saliva coming out of their mouth and people just say, "Oh, he's doing the *ipina*." "Oh, OK." People are in various attitudes of consciousness and unconsciousness...

Coca, of course, there's not a whole lot to say about coca. It's an interesting example of a psychoactive non-psychedelic. The minute you hit the Amazon rainforest they are so concerned that you've been misinformed about coca. They say, "Not a drug! This is not a drug! This is a food, this is a good food, this food makes us healthy." There is some evidence that this is true, that cocaine bears very little resemblance to coca. Coca is not a spectacular experience. What I found was that the way coca works is that you've been sitting with these people for hours and they're talking in Witoto or some language that you have no hope of understanding, you're just about ready to excuse yourself and go to your hammock, and they drag out the coca. The way you do it — this is another thing where people miss the point in South America, because they have no idea how much you're supposed to do. Imagine taking a tablespoon and going into a jar or a sack of flour and getting as much flour as you possibly could on a tablespoon. I mean a high-walled tablespoon; so you get that much coca, you bring it to your mouth and you put it in. It's dry as dust, and the trick is to slime it over, get it into your cheek and hold it there, all without a break in your conversational flow. For a honky, the main effort is not to strangle and disgrace yourself in this scene, because it's usually no women, you're in the longhouse with the men, and these guys are the authentic bare-ass scarified folks, and you're trying to fit in and choking to death on this wad of coca. Well, it dribbles down your throat and suddenly these people don't seem so bad, this place doesn't seem so filthy and you don't seem so tired, and maybe you can make out what they're saying, and maybe you'll just try out a little of what you've picked up on. Before you know it you're the life of the party, and then about 20 minutes later you think, "Maybe now I'll knock off," and then like clockwork they reach for the tin can again and send it around, and

they will do this until it's all gone.

Let's see, which way shall we go? Let's jump across the water now to Africa. I talked a little about iboga; fascinating cult, very similar to ayahuasca in the social patterns that have arisen around it. The way ayahuasca is taken in the Amazon in the Mestizo populations that Luna is talking about is that people get together on Saturday nights in windowless sheds: about one third to have the trip, about one third because they have something physically or psychologically wrong with them that they want help from the shaman with, and about one third who are wannabes or just hanging in for the social occasion. In Zaire and Gabon where the iboga cult is operating, this same pattern exists. These things, ayahuasca and iboga in Africa, are the major forces resisting conversion to Christianity. They really are the native people's answer to the missionaries, and as

such they act as a tremendous force for social cohesion. Outside of the iboga complex, in Africa we really only have rumors.

You will meet shamans from this place and that place, and they even have come and spoken at this school. They claim knowledge of extremely powerful plant hallucinogens but they won't cough up the name, or the species, or a sample, and until that's done you have to be very skeptical that these things are real. One of the things that was so interesting to me, and I mentioned it this morning, is how the shamans are like scientists. We would take ayahuasca with these people and sing, and cure, and go through all these trips and hallucinations, and 6 or 7 hours later, as dawn was breaking and all but the most hardcore people had gone back to their huts, the assessing of the trip would begin. Inevitably people would say, "Well, this was pretty good, but I remember a time in Rio Yaguas when so-and-so made it, and it was like this and like this." In other words, amazing dope tales, amazing stories of other trips in other times and places and what had been achieved, so these shamans were consistently engaged in the search for the perfect high. They were not set in a cultural pattern, they were experimentalists, always on the lookout for

rumors of new plants, untried combinations, so forth and so on.

Returning then to the African situation, there is a complex of plants and suspect hallucinogens in southern Africa in use among the Hottentots, the aboriginal peoples of South Africa. In the family of the *Mesembryanthemaceae*, which includes the *Lithops*, the *Haworthias*, these little ground-growing things that look like stones, the so-called "rock plants," some of those contain mesembrine. Mesembrine is an alkaloid of some sort, with unresearched psychoactivity but a persistent enough rumor of its use that it should probably be checked on. Then when you turn to the Eurasian continent, the largest landmass on the planet, you discover what I referred to before: this surprising poverty of hallucinogenic plants. You get the belladonna complex, the tropanes, you get the opium complex. Opium poppies are native to Southeast Asia and have been used by people in Eurasia at least as far back as the ancient Scythians; we have accounts in Herodotus which make that clear. In fact, there's a considerable amount of Greek archeological material that shows opium diadems and opium poppies being used as ornaments by various goddesses, so

it was understood that it was psychoactive.

Audience: Robert Graves suggests in one of his books that the ambrosia of the Greek gods was actually psilocybin mushrooms. Have you ever come across another allusion to that?

Yes, well it's an interesting question, it has to do with Eleusis, and as you probably know, Eleusis was a major prophetic mystery site in classical and ancient Greece where every September a ceremony would be done, and the rule was that you could only do it once in your life, so you never got a second shot. Everybody in the Greek world would go at some point in their life — Plato, Aeschylus, Aristotle, the whole gang — everybody had this experience, and at the center of it something was drunk and something happened. There's been great argument about what it was and what happened. Wasson and Hofmann and Ruck, who's a classicist at Cornell, all wanted to argue that it was an ergotized beer. In other words, that on the Eleusinian Plain there was a kind of rye being grown which was infected with a strain of *Claviceps* that was mild enough that it was hallucinogenic without being convulsive or causing miscarriages or something like that. Because if you just go out and gather ergot smut, *Claviceps purpurea* — and you should be very careful with it, some of these ergot alkaloids can send you into convulsions and they're fairly toxic —

but it's conceivable that a strain grew on the Eleusinian Plain that was made into a kind of beer that was then this hallucinogenic intoxicant, but Robert Graves, who didn't have the kind of public relations machinery that Wasson had, had a different notion.

He claimed that the surviving recipes of the sacrament at Eleusis, and there were I think four examples of surviving recipes, all called for the same ingredients. Don't hold me to it, but I think the ingredients were barley, honey, water, and something else, *haisa*, maybe. He pointed out that a recipe for beer in Greece would never specify water because you understand that water is part of beer, so he said that these words were code words, and that in Greek the first initial of these four words could be arranged to spell the word ?????, *mykos*, which is mushroom, *mucus*. Part of the Indo-European language family believed that mushrooms are slimy. This is why the word *mucus* can be traced back to the word *mykos*, mushroom, *Mykones*. *Myconae*, in fact, means "the land of the mushroom," and so the role of mushrooms in generating the religions of early

Greece is a completely unexplored area, it's never been fully thought through.

This is called an Ogham, by the way, where you take the first letters of the items of a list and the first letters spell out a secret meaning, and it was a favorite trick of Irish bardic poets, which Graves was very much into. Here's a great project for somebody: we need someone to prove that you can brew a hallucinogen out of *Claviceps* on rye. I mean, this ergotized beer rap is just a phrase until somebody puts the stein on the table in front of you. It would go a great distance toward trying to prove their case. Someone should go to the Eleusinian Plain and see if they can still find any cereal grains growing there, and if so, can they infect them with *Claviceps*, or is there *Claviceps* in the area? Now, there's a problem here: I understand there's an oil refinery where the Eleusinian Mysteries used to be practiced, but even in California one could at least take a step toward understanding this, because we have in California species of grasses called *Spartina*. There's quite a population of *Spartina* on the cliffs above the sea just north of Santa Cruz. Well, *Spartina* could support *Claviceps purpurea* as an organism, so why not grow *Spartina* and attempt to infect it with a mild strain of ergot which you could get from the American Type Culture Collection or something like that? See if an ergotized beer could be brewed. The absence of mushrooms in these places does not disprove the theory, because all of the Mediterranean has been

drying out throughout historical times, and there are Greek vases and friezes which do show mushrooms in situations that are ambiguous as to whether or not they are being venerated or exactly what is happening.

I mentioned the *Argyreia* complex in India, that's the Hawaiian baby woodrose. That's an interesting one, and I'm always on the alert for these, because I'm interested in unclaimed indole complexes. In other words, why was *Argyreia nervosa* never utilized by anybody? It's extremely powerful, you only have to take 8 or 9 seeds, and you don't have to prepare it at all, you just chew it up and swallow it. How come there's no cult, no impact on the history of ideas? Well, we don't know. Those 13 species of *Argyreia* are spread from India down through Polynesia. It's called

Hawaiian baby woodrose, but it was introduced into Hawaii 100 years ago, it has nothing to do with Hawaii.

The only major complex that I didn't discuss is the cannabis complex. This is one that is not an indole, and there are many anomalous things about cannabis. First of all, it's what is called a polyhydric alcohol, the only psychedelic polyhydric alcohol known to science. It's an extremely old plant. I mentioned last night the relationship of the metaphors of storytelling and weaving and language, and of course hemp is a fiber plant. We find hemp mats that go back to as late as PPNB, Pre-Pottery Neolithic B. At Catalhöyük there are hemp mats. Well, it's very unlikely, what with tossing waste from weaving into fires and the oiliness of the seed and so forth, that the psychoactive properties of this thing were not discovered. Cannabis originates in Central Asia, the original species is *ruderalis*. Then very early in prehistory it divided into the resin race, *indica*, and the

fiber races, and then it was carried across the land bridge, presumably, into North America and that accounts for the *sativa* variant and so forth.

Herodotus describes, interestingly enough, that marijuana was used for thousands and thousands of years before it was smoked. One of the hardest things to wrap your mind around is the notion that until Columbus discovered the New World 500 years ago no one in Europe had ever conceived of smoking anything. It was a New World cultural practice, and if you read Columbus' diary of when he landed in the New World, he was amazed. He wrote, "The natives drink smoke." That was the only way he could imagine it: "What are you doing?" Then, of course, it was less than 100 years before it was a major vice of the sophisticated raconteurs of Europe. Within 100 years of the introduction of tobacco into Europe, tobacco was being buried in the graves of Lapland shamans above the Arctic Circle. So the shamanic nature of tobacco was immediately recognized, even in the European context. Herodotus describes marijuana ingestion as a process somewhat like being in a sweat lodge and then pouring hemp seeds and hemp waste onto the hot rocks and letting it mingle with the steam in this closed space and deep breathing, but nobody ever had the notion of a pipe or anything like this. It's very interesting for many different reasons, and one is that it's a new use for the human body, less than 500 years old in European culture. At Non Nok Tha in Northern Thailand, and in other Neolithic graves, they have found long bones, arm and leg bones with burned-out centers, and they don't know whether this was a marrow extraction procedure or if it was a chillum. A chillum is a ceramic tube, narrow at one end and wide at the other, and you pack it with hash and tobacco and then you hold it and inhale.

It may be that smoking was known in Asia in Neolithic times but somehow died out in the preclassical period and had to be reintroduced from the New World.

Audience: Terence, do you want to comment about *Amanita muscaria*?

Yes, I'm glad you reminded me. *Amanita muscaria* is perhaps the Old World hallucinogen *par excellence*, at least in the opinion of Gordon Wasson and a lot of other scholars. The problem with it is that it's extremely difficult to get a reliable positive experience from it. The reasons for this

are complex: first of all, it's geographically variant, it's seasonally variant, and it's genetically variant. So only if you have lived in an ecosystem virtually your entire life and have inherited the accumulated knowledge from the shamanic elders of your tribe are you going to know whether you've got a good one or not. Nevertheless, Gordon Wasson tried to argue that it was the ur-hallucinogen, the prototypic hallucinogen of prehistory used by these Vedic peoples who invaded India. In fact, he thought it was soma, and I had correspondence with him about it before he died. I

think the soma question isn't settled and it could well have been a coprophilic mushroom associated with the dung of cows. After all, the role of cattle in Indian religion is very central, and in fact the role of cattle in early religion generally is extremely central.

I mean, you do not get goddess religion in the ancient Near East without cattle worship. Cattle and goddesses seem to go very much together, and on the other hand, the Dionysian-Mithraic complex is a bull cult, and it too can be traced back into time until it's just lost in remote antiquity.

So, yes that's the Arctic mushroom used by Siberian shamans, and it's been made the prototypic hallucinogen, because Siberian shamanism was made the prototype of all other shamanism, only because some anthropologists somewhere decided that that would be a good idea.

Australia is again singularly poor in known hallucinogens. I always say in known hallucinogens, because somebody could go out into these places and come up with something brand new, something that we've overlooked. This is a great challenge for fieldworkers.

The other thing I want to say, and then I'll stop for today, is a bit about this issue of synthetics. Are all psychedelics the same? Are synthetics in any way inferior or superior to naturally occurring hallucinogens? If so, why or why not? This controversy began for me as an aesthetic issue. I just felt better about taking plants sanctioned by thousands of years of use, but I didn't particularly feel that it was a strong distinction. But the more time I've spent with it, and the more time I've spent with Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields, the more I come to see that I really think there is a very large distinction between synthetic and naturally occurring drugs. It's not a distinction that you're going to get a chemist to agree to, or a materialist. As far as they are concerned DMT from a plant or DMT synthesized in a laboratory are exactly the same thing, and as far as they are concerned, a synthetic hallucinogen like, I don't know, ketamine, let's give it the benefit of the doubt for the moment. Ketamine and a natural hallucinogen such as psilocybin, the differences do not reside in the fact that one is organic and one is synthetic. I think that

these plants take people as much as people take the plants, so that when you have a mushroom trip, you not only are having a mushroom trip, you are contributing to the future mushroom trips of everybody in the future who will take this thing.

In other words, you make a small offering on the altar, and that henceforth becomes part of the setting of the thing. It's like the notion of the Tao of the ancestors: when you take one of these ancient hallucinogens you are locking into the morphogenetic fields of all the people who ever took it. How else are we to explain the fact that when you take morning glory seeds you are flooded with Mayan imagery of staircase cities and hieroglyphed balustrades, people dressed in gold and Quetzl finery and all this, or that when you take ayahuasca, even in this culture, there is a

very strong impression of the jungle, of jaguars, of rivers. These things are coded into these compounds somehow. It seems to me, without talking about issues of toxicity and pharmacological uncertainty, that the content of the naturally occurring hallucinogens are much richer.

One last I point that I want to make to sum up this geographical survey of what is available is to say that, again, another research frontier is China. There is very little evidence of any use of hallucinogens in China, and yet there are clues that mushrooms were understood, that other plants may have been used, the knowledge of which has been lost. The Cultural Revolution did a pretty thorough job on wiping out this kind of traditional Taoist shamanic data. A very simple way of focusing the problem is to say that there has never been reported from China a psilocybin-containing mushroom, and yet I'll bet that if a reasonably informed investigator were to go to southern China and spend no more than 2 or 3 months off the beaten path, talking to country people, I'll bet you could come up with half a dozen psychoactive mushrooms with a history of folk

usage, it's simply that the question has not been asked.

Well, we're not going to have a clear understanding of the historical development of Chinese thought and institutions unless we know what their relationship to the invisible world precisely was, and I think that the indigenous tradition of shamanism, which then became Taoism, which

became the real substratum of Chinese religion while it weathered various late-grafted variants and foreign imports like Buddhism, but that native stratum of Taoistic shamanism hints very strongly that there was psychedelic usage of these plants in ancient China.

A couple of people expressed interest in this week that I'm doing at Esalen, so I might describe it a little bit. It's quite different from this, it's an in-depth involvement in the mathematics of the I Ching and then a theory that I evolved out of my engagement with that that has to do with the structure of time and analysis of history as a predictable phenomenon. It has no connection with psychedelics, other than that the entire thing was dreamed up under the influence of psychedelics, but it's a stand-alone idea. If I am able to control the group, I will keep it quite far from psychedelics except in moments of rhetorical desperation. If you are interested in the I Ching, don't let the word "mathematics" put you off. I am not a mathematician, and the best mathematicians aren't either. It's just a way of talking about it and doing analysis that was very fruitful, so that's a five-day, from the 28th of this month to the 2nd of December at Esalen. A lot of people will be bringing their computers, there will be a lot of machine implementation people. It will go from Taoist scholars to assembly language programmers, and everybody will have more of a

contribution to make than they suspect at the time.

Well, hopefully you turned some of this over in your minds in the time that we were apart. I certainly did, in the sense of trying to figure out what I had missed and whose concerns had not been met. What I came up with was your interest in the specifics of time, place, and manner, which

should certainly be covered because it's operational information.

Talking about the various visionary plant complexes that we talked about yesterday, each one of these things has a style and a set of demands that it makes on its practitioners. If you look at the ethnographic literature you then see how the people who have used these things over millennia have come to terms with them, how they have accommodated themselves to these things. For instance, in the iboga cult of Gabon, what is aimed for is that early on in the involvement in the plant, a massive dose is taken, and they say, "It splits your head open," and you never have to take very much again, because somehow a creode or a predilection has been created and then you are initiated into this. When you read the ethnographic literature it's hard to believe how much they say they are taking. There's a saying in Gabon — Bwiti is what they call iboga — "Bwiti begins at 60," and that means 60 grams. Even allowing for the fact that they're using fresh root and you might get a collapse rate of 50-75%, that still means they're saying that Bwiti begins at 15-20 grams, which from my own experience with this stuff I can tell you is not even a

conceivable place to begin. That's not a strong hit, that's an impossible hit.

You have to know, pharmacologically speaking, the window of effective activity. Every drug, every compound has a profile which you can imagine as a linear spectrum. Below a certain amount it's undetectable, above that amount it becomes detectable, first as this CNS arousal that I mentioned yesterday and then as a full-blown psychedelic experience. At higher doses it begins to have toxic effects; all drugs are toxins. People often make the mistake of thinking that if you have a toxic substance and you take half of it, then it's not toxic because there is no register of its effects, but of course everything is incrementally toxic. Some things are very safe, have a great range of effectiveness well below the range where any toxicity begins to set in; other compounds are active as psychedelics at a level just slightly below the level where you're going to begin

to have toxic effects. So you want to know what the profile is of the particular substance that you are thinking of taking.

In pharmacology, one of the parameters that they establish is an LD50, which is a fairly unpleasant concept which you should nevertheless be informed of. LD50 means lethal dose 50. This means that we have 100 mice and we give them an unknown drug; at the point where half of them die, that is the LD50 dose of that compound. There's an LD100 and LD10 and so forth. What you want is for the LD50 to be tremendously high relative to the effective dose. Now, the perfect or model compound in that case is of course LSD. LSD is active at the 25 microgram range, 25 ? . A microgram is a millionth of a gram. It's well below a smidgen. The LD50 for lysergic acid has never been determined. It's never been found how much it takes to kill half of the test animals, so that makes it a tremendously safe drug if mortality is the only concern. Of course, what most psychedelic trippers eventually realize is that mortality is rarely at risk in psychedelic experiences. What's at risk is sanity. Being nuts is not as bad as being dead, but nevertheless it can spoil your entire day. It's very reassuring to have taken a compound like psilocybin, and having

become totally convinced that you are dying, to remind yourself that the LD50 is 200 times more than what you took, and therefore it's impossible, and you merely have to discipline the hindbrain and take control of your fear and then you will be alright.

We've talked so much about hallucination here, and always because of my particular bent which I have unconsciously transferred to you we're talking about visual hallucinations, but all psychedelic explorers should be aware of the concept of what is called a cognitive hallucination. This is a much more insidious phenomenon; this is quite simply an out-and-out delusion. The commonest form of cognitive hallucination goes like this: you take mushrooms, an hour and 20 minutes into it it's getting mighty strange — this is especially a problem with first timers — and you realize

with the force of revelation that you didn't take psilocybin, you took a poisonous mushroom, and now you are going to die. This is an out-and-out cognitive hallucination which is as real as a belief, but it is not a disturbance in the visual field, it is a disturbance in the cognitive machinery.

A friend of mine had never taken mushrooms and was very concerned about how to do it and got the instructions from me — silent darkness, quiet room, stay sitting — and took them in his room in silent darkness. At about the hour and a half point he realized with a demonic chuckle that I had been kidding, I had been putting him on, and actually had told him to stay in his room because we were preparing a surprise party for him at the bar two blocks down the street. Chuckling to himself with this realization, he showered, dressed, went down to the bar, pushed open the door and said, "I'm here!" and the guy behind the bar said, "Oh, really?" Well, the trip got wilder from there, because in the wake of disconfirmation in one of these cognitive hallucinations people tend to become confused, paranoid and upset. You have to continuously track your mental processes and it's really good to stick with whatever rules that you've laid down for yourself. I actually apply this technique in my own life. If I get to the place where I cannot understand what is happening, I try to think back to the last moment when I did understand what was happening,

and then do what I said I was going to do then, having given up on understanding it in the moment.

The practical fallout from this in terms of psychedelic research is what we call the "chained to a tree technique," which is where you just chain yourself to a tree, and providing you don't hang yourself with the chain, this cuts down the possibility of doing something peculiar. With psychedelics this doesn't tend to be a problem, but for instance with datura, the best intended and most together people lose it completely and then come back into it 12 or 24 hours later to just survey the swath of wreckage that they have cut through their own and other peoples lives. I had a friend years ago, a very diminutive, attractive woman who took datura with a couple of boyfriends, waited hours and hours, nothing happened. They finally decided to go to their homes. She walked them down the stairs, said goodbye to them at the top of the stairs — it actually happened in the Haight. That was the last thing she remembered until she came to on the 6th floor of the federal building in the San Francisco County Jail. The charge was assault on arresting officer, and the evidence was the officer's thumb, which had been bitten off. She was an

Antioch PhD in medieval literature, so it happens to be the best of us.

Audience: Can't you eliminate a lot of that cognitive uncertainty by having somebody with you when you do this?

Yes, you can. I'm only speaking from my own experience, and I may have an odd take on it, because God knows, I'm odd, but to my mind the ideal situation is to have the sitter two rooms away, and to have a doorbell or the equivalent, because if the sitter is with you, you start to analyze the sitter. As someone once said to me in India, "Face is index of mind," and the sitter can just become an existential galaxy of possibilities, because you can read their history, their intent, their most secret thoughts — your belief in what are their most secret thoughts. People are concrescences of ambiguity that you don't want to get too tangled up with in that state unless you really are ready for the trip to take that particular direction. I don't know if it was in this workshop or the other night that I mentioned that I recall a trip I took with this English guy; it took me

two weeks to get his voice out of my head. It just became like this accompaniment to consciousness, this stream of sort of understated, English upper class gibberish on all subjects, and finally it retracted.

That's called becoming a victim of the transference. All psychotherapists are aware of this. The transference is when you get dragged into the other person's system of values or delusions. There's even a name for this in clinical psychology: it's called allophrenia. Allophrenia is schizophrenic behavior on the part of normal people in the presence of schizophrenics. This is a real problem. Your friend is put in the place, you go to see your friend to cheer them up, and your friend is not violently insane, but saying strange things, behaving in strange ways, and you, in an effort to relate to them, begin saying strange things and behaving in strange ways, and before you know it, the resident has to break in and escort you to the elevator because you're causing a problem in the ward. The transference is this phenomenon happening among people who are more or less psychologically healthy, but still it can be very disrupting.

I think the sitter should be there only if there's a three-dimensional emergency. I like the word "sitter," because it's operational, it tells what you should do. "Guide" is not such a pleasing word: this implies control, prior knowledge, hierarchy, so forth and so on. The best guide-sitter I ever knew was a wonderful old guy, he's dead now but I'm not yet ready to say his name in public, his style was that he read these paperback trash novels. He would just sit down with somebody, give them the stuff, and every once in a while they would fight their way out of this ocean of

hallucination to deliver some insight and he would just put down his book and turn to them and say, "That's nice, now go back to the music." This guy could get 600 pages in a situation where he was nominally in charge of a dozen people who were tripping. Non-intervention, I think.

Then there's the question of doing it with another person, meaning that the other person is going to be stoned too, and this has its own pitfalls and ambiguities. If it's your lover, your sexual partner, then in my opinion that's probably the best way to spend your time. If it's not, then the sky's the limit. You're going to learn more about this person than perhaps you were prepared to. Sometimes it's easy, it's no problem, everybody stays who they appeared to be before you took off, but sometimes the masks just start being hurled across the room in all directions and you don't know where it's going to leave you.

My approach, I guess, is one of two extremes. I sort of belong to the sensory deprivation school that says, "Lie down, shut up, silent darkness, music very judiciously, if at all," and I always do it at night, which some people find strange, but night is quiet, the energy dies down. There is calm and still between midnight and 4 a.m. The other end of the spectrum is someone like Salvador Roquet, who gives you three drugs, plays heavy metal rock 'n roll, then you get to see the Auschwitz film. I'm not kidding: it is an effort, so far as I can tell, to drive you absolutely starkers. I would not submit myself to that. This same polarity exists in therapeutic theories. Some schools of therapy want you to lose it, want you to weep, lament, rend your clothing, throw yourself on the floor, kick your feet in the air. This is called "getting out your stuff," or "working through your stuff." What I find about this kind of thing is that it resonates too long. It doesn't feel like you've gotten clear of it, it feels like you have simply objectified it, but life is an uncompleted puzzle; I could certainly change my mind.

I have never felt that the primary use of these things was to cure what is called in modern parlance "neurosis," what I call "unhappiness." It isn't for that. This may be the influence of Jung in my background. Jung felt that there was no such thing as normality, that the task of life was what he called individuation, and he felt that it doesn't really begin until you approach middle life. You must leave the 20s behind you, because they are so socially and hormonally turbulent that you're just basically trying to make sense of it on a day to day basis. Then you settle in and this unfolding takes place. I really assume that we are all beyond neurosis; not that we are not neurotic, but that we all have our own strategies and our own take on our own quirks and peculiarities. The psychedelic thing as tool is more to go beyond the legacy of the normal into the

transpersonal or the suprapersonal, and really view life as an open-ended domain to be explored.

I find myself talking to psychologists a lot — because this is where this has been seized upon, because it does perturb the dynamics of the psyche — but for instance, I don't think you should give people hospitalized for psychotic behavior psychedelics. They are having enough trouble. They are being overwhelmed by the contents of the unconscious 24 hours a day and have no tool to make sense of it. The rest of us can make sense of overwhelmed by the unconscious if it doesn't go on too long. I don't think there's any one of us who would wish to take mushrooms, arrive at the heights and just stay there. After 48 or 72 hours, some situation would arise which would cast us into an extreme state of disequilibrium. It's more like diving. A friend of mine said many years ago, "The yogi," and sub in "shaman," "psychedelic voyager," "The yogi and the schizophrenic dive in the same ocean, it's just that the yogi remembers to take his tanks along." That's what it is: there is this possibility of inundation and overwhelm. Well, let's return to the matter of dosage and set and setting.

Audience: You mentioned yesterday how you favored organic materials over synthetics. What about taking organic materials and then refining them and narrowing them down, getting rid of all the other ingredients in the plant? That's our Western tendency, to take something and refine it down and isolate the active ingredient and then take doses with that. Do you see that the natural ingredients in mushrooms, or ayahuasca, or whatever it is, have provided and sort of synergized the active ingredients and made the trip easier or smoother?

Yes, I think so. Rarely in a plant where you have a psychoactive compound will it occur all by itself. For instance, in the peyote cactus, there is mescaline, there is *N*-methylmescaline, there is anhalamine, anhalinine, there's a whole family, about a dozen of these things. Similarly, in the coca bush: cocaine, several other -caines and several other active compounds. When you take a plant, you're getting a broad spectrum of these active molecules that have a familial relationship to each other. No chemist has ever exactly explained to me what's happening, but I think all chemists and pharmacologists are aware of the fact that natural compounds, even extracted or purified, are smoother than their synthetic counterpart.

I recently had occasion to relearn this because there's been some amount of experimentation with 5-methoxy-*N,N*-DMT, which is not like DMT, but it is short acting and creates a profound oceanic emotion, but also in the pure substance there's a tremendous heart rush in the first 30 seconds. I mean, you just feel like you are in an up-elevator which knows no limit, and just about the time that you figure you're going to go into some kind of emergency situation, it tends to back off. So recently there has been this material in the underground called "toad foam," which is actually 5-methoxy-*N,N*-DMT extracted from the glands of a large southwestern toad. Well, when you smoke that, it too is 5-MeO-DMT, but there is no heart rush and it also doesn't last as long. It's much more benign and easygoing.

Even in cases where there isn't a detectably variant spectrum of compounds present — for instance, in *Stropharia cubensis* there are really only two active principles: psilocybin and psilocin, and psilocin is the dephosphorylated ester of psilocybin, so they are basically the same compound. Nevertheless, if you talk to somebody who has only taken Sandoz psilocybin, it's much less animated and interesting than organic psilocybin. The counterexample to this is that when Hofmann synthesized psilocybin for the first time, he gave some of it to Wasson, and Wasson took it back to Huautla in the Sierra Mazateca of Oaxaca and gave it to Maria Sabina, and Maria Sabina said, "The spirit of the mushroom is in the little pill." This story has been repeated over and over again. My assumption is simply that Maria Sabina was a wily old lady. It's not writ anywhere that

shamans have to always tell you the truth, and I very seriously doubt that the experience is the same, although I've never had the opportunity to take chemically pure psilocybin.

The difference between the morning glories and LSD is one of animation and color. The morning glories — I'm talking now about *Ipomoea* and *Turbina*, the Mexican species — when you take them there is a flood of Aztec, Toltec, Mayan imagery. It's just uncanny. You can't believe it while it's happening, that you would see this much carved obsidian, glyphs, Quetzl feathers and all of this stuff. Is it the morphogenetic field? Is it the broader vegetable spectrum of the alkaloid rather than the synthetic? Who knows; these things remain to be looked at.

In terms of the theory of morphogenetic resonance — some of you probably follow Rupert's ideas and Rupert himself — he problem is that the morphogenetic field is very difficult for instruments to detect. So far the only instrument I think that can detect it is the human mind. This probably means that it's perturbing a field that is very, very far removed from the fields associated with the four or five ordinary forces of nature. But for instance when you go to Tikhal in Guatemala, or Borobudur in Central Java, or Konark on the Puri Coast of India, and you take these psychedelics, the past is present. You see these places at their height, and you can say, "Well, it's just suggestion," but I don't know.

When I take ayahuasca, wherever I take it I encounter the motifs typical of Amazonian shamanism: the jaguar, the giant anaconda. To show you that sometimes the iconography of these compounds is not predictable: black people. Everyone in the Amazon says this, that you see black people. Well, there are no black people in the Amazon, not really. In the Lower Amazon there are a few, but in the Upper Amazon a black person is as rare as a Kurd, and yet everybody insists on this. I have had this experience on ayahuasca, and to call it "seeing black people" is a very mild gloss on what it is. It's like being at the Apollo Ballroom on a hot evening in 1960 and Aretha Franklin is onstage; I mean, it is a deep hit of blackness.

I don't know quite what to make of it. I don't know why, and Claudio Naranjo gave harmaline to urban people in Santiago, Chile — stockbrokers and advertising executives, people who have no connection to the jungle — and they reported jaguars, giant snakes, jungles and black people. This is a tremendously fertile area for Jungians to look into. Psychics have claimed since who knows how long that by holding an object in their hand they could penetrate its past states of being. Well, it's like all these other occult claims in my experience: mantra, yintra, yoga posturing, past life recovery. For me, none of these things are possible unless I'm stoned, and then they all become possible. It's like you just throw the switch and suddenly mantras work. I can chant mantras until hell freezes over in an unstoned state. The precondition for empowering occult idea systems seems to be a shift in brain chemistry.

It's to be noted that in these cultures where a lot of magic, a lot of violation of natural law is going on, there is a lot of psychedelic stuff going on. Among the Aguaruna-Jivaro for instance, a very no-nonsense tribe of headhunting people in the Amazon, the shamans live continuously in a state of altered consciousness. I mean, they are taking this stuff all the time, it is a food item. What would it be like to be the shaman of the Aguaruna in the jungle, all the time taking all this stuff? It's hard to imagine, because when you just do it once all plants have auras, all plants have songs which can be extracted out of them. They are living, literally, in some kind of other dimension.

Audience: I'd like to play devil's advocate, if I can for a minute, about this whole idea that certain plants or certain substances have certain attributes or certain places that they take people to. I've had the ideation that you're talking about — the visualization of the snakes, the cats, the jungle, the pyramids, the whole Mayan aspect, jungle and shamanic routine — on LSD, on mushrooms, on ibogaine and on yagé, and I've had clients that have had the same ideation doing breathwork.

Yes, this raises a real question. I don't understand exactly how this works. I will join your side for a moment because there's a phenomenon that I've noticed, and some of you have heard me talk about it. It's possible to do this on psilocybin; it's really easy to do it on ayahuasca.

Ayahuasca, in a way, is somehow more open to suggestion. These other things have their own agenda; ayahuasca will work with you. One of the bizarre things that you can do on ayahuasca is that you can suggest a period, let's say Italian Baroque. You just say it in your mind and paintings, altarpieces, architectural spaces, balustrades, vehicles, armaments, saddlery, clothing, serving utensils, bowls, pewter, candelabra, all of this stuff will begin drifting toward you, and it is high Baroque. In fact, it is more Baroque than the Baroque, it's obviously what they were

shooting for. Then you say, "Dynastic Egypt," and you get a hawk-headed guy. Then you say, "Art Deco," and thousands of cigarette lighters and coffee tables appear, more intensely realized than when you actually encounter these things in real life.

Well, what does that mean? I have no idea. First of all, the possibilities seem to be that what we call styles or motifs are actually categories in the unconscious, but the amazing thing about it, having looked at the Italian Baroque, Dynastic Egypt, and Art Deco, is that you can also say to it, "Surprise me," and suddenly it can surprise you, 100%. It can show you objects that you cannot place to any set of motifs, any historical period, past, present or future, and then you can say to it, "Surprise me again," and it gives you Surprise B, which is completely different from Surprise A and also not related to any known style. So then you say, "Are styles categories in the unconscious? How many of them are there? What does it mean then for a group of people in 1680 or 1930 to suddenly find one of these places and punch into it?" Then another question is, "Is there a necessary historical progression, or is it by chance?" In other words, "Could the political world of the 16th century have lived with the design motifs of Art Deco? Could we have had Columbus arriving in America in a ship consonant with the best canons of Bauhaus design?" Strange

questions, friends. "Is there necessary succession in style or are these things pure chance?" I don't know.

Returning to and responding to your demonic advocacy, it may be that going to Tikal preconditions you and that pushes the button, and then when you take the psychedelic you realize that the high Mayan, the classic Mayan button had been set, and then you find all of this stuff. It's a little more bewildering to have it happen in your living room.

Audience: My feeling about it is that those experiences are available to anybody in various states, with various ways to get there, and I don't feel that it is mutually exclusive to say that some substances do seem to have a certain predilection for certain kinds of experiences. I've had both feelings about it, that the bandwidth of experiences is available and some things are more likely to put me there than others.

Well, LSD is a relative of morning glories, so if you got Mexican imagery off of LSD that would be understandable. It may be that all the indoles resonate together, and Rupert is fond of saying, "The thing which is most impinging on the present is the immediate and most closely related past," but also impinging are the related past moments and the related contingencies. Perhaps all of the indoles can access each other. One thing that I've done on psilocybin — and you might try this, this is an interesting experiment — once you get it up and running smoothly, then you can say to it, "Be MDMA!" and it will be it, and you can say to it, "Be LSD!" It loves to do imitations of other psychoactive drugs. I don't think you can say to MDMA, "Be DMT!" and it will move over into that space. You hope not, don't you? Obviously, it's some kind of freely commanded modality in the psyche with which we can have a relationship if we will but evolve a control language and a dialogue. It remains mysterious. A point that I made yesterday that I think is worth repeating is that the psychedelic experience is the beginning of the spiritual path. That's why it's

not important that yogis claim that they can deliver you the psychedelic experience, because it begins with the psychedelic experience and then you go from there.

I said something like this a few weeks ago at the John Ford Theater in L.A., and this guy got up and said, "So why don't you take more?" which I think is a very interesting question, very valid for me, personally. Our whole lives, we conceive of spiritual development as looking for the answer: is it Taoism? Is it diet? Is it tantra? We look for the answer, and I think we have become so accustomed to looking for the answer that it's never really entered our minds what it would be like to find it, to have it. Once you come face to face with these psychedelics, the trail ends. You have found the answer. Perhaps because you're smart, perhaps because you're lucky, perhaps because you deserved it, perhaps because you hang out with the right people, you have found the answer. Now the question is, "What the hell do you do with it?" because the answer is

going to make hash out of your life, because your life is based on living without the answer. Suddenly it's not, "I want to be an enlightened being, I want to be a shaman, I want to be a Taoist, I want to be a yogi." Be it, see how you like it!

So the answer to the question, "Why don't you take more?" is because I am attached, basically. It is entirely my own attachments that now impede my spiritual growth. Nobody is holding me back, nothing is holding me back except my sense of the awesomeness of what is now possible. This is true of everybody who reaches a certain point. Think of the Taoist sage on Cold Mountain who has been up there in the fog and the mist and the rock escarpments for 30, 40, 50 years, and the people in the village occasionally mention him to each other and say, "Is old Fuzhi still alive? Has anyone seen him recently?" and someone will say, "Oh yes, I saw him three years ago across a valley gathering wood, but when I approached he ran further up the mountain and disappeared." To be Fuzhi is entirely possible, to actually attain what we have previously thought of as unattainable spiritual accomplishment, but I don't think it can happen without leaving everything. Do you really want to be a Taoist hermit circulating the light for 200 years in a cave, high up above the timberline? You can; there's nothing stopping you once you understand that this

psychedelic vehicle is available. I am appalled at that. I mean, it's one thing to change your life to be nicer to your coworkers, it's quite another to change your life to be incomprehensible to 99.9% of all humanity.

Once you have the psychedelic tool in hand, then real choices have to be made. What is this to you? Is it simply something that you do once or twice a year to affirm to yourself that it's possible? Is it something that you can use in some way for your good and the world's? That's sort of where I have come to rest, and I hope it's not a delusion, but I think that there are ideas out there, and that they don't do any good out there, that they only have efficacy if brought into three dimensions. There are all kinds of ideas, in fact they are all ideas. So we're talking about a more efficient internal combustion engine, how people can learn to love each other, how to save the planet, the most efficient way of packing crackers in a box for long shelf life and low destruction of their structural integrity. It doesn't matter what the problem is, the answer can be found out there. It puts people who are into this psychedelic thing in an entirely different stance from all other spiritual seekers, because all other spiritual seekers are furiously seeking. Psychedelic people are holding it back with all their power because they are in the presence of the mystery, and

then the trick is to get a spigot on it so that it can be turned on and off, rather than just coming at you like a tidal wave a mile high and twenty miles wide.

It's a different problem, an embarrassment of riches, an embarrassment of access to past, present, future, alien dimensions, mantra-hoarding elves and promise-bearing demons. Strangely enough, it creates a certain kind of conservatism. I don't think that everybody realizes this. Many people take psychedelics in order to prove to themselves that they can, and then gain acceptance from their social group. It's a way of fitting in. You can always evade the mystery, not always, but if you're trying to from the get-go you can evade fully confronting the mystery, but if it's

what you want, you will quickly discover that you have hit the main vein, and that changes the rules of the game pretty entirely.

Audience: Some psychologists say that psychedelics will only take you so far, and then you have to do something else, but my experience with it is that that's not true and it will take you as far as you're willing to go.

That's what I think, I think people who quit doing it see something, detect. If you think of the self as a diamond, the psychedelic is pressure on the diamond. You can raise the pressure to 1,000 pounds per square inch and there are no structural flaws, but if you raise the pressure to 10,000 pounds per square inch microflaws begin to show and sheer lines appear, because everything will fly apart at a certain level. One cannot encompass this mystery. I think finally you have to avert your eyes and just — "adore" is a strange word, and "worship" is also a strange word — but

certainly give credit to. It is not a program that you finish, and people who say, "I learned all I could from it," probably learned mostly that they shouldn't do more of it.

Audience: I think it threatens to put people out of a job, especially psychotherapists.

Well, it threatens to put anybody out of a job, because eventually the contradictions of living in this low-level slice of reality will just become unbearable. This actually happened in the '60s, many people quit and dropped out for many reasons, but the seed of all that talk is that you just say, "This is absurd, I am going to sit." That's not absurd. But what about your stockbrokerage? What about your portfolio? What about your divorce in progress? I think that the depth of this cannot be taken. Eventually the male ego in every single one of us, regardless of our gender, will feel threatened, because it's hardly different from death, because you're not going to recognize yourself. That's the point that I wanted to make in talking about the guy up on Cold Mountain. Once he ran a gas station, once he followed the Dodgers, but then it all began to slide in a certain

direction and he is no longer recognizable to himself.

Carlos Castaneda has Don Juan say, "You must lose your personal history." I don't know whether Don Juan is a real person or whether he ever said that, but it's interesting, that notion. How many of us would be willing to become unrecognizable to ourselves? And yet obviously that's the path that one is on, and so then you just decide, "Is there an obligation to go to the end? Do I have to become a genie? Do I have to become a Taoist sage, an immortal?" and I think the answer is no, one doesn't have to do that. Buddhism creates the notion of the Bodhisattva, that is in a way this same thing. It's where you're just about to go over the hill into incomprehensibility, and then you say, "Wait a minute, what about the people in the prisons, the naked, the hungry, the oppressed?" and you pull back and say, "No, I forswear enlightenment until the last being attains enlightenment." Well, it's a noble gesture, but I'll bet these Bodhisattvas make this vow with a tremendous sigh of relief. Now they know what they're going to do with their lives: they're going to work in prisons, or council the dying, or get into political action. "Gee! For a minute I

thought I was going to go straight into the light, and become unrecognizable to myself and lose my definitions," and so forth and so on.

Audience: The two words that struck me were "adore" and "worship." On Friday night Matthew Fox quoted, "We have come to a point in history where we must either find some form of meaningful worship or commit suicide," and somehow that quote came back when you mentioned, "When one may reach that point of the penultimate truth, of the unspeakable, or the formless form, or the light," and the mushrooms are pointing the way. Breath therapy, all these things are only something that points you to the ultimate, and when you get there it moves into the adoration and the worship level. Interestingly enough, coming from a recovering Catholic, I could never find any kind of religious community and I didn't want to join a monastery for that purpose. What I see is this neurosis or unhappiness that exists in so many people in this country. They have no

contextual format for worship, because it doesn't have that power for them to do it.

You have to have the personal experience of something to worship: this is what has been lacking. What the churches are peddling is high abstraction, and you really have to work yourself up into a lather to be able to accept that as worthy of that kind of attention. The psychedelic subset of society is into an experience, it's accessible. In a way we're like Calvinists, not in our ethics or our restraint on behavior, but in our insistence on a direct personal relationship with the mystery. This is something very new. We have really accepted the idea that truth descends through hierarchies, basically from Newsweek and Time and the Washington Post down to us, as consumers of these various images of what is going on. The notion that you might know more about reality than the combined editorial board of Scientific American and the Journal of Foreign Affairs is startling stuff. We always give ourselves away, we don't realize that it only depends on you. To believe that at Cornell or down at SRI people understand the universe is not helpful. You must understand the universe, and if you don't know partial differential calculus then your model of

how the universe works must do it without partial differential calculus. In other words, it's not writ anywhere that only one model will work, and in fact I think that all abstract models should be highly suspect.

We have to view life as an opportunity. What are you doing with it? Are you afraid of it? Some people live their lives and apparently what they are doing is arranging their deathbed scene. They want it to take place in a large baronial house with clipped green lawns, acres in surround, they

want the room in which they die to be filled with fine art, they want their loving heirs to be dutifully assembled while they pass out the final wisdom, and they spend their entire life creating the dramatic scenario of their passage. Of course you have to work hard, because you've got to make the money to buy that house, you have to sire all these children, educate them into your values so they won't be stabbing you in the back and misbehaving in this situation. You have to create loyalty, possession, power, all of these things and then you won't die in a ditch, unknown and

abandoned; but on the other hand, what was the quality of that life?

Life is an opportunity: how much pressure should you put on it? How many places should you go? How many drugs should you take? How many sexual configurations should you experiment with? How many professions? It depends; the question, I think, is, "How seriously do you take it?" Do you just think that life is a lark and it's fine with you that you're going to go into a pine box and be forgotten for all eternity, or do you have some inner consolation that that won't happen and you're going to go off and be with Lao Tzu and Mao and everybody else who ever died? Just

what is it? I think of it as a telephone booth being filled with water. You can see that when the water reaches the top of the telephone booth you're going to be dead as a doornail, so you have 30 years to figure it out.

We are alive, there's no contest about that. It's extremely improbable that we should be alive, that we should be here thinking, feeling, sharing. The fact that we're alive throws open the whole game, means anything is probably possible, but I doubt that it's easy. I'll bet that you have to be very smart to figure out what's going on and get it right, so I guess I have a private religion of intelligence. It isn't how good you are, it's how wily you are, which was the Greek virtue of Odysseus, that was always his epithet. He was "wily Ulysses." Reality is some kind of maze, a puzzle garden that you walk through to try to find your way out. It isn't to the swift that the race goes, it's to the thoughtful, to the careful, to the one who can tease it all apart. For puzzle solving, the psychedelic is this tremendously powerful tool, because it extends the domain of mind, and

that's what's necessary to make it go.

OK, moving through these things and discussing dosage, probably in order of the likelihood of your encountering them. Mushrooms: I feel that people who weigh around 140 pounds should take five dried grams. This is a stiff hit. This is a committed hit. There will be difficult moments in a five gram trip, but on the other hand certain questions will be solved forever for you, because you will validate the existence of this dimension, you will see what your relationship to it is. I don't believe in diddling with these things. People tend to take tiny amounts, thinking that one tenth of a dose is one tenth of an experience. It doesn't work like that; half a dose can be no experience at all, and a full dose can feel like ten of these experiences, so trivializing it is really, and I use this word advisedly, sinful, because you are trivializing the only mystery. It's like trivializing sex. The ordinary objections to pornography are not my objections, but to my mind a very strong objection to pornography is that it trivializes, and anything which trivializes anything central to our self-definition is bad mental hygiene. Taking small doses of psychedelics tends to trivialize them.

There are people who probably take LSD every weekend and go dancing and have done this for years and have no idea what LSD is capable of.

The main shift in the use pattern with LSD is: it may have been childish, but the style of the '60s was, "How many mics can you bolt down?" "Have you had the 500? Have you had the 1,000? Have you had the 2,000?" Eventually it becomes moot because you just dissolve into shimmering atoms for longer and longer periods of time on these trips, but the modern approach, which is, "How little can you get away with taking and still be one of the gang?" is even more insidious, because then people feel capable of talking about these things. There are people who feel that their opinions on the psychedelic experience should be weighed very carefully who have only taken MDMA. Well, listen, I've got news for you: that is to the domain we're talking about like a broken tricycle to a Testarossa Ferrari. So this is a general comment, that you should take a committed dose of whatever it is you're taking so that there is no ambiguity, because there's nothing worse than a sub-threshold psychedelic experience. It's all show and no go: you feel the CNS activation, you feel the keyboards light up, everything comes on, you start down the

runway, you pick up speed, and then you come to the end of the runway and taxi back to the hangar. Well, that was not a flight to Boston, that was just clogging the traffic pattern.

So, committed doses. Then, because you're going to take a committed dose, inform yourself of the medical and pharmacological chitchat on the matter so that you can feel reassured. Talk to a heart specialist, questions like, "If my heart is pounding, does that mean I am having a heart attack? What is a fibrillation and how will I recognize it?" because you can have very odd feelings and not be in any danger whatsoever. Your heart can pound — it's made to pound, look at all these aerobic exercise freaks — well, the fact that you're sitting still when this begins to happen doesn't mean that you've been shoved to death's door, it just means that everything is equalizing and coming to some kind of equilibrium, and you're passing through a transition. These drugs do have a kind of Mach barrier. In other words, there is a barrier somewhat like the speed of

sound. It's a pharmacological and physiological barrier. So you take the compound, the plant, whatever it is, nothing happens for 40 minutes or so except false starts and little things and you have to pee and then you come back and sit down, and then it begins to come on.

It can have many manifestations. It can be chills, tremoring, knotted stomach, nausea, restlessness, so forth and so on. This is what I call, taking a page from the engineering book, "Q." "Q" in engineering circles is vibration in a physical system. When they launch the space shuttle, if you listen to the radio chitchat they will say, "Approaching max Q," then they'll say, "Max Q, mark," and then they're through that. What that means is that as the system approaches a transition it begins to shake, it begins to shake as though it's going to shake to pieces. The Q forces are building on all the air surfaces, the airframe. Then you break through that, Q falls to 0 and then you're in the cool, main engine cut off. You are now in orbit, all vibration has ceased, noise has ceased. You are in orbit, you are weightless, you are there. It's different. Now you shut down all these switches related to the launch procedure and begin to set a course through a different kind of medium, a medium characterized by smooth stillness and that sort of thing. LSD: I don't see anything wrong with 300-400 micrograms as an initial dose. I don't see any point in running up into the 1,500-2,000 μ g range, because in my experience what happens at higher doses is that there is simply an area where you can't remember what happened, and the higher the dose, the longer that period of time, but since you can't remember anything about it, it should be

shortened. DMT: 70 milligrams vaporized in a glass pipe.

Audience: I have taken very large doses of LSD at times and it's always seemed to me that it's very difficult to process all that's going on. The biocomputer shut downs for a while, and like you said, I forget.

Yes, it overloads, it just shunts it past you. What do we need to cover here? DMT, psilocybin, LSD, MDMA, which probably you all know, 125-150 milligrams, and because I tell you these doses it doesn't necessarily mean I approve of all these things. I'm just saying that if you take them, these are the doses. Ketamine: people take small amounts, again usually after attaining some amount of proficiency with it. I've only done it four or five times, and always fairly large doses, 130-150 mg. Interesting compound, but contraindicated because of physiological problems. It depresses the immune system, there's the possibility of epileptic kindling. Certainly, if you were to vomit in that state, you might well strangle because you wouldn't be able to clear your throat. What I also have against ketamine is that you have to shoot it. As I was driving home last night I was listening to some program and they were talking about intravenous drugs and I thought, "How interesting. That's a distinction you don't hear made very often." They were saying, "We should legalize all drugs except intravenous drugs," so that's of course morphine, cocaine, heroin,

ketamine, steroids, I suppose. That's an interesting distinction, operationally.

Audience: You can snort ketamine, can't you, though?

You can, but I've heard that it's dangerous. When they give it as an anesthetic it's 600 mg IV push, which must be just like being struck from behind by a freight train. I'm sure you never know what hit you. I mean, imagine an exploratory dose is 100 intramuscular, they are talking about IV, directly into the vein, 600 push, that means pressure on the feeder. So it's just like a high pressure filling of your gas tank, you would never know what hit you. Now they've pulled it from general surgery, even veterinary surgery, because it seems to depress the immune system and

the worst thing you could do is to do surgery on somebody and then put them into a surgical recovery ward with a depressed immune system. So that is kind of out.

I must say about ketamine that it did something to me that nothing else has ever done, which is that it erodes the observer in a way that the indoles don't. On ketamine you can get so out there that it is a major intellectual breakthrough to realize that you're on a drug, in other words, there's this situation and it seems like it's always been there and it always will be there and you can't remember who you are, or what you are, or where you are. This situation continues, and there's something about it but you can't quite put your finger on it, and there's never been anything else, there will never be anything else, and then suddenly comes this tiny thought: "You're on a drug!" "Oh, right, I remember now. That's it! That's it, I'm a human being and I took a drug. This is a trip. That's right, I'm on a trip. Now I've got it!" Well, what this means is that

you're now coming down because the trip is now over with.

Audience: I had this experience with mushrooms. For hours I had no connection to anything which had any connection to my personality or to life. It was wonderful to be there and to see what makes up our minds, how this world is made up, with all of its structure and architectural designs.

Yes, maybe this is the white light. Maybe this is what these early LSD people were so enamored of, getting so far into it that you don't even know you're into it, because you can't remember where you started from. It's not what I'm shooting for because I always want to bring stuff back. My belief is that this stuff is important for all of us, that we are in some kind of lower-dimensional slice and what you see in the psychedelic experience actually has historical implications. I find this sort of paradoxical because I'm the person who draws everybody's attention to the fact that

people have been doing this for 50,000 years, so in a way that sounds like I'm saying, "It's not a big deal, it's part of the human heritage, certain people have always known about this."

Audience: The point between when there's nothing and when the observer kicks in: that's a big issue in my life, where does the observer come from? Is it an evolutionary thing, like animals never have it when they fade into the white light? Do you have anything to say about that little

place in between?

I think it begins with self-reflection. In other words, the question, "What is happening?" I don't think animals ever ask that question. For animals, what's happening is what's happening, but we are capable of creating a state of distance and posing the question, "What is happening?" and at that point in the trip it means that you are making your way back to the modality that you left from, you are drawing away from the translinguistic place — and it truly is translinguistic: nothing can be taken out of it — but at the interface of the sayable and the unsayable is the novel, the new, the never before seen, said or done. I think it's important to try to bring out ideas because I think we are the animals that bring back ideas. Somehow our hunting and gathering adaptation then set us loose in our own minds, and somebody came back and said, "Let's throw a chunk of this

meat in the fire and see what happens." It's this "see what happens" attitude, so then suddenly they discovered that meat burned in fires is easier to digest and tastes better.

By this means, this, "Let's see what happens," approach to things, the ideas come in the mental dimension. The, "Let's see what happens," translates those of them that can be translated into three-dimensional space. "Let's plant this plant, let's slaughter this animal, let's try sex this way, let's go over that hill this year instead of that hill." What has come out of this is the entire legacy of our cultural heritage as a global civilization, but all of these ideas began in the mind. What are ideas? This is the central question of Platonic philosophy. What are we that we seem to separate the doable from the undoable in the realm of ideas? Anything that can be done, we do. It doesn't matter how perverse, how painful, how destructive, how grandiose, how wonderful, how sublime; if it can be done, we do it. Then, in this three-dimensional domain of space and time, these ideas compete with each other like organisms and an ecology of mind evolves. That's really what culture is: it's the ecology that mind has created for itself, in the same way that bees create a beehive and then the beehive is the cultural context of beesness. We have created

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civilization through language and then civilization has become the context for humanness, and yet we always seek to transcend it and go beyond it.

Now, I don't know whether this is something innate in us or whether it is somehow programmed in from the planet at different levels. It's very interesting, I don't know how many of you are aware of this, but there are leafcutter ants in the tropics, they are a major part of life in the tropics, and they march in columns through the jungle, and they can swarm up a tree and take all the leaf material off a large jungle tree in a matter of hours. What they do with these leaves is that they return, sometimes at great distances, each one carrying like a little banner a chunk of leaf, and they go down into their nests, chew it up and stick it on the wall, and then some of them go back to the surface and gather spores on their antennae, and then they go back down into the anthill and they inject or inoculate the chewed plant material with these spores. Naturally, this chewed plant material is pretty organic and funky, so it begins to grow all kinds of things: molds, mildews, bacteria, so forth and so on. The ants farm this and weed out all these bad bacteria and small microfungi and organisms, and only cultivate this one fungus which then converts the plant

material into a usable sugar. This is a symbiotic relationship between the fungi and the ant. The ant is getting an enriched food out of this and what the fungi is getting is a cultivated situation where all its competitor organisms are carefully kept away and weeded out.

This is precisely, in my model, what is happening with the human species at a more complex level. In other words, by domesticating cattle we have set up an environment that is very favorable to the growth and appearance of what would otherwise be a very rare deep forest mushroom, but because we domesticate cattle and clear land we have created a huge circumtropical global environment in which these mushrooms can reside. What they make for us is not sugar but ideas, something we need the way ants need sugar, and these ideas take all kinds of forms and then we refine them. I really believe that human populations that do not have contact with the psychedelic tremendum are neurotic, because they are male ego-dominated. The reason I call it male ego is because women, by virtue of physiology, basically, are pretty unavoidably welded to the nitty gritty, because they give birth, they carry children to term, and those two things are biologically dictated. There is also the cultural dictate that women are usually involved in preparing and burying the dead in traditional societies, so women know how weird it is. Surely, to give birth must give you a perspective that anybody who has never done it just cannot hope to have. The male ego floats on this myth of separateness that no woman has the luxury of entertaining, because birth, pregnancy, menstruation, care for the sick, care for the dying, these are boundary dissolving activities that keep women close to the nitty gritty. The male organism can go off into its own private Idaho, pretty much. Often what child rearing means is the simple act of impregnation, and that's the contribution in many cases, in primitive and modern societies. Death is

something that the women take care of. At birth in primitive societies men are never present; women do it alone or with other women.

In these Neolithic and Paleolithic societies this tendency of the ego to tumorize and grow in individuals was kept down by a chemical regulator, which was the psychedelic experience. It was part of the food chain and it suppressed ego, much in the way that drugs are given in prisons to suppress libido, because it's hard to manage a highly libidinous people in an institutionalized situation, especially when only one sex is involved. So this natural regulation of the human species by regulating this psychic function called ego was disrupted with the invention of agriculture. The hunting-gathering society with its deep involvement in ecstasy, these weekly or biweekly psychedelic orgy/ecstasy picnics that people used to have, that gave away, Weston La Barre makes the point that ecstasy is not at a premium in agricultural societies because it's disruptive. What is at a premium in agricultural societies is the ability to get up before dawn and pick up your tools and go to the fields and work like a dog. If people have been up all night before, dancing and tripping, they can't do that. The psychedelic gods are replaced by cereals — corn, wheat, rice — and of course at a very early strata in the Neolithic you do get the emergence of the Great Corn God and all this. Frazier is full of talk about this. So we are living the legacy of millennia of cultural neurosis in Western civilization by virtue of the fact of the untreated growth of the cancerous ego. We know this, it's simply that we assume there is no cure, we assume that it's natural to have ego and that it's somehow unnatural to suppress it. Wherever you have an outbreak of psychedelic use in a high-tech society then you see reformed, hang loose, communal, caring

values. Values come into prominence within the community.

Audience: Have you seen a difference in the way men and women react to psychedelics, given the fact that perhaps men embody a stronger male ego than women? My other question has to do with the role of observer ego when you're doing drugs, whether it's marijuana or alcohol or especially psychedelics. Sitting here, thinking that the reason that I don't take anything stronger than marijuana is that I lose myself even in a strong hit of marijuana, I lose my ego completely. I get a different form of the experience if I don't get fearful and paranoid, but it's easy to get scared when the sense of the observer ego just goes and I don't remember that I'm on a drug trip and it seems timeless and eternal. Then I come down later. As you were saying, at the backside of the high I say, "Oh, yes, I just took some marijuana two hours ago. Everything's fine, I'll

recover tomorrow." Maybe you can talk a little about that and what people can do who don't have a strong ego structure, whatever it takes to do these powerful drugs. I don't think I would be able to handle it.

If you don't have a strong ego structure, chances are you're not a heavy-duty male dominator, because they're sort of antithetical. I think probably cannabis was a major ego dissolver and that all these things have been used this way, and if that works for you, that's fine. I didn't take psychedelics to lose my ego. Although people said that would happen, I never quite understood what was meant, but looking at it as a mass phenomenon, where you're not talking about an individual tripper but tens of thousands of people, inevitably this feminizing of values seems to take place. I don't know if men and women experience psychedelics differently, I've never quantitatively looked into this, but my impression is that it's less of a surprise to women and that they feel less of a need to do it. I think this is particularly true of cannabis; I'll bet that two thirds of cannabis use is male use. Why is this? I'm not sure. Maybe women have too much work to do, too many obligations. The old man can sit and smoke dope, but somebody has to do the shopping, get the kids to school and pick them up, keep the insurance paid and all that. Women, I think, have a different relationship to it. Women are often shamans, and in many cultures the best shamans are usually felt to be women. Women are connected up to all of this stuff. Drug taking may not be a male enterprise but history is a male enterprise. I don't think we would have ever

gotten into it if it had been up to women.

In a way, the women outsmarted themselves because they had, not control in the conscious sense, but they were sitting in the front of the canoe and then they invented agriculture and that undercut their own position, because the vast repository of plant knowledge that had been the secret knowledge of women no longer really mattered as long as you knew how to grow corn and a couple of other things. The vast encyclopedic data on wild plants became less important and it became more labor intensive. Men, because they had evolved toward being efficient hunters, probably did have a physical edge on women in terms of stamina and the ability to work with a hoe for 8 or 9 hours a day, because what the women did when they were in the prime cultural situation was that they gathered. They looked at stuff and talked about it with each other, and this was the domain in which language then arose. Gathering is not hard work, it's just steady work, and it's lots of fun if you do it with your friends. The cliched notion about aboriginal peoples is that women chatter, this phrase, "the chattering of women" in primitive situations. It really is true that women avail themselves of language much more than men in these prerelative situations. The men are hunters and they act like hunters: they're stoic, they hold it all in. Literally, the larger bladder size of men is thought to be related to the hunting adaptation and so forth. The men are stoic, they're holding it in; the women are information freaks, for them it all rides on information. "Where do you find it? How do you cook it? What does it look like? What does it taste like? What time of year is best? What soil is best? What do you combine it with? Is it good all year round? What

do the flowers look like? What does the fruit look like?" Data, information. How could you ever understand the use and location of 600 plants or more unless you had a tremendously evolved vocabulary for this kind of thing?

Audience: The physical weakness that follows psilocybin, is there any way to prevent that?

These things take energy. Obviously, during the trip energy is being sucked into the moment. A trip is hard work even if you're sitting still, so then there's going to be an energy debt. One way of assessing the toxicity of a drug — in the course of this weekend I've named several ways, and they all need to be used together — one way of assessing toxicity is how you feel the next day. What I do when I take mushrooms is that I usually take them at about 9 at night. By 1 or 2 in the morning it has usually passed, and then I eat before I sleep so that I don't wake up in the morning with a protein debt. That's very important, if you eat before you sleep after a trip, it won't be nearly so hard a comedown. One of the things that's really appalling to me about MDMA is that here is this pretty minor psychoactive, and my God, the day after is tough sledding. For a hangover like that you should at least have seen God. LSD: if you drink a lot of water, that helps, and yes, vitamins are never a bad idea at any point with these things. LSD, as I said yesterday, was so effective at low doses that on that scale it appeared very non-invasive. I feel terrible

after taking LSD, it takes me 24 hours to put it back together.

The interesting exception to this, and it always seems to cut my way in terms of favoring the ones I think are most interesting, DMT is again the anomaly here. DMT is the most powerful hallucinogen there is. If it gets stronger than that I don't want to know about it. 15 minutes after you do it, you feel as though as you have never done a drug, you are down 100%, mentally, emotionally, physically. It just returns you to the baseline. Ayahuasca goes DMT one better, and ayahuasca is the only one that I know of that does this. I maintain that the reason these things behave this way is because they are so similar to ordinary brain chemistry. With ayahuasca, you actually come out slightly higher than you went in, and it isn't lost. I mean, you feel great the day after an ayahuasca trip. If it's your first trip and you spent 8 hours vomiting, you're probably not going to feel so good, but if it was an ordinary ayahuasca trip then you're going to feel much better the day after than you did going in: more connected, more alert, more energy. This must have something to do with the fact that the constituents of ayahuasca — harmine, harmaline,

DMT — all occur in the human brain. Why doesn't this happen with psilocybin? I don't know. Psilocybin doesn't occur in the brain but it is a very close relative.

I think DMT is absolutely fascinating from every point of view. Why is it so benign? Why is it so powerful? Why is it so short acting? Why is it so hard to get any? That's the \$64 question. Believe me, every book on drugs that you pick up says it's easily made, they ask you to believe that people are making it in their kitchens all around you. Well, I don't know. I've seen it botched many times. The literature doesn't tell you that; botched, ruined. If somebody comes to you with a grainy, dark brown syrup, forget it. That is not what it looks like. That means that they swept the floor after they dropped the reagent or something. What it looks like is orange moth balls. It looks like a crystalline, waxy, orange to pale rose to yellow kind of substance, and it's very aromatic. If someone shows you a liquid or stuff which looks like brown sugar, it's a mess. We were appalled, we got samples of underground DMT and ran high pressure liquid gas chromatography on them, and it literally looked like the guy swept the floor. These people had actually done it. I wouldn't have given it to a rat, much less a human being. The notion of someone actually taking that stuff was just hair raising. What you should have is a very steep spike at 620 nanometers and what we got looked like the Himalayas. It was running around all kinds of stuff. There has been DMT around which was shottable DMT, which is the hydrochloride, and since I don't shoot things I didn't pursue it, although what people tell me is that shooting is not as effective as smoking. People think that shooting a drug is the most effective way, because you see it all go into your body or something, I don't know. If you shoot DMT it takes about 5 minutes to come on and lasts about 45 minutes. That's why if you read in the literature, "How long does DMT last?" it will always say 45 minutes. If you smoke it, the peak experience lasts 400 seconds, something like that. It's extreme, that's why it's so astonishing, because it is so intense and the onset

is so sudden that it's more like something has happened to you, rather than that you've taken a drug.

Sometimes people come out of it saying, "What happened?" "Have we done it yet, or was there an earthquake and the roof fell on me just as we were about to do it?" It has the quality of an event rather than an experience, and also it has the quality of an event because it does not touch the core observer. You are not changed, what's changed is the sensory input. You are still who you are. You don't think you're God, you don't feel bad about yourself, you are exactly who you were before you did it with the same set of concerns, but you have been whisked into an alien

dimension, one you never had imagined existed or could have a moment before have conceived of, and suddenly it's 100% in place 360 degrees around you, and then 3-10 minutes later you're raving to your friends, and it's as far away as that trip to Mallorca four years ago.

Audience: Could you explain the distinction between DMT and 5-MeO-DMT in terms of the quality of the experience?

They are day and night. 5-MeO-DMT, some people like it. It's a feeling, that's what it's been for me. It's this huge feeling that kind of sweeps through you, and it's velvety. It's hard to describe, but the main thing that I'm noticing when it's happening is that I am not hallucinating. Of course, the main thing that's happening with DMT is that you are having hallucinations so intense, so three-dimensional, so highly colored, so sculpturally defined that it's more real than reality. By that I mean: if you look at this room, notice how all edges are slightly feathered, there is at all boundaries a slight indeterminacy, but on DMT it's hard-edged, everything is just defined. Sometimes people say, "It's as though all the air had been pumped out of the room." You're seeing it with that lunar starkness and clarity; unimagined objects, objects off the art scale, and

entities. DMT is the only one of these psychedelics where I have seen the entities. On psilocybin it speaks and it's aural. On DMT you see these things. I don't know whether it's my personal mythology...

For me, DMT is the center of the mystery. I fear it, I love it, I thank God for it, I wonder if I'll ever understand it. It takes a huge mustering of courage on my part to do it. I mean, we talk, talk, talk: change, transformation, other dimensions. This is not talk when you do it. You just do not know the parameters. I feel like I know more about what could happen to me if I'm in the Amazon jungle than I know what could happen to me when I'm in that place, and after many DMT trips I've finally been able to paint a picture for myself of what is happening in there. I don't know anybody who has done it as much as I have. I wish people did it more and talked more about it, because, boy, if there is a landscape where we need some consensus, this is it. I have been present when people did it, and they come back babbling about the same thing I think that I have

encountered. One woman said, "It was a carnival, it was an extraterrestrial midway," and somebody else came back and said, "There were gnomes, there were elves," and yes, this is getting close to it.

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What happens to me when I do it is that there is an initial period of hysteria and confusion. It's almost as though time speeds up, even before you take the first hit. Many people say, "Just before you do DMT there's this funny kind of impression in the room," almost as though there is backwash from the event about to happen. You are caught in the psychic field of this event and everything is moving faster and faster, it's like the Q phenomenon. Then you take the hit and it's building up in your body and your heart is pounding, and then you break through to this place. The first impression is of the sound of cellophane being crumpled, that crackling sound, as if someone had just taken a bread wrapper and crackled that cellophane. A friend of mine says, "That's the sound of the radio entelexy of your soul tearing out of the organic envelope," which is what it sounds like. It sounds like your body has just been wadded up and thrown into a corner and now you're a radio signal approximately four lightseconds in diameter spreading out through an alien universe, and the next impression is of a cheer. It's, "Hoorah! Welcome, welcome!" It's them, they're wailing and they can hardly wait. There's a moment when they are not on me, just a moment, and then they say, "You're here, we're glad to see you! Why did you stay away so long?" and then they come toward me, and the main thing for me in the DMT thing is to struggle not to go into shock of wonder, basically. There is a strong tendency, and for the first few trips I couldn't conquer it. I was just a victim of it, I would just go into this, and I would say, "Heart? Heart OK. Breathing? Breathing OK," but I'm looking and I can't believe my eyes,

because I'm in some kind of domed place.

The impression, don't ask me why, the impression is of being underground, even though it's a huge vaulted space and highly colored. What it, of course, rivets my attention are these beings. They're small, and they're like I've described them, as machine elves. They seem partially machine-like and partially elf-like. They are not so mundane as that, they don't have a fixed body outline, and in fact that's one of the things that going on in this space that's so baffling. They come toward you. They are singing in this alien language which you somehow understand — it cannot be translated into English but you understand it in that moment — and they are using their voices to produce objects. So song becomes thing, and there are dozens of these things and they come closer and closer, and the songs they sing condense into objects, and the objects

themselves can sing. These things come and they are saying, "Look! Look!" and they are holding this stuff out to you, and you look at it, and you're fighting wonder because your entire being is caught up in, "This can't be happening," and yet they're saying "Just look!"

What are these things? Devices? Toys? Works of art? Objects? Whatever they are, they are amazing, and you look into it and they seem to be shifting, even though they're made of metal and glass and gems and pulsating. Everything is migrating and shifting and changing and they say, "Look at this one!" It's the most astonishing thing you've ever seen, and then they say, "Look at this one, look at this one!" and they're piling up. These things are coming toward you and then they jump through you, they can pass through your body. They're running around, chirping and singing and making these objects. What they're doing is they are saying, "Do what we are doing, do what we are doing!" and you just say, "I just want to go back to New York." They say, "Later for that!" The implication is — and this is the mystery of my life, I'm teasing it out, trying to understand it — but the implication and the promise is that ahead of us in time, 6 months, 50,000 years, is a visible linguistic channel of communication. That the thin channel of aural communication composed of small mouth noises is just a provisional kind of communication, and what is being proposed in this state is a true telepathy. Now I always thought that telepathy means that you think and I hear what you're thinking. What it actually turns out to be is that you speak and I see what you mean. I don't mean that metaphorically, I mean I see what you mean, so that your

linguistic intentionally condenses as a three-dimensional object in front of us, a sculptural modality. So then we both see what you mean; you made it and I'm your conversational cohort, and we're both looking at your meaning. We can walk around it, we can adjust it.

Notice that no common dictionary is necessary here. If you're Witoto and I'm Polish, I still see what you mean, because what you mean is an objectified three-dimensional modality, not a string of Witoto words, and it's saying, "Do this, do what we are doing!" It took me about 15 trips to get this far, and then I began to experiment with sounding in that state and I discovered that they were right. That "mnmnm" is a 3.5 foot wide, 8 foot long, magenta curved surface with lime auras, and that "uhnm" shifts the lime auras into rose pink and adds grey-silver pinstriping along one edge. I thought, "My God, what is this?" Then when you break out into actual chanting, actual linguistically-modulated sound, you discover that you too can make these objects. What they apparently are — how this could be, don't ask me — they are apparently syntactical sculpture, sculpture made of syntax. Syntax suddenly becomes not the rules that govern spoken languages, but the rules that govern the assembly of three-dimensional thought objects, as though words were the shadows of hyperdimensional intentions that can actually be broken through to. Well,

my God, I just thought that this was the weirdest, this takes the cake. I've never heard of such a thing. Nobody's ever suggested to me that this is possible.

So then, as is the case with most things, if you look long enough you discover precursors. What I discovered in a wonderful book, and any one of you would love this book, I'm sure. It doesn't deal with the psychedelic experience by name, but it is a psychedelic book. It's called The Phenomenon of Life by Hans Jonas, and if you can find this book, what a read. It's a group of essays, and in one of the essays he is talking about the etymology of the word "Israel," and he says, following Talmudic thinkers, that Israel means "He who sees God," that this is the actual etymological basis of the word "Israel." Did I say that we are talking now about the writings of Philo Judeaus? Yes, Philo Judeaus, in discussing the etymology of the word "Israel," says that it means "He who sees God." Then he says, "What does this mean, he who sees God?" Well, as you probably know, in the Hellenistic world there was this phenomenon called the Logos. The Logos was an informing, internal voice that tells you the right way to live. It's like a spirit ally that speaks to you and informs you. So Philo Judeaus said, "What would be the more perfect Logos?" and then he goes on to answer his own question. He said, "The more perfect Logos would go from being heard to being beheld without ever crossing over a quantized moment of distinct transition." This is precisely, and in fact, what is going on in these states, because now I

have learned or have found out how to evoke this DMT phenomenon in the more controllable environment of the psilocybin intoxication.

It happens like this: first of all, I form the wish for it to happen. I usually follow a line I learned in an old I Love Lucy rerun where she's explaining to Ethel how she contacts flying saucers and she says, "I just say, 'Come in, little green men! Come in, little green men!'" So on mushrooms I do this, I say, "Come in, little green men!" and what begins to happen is this sound like bells, like very distant bells. Then it becomes louder and louder, sort of like bells with wind. It becomes louder and louder and more complicated and more complex, and at a certain, very hard to

precisely define moment, it begins to spill over into the visual cortex. Then I see the language and I can interact with it. It is apparently a more perfect Logos.

This is what I had in the back of my mind yesterday. Remember when I talked about how smoking was new to Europeans and they couldn't understand what it was, and then I made this offhand comment that it was a new use for the human body, only 500 years old? Well, it proves that there may be undiscovered uses for the human body. I mean, we've only been around playing with our bodies for 50,000 years, and we've discovered most sexual configurations, and all these acrobatic things and amazing things that people can do like make pyramids of ten individuals, but smoking is pretty basic, and yet only 500 years old. It seems to me that right under the surface of human neurological organization is a mode shift of some sort that would make language beholdable, and that if we could somehow kick over into this alternative mode we would become

unrecognizable to ourselves. Now I realize that this sounds pretty far-fetched, but you always have to have reference to context.

In a universe where there were no people, that would be a pretty far-fetched idea, but the fact that we already possess language seems to argue that we are in the process of continually evolving new applications for our bodies. When spoken language burst onto the scene 35,000 years ago, by most estimates — think of it: 35,000 years ago, people invented language — what must it have seemed like to them? It must have seemed like a miracle. Hardly anything sets you up for it. The difference between a 9 hour recitation of oral poetry and three chickadees on a line is quite a leap. I'm suggesting that there could be a form forward in the communication dimension and that this is in fact what shamanism is all about, what the end of history is all about, what psychedelic drugs are all about. We are edgewalking on an ontological transformation of what it means to be human. The mode that this transformation will come in will not be political or technological. It isn't starflight, it isn't socialism; it's a whole other way of making our minds known to each other, by being able to show each other our minds. In psychedelic states you can

do this.

Audience: Do you think there is any relationship to the Australian aboriginal belief that the forefathers actually sung the world into being? That concept doesn't seem too far off.

Yes, that's right. In our own tradition, "In principio erat Verbum, et Verbo caro factum est," in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh. That's the whole story. What we need to do is to pass through this transition and make the Word flesh. In other words, to somehow objectify the Word. Believe me, I talk about these things but the pictures are provisional. I don't understand how it could be done. I'm an engineering type on one level, but it is an acoustical hologram? How in the world could I make you see a concept in my mind as though it were

hovering three feet above the floor? Is there a way?

I've noticed on psychedelics, and again, I don't know whether this is a false trail or whether this is part of the mystery, but I've noticed on psychedelics that if you get a person between yourself and a candle so that you have them in profile, and they are raving and you can see the candle past them, there's something coming out of their mouth. It's like how when you agitate oil in water you see this swirling oiliness of water, or when you're in a swimming pool with too much suntan lotion in it there's this kind of rolling discontinuity that's fairly subtle. Well, something like that is happening for about 8 inches in front of people's mouths when you look at them under certain conditions. Maybe it doesn't need psychedelics, I don't know. It's possible that the air goes into your lungs, is heated and then is returned to the colder air of the room, and what you're seeing is the mixing of the warm and cold air which have different refractive indices, and so it shows up as a kind of wave-like distortion. Could be; I am a reductionist on one level. If it's not real, then I want to know that it's not real, but I'm not sure that that's what it is,

because it seems to me that they are beginning on a very small level to do this thing and language seems to me to be a continuous spectrum.

Because I'm a public speaker, because I work with language, I think about these things a fair bit. It seems to me that language begins in total inarticulation, basically "um, erm, ungh" kind of stuff, and then it goes on to operational speech: "Give me this, bring me that, change my diapers," this kind of thing. Then you introduce the notion of communication. I mean, at what age do children become capable of saying, "I feel x, y and z?" What this means is that they are beginning to move invisible, interior modalities out into the linguistic domain, say, "I feel sick to my stomach, I feel too awake to go to bed," so forth and so on. Then you get more complex ideas, where people are conveying abstract ideas. Then you get eloquence, a speaker who can make you listen and can rivet your attention. Then beyond eloquence comes poetry, and supposedly in

the Irish tradition and in other traditions, great poetic feats were undertaken and poets were magicians. The difference between a poet and magician was practically nil, but that's where we're asked to believe that it ends, in great poetic eloquence.

It seems to me that it's possible to just keep going, and one of the curious things about the way we think about language is that when we talk about clear language, we always use visual metaphors. To understand someone you say, "I see what you mean." Seeing is the sense that we trust. "He spoke clearly," is a visual metaphor. "She painted a picture," "I see what you mean," as though we unconsciously sense that language is an uncompleted project at this point, moving toward a visual mode of expression. If we say that the psychedelics are catalysts for imagination, then what is it that they are catalyzing? They are catalyzing the further concrescence of language. Who knows how long this is. Looking back at the invention of language, you kind of have to suspect that it happened rather suddenly, that people went from not speaking to speaking quite suddenly. They had all the physical machinery: the lungs, the vocal chords, the coordinating mind, and apparently, if you follow Chomsky and his school, the genetic foundations for syntax. Syntax, Chomsky has shown, precedes language. Chimpanzees and squids show evidence of syntax, but their language is extremely rudimentary. Somehow you can't have language until you have syntax — syntax is the set of rules that define language — but at a certain point, language has this capacity to become truly self-reflecting. I can't imagine what a world would

be like where this ability would be mastered. I suppose you would have to say it is a psychedelic world.

Audience: Earlier you were talking about this possibility, and you were saying, "I can't imagine how we would do this," and you started talking about it, and to me it felt like you were talking about something hovering. At that point I could almost see that it would be possible to continue. When you said "hovering," I got "hovering," I could almost see something hovering, and it seems like there's really an evolutionary thing, that once people get used to really hearing each other it would just begin to happen. Little by little, we'll get used to it and we may not even know it.

Maybe it's happening now, that language is being used much more in different ways than it used to be.

Yes, I think that's true. My fantasy is of a workshop where some day we get it out. That's really what I want to do: I want to punch a hole into this other place and have this linguistic, syntactical, intentionality-directed stuff pour into the universe and fill it to the brim. It seems to me that this is a real possibility. Whenever I'm stoned, I have this notion that I call the Last Conversation. It's where it seems possible to sit down with somebody of good will and say, "We're going to have the Last Conversation. We're going to start from here and we're going to work our way in, and when it's over there will be no you, there will be no here, there will be no there, because we will have carried out some kind of Derrida-type deconstruction project on the apparent reality and we'll be left with bedrock." I don't know if that's the same program

as the visible language. What I do know is that with ayahuasca in the Amazon basin, this is what's going on. They call it singing, but it's a visual art.

Our little company sells ayahuasca songs. Well, they are audio recordings, but they are visual works of art. How they sound doesn't matter, it's how they look. When you're sitting in a blackened hut with these people you'll hear someone lay down a riff which manifests as a fluorescent pink line with grey undershading, and it's a wavy line. The shaman is sitting next to the singer and will go back through and place a mirrored green dot in the trough of each wave, and the sound is lost in this. The experience is entirely visual. Is it only abstract colored patterns and moving fields of light, or can I sing you my grandfather and you would see him with his blue visor and his pegged pants and his crew cut? It's this kind of thing, you know.

This is why I believe that the psychedelic experience has some kind of historical role to play. If we take seriously that it is an enzyme for the imagination, and if we take seriously the notion that language is the carrier wave of the imagination, then probably what we're involved in here is a quantized evolutionary leap to a higher modality of language. It will come out of our biological organization; it's not cultural, and it's still less technological. It's in the bones and tongue and brain and lungs of human beings.

Audience: Terence, when you're in one of these circumstances and you speak to the little people, if someone were in the room with you, would they hear you speak? Do you actually acoustically verbalize this kind of conversation from your side?

Yes. It's a kind of glossolalia, or that's what we would have to call it. Glossolalia, as you all probably know, is speaking in tongues, but this has characteristics that glossolalia doesn't have. For one thing, people who do glossolalia have a kind of disconnectedness from it. In other words, in these Pentecostal churches when someone will go into glossolalia, often when they come out they will turn to the people around them and say, "Did I speak in tongues? Did I really do it?" In other words, there seems to be a kind of occlusion of the observing mind. The other thing is that glossolalia of that sort involves pretty radical physiological changes. Some of you may know Felicitas Goodman, who wrote a book on glossolalia. She measured pools of saliva 18 inches across, having originated from a single person during a 20 minute burst of glossolalia. Well, that's a pretty lathered-up, hyped-up state to be in. The glossolalia induced by DMT and psilocybin is controlled and willed. It's as though the English-forming part of the mind steps away and an *ursprach*, a kind of primordial language, steps in. It's highly modulated; it doesn't have to be screamed, sung or chanted, it can simply be done at conversational levels. When you do this in the stoned state, it's wonderful, and when you make tape recordings of it and listen to it in the unstoned state, it's either alarming or silly. I mean, people have said to me, "Soft-pedal this part of it, because it's too weird."

Audience: The point I was trying to get at is that in order to form these sounds there's some sort of electronic, neurological something going on in the synapses to cause the muscles to form the sounds, and there's a radiation of electric energy that starts the mechanical-acoustical coupling to the vocal chords, and in trying to figure out the mechanism you were discussing, how would you make this work? Would you actually see the sound coming out of the throat? It would seem more reasonable to me to pick the electronic model and the radiation of electromagnetic energy, rather than acoustical, to project this information.

True, although it is interesting that sound can be used to form holograms, which are three-dimensional objects. In other words, there are what are known as acoustical holograms, not generated by lasers, but generated by patterns of interference that are acoustic waves. For years, in the psychedelic states I could hear this translanguistic stuff but never do it. Then I became able to do it on the drugs, and then after many more years I've been able to do it pretty much on the natch, or at least give a reasonable imitation of it, but when I do it and I'm not stoned, it doesn't transport me. It has syntax, it has order. I'll give you a short sample of this. If I'm at all self-conscious or anxious, something shuts down and I can't, and I know I'm faking it and it's not real. *Aideughey vounthey haxhivichny moughamwva bakiam didikini hipeketek*. It's like that. It's far removed from English, it sounds to me like a very primitive language. The image that comes to my mind is of pygmies around a fire, one guy raving. He's telling a story. There's something in there; it feels like meaning, but it doesn't compute to a dictionary. When you do it on your own you just can do it for hours in that state, and it's very, very satisfying. What you're hearing is the shadow thrown by a hyperdimensional object that the person making the sound is actually seeing, and you are just rotating this thing, going into it, expanding it, taking it apart, melting it, fusing it, remaking it. Strange stuff. I played this stuff for a linguist, this very straight linguist. I played about a 30 minute burst of it, and he smoked his pipe through it all, and when it was over he said, "No O's."

Audience: Did you just make that up? Did you have any images? Can you describe what was going on inside of you when you were doing that?

I was trying to stand aside, I was trying to not do anything to it, I was just trying to let it be, because there will be a part of it and I'll think as it goes by, "Hmm, sounds French." The main effort is just to relax and let it be. The way I discovered it is that when I smoke DMT I can't stop myself. At first I would yell it, and that got my friends concerned. Slowly I've been able to bring it down into this conversational level, but it just goes on and on, has a feeling, has a tone, it's very satisfying to do. That's why I think that language existed for millennia before meaning. Bowl, bison, reindeer: meaning is just some kind of late thing that was tacked on to language to make it a more practical enterprise, but I think that people were taking drugs and amusing each other with artistic compositions of the sort I just did for you for a long time before they did anything practical with it.

Audience: I was just wondering if you thought that language may have changed around the time that agriculture came in, when things were narrowed down to a few commodities.

I think that language goes through tremendous periods of impoverishment, and I think that was one. The origin point of language is placed at about 35,000 years ago, although on what basis they do this I'm not sure. There is a flute in existence that's 26,000 years old. That's pretty interesting, and that's not the Museum of Atlantis artifacts either, that's the real thing. The Pythagorean face of number, musical tone, language and proportion is still alive. There's still something to be learned there. A perfect science, an appropriate science, a science of harmony, resonance, proportion: that is and remains the shamanic ideal, the Orphic ideal, the Pythagorean ideal.

Audience: What are the risks associated with MAOIs and psychedelics?

You do not want to take certain hallucinogens if you're taking a MAO inhibitor, because it will prolong it and will cause it to behave in unpredictable ways. There are many MAO inhibitors commercially prescribed, some quite strong. In other words, that act for weeks, I think even after a single dosage. What are those things for?

Audience: The common scenario is Marplan, which is a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. What that means is that monoamine oxidase is the enzyme that destroys monoamine, so if you are taking that particular drug and then you take something that builds up in your system like aged cheeses, lentils, maybe mushrooms, wines, fermented kinds of things that have lots of amphetamine-type chemicals in them, then they overload the synapses. It happens because you can't break it down in your brain and basically it deteriorates. There is one that people did this with and died, so apparently the hallucinogen had some of that build up and it can't be destroyed properly, so that's why there's the warning not to take it.

The hallucinogen is a monoamine, and then if you inhibit the monoamine oxidase, which is the compound which inhibits the monoamine, then the monoamine will accumulate. It's important to know this because we tend to move in a yuppie environment, and a typical yuppie buffet of good burgundies and good brie is just going to load your system with tyramine, tyrosine, these kinds of things. They are monoamine oxidase inhibitors, and then if you take a hit of ayahuasca 12 or 24 hours later it's just going to send you skittering all over the board, and you won't understand why unless you are aware that this monoamine thing is working.

Audience: Someone gave a talk in New York about smoked fish and plantain, and possibly this is a precursor of certain neurotransmitters.

Yes, this is a more complicated question than simply yes or no on the MAO inhibitors. Serotonin, which is, of course, the neurotransmitter that runs the nervous systems of all higher animals and occurs in all animals, is very strongly present in bananas, for example. You can load your system with serotonin without realizing it if you eat a lot of bananas, and that's very interesting. There was a group of people in tribal Africa who had actually lost the gene for the production of serotonin, or of serotonin-2. In any case, one subspecies of serotonin, and they didn't know that that was what was wrong with them. All they knew was that as soon as anybody left the tribe they all became psychologically ill, and then they would return to the tribe and this situation would immediately normalize. So they looked into it, and they discovered that these people were eating bananas as a huge component of their diet. Consequently, even though the serotonin gene was deficient, they always had a sufficient amount of serotonin because they were getting it from a dietary source.

If somebody left the tribe, left the forest and went to Kampala and got a job and stopped eating so many bananas, they immediately appeared to become mentally ill. This is because they were then finally forced to confront the fact that on the natch they could not produce enough serotonin to stay balanced, so this is an example of how foods and neurotransmitters and all of these things work. It's really astonishing, the fact that evolutionary biologists, in talking about how human beings have come to be, have so far as I know never talked about the evolutionary influence of

diet. The fact that under pressure from dwindling rainforests, we ceased being frutitarian, canopy-living creatures, and instead became omnivores and meat eaters on the plain. In going through that transition we subjected ourselves to a huge amount of mutagenic influence.

There are all kinds of compounds in plants that will break chromosomes, interfere with ovulation, interfere with lactation, interfere with fetal formation, control or accelerate tooth decay, interfere with acuity of vision, digestive enzymes that may or may not work in certain situations. If you just start eating things randomly or testing things to be foods, you're exposing yourself and your progeny to an immense number of mutagenic influences. This may explain why the human somatotype, the human body type, went through this period of rapid change about 50,000 years

ago. This is when the brain size doubled, and then nothing much has happened since to human beings physically; all evolution has gone on in the cultural domain. This sudden explosion in the size of the brain case is occurring at the same time when there is this dietary shift.

One of the things that I mentioned the other night is the preservation of infantile characteristics as a part of our species, not necessarily simply infantilism psychologically, but also our hairlessness, for instance. More primate babies are born hairless, but we're the ones who stay hairless the whole time. The suppression of secondary sexual characteristics — for instance, our rumps don't redden when we're in estrus — and all these things that we see happening in other primate species are suppressed in human beings. There's a lot of debate about why these things go on. Why, for instance, there isn't a mating season in human beings, or why it is that female human beings can keep pregnancy a secret for quite a long time before it becomes apparent. How does this feed back into primate social organization? What do males do if they think a female is

pregnant or not pregnant? How does this work into the evolutionary thing? There's a lot of thought that needs to be given to all this.

MAO is one of the most easily influenced of these internal enzyme systems because there are MAO inhibitors in so many things that are human foods — pulses, all beans, fish, cheeses, dairy products, so forth and so on — the very things that were probably fairly prominent in the primitive diet. All monoamines will be more active in a human being who has taken a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. One of the strange things, and I mentioned this yesterday, is that in the Amazon they have figured out how to make this work for them. For instance, DMT cannot be taken orally, it's destroyed in your gut. If you inhibit MAO then it isn't destroyed in the gut, it passes through the bloodstream and through the blood-brain barrier. They figured this out; it's only been since the mid '50s or something that the MAO system has been understood by Western medicine. These people apparently intuitively figured it out thousands and thousands of years ago. These things compete with serotonin for the bond site, many of them are in fact inhibitors of serotonin. If you have a huge amount of serotonin in your system, the serotonin can mitigate the trip. It's a gentler

trip because it's not as strong a trip as it would be had you not loaded yourself with serotonin.

Audience: But some people do, that's the whole theory of why some people get depressed, that certain people have higher levels of serotonin and certain people have lower, and that if you have higher levels supposedly it correlates with how naturally high you are.

Yes, well it's sort of hard to nail this down. When people first started doing psychedelic research they thought — it was the so-called psychotomimetic theory of psychedelics — that these things make you crazy, therefore being crazy must be a natural state of producing these things. So for instance, they measured DMT in the blood of schizophrenics, people who are diagnosed as chronic schizophrenics. The problem is that there is no visible correlation. Some people have more, some people have less. It isn't as simple as that mad people are people who are making their

own psychedelic molecules. There was great hope for this in the '50s but it didn't quite pan out.

A thing to bear in mind, sort of related to what you were saying, is that disease, which we accept as part of life, is actually something fairly unusual in nature. The only places in nature where you see a lot of disease happening is in insects. Insects are highly subject to viruses and there's a huge family of insect viruses. This is the basis of many pesticide design strategies, to spray crops with viruses that attack insects. The other area in the animal world where you see a lot of disease is human beings and the animals they have domesticated. Cattle, pigs, poultry and people

are all fairly subject to disease, but for instance, birds of prey are not greatly subject to disease. Fish, all animal groups have some susceptibility to diseases, but really human beings and insects seem to be the most set up for this.

The reason that is advanced for this is that these are the social animals, the insects and the human beings, wherever you have intense social activity. For instance, in some species a male and a female will encounter each other only once in the life of each individual, then have sex and that's it. There is no social life. No disease can get a foothold there, because diseases require transmission and contact. The AIDS thing is a perfect example of this. The statistics are that a professional prostitute has five or six sexual contacts in an evening. A person at high risk for AIDS with a very active homosexual lifestyle may have three or four times that number of sexual contacts. No virus is going to pass a chance like that up, it's just like a super intense environment for transmission. The diseases want to be able to move from one person to another. The

susceptibility to disease was apparently also something that was going on at the same time as we were beginning to acquire language, to domesticate animals, to switch our diet.

What we really are is the evolutionary wreckage of a very chaotic and crazy series of pattern shifts that went on between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago. Now we are the inheritors of that. As long as I'm on this subject, there's a very interesting relationship between disease and spirituality because pilgrimage sites are the great disease vectors of the ancient world. Here you can imagine that you have a temple, everybody comes there to get cured, and everybody leaves sick because all these infected people have been there. There's a wonderful book, I can't remember the author but the title is Plagues and Peoples. It's a study of epidemiology and the history of disease and its impact on human populations. Very interesting, and it has a lot to say about psychedelic use by implication, because psychedelic use also brings people together under very close and

intimate circumstances many times.

Audience: Let me ask a chemical question. I have never done these substances that you're talking about, specifically *N,N*-DMT and 5-MeO-DMT and what you're talking about as ayahuasca, which is a hybrid of an MAOI and DMT. Those are the chemical names of these substances. Are

there generic names or so-called street names for these things that you are aware of?

First of all, 5-MeO-DMT doesn't occur in ayahuasca. The way ayahuasca works is that the MAO is a 7-carboline: harmine, harmaline, tetrahydroharmine. These things are hallucinogens in their own right, but only at uncomfortable doses. If you took 600 mg of harmine, you would have hallucinations, but you would also have so much discomfort and icky feeling that you couldn't call it a trip. 5-MeO-DMT occurs in *Anadenanthera peregrina* and in the toad foam that I mentioned. It's interesting that the toad foam is the only animal-based hallucinogen that we know anything about. DMT does occur in certain fish and these fish are eaten for psychedelic effect. DMT is psychedelic in its own right, but not when taken orally. When taken with the harmine it becomes orally active. If you combine 200 milligrams of harmine, which is a sub-threshold dose of harmine,

with 50 mg of DMT, which is a sub-threshold dose of DMT, you'll have a tremendous trip. That's called ayahuasca, and it comes from these plant sources. You drink it, it's a beverage. It's a fluid, tastes terrible.

Audience: You recommended a committed dose, like five grams of mushrooms, in a silent space, preferably at night and also alone.

If that's your predilection, if you're comfortable with that. If you're uncomfortable with that, get a friend. Is that your question?

Audience: I guess that's my question, because it seems to me from reading Stan Grof's books that the point he makes is that these substances are physiologically very safe. The danger is in psychological acting out, and for that reason you have someone there, in order to prevent a

confusion of what he calls holotropic and hylotropic, i.e. you decide that you want to jump off your balcony and you confuse your psychic reality in which you can fly with the physical reality of your body, which is that you'll fall off and die.

If you have that delusion you would certainly want a sitter present. In 99% of the cases what the sitter is there for is not to restrain you but to tell you that it's OK. Just to say that it's OK, this is immensely reassuring to people, no matter how uncertain the sitter is that it is OK. You could almost have a button that you could push which says, "You're OK! Don't worry, it won't last forever," something like that. I guess I'm sort of in a funny position on the sitter issue because I find them so distracting, but you do want it, the one time you need them you really need them. The other thing is this issue of whether you should do it indoors or outdoors. What I found is that I really like keeping it mental, that's my way of controlling the situation. We all know this phenomenon called synchronicity, which is where it's weird for no reason. If you go out into the world

stoned you will just discover that it is a maelstrom of synchronicity, and I don't like being swept away into strange and unexpected adventures.

This is an example of how this works: I was at Sarnath once, outside of Benares. Sarnath is the place where Buddha preached his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. He was enlightened at Bodhi Gaya and then he walked south many miles to the deer park at Sarnath and gave his first sermon there. There's a stupa there, an ancient stupa, 2nd century B.C., and manicured green parks; a very nice place to take a psychedelic, I thought. So I took this psychedelic, it happened to be mescaline, with these two women who were friends of mine, and there was nobody around. It was very early in the morning, we were sitting up on this little knoll in a tree and it began to come on strongly. I was looking out over this green expanse, and almost at the edge of discernible vision I suddenly see two dots, two people moving orthogonal to my position across my field of vision. Then they got to the middle of my field of vision, and they just stop dead. These two people must be 500 yards away, 1,500 feet away over these rolling green lawns, and they stop dead, they scan and they start toward me. I cannot believe my eyes, that these people have

changed course 90 degrees and are now headed right for me. I kept telling myself, "It's a hallucination, it's an illusion. They are not getting larger in your field of vision, you are not going to have to confront these people. Please, God, make it so." No reprieve.

They just keep getting larger and larger, and so I said, "I'm going to make this go away by not looking, and I'm just going to sit like this," and I sat like this, not moving, until the guy's feet entered my field of vision. Then I didn't move, I didn't say anything. I just looked up, and he said, "You're from which place? You have been how long in India?" and it was the grilling. Any Indian tourist knows that any citizen of the subcontinent can approach you at any time of the day or night, anywhere, demand to know your name, how long you've been in this country, and then the person, "And what you think of India?" This question is asked for the specific purpose of observing your discomfiture, because they know damn well what you think of India. I looked up and I gave this guy my most penetrating gaze and I said, "I cannot be interrogated," and I just put my head down and waited an hour. When I looked up they were gone, but only in that circumstance of being so stoned would I have ever behaved that way. The normal tourist reaction is, and they watch this happen to you, you just go into a tailspin of, "It's their country, everybody's a person, I'm a stranger. I should be nice, they're harmless. What's so bad about this, anyway?" Then you pare it out, you explain, "I'm from San Francisco, California. I've been here three months," so forth and so on. A friend of mine told me a funny story about taking the Bombay-Calcutta mail and arriving in Calcutta on this train. It's 4 a.m. and he gets off the train, and there's a little sadhu man over there, and the guy starts toward him and comes up to him. My friend said, "Wait a minute, before you say a word: my name is Nathan Jones, I'm from Brooklyn, New

York. I've been in India three and a half months and I hate it," and the guy said, "Ooh, you're great, babe! You're reading my mind!" You've got to be fast, that's all there is to it.

Audience: You've said that the mushroom tends to create its own agenda. You've also given examples of how you've directed it. So which of those is true? Are there ways to direct it to specific regions by doing specific things, whether you want to deal with certain issues like death or the

body, or to get into certain regions of consciousness?

It has its own agenda. It has certain qualities, this extraterrestrial, outer space, planetary, history is ending, apocalypse, millennia, kind of thing. You can direct it if it likes the way you're going. It's sort of like a very strong horse. If you're going the way it wants to go you're fully in control, otherwise not. I can remember situations with mushrooms where I hadn't taken it for a long time and I fall into confusion, and it usually revolves around, "Am I doing the right thing?" whatever the right thing is, so then I'll take mushrooms and wait until properly stoned, and then put this question to it. "Am I doing the right thing?" it reminds me of a press conference that Lyndon Johnson gave shortly after he became president. Somebody asked a question that he didn't care for and he said, "What kind of a chickenshit question is that to ask the president of the United

States?" When I go to the mushroom and say, "Am I doing the right thing?" it basically said, "What kind of a chickenshit question is that to ask me?" I think that was a very good answer, that was what I needed to hear, you know, "Are you kidding?"

My father used to say, "You can drive a horse to water but a pencil must be lead," and I think that's sort of the situation with the mushroom. If the question pleases it, it will answer. If the question doesn't please it, you'll hear about it. It is amazing how it gives people what they need. You know that Rolling Stones song, "You can't always get what you want, you get what you need?" I have a friend, dear friend, but arrogant, no doubt about it. This guy is arrogant, he definitely thinks he has the truth by the throat in most situations, and he won't take mushrooms because it gives him such a hard time. It says, "You're arrogant! You want to know what we do to arrogant people?" "For God's sake, lift it off me!" A certain amount of humility; it's a relationship, like to a crusty Zen master or something like that. It is really like another entity, because you cannot predict the answers. I remember a dialogue that I had with the mushroom early on where I said, "What are you doing on this planet?" and it said, "You're a mushroom, you live cheap." It said, "Listen, this neighborhood was not so bad until the monkeys moved in. To you it may look like a

mess, to me it was paradise."

The mushroom is very, very weird. I'll tell one more story and then I'll try to get off stories. I was in Malibu with all these fancy film people and we went out to dinner; Ralph Abraham was there, too. There was this French woman there, a film producer, and she was seated next to me at dinner, and before dinner we had been talking about the mushroom. I had been introduced to her as "the mushroom man," and she said to me, "You say that the mushroom speaks to you, but I do not understand exactly how this works," and I said, "Well, it's sort of like it has many faces that it can show, like sometimes it's like the role that Rod Steiger played in *The Pawnbroker*." At that precise instant, Steiger shows up at the table to shake hands with everybody and slap a few backs and then he just drifts off into the recesses of this restaurant. Ralph Abraham, who was

sitting across the table from me watching this whole thing and had heard what I said to this woman, reached across the table to me and said, "You see, the mushroom is showing us that it can touch us anywhere, anytime." Strange stories; synchronicity.

Audience: How do you remember to bring back what you've learned?

That's a good question, that's an important question, that's a key question. Roland Fischer, who was a great psychedelic researcher with psilocybin and later retired to Mallorca to be Robert Graves' next door neighbor, coined the phrase "state-bounded." This means that you can't bring it back. I'm sure you all have had the experience of dreaming, being caught up in some incredible dream with strange people, foreign countries, exotic costuming. The alarm goes off and as you stagger out of bed this is just melting like an ice cube in a blast furnace. By the time you are out of bed and fully dressed you have nothing, not a shred, not a hint, not a clue, it's absolutely gone. This is a state-bounded memory. Chemically what is going on is apparently that short term memory transcription is just not occurring. You are having the immediate impression of

these things happening and then it's not going to disk, so to speak, it's just lost.

The dream is not truly lost in that situation where you wake up and it melts away. The proof of this, and I'm sure you all have had this experience is that you go off about your daily business and then there will be, almost always by coincidence, an image, a chance phrase, a view of a street or something, and it will cause you to remember the dream. Once you get a hook into a portion of the dream, if you then work on it, you can probably bring a lot of it out. How this works in psychedelics is that I have an insight or something that I particularly want to remember, first of all, I will say it aloud. This is strong imprinting. Then the real imprinting is to repeat it a few minutes later, and then a few minutes later again. If you can carry it over a number of minutes to several different levels it won't leave you. A very useful shortcut for this is a tape recorder, where if you

play the tape of the trip back after the trip, just a phrase spoken will set off a chain of associative recall and you will retain it this way. To my mind, what shamanic training must really be is mnemonic training. If you want to bring stuff back you have to train yourself to bring it back.

Now, this state-bounded thing: it's important to notice, we talk about how dreams are state-bounded, how psychedelic experiences are state-bounded, but what we fail to notice, usually, is that ordinary reality is state-bounded. If I were to ask any one of you, "What did you discuss with the person you had lunch with yesterday?" it's probably very touch and go to actually put this together. I had lunch yesterday with Richard, we discussed his television transmission system, but that was new to me and therefore easy to retain, and also Richard and I haven't had thousands of hours of conversation together. The person we are most familiar with is ourselves. I don't know if it works for you like this: I am, let us, say cleaning my house, vacuuming, doing dishes, making beds, and I'm all the time thinking. I understand why Rome fell. I realize what I said wrong to somebody two weeks ago. I recall a telephone obligation that I have to fulfill, I think about things that happened years and years ago, and then the doorbell rings. I go to the door and there's someone there. They say, "What are you doing?" and I say, "Nothing." This is because the

ordinary state of consciousness is highly state-bounded.

One thing these Buddhists have certainly gotten right is that attention to attention is the key to taking control of your mental life. Most of it is just like a river flowing by, and every once in a while we check to see if the river is still flowing by, but we don't attempt to retain it. Memory training is great psychedelic training, and of course, as I'm sure you know, there were ants of memory in the past. We are very poor memorizers because we rely on technologies to do it for us. People in the past had all kinds of technologies for allowing them to remember things. For instance, the most common one in use in late antiquity and up through the Renaissance was the memory palace approach. This is where you think of a place you know well — a school, a hospital, a cathedral, a university, but big — and sit and think about it, think about how it looks as you go through the main doors and then what you see when you turn to the left and what you see when you turn to the right. Learn this building until you really can command it with reasonable vividness in most situations. Then if you want to remember something, imagine yourself walking through the front door of this building, turning to your left, and there near the water fountain you will place an emblem of this thing that you want to remember. Then you will go down the hall and around the corner, and by the fire extinguishers you will place another emblem of the next thing you want

remember.

The act of remembering this long list of things is the act of mentally moving through this imaginary building. When you come to the water fountain, the clue will be there, when you pass the fire extinguishers in your mind, the emblem you place there will be there. I know this sounds highly unworkable and unwieldy, but it actually is extremely workable, and people like Catulus and Cicero, the great late Roman orators, were able to speak for hours on end with lists of virtues and vices and interconnecting causes and this sort of thing, because they were masters of this mnemonic memory palace technique. Well, psychedelics are this vivid. This is another one of these things like mantras and yantras that works on psychedelics. You can do this so that when you're on a psychedelic and you have an experience that you want to remember, place it in your

memory palace, and the next time you come past that point in your memory palace this thing will be there.

If any of you are interested in this, the last word is *The Art of Memory* by Frances Yates, who was a wonderful woman, a great scholar of Renaissance magic. The final trick is to make the image extremely vivid, so that for instance, if you're about to give a speech to your collegium on the seven deadly sins, one of these sins is lust. I chose the easy one because I can't remember what the other six are; shows you where my problem lies. You don't just place the word "lust" in the memory keeping spot, you place some vivid and shocking image. Yates suggests the image of a nun lifting her skirts. I think this was a classically suggested one that people were taught to use. Then when you come around the corner and meet the nun lifting her skirts you think, "Aha, lust, that's the first one," then you go on, and so forth. Some of the most astonishing products of the medieval engravers' art are these books of what are called "emblemata." Emblemata are surreal juxtapositions of things, animal parts and bodies and machines, that are memory emblems, made as grotesque, surreal and bizarre as possible in order to make them unforgettable. That

was the technique, and the surrealists used this very consciously. There is something about the unexpected, the grotesque and the surprising that is almost by definition memorable, and this will work very well in the psychedelic state as well.

Audience: I'm interested in the legal aspect of this thing. We're talking about something that is highly illegal. As far as the law is concerned, how do you handle it? Anybody that drives around with the license plate "NNDMT," I wonder, are you paranoid about that?

No, I'm not paranoid about it. If they wanted me they should have come a long time ago, because I was much more vulnerable then. I've sort of covered my ass. Naturally, if you speak about these things you can't do anything particularly illegal. Perhaps I'm foolish, in the sense that I shouldn't be worried about being arrested, I should be worried about being shot. If that's how they play the game then I'm in big trouble, because they'll just come and shoot me, and you too, if you get into this; but if we actually have a legal system that works, then this is called advocacy, and it's not a crime. It's an exercise of the First, Fourth, and a couple of other amendments to the constitution. Henry David Thoreau, you don't get more American than that, said, "If you are right, you are a majority of one," and we live by majority rule. I don't feel heroic. It's not false modesty or anything, I don't feel heroic doing this. This is really humdrum to me; I just could not behave any other way because of what I've seen. This transcends laws, all that is seen as preposterous. I believe in universal laws; you shouldn't kill people, you shouldn't lie to

people, you shouldn't inject yourself between lovers. Most cultures recognize a set of universal laws, but, "Thou shalt not smoke marijuana?" Surely the God of Mount Sinai has better things to do than worry about that sort of thing.

We have to create a new option. All social progress is made by people taking chances. If I am an anomaly, some kind of dangerous sociopath, then my message will be swamped and lost in the noise of the tumult of the world, because there are thousands of messages out there. If, on the

other hand, this is a great and important domain of truth, then they are crazy to try to repress it because it cannot be repressed. They have tried to repress it.

Audience: Why did they seek to repress it? If the use of psychoactive drugs is so good for the psyche, why have they sought to repress it?

They sought to repress it because there is something in the Western mind that gets very nervous when you try to talk about the bedrock of ontology. McLuhan talked about this. He met great resistance, and all he was saying was that print had created certain kinds of unconscious biases in society in favor of uniformity and linearity. He was amazed at the violence of the reaction against this. He concluded that those cultures that have evolved from the phonetic alphabet are so removed from the stuff of the world, as opposed to languages like Chinese or Mayan where there is

a retention of the image in the written language. The cultures descended from the phonetic alphabet are extremely paranoid about questions about the nature of reality. That's what this is really about.

The psychedelic issue does not relate to the drug issue at all. In fact, it's important to make this point: drugs and psychedelics are not two members of a family, they are antithetically opposed to each other. The pro-psychedelic position is an anti-drug position. How can this be, since we are accustomed to thinking of psychedelics as drugs? Well, it's like this: what is it that we object to about drugs? I think most people can agree that we do have a drug problem. If you live in the inner cities you see people getting all twisted up behind this stuff. So what is it about drugs that we find problematic? I think that what is objectionable about drugs is that they cause unconscious, obsessive, destructive to self or other behavior. Unconscious, obsessive behavior is intolerable, because we are conscious people accustomed to injecting choice and meaning into our lives. You cannot have meaning if you do not have choice. This is why we don't have to spend any time at all talking about whether the world is predestined, because if the world is predestined, then I'm not saying what I'm saying because it's what I want to say, I'm saying what I'm saying because I can't say anything else. You're sitting there because you can't not sit there, so it makes the world very dull and uninteresting. Compulsive, unexamined, obsessive behavior is the quintessence of inhuman behavior. It was Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the founder of General

Systems Theory, who said, "People are not machines, but in every situation where they are given an opportunity to behave like machines, they will so behave."

Then there are drugs which reinforce obsessive, unexamined and self-destructive behavior patterns. Well, what do psychedelics do? They destroy behavior patterns, destroy cultural assumptions, completely hold everything up for grabs, completely throw open the possibility that reality could be any number of ways that are not culturally sanctioned. In that sense, the psychedelics are almost the answer to the drug problem. The early use of psychedelics reported spectacular progress with alcoholism. The people who believe that alcoholism is a disease — and I don't follow this literature closely — it seems to me that this is a preposterous statement. You mean a disease like influenza, smallpox and AIDS? Alcoholism is a disease? Can you get it if you don't practice safe sex, or do you have to wash your eating utensils? It isn't a disease, it is a failure of self-image. The reason LSD, in many cases, had a tremendous impact on alcoholic behavior was because it just showed people what they were doing. It said, "This is you. You're a drunk! You're a burden to your family, a bore to your friends, you smell bad and you're useless! How do

you like it?" So you say, "I don't like it," and it says, "Then stop drinking!" That's how psychedelics cure addiction. When we talk about addiction, nobody ever talks about what is called self-restraint.

Audience: There's a new book that came out about a month or two ago that's incredibly controversial. The man takes the position that for the last 30 or 40 years we've seen alcoholism as a disease, and that's just more bullshit from the medical model, and that we need another alternative. Of course AA is up in arms about the book. It's called Heavy Drinking: The Myth of Alcoholism as a Disease, and he discusses the fact that essentially it's a rationalization to say that alcoholism is a disease. There are certain people that have certain chemical reactions to

alcohol, but they are in the minority. This is very important to me because this is work that I am interested in, and alcoholism has also touched my family, as it has a lot of families.

In the disease model there's no responsibility involved. AA's position, their goal, is not to understand the nature of the universe; they're not in the philosophy business. They are trying to get people to stop drinking. So to maximize that goal, I think that they go far overboard. First of all, all substances: they say, "If you are an alcoholic, then you must forswear everything." I don't know how they relate to tobacco, but what you've got to understand is that we are set up for addiction. It's just like language and cognition and all of these other things. We are the animal which

addicts; other animals don't addict. Addiction is a way of relating to the world. We not only addict to drugs, we addict to each other, to chunks of territory, to behavior patterns. We attach to everything.

It's very real, it's physiological. I remember that years and years ago a woman left me for a homunculus, and I was appalled. I was vomiting every four hours, could not sleep, would burst into tears in inappropriate situations, of which there were many in my life. Heroin withdrawal cannot be worse than that, I mean, are you kidding, vomiting every four hours? Then one night, in the middle of the night, I was just frantic, because when I was awake I felt like I wanted to be asleep, when I should have been sleeping I couldn't sleep. I was just dragging myself to classes. I thought, "This is crazy, I should turn myself in, but they don't have crisis centers for broken hearts. What are you going to do?" So then in the middle of one of these bouts, I went to the medicine cabinet, and this woman who had left me had left all these pills there. I sorted through all these pills and came upon a small bottle of tranquilizers, a very mild tranquilizer like valium or something. Well, I had never taken valium, so I said, "I'll take half." I took it, and a few hours later I went out to breakfast and somebody sat at my table and said, "How are you coping since

Hermione left you?" and I said, "Who?"

It really gave me respect for tranquilizers. I was appalled that something so real to me, so much *me*, half a tab, I didn't care. Let 'em go. I realized that this is how all the people around me deal with emotional crisis. Nobody wants to feel anything. The moment that an unpleasant emotion rears its head, people go take valium or something else and cut themselves off from feeling. We addict to people, that's the point of that story, and when they leave us suddenly it's just like having your heroin taken away and you become a mad thing for months, years sometimes. I mean, I still vibrate from this event and it was 15 years ago. We addict to territory. This is war: our turf, our land. This arises as again a consequence of agriculture. Before agriculture, nobody had land, land was something you walked around on as you migrated behind your herd. Once it was

cognized as an object and fixed upon, they were ready to knock the other guy's brains out for setting foot on your territory. We all do this. We are addicted to caffeine, money, sugar, praise, television.

This is a favorite one to talk about because television is a forerunner of very insidious drugs to come, it's just the crudest and the first. Imagine if, after World War II, a drug had been introduced into this country of right-thinking, hard-working, decent Christian people, such that 20 years after its induction the average American citizen would be spending 6.5 hours per day involved in this drug. That's the figure for television consumption in this country: the average American watches 6.5 hours per day of TV. It is an electronic drug. It is an obsessive behavior pattern, an unconscious behavior pattern, and a physically destructive behavior pattern. I mean, it's done more for the rebirth of hemorrhoid specialists than any other single force in our society; but people say, "That's not a drug, that's entertainment." 6.5 hours per day of entertainment? Before electronic media a person could regard themselves as a great patron of the musical community if they heard twelve live musical performances a year when they would go to a theater. How many experts on Beethoven in his generation or the generation following heard the Ninth Symphony more than several times in their intellectual life? You have to get a lot of people together and cooperating to perform the Ninth Symphony. To us, the Ninth Symphony is an object: listen to it, listen again. We are able to objectively experience and then addict ourselves to it. Is this bad? How can it be bad if it is so written into us? I don't think it is bad; I think what we have to do is choose our addictions, choose our behavior patterns. One can choose to be addicted to punctuality. I am accused of this; other people are addicted to always being late. One can be addicted to

meaningless sexual encounters.

I think the physiological end has been much overplayed. Should we not fall in love because we phenomenally lock together with this person and become a single unified set of drives and goals? The physiological aspects of addiction have been, I think, very strongly overdrawn. I smoke cannabis every day at most opportunities, and have for years and years, since I was 18 years old. Every once in a while I stop, just to see what that's like. It's trivial: it's utterly easy. All that happens is a shift in behavior patterns. I read more; that's what happens when I stop smoking cannabis, and yet I'm supposed to be breaking out into cold sweats, wandering aimlessly through the streets of the city staring up at lighted windows. I think we give each other too much permission to be weak in this area. What is never talked about in talk about addiction is self-restraint. For heaven's sake, just take hold of yourself. If you tell people that addiction is a disease, addiction is because you're black, it's because you're poor, it's because you're this, it's because you're that, you have just given them a whole bunch of reasons not to take responsibility for their

own situation. What is needed in these addictive situations is the shock of recognition.

I believe that if you don't take drugs, you're unbearable. I can't think of a society on earth where people don't take drugs that any of us would want to have anything to do with. Let's take Calvinist Geneva, say. I imagine that as an example of an environment of moral rectitude. These people did not wear bright colors, didn't listen to music, never drank coffee, never smoked, forgot about alcohol, sex is for procreation, so forth and so on. They were paradigms of the male ego frozen in place: didactic, paternalistic, all-knowing, filled with hellfire and damnation. Everything is seen in terms of a moral dimension that makes impossible demands on the human animal. Rather, I think what we should realize is that somehow our evolution into a civilized self-reflecting being is caught up in these synergistic relationships that our conscious mind has with various

things in the environment, so that we should choose our addictions.

Notice that addictions to natural substances are harmless. Let me name some natural substances that you might disagree with me on this point. I think probably the strongest one would be opium. People will say, "What about opium? Surely, this is the scourge of mankind." Actually, opium was never a problem in human populations until it was conceived of as a problem by British colonial policymakers who decided that they could manipulate the opium trade to get an entire into China. Alcohol was never particularly a problem until the discovery of distilled alcohol. Of course, heroin is distilled opium, morphine also. Sugar is a refined vegetable substance. In every case, it has required the intercession of science and technology to take harmless habits and turn them into dangerous addictions. Everybody has a solution to the drug problem. I think what I would suggest is something called the Vegetable Drug Act, where you just say, "If it's a vegetable, it's not a drug." This was the position until very recently with British common law; in Canada, mushrooms were legal. Mushrooms aren't psilocybin, psilocybin is a refined chemical. It is

technology which allows us to create these super powerful, addicting substances, and there will be more and more of them downstream, you may be sure.

I think we need to think of human beings as hardware, as the computer, if you will, and drugs are forms of software. The software that you run determines the kinds of functions that you can perform. If you run distilled alcohol software then you take on the persona of the alcoholic. I believe that cannabis is probably the most harmless and benign drug around. It carries out this feminizing that I talked about, it lowers the profile of the male ego. Instead of wanting to duke it out, people just say, "Well, if that's your thing..." I mean, that practically boils down to what we call tolerance. So I think that this disruption of our relationship to psychoactive plants is what set us on the long, hard downward path into neurosis. It began with agriculture, with the narrowing of our spectrum of plant awareness from many plants down to the rye, the oats, the barley. It's interesting that then out of this came the cultivation of beer, which preceded wine. That comes out of the fact of having created surpluses, because the way beer was discovered was through the fermentation of grain that was stored. If you didn't have surpluses you would never discover

the psychoactive properties of fermented grain.

In Nepal, the Newari people have an alcoholic beverage that looks like a bowl of granola when it's put in front of you. It's dry; they pour it out of a sack into your cup and you say, "This is beer?" Then they come along with boiling water and pour it over it, and then you get this foamy, lightly fermented, contaminated grain water. To my mind, that is clearly how fermentation of grains and production of alcohol was established. Notice that it was also the accumulation of surplus from the agricultural adaptation that creates the need for defense, because now you've got a surplus and you have to guard your surplus from everybody who doesn't have any. The other thing that the creation of surpluses caused was the invention of barter and money, and this sort of thing, because now you have something that you can trade for something that you don't have. All of these adaptations; also, a nomadic people cannot move a grain surplus with them. If you're a semi-nomadic people, a people like in the Amazon, they plant things and then they leave them and go away. They have a yearly peregrination and when they come back to that place a

year later there's all this food ready for them.

Imagine a nomadic people who were doing that kind of quasi-agriculture with cereal and then there's one year of great weather and great rainfall and when they arrive at their little wheat patch, so much wheat has been produced that they can't move it, they can't take it with them. So then they say, "We have food now, we don't have to keep hunting, so let's spend the winter here," and this interruption of the cycle of nomadism to deal with unexpected surpluses obviously spawned the idea in people's minds. "Wouldn't it be great if we had surpluses every year?" Then that says, "That won't happen if we are as careless as we have been about our sowing and harvesting, but maybe if we're very careful and till the land, carefully plant and do careful weeding, we'll have to stay here and weed, but then we'll get this tremendous payback in the end." To my mind, the invention of agriculture broke our relationship to the wild plants and the lowered profile of the male ego and set us on a path of defending wealth, creating fortifications, supporting more specialization, larger populations, so forth and so on, and from there to the present

predicament it's only a moment.

I think that now things are very far out of hand, and we are caught up in the endgame of history. We are going to have to create a way out of this impasse that is probably going to mean a complete redefining of who we are and how we relate to each other, and space and time, and life and death. It appears that technology is now the thing that is guiding us forward. We are not being lead into the future by politicians. Politicians are running frantically along behind the wagon of history, trying to jump onto it. What is pulling the cart is technology. I think that technology is the program of realizing the practical concerns of the imagination, and that really where are headed is the imagination: it's a place. I don't know whether it's in solid-state circuitry, or the in the bones of the planet, or in artificial archeologies in deep space. The future will figure out the details,

but we are close enough to it now that we can anticipate it. It's what the shamans always said was possible: a world of value and meaning lived in the light of nature.

I think that if we can get through this narrow neck that rationalism has imposed upon us, and overcome these poisonous, paternalistic philosophies, we will return. That's why I call it the archaic revival: it's the myth of the eternal return. History is something that you finish with as quickly as possible and then return to the archaic mode of eternity. I think that's the adventure that we're all caught up in, that's the agenda that the plants and the planet have always had in front of them. It's just that we wandered away from an awareness of what was happening by deluding

ourselves with our own inflated self-image: man as master of woman and nature. This distorted part of our self-image has now become so dangerous to us that we have to abandon it, we have to draw back from it.

Under that kind of pressure, I think we will. Harking back to another question, the reason I do this, and the reason I don't feel any great trepidation about it, is because I believe that historical momentum is with us. This is what is destined to come to be. We are going to take control of who we are by taking control of the physiological and psychological foundations upon which the self rests, and that means the chemical reengineering of ourselves into the state of Edenic innocence that was lost when we set out on the long trail of the sword and the hoe. That's it. End of

weekend.

Thank you very, very much. It's a political point of view, you see, and as a practical matter there's no better way to succeed in politics than to champion the most out-of-it point of view. We live in an era where beige fascism is apparently the rising rule of the day. Well, that means that if you want to be on the cutting edge you have to embrace something very akin to psychedelic anarchy, the absolute antithesis of the fascist state. Then you will participate in the turning of the tide and the vindication of this point of view; and it will be vindicated, there's no doubt about it. All other points of view are bankrupt on the face of them. End of footnote.

Original Transcription by: [P.C. Lansdown, May 17, 2015]

Review 1 by: [transcendentalobject, July 11, 2017]

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Evolving Times

29 April 1995

Sacramento, California



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[0:00:00]

Terence:Can you hear?

Audience:Yes.

Terence:Everybody can hear? Good. Well, I like to lead with good news, so, uh, let me assure that at no point this evening will I read from, or quote, the poet Rumi.

[audience laughter][0:00:30] Uh ... It's a pleasure to be in Sacramento, it's a pleasure to be in California. I lived here about 30 years before moving out about 8 months ago – lived over in Occidental – so, I sort of feel like this is a hometown congregation.

You may have seen the story in The Bee this morning, uh, it was a reasonable detailing of my theory of evolution [0:01:00]. I noticed that one expert wouldn't even give his name to allow his "no comment" to have attribution. [audience laughter] [laughing] Gentlemen, this is no way to behave in the face of an ideological revolution. Anyway, uhm ...— and, plus, it isn't even my weirdest idea, [audience laughter] but that was left unmentioned [0:01:30], thankfully, in the article. But, since the article dealt so specifically with evolution, and because that probably is my best candidate for entre into any kind of respectability, something I crave intensely in [audience laughter] every atom of my body, i thought I would discuss it with you this evening and try and make it [0:02:00] seem a little less absurd than, uh, than my critics might make it seem. First of all, let me lay out for you

the, uh, [phone starts ringing] the nature of the problem – right now, the nature of the problem is finding the damn phone and shutting it off! [audience laughter] [laughing] No, the nature of the problem is that, uh, evolutionary [0:02:30] theory tells us that we are some kind of advanced animal, of some sort, and science has waged a noble struggle over the past 150 years to secure this position against all attacks by orthodox religious thinking, and yet, there is...after it's all said and done, the sense that if we are an animal, we are a very, very [0:03:00] peculiar sort of animal, indeed – a unique animal. An animal capable of language and coordinated planning, an animal not bound to a particular social or sexual style – we have monogamous human societies, polygamous societies – this is very different from animals. We have poetry, we have mathematics, we [0:03:30] have drama, a whole spectrum of effects that is far from anything that we find in animal organisation. And this problem has fascinated me for a long, long time as it's fascinated a lot of people, uh, because obviously it's a great embarrassment to the theory of evolution that it can't account for human consciousness, [0:04:00] because after all human consciousness produced the theory of evolution [audience laughter]. So, you see, it's a significant failure there. So, uh, obviously if you accept the basic rules of the evolutionary game, which are that there is random mutation, which means gene drift, mixing of genes through sexual reproduction, uh, [0:04:30] cosmic rays which cause birth defects and mutations, this sort of thing, and natural selection. And, these two factors, natural selection and, uh, and mutation, are sufficient to account for praying mantises, chipmunks, tropical rainforests, but no us. And the reason is that we emerged too quickly [0:05:00] from the background of the rest of ordinary nature. Uh, in the space of about two billion years, the human brain doubled in size, and Lumholtz, who is an orthodox evolutionary biologist, calls this the most dramatic transformation of the—of a major organ of a higher animal, in the entire history of life [0:05:30], and it happened to us. It happened to that very organ that is responsible for the theory of evolution. So, what extraordinary confluence of, uhm, factors could have come together there to take a, uh, essentially an arboreal monkey, an ape of some sort, that had been at an evolutionary climax in the canopy [0:06:00] of the rainforest for a couple of million years, what extraordinary set of factors could then set that creature marching down the road toward, you know, Elvis, the Internet, Bill Clinton, and, uh, all the rest of it?

[Transcript by Frank Bronson]

Well, I imagined when I first started thinking about this, that there must be some huge edifice of established theory, that we have to go up in there and blow up, surely somebody has stated up this ground and made some kind of an argument about human consciousness. Well, in terms of science, not; or almost not. I mean, in terms of religion it's simple, I mean: god made us from the clay of the earth. In terms of science, the best shot is pretty weak soup from my point of view. Here's what science is telling us; that when you throw something, you have to plan, because once you let go of whatever it is you are throwing: you can no longer control it. And so because we were small, and weak and hunted in packs, we learnt to throw like hell: at very large, onrushing, wholly fellow mammals of various sorts. And you had to plan your throw. Consequently, we developed brain capacity to do this and have enough left over to invent quantum physics, paint the Mona Lisa, invent the phonetic alphabet, philosophy, religion and all the rest of it. In other words, it was the coordination of the hand and the eye, to the throwing arm. This is what the orthodox folks tell us, that gave us this extra brain capacity. That we sort of then managed into human civilization. Well, notice that this would make the pinnacle of the evolutionary ladder, the gum-chewing big league baseball pitcher. Because you know, he can put that pill right across the plate at high speed, time after time. As somebody who learned everything they know about sadomasochism in PE class, I'm not really ready to embrace this theory, it definitely runs against my paradigm: so I've built another story, and to my mind, it meets the objections, answers the questions of where did consciousness come from. But instead of doing it very nicely and neatly: it raises in the very act of answering this question, other questions. Maybe more closer to home. Questions that reflect on our social organization, our politics, how we treat each other in the here and now, even with implications for the future. We'll get to that, for the moment let me just run through this for you. There's a sort of a basic situation that all theories of evolution have to come to terms with, and this is, that our remote, protohominid, primate, ape, ancestors; lived and developed in Africa. If you have a non-african theory of human origin, and there are such things, the evidence is strongly against you. If it were stock, I'd sell. The evidence is pretty strong, that whatever happened that brought us

out of the animal-body, it happened in Africa. Well, all animals, and plants for that matter, tend to reach evolutionary climax and occupy a niche and stabilize in that niche. Cockroaches, ants achieved this hundreds of millions of years ago, and have not changed greatly since. Most of biology is this iterative occupation of a climax niche. Very little of biology, is the pushing forward into radical new forms, new species, still rare, new genera. For that, there has to be disruption of some sort, of the environment and it can be the meandering of a river, or an asteroid strike, the retreat of a glacier, something which creates open land. Well, for five-six million years now, the African continent has been slowly drying and three million years ago it was covered by rainforest at the equator from east to west. And that was the environment of human ancestor types. They were canopy dwelling, they were fruit eating, they ate some percentage of insects composed their diet, they had a pack signaling repertoire that was fairly complicated by animal standards

[Transcript by Javier Alonso]

....And there they were happily living in the canopy. But Africa began to dry up.

And they came under nutritional pressure. Now, simpler animals - insects for example - when their food source is withdrawn, they usually buy the farm. They don't have much flexibility of diet. If you've ever tried to raise caterpillars into butterflies for your children, you know that if you give the caterpillars the wrong leaves, they just can't make any sense out of it, and they die.

Uh - more advanced animals when confronted with dietary pressure or disappearance of ordinary food supplies, before they give up the ghost, they will - uhh - experiment, with other food sources in the environment.

Now the reason this isn't normally done, is thought - the reason animals are conservative in their food choices - it's thought to be a way of avoiding - ah - mutational influences in the form of tertiary chemicals, toxins, viruses, and things like this that would be in fo- in unusual foods.

One of the things that accompanies our acquisition of consciousness is gastronomy - the appreciation of flavor - the approach to food that makes it an art. Animals don't do this - they're just trying to get enough protein to keep the old engines running. The notion of flavouring is counter-intuitive to animals. And flavoring's probably in part a mutagenic influence to our diet.

When our remote ancestors came under environmental pressure, their environment was shrinking, the rainforest was being replaced by grasslands, and nutritional pressure - their ordinary diet of fruit and insects was being restricted - they began exploring this new environment of the grasslands, and this is the era of knuckle-walking, turning into bipedalism. It's the era of the coordination of binocular vision, so forth and so on. There was a paper published recently which anticipates my point but I can't wait to hit you with it. A paper published recently about canopy-dwelling monkeys who only leave the canopy for the acquisition of one particular food. And the food they will come to the ground for, and risk predation, is mushrooms.

So, it seems perfectly reasonable to suggest that our remote ancestors, exploring the new environment of the

grasslands, would have encountered, as you would if you were to go to the - to the tropics, ahh, psilocybin containing mushrooms, growing in the dung of cattle, many dung-growing, so-called coprophilic- coprolitic mushrooms produce psilocybin, among them stropharia cubensis, which is one of the largest and pandemically distributed of these mushrooms.

I'm sure that our early ancestors also tested other kinds, of food, they were testing everything. They were digging for corms with pointed sticks - ahh - and I'm sure there were many uhrhr ecological and medical disasters as a consequence of this. For instance ah, the birth control steroids in modern birth control pills are produced by dioscorea vines, grown on plantations in Mexico. Well dioscorea is the family of ahhhhh sweet potatoes. Imagine-uh a hungry band of primates that come up on a patch of sweet potatoes that are heavy in these steroids. It would raise holy havoc with their reproductive cycle - it would interfere with menstruation, ovulation, lactation, fertility, and uh, y'know, human genetic history is the story of many such - uh - encounters - with mutagenic influences in the environment - most of them catastrophic, detrimental, lethal. But in some few cases, there would have been uhh - salutary results - advantages conferred upon the, animals that accept these new foods into their food chain.

breath And - and I want to particularly emphasise psilocybin because I believe it's the key. You see we're looking for some kind of factor, which could have exploded, the human brain size, at a rate ten times faster than evolution, normally takes place. So it's going to be an unusual situation - perhaps the need to throw a boulder at distance accurately, or perhaps contact with an unusual food item or drug-containing plant. But it was something unusual - if it weren't unusual, it wouldn't have taken this planet....

[Transcript by Kurt Robinson]

[18:00]

...a billion and a half years to bring forth its first intelligent species.
Well, so let's look at psilocybin then in a little more detail.

It has a number of properties, not specifically related to its psychoactivity that make it an ideal candidate for a catalyst for the emergence of consciousness and an advanced animal. First of all, and at the early stage of human invasion of this new grassland environment - proto-hominid invasion I should say - ahh, we were testing foods, we would certainly have tested this food. I've seen these things the size of dinner plates in the Amazon after a rain, and they are silvery with blue and purple shading, they are the most dramatic thing in the environment, whether you know anything about them as, as, uhm, psychoactive agents or not. Certainly they would have been tested for food; I've seen chim-, uhm, baboons in Kenya investigating cow pies and flipping them over, because beetle grubs nestle underneath them. So cow pies are a natural vector for hungry baboons, so that everything is in place, it's- it's trivial to, uh, suggest otherwise, I would maintain.

OK. The first quality of psilocybin, which isn't specifically related to its psychoactivity, is that in small doses - doses that are the kind you might obtain if you would just sort of eating it along with little roots, grassroots, small bugs, um, you know, so forth and so on - visual acuity is improved. Specifically, edge detection is improved. Well, now, it seems to me, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that if you're in a highly competitive evolutionary

environment, in grassland, an environment characterised by large predators, hunting cats, and also characterised by small ungulate prey, that having an increased sensitivity to edge-movement might make the difference between whether or not you live to tell the tale or you become somebody's dinner, or it would certainly make the difference between going home empty handed, and taking dinner home with you. So, a factor which enhanced edge-detection on those animals accepting that food supply into their food chain, they would have, uhh, a slightly increased chance of evolutionary success as opposed to the non-psilocybin members of their group, and this increased hunting, uhh, success, would tend to outbreed the non-psilocybin-using members of the group.

At slightly higher doses, uhh, in highly sexed animals like primates, uh, all alkaloids are what are called CNS stimulants - central nervous system stimulants - that means that they produce arousal, and in sexually extremely active animals like primates, arousal means, uhh, erection, usually in the male, usually followed by hanky-panky, what anthropologists and primatologists call successful instances of copulation. [*audience laughs*] Well, again, what is this? It's a second factor tending to outbreed the non-psilocybin-using members of the population. They're now definitely moving to the rear of the parade; they don't have as much hunting success, they don't have as much food for themselves and their offspring, they're not having as much sex so they're not having as many offspring, and, you know, in terms of, of rising and falling numbers, those that have some allergy prejudice or fear of, uh, of a mushroom, are, are just being shunted out of the breeding population.

Well, at still higher doses, approaching effective doses of 20 milligrams or more, in other words 4 grams dried and up, or 45 grams wet and up, uhh, hunting is out of the question [*audience laughs*], sex is something you can consider [*audience laughs*] but it's out of the question, and you are basically nailed to the ground in a state of mind which we for all of our sophistication, our logical positivism, our superconducting supercolliders and all the rest of it, haven't a clue as to what it is, what it means, what its implications are - the full blown psychedelic experience of which we can only speak in, in terms of, uh, religious hierophany, epiphany, apocatastasis, and all those other great greek words, uhh, ataraxia, you know - in other words, we like it; but we don't understand it. And it is therefore, uh, the basis for religion.

Well... *swallows*, uhh, so right there...

[24:00]

[Transcript by Adnan Zahirovic]

... You have a three step process, driven by nothing more than hunger and curiosity, that leads remote primate ancestors to a confrontation with, what Rudolf Otto called the Holy Other, The Holy, The Numinous, The Transcendental. And aah, aah, you know this is on slightly less firm ground but in my own personal experience and having collected psychedelic experiences life long I feel confident in saying that at high doses psilocybin causes glossolalia. Glossolalia is syntactically structured language like behavior in the absence of meaning. Aah, speaking in tongues is what christian fundamentalists call it, but they don't have, aah, mo, monopoly on it. It's ancient it occurs in all cultures, It's shamanic, and what it is it is a kind of neurological seizure where linguistic organization spontaneously is verbalized. No animal does this, It must have something to do with the acquisition of language by human beings, and what I think is going on is that probably language was, aah, entertainment long before it was meaning, that is a kind of tuneless singing, and that having discovered that we could make an almost endless repertoire of small mouth noises, we did this, for each other, for amusement, for, to, aah, pass the time I mean, god knows there was a lot of it *audience laughs*, and It, It probably was very late in the evolution of this ability that some very tight ass rational type said, you know, we could attach a specific meaning to a specific sound and then every time I've made that sound you'd know what I meant, and then you can go and get it for me, *audience laughs* you see. It's a sort of, it, it's the "as long as you're up get me a Grant's" theory of language, aah. So, so that's the basic

idea, and, I, I really believe that, sometime in the last fifty thousand years before twelve thousand years ago, a kind of paradise came into existence. A situation in which man and women, parents and children, people and animals, human institutions and the land, aah, all were in dynamic balance, and not in any primitive sense at all. Aah, language was fully developed, poetry may have been at its climax, dance, magic, poetics, altruism, aah, philosophy. There is no reason to think that these things were not practiced as adroitly as we practice them today. And it was under the aegis of the boundary dissolving influence of psilocybin. We were nomadic, we were breeders and, and caretakers of kattle, we worshiped a great goddess, we followed a yearly round in a vast grassland cut by crystal streams that were washing down out of the, the higher altitudes, and we were probably black as your hat, for that matter. Aah, and it was great, well if it was so great, what happened, well, ahh, the very forces which created this situation, and you all recall what it was, it was the drying of the African continent forcing us out of the trees, forcing us to change our diet, forcing us to accept a dung growing mushroom, ahh, and there were other factors forcing us into consciousness as well. When we became omnivorous, the first form of consciousness is having the point of view of your prey, predatory animals have the highest form of animal consciousness, big cats, but it's a consciousness of the exterior world. Psilocybin forced us beyond that, into consciousness of the imaginal world, the world of the imagination inside our heads. What happened was, aah, the mushroom faded, the climate changed, what had been everywhere became seasonal, moved into the rain shadows of mountains, aah, became the prerogative of a special class of people called shamans, who were like the, the designated hitters for dealing with the hyperspace of the mythos. Aah, and in other words, over millennia, the, the, the, connection went from available to everyone all the time, to ever more tenuous, ever more tenuous, finally faded out entirely. It's even more complicated than that because surely people....

[Transcript by Lobo Noble]

[00:30:00]

Terence: would have, as they saw this happening, make attempts to preserve the mushroom, and in a world without refrigeration, the only effective way to do this is preservation in honey. You can dry mushrooms, but in a world without hermetically sealed peanut butter jars, drying is a very short-term strategy for preservation. The only thing which will really work is preservation in honey. The problem there is that honey itself, especially aboriginal honeys – which have a lot more water in them than what you get in those little plastic bears at the A&P [audience laughter]– uh, aboriginal honeys are very runny, and so what do they do? They themselves have the capacity for turning into a psychoactive substance: alcohol. But alcohol promotes a completely different set of cultural values and attitudes than psilocybin. Uh, psilocybin is a boundary dissolving hallucinogen, uh, mead alcohol, uh, gives an enhanced, uh, sense of verbal acuity in the presence of lowered sensitivity to social cues. In other words, uh, one can make an ass of oneself [audience laughter].

But now I want to backtrack for a minute, I will return to this thing about the loss of the mushroom, but there's something that I wanna go over with you that's really important in all this, to me, and that is: this isn't simply the story of how an intoxicant promoted consciousness and then we fell into history but losing that intoxicant and went into other intoxicants, with consequences to be evaluated, it's that, but it's more, because psilocybin had a very, very peculiar effect, over and above what I've mentioned so far, and it's this over and above effect that makes my theory so controversial, and so, uh, and academics so phobic of it, because it rips open a whole can of worms, and this is the problem: all primates, clear back to squirrel monkeys and old world monkeys, all primates form dominance hierarchies. This means that the sharp fanged, hard bodied young males control everybody else: the women, the elderly, the sick, the children, homosexuals – everybody finds their place somewhere in this dominance hierarchy run by these dominant alpha males. We are no different. We also, as we sit here this evening, operate under this kind

of a social organisation. I mean, we complain about, we analyze it, we are aware of it, but we live under it, it's how it is. So, here is my suggestion: that, what psilocybin did was it changed behaviour, it interfered with primate behaviour. Specifically, it interfered with this tendency to form monogamous pairs and dominance hierarchies, and so the ordinary tendency of the primates to organise themselves that way [00:34:00] was interrupted, medicated out of existence, if you like, vaccinated against, if you like, by the presence of psilocybin in the diet. And, uh, this, oversec—this, this overemphasizing or chemical accentuation of sexuality occasioned by the arousal of psilocybin, was sufficient to dissolve [00:34:30] the ordinary tendency toward monogamy, and replace it with an orgiastic sexual style, or they coexisted simultaneously, I mean who knows, we weren't there, it's sort of, the way I imagine it, is that at every new and full moon there were group mushroom parties which basically, simply got out of hand [audience laughter], regularly. And—and, so, the monogamous [00:35:00] pair bond would be under pressure if not completely eliminated. Many cultures have this even to this day, I mean, in a sense, mardi gras is a festival where the rules are dissolved, and nobody is supposed to go to their spouse the monday after and say, "You know, was that you I saw dressed as Marie Antoinette and, uh" ... [audience laughter] because, you know, the rules are—there is permission to break the rules, and many societies [00:35:30] do this. Uh, the result of an orgiastic style like that, is, uh, men cannot trace lines of male paternity, and so there is a tremendous social glue, a tremendous, uh, force for the cohesion of community. Men don't then think in terms of "MY children", they think in terms of "our children", the children [00:36:00] of the group.

[Transcript by Frank Bronson]

...And under the aegis of this group, this polymorphis.. (polymorphic), sexual style, group -uh- childcare, and -uh- and extended family rearing, we produced everything that we think of as human; that we value. Our art, our music, our philosophy, our sense of each other's worth, -uh- body painting, tattooing, piercing, all the accoutrements that distinguish us from animal existence were put in place when we had a different kind of mind than we have now. We didn't have a mind that that favored role specialization, and male dominance, and anxiety over female sexual activity related to feelings of male ownership. That all came later.

[37:00]

We became human beings in this other.. World of - of values and psychological attitudes. The problem is, as I say, 'the mushroom faded,' but by the time it had faded -uh- we were no longer the wordless symbionts of cattles, the, the barely sentient hunters of, of the African plain. By the time we were finished with the mushrooms we had language, we had social institutions, and - but what we began to lose was, you know, - you can get as wet eyed as you want about it but.. respect for each other; a sense of each other's individuality. A sense of love, a sense of community. And it must of been, though it happened over a long period of time, very much like what we're living through now.

[38:00]

A sense that people are, you know, no damn good and getting worse. A sense that, you know, 'Why can't we be as we once were?' 'Where is our sense of each other?' 'Where is our ability to care for each other?,' so forth and so on. I wrote a book called -uhm- 'Food of the Gods', in which I tell this story in the first third of the book that I have just told you, and then I show that, what history is essentially, is, is a careening, out of control effort to find our way back to this state of primordial balance. One of the things that marks us as humans that is unique is our obsessions with

drugs; our ability to addict.

[38:57]

We addict not only to substances, we addict to each other, we addict to ideologies (Marxism, Christianity, pff..Skinkism as practiced in Washington, *audience laughter* -uh- whatever). And we addict to each other. You know? I mean I am a romantic -uh- with the best of them but I can't help noticing that a broken heart and a heroin withdrawal show very similar presentations. *audience laughter* Really! Insomnia, sweating, sense of diminished self-esteem, hysteria, -uh uhm- you know, it's, it's very very similar. We- so, a psychologist looking at a person with an addictive syndrome will say, "Well you were damaged in childhood, there's some trauma there that you're, you're trying to compensate. You're trying to compensate."

[40:04]

Well i'm not that keen on all this psychologizing, but I do think that we could apply this model to ourselves on a grand scale. We were essentially torn from the gain womb, thrust into the birth canal of history, and expelled sometime around the fall of the Roman Empire into the cold hard world of modern science, existentialism, and all the rest of it. And -uh uh- we have searched the planet for substances which would assuage our sense of pain. And there are things out there, you know.. Alcohol, the whole morphine family, so forth and so on. But these things always have consequences. There's a price to be paid.

[41:00]

-Uh- The very knowledge of psilocybin was lost to the entire planet, except for some tribes in the Mexican mountains, -uh- for several millennia until Valentina and Gordon Wasson went in the -uh, uhh- early nineteen-fifties and found these mushrooms and brought them out and then Albert Hoffman, who had earlier discovered LSD, synthesized the compound and made it available. That was '55. Well by '66 all human research with these things had been forbidden. We have- It's not that science "mowed this field and moved on." It's that -uh- science has never really been here. -Uh- we haven't looked at the implications of diet on early human evolution.

[Transcript by Nigel Millegan]

[42:00]

We don't have a theory for the evolution of consciousness of any consequence, and yet, you know, the factors I've laid out for you - increased visual acuity, a-, impact on sexual and social behaviours, uh, triggering of glossolalia-like phenomena in the presence of a boundary dissolving psychedelic experience - these are catalysts efficiently dramatic that inculcated into a cultural style, I think they explain a great deal about where we came from and who we are. Now, the, [*looks at watch*] the irony of all of this is, uh, that we live in a society that has made p-, all practically, any discussion of this, illegal. Certainly if I were to end this lecture by handing out doses of psilocybin, [*audience

laughs*] I would be gently taken by the elbow and led away forever. [*audience laughs*] Uhh...

Uhh, the western mind is particularly phobic of this, uhh, of this subject, I mean, we have bent our laws so that people can jump out of airplanes in the pursuit of thrills, so they bungee-cord off major highway bridges and freeway overpasses; be-, so concerned are we to fulfill society's need for thrills, uh, but this, is something else. It provokes all kinds of alarmed reactions and perhaps you believe unfairly. I think that when you examine the situation, it's possible to understand very clearly why this is such a social issue; because what these things do, if you look - and now I'm slightly broadening my wrap to include other psychedelics besides psilocybin, but psilocybin is certainly true in all cases - what these things do, if you had to generalize a hundred-thousand psychedelic experiences - the ones where people thought they were god, the ones where people had to be taken to the ER room and have their stomach pumped, all of them - if you generalize what the-, what these substances do, is they dissolve boundaries. They dissolve boundaries. If you love it, you'll love it. If you hate it, you'll hate it. But that's what they do; they dissolve boundaries.

Now, the reason this provokes a lot of social anxiety is because all societies are about the maintenance of boundaries. It doesn't matter whether you're, you know, a stockbroker in New York, a zen monk in Kyoto, a hasid in Jerusalem, your society is held together by boundaries, and definitions, and anything which dissolves those boundaries and introduces, uh, relativity into cultural modeling, is felt to be threatening. Because we like to believe that our reality is somehow sanctioned, that this is how it should be. But in fact, you know, that's just, uh, cultural judgement; all cultures think that their culture represents a sanctioned reality. It doesn't. It just represents the current download of, uh, their linguistic enterprise. [*audience laughs silently*]

Uhm... The- At the core of the western anxiety about boundaries is something that we are very proud of, that we believe we invented. We call it the ego. Sometimes we call it the democratic individual. Uhh, we say no we- wu-, no eastern society could have produced this. We took this from the Greeks, we perfected it through the Romans, we brought it up through the medieval period; John Locke, and Thomas Hobbes, and all those folks fixed it up for us in the 18th century, Thomas Jefferson ironed out the wrinkles, and modern America is the shining example of, uh, what you can do if you empower the ego, the citizen, the individual. We want nothing of tribalism, still less of collectivism, and God forbid [*in mockingly stern voice*] nothing whatsoever to do with communism! See, all these- all these things, uh, set us going. Uhh...

But in fact, the ego is appropriate only to a certain point. I mean, yes, we need egos, so that you take someone to dinner at a reasonable restaurant, you place food in your mouth, not their mouth. [*audience laughs*] This is-, this is what the ego is for. It tells you who pays. [*audience laughs*] [*clears throat*] Uhm, but in fact, what the ego is, is the return to consciousness of this psychic structure related to the patterns of dominance. And the way I think of the ego is it's like a cyst, or a calcareous growth, or a tumor, [*audience laughs periodically throughout the sentence*] that gets going in the personality, and if not treated, it becomes chronic, and then there is no cure. There can only be, you know, a certain amount of maintenance, and....

[48:00]

[Transcript by Adnan Zahirovic]

[0:48:00] ...medication of it but it's it's incurable except unless we resort to not only non-prescription drugs but uh drugs currently illegal. In other words, the psychedelics through this boundary dissolving function dissolve that boundary as well. And so they promote a larger sense of the world than the values of capitalism, [0:48:30] competitiveness, object fetishism, property acquisition and the bottom line, empower.

So the -the issue as was always since, since the sixties forward i think is not simply uh an issue of religious freedom or an issue of an eccentric minority social practice [0:49:00] being tolerated by the majority, the way they tolerate handing out pamphlets in the airport or something like that, the -the issue is in fact what kind of people shall we be? And then what kind of society shall we put in place?

And that's why my theory of evolution is not simply a dry [0:49:30] footnote on uh an issue that involves anthropologists, primatologists and biologists, but it turns into a political issue because our unhappy, addicted, ego-driven condition has become not simply the source of our own unhappiness, that was bad enough but now it's the source of great discomfort and dislocation [0:50:00] for all life and human society on the planet. We -we are out of control, we are basically severely addicted to things, and cannot stop ourselves. Uhh and we know, or we should know, that there is not enough petroleum, heavy metal so forth and so on [0:50:30] in the planet to give all the thing addicts all the things that we know they must have in order to be happy.

We have spread this intellectual virus from pole to pole, to Turkmenistan and Borneo, to the upper amazon to the Tajiks , everybody wants kids, you know? Everybody wants the pause that refreshes, uhh, [0:51:00] what are we going to do about this? Well so far we've been treating it like an endless garden party, there's no serious plan on the table to deal with this at all.

Uhh uh i think that the momentum of human history is pushing us inexorably toward some kind of day of reckoning and in which we are going to have to turn [0:51:30] consciously toward brutality and selfishness and say we'll let India go. Let Bangladesh go. Triage. Costs too much. Can't possibly fix the problem in order to maintain our locked compounds and our 50 channels of television and the endless availability of arugula (*audience laughs*) we have to let India go.

We're going to have to [0:52:00] turn that way in other words each consciously participate in a choice to brutalize the human enterprise or we're going to have to uhh seriously talk about very major restructuring of our society and i don't really know how we do that.

I was living in northern california a couple years ago when they wanted to close an airbase near here and the [0:52:30] newspapers were filled with weeks for weeks with analysis whether western civilization could absorb this hammer blow at the very heart of its institutions of closing one frickin airbase for crying out loud. (*audience laughs*) That's not my idea of major change. You know?

We may have to give up some of our pretty things. We may have to discipline some of the irresponsible [0:53:00] uh social philosophies that run amuck among us and no i don't mean the advocacy of psychedelic plants i mean the roman catholic church on population control in the third world. I mean the germans take quite a knock for the

holocaust but the catholic church manages to push more people into death disease and degradation every year [0:53:30] than the holocaust manages in its entire show and it's thought rather crass to even mention the fact. It seems to me that as long as these catholic bishops can show their face in public that we are - uhh in complicity with mass murder. It's not pleasant news, but what are you going to do about it. Islamic fundamentalism, [0:54:00] another bunch of not-heads with an anti-human agenda, what are we going to do about this?

[Transcript by Jonathan Laliberte]

Are we going to go gently into that good night of planetary chaos, extreme distortion of class structure, defence of what we have at any cost against those who have nothing? There doesn't seem to be any other plan on the horizon.

Arthur Koestler - who probably never thought he would be quoted by Terence McKenna, [*audience laughs*] a very conservative character, you'll recall he was a marxist who turned on marxism and led a very interesting intellectual life - he wrote a book thirty years ago called "The Ghost in the Machine", and he made a case similar to mine, but a little simpler. He observed: human beings are hardwired for homicide. [*audience chuckles*] This is what we do best, because this was something we had to do, apparently, at some point in our past, at least in Koestler's view, he didn't believe in a mushroom paradise. But he reached the same conclusion that I have, which is, we need a pharmacological intervention on antisocial behavior, or we are not going to get hold of our, uh, our dilemma. And, uh, I-, I-, you know, there have been dystopias based on drug intervention on aggressive behavior; you all remember "Brave new world", where every time anybody raised their voice, they were given a, a gram of soma, and told a "gram is better than a dam" (?). And so, nobody ever had the thought in their head. Well, that's a terrible drug, let's not introduce that. O-oh, the bad news is, we've had it for decades, it's called television, [*audience laughs*] you know. We have millions of people in larval low-awareness lives, in their little condominium apartments, just ladling this garbage into their minds. The average American watches five and a half hours of TV a day, so imagine how much these people watch. I mean, to- to think of that as human at all... If that were a drug, we'd be up in arms. You know, if people were loaded at home with that level of mental condition, [*audience laughs*] day after day after day, we would-, we would do something about it. [*clears throat*]

So, my, uh, you know, I don't ha-, I can't propose a grand solution, but I do think that it is, uhh, uh, pregnant with implication that here at the end of the 20th century, with all of this problems hammering down on us, the news comes from the rain forests, and the deserts, that these aboriginal people - while we made the descent into history, and got the top quark, and planted the flag on the Moon, and all that - they kept the faith. And they have... [*pauses, swallows*] a "materia medica", a toolbox, that can carry us back into connection, uh, with the planet. Now, the question might be asked: w-, why-, why do y-, do you have such overwhelming faith in, what is after all a substance, a drug? I mean, don't psychedelics just cause you to see pretty pictures and patterns, and tally up your gains and losses, and then you come down, and that's it? And the answer is: no. What is mysterious here - and I mentioned this in the early part of my talk - what is mysterious here, is this thing we call the psychedelic experience. Those people nailed to the ground around the campfires fifty thousand years ago, they didn't know what it was. And when we go in there, armed with our Heidegger, and our Husserl, and our... Wittgenstein, and our Merleau-Ponty, we don't know what it is either. There has been no progress in sixty thousand years in reducing the psychedelic experience to a known quantity. It is as terrifying, as awesome, as ecstatic, as irreducible to us as it was to them. Well, what is that? As secular people, uh, we rarely experience religious awe, especially of the uncontrollable sort. Uhh, I believe that, what makes the psychedelic experience so central, is the that it is, uh, a connection into a larger modality of organisation on the planet, which is a fancy way of saying, it connects you up to the mind of Nature herself. The planet is not, uh, uh, just a hodgepodge of competing species, that's the old evolutionary model. That's been obsolete for decades. The new evolutionary model is, that, where we see species... Nature sees only ge- a gene swarm. Genes moving at various speeds, being transferred around - a large percentage of them by sexual propagation.

[1:00:00]

[Transcript by Adnan Zahirovic]

But a large percentage of them by asexual and vegetative propagation. And still others by more exotic -uh- methods of propagation such as [what] go on in the fungi and the bacteria. Uh, the world is a gene swarm, and people like Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock have been suggesting for years that the Earth is a kind of thermostatic self-regulator. Well, if you carry that idea far enough, thermostatic self-regulator is a way of saying [it's] a kind of computational engine; a kind of computer; a kind of mind! A kind of of mind; The Gaian Mind. The reason those mushroom eating, orgiastically-behaving people worshipped a great horned goddess, the reason they imaged the numinous other as feminine [1:01:00], was because they had a connection into a kind of overarching intelligence that they instinctively and intuitively felt to be feminine.

And we retain this in our languages as the idea of mother nature, and the femininity of the land and so forth and so on, but it's just become a distant metaphor to us. I think our intelligence is, is a source of toxicity to nature and discomfort to ourselves unless our values are based on planetary values; are linked to the values of the rest of nature. And that means we need to -uh- fit ourselves more appropriately into the scheme of things by limiting our numbers, [1:02:00] by -uh- limiting our extraction of natural resources and toxification of the environment.

Uh, we uh, we need to realize that there is a hegemony of life on the planet, not necessarily a hegemony of intelligence. Intelligence is not a licence to trample. Th- the proper role of intelligence in a planetary ecology is that of gardener, caregiver, and uh, uh, maintainer of balance. Well.. so where do we go and how- what do psychedelics have to say about that? Well, I- I believe that psychedelics show us something which -uhm- [1:03:00] which capitalist, consumer fetish oriented society doesn't want us to know.

What psychedelics show us, is the incredible richness of our minds. That- that you, little you, can produce more art in a 20 minute burst of hallucinatory intoxication than the western mind has produced in the last 500 years. Our socially created space is incredibly impoverished. You know? We have Picasso's contribution and Pollock's contribution and everybody's contribution but it all together is as nothing compared to the richness that resides in each one of us a half inch behind your eye brows.

[1:04:00]

We are told, you know, 'oh well if you want beauty you have to own a lexus.' Or -uh- you know, if you want a sense of satisfaction then you need a triple car garage. [And] on and on. Th- this is absolutely -uh- not true. These are substitute addictions that will never satisfy for the genuine article, and the genuine article is a connection into the Gaian Mind. Well I don't believe or expect for a moment that ever again, naked, tattooed, and joyous we will herd our cattle across the grasslands of Africa. *audience laughter* I mean there are six million (billion?) of us that chance has been blown. Uh, but, but, what- what can we do to make- to ameliorate our situation? Well I have always been an optimist, i'm more optimistic right now [1:05:00] then I have been for a long time because sometimes when

you're an optimist, you're an optimist simply on principle, you believe it's going to turn out alright but you don't see how it possibly could.

I'm beginning to see how it possibly could turn out alright, and -uh- my notion is - first of all I- I follow my thinking about shamanism and I follow the great historian of religion Mircea Eliade, who got it almost all right except that he never embraced psychedelics. He thought they were decadent. But that was just his French/European education and he came to early. But anyway, Eliade wrote a book called 'Shamanism,' and then he subtitled it 'The Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy.' Now he wrote the book in French. In French . . .

[Transcript by Douglas Salguero]

...technique has a connotation that it doesn't have in english. It means both a way to do things, and it means technology. Later, the french sociologist Jacques Ellul wrote a book called 'Propaganda' and the little banner under which his book flew which is printed right on the front of his piece, is he says, 'there are no political solutions, only technological ones. The rest is propaganda.' And then he spends 200 pages explaining what he means by political solutions, technological solutions, and propaganda. By Ellul's understanding, I agree. I think ideology is toxic. All ideology. It's not that there are good ones and bad ones. All ideology is toxic because ideology is a kind of insult to the gift of human free thinking. I mean, if you adopt some ideology, Lenninism, Mormonism, it doesn't matter, then you have all the answers. You just go and look in the catechism. Well I don't know why they issued you a brain, they could have just given you the catechism. *laughs* Uhhm. Technology as the counterpoint to, uhh, ideology is a very different animal. Now right now we're going through a technophobic phase because people think technology means exploding nuclear power plants and uhh irradiated food and tv. But all technology really means in the Mclewin sense is the extensions of man, the extensions of man. And, so language is a technology, shamanism is a technology, psilocybin is a technology, and certainly the internet is a technology. It's, slowly I think, dawning on a number of people that if we, if we're talking about hallucinogens as consciousness expanding drugs, than the only difference between a drug and a computer is that one is slightly too large to swallow, and our best people are working on that problem, even as we speak. The drugs of the future will be much more like computers. The computers of the future will be much more like drugs. And I think what we have to recognize is that we are in a very brief and low energy technical phase in technology, basically we're at the tail end of the petro-chemical steam era and where we are headed is toward the solid state, fiber optic, global community of the internet. And uhh, when I was in San Francisco two weeks ago, the buzz was all about VRML, the virtual language markup... the Virtual reality markup language whose protocols are being set now so that we will be able to build websites on the net that you can put on your helmet and walk around in. Sun Microsystems is about to introduce something called Hot Java which will let you build and interact with your website without going through your server. Bandwidth is broadening as we speak. Uh the whole world is being brought into the domain of electricity. And you may not know it but Marshall Mclewin thought that this was descent of the holy ghost as a convert to christ- to catholicism, he sort of went the opposite direction as me. As a convert to catholicism, he decided that the descent of the third person of the trinity and the worldwide spread of electricity were the same event. So I think that uh what we have to do is dematerialize culture in every way possible. And that means pharmacologize culture, computerize culture, network culture, virtualize culture, and uh, make of it, thereby, uh a tool for the production of our poetic flights, a technology for the putting in place of our dreams as exhibits that we can show each other. This is what it is, this is what technology can be in the service of boundary dissolution. In the service of boundary maintenance, you get hydrogen bombs and seran. In the service of boundary disillusion, you get psychoactive substances, and the Internet, and uh, sexual experimentalism, social justice, tolerance, and community, and the, the choice is to be made on an individual level by each and every one of us. I don't advocate a mass outbreak of psychedelic use, I think these things are a private matter. They are, the only thing comparable to them in our human experience is our sexuality, and that's a private matter.

[Transcript by Christian Haas]

[1:12:00]

How we define it, how we express it, how we act it out, who we do it with, what we think about it and what we choose to say in public about it is all, uh, in our hands. I do not think that, uh, the government, under the guise of some phony alarmist pseudo-scientific rhetoric, should attempt to control the evolution of consciousness. After all, if these things truly are consciousness-expanding, it doesn't take too much intelligence to realise that it is the absence of consciousness that is causing our flirtation with extinction and planetary disaster. If there is any way to raise consciousness - diet, drug, machine, sexual practice, mantra, yantra, whatever it is - we should be furiously exploring and applying it. Because if we should fumble the ball, if we should actually, uh, where our ancestors over thousands of generations did not fail, if we are to fail, the magnitude of the tragedy will be immense, because failure is not inevitable, it is not inevitable that we should fail. There are ideas, personalities, technologies, uh, available right now that which, if honestly explored and- and implemented, could rescue the human enterprise from the disgrace that hovers over us. We don't want this to end in a toxified garbage pit ruled by nazis, which is, you know, the way we may well be headed. Uh, the Gaian mind has always been there.

Nature, originally through the plants and shamanism, provided the tools for us to access this incredible natural database through the vicissitudes of history, previous generations lost the key in western society. Since the 1960s the key has been re-found. It's a matter of great social controversy, it's a matter of... of- of great risk of those who take it, how they will be viewed by their peers but there is no longer.... ignorance is no longer an excuse. Anthropology in the last 100 years has laid at our doorstep the tools necessary for an archaic reconstruction of a society and, uh, human values within that society. It's inconceivable that Western industrial capitalism could run on another 500 or a 1000 years. Uh, it- it will not continue as it has, it will deteriorate under the pressure of resource scarcity. And what few democratic values we have obtained, what little space for reasoned discourse has been created will be the first to be swept away, so it's- it's very, very important that people take back their minds and that people analyse our dilemma in the context of the entire human story. From the descent onto the grassland to our potential destiny as citizens of the galaxy and the universe, we are at a critical turning point. And as I say, the tools, the- the data that is... holds the potential for our salvation is now known, it is available, it is among us. But it is misrepresented, it is slandered, it is litigated against and it's up to each one of us to relate to this situation in a fashion that will allow us to answer the question that will surely be put to us in a some point in the future, which is "What did you do to help save the world". Well, I'll knock off now, I'll sign books, we'll take, like, a 10-minute break and then we'll come back and do questions. Thank you very much for your attention! [Applause]

[Dis]...aster and that in fact what we're involved with here at the end of the 20-th century is some kind of, uh, accelerated forward escape into transformation. And I- when I lecture that subject I more or less imply that it's inevitable. In other words, that it's not that we have to to X, Y or Z, that it's on track. I think it is on track but I also think there is a place for this kind of politics we discuss this evening because, as the world gets crazier and crazier, a lot of people are going to get very, very anxious. This thing in Oklahoma City is an example of people getting anxious. Uh- so, what needs to be done is to spread [1:18:00] the idea that anxiety is inappropriate.

[Transcript by Demeter Bogoev]

It- it's sort of like w-we who are psychedelic have to function as sitters for society [audience laughs], because society is going to thrash, and resist, and think it's dying, and be deluded, and, uh, regurgitate unconscious material, and so forth and so on. And the goal (1:18:30) - and the role, then, for psychedelic people, I think, is to try and spread calm.

I'm very convinced that things are going to get a lot nuttier than they are, and they are a lot nuttier now than they have been for a while [audience snickers]. But, it- it isn't -- it isn- doesn't mean the bad people are winning, or that we are going to fumble the ball, or anything.

The mushroom said to me once, it said, "This is what it's like when a species departs for the stars." (1:19:00) It's a birthing. It's complicated. Uhm, if you had never seen a human birth, and you came around the corner of a building in your daily round, and it was happening - it vibrates medical emergency. I mean, blood is being shed, tissues stretched. It doesn't - you really have to have your chops together to step back and say, "How wonderful! New life coming into the world!" (1:19:30) [audience laughs] Because, uh, you know, that's not the vibe of it. [audience continues laughing] And, I think that's the circumstance that we're in. This is the birth canal to a new order. And, at the moment, it looks like suffocation, constriction, limitation, possible death.

But, uh, we need to inform ourselves, and get a big perspective. (1:20:00) And, there's no way to get a big perspective like education and psychedelic experiences. If we can see history for what it is, it's a- it's a twenty-five-thousand year, nearly instantaneous, transition from one state of being to another. And, yes, there are fifteen-hundred generations of people who live in that paper thin transition time. (1:20:30) But, when it's over...it's over, and we will leave history behind the way you dump a used placenta, I'm sure.

Yeah? [Points to audience member with a question]

Audience Question -

Um, I wondered, is there any reliable information on the relationship between psychedelics and early, uh, Christianity?

T.M. -

Reliable information on psychedelic use in early Christianity? The answer is no. I mean, there - there is a book by John Allegro, (1:21:00) called The Sacred Mushroom And The Cross. He was a very respected Dead Sea scholar 'til he wrote that book, [audience laughs] uh, and that basically finished his career as a classicist. He says some incredibly provocative things in that book. To judge whether he's right or wrong you would have to be, uh, an Assyrian philologist - about which I know nothing. (1:21:30) So, to the layperson, it seemed to be quite an impressive book, but, apparently to his specialist colleagues it was sloppy thinking, and a travesty, and reason to deny tenure. [Audience laughs]

Uhm, St. Augustine was a Montanist before he - no, he was a Manichaeon before he converted to Christianity. And, uh, (1:22:00) he mentions that Manichaeans forbade the use of mushrooms - the eating of mushrooms, it doesn't say the use of mushrooms.

But, the ancient middle-east - we don't know very much about psyc- uh -- psychedelic sacramentalism. It may have been there. It may not have been there. Absence of reference is not proof of absence, because of cult secrecy, and- and other factors like that. (1:22:30)

We do know that the - or we feel we are on firmer ground in saying that the Greek mystery religions, emphatically, probably were psychedelic. Especially, the- the Ele- Eleusinian mysteries. The mysteries that were practiced on the plain outside of Athens every year for over two-thousand years. And, everybody who was anybody in the ancient world made the journey to Eleusis (1:23:00) to celebrate the greater mysteries, which were celebrated in September. Interesting approach to psychedelics there - you could only legitimately participate in the mystery at Eleusis once in your life.

So, imagine if you had a single, high-dose, psychedelic experience under ideal conditions. In other words, in darkness, under the care of experts, and then (1:23:30) the rest of your life you had to sort it all out based on what happened that one evening. It was extraordinarily powerful for the ancient world.

Eventually, it was destroyed. Alaric the Visigoth, who was a barbarian, but that didn't stop him from being a convert to Christianity. [audience laughs] Alaric the Visigoth burned Eleusis on his way to North Africa, on his way to burn other things. (1:24:00)

[Transcript by Jason Bastin]

[1:24:00]

Terence: "Yeah?"

Audience member: "I was wondering, Terence, if you'd had a chance to read *The Emperor's New Mind* by Roger Penrose, I think? It's an argument against the idea of A.I. Artificial Intelligence and whether you were able to follow his argument, 'cause I would take it you would be opposed to his argument"

Terence: "I haven't read the book. I like Roger Penrose's early work. He's saying Artificial Intelligence is impossible?"

Audience member: "Yeah, based on...And he goes through the Turing, uhh, and I heard you bring it up once"

Terence: "The Turing Test."

Audience member: "The Turing test for Artificial Intelligence and he also, uh, brings in the, uh, incompleteness

theorem.

Terence: "Uh huh. Oh, Girdle's little incommensurability thing?"

Audience member: "Maybe a little on that?"

Terence: "'A little Girdle please?' *laughs with audience* 'in 2/4 time?' *audience laughs* Well, uuuuhhhh, I don't have a particularly strong opinion one way or another on A.I.. I certainly think computers wi...can be a lot more intelligent they are before we settle the question of whether they can pass the Turing test. You all know the Turing is this test...uh...Alan Turing was a mathematician. He figured it out during World War II and it's basically 'if you call "X" on a telephone and you can't tell whether "X" is a person or a machine, then "X" passes the Turing test,' and every year they have T- Turing tests, uh, where judges converse by telephone with computers and people and try and decide which are the computers and which are the people and it's still pretty easy, uh, because the people exhibit exasperation, incorrect information, *some audience members laugh* misinterpret the question *more audience members laugh* so forth and so on. *coughs* Uh, there are some wild thinkers out there, far wilder than me of...you know, if you want to read a wild book, read, uh um, Hans Moravec's book, Mind Children: The Future of Human and Artificial Intelligence. There's a book, uh, and, uh...I'm having a memory lapse here, help me out..."

Creon: "Tipler"

Terence: "Tipler, thank you. I said help me out with a memory lapse. You didn't have to read my mind, for God's sake! *audience laughs* *Terence laughs* Yes! *laughs* Thanks you Creon. *chuckles* Tip...Tipler's book is, uh uh, the end of all speculation where artificial intelligence, uh, is concerned. Uh, I think machine/human interfacing is, is very important. I think the debate about whether a computer can think like a human being is kind of not very interesting. Computers think like computers. Already vast amounts of what we call 'human society' are entirely run by machines including very important financial sectors, market decisions, uh, resource extraction decisions, inventory resupply decisions that feed clear back from the warehouse to the mine; in other words machines say how much tin should be extracted and at what rate and therefore, to certain degree, say who should come to work and who shouldn't on certain days. Uh, a lot of design work of circuitry, engineers will simply tell the machine what the circuit should do and leave the actual architecture of the circuitry to machine decision. Uh, this means, you know, lar..m-more and more parts of the human world are being over...given over to machines to design, but when you see how much the world looks like the arrival concourse of an international airport, uh, having computers design the world might not be, uh, a bad idea. Uh, definitely computers figure in our future. I mean, I wasn't joking when I said that drugs and computers are migrating toward each other. I can imagine, uh, a world, and this is not the ultimate world by any means, a world 5, 6, 7 years in the future where the equivalent of today's advanced Macintosh would be something you glue on your thumbnail and communicate with that way. And, you know, beyond that lie, you know, enormous computational and data-accessing abilities that may be accessed through implants. Uh, we're going to have to decide, you know, how much of the monkey we want to take with us into the future. We don't want to take the homicidal killer, we don't want to take, uh, the male dominator, but we...it would probably be a mistake to leave the body entirely behind. Uh, after all the body gives us our orientation in the world and our sense of ourselves as somehow co...coextensive with animal life. But how much of what we call 'human' is really human is going to be major topic for discussion, uh, from here to the end of time. Yeah, [1:30:00] in the back."

[Transcript by Jaska Isola]

T: Yeah, in the back....

Q: Aah, two questions on ecstasy. Aah. What's your take on MDMA? And ahh, what's the optimum grams to take ahh to achieve ahh sexual ecstasy?

T: Sexual ecstasy on XTC? (*laughs, *audience laughs)

A. On mushrooms.

T: Oh, on mushrooms! Oh I see. "W- well" first about MDMA... w-well there is no doubt, that from here to the end of time, whether it be eighteen years or a thousand years away, science is going to produce more and more psychoactive drugs. There are psychoactive drugs on the shelves now, waiting for human testing and government approval, ahh, around the world. We cannot explore the brain, we cannot explore neurochemistry, without these drugs being, ahh, a natural consequence of this program of research. MDMA is a cyclised amphetamine, like MDA, like mescaline, which is "a- a" natural occurring compound of this type. Uhm, "i-in" the hands of a skilled psychotherapist ahh MDMA leads to conflict resolution, "relationsh- insights into relationships", this sort of thing. I am not entirely convinced that it's, ahh, the silver bullet for these conditions. Every drug that has made its way on to the, ahh, the alternative scene has first built itself as a love drug. That's an unfailing market ploy. (*audience laughs) To get a drug to the forefront of public attention. Cannabis was sold to us as a love drug. Aah, LSD, psilocybin, ibogaine. MDMA, ahh, is no different. ("MD- MDMA does promote a certain kind of empathy"), not a whole lot of, ahh, vigorous sexual activity. In terms of what dose of psilocybin leads you ("int- into"), ahh, a sexual rather than a visual acute or visionarily ecstatic situation. Aah, I would say for a hundred and thirty five pound person, probably two to three grams is this agitated, sexually active or if no sex is happening maybe dancing or drumming. In other words thoroughly aroused, busy, active dose. As the dose rises, you know, activity slows and finally you just want to sit down and then finally you just want to lay down, and ahh, (*audience laughs). Then you're into the other phase.

Behind you there was another question.

Q: Yeah, I was gonna say that John Nully? Has an interesting kinda speculation about the future possibilities of solid state (unintelligible) on an autobiography of a scientist. But I was really curious what, if you have anything to say or, you know, about the credibility of the author William Cooper, who wrote the book called 'Behold A Pale Horse'. You know that book?

T: This is the flying saucer debunker.

A: (unintelligible)

T: And isn't he the one who said he was the CIA guy for a long time.

A: (unintelligible)

T: Well this is slightly off the track or might be seen by some people to be slightly off the track. Aah, I don't know William Cooper's book., I regard that, ahh, whole flying saucer thing as a civil war in a leper colony. Aah, (*audience laughs) but I do think, I do think, having been, like probably most of you, very interested in flying saucers from the time I was a kid. And I grew up when it was all happening. Aah, a ("few- couple of years ago") I accepted an invitation for the first time to go to a flying saucer conference. If you've never been to one and you're interested in flying saucers. Go! You will, ("b- ch- have more insights in the phenomenon than in ten years of studying it, because what's perfectly clear is that people are self-selected for gullibility. (*audience laughs) Aah, it's not their fault, it's just that ("the- the ticket through the front door is"), ahh, you know, 'would you believe this?' 'Would you believe this?' (*audience laughs) Aah, I think probably what happened, historically speaking, you know, in 1947 the first UFO's were seen, "they- it was a weird world." The explosion of the atom bomb, the work toward the hydrogen bomb... People didn't know. Einstein and Truman and all those, ahh, they didn't know what it really meant. "If- they thought that it is conceivable that the solar system is monitored. And it is conceivable that this is the switch which turns on the monitor and brings attention. I mean, they were in awe of the atom bomb and they realized they were tampering with cosmic forces. And then, at this moment of cosmic awe and realization of tampering they began to get reports of spacecraft entering the skies of earth and interacting with human beings. Well, what they did,

the CIA had just been founded in '48 and so forth and so. What they did, they put a lot of time and effort into infiltrating all these groups that claimed knowledge of what was going on. And as a survivor..

[Transcript by Melvin Goudbeek]

[Terence McKenna] : ...of the new left I can tell you when the government gets interested in infiltrating, I mean I, ...there wu eh, [fff], two out of every three members of SDS was a government informant [audience laughter] at the height of its membership! So, I believe that what happened was these flying saucer groups were massively infiltrated by the government in the course of its,... pursuing its constitutional obligation to, maintain the public welfare. And by '54 or '55 the government was perfectly convinced that whatever flying saucers were, they did not pose a threat to the integrity of the Air Defenses of North America and that was their real concern.

But bureaucracies are weird creatures, they really exist only to perpetuate themselves. So at some point inside these agencies, they must've had to face the fact that they had massively infiltrated a bunch of very flaky people and now their choice was to either end the program, tell the budget people that, "No, they wouldn't be needing that 10 million dollars this year" [audience laughter], OR keep going with it because they now had a group of people self selected for gullibility. And that group of people became the victims of every chemical experiment, weird technology, propaganda experiment, and so forth and so on, because their friends and relatives had already written them off [audience laughter] as completely, uhh, untrustworthy. Who would believe them no matter what story they told?

So, I really felt I was among severely damaged people [audience laughter] , uh, and it wa-it wasn't their fault it's that they-they had become part of something, that had become part of something, that had become part of something, and they never really had a fighting chance. Do strange lights haunt the skies of Earth? You bet their booties they do. But, the flying saucer cults are a social phenomenon and largely unrelated to whatever this anomaly is.

Terence McKenna: *Points at Audience member* Yeah.

Question: "Um, (could not make this part out, i tried) ...of doctor Pugnitzen Polar [sp?] often spoke of the ephemeralization of technology. Do you think there will come a time when, we are indistinguishable from our technology and would that be sort of apotheosis that you speak about in your-in your books?"

TM: No, I think it would go the other way that we're moving toward a time when our technology is indistinguishable from us. In other words, I don't want us to all turn into, uh, 7100 ADAV, that doesn't seem like a good idea. Uh, but on the other hand I could, imagine, as a hopeful scenario a future world of let's say 500 or a billion, healthy, happy, well fed people of all races, political persuasions, gender preferences, and so forth and so on. And, uh, those people would essentially live as our archaic ancestors did. Very little material culture, uhh, very-ve, nomadic, uh, but if you could transport yourself into the body of one of these people you would discover that when they close their eyes, there are menus, hanging in space. In other words, the computer that was on the back of the thumbnail, 5 years later that computer moves into being a kind of an implant, a black contact lens that is sewn into your eyelids at age 6 so that when you close your eyes you're actually looking at an interface. And the entire, uh, database of the culture could be placed there.

You see really what computers are doing is they're making what we call the collective unconcious, concious! All

data, all images, uh, are potentially accessible through, uh, the network. And, uh, ya know, I'm still getting used to the idea of the network myself. Like I keep thinking, "Oh, I have this timeline, I could get somebody's chronology and put it at my website". And then I remember "No, No, all I have to do is point to their website. I don't have to copy or move anything". If there is one list, that's all the world needs. Anybody else who needs that list can point to it from their website. So the speed at which new structures can be created, is, astonishing! I mean it- almost literally overnight, you can build a website, and begin to point at other websites and bring resources into yours.

Uhh, this is a technology which is gonna turn out to not be what people think it is. It's going to be a technology for showing each other the inside of our heads. For showing each other our dreams. Uh, you know one thing I didn't talk about in the main part of the lecture is that psychedelics are catalysts for language. They speed up and catalyse the language formation process. And a culture cannot evolve any faster...

1:42:00

[Transcript by Wesley LaVassaur]

[Starting at 01:42:00]

... than its language evolves and it cannot be anymore glued together than the bandwidth that its languages will tolerate, and so what this technology that is putting in place is going to mean is.. the way in which it will dissolve boundaries is by making us transparent to each other. I mean I can imagine a child of the future, uh... we all bring home our drawings to stick on refrigerators and things like that, in the future we won't stick them on refrigerators, we will stick them in our website and everything will go into our website and by the time we are twenty-five or something, our website will be the size of the American museum of natural history and you can wander through it and a.. as... [01:43:00] as a gesture of intimacy, you can invite someone else to wander through it. Well that's who you are. It's your imagination. And... I think in a sense I have said it times that the cultural enterprise is an effort to turn ourselves inside out. We want to put the body into the imagination and we want the imagination to replace the laws of physics. With these technologies we can probably do that. But it will have to run on psychedelic design principles or it's certain to be a mess. Yeah *pointing towards the audience*

Q-What can you tell us about the problems of that some people experience with the digestibility of the mushrooms and how can it lead to pain an- and discomfort uh.. sometimes to like a nightmarish type of experience?

Terence nods

A- Well, first of all let me say this, there are several mushrooms which contain psilocybin [01:44:00] which grow in cow dung. What I urge people to do, if you are serious about this, is to grow your own. Uhh... this is moderately self serving because I wrote a book about how to grow your own mushrooms *audience laughter*. But there are many such books. You don't have to buy mine, you only need it if you want the best one *audience laughter*. Ahh.. but- you see- ah- Stamatson's book is excellent, and if you wanna go large scale, Stamatson's book is the one. But let me say something then, ah... after the brain, the stomach is the most heavily innervated organ in the body and anxiety has a way of cropping up as a stomach ache. So, its- a lot of people have anxiety in the first hour of taking mushrooms and they believe that [01:45:00] something in the mushroom is giving them gastric distress. It really isn't, it's more like a case of butterflies on an empty stomach because you should take mushrooms on an empty stomach. Ah... you can try a suppository, you can try another drug if you want. But there is in this psychedelic

business something to be said for simply disciplining your hind brain. Also you can suppress nausea with cannabis. So, you know, a mixture of self-discipline, pharmacological steering, uh... so forth and so on. Ah.. if you have- if you have a severe reaction to the mushroom, you probably shouldn't take it. I mean after all it is a fungus and as mammals we have developed some pretty strong uh... allergenic reactions to fungi, [01:46:00] some of us. And- certain reactions to psilocybin are not psychedelic reactions like uh... enormous sweating or something like that. That's more an indication of an allergy. If you are going to get into psychedelics, one of the things that you have to do is learn your way around. Psychedelic sophistication doesn't mean you took everything there is in combination with everything there el- else there is, at high doses, with your friends, at rock concerts *audience laughter*. *clears throat* It- it means that you figured out what worked for you, and then really put the pedal to the metal, you know. Yeah* pointing towards the audience*

Q- I recently came by David Hudson's work on Orbitally Rearranged Monoatomic Elements and found that these monoatomic heavy metals [01:47:00] conduct- act as superconductors- conduct lightforce through our nervous system. Are you familiar with this work at all?

A- No you- you have stumped the star *audience laughter*. Ah.. I mean uh.. I am interested in organic superconductivity and room temperature superconductivity, ah.. but i don't know his work so i can't comment on

Q- It's fairly new, its- its- its you say will be *inaudible* coming out a book called ORMEs *spells out* which is Orbitally Rearranged Monoatomic Elements.

A- I am sure it will find it's way to my de- now all these hands, oh he should be the guy, you tell me, alright.

Q- How much of our consensus reality do you think is based on um.. inexorable physical laws things that aren't the *inaudible* creations and how much if any is subject to change without notice simply based on a consensus belief of what should be or what is going to be?

[01:48:00]

[Transcript by Rohan Singh]

TM: Well, I mean, this is, you've... this is sort of where I'm at. I mean, as you were asking the question I was... my tendency would be to say none. That none of our reality is based on inexorable physical law. But, I only want that to be true. I'm not sure it is true. Whitehead used to sa- he had this thing about what he called stubborn facts. And he said there are some stubborn facts and you can cut your philosophy any way you want but if you don't take account of the stubborn facts, you'll have a problem. Uh, a lot of reality is made of language. How much I'm not sure. But, I, my hope is that a great deal is made of language. Rupert Sheldrake, who's a good friend of mine, and we sort of think along the same lines, he believes that there are not inexorable physical laws, that there are just very old habits. He would think of the speed of light as a very old habit. Uh, these physical constants may be changing. We don't know, I mean take the speed of light, we've measured it on one planet since 1906, and cheerfully extrapolate it to every corner of the known universe with no sense that there might be a problem there at all. Yet, you know, if you're a critic of this, you can look at the speed of light as measured from 1906 and you will notice that the values have been slowly going up. It's apparently going slightly faster than it was a century ago. Well, people just dump on that and say 'no no, you poor moron, you don't understand, it's that the instrumentality has become more precise and so the measurement may have changed slightly'. Oh yeah? Well it seems to me in that case the points should cluster.

How come the more recent ones are faster than the earlier ones consistently? In other words it's not that we're getting measurements which cluster around a value, it's that we're getting measurements which are going out this way toward faster. Uh, I think language is the key to making reality. I think our language is a, is a very weak language computer languages may be more powerful. Uh, you know, VRML, or mathematics, but i believe the world is made of language, that's the magical belief but then the challenge to that belief is how come the world isn't the way you say it it? Well, that's ungenerous. Uh, it...it uh, I think because it doesn't work quite like that. Consensus is set by societies. By millions of people. Reality is a phenomenon of many linguistically operating subsystems. Maybe if you and I were stranded on a desert island we could get a reality going. We probably could but it would surely be shattered when somebody showed up to take us home again. Over here (points to audience) uh, the documentation, um, well there wouldn't be anything written, of course, it's earlier than that, but the documentation, it is well known that the Sahara was wetter in the past, even as recently as Roman times, Pliny called it the breadbasket of Rome. And we know that human populations were out there. We, in the Teselly Plateau of southern Algeria there are rock paintings ruprestice paintings that show shamans with mushrooms sprouting out of their bodies and in their hands. So, we have mushroom use, we have evidence of mushroom use at the era of the great horned paleolithic goddess, um, the um, the presence or absence of monogamy and polygamy is debatable. So I, however the archeology of this area has not been well studied, and won't be soon, thanks to islamic fundamentalism, Algeria is no place to do archeology right now. Now to the first part of your question, why was it human beings who ate the mushroom? Uh, well, we, you had to, to use the mushrooms as a doorway to higher intelligence, you would have had to already come a certain distance down the path of higher animal organization. We were bipedal, we had a pack signaling repertoire, we had binocular vision, and the reason we used the mushrooms is because we were under nutritional pressure. Uh, there may have been other animals under nutritional pressure but they may have been more tightly, uh, bound to their original diet, or they may simply have had behavioral organization that the mushroom couldn't dissolve or break through.

[Transcript by Suzanne Tracey]

[Start 1:54:07]

There has been talk among evolutionary biologists about if there were no primates on this planet, what order of animals might occupy the conscious niche or be able to come in there. And interestingly raccoons are candidates. Raccoons have, bah, have well positioned eyes. They have a very complex hand and, uh, uh, years and years ago I used to grow mushrooms in, and I grew them by my own method naturally in jars. And uh I would have waste rye infected with jars. I mean, jars infected with mycelium permeated rye and I would put them out on the back porch at night or I did once. And I awoke in the middle of the night to this terrific racket and there were racoons on the back porch. They could smell the rye infested with the psilocybin containing mycelium. They could unscrew the lids and plunge their mitts into this stuff and, and, as I turned on the lights I saw these little bandit faces with this mycelial crumbs on their little upturned muzzles and their didn't, they wouldn't back off. They would, the other thing was they were standing up on the they hind legs, so they were standing on the their hind legs holding a jar, holding this stuff, and tottering toward me. So um I just took one look and backed off. And for the rest of the eventing you could tell they were approaching the orgiastic boundary, ah because the carrying on, the sexual squeaking and squealing, thumping and pounding going on in the backyard was just incredible. So ahh, you know they might be interesting test animals to put through this.

Yeah *points at new questioner*

inaudible I want to have your comments on the numerous dangers of the ufo phenomena with regard to *inaudible* and the role of this phenomena which I think you referred to as the other earlier in your talk has been the transformation you have us going through in the future.

Yeah, yes Jaque Belay was a UFO and the book that was mentioned, passport to Magonia was one of his earliest books on the subject. He's gone through a lot of changes about it. Um, the numinous, I think what's going on is that in a sense there is leakage from the future. This is a broad subject and it's late in the evening so I'll give it to you in headlines. But basically science takes the position that nature is without purpose. In other words nature has no goal. Nature proceeds forward according to the unfolding of chance and necessity. But I don't believe this. I think nature is an engine for the conservation of novelty. Nature's purpose is to generate ever greater novelty. In fact history is the dawning realisation that we are about to descend down a very steep novelty sink as it were, into immense amounts of novelty. And this is why we image the other in the 20th century as the extraterrestrial because out of the unconscious comes this image of the other as the extraterrestrial. I think we are in the presence of the transcendental object at the end of time and that religions call it the messiah, or the maitreya, secularists call it utopia, millenarians call it something else, mushroom enthusiasts call it something else. But we are in the presence of the transcendental object at the end of time. And that it casts an enormous reflection back through history, especially recent history. But any person encountering this backward moving shadow of the transcendental object will attempt to interpret it in cultural terms that they can relate to. So if they happen to be a French peasant in the 11th century they will assume it's the virgin mary. If they're a sexual scientific rationalist in the 20th century they will assume it's a spacecraft of some sort. [1:54:00] The Celts and their relationship to little people and an invisible world this is a generally held belief that they are exemplifying that is world wide which is that the dead are somehow co-present in the space of the living, but invisibly so. Except to those who have the gift of second sight or are magically empowered or shamanically adept. Uhhm the last thought I should leave you with this and it's adumbration of this question, but also has deeper implications.. The model that you're usually given of the psychedelic experience is a religious model, that the mysterious of religions, Hindu, Buddhist, or something or other are somehow illuminated by this boundary dissolving experience, my model is a little different, a little cooler and a little more formal, and it's this. That consciousness is an omnidirectional threat detection response.

[Transcript by Christian Sherriff]

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Experiment at Petaluma

Day Month 1990

Location, City, State

Description

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Terence McKenna: And I do agree with you. I think the difference between the 1960s and the 1990s in terms of the psychedelic compounds is that the sixties entirely lack any awareness of shamanism or the historical role that these substances have played throughout human history and prehistory. Uh, the sixties believed they were inventing this reality for the first time. Now that we have been able to compare the psychedelic experience to the way it is done in the Amazon, in West Africa, in areas where these things have been used and understood for a long time. We know have a model. And it's the model not that you take low doses and go with your friends to a rock concert, but that you take high doses in a situation of sensory isolation, such as a quiet dark room and make an inward journey into the self that parallels the journey that shamans have always made, uh, to recover lost souls or to cure or to discover the whereabouts of, uh, lost objects. So, in a way psychedelic, uh, exploration has gained power, respectability and, uh, and legitimacy by discovering that it's own roots were in a paleolithic religion of great, uh, power and wide distribution. In other words, psychedelic voyaging is not something new. This is how religion was done for the first million years, not the last two thousand years. This is really the only exception to this rule. And I agree with what you also said about, uh, how vast this domain seems to be. Serious psychedelic voyagers I think can agree the further in you go to this realm the larger it appears to be. Really what we are doing is we are discovering the inner richness of organism. That, you know, the richness of the human world is not in owning stuff. The richness of the human world is, uh, lies in being able to access what is within us. Our minds are not blank slates or merely repositories of traumatic memory. Our minds are doorways into an infinite labyrinth. A kind of Borgesian library of infinite possibilities and we can choose to open these doorways in whatever sequence or fashion we wish.

That, that twenty thousand years ago on the plains of Africa this, the expansion of the human diet, the restless search for new food sources that led our primitive ancestors to include mushrooms in their diet that contain psilocybin. And out of that synergistic food stamping[sp?] that springs the whole spectrum of human cultural effects, religious, religion, language, poetry, magic, dance. All of these, uh, unique expressions of humanness come out of the the restlessness of primate organization and the synergy of psychoactive psilocybin in the harmaline diet. This is the real missing link. This is the real key to what the factors were that called us forth, uh, into, uh, humanness.

Then[sp?] should we talk about language?

Female audience member: Yeah.

TM: Well, uh, first of all let's talk about ordinary language, which is probably, uh, the closest thing to a miracle in the natural world. Uh, it's the major neurological manifestation of difference between ourselves and, uh, other animals and primates. And it's not a physiological difference. It's a difference in behavior that language represents the most complex behavior ever observed in any animal and certainly it's the most complex thing any of us ever learns to do. We're born into what William James calls a a blooming, buzzing confusion. But, uh, by the acquisition of words we mosaic over, uh, various sectors of this blooming, buzzing confusion with words. We replace the unknown with the known through the substitution of words and by the time a child is two or three they have completely created a cultural mosaic of words that is interposed between them and, uh, reality. Reality from that point on is only an unconfirmed rumor brought through the medium of language. And every culture accentuates different parts of reality. So within a sense every culture is a different reality. Language is the stuff [sp?] of the world, not quarks or wave packets or neutrinos, but language. Everything is made of language. All the constructs of science are actually interlocking constructs of syntax. Well, so that's ordinary language, which seems to define reality to a kind of process of lying about it. For instance by creating subject-object distinctions, which are in fact not true to the matter, but somehow operationally necessary for us to navigate in the kind of lower dimensional space that we inhabit. Then there is the phenomena of non-ordinary, or what I call visible language. And, uh, this is very interesting to me. This is where technology, uh, virtual reality, cybernetics, human machine interfacing can actually, uh, make an impact and explore a frontier. Visual language is a transformation of the physiological impulse towards syntax into a final product, speech, which is not heard with the ears, but beheld with the eyes. And, uh, it's very interesting that all our metaphors of clarity of speech are visual metaphors. We say I see what you mean, he spoke clearly. This means that at the organismic level we associate a higher, uh, signal clarity with visual input. And on DMT and other tryptamine psychedelics you actually experience the field of language, both heard and self-generated as something that is visibly beheld. It's, uh, almost as though the project of communication becomes high speed sculpture in a conceptual dimension made of light and intentionality. Well, this would remain a kind of esoteric performance on the part of shamans at the height of intoxication, if it were not for the fact that, uh, electronics and, uh, electronic cultural media, computers, make it possible for us to actually create, uh, records of these, uh, higher linguistic modalities. In other words it's possible to imagine a virtual reality that was driven by a speech operated synthesizer where the various parts of ordinary speech, adjectives, modifiers, subjects and objects, uh, were, uh, interpreted by the scientific, by the cybernetic environment as topological manifolds of various shapes so that speech would then generate a visibly beheld topology and it's possible to imagine a future world where in setting up [sp?] corporate takeovers, in other words in areas where, uh, communication, clear communication, clear expression of intentionality was very important that people would actually go into the virtual reality to use the virtual language because its capacity for conveying intent would be much greater than ordinary spoken language. In other words, uh, it's not for nothing that Plato connected up the notion of the good, the true and ultimately the beautiful. And the beautiful of those three concepts is the primary concept because it is visibly beheld, because it is seen. This is the great convincing power of the psychedelic experience. That it ultimately appeals to us through the sense that we value most, that we existentially relate to as the most authentic. And that is the visual. Visible language is a kind of telepathy. Because you see, if I made a statement in visual language and then you and I regard my statement we are somehow in the act of regarding made one. Because meaning is not being created out of, uh, interiorized dictionaries which we each consult in the privacy of our own mind, but rather meaning is a visible manifold in the public domain. When[sp?] meaning goes public and the differences between people then decline toward being insignificant. It's a kind of a final, uh, confirmation of the McLuhan apotheosis and I think visible language is coming. Life in the imagination is to be, uh, uh, the life[sp?] of creativity carried on through [sp?] virtual environments driven by, uh, linguistic engines.

Like that.

[Terence laughs]

[Female audience member inaudible]

TM: [inaudible] the star-ships of the future, in other words the the vehicles of the future which will explore the high frontier of the unknown will be syntactical. [inaudible] The engineers of the future will be poets. This is what virtual virtual reality folds out to. It's the possibility of walking in to the constructs of the imagination. In a way culture is that. I mean, our cities, bridges, highways, airfirms and art galleries are condensations out of the imagination, but at tremendous cost because we must make them out of matter. Once we can make them out of light, out of electrons, then we, you know, we won't build skyscrapers a hundred and twenty stories high. We'll build them as high as we want. Uh, roof height will no longer be a factor ruled by cost-effectiveness and gravity. It will be a parameter ruled by

the imagination, as will all other parameters. And then we will discover what man truly is. When we are able to erect, stabilize, share and explore our dreams in a kind of virtual hyperspace that [sp?] is seemed to be linguistic. That's what its connectors are made out of. That's what its thorough concrete and steel is, is, uh, the edifice of language. This is what the stuff of the imagination is made of. And I think this is what we're moving toward. The psychedelic shamans have always known this. Now the psychedelic underground art community points toward, uh, this goal and leads the way.

Yes, well. Uhm. This is a segway from yesterday's discussion about, uh, visible language. The notion being that, uh, well let me review what yesterday was about[sp?]. It was about, uh, the idea that if we could see language. If language were a project of understanding that used the eyes for the extraction of meaning rather than the ears, that, uh, it would be a kind of telepathy. There will be both a fusion of the observer with the object observed and with the person communicated with. The place in nature where something like this has actually evolved and occurred is in, uh, the cephalopods. The squid and the [sp?] octopi. Now these are animals that divided from the human, uh, from the line of development that we [sp?] human beings over six hundred million years ago. They're mollusks that related to ancho- I mean to escargot. It's, uh, an organism very different from, uh, ourselves. Nevertheless, one of the things that evolution merry biologists always talk about is the convergent evolution between the eyes of cephalopods and the eyes of higher mammals. This is because the, uhm, cephalopods live in an extremely complex visual environment. And in fact they have evolved a form of communication that approximates this visible language that I'm talking about. Because these octopi have, uh, chromatophores all over the exterior of their bodies. Chromatophores are cells that can change color. Now many people know that octopi can change color, but they think it's for camouflage, for blending in with the environment. This is not at all the case. The reason octopi change colors in an, uh, very large repertoire of stripes, dots, blushes, uh, traveling shades and tonal shifts is because this is for them a channel of linguistic communication. In other words, they don't transduce their linguistic intentionality into small mouth noises, like we do. Small mouth noises which then move as sound, uh, across space, uh, in the form of vibrations of the air. Rather they actually change their appearance in accordance with their linguistic intent. What this boils down to is they physically become their meaning. And one octopus observing another, it is watching the unfolding of internalized neurological states within the organism being reflected in color changes on the surface of the skin. Now these octopi not only can change their color, because they're soft-bodied creatures, they can also change, uh, the texture of their surface from smooth to rugose and folded. They can also, because they're soft-bodied, uh, fold and unfold and reveal and conceal very, uh, rapidly different parts of their body. So they're capable of a visual dance of communication that is an extremely dense kind of visual signal. And in the so-called emphic[sp?] octopi, the species that have evolved in very deep water where very little light reaches, uh, they have evolved, uh, light-emitting phosphorescent organs. Some of them with membranes like eyelids over them, so that even in the darkness of the abyssal depth of the ocean they can carry out this dance of light, self-enfoldment, color change and surface texture that is their linguistic style. And that the only way an octopus can experience a private thought is to release a cloud of ink into the water into wh- which it can retreat briefly and hide its mental nakedness from its followers. This kind of biologically intrinsic wiring into the potential of language is something that we may be able to mimic and achieve using psychedelic drugs as the inspiration for the directions given to a virtual reality, uh, development program. In other words, we might be able to create kinds of visibly beheld syntax that would be the human equivalent of the dance of light, texture and positioning that constitutes, uh, the grammar and syntax of, uh, squids and octopi.

Yes, that's right. Because, uh, operationally what these psychedelics do is they dissolve cultural conditioning. Cultural conditioning is like software, but beneath the software is the hardware of brain and organism. And by dissolving the cultural conditioning to speak English, German, Swahili or whatever then one returns to this ursprach, this primal language of the animal body and can explore, uh, uh, the real dimension of feeling that culture has a tendency to cut us off from. Culture replaces authentic feeling with words. As an example of this, imagine a infant lying in its cradle and the window is open and into the room comes something marvelous, mysterious, glittering, shedding light of many colors, uh, movement, sound, uh, a transformative hierophany of integrated perception and the child is enthralled. And then the mother comes into the room and she says to the child "That's a bird, baby. That's a bird." Instantly the complex wave of the angel peacock iridescent transformative mystery is collapsed into the word. All mystery is gone. The child learns this is a bird, this is a bird. And by the time we're five or six years old all the mystery of reality has been carefully tiled over with words. This is a bird. This is a house. This is the sky. And we seal ourselves in within a linguistic shell of disempowered perception and what the psychedelics do is they first depart this cultural envelope of confinement and return it really to the legacy and birth right of the organism.

[Terence speaking indistinguishable glossolalia]

Male audience member: That's great.

Female audience member: Yeah.

TM: That's it. I'm out of here! [Terence laughs]

Original Transcription by: Alhazred (5th of March, 2018)

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Exploring the Hermetic Tradition

Day Month 1991

Location, City, State

Description

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When Kat and I were in the amazon in '76 taking ayahuasca, we got in with this certain group of people in Peru that took it every week. and, you know cultures have different ways of handling hassle and in some cultures it's confrontational, in other cultures not. The way these Peruvian country folk operated was if somebody was screwing up nobody would ever say so they would just talk about these people behind their back until the morphogenetic field of gossip was so strong that you'd basically awaken to the problem.

So, there was a complex social situation going on in this ayahuasca circle, which was: there was a master shaman, who we were apprenticed to, who was beloved by his neighborhood, but he had a nephew, a sobrino, who was a jerk. I mean, this guy was, as Don Fidel says, ambitious. He dealt a little weed, he did a little pimping, he was just sort of an edge runner type of guy. And every saturday night we would all get together and take ayahuasca, about 30 of us, older shamans, our guy, people from the neighborhood, and this sobrino, Don Jose.

So uh, I don't know what the real history of it was, 'cause I had just arrived on the scene, but these old guys would sing these icaros, these magical songs on ayahuasca that appear as colored tapestries in front of your eyes and you know, they were, they had soul, they were into it, they were, and this guy would sing against them. I mean, it's the rudest thing you could possibly imagine, I mean, imagine if, if you know, lou reed were trying to give a performance and the guy in the third just launched into Old Man River, and kept at it! You know, I mean in this town I'm sure large guys would appear and say "sir." In Peru it didn't work like that. They just kept singing, he kept singing, and it was clear that this is how it was gonna be handled. That we had just divided into two separate entities here.

Well, um, my, uh, wife was sitting next to me and he was sitting across the room from us, the sobrino, and I had been watching him for a long time and I was loaded to the gills, and I could see he would get up on his haunches, he, he looked like a monkey, he, he, his face it was uncanny, he looked like a monkey and he also looked kind of like a jackal a dog with long teeth, he kept going through these changes, and.

And Kat leaned over to me and said something like "this guy is an asshole" and I just said, you know, "let it slide, what do we know, think of it as anthropology," but she, she wasn't having it. So after a while he kept doing this and at one point everybody in the room, every person in the room was bummed out, and they were looking at their laps, all eye contact was broken, it's actually. When I was a kid I invented a word. The word is Fardow, and it means: The embarrassment you feel when someone else fucks up, you know, and you happen to just be there and somehow the aura of it is so strong so, the entire room is awash in fardow and the old guys are singing and the guy is singing. So then, at the end of a particularly intense clash of these two styles, uh, my wife just looked across the room at this guy and, like, put the whammy on him. And I saw these red arrows leave her eyes and like, like, dotted lines going across there: unh unh unh unh unh, and they moved fairly slowly, you know, more slowly than you can throw a ball or something. Well when this line of red arrows got to this guy he was knocked off his feet. He, he fell backwards with his legs in the air there was a big noise and all the singing stopped and everybody in the room looked up and these three old shaman, who were sitting behind Don Fidel, who I to that point had not heard speak any language but Quetchua, one turned to the other and he says in Spanish "oooh, the gringa sends the ziboodiboodiblugh!"

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Finale - Bridge Psychedelic Conference

1991

Stanford U, Mill Valley, CA

Description

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Forms and Mysteries, Morphogenetic Fields & Psychedelic Experience

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

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Light at the End of History: Gaia, Eros, and the Archaic Revival

24 August 1989

Ford Theatre, Los Angeles, California

Description

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Global Perspective and Psychedelic Poetics

Day Month 1994

Location, New York City, New York

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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[Note from transcriber: I thought I would be able to finish this but due to some unforeseen events I am not, so I will just post what I have. Maybe I will return to it and finish it later if someone else hasn't already. Excuse any mistakes and especially the poor (or lack of) formatting.]

Global perspectives and psychedelic poetics is what it says in the, uh, in the propaganda, which I assume is simply permission to rave about whatever comes to mind.

Global perspectives... I guess what, uh, I could say about this from a psychedelic perspective, the thing that is, uh, different for psychedelic people, looking at the global dilemma that we're in and that increases, that continues to deepen around us, is that it's, uh. From my point of view permission to hope rather than despair, because I think that, uh, processes, institutions that for a thousand years or more have been building toward some kind of symmetry-break, some kind of definitive self-revealing moment that we now are, uh, turning final as pilots say. We're now deeply embedded in the pattern, we can see enough of what's ahead of us to begin to actually feel the texture of the end of human history. It's no longer an abstraction. Even the straight people who own the world with their, uh, long-term and short-term projections; looking at population growth, spread of greenhouse gases, disappearance of the ozone hole, uh, rising third world expectations so forth and so on. When you propagate all these trends, it seems very clear that business as usual is no longer an option. Nobody's talking about that. So, we're either in some kind of final fatal meltdown of the values of western civilization, revealed now after a thousand or two thousand year run to essentially be bankrupt. Or, we're going to transform ourselves unrecognizably. There really isn't any middle ground. The most radical and least likely, uh, future of all, it seems to me, is the future in which we continue just to stumble forward, as we have been since the industrial revolution. That's no longer an option. And, so then the question becomes sort of a gnostic conundrum. Yea-, is this the final act of some kind of great cosmic tragedy in which intelligence rises out of the slim, is shown to be inadequate and sinks back into the slime, or is this, uh, you know, a tale of, uh, difficulty overcome and heroism won. And are we going to be able to shed the monkey nature, and shed the ego and actually move up to some kind of shining ideal. Eh, you know it's, uh, if you think of us as the descendants of the angels this is a pretty tacky circumstance we've come to rest in. On the other hand if you think of us as the descendants of shit-hurling apes screeching through the treetops, then it's pretty amazing, [audience laughs], what has been accomplished here. Uhm, we-eh, you know one of the dilemmas that I feel very strongly, and I'm just sort of talking off the top of my head here, because whenever a crowd is small enough I sort of feel like I'm in my own living room, we don't have to have the pretense of knowing-lecturer and, uh, you know eager-to-be-

educated-audience. Uhm, the real, the real challenge, I think, is trying to decide what is baggage, and what is ballast that's going to have to be dumped. Can the future be a celebration of humanness as we have known it? Meaning in the animal body, with all its, uh, uh, you know, joys and pains, with all its frailty and, uh, potential for ecstasy. Or, is what we call human nature somehow transcendental and did we only rest for a moment in the monkey body as once the cutting of evolution must have rested in the great reptiles and at some earlier phase in history rested in the fish and so on. Is consciousness something uniquely human, and must we keep the animal body with us? Is our destiny to become gardener/caretakers of a revived earth or is the earth like a placenta of some sort, that we have literally sucked all the nutrition and potential out of, because we're on our way to some grander, higher domain of being? I don't have the answer to these kinds of questions. I feel it very poignantly. It's very poignantly focused in the psychedelic - in the experience of psychedelic plants and psychedelic shamanism, because, e-, you know, as any of you who have followed my ideas on this know, I've spent a lot of time in the Amazon basin with human populations that seem to have struck some kind of dynamic balance with the earth. And yet the paradox of that dynamic balance is that when you take the sacraments, the hallucinogenic plants of these people, you're propelled into a worlds of, uh, science-fiction-like strangeness. Transcendental dimensions of titanic implication. And then, at least I personally have come to the realization that this is how those cultures have chosen to deal with the Faustian impulse in human beings. It's been somehow confined in the domain of the imagination. We, meaning we who trace our, uh, our ancestry back to Europe are part of a different style. A different strain of human being, if you will. We are the idea-excreters. Not ca- not, uh, satisfied to have a canoe, a net, five fish hooks and, uh, a bowl. But instead we take matter, we, western civilization, western technology, and we impress upon matter ideas. Millions of ideas; cities like Manhattan, uh, high performance weaponry, uh, enormous works of art. All of this is is a kind of impulse, very strong in western human beings to bring the ideas out of the domain of mind and to somehow solidify them in matter. Permanence, the cult of the west is permanence. Ye-, I always feel that when you can find the obsessive center of a society you probably have put your finger on its, uh, on its central neurosis as well. I remember when I spent time in India; India is rife with talk of shakti. Shakti is energy, conceived of in various ways; it can be sexual energy, or it can actually be electricity flowing through wires is called shakti. And I realized being in India that the Indian obsession with shakti was a consequence of there not being any, that this was a society where energy had become the hardest commodity to encounter. And I think in the West permanence is the thing - is our great bugaboo, because we, uh, are born into the realization that everything is slipping through our fingers at the very moment that it comes into existence. The hardest psychedelic truth to assimilate, and you don't have to take psychedelics to assimilate this, if you just live this will be hammered in on you again and again, and it's not , uh. Well, uh, it's a cause for exaltation, it's a cause for despair, it's that nothing lasts. Nothing lasts. You know, not your fortune, not your misfortune, not your lovers, your enemies, your children. Ultimately, not even your own life and body. Everything fades. And so the western response to this is the attempt to create something permanent; civilizations, enduring ideas, enduring institutions. All this is doomed to failure. And, I see this western, uh, obsession with the cult of permanence as a consequence of the western obsession with ego. Ego, to my mind, is the very thing, that if you had to, somehow, meld each problem into the next problem to try and reduce all problems to one, what you would eventually come to is the realization that ego is what is destroying us. Our inability to displace our loyalty away from the unique locus of space and time represented by our own bodies. You know, community, communalism, these are the things that we fear, that we repress, and that we at the same time struggle to realize. I mean, the collapse of communism on one level was the collapse of a repressive nightmarish paranoid social system, but the dream which lay behind that was a dream of community, of unity, of sisterhood and brotherhood. And the great concern now is that with the collapse even the, uh, a pretense of that position, that we are further fragmented, further atomized into individual competing microbes of greed and need, and this is precisely the attitude which will push us, uh, ever closer to species-extinction and to global ruin. Well, when you look at thousands and thousands of psychedelic experiences, you, to my mind what you come away with is the notion that, you know, no matter who you are; Amazonian shaman, Hasidic rabbi, n-n-nuclear physicist, the psychedelic will dissolve boundaries. It will dissolve your boundaries, and force you to realize the commonality of the flesh. You know, it's, a-, a startling thing to realize that what you represent is nothing more than a point of view, and that we each are such a point of view triangulating perception through what is essentially simply a nexus of our past history. We always are talking about "the past", and "the future", but it's worth noticing that we all managed to get here this morning, this place, this time,

and not one of us has the same past as any other of us. This moment, like any moment, is not a confluence of the past, it is a confluence of many pasts, and these many pasts come into a nexus of connection, and then move on to become many, many futures.

The reason I'm interested in the psychedelic potential, and willing to speak about it, is because I think that our, the myth of our separateness, which was the glory of our institutional accomplishments; parliamentary democracy, individual rights, uh, uh, liberation of various classes, and so forth, has now turned somewhat sour. There has got to be something more to it, than just turning people loose to loot the planet so that everyone can pile up more and more up stuff. Stuff which doesn't satisfy anyway. And, I think, n-, in talking about the future what we somehow have to do is dematerialize the future, and there are several ways or many ways to do this. Uh, people have preached voluntary simplicity, and some people are into this, uh, however it's hypocritical to preach this in the third world to people who have nothing. You know, we have everything so we have seen the fallacy of condominiums and Mercedes so then we preach this in Bangladesh. Th-this is a bit disingenuous. Uh, the dematerializing of culture, uh, somehow, you see, what we have to recognize in the wake of the collapse of communism is that capitalism as well is a system with a fatal flaw that is set against human nature. Capitalism assumes an endlessly exploitable frontier of resources. This we have got not. So, capitalism is now essentially, unless it can be radically retooled an anti-human philosophy, it's literally chewing up the ground we're standing on. But there's nothing in the, uh, the basic notion of capitalism that says we have to be thing-dealers. This is simply the style of capitalism that we have fallen into. Somehow we have to dematerialize existence, and I don't know whether that means virtual reality, some of you have heard me say that my vision of a perfect future is, you know, 25% of the world population, living in ecological balance, living in an apparently primitive, naked, aboriginal state, but when you step into the minds of those people and look behind their closed eyelids there are menus hanging in bio-tele-electronic space. Culture, you see, can be downloaded into a chip, installed behind the eyelids, so that is, you know, freely commandable, as an experience in the imagination. But, if we insist on continually extracting resources from the earth and fashioning our dreams out of the stuff of earth, then our dreams are destined to turn to nightmare. It can't be any other way. So that's one thing about the future, the future needs to be dematerialized. Uh, u-, and then, you know, since people always accuse me of being a hairbrained dreamer, uh, I've tried to come up with something approaching a practical suggestion, and I, I took this need to the feet of the mushroom-gods, a-being, having been challenged by somebody at a talk like this, they said, "Well, you're always saying these mushrooms speak, why don't you ask them, uh, uh, how to save the world?", and I thought this was kind of disingenuous, but, uh, the next time I had the telephone to hyperspace in my hot hand I did make the inquiry. And, uh, the suggestion which came back I think is at least food for thought. The suggestion was, "You wanna save the world? You wanna overcome male-dominance, the momentum of consumerism, so forth and so on? Uh, every woman should bear only one natural child". This is an interesting idea, whether you take it seriously as program or not. If every woman were to commit herself to bearing only natural child, the population of the earth would fall by 50% in 40 years without war, or famine, or epidemic disease. If this program were continued for another 40 years the population would fall by half again. This means in 80 years the population of the planet could be reduced 75%. Why have we not heard anything about this? Even for it to be denounced, I'm not saying it has to be embraced, but why is it a tiny fanatical minority advocating this? I think it's because, uh, it's inconceivable in this society to try and practice capitalism in a situation of retreating demographics. It also would be, a s-, a solution which would place enormous power in the hands of women. Women are often heard to complain about their powerlessness, yet here is a plan which requires very little input from white guys. Uh, I took this idea to demographers and said, "What about it? This seems so simple, most people think there are no solutions, here's a very simple solution, what about it?", and they said, "Yes, well, it's more startling than you realize, because women in upper class high-tech western society, uh, a woman, say, on the upper east side of Manhattan, or Malibu, or the sea cliffed district of San Francisco. A child born to that woman will have eight hundred to a thousand times more negative impact on the earth than a child born to a woman in Bangladesh. If you were to go to Bangladesh and meet a woman in the back streets of Dhaka who told you that her ambition in life was to have nine hundred children you'd think you were dealing with some kind of sociopath, a kind of, [audience laughter], a kind of typhoid Mary of

the demographic scene. And yet, every child born into moderately well off yuppie families in high-tech societies is in that position. We prefer to not to think of it, this way. I think it's very interesting that one could make a case to, uh, women in western societies, you could say, "How would you like vastly increased leisure time. How would you like increased disposable income? And how would you like to, uh, take upon yourself a truly heroic social role?" This is what's being offered with this suggestion to limit reproduction to one natural child. No more heroic, no more politically correct can be taken. And, interestingly, the women you want to convince of this position are the women you are most likely to be able to convince; educated, white, uh, women, with, uh, above average incomes. So that's a very practical suggestion. More likely to be implemented than my dream of, uh, lunar inoculations with psilocybin for the entire population, [audience laughs], to, uh, dissolve the calcareous ego formations that have sprung up in the bloodstreams since the last full moon. Which I also think would be, uh, a fine idea.

You see, boundary dissolution is what is needed here. Boundary dissolution of all type, our separateness is an illusion. There is a kind of human bedrock. That's why I think that the world sweep toward democracy is far more than simply a political trend. Democracy is not exactly a style of government per se. Or, exclusively, democracy is something, is, a biological institution of some sort. Because, there is no theory, there is no abstraction, there is no ideology. I mean democracy is as close as you can get, uh, to anarchy, and still have any theory of organization at all. You know, I wrote a book, which is around and about, called "The Archaic Revival", and that's why my belief in the archaic revival is what brings me out to events like this. I mean I think the term new-age and some of these other terms are pretty trivializing and basically designed by the mavens of marketing to draw you in. uh. But there is an impulse throughout the 20th century, in freudianism, in abstract expressionism, in dada, psychotherapy, sexual permissiveness, psychedelic experimentation, jazz, rock'n'roll. These are all facets of an impulse toward the archaic, toward the primitive, the non-straight, the anti-bowtie, uh, the wish to blow up the stayed world created by the fine ladies and gentlemen of the 19th century with their christer-ethics and their long dresses and all of that business. There is an impulse toward the archaic. This is very healthy. This is what happens when a society seeks to revivify itself. When the medieval world exploded in the face of the Italian city states and the new classes that were emerging, uh, they. It reinvented classicism. It was actually the second time classicism had been rediscovered, it was also trotted out by the Arabs in the 9th century when they needed a stabilizing metaphor for the Ummayyad caliphate and those civilizations. Now, in the 20th century, we can't go back to ancient Greece and Rome, or Babylon, a-and in a sense the new age, I think, is an effort to go back to a kind of, uh, Minoan/Egyptian world, which never existed except perhaps in the minds of certain menopausal theosophists. [Audience laughs] But, but the impulse is, uh, the impulse is laudable, however screwy the results. But I think we have to reach further back, that all of history is what our earth text, the bible, tells us it is. It's a confusion, a kind of punishment, a wandering in the wilderness, and that where we really want to be is naked, singing in the rainforest, stoned, and exalted. Uh, one with the souls of the ancestors, one with the s-, gaian spirit of the planet. And I don't mean to imply that psychedelics ar-, simply act negatively; dissolving ego, dissolving social constructs, dissolving programming and neurosis. That's all true, but what is left when all this dissolving has taken place is not simply a tabula rasa, a clean slate. What is left is, uhm, what we forgot, what we have been so long away from, which is a connection into the reality of the gaian mind. The great news that all shamanism can attest to, and is built on, is the news that there is a sentient, minded, caring entity that surrounds and holds the planet in its hands, in its heart. S-, beyond comprehending. I mean call it Gaia, call it God, call it the spirit of nature, it doesn't matter what you call it. It transcends the natural apprehension of higher primates, and yet it is there. We know that our own peculiar form of self reflection emerged in just a couple of million years, out of animal organization. Well, what we don't know is how many other forms of mind there m-, are possible, and how many times in the two billion year history of life on this planet, uh, uhh, intelligence has been able to shed the dark chrysalis of matter and launch itself into nearby dimensions in which it finds completion and happiness. Uh, and I think that this is the great news that informs the shamanic religions, that we are not alone, and that The Other that we can make our way toward, is not, uh, you know, a galactarian intelligence from Beta Reticuli that is part machine-symbiote, part banana slug, or something like that, [audience laughs]. That, the, the coherent-minded entity that we make our way toward is actually a reflection of what is best in our hearts. That we carry in ourselves the seed of this thing, and that we are like, the, the peo-, the, the guy in the story of the prodigal son. We

have fallen into history, and out of this misfortune, out of this experience we can come gold. If we return to the fold of the ancestors, if we can, somehow, take what we've learned from history and fold it back into the experience of being truly human. And this is the challenge. And it faces us on the political level. Issues such as, you know, all kinds of community issues, such as racism, and sexism, and classism, these are community issues. And then issues between the human community and the planet. Our inability, you see, to emotionally connect with the consequences of what we're doing. I mean, we as a species present a perfect picture of pathology, b-, uh, because what real psychotic behavior is, is behavior th-, that one cannot emotionally connect with the consequences of what is being done. And when you realize that we are literally, uh, looting the cradle of future human life. That we have decided that we are not simply transient occupiers of this domain, but that it is ours to trash, to use up, to do with as we wish, leaving nothing for the future, then you realize the depth of our need for immediate and widespread, uh, therapeutic, indeed, pharmacological intervention on our state of mind. Because, we have wandered from anything like real human values and the reason psychedelics are so threatening in this society is because they immediately throw into high relief the internal contradictions of the dominator style of doing business, and this is must what happen. The momentum toward catastrophe, built up over centuries, is immense. The only antidote to that, that I've seen, extrapolating from what I've seen it do to single individuals, are the shamanic hallucinogens, because, when you cut right to the bone, what has to happen is; we must change our minds. If we don't change our minds we are going to go down with this self-generated titanic called western civilization. And we have the power to change our minds, but it won't come from hortatory preaching. If that would work then we would have turned the bend on the Sermon on the Mount. But as it is, I think we turn the bend, uh, sometime in the 20th century; either when Albert Hoffman invented LSD, or Gordon Wasson found the mushrooms of Huaca[?], or Richard Schultes brought back news of ayahuasca from the Amazon basin. You see, we have to humble ourselves, we have to give up the titanic ego-driven idea that we can do it by ourselves, as religions and yogins and all that beady-eyed crowd are into promising. The first step on the path of self-, real self-transformation, is the admission that you must humble yourself so thoroughly that you need to form a pact with an organism that begins its life in a mound of manure. You know, it's a true alchemical journey. You return to the droth, and out of that which everyone has rejected; literally, the compost, uh, of s-, of being you find the jewel. And the jewel can be grown, cultivated, brought to fruition, internalized, globalized, shared, to create a transforming option, that, uh, does honor to a human experiment that has been going on far too many millennia for us to fumble the golden opportunity away.

Is there anybody who's burning with their own agenda that i-, oh, here's a "burning person", yes.

Audience member: "I had a experience, about three years ago now, nearly four years ago, where I-, I was on a hallucinogenic. And, I had a feeling that I was talking to some people, and they were telling me that when we leave this planet we become stars! I was wondering what. Have you got any more on the outer space connection?"

Terrence: W-well, I-I mean, I think, you know, I mean... It's funny for me to be talking at a, at a place like this because my, I am actually a rationalist, i-it's simply that my experience has been very, very peculiar, and I thank God for it, because I think most rationalists actually live lives which reinforce their rationalism. Maybe because they don't poke around enough in the edges of things. I mean, you know, we have orthodox ideology, I don't know what it is now, free markets, democracy and physics or something, and then you press out a little bit to the fringes and, you discover that reality is not only not as you supposed it to be, but it's not like anybody supposed it to be. The, the s-, the maps we have are largely based on, uh, conjecture and naive hope. The hope that there's hiding woods, the hope that there's nobody waiting behind the hill. Uh, uhh, when I first started talking psychedelics it all ran pretty much

according to hoil[?], uh, LSD, it seemed like a tremendous tool for insight into the structure of the personality, kind of high-powered, turbocharged self-directed psychotherapy, you know? Uh, which is certainly useful, illuminating, but n-, doesn't violate the laws of physics, or threaten the, uh, the foundations of western science and philosophy. What has interested me, and become the focus of my personal life, I guess, are these tryptamine hallucinogens; DMT; psilocybin, and then ayahuasca, which is a, simply a strategy for making DMT orally active. And, you know, one could accept, I think, insights into one's upbringing, uhh, insights into the structure of philosophy or mathematics or something like that. But what is hard to accept, are, uh, you called them "gibberish people", I call them self-transforming elf-machines, or tyches, or fairies. And, t-to my mind, this i-, this is confounding, this is no mere extension of the models of the psyche that we inherit from Freud and Jung. It begins to look as though, uh, that, uh, you know, the mind is not even in the brain. There's some kind of extended landscape of possibility, and I, uh, I speak as, uh, somebody who's been there, who's seen this stuff, but who doesn't, I don't have an agenda, I'm, uhm. In a sense I'm sort of chicken-shit, because the motivation for my public career is to get a whole bunch of people to march with me, in there, to check again, because, uhh... Y-you know, u-, well, I-I talk in the book I wrote for Bentham, Food of The Gods, about DMT, because I think, it's, in a sense, the, uhm, the case where all the issues are most intensely brought together. Uh, it's a naturally occurring neurotransmitter, indigenous in the human brain, it also is very fast-acting, it clears your system very quickly, Not only clears your system, but leaves no trace whatsoever. You can't even n-, feel that you have done some kind of substance a half hour after you do this stuff. Nevertheless, the content of the experience itself is absolutely paradigm-challenging, and the chief reason is because there are these entities in there, and on psilocybin you hear them; they speak to you. What you were describing, it's almost as though this is some kind of, uh, of a mandala of pharmacological approaches to the mystery, and DMT lands you right in the center of the bullseye. I mean, thirty seconds after smoking DMT you confront these things, which look like, I-I mean, it's very hard to force language into these dimensions, and then e-, bring it back, but what they look like to me is self-transforming, self-dribbling basketballs, or something, I mean, they come bounding forward. When you enter into the space there's a kind of a cheer, you know, "Hooray!", and suddenly you're there. And this is not the cumulative eff-, effect of spirulina or hanging out at finned horn[?] or imbibing any of these ideologies that permit this kind of thing. I mean, I come out of, uh, u-, you know Jean Genet, and existentialism, and Sartre and m-, very much more mainstream, down, dreary, western approach. These things do not require belief to sustain their existence. You may doubt, you may deny, and yet there they are. And they, un-, it is not, uhm, it's not some kind of neutral panorama, like window shopping. It's an encounter, it's a situation in which you see them, they see you, and the, uhh, uhh, relationship between you and them is very rapidly evolving. They seem to have been waiting, and the impression I get is, well it's not an impression I get, it's what they say. They say, "Here you are again, how wonderful!", it's not exactly in English, you understand... And they have, uhm, e-, you know, they're not made of matter. The questions, you know, what is the ontos of these things, what is their exact ontological status, and as far as I can tell, they're made of language. They're, they are not composed of DNA, sinew, tissue and blood, they're composed of syntax. They are like self-articulating sentences, or language with the, that has no requirement for a speaker. It is its own self-generating system of meaning, and, in, you know, the immediate impression you have, is, if you're a sane person, is, you know, "My God, what is this?", and then, "Is it okay? Am I, number one, am I still alive?" And you check through, you know, take a quick inventory; breathing, normal, blood pressure, normal, heart, normal, but what you're seeing is a complete replacement of the ordinary world. And these things which are not enough like elves, gnomes and fairies, it's almost as though, you know, you'd look to folklore to, uhm, uh, to, uh, b-, provide evidence for the existence of these things, but the elves, gnomes and fairies of folklore are a little too predictable, a little too humanoid, a little too disneyesque for what you're dealing with. These things actually appear to be as alien a form of life as it would be possible for a human being to imagine and still cognize that it's alien intelligence at all. And, they are performing an extraordinary activity in that place. Which is; they possess a language that can be seen, with the eyes. And this is fascinating to me, I really think that there's something to be learned here. This is what they want you to learn, they s-, they come forward, they utter statements. Which, remember, you don't hear with your ears, but which you see as condensed sculptural objects, which are like Fabergé eggs or beautifully tooled machines of glass, shell, and crystal, except these things are in motions. They're opening up in front of you, and they're, they're pressing in, there's a kind of frantic intensity to this kind of an encounter; it's like a Bugs Bunny cartoon running backwards at twice normal speed. I mean, stuff is just flying all over, and they're saying "Don't

abandon yourself to amazement. Don't just go ga-ga with disbelief. Try and focus on what we're doing." And then, if you are able, you can moderately to focus on what they're doing. What they're doing is they're offering you these objects, and they're saying "Look at this! Look at this!" As it is passed you before you, as you look into it you have a very strong, and I believe, genuine, impression that this thing that you're being shown, though it's no larger than a kaiser roll is somehow absolutely confounding to the principles and assumptions of this world. That, in other words, if I could condense this thing into my hand right now I wouldn't have to convince you, I wouldn't have to preach to you, I could just show you. Hey, look at this! And in the visual confrontation with this thing it's self-evident that this is impossible. Matter like, th-, they don't behave this way. It's as though you've brought back a chunk of another dimension. And, and then what they're saying about these things is, uh, "You can do this. Do what we are doing", and then the urgency becomes almost strident, they say, "Do what we're doing! Do it now!" And you say, "Wha-, ho-?", and, and then you feel, or I felt, at any rate, an upwelling in myself, like a calling forth. Then out of my mouth comes language, or at least, syntax, but without meaning. Some kind of glossolalia where the modality of language is preserved, but the meaning is not. It's a kind of an ecstasy, it's sounds gibberish in three-dimensional space, but in that space it seems to be the key to u-u-unlocking a world made out of syntax and meaning. And I, you know, I come before you with all of this stuff unfinished. This is not a teaching or a system or an anything; it's an eyewitness account of a hyperdimensional automobile accident or something. We're not saying what the conclusions are; we don't know what the conclusions are, but this is big news. And when I first encountered this kind of stuff I was, uh, I was a-a young art historian at the University of California, and I assumed that any motif, no matter how [french phrase?], or bizarre you would be able to look at the painting, folklore and sculpture of somebody on this planet and find, uh, uh, a trace. And it didn't, it seemed as though this defeated that idea. It was almost counter the idea of the collective unconscious, because it argued that you, Joe Anybody, Sally Somebody, can break through on your own, an ordinary person, to a place that Verrocchio never saw, Michelangelo didn't anticipate it, Yates didn't know, Blake hadn't a clue, Melville wasn't briefed, and yet there it is, you know. And this is, uh, a-a-, to me, as an intellectual, was very confusing, because, I think, as intellectuals we always assume that progress will be built on the b-, on the shoulders of the giants that have preceded us. The idea of something actually one hundred percent brand new and unexpected is pretty daunting, and, and here, here it was, thirty seconds away, uh, uhh, simply by the act of ingesting this natural neurotransmitter. Well, those of you who've been there know exactly what I'm talking about, those of you who haven't been there I can't imagine how you can even sit through this kind of thing [laughter], because, you know, it makes the folks from the Pleiades and all that other stuff out there seem mundane by comparison. The other thing is, we're not talking about camping out in cornfields night after freezing with your eyes glued to the stars in one hope. This is a no-fail method for plunging deeper into these spiritual, uh, realms than the tantric yogas or the practitioners of x, y, or z dare scarcely suppose. It's repeatable, it's on demand, it does not depend upon the state of your moral purity or, uh, uh, you know, tantric accomplishment. It's something that is our birthright, as much as our sexuality, our language, our eyesight, our appreciation of music. It's, uh, an innate human thing. And a-, you know, to try and return to the premises of your question; I tried to formulate theories about what could this be. Well, the first impression that I had based on a reading of how weird this all was, was this must be a parallel a continuum á la Philip K. Dick and like that. That just apparently over some kind of neurological energy-barrier that's all around us all the time, these things are there. And they are not made of matter, so the laws of physics don't apply. And, hmm, you know, like that. And then, and then I entertained different possibilities, o-, and I still entertain numerous possibilities because I haven't got it figured out yet. One possibility is that these are things are actually human beings from the future. I mean if you take the content of the experience seriously and say, "I am apparently in contact with diminutive English-speaking creatures of some sort," well then, they have got to be either intelligent beings from another part of the universe or humans from, uh, some extraordinarily advanced future world where human beings are now made of language and are only two and a half feet, so I would put it rather far in the future. Or, and I just simply offer this in the spirit of, uh, of, intellectual completeness, uh. If you ask a shaman, or a sh-, or, uh, what these things are, they don't hesitate, they just say, "Oh, well, those are the ancestor-spirits", uh, this is what it's all about is ancestor-spirits. Well, it takes a while for the implications of this to sink in. They're talking about dead people, that's what an ancestor-spirit is. They're suggesting that the dearly departed do not evanesce into sunlight or something cheerfully nonspecific like that, but that this actually is, uh, simply one level of, a cosmic system of some sort where birth and death are transitions from level to level. Well, this is just exactly the kind of

thing that I'm intellectually set up to doubt, and to feel a kind of scorn for. 50:48

Original Transcription by: rawrawr (50% done)

Review 1 by:

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Hallucinogens and Culture (on 'Thinking Allowed' w/ Jeffrey Mishlove)

Day Month 1988

Location, City, State

Description

- [Video Link](#)

[Theme music]

[On screen text: 'Thinking Allowed productions presents' ... 'Inner Work Videotape' ... 'Hallucinogens and Culture with Terence McKenna']

Jeffrey Mishlove: Hello and welcome. Our topic today is hallucinogens and culture. We're going to examine the way that various cultures throughout the planet have been influenced in their social and cultural and intellectual development by hallucinogenic substances in the food chain. With me in the studio is Terence McKenna, author, lecturer, explorer, and philosopher. Terence is the co-author with his brother, Dennis McKenna, of a book called "The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens, and the I Ching." He's also the co-author of "Psilocybin: Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide." He is the author of a computer program called "Time Wave Zero," and he's the co-founder, and president, of an organization called Botanical Dimensions, which devotes itself to saving botanical plants used in shamanistic traditions throughout the world. Welcome Terence.

Terence McKenna: It's a pleasure to be here.

JM: It's a pleasure to have you here. I think a good starting point for our discussion would be the ancient Vedic culture of India; one of the world's great and and one of the world's earliest religions. The Rigveda is, is considered by all scholars to be one of the most, uh, beautiful composite of religious hymns and deep philosophical discussions, and and yet when one reads the Rigveda carefully one discovers an enormous emphasis on a mysterious, apparently hallucinogenic, substance called Soma.

TM: Yes, you're quite right. The ninth mandala of the Rigveda is entirely devoted to singing the praises of Soma, and yet we do not know what Soma is or was. R. Gordon Wasson spent a considerable portion of his life researching this problem and reached the conclusion that Soma was *Amanita Muscaria*, a mushroom that is symbiotic to pine and birch trees, uh, in much of the North Temperate Zone. However, uh... scholars have cast doubt on his identification of Soma. Nevertheless, uh, what we learn from Wasson's scholarship is that plants with hallucinogenic chemical principals in them have had an enormous impact on shaping the psychology of various cultures, both preliterate and literate, throughout the world.

JM: It seems quite clear that the references to Soma in the Rigveda were not really symbolic; they referred

to some actual plant substance.

TM: Oh yes, definitely. Some sort of plant substance was prepared and ingested by a priesthood who then use the ecstatic experience induced by that plant as a basis of all of their metaphysical and philosophical speculations on the nature of the universe. The case of Soma is by no means unique. My own field of, uh, interest was, uh, the Amazon Basin, where we don't have a great, uh, written literature, but we do have an extensive oral tradition and a tradition of hallucinogenic plant use that persists to the present day.

JM: While I think most notable in South America is the drug ayahuasca.

TM: Yes, ayahuasca is, uh, perhaps the worlds largest and most thriving psychedelic religion; it touches the lives of millions of Mestizos and, uh, Indians in the basin. It is a combinatory drug, which makes it especially interesting to pharmacologists, because its two principal ingredients are themselves inactive expect in the presence of each other. So, what we have in the case of ayahuasca is an example of a highly evolved folk pharmacology. And, how a discovery like this was ever made in the first place is one of the challenging questions that anthropologists have to deal with. After all, in a square mile of Amazonian rainforest it is not unusual to encounter 50,000 distinct species of plants. How, then, did these uh so-called primitive or preliterate people make the connection between the combining of the bark of one, with the leaves of another, boiled and put through a number of procedures to, uh, produce an intense visionary hallucinogen. This is an extremely interesting and, uh, to this day, unanswered question.

JM: Isn't it the case, that, I believe it was the German, uh, chemist who isolated this, uh, chem [stumbles] the chemical active ingredient in ayahuasca originally named it *telepathine*.

TM: Yes, that's right, uh. Based on field reports of the states of group mind induced by ayahuasca, which is also called *yage*, he felt it was fitting to name it telepathine. Now, the rules of scientific nomenclature are such that, uh, the first name of a compound is always given precedent, and about 20 years after it was name telepathine, it was realized that the identical compound had been isolated around the turn of the century from the giant Syrian rue, *Peganum harmala*, and named harmine. So today the active ingredients of ayahuasca are known as harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmine. But your point is well taken, the- what struck the early explorers and ethnographers into the Amazon Basin was the fact that the people seemed to be taking this plant preparation in order to unders- uh, undergo states of community group mindedness, and during these intoxicating intervals, uh, social plans, relative to migration hunting and warfare, were undertaken by the elders of the tribe and, uh, though the name has been changed to the more innocuous harmine, nevertheless there's a continued persistence of the feeling that, uh, telepathic and group mind states are induced by this particular plant mixture. And, it's particularly interesting in the light of the fact that the chemical constituents which make it go are in fact found endogenously in the human brain. These are not exotic compounds from the point of view of ordinary human brain chemistry. So there is a suggestion there, that, uh, manipulation of neurohumoral compounds, brain neurotransmitters, and that sort of thing may in fact open the door, to, uh, untapped areas of human potential.

JM: I would imagine that many of our viewers have seen the movie "The Emerald Forest" which seems to deal with the use of substances of this sort in the Amazon culture.

TM: Yes, John Boorman did a wonderful job with that movie. He was portraying the use of *epená* snuff. Uh, that's a hallucinogenic drug complex that occurs in the eastern part of the Amazon drainage and in

rural Venezuela. Uh, *epená* is, uh, contains DMT and is blown up the nostrils by a cooperative friend and induces an intense state of hallucinogenesis. Yes, that was, I think, most people's first exposure to the real richness of the visionary pharmacopoeia that does exist in the Amazon.

JM: And there's also the suggestion there then, I guess, that DMT would trigger telepathic-like experiences, or clairvoyant types of experiences.

TM: That's right, and DMT is also a product of endogenous human metabolism. It's interesting that the most intense of the hallucinogens, DMT, which you mentioned, are the ones which are most closely related to our own brain chemistry. So, far from these compounds being, uh, alien to the brain or being an insult to the physical brain, what they really represent are the shifting of ratios of compounds already present in the ordinary brain.

JM: Well, well DMT I believe is dimethyltryptophan-

TM: -Tryptamine

JM: -Tryptamine?

TM: That's right

JM: Tryptamine. It's related to the protein tryptophan, is it not?

TM: It's related to the protein tryptophan and it's also related to Serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter which occurs in all life, and is most concentrated in the higher primates, and most concentrated there in man. It is 5-Hydroxytryptamine. While DMT is, as you mentioned n,n-Dimethyltryptamine, so there is a very close structural affinity between this extremely potent and exotic hallucinogen and the very, uh, common basis for ordinary consciousness, Serotonin, that's correct. Mhm.

JM: No, other cultures around the world have also used other types of substances. I think it might be interesting to talk, at least briefly, about alcohol which is referred to so often, in the Bible for example.

TM: Yes, well we tend in our culture to make a radical distinction between drugs and foods with what we call spices sort of falling somewhere in the middle. In point of fact, a culture is what it eats, and an individual's personality is, uh, often largely a reflection of their diet. There has not been a human culture, uh, that did not bear upon it the stamp of its relationship with certain plants which altered the individual and mass psyche. We can think of numerous examples, the influence, for instance, of sugar on the growth of 19th Century mercantilism. Or the way in which the British manipulated opium policy in the far east. Or, as you mentioned, uh, alcohol, which has always been the drug of choice, uh, in Western culture. Who can imagine modern industrial office culture without coffee? These are major drug dependencies that have placed their stamp on the lives of millions and millions of people. It's simply that we choose to linguistically define it in such a way that the effect is not something most people are cognizant of.

JM: I think coffee is a very interesting example because when it was first introduced into our culture, as I understand, it was considered virtually a hallucinogenic drug.

TM: Oh yes, when coffee was first introduced into Western culture, uh, it was associated with certain establishments where loose women and loud music were available, and the bohemian literati would gather and drink coffee and talk into the night, and it was considered quite a, uh, risqué thing to be involved with, that's right.

JM: And, and wasn't tobacco also viewed that way initially?

TM: Yes, tobacco was a very similar case. The anthropologist Eduardo Luna has pointed out that tobacco, which had a history of millennia of use in the new world, was, within a hundred years of being introduced into Europe through Portugal, was being buried in the graves of subarctic, Lapland, shamans. So, it shows how the character of the drug is quickly discerned by a culture, even a culture that is encountering that plant or that drug for the first time.

JM: I., It wouldn't be fair really to talk about drugs without mentioning, socially, what's happened in western culture, particularly during the 60s and early 70s when there was quite a wave of psychedelic drug use.

TM: Yes that's right. Following upon the discovery of LSD by Albert Hoffman in the late 30's and then the writing on the subject of the psychedelic experience that was done by Aldous Huxley, uh, Metzner, and others, it became a fad of the self-exploring youth culture of the 60's to be involved with these things. Uh... this was during a time of great social upheaval for other reasons, and the end product of that historical episode was the complete suppression of the study of psychedelic drugs, and, in my opinion, to the great detriment to the development of psychology. I feel that, uh, potentially psychedelic drugs could be for psychology what the telescope became for the science of astronomy. The problem with the psychedelics is, that they, uh, dissolve cultural programming and hence, inherently, have a political charge about them. You see, culture is the product of the unperturbed human mind. The human mind, unperturbed, through the medium of language, erects institutions and social structures which into which it then secretes itself, and sort of lives in a private Idaho. A psychedelic drug will dissolve these linguistic and cultural assumptions. It is a perturbation of the mind, and the perturbed mind is a mind in the act of rediscovering the nature that lies outside of culture. So this tension between cultural values and what we might call, for want a better word, reality, creates a tension between institutions and the users of these substances.

JM: It's as if our culture, if I understand you right, acts as a filter, uh, between our minds and and direct experience of of reality and the drugs, somehow, blow away that crust of culture and allow more of a direct, a gnostic experience.

TM: That's right; and the business of culture, any culture, is to perpetuate it's cultural models, and if the hallucinogenic plants have not been integrated into the cultural model then they are definitely seen as dangerous forces for an unpredictable sort of social change. Now, if the hallucinogenic plants have been integrated into the cultural model, this is not then a problem, and this is the case with Shamanism. Shamanism is the, uh, culturally sanctified institution of, uh, inner exploration via psychoactive plants. Where psychoactive plants are not present, shamanic institutions tend to become vitiated, to rely on ritual, or ordeals, or, uh, other methods of elucitin- eliciting these ecstatic states, but, to my mind, and this is a great argument which rages in anthropology, uh, to my mind, and I'm in agreement with Wasson here, the hallucinogenic plants are the *sine qua non* for an active shamanism.

JM: For authentic-

TM: An authentic shamanism, that's right. Now, Mircea Eliade, who's the great, uh, commentator on shamanism took then an entirely different point of view and said reliance on, what he called narcotics was a decadent phase of shamanism, but if we examine Eliade's, uh, personal history, I think it can be clearly seen that this was simply the cultural myopia of a European scholar in the great 19th century model.

JM: Sort of still under the sway of a Victorian sense of, uh, morality.

TM: Uh, yes, sort of taking the point of- the superior point of view that, while these are primitive people, surely our greater epistemological sophistication puts us in a position to judge them.

JM: You have the same controversy, don't you now, within the Hindu tradition where many gurus say 'no drugs', and are denying I suppose the, uh, um, the tradition of the Rigveda which we spoke of earlier.

TM: That's absolutely correct uh, the Mahabharata, which is the central core text of late reformed Hinduism, explicitly forbids mushrooms to the Brahman class; they are a forbidden food, but in ethnography we're taught that a taboo usually indicates a previous involvement and fascination, and, uh, in fact, the early Hinduism of the Vedic phase was definitely more analogous to the hallucinogenic shamanism of the Amazon Basin than it is to the extremely stratified, uh, Hinduism of modern India

JM: Do you find the use of drugs of this type, hallucinogenic drugs, in the Tantric traditions, the traditions that deliberately use taboos in order to inculcate higher states of awareness?

TM: Yes, well, when you go to India, you discover that the one thing that is not stressed in Hinduism as it is exported to the West, is the immense reliance on cannabis. Hashish, Ganja, is, uh, the staple of these Sadhus. This is a fact of their daily life, that they are relying on this for a, uh, constantly reinforced contact with the, uh, transcendental dimension. Mhm.

JM: You know, I think it's interesting how you referred earlier to the, uh, shamanistic religions as being the ones that really have sanctified the use of these drugs for religious purposes, and yet we find in our Western tradition, Christianity has come and in an effect labeled these sorts of things as diabolic. Uh for example, uh, drugs, I believe, uh, were used, uh, amongst various witchcraft groups that were persecuted by the church.

TM: That's right, however, the church was concerned that the magic of the witches be seen as real, number one, and number two, entirely caused by the agency of the devil himself, and so the church downplayed the operational role that plants had in inducing these states, because, after all, if the devil cannot lead you astray without the use of plants, why, what kind of devil is it? So in our own, uh, historical tradition, there is a curious blindness to the efficacy of hallucinogenic plants.

JM: I have heard, for example, in you know the old story of, of witches using toad skins in in their brews that that there's a drug called bufotenine in- which is a hallucinogenic that comes from the skin of toads.

TM: Well, there was excitement about bufotenine in the mid-60s; it was later shown to be non-

psychoactive. However, since then, toads have been found which do secrete DMT-like compounds, and it's fairly clear that the cauldron chemistry of the witches which relied on datura, hellebore, monkshood, henbane, these sorts of plants, was a powerful, uh, visionary chemistry, although these compounds, uh, the tropane alkaloids that occur in those plants, tend to be more deliriants and confusants than what I call the classical psychedelic compounds, which are more the tryptamines and the beta-carbolines. There are many chemical compounds in nature which are psychoactive, but a much narrower spectrum of these compounds are truly what we call psychedelic, or mind-manifesting.

JM: Now, other than the, uh, obvious spiritual and religious implications which we see again and again in different cultures, even, and I suppose we should mention the Native American Church and their use of

TM: -peyote.

JM: peyote uh, uh, what are the other kinds of cultural developments that we can trace to the use of these drugs?

TM: Well, I think the most profound cultural development is, it is possible to make the case that language itself is an ability that was coaxed out of an evolving primate species by virtue of the fact that there were hallucinogenic plants in the diet of that creature. You see, psilocybin has been shown in low doses to actually increase visual acuity. Well, at the stage of evolution where human beings encountered psilocybin mushrooms, we were essentially baboon-like, pack hunting hoards of veldt-living creatures in Africa. In that situation, a compound which increases visual acuity will give a tremendous adaptive advantage to the animals that are including it in their diet, and those animals not including it in their diet will be quickly eliminated by the process of natural selection from the evolutionary scenario. So, it's possible to argue that this mind-manifesting quality of the psychedelics actually conferred an evolutionary, uh, advantage on certain primates who then were able to bootstrap themselves to higher and higher states of reflective self-awareness. This may lie behind the very early coincidence of cattle, goddesses, and mushrooms in the apparent obsessions of early man as reflected by the cave paintings on the Algerian plateau and in southern France and Spain. We always find the notion of the mystery, circa 18,000 years ago, connected with the idea of cattle, and we always find the cattle connected with the notion of the great Goddess. Now, it may be that the hidden and third member of this trinity was a hallucinogenic mushroom of some sort.

JM: We've got only about 2 minutes left but I, I wonder what the connection; I don't, I don't quite see it between the mushroom and the cattle and the Goddess.

TM: The mushrooms grow in the manure of the cattle. When the hunting packs of early primates followed along behind the cattle, they inevitably encountered the mushroom, ate it, had their visual skills thereby increased, bred more readily therefore, and survived more easily than their non-mushroom eating cousins, and so, the eating of mushrooms and the development of higher aspects of consciousness, including self reflection, were thereby enforced, leading to the conclusion that it was actually a symbiotic relationship between early primates and these hallucinogenic plants that laid the basis for the appearance of what we call human beings.

JM: Well, Terence McKenna, this is a very interesting discussion. You seem to be suggesting that our evolution, I suppose, from the animal kingdom into the human kingdom itself was catalyzed or, or triggered by our encounter with these hallucinogenics um.

TM: Yes, we are an ape with a symbiotic relationship to a mushroom, and that has given us self-reflection, language, religion, and all the spectrum of effects that flow from these things.

JM: Yeah. And one can only wonder how these hallucinogens might affect our future evolution as well.

TM: They have brought us to this point and as we make our relationship to them conscious, we may be able to take control of our future evolutionary path

JM: Terence McKenna, thank you *very much* for being with me.

TM: It was a pleasure.

JM: For me too. And thank *you* very much for being with us.

[Theme music]

[On screen text: 'Inner Work' ... 'For a complete catalog of videotapes please write to:

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Hallucinogens Before and After Psychology (aka Beyond Psychology)

14 May 1983

University of California Santa Barbara, Psychedelics & Spirituality Conference

Description

- [Audio Link \(Archive.org\)](#)
- [Original Transcription from Willmushiamroom](#)
- [Audio Link \(YouTube\)](#)

I have to begin by, uh, correcting Rob. Actually Jonathan Ott wrote, uh, Hallucinogens and Mathematics. I wrote Psylocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide, uh, in collaboration with my brother [Terence chuckles; audience applause]. I was originally going to call this talk, uh 'Monkeys Discover Hyperspace', but, uh, I decided that that was, uh, a little outrageous and I settled on 'Hallucinogens Before and After Psychology'. So before I dig into that subject, I'll say a bit about how I come to have an interest in these substances and their very peculiar effects.

Years and years ago, after an LSD trip, I, uh, imagined that I perceived a relationship between the LSD experience and the motifs of Tibetan religious art, and accordingly I went to Nepal and took up residence in a, uh, village of Tibetan refugees. And, uh, I quickly learned that the shamanism that I wanted to study was, uh, inaccessible for reasons of language, for reasons, uh, such as that the Buddhists who were teaching me Tibetan looked, uh, askance at the shaman I wanted to associate with. And I realized then that the association between shamanism and hallucinogens is such that both in a way are taboo and when you, uh, deal with preliterate cultures you discover that the shaman is a very peculiar figure.

He is, uh, critical to the functioning of the psychological and social life of his community, but in a way he's always peripheral to it. He lives at the edge of the village, he is only called upon in matters of, uh, great social crisis, he is, uh, feared and respected, and, uh, this might be a description of these hallucinogenic substances. They are feared and respected, they are misunderstood, they are only called upon, uh, often in moments of great crisis, and they are a persistent, but always peripheral part of the community.

And, uh, I saw this in Nepal among Bon-Po Tibetan shamanism, which is a non-hallucinogen based shamanism, I saw it in Indonesia where techniques had been developed to induce trance, but were non-chemical techniques, uh, specifically dance in the case of Bali and Mantok, and I saw it finally in the Amazon where I think, uh, I contacted the primal shamanism. Uh, as you know, there is a division of opinion on the matter of whether narcotic or, as I call it, hallucinogenic shamanism is decadent or in fact primary, and Mircea Eliade took the position that hallucinogenic shamanism was decadent and Gordon Wasson, very rightly I believe, uh, contravened this view and held that actually it was very probably the presence of the hallucinogenic drug experience in the life of early man that lay the very basis for the idea of the spirit.

Well, as I made my way through these various cultures and various hallucinogenic substances it, uh, came to my attention that, in my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of Gordon Wasson and, uh, other scholars- Henry Munn comes to mind- he wrote a marvelous essay called "The Mushrooms of Language", but in the minds of those who associated themselves with the mushroom there were certain assumptions about psilocybin that were different from the mythos that was arising around some of the other hallucinogens.

Um..psilocybin, I think, as one of the more commonly available hallucinogens, is the most visual, and it is certainly visual if it is done in the traditional manner, and, uh, I'm always amazed at how little understood or practiced the traditional manner is, so I'll sketch it for you. The traditional manner of taking psilocybin is to take a very healthy effective dose in the vicinity of 15 milligrams on an empty stomach in total darkness. [Audience member "WOO HOO!", Terence laughs] You've been there! [Terence laughs] And in that situation, which is in a sense a situation of sensory deprivation, the psilocybin is able to exfoliate itself to the fullest degree and to show you what it is, not against a background of a reality that ordinarily surrounds us, but against a background of darkness so that the pure essence of the thing can be shown, and it is, uh, extraordinarily bizarre, extraordinarily difficult, I believe, to assimilate into your world view, and this is whether you're a Bora youth undergoing initiation, or whether you're a college student or a research chemist.

These things do not lend themselves well to integration into language. If they did, they wouldn't occupy this peripheral position after 10,000 years of human culture. But above and beyond the visual intensity of psilocybin, the thing that sets it apart, I believe, is a phenomenon that might be described as an induction of aural hallucination, but in fact, to describe it that way is to fall back on a kind of, uh, medical, uh, jargon reductionism because what it really is is a voice in the head that is separate from the perceived ego function, in other words, a voice speaks. You hear it, and it seems to be operating independent of the ego. It operates in a psychopompic role as a teacher, as the narrator of the vision which is revealed much in the same way that Virgil led Dante through the circles of hell, and uh, the modern intellectual equipment is not capable of assimilating this. This is the sort of thing that we associate with psychopathology. We can hardly imagine anything more alien to modern consciousness than a disembodied voice in the head. However, if you familiarize yourself with Western thought on the scale of millennia, you discover that not only is this not an alien phenomena, but for much of human history it has been inimical to the human experience and it is called, uh, relying on the Greeks, the Logos. The Logos is a voice heard in the head, and the Logos was the hand on the rudder of human civilization for centuries, up until, in fact, the collapse of the ancient mystery religions and the ascendancy of Christianity to the status of the world religion.

I am sure many of you are familiar with the story in Plutarch of, uh, the fisherman who heard a great noise and saw something fall into the sea and heard a voice from the sky saying that great Pan was dead, that, in other words, the ancient gods had been eclipsed, and in fact in Jungian terms, the ancient god, by falling into the sea, had been submerged in the phonic unconscious and disappeared from the, uh, experience of ordinary people.

From that period on it was 15 to 17 centuries while Christianity worked out the implications of its message, while science spun away from Christianity and created its own set of modes, the New World was discovered, reason was enthroned, scientific method was enthroned, and the civilization that we know arose around us, but then in 1953 Valentina and Gordon Wasson went to Huautla de Jimenez in the Sierra Mazatec of Oaxaca and they discovered this mushroom cult, and its my belief that to this day we do not

know what exactly it was that they stumbled upon. Mushroom, drug, cult, all of these, uh, ideas about what it rests on the assumption that we know what we're talking about when we talk about mind, and in fact everything that has been said at this conference had rested on the assumption that we know what we're talking about when we invoke a concept like mind.

The truth of the matter is, ladies and gentlemen, that after two thousands years of grappling with the problem scientists cannot even tell you how you can form the conception that you will change your open hand into a closed fist, and it will happen. This is an intervention of mind into the world of matter that, uh, no, no philosopher has been able to give a satisfactory account of. Now, with the hallucinogens this intervention of one realm into another, of mind into matter or matter into mind, is raised to a pitch of excruciating intensity, and, uh, it's my belief that one of the, uh, unconscious reasons which underlies the odd attitude of the establishment toward hallucinogens is the fact that they bring the mystery to the surface as an individual experience. In other words, you do not understand the psychedelic experience by getting a report from time magazine or even the economist. You only understand the psychedelic experience by having it, and therefore to understand it is to embark on a course of action, of self-education outside the context of your culture because your culture has no answers about what this thing might be.

Ok, so much for that. But Psilocybin and DMT to a lesser extent, although it is so brief and so intense that it's sometimes hard to sort these things out, uh, invokes a Logos or reintroduces the phenomenon of the Logos, uh, into the experience of modern people. So what, uh, what can we make of this? Um, I think we have to take it very seriously. I think that the culture crisis that we are involved in has to do, and by that I mean the entire global cultural crisis leading possibly to the extinction of the species, has to do with the fact that our models, developed over the last 500 to 1,000 years, have played us false. They aren't working, and the cultures that we have conquered with, uh, capitalism and, uh, technology; we have repressed their connection into these intuitive realms. We have established one method for the arbitration of truth and everything which does not, uh, pass through that narrow gate is relegated to the realm of mythology or worse, cultural immaturity, and yet we are the culture that is in crisis. When you go to the rainforest you don't find cultures in crisis except to the degree that they are being impacted by us.

So, I believe that it is no coincidence that in this moment of maximum cultural crisis which we call the 20th century the hallucinogens, the entheogens, have emerged in Western culture. It is no accident that Wasson made his trip to central Mexico and contacted the mushrooms. What he discovered in the mountains of Mexico was nothing less than Eros, sleeping but alive, the body of Osiris preserved over an entire astrological age, metaphorically speaking. In other words, that to take the mushroom was to transcend the cultural momentum of the past couple of millennia and return to a world where the Logos was a realized phenomena. And we heard from Carl Ruck last night about the Eleusinian Mysteries; this was not a minor phenomenon. Over a period of 2,000 years everyone who was anyone made the pilgrimage to Eleusis and had the experience, and it put the stamp on Greek drama, Greek philosophy, later Roman politics. All of these things were influenced by the hallucinogenic experience.

So, our culture, spiritually, has played the role of the prodigal son. We, for reasons of ideology, botanical geography, other factors have not had visionary ecstatic hallucinogens installed in our culture, uh, as we perhaps should have over the last, uh, several hundred years. Now, that is changing, and in order to understand what the change means you have to look further back in time, in fact, past history to prehistory, again to the model of the shaman, not the shaman as anthropologists, uh, describe him, but the shaman as shaman dream him because every shaman looks back toward an archetypal first shaman who was

superhuman, who did go to the stars, who could go to the bottom of the ocean, who could move through the gates of death and return with a lost soul.

Now, it seems to me when you pull back to, uh, the perspective of several thousand years, all of history can be seen as an adumbration on this wish, expectation, hope for a superhuman condition, for a transcending of the laws of gravity, of the laws of life and death into a superhuman condition that was salutary for mankind as a whole, in other words, the shaman as the archetypal perfected man.

Now, this afternoon you heard Metzner refer to alchemy as one of the, uh, refractions of this concern with the perfection of the spirit. Uh, it is about the projecting of a perfect substance, which is the self purified, but it also lead to the rise of modern science basically through a misunderstanding. Now, it seems to me what's happening now is that what Mircea Eliade called the "human desire for self-transcendence expressed through the motif of magical flight" has been taken up by the technological society as the idea of space flight, and I'm sure if Tim Leary were here he could speak to this more eloquently than I can. Space flight is nothing less than the exterior metaphor for the shamanic voyage, in other words, in our terms for the hallucinogenic drug experience. This is the way that engineers get high. They go to the moon.

[audience laughter and clapping]

What we need to do to transcend our cultural schizophrenia and to heal the rift between spirit and soul or world and self is to realize something which we all pay lip service to, at least I'm sure all the people in this room pay lip service to, which is the idea that the inside and the outside are really the same thing, but I don't think the cultural implications of that have been, uh, clearly drawn. What it means really is that all our dreams of transformation have to be realized at the same time, and that we cannot go to space with our feet in the mud, nor can we in fact turn ourselves into an eco-sensitive hallucinogenic-based culture on earth, unless we fuse this- these dichotomist opposites. It is only in *coincidentia oppositorum*, a union of opposites that does not strive for closure that we are going to find cultural, uh, sanity, and this is the thing that the entheogens, the hallucinogens deliver with such clarity and regularity. They raise paradox to a level of intensity that no one can evade, and in doing that they set the stage for turning yourself into the kind of person who does not insist on having it either or, black or white and a culture composed of those kinds of people will be a culture more civilized than any that we have seen so far.

If I can paraphrase Teilhard de Chardin for a moment, he said, uh, or I will paraphrase in this way, 'when the human race understands the potential of the hallucinogenic drug experience it will have discovered fire for the second time.' And this is what we are waiting for. We are waiting for the discovery of fire so that we can transcend the monkey business and get on with the great business of inhabiting our own imaginations, and it's impossible to take that position without someone saying, Manichean, dualist, uh, enemy of the body! Perhaps, but, uh, since the very beginning of culture what we seem to be are animals which, uh, take in raw material and excrete it imprinted with ideas, and we do this on a larger and larger scale looking toward the day when all physical constraints can be lifted off of us as they are in our imagination and we can erect the kind of civilization that we want to erect, and this vision was anticipated by no less a seer than James Joyce who said, "If you want to be phoenixed come and be parked." [Terence laughs, audience laughter] "Up in the yent prospector", uh, "Here in Moycayn we flop on the seamy side." Moycayn is the red light district of Dublin. "But up in the yent prospector, you sprout all your worth and woof your wings." This was part of his program; he wa- hoped that man would become "dirgible" as he put it, and he didn't live to see the revolution of the hallucinogens, but I think had he, he would have felt that,

uh, that man was well on his way to becoming “dirgible,” and, uh, it seems to me that we stand at an enormous threshold. The future of the human mind must, uh, loom large in the future of the human species. If it doesn’t loom large in the hum- in the future of the human species, then we are in very big trouble.

Now, a term that has been applied, or was early on applied, though I haven’t heard it used in this conference, to hallucinogens, was 'consciousness-expanding drug' and this may not be onomatopoeic, but it’s certainly phenomenologically accurate and neutral. They are consciousness-expanding drugs, and the question, "what is consciousness?", cannot be divided away from the question, "Is man good?" And this is a question that we have to answer for ourselves because I believe that we are not going to extinguish ourselves. We are going to evade the, uh, the many obstacles that are so obviously ahead of us in the next few years. We are going to reach the threshold of the galaxy, but in what form? And in order for the form in which we reach the edge of the galaxy and present ourselves to the hegemony of organized intelligence that must exist there, in order for that form to be worthy, we are going to have to go with our minds fully illuminated in front of us, and that means that we can have no more truck with the idea of an unconscious, of an inaccessible and dark part of the human psyche that cannot be controlled, that it's obviously a description of the childhood of an intelligent species, and I believe that these hallucinogens signal the end of that childhood. There have always been individual shaman who have made that transition, and in that sense the taking of hallucinogens is an anhistorical phenomenon, it has always been going on, but the idea of psychedelic societies is something new, and it doesn’t necessarily mean that everyone take the drug, it merely means that the complexity and the mysteriousness of mind are centered in the consciousness of the civilization as the mystery which it comes from and which it must relate to in order to be relevant.

So I'll take a couple of questions. [audience claps]

Q: ...[?]

TM: This idea that the mind is essentially uh...

Q:...[?]

Well, I guess, uh, the question is "is there any advice vis-a-vis utilization of materials that would, uh, allow you to hang on to any perceptions that I may have, uh, triggered in you. I wouldn't presume to answer that question but I'll answer another one that might relate to it, which is I think that when you take hallucinogens you should take an effective dose, and I can't stress enough the importance of lying down and being still in darkness on an empty stomach. I mean if you want an oral empowerment, that's it. Nothing could be simpler, and yet you would be amazed at the number of people who when you mention psilocybin, the first question that occurs to them is "Will I be able to drive?" [audience laughter] It just is uh.. One more.

Q: [?]

TM: With regard to what?

Q: ??

TM: Well ...the word empathenogen, empathogen seems very appropriate. It is not a, uh, a powerful visual hallucinogen. I am very interested in the visual hallucinogens because it seems to me they pose certain fundamental questions of information theory and that kind of thing. Uh, for instance, you know, where do these hallucinations come from? These extremely intricate, far more intricate than any visual scene that your eye falls upon in ordinary reality. [audio cuts out]

...shifting information patterns. I don't believe that they can be reduced to, uh, spirals, lines and dots. What I see isn't like that. it's more as though you have a holographic hyperspatial radio and you just tune down the dial and here's a desert world and a triple star system and, uh, here is a city somewhere inhabited by insectile creatures with a machine symbiosis [audience chuckles] here's something else, and it's just flipping by. Um, I would prefer to believe that the human imagination is the holographic organ of the human body, and we don't imagine anything, we simply see things so far away that there is no possibility of validating or invalidating their existence

One more. [audience laughter]

Q: I was interested in psychotherapeutic potential for dymethyltryppamine, [??] within that [??]...to benefit from [??] any profound lasting effects.

TM: I think it certainly has a profound and lasting effect. The very brevity of it serves to convince you that it isn't a drug at all, but that it's carried you into another dimension and back again, and that alone is, uh, something to ponder.

Well, I thank you for your attention! [audience claps]

Original Transcription by: Willmishiamroom

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

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Hallucinogens and Shamanism in Anthropology

1991

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Hazelwood Trialogues

20 June 1993

Hazelwood, Devon, England

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Alchemy and the Hermetic Corpus

May 1991

Location, City, State?

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Terence McKenna: Well, it is a small group and this was my intent by focusing on the Hermetic Corpus and alchemy. I've just gotten tired of talking about psychedelic drugs and always saying the same things over and over again, nevertheless it's a challenge to go outside my own bailiwick. I mean I've had an interest in hermeticism and alchemy since I was about 14 and read Jung's psychology and (of) alchemy and it opened for me the fact of the existence of this vast literature, a literature that is very little read or understood in the modern context. The Jungians have made much of it, but to their own purposes and perhaps not always with complete fidelity to the intent of the tradition. We'll talk a lot about the Jungian approach but there are other approaches even within the 20th century. I believe, since I don't have the catalog I'm not absolutely certain, but I believe the catalog urged you to read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition by Dame Frances Yates and this is, though Frances Yates scholarship is very controversial, I think that to get an overview of the landscape her book is probably the best single book between covers. It's not pleasing to some factions and we can talk about that, I mean, we will probably discover within the group all strains of alchemical illusions and delusions that have always driven this particular engine, but I thought to get one book that sort of covered the territory that was a good one to start with. Well then I found out that it's very hard to get this book. I didn't realize that because it's been sitting on my shelf for years. Richard Bird found a reprint at the Bodhi Tree. I wasn't aware of this particular edition so, though probably none of you brought it with you in heavily underlined form, if after this weekend you want to try and get it, it is available and if you can't get that edition, why, a good book service can probably come up with the first edition which is Routledge Kegan Paul.

I wouldn't hold a weekend like this simply to go over a body of ancient literature if I didn't think it had some efficacy or import for the modern dilemma and some of you may know the song by the Grateful Dead in which the refrain is "I need a miracle every day." I think any reasonable person can conclude that the redemption of the world, if it's to be achieved, can only be achieved through magic. It's too late for science. It's too late for hortatory politics.

Well, it's very interesting - every ancient literature has its apocalypses and in the hermetic literature there is a prophecy, I think it's in book two but that really doesn't matter, and the prophecy is that a day will come when men no longer care for the earth and at that day the gods will depart and everything will be thrown into primal chaos and this prophecy was very strongly in the minds of the strains of non-Christian thought that evolved at the close of the centuries of closure of the Roman Empire. When you look back into historical time it's when you reach the first and second centuries after Christ that you reach a world whose psychology was very much like the psychology of our own time. It was a psychology of despair and exhaustion. This is because Greek science which had evolved under the aegis of democratic atomism and Platonic metaphysics had essentially come to a dead end in those centuries. We can debate the reasons why this happened. An obvious suggestion would be that they failed to develop an experimental method and so everything just dissolved into competing schools of philosophical speculation and a profound pessimism spread through the Hellenistic world and out of that pessimism and in the context of that kind of universal despair which attends the dissolution of great empires a literature was created from the first to the fourth centuries after Christ which we call the Hermetic Corpus or in some cases the Trismegistic Hymns. Now this body of literature was misunderstood by later centuries, especially the Renaissance, because it was taken at face value and assumed to be at least contemporary with Moses if not much older. So the Renaissance view of Hermeticism was based on a tragic misunderstanding of the true antiquity of this material and there are people, hopefully none in this room, who still would have us believe that this literature antedates the Mosaic Law, that it is as old as Dynastic Egypt. But this is an indefensible position from my point of view. In the early 16th century two men, a father and son, Issac and Marik Casaubon, showed through the new science of philology, that this material was in fact late Hellenistic. Now, I've always said that I am not a Classicist in the Victorian sense, in the sense that there is a certain strain of thought that always wants to believe that the oldest stuff is the best stuff. This is not the case to my mind. To my mind what is amazing is how recent everything is. So I have no sympathy with the fans of lost Atlantis or any of that kind of malarkey because to me what is amazing is how it all is less than 10,000 years old. Anything older than 10,000 years puts us into the realm of an aceramic society relying on chipped flint for its primary technology.

What the Hermetic Corpus is is the most poetic and cleanly expressed outpouring of ancient knowledge that we possess. But it was reworked in the hands of these late Hellenistic peoples and it is essentially a religion of the redemption of the earth through magic. It has great debt to a tradition called Sevillian which means to mean Mandeism and Mandeism was a kind of proto-Hellenistic gnosis that laid great stress on the power of life, Zoa, Bios, and in that sense it has a tremendously contemporary ring to it.

We also are living in the twilight of a great empire, and I don't particularly mean the American empire, I mean the empire of European thinking created in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern industrialism, the empire, in short of science. Science has exhausted itself and become mere techné. It's still able to perform its magical tricks, but it has no claim on a metaphysic with any meaning because the program of rational understanding that was pursued by science has pushed so deeply into the phenomenon of nature that the internal contradictions of the method are now exposed for all to see. In discussing alchemy especially we will meet with the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum, the union of opposites. This is an idea that is completely alien to science. It's the idea that nothing can be understood unless it is simultaneously viewed as both being what it is and what it is not and in alchemical symbolism we will meet again and again symbolical expression of the coincidentia oppositorum. It may be in the form of a hermaphrodite, it may be in the form of the union of soul and Luna, it may be in the form of the union of Mercury with lead, or with sulfur, in other words alchemical thinking is thinking that is always antithetical, always holds the possibility of by a mere shift of perspective its opposite premise will gain power and come into focus. I think it was John, when we went around the circle, who mentioned his interest in shamanism. There's a wonderful book called The Forge and the Crucible by Mircea Eliade in which he shows that the shaman is the brother of the smith, the smith is the metallurgist, the worker in metals, and this is where alchemy has its roots. In a sense, alchemy is older than the Trismegistic Corpus and then it is also given a new lease on life by the philosophical underpinnings which the Corpus Hermeticum provides it. Alchemy, the word alchemy, can be traced back to mean Egypt or a blackening and in its earliest strata it probably refers to techniques referring to dying, meaning the coloring of cloth, and gilding of metals, and the forging and working of metal. I mean, we who take this for granted have no idea how mysterious and powerful this seemed to ancient people and in fact it would seem so to us if we had anything to do with it. I mean how many of us are welders or casters of metal. It's a magical process to take for instance cinnabar, a red, soft ore and by the mere act of heating it in a furnace it will sweat liquid Mercury onto its surface. Well, we have unconsciously imbibed the ontology of science where we have mind firmly separated out from the world. We take this for granted, it's effortless, because it's the ambience of the civilization we've been born into but in an earlier age, and some writers would say a more naive age, but I wonder about that, but in an earlier age mind and matter were seen to be alloyed together throughout nature so that the sweating of mercury out of cinnabar is not a material process, it's a process in which the mind and the observations of the metalworker maintain an important role, and let's talk for a moment about mercury because the spirit Mercurius is almost the patron deity of alchemy.

You all know what mercury looks like-at room temperature it's a silvery liquid that flows, it's like a mirror. For the alchemists, and this is just a very short exercise in alchemical thinking, for the alchemists mercury was mind itself, in a sense, and by tracing through the steps by which they reached that conclusion you can have a taste of what alchemical thinking was about. Mercury takes the form of its container. If I pour mercury into a cup, it takes the shape of the cup, if I pour it into a test tube, it takes the shape of the test tube. This taking the shape of its container is a quality of mind and yet here it is present in a flowing, silvery metal. The other thing is, mercury is a reflecting surface. You never see mercury, what you see is the world which surrounds it, which is perfectly reflected in its surface like a moving mirror, you see. And then if you've ever, as a child, I mean I have no idea how toxic this process is, but I spent a lot of time as a child hounding my grandfather for his hearing aid batteries which I would then smash with a hammer and get the mercury out and collect it in little bottles and carry it around with me. Well, the wonderful thing about mercury is when you pour it out on a surface and it beads up, then each bead of mercury becomes a little microcosm of the world. And yet the mercury flows back together into a unity. Well, as a child I had not yet imbibed the assumptions and the ontology of science. I was functioning as an alchemist. For me, mercury was this fascinating magical substance onto which I could project the contents of my mind. And a child playing with mercury is an alchemist hard at work, no doubt about it.

Well, so then, this is a phenomenon in the physical world and then mind is a phenomenon in the Cartesian distinction, which is between the Res Extensa and the Res Verins. This is the great splitting of the world into two parts. I remember Al Wong once said to me, we were talking about the yin yang symbol, and he said you know the interesting thing is not the yin or the yang, the interesting thing is the s shaped surface that runs between them. And that s shaped surface is a river of alchemical mercury. Now, where the alchemists saw this river of alchemical mercury is in the boundary between waking and sleeping. There is a place, not quite sleeping, not quite waking, and there there flows this river of alchemical mercury where you can project the contents of the unconscious and you can read it back to yourself. This kind of thinking is confounding to scientific thought where the effort is always to fix everything to a given identity and a given set of behaviors. Now, the other hermetic perception that is well illustrated by just thinking for a moment about mercury is the notion, and this is central to all hermetic thinking, of the microcosm and the macrocosm. That somehow the great world, the whole of the cosmos is reflected in the mystery of man, meaning man and women, it's reflected in the mystery of the human mind/body interface. So, for an alchemist, it makes perfect sense to extrapolate from this internal, what we call internal psychological processes, to external processes in the world. That distinction doesn't exist for the alchemist, and let me tell you, the longer I live the more I am convinced that this is absolutely the truth.

The myth of our society is the existential myth that we are cast into matter, that we are lost in a universe that has no meaning for us, that we must make our meaning. This is what Sartre, Kierkegaard, all those people are saying, that we must make our meaning. It reaches its most absurd expression in Sartre's statement that nature is mute. I mean, this is as far from alchemical thinking as you can possibly get because for the alchemist nature was a great book, an open book to be read by putting nature through processes that revealed not only its inner mechanics, but the inner mechanics of the artifact, the person working upon the material, in other words, the alchemist.

Well, in other contexts I've talked about the importance of language and how our world is made of language and part of the problem in understanding alchemy is that the language is slipping out of our reach. We are so completely imbued with the Cartesian categories of the Res Verins, the world of thought, and the Res Extensia, the world of three dimensional space, and causality, and the conservation of matter and energy, and so forth that in order to do more than carry out a kind of scholarship of alchemy we have to create an alchemical language, or a field in which alchemical language can take place. Some of you may have been with me a couple of weeks ago in Malibu when Joan Halifax and I debated the roots of Buddhism and I think Joan deserves great credit for saying that Buddhism would never have taken root in America were it not for the psychedelic phenomenon. Not that Buddhism is psychedelic, it in fact is fairly touchy about that, but Buddhism would have gotten nowhere in America had not psychedelics created a context for Buddhist language to take root, and I wager that I would never have gotten to first base with proposing a weekend on alchemy at Esalen were it not understood that psychedelics have prepared people for the notion that mind and world can be pureed together like mercury and sulphur, like the Sophic waters, to create a new kind of understanding because otherwise modernity has fixed our minds in the category of Cartesian rationalism and so I will not claim, and do not in fact think it's so, that there was anything overtly psychedelic in the sense of pharmacologically based about alchemy. When we look back through the alchemical literature there's very little evidence that it was pharmacologically driven. Only when you get to the very last adoptions of the alchemical impulse in someone like Paracelsus do you get the use of opium. But it is interesting that the great drugs of modern society were accidentally discovered by alchemists in their researches; distilled alcohol is a product of alchemical work and then, as I mentioned, opium was very heavily used by the Paracelsian school. But what they possessed was an ability to liquify their mental categories and then to project the contents of the mind onto these processes and read them back.

Now this is what made alchemy so fascinating to the Jungian school because the Jungians were discovering the unconscious and they realized, before Jung's involvement with alchemy, that the best material for psychotherapy to work upon was dreams and mythology and these were the two poles of the data field that the discovery of the unconscious was working on. Well then Jung had the presence to realize that alchemy, which to that point, as the gentleman over here said, had been dismissed as a naive effort to turn base metals into gold-this is the first fiction that you have to absolutely purge from your mind, the only alchemists who ever tried to turn base metals into gold were charlatans, the so-called puffers. They were called that not only for their exaggerated speech but for their use of bellows to drive their fires. Alchemy has always had a core of true adepts and then a surround of misguided souls and outright con artists who were trying to change base metals into gold. Now, it's interesting that science, in its naivety, in the 20th century has actually completed the program of pseudo-alchemy. You can, if you have a sufficiently powerful nuclear reactor, change lead into gold. I mean, the cost is staggering. It has no economic importance whatsoever but it can be done by bombarding gold with a sufficient amount of heavy particles. Lead, you can change it into gold, but this is not what the original intent was. In fact, when we look at the history of 20th century science we will see that, in a way, it's a misunderstanding of what the alchemical goals were to be and, one by one, it has done these things that were stated goals of the alchemists except that the alchemists always spoke in similes and in a secret control language that was symbolic.

Ok, now, another point that was brought up in going around the circle was the externalization of the soul and what we're trying to do in this weekend is study and talk about the idea of redeeming the world through magic. And how is this to be done? Well, the philosopher's stone is a complex of ideas that, no matter how you divide it, no matter how you slice it, it's very difficult to hold the pith essence of this concept, but what it really comes down to is the idea that spirit is somehow resident in matter in a very diffuse form. The goal of hermetic thinking and later alchemy is the concentration and redemption of this spirit, a focusing of it, a bringing of it together. This is an idea that was common in the Hellenistic world not only to hermetic thinking but also to Gnosticism.

Gnosticism is the idea that somehow the pure, holy, real light of being was scattered through a universe of darkness and of Saturnine power and that the goal is that by a process which we can call yogic or alchemical or meditative or moral/ethical, the light must be gathered and concentrated in the body and then somehow released and redeemed. All esoteric traditions, East and West, talk about the creation of this body of light and we will not, in this weekend, talk very much about alchemy, non-western alchemy, Taoist and Vedic alchemy, but in those systems too the notion is about the creation of this vehicle of light. This is one metaphor for the externalization of the soul.

The philosopher's stone is another and I will challenge you to try and imagine what the achievement of the philosopher's stone would be like because it's in trying to think that way that you begin to dissolve the categories of the Cartesian trap. So, image for a moment an object, a material, which can literally do anything. It can move across categorical boundaries with no difficulty whatsoever. So what do I mean? I mean that if you possess the philosopher's stone and you were hungry, you could eat it. If you needed to go somewhere you could spread it out and sit on it and it would take you there. If you needed a piece of information, it would become the equivalent of a computer screen and it would tell you things. If you needed a companion, it would talk to you. If you needed to take a shower you could hold it over your head and water would pour out. Now, you see, this is an impossibility. That's right, it's a coincidence opatorium. It is something that behaves like imagination and matter without ever doing damage to the ontological status of one or the other. This sounds like pure pathology in the context of modern thinking because we expect things to stay still and be what they are and undergo the growth and degradation that is inimical to them, but no, the redemption of spirit and matter means the exteriorization of the human soul and the interiorization of the human body so that it is an image freely commanded in the imagination.

Imagination. I think this is the first time I've used this word this evening. The imagination is central to the alchemical opus because it is literally a process that goes on the realm of the imagination taken to be a physical dimension. And I think that we cannot understand the history that lies ahead of us unless we think in terms of a journey into the imagination. We have exhausted the world of three dimensional space. We are polluting it. We are overpopulating it. We are using it up. Somehow the redemption of the human enterprise lies in the dimension of the imagination. And to do that we have to transcend the categories that we inherit from a thousand years of science and Christianity and rationalism and we have to re-empower and re-encounter the mind and we can do this psychedelically, we can do this yogically, or we can do it alchemically and hermetically.

Now there is present in the world at the moment, or at least I like to think so, an impulse which I have named the archaic revival. What happens is that whenever a society really gets in trouble, and you can use this in your own life-when you really get in trouble-what you should do is say "what did I believe in the last sane moments that I experienced" and then go back to that moment and act from it even if you no longer believe it. Now in the Renaissance this happened. The scholastic universe dissolved. New classes, new forms of wealth, new systems of navigation, new scientific tools, made it impossible to maintain the fiction of the Medieval cosmology and there was a sense that the world was dissolving. Good alchemical word-dissolving. And in that moment the movers and shakers of that civilization reached backwards in time to the last sane moment they had ever known and they discovered that it was Classical Greece and they invented classicism. In the 15th and 16th century the texts which had lain in monasteries in Syria and Asia Minor forgotten and untranslated for centuries were brought to the Florentine council by people like Gimistos Placco(sp?) and others and translated and classicism was born-its laws, its philosophy, its aesthetics. We are the inheritors of that tradition but it is now, once again, exhausted and our cultural crisis is much greater. It is global. It is total. It involves every man, woman and child on this planet, every bug, bird and tree is caught up in the cultural crisis that we have engendered. Our ideas are exhausted-the ideas that we inherit out of Christianity and its half-brother science, or its bastard child science. So, what I'm suggesting is that an archaic revival needs to take place and it seems to be well in hand in the revival of Goddess worship and shamanism and partnership but notice that these things are old-10,000 years or more old-but there was an unbroken thread that, however thinly drawn, persists right up to the present.

So the idea of this weekend is to show the way back to the high magic of the late Paleolithic, to show that there were intellectual traditions, there were minority points of view that kept the faith, that never allowed it to die. And, to my mind, this alchemical, hermetic, Gnostic, Egyptian, Caldean thread is the thread and if we unravel it with sufficient care and attention then we can build a bridge from the otherwise nearly incomprehensible high magic of the late Paleolithic. We can get it as

near to ourselves as John Dee, who died in 1604. We can discover that it's no further away from us than the beginning of the 30 years war and, for my money, after that, it gets pretty mucked up. I mean, after Ulias Levy, who's already waffling, I'm not very interested in the occultism of the 17th, 18th and 19th century but it's not necessary because scholarship gives us the Caldean oracles, the Trismegistic Hymns, the library at Nag Hammadi, and so forth and so on. So my impulse is to, in the most austere sense, re-popularize, reintroduce this kind of thinking so that people can live it out. Then, step, by step, we can evolve our language and evolve our understanding to make our way back to the garden, back to Eden.

It's occurred to me recently, you know it's said that Christ opened the doors to paradise, yes, but he closed the doors to Eden and paradise is a very airy place where everybody sits around on clouds strumming their lyres. I think that what we want to do is make our way back to the alchemical garden. That's where our roots are. That's where meaning is. Meaning lies in the confrontation of contradiction-the coincidencia oppositorum. That's what we really feel, not these rational schemas that are constantly beating us over the head with the "thou shalt" and "thou should." but rather a recovery of the real ambiguity of being and an ability to see ourselves as at once powerful and weak, noble and ignoble, future-oriented, past-facing. We each need to become Janus-based(?) and to incorporate into ourselves the banished contradictions of being that so haunt the enterprise of science. We can leave that behind and when we do we reclaim authentic being. And authentic being, make no mistake about it, is what alchemical gold really is. That's what they're talking about-authentic being.

Q: So right now we're lead?

TM:That's right, we're Saturnine and we'll talk about Saturn and Pluto and all of that. Yes, tomorrow we'll talk about the stages of the alchemical opus and though the stages are many and multifarious, it all begins in what is called the negro, the blackening, the depths of the leaded, Saturnine, chaotic, fixed place. And that's where we have been left by science and modernity and so forth and so on. That's where the alchemist loves to begin. That's where he or she stokes the fire and begins the dissolucio et coagulatio that leads to the appearance of the stone.

I'll show you some books and this is by no means exhaustive. The literature on hermeticism and alchemy is vast and I could have brought 5 or 6 boxes of this size from my own library. This a smattering. It doesn't mean that what I show you is the best. It simply tries to spread over a large area. Oh, someone put this here. This is a new novel that's just been published by Lindsay Clark called The Chemical Wedding and I see last week it was number 10 on the New York Time's best sellers list which is astonishing for such an obscure subject. It's a retelling of a famous incident in alchemy in the 19th century when a woman named Mary Alice Datwood, who had a very, very close relationship to her father, Dr. South, and the two of them worked together, she on a text, he on a long poem and to make a long story short, eventually they decided to destroy both the poem and the book feeling that they had said too much and given the secret away-at least that's one version. So this is fictionalized retelling of that incident intercut with a modern cast of characters very clearly modelled on the poet Robert Graves. So if you like to absorb your information in a fictionalized form, this is a wonderful book. John Borman the movie director recently optioned this book-the guy who made "The Emerald Forest" and "Excalibur" so we may have an alchemical movie downstream, a year or two.

A number of compendiums of alchemical texts have been published over the centuries and if you wish to study alchemy you have to obtain these. If you're fortunate enough to read French you should read Vesputigari and Berthelo. They collected alchemical texts into encyclopedic-sized volumes but unfortunately these have never really come into English. One that did come into English is the Museum Hermeticum Amplificarium et Theatrum, I think, which A.E. Waite, who some of you may know for his role in the Golden Dawn, collected. There are about 40 alchemical texts and all the greats are in here: Lull, Vilanova, Michael Maier, Basil Valentine, Kramer, Edward Kelly and so on and so forth.

The place to begin, I think, is obviously with the question "Who is Hermes Trismegistus?" What are we talking about here? I mean, this sounds so incredibly exotic to people. The Renaissance had the concept of what it called the Presqui Paoologue (sp?) and if my Latin and Greek irritates you, you have to understand you're dealing with a boy from a coal mining town in Colorado, so I do mangle these things. The Presqui Paoologue were Orpheus, Moses, and primarily Hermes Trismegistus. Hermes Trismegistus was the primary source, from the point of view of the Renaissance, of this whole mysterious tradition and, you recall from last night's lecture, this is based on a misunderstanding. The Renaissance believed that Hermes Trismegistus was older than Moses. We know now, thanks to Isaac and Meric Casaubon, two philologists of the early 17th century, that definitely the Hermetic corpus was composed between the first and second centuries after Christ. The method of the Casaubons was to examine the philosophical language of the Corpus Hermeticum and show that there were words and phrases there that were post-Platonic and derivative of philosophers whose dates we have fully in hand. Now, if you go to an occult bookstore you will find that, to this date, this error persists. There are people who still want to claim that this stuff is older than dynastic Egypt. There are even books, I was in Shambala weeks ago, claiming to teach you how to change lead into gold. Well, from my point of view this just evokes a small smile. The old errors persist. The Puffers are still at it. But what Hermes Trismegistus is a character who appears in many guises in these hermetic dialogs. The hermetic hymns are usually couched in the form of dialogs between Hermes and his son Thoth and Thoth takes the position of the uninitiated ingenuo who is sitting at the feet of the master. Thoth asks questions: what is the true nature of the world, what is the true nature of man, and Hermes answers and the general form of these texts, with exceptions, because there are 20 of them, is an intellectual dialog which builds to an ecstatic revelation and then in the wake of the ecstatic revelation there is a hymn of praise to Hermes Trismegistus. Trismegistus means thrice-blessed and is sometimes called Hermes Triplex to distinguish this Hermes from all the other Hermes of early, middle and late Greek thinking. Hermes is of course the messenger god, the god of scribes. The reason this libic-headed being holding a staff is embossed on the cover of each of these books is because this is how Hermes Trismegistus, Thoth-Hermes was imagined. He was associated with the scribe god of the Egyptian pantheon. The two distinguishing factors that stand out, at least for me, that I think you need to incorporate into your thinking about hermeticism, two very important concepts. The first is the divinity of human beings-an extraordinarily radical idea in the context of late Hellenistic thinking. We all operate under the spell of the concept of the fall of man. Man is an inferior being, errors were made in the Garden of Eden and that we are, far from the nature of divinity. All magic, and all magic in the West is derivative from this tradition, takes the position that man is a divine being, men and women are divine beings. The Corpus Hermeticum actually refers to man as God's brother and this is a double-edged perception. It gives tremendous dignity to the human enterprise but it also raises the possibility of the error of pride and hubris. In the Renaissance, Marcello Ficino boiled this notion down to the aphorism "man is the measure of all things." And you may notice that this is the position of science, that man is the measure of all things, that it is up to us, we can decide the course of the cosmos. All magic stems from this position. This is why the church was so concerned to stamp out magic-because it assigns man an importance that the church would rather reserve for deity. So that's the first great division between Christian thinking and hermetic thinking. An entirely different conception of what human beings are and when we get into the text, I'll read you some of these passages. Now, the second distinguishing factor, and notice that position on man empowers tremendous freedom, man is the measure of all things, the second distinguishing factor in hermeticism is the belief that we can control fate, that we can escape from cosmic fate. The late Hellenistic mindset, and what you get in the Gnostics, is the belief that because of astrology, because of the stars, we are subject to control from these exterior forces. In most Gnostic thinking the

whole concern is to somehow evade what is called the **Heimarmene**, cosmic fate. And in the Gnostic systems, the only way it can be done is by ascending through the shells of cosmic, ordering forces-the archons, the planets, the planetary demons, and so forth and so on, and then beyond the Heimarmene, which is actually thought of as a place in space that you burst through when you transcend fate. What the hermetic thought is is that these fates become personified as the decans, as stellar demons, and then it is held that there is a magic, a magical system, which is possible where you can call these archangels to your side and work with them and not be subject to the inevitable working of the cosmic machinery and this burst like a revelation over the late Hellenistic world because there was such philosophical and emotional and political exhaustion that this comes, this is a counterpoint to the message of the New Testament, which is a similar message, that you can be saved in the body, that you can escape the inevitable dissolution and degradation laid upon us by time. So, these are the two distinguishing factors: the divinity of man and the possibility of using magic to evade the machinery of fate. So, I want to read some of the Corpus Hermeticum to you to give you the flavor of it, but before I do, I want to say something about the history of these texts. You're all familiar, more or less I'm sure, with Apuleius' The Golden Ass, which is a novel of initiation which is late Roman. Apuleius also put together what is called the Asclepius and the Asclepius is true hermetic literature that was not lost. It was the only one that was available throughout the Dark and Middle Ages. All the rest was lying untranslated in Syrian Monasteries until Gemistus Pletho in 1490 brought these manuscripts to Florence, to the court of the Di Medici and then the translation project began. The only other hermetic material that was accessible throughout the high Gothic period was a book of magic called the Picatrix. And the Picatrix was probably written in the 1200's although this elicits screams of dissent from the burning-eyed faction. But reason dictates that we consider Picatrix 12th century so only the Asclepius and the Picatrix represented this strain of thought before the 1460's. And the importance of hermetic thinking can be seen by the fact that Gimmists Plato brought Plato to the Florentine council as well as Hermes Trismegistus. And when Marcello Ficino sat down to do this translation work Cosumo Di Medici said "Plato can wait, I'm getting old. You do the Hermetic Corpus first. That's much more important. We'll sort out this Plato business in a few years." And so it was done. It was completed in 1493 and in 1494 Cosumo died so he never saw the translations of Plato but felt that the Corpus Hermeticum was more important. I mention this to show you the importance that was attached to this stuff. Here is one of the key passages on man's nature. This is from Book one of the Corpus Hermeticum: "But mind the father of all, he who is life and light gave birth to man, a being like to himself and he took delight in man as being his own offspring for man was very goodly to look on, bearing the likeness of his father. With good reason then did God take delight in man for it was God's own form that God took delight in and God delivered over to man all things that had been his made." This is the basis of the Ficinian statement man is the measure of things. "And man took station in the Maker's sphere and observed the things made by his brother who was set over the region of fire. And having observed the Maker's creation in the region of fire he willed to make things for his own part also. And his father gave permission having in himself all the workings of the administrators." This is a reference to the angel hierarchy "And the administrators took delight in him and each of them gave him a share of his own nature." So man is the brother of God and a creature at home with the angels. This idea is echoed in the Asclepius which you'll recall was available throughout the Middle Ages. "The range of man is yet wider than that of the demons" meaning the angels - this term is transposable in its hermetic thought "The individuals of the human kind are diverse and of many characters. They, like the demons, come from above and, entering into fellowship with other individuals they make for themselves many and intimate connections with all other kinds" and then the famous passage "man is an honor then, Asclepius, honor and reverence to such a being. Man takes on him the attributes of a god as though were himself a god. And he is familiar with the demonkind for he comes to know that he is sprung from the same source as they. And strong in the assurance of that in him which is divine, he scorns the merely human part of his own nature. How far more happily blended are the properties of man than those of other beings. He is linked to the gods inasmuch as there is in him a divinity akin to theirs. He scorns that part of his own being which makes him a thing of earth and all else with which he finds himself connected to by heaven's ordering he binds to himself with the tie of his affection." So this is an incredibly radical conception of what it means to be human. So radical that it is unwelcome even in the present context. Notice the modern feeling of this stuff. This is not biblical rhetoric. This is philosophical discourse as we know it and carry it out ourselves. This is a passage on the adept and initiation. Let me see who's speaking here. Thoth speaks to Pimondres, this is book one, "But tell me this too, said I, God said 'let the man who has mind in him recognize himself' but have not all men mind?" And then Pimondres replies "Oh man, said mind to me speak not so, I even mind come to those men who are holy and good and pure and merciful and my coming is a succor to them and forthwith they recognize all things and win the father's grace by loving worship and give thanks to him praising and hymning him with hearts uplifted to him in filial affection." Again the reference to being God's brother in filial affection. "And before they give up the body to death which is proper to it they loathe the bodily senses knowing what manner of work the senses do." This introduces the theme of asceticism. Like the Gnostics, there is in much of hermetic literature a kind of horror of the earth, a desire to ascend and to get away from it. Scott makes the distinction between what he calls pessimistic Gnosis and optimistic Gnosis. And within the 20 texts of the Corpus Hermeticum you get vacillation on this point. In some cases the Mandaean, the Cebian(?) tendency is there and the world soul is invoked and the whole of creation is seen as a living being involved in this soteriological process, this process of salvational mechanics through magic. In other texts this Gnostic horror of matter is strongly stressed. It's very clear that the Hellenistic mind was ambivalent on this point. Even as we are ambivalent on this point. It's a real question, are we here to be the caretakers of the earth or are we strangers in the universe and is our task to return to a forgotten and hidden home no trace of which can be found in the Saturnine world of matter. It's very hard to have it both ways. You're going to have to take a position on that and these people were forced into the same dilemma. There's no middle ground between those two positions and so that dichotomy, that conundrum, haunted a lot of hermetic thinking. Here is the hermetic creation myth. This is book three, paragraphs one through a few, and you'll see the comparison and similarities with the Christian creation myth but with extraordinary differences. "There was darkness in the deep and water without form and there was a subtle breath, intelligent, which permeated the things in chaos with divine power. Then, when all was yet undistinguished and unworked, there was shed forth holy light and the elements came into being. All things were divided one from another and the lighter things were parted off on high, the fire being suspended aloft so that it rose into the air and the heavier things sank down and sand was deposited beneath the watery substance and the dry land was separated out from the watery substance and became solid. And the fiery substance was articulated with the gods therein and heaven appeared with its seven spheres and the gods, visible in starry forms, with all their constellations and heaven revolved and began to run its circling course riding upon the divine air. And each god by his several powers set forth that which he was bidden to put forth. And there came forth four-footed beasts and creeping things and fishes and winged birds and grass and every flowering herb, all having seed in them according to their diverse natures for they generated within themselves the seed by which their races should be renewed." And then it goes on to describe the birth of man. This kind of thinking is what alchemy seized upon in it's ambitions. One way of thinking of what alchemy came to attempt is, the thinking went like this - since man is God's brother, the purpose of man is to intercede in time and it was believed that ores, precious metals and things like this grew in the earth. It was a thorough going theory of evolution that reached right down into the organic realm. It was thought that gold deposits in the earth would actually replenish themselves over time. It's passages like this that give permission for that kind of thinking. In line with that, we're now in book four and remember the tone changes slightly from book to book, they were, after all, written over a 300 year period by various people. "You must understand that God is pre-existent, ever existent, and that he alone made all things and created by his will the things that are. And when the creator had made the ordered universe, he willed to set and order the earth also and so he sent down man, a mortal creature made in the image of an immortal being, to be an embellishment of the divine body for it is man's function" - here it comes, the purpose of man according to book four - "for it is man's function to contemplate the works of god and for this purpose

he was made, that he might view the universe with wondering awe and come to know its maker. Man has this advantage over all other living beings, that he possess mind and speech. Now speech, my son, God imparted to all men but mind he did not impart to all. Not that he grudged it to any, for the grudging temper does not start from heaven above, but comes from being here below in the souls of those men who are devoid of mind." This introduces the concept of an elect, or a perfectee, a hierarchy of human accomplishment and understanding and this is also basic to Gnosticism. It's not for everyone, they're saying, it's for the pure of heart and what pure of heart means depends on the school you're looking at. For some, it was mathematical accomplishment. For others, it was contact with the Logos, for others it was the ability to resist the temptations of the senses. But there was always the sense of the higher and lower possibilities within the human experience. Questions? I'm still back in the last lecture we shared on plant intelligence. So I'm listening to all this divinity of man and wondering where the position of the plant realm or the planning(?) was. There was one section where you read that, so... Yes. This is the opening of book 12 and this is a heavy Mandaeen sensitivity, this sensitivity to life. This whole cosmos, and notice how this transcends even the Buddhist point of view because in Buddhism plants have no soul, this is a tremendous failure in the Buddhist perception as far as I'm concerned, o.k., this is book 12 - "Now this whole cosmos, which is a great god and an image of he who is greater and is united with him and maintains its order in accordance with that will, is one mass of life and there is not anything in the cosmos, nor has been through all time, from the first foundation of the universe, neither in the whole, nor among the several things contained within it that is not alive. There is not, and has never been, and never will be in the cosmos, anything that is dead. For it was the father's will that the cosmos, as long as it exists, should be a living being and therefore it must needs be a God also. How then, my son, could there be dead things in that which is a God, in that which is an image of the father, in that which is one mass of life. Deathness is corruption and corruption is destruction. How then can any part of that which is incorruptible be corrupted or any part of that which is a God be destroyed." And there are other passages. Ah, this is a good one. This is book 18, "For as the sun, who nurtures all vegetation also gathers the first fruits of the produce with his rays as it were with mighty hands, plucking the sweetest odors of the plants, even so we too, having received into our own souls, which are plants of heavenly origin, the efflux of God's wisdom must in return use his service for all which springs up in us." Now, this conception that the human soul is a plant is a unique idea. I don't know of another tradition. Those of us who were in Ojai heard Johannes Wilbur(sp?) talk about how, among the Amazon Indians, the Guirai(sp?), men actually marry trees. They actually take trees as their wives, a tree, and it is a man's job throughout his life to take care of this tree with the same tenderness and affection which he lavishes on a living wife. This is a more radical conception than that. This is the conception that the most important part of us is a plant. It reminds me of the joke that I occasionally make in these groups, the notion that animals are something invented by plants to carry them from place to place. Well, according to this, that's right on. So, the sensitivity to the vegetative nature is so great that it raises the plant to be the pith essence, the soul of man, the brother of God! So you see the valuation of the vegetative universe is of an extremely radical type. The upper echelon of humanity that was given the mind, was that predetermined at birth or can someone develop a mind? No, it is not predetermined. It is something that is acquired through cultivation of a relationship to, in the hermetic language, nous, the higher mind, and in the Gnostic language logos, the informing spirit. Nothing is predetermined in the hermetic system because through magic we can overcome the energies of cosmic fate. This is the great good news of hermeticism, that we are not subject to fate. We should probably talk a little about this logos concept. This is something which seems very alien to modern people unless they are psycheducially sophisticated. The logos was the sine qua non of Hellenistic religion and what it was an informing voice that spoke in your head or heart, wherever you want to put it, and it told you the right way to live. You get this idea even in the later Old Testament where it's said that the truth of the heart can be known. It's no great dilemma to know good from evil, you simply inquire of your heart, "is it good or evil?" and you will discover a voice which will tell you and all the great thinkers of this Greco-Hellenistic period sought and cultivated the logos. Plato had his demon. Everyone sought the informing voice of the nous, that's what it's called in Neo-Platonism and then in hermeticism and then in Gnosticism, the logos. For modern people, well, no for me, the only way I've ever had this experience is through the presence of psychedelic substances and then it is just crystal clear, there's just no ambiguity about it. Somehow, it's possible for an informing voice to come into cognition that knows more than you do. It is a connection with the collective unconscious, I suppose, that is convivial, conversational, that just talks to you about the nature of being in the world and the nature of your being in the world. It's puzzling to us because it seems so remote, for us a voice in the head or the heart is pathology and you may know the famous story of, in the first century, some fishermen were off the shore of the island of Argos in the Mediterranean Sea and they heard a great voice from the sky and the voice said, "great Pan is dead." Well, people like Lactantius and Eusebius, these patristic fathers, the people who built Christianity, who took the Gospels and turned them into a world religion, they took this announcement from the sky as the announcement of the change of the Aeon. By the Aeon, I mean these roughly 2,000 year periods that are associated with the equinoctial procession. Do you all understand how this works? That over 26,000 years, the helical rising of the solstitial sun slips slowly from one house to another and around AD100, there's argument because these things are never precise, the age of Pisces began and the previous Aeon ceased and the cosmic machinery, the great gears of the largest scale of the cosmic machinery, clicked past a certain point and into the age of Pisces and this was then taken as very fortuitous for Christianity because Christ was associated with the sign of the fish and it was seen as a Piscean movement. I believe that it's entirely possible that the logos in that rough moment in time fell silent and it has been silent for 2,000 years so what we have is the exegesis of text and Neotic archeology of the sort we're carrying on here. Now, a phenomenon as trivial and hyped on as channelling can be seen as the reawakening of the logos. The long night of Piscean silence is ending and the spirit of nous is again moving in the world, speaking in the minds of the adepts and the hierophants who have the techniques and the will to connect with this stuff. I don't know how I got off on that. But obviously this kind of literature can be seen as the last message from the fading logos. The last statements before the change of the Aeons rendered this control language very difficult and non-intuitive and somewhat incomprehensible. Reading...you broke off, and I had a puzzlement about the use of the word mind. What, in this context, does this refer to? It's Scott's translation of this word nous. It simply means this universal, permeating intelligence. The statement there is that it is only available to an elite through... Through asceticism and desire, intent. There are proscriptions, they lived a life of purity, although their definitions of purity varied widely. Man is brother of God and yet we have to earn it. This seems kind of a denial of that. That's right. This persists right up to this moment. The quote I always love is from Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan. Hobbes was the great theoretician of modern government and social systems and he was basically a paranoid S.O.B. and he says in the Leviathan "man to man is likened to an errant beast and man to man is likened to a god." It's absolutely true, you know, our noblest aspirations and our most hideously dehumanizing activities take place in the context of our relationship to other people. This is what the alchemists were trying to do - separate the gold from the dross. They were trying to take the errant beast, and when we look at alchemical art we will see dragons, dogs, pigs, we will see the errant beast and we will see the angelic beings that are trying to be separated out of our nature. This is within each and every one of us. Man to man is likened to a god and man to man is likened to an errant beast. This question has to do with mind. According to my understanding of some of the Platonic tradition and Neo-Platonic thought, this has to do with the divided line in Plato. You can divide that line...into five stages of knowing. You start with the senses as being agency or avenue, knowing something about something like contact - most external form of knowledge - the level above the senses is designated as the instincts, it's an inactive knowing, in that sense a biologically active knowing that we have. The third stage is described as sometimes estimation, this is, an approximation, yes, this characterized mainly sort of logical activity and then the next level of cognitive activity is reason and this reason is not the type of reason we normally engage in, it's a very different, a very creative type of activity. Above the reason is what they call intuition or intellect or nous and that's put in as the fifth. And would that be revelation? Reason is a creative activity and one can generate and think things through with creative ability. One goes through activity and stages of the activity and things transpire over time and one comes to complete understanding of the thing one is trying to grasp and sometimes that's described as discursive activity although the logical activity is discursive. So you're moving through a process...pieces, the nous or the intellect of the higher mind grasp things in totality. It doesn't engage in... in ratiocination(sp?). You raise an important point which further complicates the picture, but it's how it was, folks. The reference here is to Neo-Platonism which is a kind of parallel tradition to what we're talking about. Plato had at least a couple of phases in the evolution of his thinking. The young Plato is a rational thinker but the later Plato, apparently after he fell under the influence of Pythagorean schools, becomes a full-blown mystic and then in the late Roman empire, almost a thousand years after Plato, we have to remember, in our minds these people get squeezed together like they could all have dinner together, but Plotinus is as far from Plato as we are from King Connaught so you have to bear in mind the scale of history. But, so 900 - 1,000 years after Plato a Byzantine school of philosophy arose around Porphyry, Plotinus and Proclus as the major exponents and they worked with the late Plato and elaborated a beautiful mystical cosmology. This is what I did a workshop on here a year ago and many of those ideas and terms parallel conceptually the stuff in the Corpus Hermeticum and if you're of a certain intellectual bent you may find yourself more comfortable with the Neo-Platonists than this. This tends to be emotional, evocative, poetic and while there's great poetry in Plotinus there's also very tight thinking that goes along with it. And there are other traditions, I'm making it simple for you, there was a whole tradition called the Caldean Oracles and this was a collection of 100 or more fragments all of which were the great commentaries of Eusebius in 30 volumes. The Amblicus(?) is one of them. That's all lost, we don't have that material and it is in a way the most mysterious of these traditions because it just didn't survive and it may be that that, the Caldean Oracles is the missing link to push this stuff several centuries back into time because the Caldean Oracles may actually be pre-Platonic. There's considerable evidence of that. But these are very arcane matters. You have to give yourself over to a lifetime of learning these languages and the philology of these languages to penetrate this stuff.

Neo Platonism was Byzantine, basically Constantinople. The Hermetic Corpus was largely Alexandrian. There were also Christian Platonists in Alexandria. There were certain centers: Rome, Alexandria, Byzantium, Heliopolos in Egypt was a cult site that was maintained for a very long time. If you're interested in this stuff but don't like to absorb it this way, Flaubert, of all people, the Flaubert of Madame Bovary, wrote an incredible novel called The Temptation of St. Anthony in which he describes second century Alexandria in a fictionalized form and gives you a real flavor for the intellectual complexity of the Alexandrian world. Christianity had not yet gelled, it was many things, so you not only have Gnostics of five or six schools: Simonians, Valentinians, Basilideans and so forth, but you also have Christians, a numbers of cults calling themselves Christians, who were in fierce competition. Docetists, Montanists, and later Nestorians. There were Gymnosophists from India, people who were actually carrying yoga doctrines into the Mediterranean world, plus you then have all the surviving cults of the older Egyptian strata, the Cults of Isis, and Seville, and Dionysus, and Adonis, it just goes on and on. The richness of this intellectual world is very, there's nothing comparable in our experience and it shows the passion with which people were trying to understand the dilemma of a dying world because this is what they were confronted with. The intellectuals of the empire could feel it all slipping through their hands. Flaubert gives a wonderful picture of this. Flaubert has a very romantic streak. It's like smoking hashish, reading this book - the attention to fabrics, architecture, food and odor. And because the subject matter is the temptation of St. Anthony, it's an excuse to describe these temptations in all their sensual richness and erotic kinkiness. It's a wonderful way to absorb this material.

Somebody else raised the point of the elitism, of an elite group of people. And if one considers a society like the one you had in Alexandria, or some of the other centers, the only people who really had access to this were first of all people who had money and who were well educated and could read so already you had an elite group.

Yes, definitely. What survives from a civilization is its literatures and these literatures are usually the production of an elite. We have to remember, don't have any illusions about the Roman Empire. I always think of the wonderful description, I don't even know why it's there, Boris Pasternak, in Doctor Zhivago, goes off on a riff about Rome and he describes it as a bargain basement on three floors. This was an empire that lived by human cruelty. It was on the backs of slaves that this airy, intellectual speculation was based. It was a tremendously pluralistic society but that pluralism was maintained by standing armies of enormous size and policies of occupation of enormous cruelty. Because of our relationship to the Christian tradition we're aware of such things as the Zealot revolt of 69 and the reign of Herod Antiochus in Jerusalem, but that was just one little corner of the empire and in Armenia, in Gaul, in Spain, in North Africa, military governments were carrying out outrageous suppressions of native populations, it was not a pretty time to be alive. And what comes down to us then is the yearning to escape. No wonder these people saw the earth as a cesspool and a trap because that's what it was for them. Our own age is very similar. We do not have slavery but we suffer under propaganda-mass manipulation of ideas and the degradation of exploitation of the third world on a scale the Roman Empire couldn't even dream of. So, there is a great affinity.

If any of you are interested in this kind of thing, I highly recommend a book by Hans Jonas called The Phenomenon of Life. It's a book of philosophical essays but there's one essay called "Gnosticism and the Modern Temper" in which he shows that once you take Gnosticism and dump all the angels and all the star demons and all the colorful bicrabar of late Roman thinking what you have is a thorough going existentialism completely compatible with Jean Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, and the kind of intellectual despair that characterized the post WWII generation in Europe. Heidegger is through goingly Gnostic in his intentionality, it's just that the language is modern and stripped of this magical thinking and by being stripped of this magical thinking in a way modern, the modern resentment of that state of mind is even more hopeless and dis-empowering.

Fortunately, I think we're moving out of the shadow of that, but I'm 44 years old, I grew up reading those people and it made my adolescence much harder than it needed to be. I mean, my god, there wasn't an iota of hope to be found anywhere. That's why, for me, psychedelics broke over that intellectual world like a tidal wave of revelation. I quoted to you last night Jean Paul Sartre's statement that nature is mute. Now I see this as an obscenity almost, an intellectual crime against reason and intuition. It's the absolute antithesis of the logos and much of our world is ruled by men, older than I am, who are fully connected into that without any question and they just think that the rest of this is just nubby pamby ecological soft heartedness of some sort. There is no openness to the power of Bios, to the fact of a living cosmos. This is what Rupert Sheldrake is always trying to say. The re-investiture of spirit into matter, the rebirth of the world soul is a necessary concomitant to what we understand about the real nature of the world. In a way, the theory of evolution, which was born in the 1850s, was the beginning of the turning of the tide because even though the first 100 years of evolutionary theory was fantastically concerned to eliminate teleology, eliminate purpose, nevertheless nobody ever understood that except the hardcore evolutionists. To everyone else, evolution meant ascent to higher form. I once heard someone say "if it doesn't have to do with genes, it ain't evolution." Well, that's a tremendously limited view of what evolution is. The inorganic world is evolving, the organic world is evolving and there the currency is genes but also the social and intellectual world of human beings is evolving and there the currency is not genes but means so that idea carries with it the implication of ascent to higher form and correctly broadened and understood becomes permission to optimism and to the kind of hope that these folks were trying to articulate.

Q: The concept of mind as something that is attainable and not necessary is a separation and therefore for me it's a lie and so I want ...I don't know, I assume there are many different definitions of mind, I don't mean functions of mind, I mean definitions of mind, and I'm toying now with the notion of meshing of the notion of mind and the notion of logos. For logos is, and it seems to me that mind is, if it is available through trial then we're back in a separation...and this is to me a false separation

TM: Yes, you're right, but it's a separation necessary for philosophical discourse, that's why philosophical discourse is not the top of the mountain. Language itself is the process of making distinctions that are false. This is why all language is a lie. This is why the ultimate truth lies in something unspeakable but the ascent to the philosophical is through this kind of philosophical analysis.

Q: Language is only the vehicle.

TM: Well it's the vehicle but eventually there's no road and you have to park the vehicle and get out and walk, and that's the journey. Plotinus, the great Neo Platonist has this wonderful phrase. He calls the mystical experience "the flight of the alone to the alone." I love this image. It's so uncompromising and it's about as true as something can be and still move in the realm of language, because it's saying: finally words fall away and finally there is only that which cannot be said. Many of you who've stuck with me know that I love to quote this poem by this obscure poet who died in the trenches in France in the first World War, Trumble Stickney, and he wrote a poem called "Meaning's Edge" and the punch line goes like this "I look over meaning's edge and feel the dizziness of the things you have not said," and I think that every one of these weekends, this is the effort to carry you to the edge of an abyss and then push you over into the dizziness of the things unsaid and they will always be unsaid.

Wittgenstein, God bless him, had the concept of the unspeakable. He said "philosophy operates in the realm of the unspeakable but eventually we must confront that which cannot be said." The dizziness of things unsaid, and there's where real authenticity then flows back into the world of community and speech but it comes from a place of utter silence and unsay-ability. How could it be otherwise? What hubris would it be to expect that the small-mouthed noises of English could encompass being. That's a primary error that all philosophy chooses to make at the beginning of it's enterprise in order to set up shop at all. No, these are lower-dimensional slices of a reality that is ultimately unitary, ineffable, unspeakable, and dazzling.

Q: Philosophical discourse is verbal and mental masturbation?

TM: Absolutely. Masturbation, because it's, there's a pun here, it's auto-poetic, it is completely out of yourself, there is no union with the other and the other is what you're always trying to get to. The other is a common term in these literatures. The other is that which cannot be fully known. I always like to quote the British enzymologist JBS Haldane, who made a wonderful statement. He said, "the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it is stranger than we can suppose." That's a dizzying perception. It's one thing to think it's very strange. It's another thing to think it's stranger than you can suppose. You may suppose and suppose and suppose and you'll fall so short of the mark that it's absurd. That's what it means to be in the presence of a mystery. The modern word mystery translates out to unsolved problem. That's not what a mystery is. A mystery is not an unsolved problem. A mystery is a mystery and ratiocination(sp?) can exhaust itself and make no progress with it and that's what's at the core of our being and that was what was at the core of this ancient perception. These were thoroughly modern people. They were shoved up against the same things that tug at our hearts and our minds and our souls and beyond that there's not a whole hell of a lot that you can say about it.

I just wanted to add that the idea of the earth as a living organism makes an appearance in psychology at the end of the last century with Gustave Fechner who survives in footnotes of textbooks as the father of experimental psychology. I read a book about the soul life of plants also and that whole part of his work is utterly ignored influenced anybody but William Jameson.

This is an idea that will not die but it's practitioners end up in footnotes. They do not have a happy fate. Certainly Henri Birkson, with his idea of the *elan vital*, this is an effort to preserve the idea of a world soul and yet the fate of Birkson, his influence on modern philosophy is certainly minimal. Alfred North Whitehead is my great favorite. I think that he's the cat's pajamas and he has this idea of the living cosmos - that life and vitality extend right down to the electron yet in spite of his mathematical contributions, the fact that he wrote *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell, Whitehead is not taught. I think there's one university in this country where they take him seriously. Modern philosophy is a desert for my money. Who cares about it? Nobody cares about it. Who's living their life according to the perceptions of modern philosophy. Nobody, as far as I can see. But yes, vitalism was this impulse in biology that persisted right up to the 1920s with embryologists like Dreche and his school and mechanical biology has been at great pains to suppress that. That's why Rupert Sheldrake is such a breath of fresh air, because he can be seen as a person carrying the vitalist message back into science. His new book on the greening of science and nature is nothing more than a manifesto for the re-recognition of the presence of the world soul.

Q: What about the Native Americans, their philosophy?

TM: Yes, well, Aboriginal people, not only the Native Americans but the tribes of the Amazon, if you live next to nature this is such an overwhelming perception that it's never called into question. But you see we, most of us, trace our civilization to desert dwellers who invented agriculture which lead to surpluses so then we had to build walled enclosures to defend our surpluses from starving neighbors and we're talking 6,000 BC at Jericho for this kind of stuff. So, we have been cut off from the natural mind longer than any other group of people on earth. This is how we're able to carry out the demonic, in the negative sense, reconstruction of the world that we have. If there is a sin then we have sinned. Robert Oppenheimer said beyond all rational argument the physicists have known sin and it's because they reached into the heart of matter without reverence and their greatest trick was to call down the light that burns at the center of stars and they call it down to the test centers of the deserts and onto the heads of our enemies, if necessary. But this is a cosmic sin, it's an abomination. It's the story of Western Civilization.

The first great error was the urbanization, well, I don't know, the first great error, the invention of agriculture was a pretty staggering bad turn, then urbanization and then a piece of bad luck which we didn't need to befall us was the invention of the phonetic alphabet. And with the invention of the phonetic alphabet we moved away from symbolism and lost even the symbolic connection to the world and that happened with the evolution of Demotic Greek and even earlier languages - linear A and B and that kind of stuff. McLuhan talks a lot about this. We live in a universe so alienated that we can barely conceive of the way back but hopefully. Archeology is a wonderful thing. We are actually digging into the stratigraphic layers of our past and reconstructing these ancient intellectual machines and setting their gears going and seeing how it works and hopefully when we recover, we're like amnesiacs, people who don't remember who they are or where they came from, we just wander mumbling through the streets of our cities foraging through garbage cans and frightening other people and yet if we could wake up, and archeology and the rebirth of an awareness of the Goddess and the pushing of science to the point where it's irrational foundations become clear - this is all part of an awakening, an archaic revival which will then make us part of the living world and not a disease, a parasitic force upon it.

It struck me that one comment you read there talked about the creation of the world. It said the elements were brought forth and at first I was thinking earth, air, fire, and water but I was thinking in relationship to some other...of life that...being, life, and intellect and being, life, and intellect are what that come into manifestation from the one who pours forth the world and creates the world and those are the first elements that come into existence - being, life, and intellect. Life itself is an element of the cosmos as it were. It's an irreducible aspect of things and you're paying respect to the fact that life is an omnipresent thing in the foundation of things. It's one of the elements.

Q: I think that in one of the other things I read it said that everything that exists, that ever has been, that ever will be, is alive.

TM: I'll read a bit more of this. This refers to the theme I touched on a little bit last night of the importance of the imagination and how I think that our destiny lies in the imagination. "God is ever existent and makes manifest all else. But he himself is hidden because he is ever existent. He manifests all things but is not manifested. He is not himself brought into being in images presented through our senses but he presents all things to us in such images. It is only things which are brought into being that are presented through sense. Coming into being is nothing else than presentation through sense." This is so thoroughly modern, it's staggering. For 1,500 years people couldn't say anything that clearly. "It is evident then that he who alone has not come into being cannot be presented through sense and that being so he is hidden from our sight. But he presents all things to us through our senses and thereby manifests himself through all things and in all things and especially to those to whom he wills to manifest himself. For though though alone can see that which is hidden inasmuch as thought itself is hidden from sight and if even the thought which is within you is hidden from your sight, how can he, being in himself, be manifested to you through your bodily eyes. But if you have power to see with the eyes of the mind then, my son, he will manifest himself to you, for the Lord manifests himself un-grudgingly throughout all the universe and you can behold God's image with your eyes and lay hold on it with your hands."

To my mind, this is permission for the psychedelic experience. We lay hold of the ineffable through the eyes. "If you wish to see him, think on the sun, think on the course of the moon, think on the order of the stars. The sun is the greatest of the gods in heaven. To him as to their king and overlord, all the gods in heaven yield place and yet this mighty god, greater than earth and sea, submits to have smaller stars circling above him. Who is it then, my son, that he obeys with reverence and awe. Each of these stars too is confined by measured limits and has an appointed space to range in. Why do not all the stars in heaven run like and equal courses? Who is it that has assigned to each its place and marked out each for the extent of its course." And then it goes on and on. And then here is an amazing modern anticipation of modernity. "Would that it were possible for you to grow wings and soar into the air. Poised between earth and heaven you might see the solid earth and the fluid sea and the streaming rivers, the wandering air, the penetrating fire, the courses of the stars and the swiftness of the movement with which heaven encompasses all. What happiness were that, my son, to see all these borne along with one impulse and to behold Him who is unmoved moving all that moves and Him who is hidden made manifest through his works." This is an image of the planets seen from space. It's absolutely the unified image of our planet. It is, I think, the central image in this early hermetic thing. This is the unifying, this is as close to an image of what godhead is that they were able to reach.

This is a shamanic flight that delivers a scientific description of the earth moving in space. This is written AD150. This is book five. Nobody had that in sight until we reach Giordano Bruno and if you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition you know that Bruno was burned at the stake and the reason that he was burned at the stake is because he looked up at the sky and did not see the stellar shells and the angelic hierarchies. Bruno had a mystical experience and when it was over he said, "the universe is infinite. The stars go on forever." That single statement was the intellectual dynamite that destroyed the whole Medieval, Hellenistic, the entire previous cosmological vision was left behind with that single statement. It was such a powerful statement that he had to go to the stake for that. And we have never recovered from that perception. It was a fundamental perception and it occurred because he looked without preconception into the night sky and did not see wheels and demons and angels and shells of cosmic fate and necessity and he just said, that's bullshit, what is there is infinite space, infinite time, the stars are hung like lamps onto the utmost regions of infinity. This, then, inaugurates the beginning of modernity and it's a perception that arose on the foundation of all this earlier thinking.

Here's another passage on the imagination. Yes? Is the implication that there's a meditation that one does where one tries to go inside and see this universe on a cosmic scale. Is the implication that their practice was somehow...

Well, the practice, we know a lot less about that because there was much secrecy around this. What we have is the philosophical discourses. When we talk about alchemy this afternoon you'll see that there the technique becomes projection onto matter. That you enter into a kind of self hypnosis where, by having what we call naive ontological categories, in other words, not being sure exactly how much of mind is in matter or how much matter is in mind, you can erase the boundary between self and world and project the contents of the unconscious onto chemical processes. What went on in the early stages we don't know. The Trismegistic Hymns are largely as you see them here, philosophical discourses. There was stress on diet and purity. Asceticism was typical of the hermetic approach. In Gnosticism it went one of several ways. There were schools of Gnosticism which were vegetarian and puristic and then, because they felt that man was no part of the universe, that man was somehow hermetically sealed, if you will, hermetically sealed against contamination from the universe, some Gnostic schools said you can do anything you want. You can have any kind of sexual arrangement you want, you can do anything you want. Do not think that you are part of the universe. And so you had Gnostic schools side by side, some orgiastic and quasi-tantric and some ascetic. There were Gnostic sects that, you see because the idea was that light was trapped in matter by the act of procreation, there were Gnostic sects that only practiced forms of sexual union that couldn't lead to union. So there were presumably exclusively homosexual sects. There were sects that only practiced anal intercourse. For them, that was the same as celibacy because the real concern was not to trap any of the light. And I don't seriously advocate this but I think that in our current situation of overpopulation a little dose of this kind of thinking wouldn't be a bad thing. Too much light is trapped in the organic matrix.

And so these Gnostic sects that were, for instance, exclusively homosexual or exclusively practiced anal intercourse, of course they were suicide sects. They disappeared very quickly because they could only make converts by a missionary conversion. You didn't have children, you couldn't hand it off. It shows how thorough going their rejection of the world was, how contaminated they felt themselves to be by the material world. But you also had, as I mentioned, optimistic schools that saw nature as something to be perfected and said, "man has been set on the earth not to reject it but to perfect it" and utopianism, the belief that one can create a perfect society, it goes back into these hermetic ideals. Because the idea was that a perfect society could be the goal of the alchemical work.

Let me read you a passage from Giordano Bruno. This is a wonderful passage from the Picatrix. This was the book of 12th century magical texts that began to introduce these hermetic ideas and this passage is the core passage that inspired the Rosacrucians and numerous other utopian movements. Here is Frances Yates, "Hermes Trismegistus is often mentioned as the source for some talismanic images and in other connections but there is in particular one very striking passage in the fourth book of Picatrix in which Hermes is stated to have been the first to use magical images and is credited with having founded a marvelous city in Egypt." And here is the passage from the Picatrix, "There are among the Caldeans very perfect masters in this art and they affirm that Hermes was the first to construct images by means of which he knew how to regulate the Nile against the motion of the moon. This man also built a temple to the sun and he knew how to hide himself from all so that no one could see him although he was within it." Those of you who are scholars in Rosicrucianism know that one of the things that was always said of Rosicrucians was that they were invisible. This was how Robert Fludd proved to people he wasn't a Rosicrucian, he'd say "you're looking at me so how could I be one?" So, he's in the temple but he could not be seen within it. "It was he, Hermes Trismegistus, too, who, in the East of Egypt constructed a city, 12 miles long, within which he constructed a castle which had four gates within each of its four parts. On the Eastern gate he placed the form of an eagle. On the Western gate, the form of a bull, on the Southern gate, the form of a lion, and on the Northern gate he constructed the form of a dog. Into these images he introduced spirits which spoke with voices. Nor could anyone enter the gates of the city except by their permission. There he planted trees in the midst of which was a great tree which bore the fruits of all generations. On the summit of the castle he caused to be raised a tower 30 cubits high on the top of which he ordered to be put a lighthouse the color of which changed every day until the seventh day, after which it returned to the first color. And so the city was illuminated with these colors. Near the city there was abundance of waters in which dwell many kinds of fish. Around the circumference of the city he placed engraved images and ordered them in such a manner that by their virtue, the inhabitants were made virtuous and withdrawn from all wickedness and harm. The name of the city was Adocetine(sp?)."

Now, what we're familiar with from the Platonic literature is a quasi-rational, largely rational approach to utopian thinking that you get in the Republic. However, the students of the Republic will recall that, is it the fifth or tenth book, contains the myth of Ur, which we went over in detail in the section I did on Neo-Platonism. The myth of Er is one of the most bizarre and puzzling passages in the entire ancient literature. You remember Er was a soldier who died, he was killed in battle but after eight days he returned to life and then he told a story that is the absolute puzzlement of ancient scholars. It's highly mathematical, it has to do with the spindle of necessity and the description of some kind of cosmic machine and all the ratios of the gears of this machine are given and nobody knows what is being talked about. But here we have a different thrust. A magical utopianism and the idea of a perfected human society using magic because these engraved images that he ordered in such a manner that by their virtue the inhabitants were made virtuous, that means he was able to deflect the energies of cosmic fate. The city was immune to astrological, malefic influence. It was protected and when we talk later about the alchemical aspirations of the Rosicrucians and John Dee and Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, we'll see that this impulse toward an alchemical kingdom returns again and again. In a way, utopianism is the four-gated city of utopian magical dreaming is one version of the Philosopher's magical stone. It's a kind of diffuse idea of the philosopher's stone, but it's a society in perfect harmony with fully realized beings living within it practicing a cosmic religion that frees them from

the impulses of cosmic fate. The other thing that is going on in some of this alchemical imagery is a kind of subtext of late alchemy, is what's called the *Ars Memoria*, the art of memory, and in fact, Frances Yates has a book called *The Art of Memory* and this is a lost art, literally.

It begins with the Roman orator Cicero and was practiced up until the early 17th century and what it consisted of was people, orators, it was considered very bad form to read your speech if you were an orator and so you had to memorize your speech and there were tricks of memory. The commonest mnemonic trick was to think of a building, it was called the memory palace, a building that is familiar to you, I've done this myself with the University of California because it's an area that I'm very familiar with because I was a student there, there are many buildings and many hallways and many floors and what you do is when you make your speech in your mind you are moving through the memory palace and at various points you construct what are called emblemata and the idea of these emblemata is that they be as unusual, shocking, and unexpected as possible in order to be memorable to you. So, say you're giving a speech about the seven deadly sins. So then *Luxuria* might be for you a nun copulating with a dog and you'll set the nun and the dog in a little niche in the hallway of the memory palace. When you reach that place in your imaginary journey all these associations will spring to mind and you'll be able to give your speech flawlessly. To us, this sounds tortured and particular but it works quite well. One of the practitioners of the *Ars Memoria* was Giordano Bruno and he wrote a book called *Spaccio Della Bestia Trionfante*, the expulsion of the triumphant beast, and my god, Max Ernst, eat your heart out, this is a surreal epic read as straight plain text because that's not how it's supposed to be read. It's a conglomeration of these mnemonic emblemata that led him on to probably give a fairly conventional disputation on one subject or another but there are even old books of these emblemata that are before surrealism. These were some of the wildest images that the Western mind would tolerate.

The one thing that we didn't get into this morning was talking about the astrological side of it. The role of the Decans. The Decans are these demons, three to a sign, so there are 36 of them, and this was thought to be an astrological conceit that went back to Egypt as opposed to the ordinary zodiacal signifiers which go back to Huran in what is now modern Iraq. These Decans were the demons that were summoned by these Renaissance Magi in an effort to control and manipulate fate. You may, if you were paying attention this morning, have noticed that in all the reading I did from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, there was really nothing explicitly magical about it. It was philosophical. There was one mention, I think, of animating statues in the description of the four-gated city. But it was those magical animation passages that really captured the imagination of the Renaissance and they built on that and the idea, simply put, is that these Decans and zodiacal signs are at the center of associative schemata which include plants, minerals, odors, certain flowers, certain animals, everything had its decanic assignation and so if you were involved with promoting an affair with a woman or something like that then you would do an invocation to Venus and you would gather the associated minerals and stones and animals and you would put them in a room and then certain tonal modes were also associated with these things and so you would play the music, have the flowers present, the minerals present, the invocations and what you were trying to do was create a microcosm of the macrocosm to draw down this stellar energy. It wasn't about the classical Hollywood appearance of demons in a circle, that's the stuff of *Picatrix*, the earlier somewhat less refined style of magic.

I wanted to read you one passage from Frances Yates' Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition because this describes this change of status of the magician that we're interested in. And also what we didn't talk about this morning was the importance of the Kabbalah, which came in quite late, that was then worked out in great detail. This was originally the idea, it was the Jewish contribution to this kind of magic, it was, the idea was that since the world had been made by Jehovah, by the speaking of words, *In Principio erat verbum et verbo caro factum est*(?), in other words the speaking of Hebrew was thought to be a primary linguistic tool for the purposes of creation. The problem for these Italians was that very few of them spoke Hebrew so it was sometimes practiced silently, the mere constructing of these Hebrew letters and the setting out of messages in Hebrew was deemed efficacious as well. And then a further *deblinded*(?) for people who were even frustrated with that was to channel magical languages which were pseudo-Hebraic in structure. This is a whole branch of research, much too arcane for us to go into here. The only non-Hebraic magical language that I may mention here will be Enochian and Enochian was an angelic language channeled by John Dee and used by him in his magical evocations and later it was taken up by Aleister Crowley and the folks of the Golden Dawn. But there were many, many of these magical languages. The Voynich manuscript is written in one of them. But I want to read you this passage about how the Renaissance changed the status of the magician. "We begin to perceive here an extraordinary change in the status of the magician. The necromancer concocting his filthy mixtures, the conjurer making his frightening invocations were both outcasts from society, regarded as dangers to religion and forced into plying their trades in secrecy. These old-fashioned characters are hardly recognizable in the philosophical and pious magi of the Renaissance. There is a change in status almost comparable to the change of status of the artist from the mere mechanic of the Middle Ages to the refined companion of princes of the Renaissance. And the magics themselves are changed almost out of recognition. Who could recognize the necromancer studying his *Picatrix* in secret in the elegant Ficino, in his infinitely refined use of sympathies, his classical incantations, his elaborately Neo Platonized talismans. Who could recognize the conjurer using the barbarous techniques of some *Clavis Solomonus* in the mystical Pico lost in the religious ecstasies of Kabbalah drawing archangels to his side. And yet there is a kind of continuity because the techniques are at bottom based on the same principles. Ficino's magic is an infinitely refined and reformed version of neumatic necromancy. Pico's practical Kabbalah is an intensely religious and mystical version of conjuring."

So now we move in this realm, these were the companions of princes and there was in that 120 years, from about 1500 to the beginning of the 30 year's war, a constant effort in various parts of Europe to try and turn parts of European society toward a kind of magical revolution. The Europe of the 11th and 12th century was entirely ruled by scholastic rationalism. Witchcraft was virtually unknown and very curious. It's the 15th and 16th centuries where you get this tremendous proliferation of magical systems, magical ideas and social hysterias related to witchcraft, alchemy, conjuring and magic. Those are the centuries when these things really broke out into the open. And alchemy in that period is basically a story of personalities, wonderful personalities, too many for us to really talk about in detail. We have Nicholas and Pernelle Flamel who sought and found the philosopher's stone, according to legend and according to legend are living to this day somewhere in central Asia in perfect happiness having achieved not only the chemical wedding but the water stone of the wise. And then we have Basil Valentine who refined red wine and distilled it in distillation apparatus until he got essentially pure alcohol and upon drinking this was so sure that he had found the philosopher's stone that he announced the eminent approach of the end of the world based on his discovery and he was not secretive at all. He propagated his recipes and in fact sampled the distillates of some of his brother alchemists and popularized this very widely. To this day the reason certain cognacs are in the hands of monastic orders and no one else can make these things is because they were originally alchemical secrets and many of these early alchemists were men of the cloth, quite a number of them.

So what I thought I would do is, in a highly chaotic fashion, read you some of this alchemical literature. The big bring down about alchemical literature is that apparently the muse didn't always smile on the alchemist and some of this poetry is pretty tormented stuff. Why this is, who can say, but let's try one here and see if you can bear with it. Also, my Middle English is not as good as it might be. This is a short one, and typical, and you will see why the alchemists were charged with unbearable obscurity and prolix prose. This poem is called "A Description of the Stone:"

Though Daphne fly from Phobeus bright yet shall they both be one

And if you understand this rite you have our hidden stone

For Daphne is fair and white but volatile is she

Phobeus a fixed god of might and red as blood is he

Daphne is a water nymph and hath of moisture store

Which Phobeus doth confine and heat and dries her very shore

They being dried into one a crystal flood must drink

Till they be brought to a white stone which washed with with virgin's milk

So long until they flow as wax and no fume you can see then have you all you need to ask. Praise God and thankful be.

This is a recipe for the production of the philosopher's stone and the author, I'm sure, felt that he'd spoken as clearly as he dare speak. And yet making something of this is no easy task. This is from the Teatrium Chemicum Britannicum and the late phase of alchemy. Here's another one:

The world is a maze and what you why

For sooth of late a great man did die

And as he lay a-dying in his bed

These words in secret to his son he said

'My son' quoth he, 'tis good for thee

I die for thou shall much the better be

Thereby and when thou seest that life hath me bereft

Take what thou findest and where I have it left

Thou dost not know, nor what my riches be

All which I will declare give ear to me

An earth I had all venom to expel

And that I cast into a mighty well

A water wick to cleanse what was amiss

I threw into the earth, and there it is

My silver all into the sea I cast

My gold into the air and, at the last

Into the fire, for fear it should be found

I threw a stone worth forty thousand pound

Which stone was given me by a mighty king

Who bade me wear it in a fourfold ring.'

Quoth he, 'this stone is by that ring found out

If wisely thou cans't turn this ring about

For every hope contrary is to other

Yet all agree and of the stone is mother

So now, my son, I will declare a wonder

That when I die this ring must break asunder

The king said so, but when he said with all

Although the ring be broke in pieces small

An easy fire shall soon it close again

Who this can do he need not work in vain

Till this my hidden treasure be found out

When I am dead, my spirit shall walk about

Make him to bring your fire from the grave

And stay with him till you my riches have.'

These words a worldly man did chance to hear

Who daily watched the spirit but nay though near

And yet it meets with him and everyone

Yet tells him not where is the hidden stone.

This stuff is obscure, it's deliberately obscure, it was obscure to its contemporaries and the whole effort became one of collecting this kind of material and finding it out. And you have to understand this was all circulating in manuscript, very little of this was printed. The *Teatrium Chemicum Britannicum* was not printed until 1652 so this was a world without vehicular transportation other than the horse and carriage and these people were paranoid of being discovered and persecuted for wizardry and witchcraft by the church. So, each alchemist working in secret, with a limited number of texts, with a local control language, created this vast conceptual patchwork of ideas and this is in large measure responsible for the obscurity of what is said.

Then another factor which impinges on this and further complicates the matter is that the name of the game was projection of the contents of the imagination onto physical processes, so taking red cinnabar and heating it in a furnace until it sweats mercury, for one alchemist this is the incineration of the red salamander and the collection of aurmercurius in the great pelican. They named their chemical apparatus after animals and gods and so the pelican is a standard distillation apparatus, basically a condenser on top of something which is boiled and then these materials would be collected, ground, powdered, re-fired, mixed with other materials, re-fired again and in the process these people were, we call it, and it's such a weak term, the projection of the intellect into this dimension, they were living in a waking dream and many of the recipes are designed to wipe out the boundaries between waking and sleeping.

Remember I talked about the river of mercury that runs between the yin and yang? Many of the alchemical processes were of 40 days duration. Well you can imagine a hermit fearing discovery by the church, trying to keep his fires not too hot, not too cold, working day after day, night after night, eventually all boundaries dissolve and you're just living in a pure world of intellectual projection and then in the swirling of the alembic, in the chemical processes going on in the retort, you begin to be able to project your consciousness onto this. It's what we call visualization but for us it's a kind of a weak term because we are never really able to accept in the psychedelic state to transcend the belief in the inner world and the outer world being somehow separate so for us it's always separate. But they were able to wipe out that boundary. Well then, what they saw in their swirling retorts and alembics was not carbonization, calcination, condensation of various molecular weights of liquids and oils out, but rather the birth of the red lion, the coming of the eagle, the appearance of the [inaudible] stone. They had hundreds and hundreds of these words. I didn't bring any with me, but much alchemical literature is dictionaries. Martinus Rulando's *Alchemical Dictionary* is a huge book of words with special meanings in the alchemical context.

So, why, why do this and what happens when you do it. Well, no matter what alchemist you're reading, there's always an agreement that there are stages in the great work. Stages in the opus, as they called it. You can't get any agreement on in what order these stages come, but roughly it's something like this: most agree that it begins in the nigredo, the blackening, Arcro(?), the Saturnine world of what we would call manic depression, despair, and that our chaos, a chaotic near psychotic state of unbounded hopelessness and that is the precondition, then, for the alchemical work though the stages of the opus never occur in order.

I had a dream last night that was, I think, triggered by an illustration in Fabricious(?) that I'll show you tonight but it was a classical alchemical dream. It was that I was at a country fair and its antiquity was indicated by the fact that it was happening in the school yard of my childhood and as I moved among the participants of this country fair I began to notice that they were freaky. There were people with withered arms and one side of their face slid down and so forth and so on. The whole thing began to drift toward nightmare and Richard Hermes Bird appeared in my dream as my alchemical compadre and at one point a black woman, perfect symbolism for the nigredo, a black woman with three withered arms and six or seven breasts, slid herself sideways in front of me and it was at that point that I went and found Richard and said, "I think we'd better get out of here."

Now, an alchemist would greet a dream like this with great anticipation and joy and would understand that this sets the stage now for the next movement forward. Well, then accounts differ. Those of you who really want to get into this, I recommend you read *Mysterium Conjunctiones* by Jung, the *Mysterious Conjunction*. He discusses the nigredo in great detail. Another symbol for the nigredo is the Senax(?), the old man, because the old man is just short of death and that's the state that the nigredo makes you feel. Then you must take this raw, chaotic, unformed material, often compared to feces, compared to corruption, compared to the contents of an opened grave, and you must cook it in the alchemical fires of contemplation, prayer, and ascetic self control and then you will move through a series of stages that are associated with colors. There is the rubado, the reddening, there is the citronitas, the yellowing, there is the veriditas, the greening, and the

order in which this occurs differs according to who you follow but then there is closure at the end of the process. Most alchemists, although certainly not all, agreed that the higher state is the albedo, the whitening, the purificacio. At each stage there are sub-stages of dissolution, dissolutio et coagulacio. There's one alchemical aphorism that says "dissolutio et coagulacio, know this and this is all you need to know." And so it's a melting and a recasting and a purifying of psychic content. So finally you reach the albedo, the whitening, the highest stage, the stage of great purity.

But remember how I said last night that mercury was always the metaphor for mind in alchemy, or one of the metaphors for mind in alchemy, and I talked about its mutability and its ability to take the shape of its container and when you shatter it it then splits into many reflections. So, once you move into the domain of the albedo, the whitening, then a whole new problem arises for the alchemist. This is the problem of the fixing of the stone. Somehow the mutability of mercury must be overcome and it must be crystallized, it must be fixed so that it doesn't get away from you, so that it doesn't slip through your fingers. To achieve aurmercury is nothing unless you have the secret of the coagulacio. So then, there is a huge amount of effort devoted to this.

What is being described is what Jungians call the individuation process. A dissolving of the boundaries of the ego, an allowing of the chaotic material of the unconscious to pour forth where it can be inspected by consciousness, and we'll see tonight when we look at this art, these images are full of ravening beasts, incestuous mother/son pairs, incestuous brother/sister pairs, hermaphrodites, all taboos are broken, this stuff just boils up from the unconscious then is sublimed through these processes and then is somehow fixed and this fixing is the culmination of alchemy and if you can bring off this trick then you possess our stone, the philosopher's stone, the lapis, the Sophic Hydroloth of the Wise, Aranius Philalith calls it. There were hundreds of control words for naming the secret, difficult to attain.

Alchemical gold, in short this is what we're after. If you possess it, nothing else is worth anything because it is psychic completion, peace of mind, Jung called it the self. It's the self that we are trying to recover and remember we talked about the Gnostic myth of the light trapped in matter. Well this is the luminae de luminae, the light of light, the lux natura, the light drawn out of nature and condensed into a fixed form which then becomes the universal panacea. And I'm using as many of these alchemical terms as I can draw out of my memory to give you a feeling for it. This is the universal medicine. It cures all ills, you know, it brings you riches, fame, wealth, self-respect. It's the answer, it's what everyone is looking for and no one can find.

So this just became a consuming passion of the 15th and 16th century mind. They thought they were on the brink of it. Along the way they were discovering stuff like distilled alcohol, phosphorous, gun powder, all of these things were coming out of the alchemical laboratories but that was not it. They kept driving themselves onward because they knew that this was not the real thing and they were pursuing the real thing. Then for some people it became reassociated with this notion of the utopia that I mentioned this morning in the passage that I read about the city of Hermes Trismegistus, they began to see, it's almost like the crisis which overcame Buddhism, it must be an archetypal, and notice how rarely we've used that word here, it must be almost an archetypal stage in human thought. Theravadin Buddhism stressed individual thought, and individual redemption through meditation on emptiness, and then with the great reforms of Magurjuda(sp?), the idea of Bodhisattvic compassion was introduced and there carries with it political freight. An obligation to society and mankind. So, as the 15th and 16th century progressed there began to be this awareness that what was wanted was not for an alchemist to break through, to his own personal salvation, but somehow to create an alchemical world. You get then the notion of the multiplacio, the idea that the stone, once created, will replicate itself and be able to change base matter into itself almost like a virus spreading through the ontological structure of matter itself and the world will be reborn and this idea then, what was happening was that these alchemists were getting bolder and printing was invented in Meins, near Frankfurt, in 1540, the distribution of alchemical books was changing the character of alchemy, it was no more the solitary hermit working away in his cave or mountaintop, far away from the minions of the church. These alchemists began to dream of banding together, of forming societies, of creating brotherhoods that were united in the sharing of their knowledge and their purpose.

This brings us to the curious episode in history called the Rosicrucian enlightenment. Dame Frances Yates, once again, got there first and she wrote a book called the Rosicrucian Enlightenment which traces the history of these alchemical brotherhoods and reveals to us what they were really about and what they were about was this dream of somehow taking the philosopher's stone, and the power, the immortality, the insight that it would bring and making it a general utility of mankind and in the, one way of looking at modernity, I have one friend who claims that the summoning of the Holy Spirit into matter can be seen as the creation of the modern world of electricity. That people like Helmholtz and Faraday were completing the alchemical work. It's very hard for us to realize how mysterious the electromagnetic field seemed to the 19th century. The 19th century had entirely imbued itself with the spirit of democritian atomism translated through Newtonian physics and they believed that everything was little balls of hard matter winging through space. When Helmholtz and Faraday and these people began to talk about action at a distance and generating the electromagnetic field and trapping lightning and light in jars and running it through wires, what could this be but the trapping of spiritus. What could it be but the literal descent of the Holy Ghost into history and, you know, give it a moment's thought. For thousands of years, electricity was something that you saw when you took an amber rod and a piece of cat fur and went into a darkened room and stroked the cat fur and then when you would bring the amber rod close to the cat fur you would see the crackle of static electricity through the cat fur. For thousands of years that's what electricity was. Who would dream that you could light cities, that you could smelt metals, that you could illuminate the earth with this energy and yet from the 1850s to the present, this was done. It's almost the final literalizing of the alchemical dream.

But to go back now, I digress, I fear, let's go back to the climate of the 1580s and the central culprit here, and to my mind a giant figure casting an enormous shadow over the landscape of alchemy and of modern science, is the Englishman John Dee. John Dee united in himself the complete spirit of the Medieval Magus and the complete spirit of the modern scientist. He invented the navigational instruments that allowed the conquest of the round earth. When Frances Drake sailed up the coast of California he had navigational instruments that were top secret. The French, the Spanish, must be kept away from this stuff and these were navigational instruments created by John Dee that allowed him to locate himself anywhere on the globe. But John Dee was a man who, on a late summer evening in Mortlag, his house in Mortlag outside of London, the angel Gabriel descended into his garden and gave him what he called the shewstone, shew being show in Old English, and the shewstone exists to this day, you can see it in the British Museum and what's amazing about it is it's a piece of polished obsidian, it's an Aztec mirror, is what it is. There was a ruler of the Aztecs called smoky mirror. How John Dee got this thing, we cannot even imagine. He says he got it from an angel, nobody can really say that, however I suspect that Cortez, on his first return to Spain from the new world, he brought a number of objects with him that he had collected in Central Mexico and somehow John Dee got his hands on this thing and it was for him a television screen into the logos and he used it over a number of years to direct the foreign policy of England.

He was the confidante of Queen Elizabeth the First and he also was the most accomplished astrologer in Europe and he used his ability to cast horoscopes as an entre into all the great houses of Europe, the kings and nobles of Europe. He was functioning as an intelligence agent, he was a spy for the British crown insinuating himself into these various courtly scenes and then writing back to Elizabeth in cyphers, cyphers that had previously only been used for magical purposes. He was sending back data on the strengths of military garrisons and the placement of fortifications and this sort of thing. This is what he was doing in the 1580s, he kept the shewstone for a number of years and he didn't seem to be able to make much progress with it. He had other methods too, he had wax tables and sigils but finally into his life came a very mysterious character named Edward Kelly and some accounts say that Edward Kelly had no ears. That indicates that he had had his ears removed for being a charlatan and a montebank. This was a common punishment in the provinces of England. So Edward Kelly was a very dubious character, I think. One strong piece of evidence that he was a shady character was, John Dee was married to a much younger woman named Ann Dee who by all accounts was quite a beauty and after gaining Dee's confidence as a scribe, the person who could look into the shewstone and lay out these scenarios that the angels and the entities coming and going in the shewstone were putting forth, Kelly revealed to Dee that the angels had instructed him to hit the hay with Ann. This was a great crisis in their relationship. However, according to Dee's diary "and so it was done," we read. So, hanky panky didn't begin with the Golden Dawn, believe me. In 1582 Ann Dee, John Dee, and Edward Kelly set out for Bohemia and Rudolph, the mad king of Bohemia held sway at that time. This is another one of those bizarre figures in the whole story of this...[Tape cuts out]

...a wonder cabinet, you see, before Linaius, before modern scientific classification these great patrons of the arts and natural sciences, they would just collect weird stuff. And that was all you could say about it. I mean, it was rhinoceros horns, fossil amenities, broken pieces of statues from antiquity, giant insects from Southern India, seashells, all this stuff would just be thrown together in these wundercabina, these wonder cabinets. Rudolph was a great patron of the arts. Well, Kelly sent the word that he and Dee had perfected the alchemical process and Rudolph immediately paid their way to Prague and patronized them very lavishly over a number of months but then they didn't seem to be coming through and he rented, he ordered a castle put to their disposal, in Bohemia and they still weren't able to come through. The Voynitch manuscript figures in here too because Kelly's entre to Dee was that he had a manuscript in an unknown language and I believe that this probably was the Voynitch manuscript. The Voynitch manuscript turns up in the estate of Rudolph and the very month that he paid 14,000 gold ducats for it to persons unknown, Dee, who was always writing back to the Elizabethan court hounding them to send money, entered into his account book that they received 14,000 ducats from an unknown source.

Dee was able to talk himself out of this alchemical imprisonment but not before he had written a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad. You have to understand the importance of this. As late as the 1920s in England in the better schools of England, like Eton, when you studied geometry, you studied Euclid's works and Euclid's geometry was always preceded by Dee's preface to Euclid. Until the 1920s every English school child studied this. He was a master mathematician as well as these other things. This was how he was able to produce these navigation instruments. So Dee, while imprisoned in Bohemia, wrote a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad in which he proposed to prove, through a series of occult theorems, that a certain diagram, unfortunately I didn't bring the hieroglyphic monad, but it's basically the symbol of, you know the symbol for mercury which looks like the symbol for female but you put horns on it and then there were some adumbrations to that. By a series of theorems he worked up this hieroglyphic monad and he initiated a couple of young men named Johan Anrae and Michael Maier into the mysteries of the hieroglyphic monad. Then he was able to get out of Bohemia and he went back to England.

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Description

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Today's thing is sort of a return to a more orthodox educational kind of mode, hopefully not to such a degree that it's boring. The agenda is to talk about Hermeticism and alchemy; the way in which this tradition — which is counter- intuitive and heterodox, if not heretical from the point of view of Christianity — what it can mean for the present, what it means for the psychedelic experience, what it means for the notion of the end of history and how the loss of this point of view has probably done us a certain amount of damage.

The great tension in the late Middle Ages was between the magical schema, the magical view of human beings, and the Christian view. The Christian view is very strongly marked by the idea of man's fall, that we screwed up early on and somehow then, by virtue of that, were forced into a secondary position in the cosmic drama. We are doing penance as we speak, the world is a vale of tears, the lot of human beings is to till hard land and we are cursed unto the nineteenth generation by the fall of our first parents. We can be redeemed through Christ, but we don't deserve it; if you are saved it is because there is a kind of hand extended to you from a merciful God who is willing to overlook your wormy nature and draw you up in spite of yourself. This is deep in us; you may not think you've bought in because you're black or Chinese, but it's just in the air we breath. It's what Western civilization makes you think, whether you want to think it or not, even if you don't come out of these traditions; for us, the concept that you've got to pay your dues...

Human beings are copartners with deity in the project of being: this is the basis of all magic. In a Christian context, magic is heresy because it implies that man can command God to act; in other words, that, in some strange way, the magician compels nature to behave as the magician desires. In Hermeticism, it isn't so much put in terms of "compel," but the idea is that men and women of great spiritual accomplishment are copartners in the project of being and that God, as it were, stepped off the stage of creation with it only 90% completed and the rest is left in the hands of his brother. The Hermeticum actually refers to humanity as the brother of God. It's a completely different attitude toward being human, it's an empowering attitude; with power comes the potential to abuse power, because you're no longer a worm. You remember that image in Jonathan Edwards' sermon Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, where he says you're like a worm suspended over an abyss, held there only by the love of a merciful God; implying that if he weren't a merciful God, he'd just let go of your thread and you'd go down the tubes.

In the Hermetic magical view, human beings are not tainted by original sin. No ideology is without the potential of abuse. The Hermetic attitude in the Renaissance was summed up in a single aphorism by the great Renaissance Platonist Marsilio Ficino — there's no sexism in all of this, you just have to realize that these guys were primitive types and they hadn't confronted the political issues we've confronted, so when they say "man" they mean humanity — the Renaissance magical attitude is summed up in Ficino's aphorism, "Man is the measure of all things." This is a double-edged sword, because in a single affirmation you cast off the guilt trip, you cast off the view of ourselves as a flawed creature, but when you say, "Man is the measure of all things," you could be the chairman of the board of Louisiana Pacific or Dow Chemical; this is approximately their attitude. In other words, it's not rainforests, it's not the life of the earth, it's none of that malarkey, we are to be the measure of all things. So, it has to be tempered. We'll probably end up talking a bit here about the pathological expression of the Hermetic position, which is called Faustianism. Faustianism is where you have unbridled ego, unbridled faith in the intellect, so that you proceed forward without self-doubt. If you haven't read Faust recently, it's a surprising read. First of all, it's very funny, it's funnier than any of Shakespeare's plays, I think. The way it ends is that the guy dedicates himself to land reclamation and the draining of swamps to build low-cost housing for poor people. People don't know this, they're caught up in the images of the center of the story, where magical power is running rampant, but Faust's final conclusion is that he should do some good work for the least of society and give up these Promethean and titanic dreams of the mastery of power.

Well, a little bit of history about this Hermetic ideal. It's an interesting story in the light of our discussion of time yesterday. Western civilization can be thought of as an accumulated series of misunderstandings, and one of the most severe of these misunderstandings has to do with this whole business of Hermeticism. The Renaissance really believed that Hermes Trismegistus was a great teacher of antiquity who preceded Moses, who was, in time, older than Moses. They had what they called the *prisca theologia*, the three theologians, and they were Hermes Trismegistus, Moses and Orpheus, in that order. The reason that I say Western civilization is built on a series of misunderstandings is because they got it all wrong about Hermes Trismegistus. There was great confusion and unhappiness in the 16th century when Isaac Casaubon, who was an early philologist, attacked the dating of the Hermetic Corpus and argued correctly that this could not possibly have been written in a period preceding Moses, that in fact this was post-Christian, written no earlier than the 1st century A.D. This is the equivalent of us finding out that George Washington was alive in Greenwich Village in the 1930s. It was a completely mind-bending re-alignment of how people thought the history of the world had unfolded, because they had up to that time thought that when you studied Hermes Trismegistus you were reading the oldest philosopher in human history; actually, it's very late. In a way, this is what destroyed the magical alternative: that the advent of modern philology showed that these so-called ancient texts were not ancient at all, they were late Roman, they were Hellenistic. So strongly was imprinted in the Western mind what's called the "nostalgia for paradise," in other words, the belief that the older it is, the better it is — Giambattista Vico in *La Scienza Nuova* laid the basis for this kind of thinking, it's called "classicism" in the Renaissance context — so once they found out that the Hermetic Corpus had been written in late Roman times it was like it was finished, and science was able to use the confusion in the magical community at that point to force its own agenda very strongly.

There have been numerous episodes of misplaced dating like this that have contributed to the confusion around the history of magic. For example, and I hope this doesn't bring somebody rising out of their chair in an air-clawing rave: Rosicrucianism rests on a whole bunch of phony dates, because they want to tell you that that somebody named Christian Rosenkreutz wrote a book called the *Chymical Wedding* and sealed it up in a time capsule in the 12th century, and that it was then dug up in the 16th century, but actually all

these Rosicrucian documents were ponied up by people in the 16th century who had a very complicated political agenda, which we will probably discuss as part of this weekend.

Hermetic philosophy is based on what is called the Hermetic Corpus. This is a group of books, the most important of which is called the Asclepius. Most of these books were completely lost during the Middle Ages. At the fall of the Roman Empire, copies of these Hermetic manuscripts were systematically destroyed by enthusiastic Christian barbarians. The Hermetic manuscripts were scattered and they only survived in monasteries in Syria and places like that. Then, in the Renaissance, the Council of Florence under the patronage of the Borgias and people like that, there was this great interest suddenly in antiquities, because this Roman statuary and stuff was coming out of the ground, so the Council of Florence commissioned a character named Gemistus Pletho to go to Syria and bring back these manuscripts, and they established a translation commission. They had, in manuscript, the works of Plato, the works of Hermes Trismegistus, a whole bunch of ancient literature. To show you what the psychology of the Renaissance was, here they had Plato, which they hadn't been able to read for a thousand years, sitting there waiting for translation, and the Cosimo de' Medici said to Marsilio Ficino, "Plato can wait, translate the Hermetic Corpus first," and so it was done. If you're interested in Renaissance Hermeticism you can't do better than to read Dame Frances Yates' book Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. Well, I want to read you some of this stuff because it's very interesting and it has a modernity that is astonishing. It's also very psychedelic.

Here's a little passage on the imagination. I'm reading from Book Nine of the Corpus Hermeticum in the Scott translation. This is a four volume set. I only brought the "texts in translation" volume, but if you read Greek, it's all here, if you don't, it's all here in English, but this will give you a feeling for the approach:

If then you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot apprehend God; for like is known by like. Leap clear of all that is corporeal and make yourself grow to a like expanse with that greatness which is beyond all measure. Rise above all time and become eternal: then you will apprehend God. Think that for you too nothing is impossible. Deem that you too are immortal and that you are able to grasp all things in your thought, to know every craft and every science. Find your home in the haunts of every living creature. Make yourself higher than all heights and lower than all depths. Bring together in yourself all opposites of quality: heat and cold, dryness and fluidity. Think that you are everywhere at once: on land, at sea, in heaven. Think that you are not yet begotten, that you are in the womb, that you are young, that you are old, that you have died, that you are in the world beyond the grave. Grasp in your thought all this at once, all times and places, all substances and qualities and magnitudes together: then you can apprehend God. But if you shut up your soul in your body and abase yourself and say, "I know nothing, I can do nothing. I am afraid of earth and sea, I cannot mount to heaven. I know not what I was nor what I shall be," than what have you to do with God? Your thought can grasp nothing beautiful and good, if you cleave to the body and are evil.

Interesting; very different from the "Humble yourself," hard labor, spun wool and watery beer approach of medieval Christianity. Here's an amazing passage. People like to think that people thought the world was flat until the Renaissance. This is an incredible psychedelic image of outer space that is 2nd century A.D.:

Would that it were possible for you to grow wings and soar into the air! Poised between earth and heaven, you might see the solid earth, the fluid sea and the streaming rivers, the wandering air, the penetrating fire, the courses of the stars and the swiftness of the movement with which heaven encompasses all. What

happiness were that, my son, to see all these borne along with one impulse, and to behold Him who is unmoved moving in all that moves, and Him who is hidden made manifest through His works.

It goes on and on. It's very readable, it's very literary, it's highly poetic. It's a celebration of nature, the notion of sin is completely absent. It rings with a kind of confidence, a kind of joy that was completely running counter to the brimstone and damnation point of view of Christianity. Here's, to me, a psychedelic passage:

But He who presents all things to us through our senses and thereby manifests Himself through all things and in all things, and especially to those to whom He wills to manifest Himself: begin then, my son Thoth, with a prayer to the Lord and Father who alone is good. Pray that you may find favor with Him and that one ray of Him, if only one, may flash into your mind so that you may have power to grasp in thought that mighty being; for thought alone can see that which is hidden, inasmuch as thought itself is hidden from sight, and if even the thought which is within you is hidden from your sight, how can He, being in Himself, be manifest to you through your bodily eyes? But if you have power to see with the eyes of the mind, then, my son, He will manifest Himself to you; for the Lord manifests Himself ungrudgingly through all the universe, and you can behold God's image with your eyes and lay hold on it with your hands. If you wish to see Him, think on the sun, think on the course of the moon, think on the order of the stars. Who is it that maintains that order? The sun is the greatest of the gods in heaven. To him as to their king and overlord, all the kings of heaven yield place; and yet this mighty god, greater than earth and sea, submits to having smaller stars circling above him. Who is it then, my son, that he always obeys with reverence and awe? Each of these stars too is confined by measured limits and has an appointed space to range in. Why do not all the stars in heaven run like and equal courses? Who is it that has assigned to each its place and marked out for each the extent of its course?

And so forth. So it's nature-oriented, celebratory; it glories in the exercise of the mind. It is not doctrinal, it is not pietistic. It is magical, psychedelic, expansive. I'm not implying that they used psychedelic substances. The evidence for that is incredibly murky and hard to get at, and probably they didn't. One of the real tragedies of Western history is that Western Europe is so poor in psychoactive plants. Had Western Europe stayed in touch with the mystery religions of Ancient Greece, Christianity would never have been able to force its agenda to the degree that it did. I think you can make an argument that there were psychedelic mysteries in Europe, probably up until the time of the fall of Eleusis. Hermeticism is only one heterodox strain among many that were in existence in Europe in the late Roman period and that then partially survived into the Dark Ages. You had Neoplatonism, which is a group of philosophers in the 3rd and 4th century — Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus and that crowd — and they took the late Plato and contorted that into a mystical doctrine of emanation. They were what are called emanationists: what this means is that you start with the One, or the Unnameable, or Brahman Atman, and then you have a series of declensions into more and more material and more and more multiplistic expressions of being. These Neoplatonists were emanationists, and their theories about how the universe is constructed have become the unconscious basis of all later magical speculation. They are the people who brought the angels into the picture so intensely, because they were trying to create a descending hierarchy of being from the most high down to the most low.

Angels, once set in place, became a real problem for Christianity, because they are not very easy to distinguish from the old stellar demons of paganism. Paganism was largely the belief that the power of the stars could be drawn down to earth through sympathetic magic. By setting up resonances in a ritual

situation, you could draw the power of the stars down into your projects and your intentions. The late Middle Ages was a period of intensely working out all the associations between minerals, colors, perfumes, plants, musical notes and styles, so that you could then bring together all these things for purposes of magical evocation. If any of you are interested in this, the book to read, which will point you toward many other interesting books, is a wonderful book called *Spiritual and Demonic Magic* from Ficino to Campanella. In the Renaissance, over a period of about three generations, this became a real problem, because what starts out as angel magic ends up as out-and-out demonic conjuration, something which I've noticed my 14-year-old son has an incredibly unhealthy interest in. I did as well at his age; I hope it's not the family curse coming back.

I mentioned the dating error. It was Lactantius, who was one of the fathers of the early Church, one of the patristic writers, that generation of theologians that followed Christ who canonized the Christian religion; he placed Hermes Trismegistus as older than Moses, older than Pythagoras, older than Plato, and it wasn't until Isaac Casaubon that this was corrected. We forget how transformative a breakthrough was represented for Western Europe by the recovery of all this ancient literature. It had been completely lost. A misimpression that probably needs correcting is that most people who are not schooled in Western history think that the further back in time, the more "superstitious" people were. This isn't actually the case. It isn't the case that the further back in time you go, the more belief in demons, magical conjuration and stuff like that you get. The 10th, 11th and 12th centuries in Europe were periods of remarkable piety and intellectual cohesion; of course it was also some kind of a fascist nightmare, that's how they achieved it. They had stamped out paganism, they had pushed heresy and heterodox thinking to the very distant frontiers of the Holy Roman Empire. People were not superstitious, people were not obsessed with horoscopes and conjuration and this sort of thing. Where that reached its culmination was in the 16th century; the 16th century was the most magic-obsessed century in the last ten.

Alchemy, conjuration, talismanic magic, sympathetic magic: all of these things flourished, not as a throwback, but as a kind of prelude to modern science. Modern science is an incredibly demonic enterprise, and we will see as we discuss this stuff that, in a curious and rarely discussed way, the agenda of magical dissidence in Europe has been entirely achieved by the forces of what we call modernity. It's simply that it has been done in an entirely secular metaphor. If you take even the trivial belief about alchemists, that they were concerned with changing lead into gold — of course that wasn't what it was about, but there were plenty of con artists running around on the periphery of these deeper scenes who were claiming that they could change lead into gold — well, in the 20th century, we routinely change lead into gold. We do it with neutron bombardment and particle accelerators, and of course it costs far more to do it than the worth of the gold that you get out, but that really wasn't the point, was it: it was to prove that it could be done. The dreams of creating the homunculus are dreams that dovetail directly into the aspirations of modern biology and genetics. The Great Chain of Being of Aristotle is animated, given a dimension of motion and, lo and behold, it becomes the Darwin-Wallace theory of evolution. Mircea Eliade talks about this, about how all the alchemical dreams of the 15th and 16th century have been brought to fruition in the 20th century in the absence of magical rhetoric, but certainly in a spirit of magical and Faustian recklessness. Scientists claim such a devotion to truth that decency must never stand in the way; they serve a higher god than human values, they serve the golem of the truth in some weird way that makes the truth OK even if it kills you. I studied philosophy from Paul Feyerabend and he used to say at the beginning of his Epistemology 101 course, "I will teach you to recognize the truth and I will teach you to ask the question, "What's so great about it?""

It was 1460 when these manuscripts were brought to Florence. Those of you with photographic memories can see the Time Wave signature as it turns over and heads through the floor. The Cosimo de' Medici immediately ordered Ficino to abandon his work on Plato. The Pimander was the only one of these books which existed in Europe even in partial form during the Dark Ages; Cosimo died in 1464 but the translation project went forward. The tree, the developmental process in Western magic all goes back to this Florentine translation project, and from there people who were well placed got a hold of this stuff. The most important person probably being an unsung hero in the development of Western thought, Trithemius, Abbot of Sponheim. Trithemius wrote a book — it was really a manuscript, it was never printed as a book in his lifetime — called the Steganographia. In it he put forth many of these magical doctrines, and also encryption methods for codemaking and breaking so that this stuff could be circulated under the eyes of the clergy without causing a problem.

Then the development of Western magic splits into two strains: the strain of Giordano Bruno and his school; he was a Franciscan monk who ended up being burned at the stake. His sin, for which he was burned at the stake, was that he was sitting on a rooftop of one of these Italian city-states one evening, presumably smoking some pretty decent boo that they'd brought in from North Africa, and he was looking at the stars and it occurred to him, "These things are suns. These little points of light are like the sun. Jesus christ!" and in a single moment the universe became infinite. He thought, "If these are suns. . ." and his mind was boggled, literally. Can you imagine, inside the medieval worldview, where they have these concentric shells of angels and demons, suddenly this guy gets it in a single moment and he sees that the universe is infinite and he begins to say so, and this is against Aristotle. The Church just goes nuts and they drive him out of Italy, and he has a whole bunch of adventures in England and other places. Eventually he makes the mistake of coming back to a place in Northern Italy, where he's betrayed by his patron and he is burned at the stake for a point of view which all of us take quite for granted.

The other strain of magic coming down from Trithemius is the Dee strain, and it is a bit more accessible to people like ourselves because John Dee was an Englishman and he wrote in English, so you don't have to conquer 16th century Italian or late Latin in order to read him, although he wrote a lot in Latin as well. Dee is a very interesting character, worth spending some time on, because Dee is the last person to be able to unify into one worldview science and mathematics, magic and astrology, all together; he is the greatest magician of his age and the greatest scientist of his age. He designed the navigation instruments that Sir Francis Drake used to go around the Cape Horn and sail up the coast of California, he was an intelligence operative serving Queen Elizabeth on the European continent. He could cast the best horoscope in Europe and that was his entree into the various royal families of the capital cities of Europe, and then he was making maps of battlements and of the deployment of war facilities and shipbuilding capacity and sending it all back to Elizabeth in these codes that he had learned from Trithemius, not personally but from the Steganographia. A very strange incident happened on a cold day in April at his house in Mortlake, which was on the outskirts of London, now completely surrounded by modern London. I should say, he had the largest library in England, he had 6,000 books. Sir Philip Sidney and the Queen would occasionally call upon him to shoot the bull, he was a very learned man.

So, one day in April of 1582, he's working at his desk at his room in Mortlake. There's some disturbance in the garden and he goes outside. His story, and we have only his story, is that an angel descended in a ball of light and gave him an object, which is to this day on exhibit in the British Museum. If you ever have a chance, it's worth hunting it down, it's in the Renaissance Hall. It's a piece of black polished obsidian; he called it the Shew Stone. The deal was that you could look into the Shew Stone if you had the right talent,

and it was a magical theater. There were gods and demons and female spirits and all kinds of things swirling around this thing. For the next many years, the Shew Stone was the major guiding force on Dee's life, and a guy came to him named Edward Kelley. Legend has it that he had no ears, which in England at that time meant that you had committed some infraction in the province and they had removed your ears. It was the mark of a con artist, it was so you couldn't fool anybody else, so if you met somebody with no ears and a big scheme you knew to keep your wallet in your pocket. This guy Kelley had an immense facility with the Shew Stone. It is one of the most puzzling and undiscussed episodes in the evolution of Western thought. It's very puzzling, because if he was a con artist he must have been a con artist of immense cleverness, because often the way the Dee angels would work is that they would deliver very long messages in Latin, backwards, and Kelley would dictate this stuff at a very rapid speed, Dee would write it down, and then they would put away the Shew Stone and they would very laboriously rewrite this stuff from back to front. They would be these long, coherent harangues about what they should be doing: about which courtly figures they should support with money and who should be introduced to who; it was very political.

Well, what kind of a polymathic talent was Edward Kelley that he could invert whole pages of Latin and reel it off and then have it be reconstructed and make sense? We know about this because Dee kept a diary over the years that this was all going on. It's one of the most astonishing books in all of English literature, and until the last ten years the 1658 edition was the only edition ever published. It's called *A True and Faithful Relation*, or in full, *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*, with annotation by M'eric Casaubon, the son of Isaac Casaubon, who did the correct dating on the *Hermeticum*. It's very interesting reading, it's one of the most puzzling incidents in the whole history of science.

Another religious system that was sort of complimenting the *Hermeticum* and developing alongside it was Gnosticism. The psychology of the late Roman Empire was very modern; Gnosticism is a very modern impulse. It may not at first appear so, because ancient Gnosticism is freighted with angels, demons, what we would call superstition, but if you strip away all that baroque stuff you come to a philosophy very similar to the philosophy that many of us have accepted without thinking; we just call it modern attitudes. The idea of Gnosticism is that you're on your own, there ain't no free lunch; if God did make the universe, he disappeared shortly afterwards and has no interest in your fate, your fears, your hopes. Gnostics were profoundly phobic of the world and they were either very ascetic cults or they were very libertinistic cults, springing from the same idea, which was that they did not belong in this universe. They were from a different place, and their whole concern was to escape. They are the ones who decided that the earth was an iron prison. They didn't like to have children because they felt that to have a child is to trap light in matter. In many Gnostic sects, the only forms of sexual activity that were approved of were forms that were guaranteed not to lead to conception: oral sex, anal sex, whatever. Needless to say, these sects died out in a hurry because they were self-limiting.

The whole Hellenistic world was awash in religious speculation. On every street corner they were casting horoscopes and prescribing diets. There were the temple prostitutes, there was the whole hedonic element in sexuality, orgy was a style in some religious organizations. Out of all of this religious foment came Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Chaldean oracularism, Jewish syncretism and so forth and so on. Christianity was just one in the crowd, but, with sharpened elbows and a sense of organization, it was able to slowly worm its way into a position of dominance. The real Christians probably were stamped out under the name of pagans. The message of Christianity was that the end of the world was imminent. For about 150 years

after Christ, everybody was so stoned out on this rap that no serious organization got done and they just waited for the end of the world in little communities, practicing voluntary poverty and doing their thing. Then it began to slowly dawn on people that it had been a long time since the messiah's promise and that it was stretching out a little. So then certain mentalities in that situation said, "This return of the messiah is all very well, but I think we should get some real estate under our control, begin a vigorous building program and maybe found some schools." These religions began to turn away from their end-of-the-world, ecstatic millenarianism and to see themselves as organizing for the long haul. It was in this atmosphere that the Hermetic books were produced and written down.

The chief magical ritual of Hermeticism is the ability to call stellar demons down into statues, and these statues prophesied. This is why Christianity takes the Jewish aversion to idol worship and raises it to a whole new level of intensity, because they were freaked out by this animating of statues with stellar demons thing that the Hermeticists were into. When you're reading a 1,500-year-old account of a magical invocation, if we are to believe them, what happened was that by singing certain songs, burning certain incense and performing these rituals at certain times that were astrologically correct, they could invoke these things called decans, which are zodiacal demons of some sort; there are three decans to each zodiacal sign. Modern astrology has largely forgotten this. There are people who do decanic astrology, but you have to pay through the nose, because of course this is a lost and dying art. They would somehow be able to draw these decans down into the statue, and then they could extract knowledge from it, and this would lay the basis for these sympathetic magics that were later developed in the Renaissance. It's quite powerful, this is why this book I recommended is so interesting, the one on Spiritual and Demonic Magic by Walker.

These Renaissance princes were incredibly wealthy; you have a suite of apartments that overlook the Plaza San Marco in Venice and certain colors are prescribed that the walls be painted, you only wear certain kinds of robes made of certain materials, you perform your magical invocations at certain times of day, you burn certain incenses. They were big on fresh air and light. It isn't the dark image of magic that we get, of the stirring cauldron, the bat-faced familiar and all that; it's all about open air, light, wind blowing through, flowing silk robes. They were angelic magicians, and they were invoking these things through the use of sigils, which are magical symbols, and then there became stress on magical languages. Enochian is one of these magical languages. Remember, I mentioned the whole ten year episode with the Shew Stone — well, one of the subjects which these entities that Dee and Kelley were dealing with returned to again and again was the Enochian language, which they said was the true language that Abraham used to communicate with the angels. It has an alien alphabet, and there has even been published an Enochian dictionary of some four or five thousand words. There was a very bizarre episode in the mid-1950s, there was a woman who was some kind of clairvoyant and she was in contact with flying saucers. Now everybody and their dog is in contact with flying saucers, but then it was fairly rare, rare enough that she became an object of interest to the CIA. At one point she was in the CIA building in Langley, Virginia, they were interviewing her and she said, "There's a flying saucer right outside the window," and these guys rushed to the window and looked, and there was some kind of thing in the sky, and she said, "It's giving me a message for you," for this colonel. The message was, "AFFA, AFFA, AFFA." I looked this up, I had a hunch, and AFFA is the Enochian word for nothingness; just more weirdness.

Angelic languages; why are these DMT creatures so concerned with language? Not only language, but alphabets. One of the high-water weirdness events of my life was that when I was young I wanted the DMT flash to last longer, so I used to smoke it at the height of LSD trips. One Christmas vacation at this

rooming house that I managed in Berkeley, everybody had gone home for Christmas, I thought, so I decided I would take some LSD and smoke DMT. It was just nuts, it's nuts enough, but this was like turbo-charged nuts; it went on and on and on. There was a woman who I rented a room to upstairs named Rosemary, who was supposed to be in Minnesota. She was an actress and very projective and did everything with great flair, and she apparently came back early from Christmas vacation. So, she hit the front steps of this house running, used her key to let herself in, came right around to my door and started beating on my door. I am by nature a very paranoid person. I can be up the Rio Yaguas in the middle of the Amazon Basin, and if I'm out in the rainforest smoking a joint and a stick is broken, I immediately hide the dope.

So, this woman lets herself in and beats with her clenched fist on my bedroom door. I underwent a coronary thrombosis or something; I was in the elf space and they were screeching and chattering and showing me all this stuff. When she did this, I flew off the bed, I jumped two feet in the air and landed on my feet, and it was as though the sudden flash of adrenaline and this sudden movement that I made broke up the ordinary division between the trip and normality. Anyway, I pulled the trip with me into the room. I was now standing in the room, eyes open, but the elf creatures had come with me. Everything had been jacked up to some immense level of intensity. There were these rotating geometric things hanging in the air and they were moving in this jerky motion. This thing was going, "Click. Click. Click," and it was faceted. Every time it would make this large metallic click, these plastic, triangle-shaped, brightly-colored chits, like little pieces of floor tile, would fly across the room. Each one of them had a letter on it in an alien language, sort of like Hebrew or Sanskrit. There were several of these machines and these things were ricocheting off the walls, and I had an elf hanging off each hand and I was just saying, "Holy shit!" She's still beating on the door, so I stagger over to the door, fling it back and look at her and say something like, "Wey dukwham waxibo gwani haptigo butix shning," and she realized at that point what my problem was and retreated, but I've never forgotten. It's the one time they went literary on me, and not only did I see them, not only did I hear them, they were printing their message on the air as well. Very curious.

Mandaeanism is a very old religion that arose around Jerusalem a couple centuries before Christ. It was a baptismal cult, they were the oldest continuous Western religion in the world with a gnostic intent. Probably they started out as Jews, but they were persecuted. They claim John the Baptist as one of their own, and he was a member of some kind of baptismal cult because we know that he baptized Christ. They were driven out of the area around Jerusalem and then for centuries they were in Lebanon, and they slowly made their way across Persia and ended up in the swamps of Iraq and Iran. Mandeans are very interesting, they have their own written language, although in 1847 there was a cholera epidemic that wiped out 90% of the priesthood. Only priests were allowed to learn to read and write this language; I have some facsimile manuscripts from the Vatican library. I sort of think that we all should become Mandeans; of all the religions I've ever looked at and studied it seems to me the most psychedelic, the most ethically correct. It would be a great religion to practice on a world scale because they're into caring for the land. They're river nuts, they love rivers and they build a cult hut called a mandi and they always divert a little ditch through it and they do their ritual baptisms there. Their folk tales and their religious beliefs are very interesting, it's like a religion of biology. The highest god in Mandaeanism is called Hibbel Zaywa, and Hibbel Zaywa is always referred to as "they." It's that "they" are in charge. It's beautiful scriptural stuff. They're very much like Orthodox Jews, only moreso, in that if you're a religious Mandaean your life is ruled by all kinds of things, sort of like the rules of kosher. The most difficult rule that these people are asked to keep in their own lives is that, if you're really a devout Mandaean, you are considered polluted if your eye falls on an unbeliever. An unbeliever is a non-Mandaean, so you can imagine how difficult it is, when you're down to

400-500 people, to make sure that those are the only people you ever see. The only profession that a Mandaean man can follow and not require ritual decontamination every day is silversmithing. So if you ever go to Baghdad or Basra or Kirkuk there are communities of these people, and you find them by going to the silver markets and then through discreet inquiry you can find them.

Folkloric anthropologists have developed all these rules. If a religion makes something taboo, you can usually bet that means that they were into it at some point. When a religion makes something taboo, it means that there has been a reformist upheaval inside the religion. This is probably how soma was lost to the ancient Hindus. Zoroaster was called the Great Reformer because he suppressed a lot of indigenous shamanic cults. Some people think that he attempted to suppress haoma, the Avestan counterpart of soma. If any of you are interested in all this, in this book by Flattery and Schwartz called *Haoma and Harmaline in Iranian Religion* they make a very strong case that soma was not mushrooms, that it was *Peganum harmala*. In the pre-Zoroastrian faiths of Iranian religion, drugs were not only used to access the spiritual world, but they actually said that there was no other way to do it, which is sort of my position. These pre-Zoroastrian Iranian light religions were into what they called the *menog*, and it's another dimension and you can only attain knowledge of it through the use of drugs. The *menog* existence is where the dead people are. What their religion was about is that you get to know your own soul through using drugs. It's like visiting somebody in stir, your soul comes through the *menog* existence and meets you at the membrane. The idea is that during life you must learn to recognize your soul, because after death, if you can't pick it out of the soul swarm, then you will be somehow incomplete in the after-death world.

DMT raises the possibility of death by astonishment. When you take DMT the question is not, "Will I be all right?" the question is, "Have I lived through it or not?" because you can't tell whether you've lived through it. DMT is a very short-acting hallucinogen that you smoke, but it's a neurotransmitter, it occurs in all human beings on the natch. It occurs in various plants and animals, in terms of nature it's the commonest of all hallucinogens; in terms of impact, it's the strongest of all hallucinogens. It's a completely reality-obliterating experience, and it comes on so quickly that you don't grok it like a drug. We all know what a drug is: you feel this, you feel that, it gets stronger, it makes you rest, finally it overwhelms you. This isn't like that. This is like: you and your friends are somewhere, there's talk about this drug, the pipe gets filled, you smoke this drug and a 747 crashes into your apartment building at three times the speed of sound and interrupts whatever you were doing. Sometimes people come out of it saying, "What happened? What happened, for crying out loud?" and you say "Nothing happened, you just did it. That's what it does." It happens so quickly that we interpret it as an event coming from the outside, rather than a chemical compound diffusing through your body. It completely replaces reality, not with the contents of your unconscious or your unfulfilled dreams, wishes or any of that but with another dimension, a space filled with entities busy about their many tasks, although they notice you and come flocking over with a piercing screech. They like to treat with you, they play with you, they're not entirely friendly. It's the kind of feeling I used to have in India when I would go to make these hash buys in these Indian markets, and these guys would say, "Welcome, welcome. You're my friend. I'm not like all the others." It was fine, we were there to do business and everything usually went smoothly, but this was no environment in which to let your guard down.

The best guess so far is that endogenous DMT mediates attention. For instance, if there were to be a noise over here or a movement and I turn and look, that's a little spike of DMT which makes that possible. It's where you suddenly narrow your awareness and project it deeply into a small, confined area. This was the best guess of the people who did work on it a few years ago. There are a number of physioactive

tryptamines. DMT is not a cardioactive tryptamine, if it's made right. Sometimes when you smoke it your heart races, but you can't tell whether that's sloppy synthesis or that you're scared. It's made from tryptophan, which is an amino acid, one of the eight essential amino acids. It's an easy conversion out of tryptophan. It can come from a plant, but if you were to ask a chemist to make it for you he'd ask you to get a few hundred grams of tryptophan.

On mushrooms you hear a voice, you rarely see who's talking. On DMT all barriers are transcended in the first thirty seconds. You hear it, you see it and sometimes you feel it. These little entities, these self-dribbling basketballs, these things that I call the tykes; they jump into your chest and then they jump out again. I don't know why they do that. In the Amazon, among the tribes that use DMT derived from plants, they call these spirit things hikool'e, and they say that they will jump into your chest and then you're supposed to have a technique to keep them from getting out. The number of these things that you trap inside your body cavity indicates how powerful a shaman you are. Your magic is done through the hikool'es that are trapped inside of you. It's very hard on DMT to tell yourself that this is a drug. It doesn't seem like it, it seems like you just tunneled through an energy barrier into the beta sub-x dimension which is all the time all around us, but somehow you became virtual and moved across the energy barrier, and there you are. The other thing about DMT that's weird is that it does not affect your mind. You don't feel gaga with ecstasy, you don't feel relaxed, you feel exactly the way you felt before you did it, it's that the world has just been swapped out. That's strange, I sort of like that: that it doesn't lay a glove on the observing cognitive processes. Instead, it just does something in the visual cortex that causes the world to be replaced by a five-dimensional highly-colored moving environment filled with screaming elf demons.

Some of you may know this book *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* by Evans-Wentz. It was reprinted recently and I wrote the introduction to it. It mentions there that when Saint Patrick arrived as a missionary in Ireland, the problem that he encountered was this belief in the land of fairies. In order to convert the pagan Irish, he convinced them that these were souls of the dead in an intermediate zone that was neither heaven nor hell, which he called purgatory. Purgatory was invented to accommodate the folk beliefs of the pagan Irish. When it was brought back to Rome, it seemed like a such a good idea for converting all kinds of pagan peoples on the fringe of the expanding sphere of Christianity that it's been in place ever since. I've wondered about the way in which there seems to be a racial or genetic undertone to some of this stuff. I didn't know until I was 13 years old that I wasn't a white person. I grew up in Colorado where everything was white-bread culture, and my father may have had opinions about the IRA and all that but we were never told that we were Irish. Some of you who have roots in this city know that, as recently as fifty years ago, they used to have signs up along 8th Avenue that said, "No Dogs or Irish Allowed." So I reconnected to that part of the heritage. The Irish are stereotypically known to be susceptible to intoxication, to be great word spinners and to have this peculiar relationship to fairyland. I don't want to think that I'm just exploring the Celtic collective unconscious, it seems to me that these things must be there for everybody. Nevertheless, we're so concerned to suppress racial differences — because we're a democracy, and because racial problems have haunted American racial politics from the very beginning — that we tend to want to believe that everybody is the same.

I took a course once at Cal that was given by the forensics department, and it was called *Biochemical Markers for Individuality*. It was actually taught by Alexander Shulgin, the great drug designer, and one of the things we did is that he brought in a little vial of some kind of chemical and he passed it around. Out of 200 people in the class, 198 couldn't smell it at all, and two people were so overwhelmed by the smell of this that they actually became physically sick for a few minutes. He explained to us that these people were

probably up to 50,000 times more sensitive to this chemical than most people, and that this is a gene that you carry for sensitivity to this thing. Those kinds of compounds, aromatic compounds with an electronically active ring structure, are the very nearest relatives to drugs, and so it's reasonable to suppose that there are genetic differences in the way we relate to drugs, which doesn't mean racial differences, it means from person to person. It also may mean that a race is a collection of related genes which are more frequently found together than not. This is why, technically speaking, you can never say that so-and-so belongs to a race. A race is a quality of a group; it's not something an individual is. You have to have a bunch of people before you can say that you're confronting a phenomenon of race. What aboriginal people believe is that there are shamanic lines, family lines with a greater susceptibility to these things than others. One of the things you learn when you begin to explore psychedelic substances is that it isn't hitting everybody the same way; in fact, it can hit people radically different ways.

Audience: It seems to me that these entities are in many ways similar to elemental spirits. Do you think of that as a possible explanation for them?

It's true, they are. They don't look like them, though, they don't look like anything. Those of you who don't have kids can tune out, but since I have kids I've seen a lot of bad movies because that's what they make for kids. Four or five years ago at Christmas time there was this movie called Santa Claus. There was one scene in the elves' workshop where they were making thousands of toys, and there were all these conveyor belts going from level to level and these guys rushing around at full speed; it was the most DMT-like reconstruction I've ever seen. It's funny, though, that the elf mythology doesn't carry the sense of strangeness that you get in the DMT flash; although I suspect that this is because we've been polluted by Disney, that Disney has given us this vision of fairies that are too harmless. It's the Tinkerbell phenomenon. If you go back to Andrew Lang's Fairy Books, those are weird. Fairies are weird; they steal babies. That's their main way of relating to human beings, they steal human infants and leave behind wizened, deformed, sickly creatures who become very strange and peripheral kinds of human beings. If you get trapped in fairyland, the only way out is through poetry. They're language-oriented, they will never do you damage if you convince them that you're a master of words. All over the world there is this persistent motif of these small entities. I'm not suggesting that they're really there, but I don't know what's going on. It's odd that they should persist and that they should be experientially available. It would be a whole different thing if it was Madame So-and-So saying this to you, but I'm pushed to this stuff by experience, because my inclination is toward reason. It's just that everybody moves along safe channels, everybody stays out of the fast lane. If you move to the edges — drugs are certainly an edge, a full exploration of one's sexuality is certainly an edge, going off to weird corners of the world and staying long periods of time is certainly another edge — the self-confirming world of white-bread, European, bourgeois, work-hard types just looks as weird as any cultural adaptation could possibly be.

Reality is created by language and we are all imprisoned in somebody else's language. This isn't how we want to talk: 90% of the words and constructions we use would be great-grandfathered. We are living inside a 90% 19th-century worldview. Culture cannot evolve any faster than its language evolves, because what cannot be said cannot be done, what cannot be said cannot be put in place. One way of thinking about psychedelics is that they empower language, it's a way to force the evolution of language. The way you stretch the envelope of culture is by creating language. This happens unconsciously. Hasidic Jews, Rastafarians, whatever, the way they create their boundaries is through language. This is how the Catholic Church does it, speaking Yiddish is a way to do it; you create a new reality inside the old one, and you can do it by moving backward into a specialized language or you can move forward into a new language.

Look at how the introduction of the computer has transformed our language in the '70s and the '80s. CPU, throughput, output, input, bug, glitch: these are words that have been empowered by our involvement with a machine. Before that, the major influence on language in my lifetime was the LSD episode of the 1960s. It always amuses me how much time and energy the establishment spends heaping abuse on hippie talk. It's even now sold to you guys as West Coast talk. It's sold on the West Coast as L.A. talk. Wherever you are, you're close to it but not of it. It's like they used to say of the Watergate scandal, "linked but not tainted."

What LSD did, I can remember a concept like "ego trip." The first time I heard that I didn't know what it meant, I didn't have the concept. Well, once somebody explains to you the concept, then you've got it. "Vibes": that notion introduced a whole bunch of people to the idea of emotions. "Vibe" means that there's no rational reconstruction of what was going on, but you could just tell that it was not a place you wanted to be. So it began to empower new realities that were able to emerge, and it was important for the establishment to suppress that, because new words are the beginnings of new realities. The gay thing is an interesting example of that. In the 19th century it was called "the love that dare not speak its name." Interesting; it was there but you dare not speak its name. Somehow to name it was to bring it too much into the forefront. People who were gay, it was worse than being a communist. Now, it's empowered. All the various racial groups that have had to come up through the American meat grinder have had to create vocabularies of community that they were proud of, rather than accepting the vocabulary of the dominator culture. A good example is the NAACP. The words "colored people" are embedded there, and yet these were the sincerest and most radical people in that movement at a certain point.

Constantly, oppressed minorities are trying to get the language right, and it's important for us to do this, too. Are we stoners? Are we heads? Are we shamans? What are we, exactly? Pouring psychedelic substances into that mix opens the doorway for the Logos to define you, and building community is part of this. We are an interesting potential community. We tend unfortunately toward the lily-white, but I don't see any class dominating. There are probably, in this room, people who could buy and sell all the rest of us without going past their small change. There are probably also people who scraped and saved for this weekend and could ill afford it. Maybe we're some kind of generally definable group of people by level of education, but I don't see that either. What holds us together is what holds all subcultures together, which is an experience, in this case the experience of being loaded. It's a very powerful and immediate kind of experience. I'm sure some of us are more loaded than others, in any subgroup you'll get that kind of a spectrum.

What happens for me is that these entities want me to do what they're doing, and what they're doing is using sound to make objects appear out of the air. They can sing objects into existence. I think that they're language elves: they're not made of matter. Well then, what are they made of? It seems as though the place you go to on DMT is made purely of language. It's a hard thing to picture. They're like sentences rather than organisms. The essence of their presentation is like that of a pun. They want you to learn to make a better kind of language: not more articulate, not more clearly defined, but they actually suggest that there can be a dimensional breakthrough into a language that is seen with the eyes. I think that the breakthrough that we're waiting for is not going to come out of a political movement, or a redistribution of wealth or anything which could be called political, it's going to come out of a shift in the body. These things happen; it's very mysterious how they happen. Think about ordinary language. Here you have two people: one is mute, the other has the ordinary powers of speech. They look exactly alike, you can't tell a mute person from anybody else, and yet there is this extraordinarily complex behavior. Language is a behavior of some sort, and it's very hard to imagine that it slowly insinuated itself into our being. It looks to me more like it

was a kind of quantum leap, and probably appeared very suddenly.

There have been other, less dramatic but more recent, things like this going on. For example, you go to school and they teach you that in the 15th century, perspective was the thing for me to understand. I mean, perspective was discovered? How could it be discovered? And yet, before 1425, people didn't know that the part of the house farther from you was smaller than the part nearer to you. You can't understand, it doesn't make any kind of sense. Another example is Saint Augustine, who was this great father of the Church and who was, by the way, African. He was known as the most brilliant theologian of his age, and the way he would prove to people that he was an exceptional and holy man was that they would open a book of theology in front of him and let him look at it for a few minutes, and then they would close the book and he would be able to tell them what was written there. As far as we can tell, Saint Augustine was the the only man in Europe who could read silently. Can you imagine this? It was a miracle. They would say, "We don't know how the bugger does it! You just show him the book and he can tell us what's written there." Now we've completely assimilated this, although there are still a few among us who move their lips as they read. Vladimir Nabokov used to cruelly sneer at these people, he said once in an interview, "I didn't write books for people who move their lips when they read."

A final example, which will indicate that we've come to the end of the line in terms of sudden behaviors emerging, is that, according to my friend William Gibson in his book *The Difference Engine*, oral sex was virtually unknown in England until the middle of the 19th century. It was brought in by French prostitutes, and it was just a mind-boggling concept to these Victorians, they could not wrap their mind around it. From our vantage point, we probably assume that people have been into this since the Stone Age. Maybe they have, but at least for several centuries in Victorian England, it absolutely died out as inconceivable. Breakdancing is another one of these, where a behavior suddenly emerges, completely coherent and formed, and then it recedes; or, if it has cultural utility, it's stabilized, such as my previous example.

What these tykes seem to be trying to say is that there is a way for you to use your voice in order to activate a language which is not culturally taught. It isn't that you learn it from your parents, but that it's in the bones: a poetic language, a language scripted into your genes, and not only is it an *ursprach*, an original speech, the vehicle of primal poetry, it can be seen. It's interesting how in our culture, when we talk about how somebody is a gifted speaker, we always reach for visual metaphors. We say, "I see what you mean." In Spanish, if they're talking to you and they want to know if you follow, they say, "Is it clear, claro?" It's a visual metaphor. We say, "She paints a picture," or, "His words have great clarity." What this means is that, unconsciously, we trust the eyes and we don't trust the ears. Telepathy, which most people think of as being able to hear somebody else think, is not that at all. Telepathy is when you see what other people mean, because when you see what somebody means, it's like standing in their shoes. Point of view: that's a very visual-oriented framework. If you can understand somebody else's point of view, you are that person for that moment, for that purpose.

It's amazing that the human world has evolved as far and as fast as it has, glued together by nothing more than small mouth noises. As monkeys, we're set up for this. You can talk longer than just about any other activity that you can do without becoming exhausted. I'm the living proof of it. A very small amount of energy is required to keep the old tongue and lips going with the air moving out. Imagine if we had to communicate as deaf people do, with sign language all the time. This is exhausting, nobody communicates like that for four or five hours at a stretch, and yet Castro can give a four-hour speech at the drop of a hat. So, we're set up for this. The problem is that it requires a congruence of interior dictionaries, because what

happens is that my words go across space as an acoustical signal, they enter your ear, you are very rapidly looking up each word as it comes in and comparing it to your definition, and as long as we don't look too closely at this, communication seems to be happening.

I've looked at this, and there are models for this kind of verbal communication. Whenever you think you're about to take a step that nobody has taken and go a place where nobody's ever been, if you look back at mother nature you can usually find that you've been scooped. A very interesting example of this vis-à-vis language is what's going on with octopi. What we've all learned from watching these wonderful TV shows about nature is that octopi can change color; most people think it's because they're into camouflage. It isn't that at all, it's something much more profound. It's that all over the surface of octopi are these specialized cells called chromatophores, and they can change into many colors. Not only can the octopus change colors, but the ordinary rubbery, smooth surface of the octopus can be made like goosebumps, but more dramatically wrinkled, very suddenly. The other thing about an octopus is, because they're soft-bodied, when they're in water, they are very adept at folding and unfolding various parts of their body. They can reveal a part of their body and then fold in and show another part; they're like a silk scarf. What's going on here is that octopi communicate with each other by the way they look. At first this doesn't seem so profound, but when you analyze what's happening, you realize that this is a profound evolution in the project of communication, because there is no culturally-sanctioned dictionary among octopi, and really what is happening is that the octopus wears its mind on its surface. They have a vast repertoire of dots, blushes, traveling patterns that move across their surface, and these behavioral displays indicate the internal state of the organism; literally, it wears its language on the surface of its skin. It is a syntactical creature: its behavior is its syntax.

Octopi as a whole are molluscs, they're not even vertebrates. These things split from the line of development that leads to us 700 million years ago. If you want to talk about an alien form of life, an octopus is about as far away from the human experience as you can possibly get. They evolved in shallow coastal waters, but because so many things were evolving in those shallow waters, some of them evolved into the benthic depths, and in those depths there is no light. In order to preserve their ability to communicate, over long periods of time they evolved phosphorescent chromatophores all over their body. Some octopi even have eyelid-like membranes at the surface of their skin so that they can blink very rapidly and modulate the phosphorescent light. You can imagine that in the darkness, in the benthic depths of the ocean, the communication between two octopi is just a dance of lights in utter darkness; it's naked mind in the water. When they are in communication like that they are, for all practical purposes, one organism. This is why octopi excrete ink into the water: it's so that they can have a private moment. Essentially, the octopus ink is the equivalent of correction fluid: you just have to erase, say, "I didn't mean that at all, here's what I really meant."

This is why I'm interested in virtual reality, because it seems to me that what we're trying to do is some kind of striptease of the mind. We want to get the mind naked, because if it can be made naked, we will understand each other. We are clothed in flesh, and then clothing and then class difference, race difference, age difference, income difference, but if you could see the mind naked, the commonality of human beings would be reinforced and the presence of ego among us would be diminished. Also, there's no ambiguity in visible language. It's interesting that in the Book of Revelations there is this talk about a sword which comes out of the mouth. It's describing a word which can be seen. The whole history of the evolution of the Western mind is, in a sense, the birth of the Logos. The Logos is making its way toward self-expression, and it's doing this by claiming dimension after dimension of manifestation. I think that

electronic media, electronic culture, drugs, the mixing of all our world cultures together, what this is empowering is a visible Logos, a Logos that is beheld and therefore lacks ambiguity.

Mind and soul, in my estimation, tend to migrate toward each other. In the late medieval period you get a lot of talk about, "Is the spirit the same thing as the soul? And are these things the same as the intellect?" I mean, yes, we are soul, but mind is the visible manifestation of soul. That would be a good Catholic definition because, you see, that keeps soul out of animals. If you say that mind is the visible manifestation of soul, then you have restricted the existence of soul to the human species. The mind is not a form of intelligence, the mind is the theater in which intelligence is manifested; you don't want to confuse the garage with the car. Everything goes on within the confines of mind: it's like the light that you switch on when you walk into a darkened room, and then everything else is the furniture within the room. Mind is simply the light which is shed over the landscape of appearances. This is only my definition, I'm aware of the Neoplatonic emphasis on the mind, I think they called it the *ennoia*, but in modern psychological terms, the mind is just the theater of cognition in some way. Consciousness is something which happens in the mind, there is an unconscious mind as well. Mind is the inclusive category, I think.

The hardest thing to figure out is a mirror, because what a mirror shows you is yourself, but a mirror is not yourself. A mirror is a piece of glass with silver vapor deposited on the back of it, but that's a very different thing from yourself. In the psychedelic space, you are not simply perceiving that space, you are creating it with your expectations as well. If you have strong expectations of a certain sort, that will be the character of the thing. We talked about this yesterday, about how here we have peasant A chopping wood, and suddenly a ripple of heat passes in the forest and a hackle-raising sense of weirdness. This guy throws down his axe and looks over his shoulder, and a light is descending from the sky. What happens next, interestingly enough, depends on the year and the place. If the year is, let's say 1000, and the place is Southern France, then the Virgin Mary will be descending from the sky. If the place is Kansas and the date is 1958, then the space people are descending from the sky. What happens is that when there is cognitive dissonance, the mind rushes forward to provide explanation. For some people it's Jesus, for somebody else it's Maitreya, so cultural expectations are inextricably woven into these strange encounter scenarios.

There was an interesting UFO theory a few years ago that I thought was kind of cute, I didn't exactly believe it. These people, Michael Persinger and Gyslaine Lafrenière, wrote a really amusing book called *Space-Time Transients and Unusual Events*. One of the things they came up with was that along earthquake faults you get the grinding of enormous masses of rock together, and if these rock masses have a high percentage of quartz in them, you can get what is called piezoelectric phenomena. Piezoelectricity is simply a peculiar form of static electricity, but what it would do is that it would create ball lightning in the sky which would follow these stress lines in the earth. There is a connection, not understood, between earthquakes and the appearance of UFOs. One of the interesting things that Persinger discovered about piezoelectricity is that if you, in the laboratory, build piezoelectric generators that generate fields of enormous strength, then as a person is exposed to these things, they actually mess with your mind. People become more and more confused, uneasy and ultimately panic-stricken in the presence of these piezoelectric fields. Once you pass the panic moment, your mind is going to start telling you what's happening. It's going to say, "You're having an encounter, something weird is going on," and then out of the unconscious comes the projection: the flying saucer, the Virgin Mary, the elf invasion, the manifestation of Maitreya. Mind goes to meet the unknown, but not without a hell of a lot of baggage of its own which it immediately tries to unpack and put into the drawers of the Other as soon as it arrives. The mind is not intelligence, it's not the soul, it's sort of the theater in which all these other things take their

place.

I think there's one transcendental object that exerts attraction wherever it can. What evolution seeks to do is to stop itself. Every organism wants to evolve into what's called a climaxed ecosystem: that's where everybody has their chair and nobody moves, so there are no empty chairs. Where you get evolution is where you have a room half full of empty chairs; then you have a choice of where to sit. Most animal species and plant species are not evolving or are evolving very slowly. Evolution tends to dead end itself. Take cockroaches, for example; cockroaches achieved their present evolutionary status 200 million years ago. They haven't changed an iota. We can dig up fossils from the Pennsylvania coal beds that have cockroaches no different than the ones running around in your apartment. This has clearly been a very successful strategy for cockroaches if the only thing that matters is the propagation of more cockroaches. Nevertheless, their cultural accomplishments have been dismal.

It's thought by the straightest people in the biz that before human beings, the major force creating evolutionary opportunity were rivers. This happens because the course of rivers will vary over time, and that means that rivers expose and inundate a lot of land. Along rivers you find unclaimed territory, sandbars and large areas where nothing grows. Into those kinds of areas what are called volunteer species, or invader species, can make their way, and these invader species evolve very rapidly. For instance, in a climaxed tropical rainforest what you find are enormous trees and vines, and then the epiphytes and stuff that grow on them, but these trees may flower once every twenty years or so and when they do flower they often produce a very limited amount of fruit. What you find along rivers and places like that are what we call weeds. A weed is a plant that is annual, it flowers every year, and that produces an enormous amount of seeds. A weed strategy is a strategy for the rapid invasion and claiming of empty land, and before human beings, rivers were the major creators of empty land. Carl Sauer, who was a biologist and a geographer, said, "Man found the earth a climaxed rainforest and he will leave it a weedy lot." What that means is that we create so much waste land that these annual, heavy-seeding, rapacious plants are replacing the products of climaxed evolution, which are enormous trees and vines and that sort of thing.

I have a lot of respect for most of Jacques Vallée's work. I thought that book *Messengers of Deception* was so off the track that I actually went to a book signing of his and leafleted the crowd with an attack on it; that shows you what a nut I am. For those who don't know, Jacques Vallée had a very interesting approach to understanding flying saucers, and I still think this is the best method. His argument went something like this: it's not productive to ask where the flying saucers come from or what they want; he said the way to understanding flying saucers is to analyze their effect. If you can analyze their effect, that's what they're doing, that's what they want to achieve. So, what are flying saucers doing? What they are doing is that they are causing vast numbers of people to doubt science. If you analyze what the effect since 1948 of the flying saucers is, it's that they have caused millions of ordinary people to think that scientists don't know what they're talking about. It offers a new alternative. Here's an interesting analogy, it's Jacques Vallée's. We've been talking so much today about the late Roman Empire; here's another take on the late Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was this immensely successful civilization in that it was able to export its vision of an imperial center over vast parts of the world. The problem with the Roman Empire was that it was an ethical disaster. First of all, it ran entirely on the backs of slaves, so anybody who starts talking to you about the grandeur that was Rome should be reminded that it was a bargain basement on three floors masquerading as a military brothel. It was not a great civilization.

What happened to Rome? Well, they had all these people inside the empire, among them Jews, and over

there in Jerusalem, a long way from Rome where communication was difficult, this story got loose among the Jews. From the point of view of the Roman Imperium, the Jews were a barbarian people. They were Semites, they had some strange religion. They were looked upon, in other words, as primitives. If you were to have sat down to have dinner with a typical Roman bureaucrat of the Imperium, you would discover that the table talk would be all about Democritean atomism, Epicureanism, Stoicism and Skepticism. In other words, they were thoroughly modern people, and they thought they had very advanced bullshit detectors. So it comes to the attention of this Roman noble that the house slaves, the kitchen boys and the gardeners are all whispering and all excited about some Galilean magician who is running around the Eastern Mediterranean, telling people that not only can he rise from the dead, but so can you. A Roman sophisticate looking at this would say, "These primitive, uneducated, colored people that we have to put up with, why don't these people step out of their own private Idaho and get with the program and study a little Greek philosophy? They're just superstitious."

Well, in a world where information moved no faster than a horse could gallop, within a century these uneducated, superstitious people and their irrational religion of magical redemption were hammering at the gates of Rome. A century after that, the emperor himself, a god for political purposes, has to make Christianity the official religion of the Empire. What happened was that political, technological and architectural accomplishments got way out in front of ethics, and at that point the unconscious said, "I'm going to pull the rug out from under these Roman dominator types. I'm going to unleash a religious system in their very midst that will be an informational virus. They'll be dead before they ever know what hit them." This is what Christianity is. It was a religion of the displaced underclasses of the empire, and within 300 years it took over and began its own pogroms and genocidal programs of extermination. The flying saucer is a similar thing. We have achieved great things in technology, in social organization and scientific research, but like the late Roman Empire, ethics and morality have lagged far behind, and so now the same unconscious that sent us the mystery of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection sends us the flying saucers. The flying saucers are destroying the faith in the scientific control systems and managerial theories at the very center of our civilization just as surely as the Roman Imperium was broken by this superstitious religion.

There is a force in this world — call it the unconscious, call it the cosmic giggle, call it whatever you want — but when a society gets all twisted and out of balance, it can pull it down in a hurry. I think the psychedelic thing in the '60s was viewed this way. The dominator society is incredibly fragile. Whenever you see somebody who has to pile up guns, it means they're not terribly confident of their ability to keep control of the scene, and we have so many kinds of guns pointed at us: propaganda, social engineering, manipulation of the media. They do it all to us and they still can barely keep ahead of it. They hate the spread of unreason, they hate psychedelic drugs, hell, they don't even like people to work up a sweat on the dance floor. Anything other than ladylike and gentlemanlike parlour-oriented English upper-class behavior completely drives them into a swivet, and yet they launch horror upon the world that makes anything the Roman Imperium undertook look like child's play. This stunt they pulled with Iraq, they don't even count the dead when they get pissed off. That's why I think this Archaic Revival is in full throttle right now. I think the dominator model is doomed, and all the things that are coming forward — the assertiveness of racial minorities, of sexual and intellectual minorities — people are just saying, "We're not going to take it anymore. Don't tell us what to believe, don't tell us what drugs to take and what's politically correct, because your record is a nightmare."

This general discontent spreading through society is keeping a lot of these dominator types up late at night

trying to figure out what's going on. Can you imagine being in charge of the planet? Suppose you were the CEO of General Motors: every piece of data that crosses your desk says that you're in trouble, big trouble. I'm saying they're coming from another dimension of some sort that actually has a plan for the human race that is larger than the plan of the people who seek to run this society. Their plan is, "Let's keep everything as much the same as possible." Since World War II, they have been at war with the future. They do not want to let the future happen. Of course, the future is building up like a logjam in a river, and what it means is that when the future finally tears loose and overwhelms these structures that they have built, it's going to be more dramatic, more sudden and more violent than they could have ever dreamed of or imagined. They're forcing the evolution of language. The real cataclysmic future does not lie in the propagation of the errors of industrial materialism. The real transformation of the future is built into the rocks, the ocean, the animals; it's not coming from human beings. The people who think they're running the world are dreaming. I'm completely convinced that no one is in control and that this is very good news. Nobody is in control, not the Communist Party, the Vatican, the World Bank. There may be groups who dream of controlling, but their frustration level must be approaching infinity at this point.

The way to steer the Hermetic question toward the UFO question is to look at this concept of the philosopher's stone. Alchemy arises out of Hermeticism. Hermeticism is the philosophy that stands behind alchemy, which is the work-bench activity of this magical system. The philosopher's stone is a concept of a universal medicine that cures all diseases, that confers immortality, that brings happiness and understanding, but it's more than that: it's everything you want it to be. The flying saucer is this same idea. The best book ever written on flying saucers was written just a couple years after the first flying saucers were seen. It's by Carl Jung and it's called *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky*. He talks there about how the human mind has an appetite for what are called "totality symbols." The human mind is always trying to complete itself, to fix itself in some way. Mandalas and certain kinds of symbols have the quality of indicating that this completion is underway.

In the 15th and 16th century, before the rise of modern science, people didn't know what matter really was, they didn't really know what was possible with matter. They would get glass flasks and combine horse manure and blood, and they would cook it for weeks and weeks and they would observe color changes. They did not have the kind of very fixed notion of the separation between mind and matter that we have, because we have been trained to see mind and matter as tremendously separate categories. So these alchemists, working often day and night in remote areas on bad food, ergot-infested bread and what have you, eventually they began to enter into a kind of waking hallucination with their alchemical activity. What you have in these glass retorts, presumably, are swirling chemical mixes, but the alchemist looking at these things didn't clearly distinguish between what is going on in the alembic, the alchemical vessel, and what was going on in their own imagination. The two categories weren't separate. So Jung noticed that these descriptions of alchemical procedures are not to be taken seriously as real recipes: they are descriptions of psychic processes leading toward individuation.

In a sense, the flying saucer is nothing more than a modern rebirth of the philosopher's stone. The flying saucer is the universal panacea at the end of time. It's the thing which cannot exist but which does exist, and which, if we could obtain it, everything would be different. We've swapped out elementals for aliens and we've swapped out the philosopher's stone for the flying saucer. Nevertheless, if we were to obtain the flying saucer, it would be the equivalent of these 16th century people obtaining the philosopher's stone. We are so bound in to the concept of the fixity of matter and its separateness from us as a mental category that we rarely exercise our imagination in the way that these early people did. For us, everything stands

still. A mental exercise you should do for yourself sometime: imagine that you had a material that could do anything. This is what the philosopher's stone is, it's a material object and it can do anything. What do I mean by anything? Well, if you needed to go somewhere you could take this material, stretch it out and then sit on it, and it would fly. If you were hungry, you could eat it. If you needed to take a shower, you could stretch it a certain way and hold it above your head and water would pour out of it. If you needed a piece of information, you could just address it and ask like a visual telephone. We have created the philosopher's stone in the diffuse form of technology. We can do everything I just described — fly, talk to people at great distances, eat synthetic food and so on — but we have solved each problem separately.

In a way, the computer is an interesting leap toward the philosopher's stone, because if you analyze what a computer is, it's a machine which can do anything. You have to tell it what you want it to be. If you want it to balance your checking account, it can do that. If you want it to predict the weather, it can do that. If you want to play a game with it, it can do that. It's mind boggling to realize that anything that you can conceive of, the computer can simulate. The computer is the first in a long line of omnipurpose machines. We're going to move into a world where you don't have a telephone to call your friend, a fork to spear your meat and a comb to tease your locks: you have one thing, and this one thing does whatever you need to have done. Technology is beginning to concreate, and it will be of course be a kind of computer, but it will be voice-programmable to do anything. Well, this is a very Hermetic ideal. We are migrating toward this kind of a fusion of possibilities. This is the secret of how to dematerialize culture: make machines which can do more than one thing. Make machines which can do thousands of things, but always return to being a little ball or a little box.

Newton is an interesting figure, because Newton is the great father of modern science, he was the one who figured out that the calculus was a tool for solving a kind of multivariable problem that up until the invention of the calculus, nobody had a clue. Modern science runs almost entirely on the calculus and the various techniques that have been derived out of it, like partial differential equations and that kind of thing, but Newton himself was a man with a foot in two worlds. He was a thoroughgoing occultist, his alchemical experiments and notebooks were voluminous, and yet he was one of the founding members of the Royal Society. The Royal Society was really the first think tank, it was a very modern institution. In the character of Newton we see the magical mentality and the modern mentality welded into one individual. There are other cases like this. Michael Maier was the greatest alchemist of his age and he was implicated in the Rosicrucian Enlightenment. There were a group of people around Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia who wanted to establish a Protestant alchemical kingdom in Europe in the early 17th century, around 1619, and Maier was part of this group. They contrived to get this guy, Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, named emperor, because at that time the princes of the Hanseatic League chose the emperor, and they were actually able to do this; but then when word got back to the Hapsburgs in Spain, they raised an army and destroyed this alchemical revolution. If you're interested, read Frances Yates' book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*.

This Hapsburg army which laid siege to Prague in the summer of 1620 and then destroyed this alchemical possibility; there was in that army a 21-year-old soldier who was soldiering and wenching his way across Europe, which was something gentlemen did in those days, and his name was René Descartes. After the fall of Prague, in early August of 1620 this Hapsburg army retreated across southern Germany toward Spain and they pitched their tents at Olm, which, strangely enough, would be the birthplace of Einstein some centuries later. Descartes was not the mature philosopher of science that we know, he was just some punk mercenary getting his first taste of life, and that night he had a dream. In the dream, an angel

appeared to him, and the angel said, "The conquest of nature is to be achieved through measure and number." Descartes awoke from this dream and he founded scientific materialism. He founded modern science based on the revelation of an angel. Science was founded by an angel. There are many instances in the history of science where these kinds of things have gone on.

The overarching theme here, the thing which serves to connect all this together; we've been talking today about alchemy and Hermeticism, it's an episode in Western history, a protoscientific movement. We were talking yesterday about how time is moving inevitably toward the production of some kind of transcendent object, or the coming into awareness of a kind of transcendent object. Well, the connection between these two notions is the idea that history itself is a kind of alchemical process. The idea that lies behind alchemy is that the alchemist can somehow step in as nature's helper and cause natural processes to occur very quickly. The belief in medieval Europe concerning precious metals was that these things actually grew in the earth, and in a sense they do: they accrete very slowly over time. The idea that lies behind alchemy is that if you could speed time up, the processes which require millions of years in the earth could perhaps be achieved in years or months. The goal of alchemy was the production of the philosopher's stone, this transcendental material, the universal panacea. What I've been saying here in all these lectures is that the goal of human history is the same thing. Therefore, human history is an alchemical process of some sort.

Human history is the story of the descent of spirit into matter or the ascent of matter into the domain of spirit, and the speeding up quality of it is what we bring to it. History is the catalyst of nature. This metaphor casts us in the role of elemental tykes. In the great alchemy of the redemption of the world we are the elementals, and we are causing a process to take place which will accelerate the emergence of the end state before it might ordinarily have happened. The idea is that history itself is an invoking and a moving toward a fusion with this alchemical mystery, which is, then, a coincidentia oppositorum. The words used to describe the alchemical goal can be used to describe the historical goal. The historical goal is then legitimately describable as coincidentia oppositorum, union of opposites, universal panacea, the diamond body. All of these alchemical metaphors of completion are metaphors which, if we would but awaken to the spiritual dynamics of history, we could enunciate as a goal. Imagine if the stated goal of global society were to produce a universal panacea. That means peace of mind for everybody, health and happiness for everybody. It's weird: millenarian or eschatological thinking has remained with us, even though ideological styles have changed. Marxism is a thoroughgoing millenarian cult. The withering away of the state is no less metaphysical a concept than the universal panacea at the end of time, and I daresay a good deal less likely. So we may have transcended Christian eschatological dreams, but we still are infected with utopian aspirations. Secular utopianism has never been more strong, it's just that it's now couched in the terms of Christian democrats, or something like that. If we could raise to consciousness our alchemical heritage and our heritage in the shamanism of the archaic, then we could actually see that the purpose of technology is to liberate, not to enslave, and somehow we've lost the thread.

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject [July 22nd 2017]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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The High Times Interview

April, 1992

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
 - [Original transcript at lycaeum](#)
 - [Other links](#)
- *Did hallucinogens play a crucial role in human evolution? Terence McKenna has devoted most of his life to exploring this question. A specialist in the ethnomedicine of the Amazon Basin, McKenna along with his partner Kat Harrison McKenna founded Botanical Dimensions, a nonprofit foundation devoted to rescuing Amazonian plants that have a history of shamanic uses. They move the plants to a 19-acre site in Hawaii and preserve the details of the plant's uses by storing the information in a computer database. In addition to preserving these important plants, as a nonprofit organization, Botanical Dimensions solicits donations to publish a newsletter and to aid in carrying out the preservation of the folk knowledge of the peoples native to the Amazon area. The combination of McKenna's academic approach -- he has a BS from the University of California at Berkeley with a distributed degree in ecology, resource conservation and shamanism -- his vast travel experiences, and uniquely visionary perspective, combine to make him a most sought-after speaker and author. His newest books include *Food of the Gods* (Bantam) and *The Archaic Revival* (Harper/San Francisco) -- in which an abridged version of this interview appears. A slightly different version of this interview will also appear in a soon-to-be-published book by David Jay Brown and Rebecca McClen called *Voices of Vision*.*

HIGH TIMES: Tell us how you became interested in shamanism and the exploration of consciousness.

Terence McKenna: I discovered shamanism through an interest in Tibetan folk religion. Bon, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, is a kind of shamanism. In going from the particular to the general with that concern, I studied shamanism as a general phenomenon. It all started out as an art historical interest in the pre-Buddhist iconography of [thangkas](#).

HT: This was how long ago?

TM: This was in '67, when I was just a sophomore in college. And the interest in altered states of consciousness came simply from -- I don't know whether I was a precocious kid or what -- but I was very early into the New York literary scene. Even though I lived in a small town in Colorado, I subscribed to the *Village Voice*, and there I encountered propaganda about LSD, mescaline, and all these experiments that the late beatniks were involved in. Then I read *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, and it just

rolled from there. That was what really put me over. I respected Huxley as a novelist, and I was slowly reading everything he'd ever written, and when I got to *The Doors of Perception* I said to myself, "There's something going on here for sure."

HT: Recently you addressed close to 2,000 people at the John Anson Ford Theatre in Los Angeles. To what do you attribute your increasing popularity, and what role do you see yourself playing in the social sphere?

TM: Well, without being cynical, the main thing I attribute to my increasing popularity is better public relations. As far as what role I'll play, I don't know. I mean I assume that anyone who has anything constructive to say about our relationship to chemical substances -- natural or synthetic -- is going to have a social role to play, because this drug issue is just going to loom larger and larger on the social agenda until we get some resolution of it. By resolution I don't mean suppression or just saying no. I anticipate a new open-mindedness born of desperation on the part of the Establishment. Drugs are part of the human experience, and we have got to create a more sophisticated way of dealing with them.

HT: You have said that the term "New Age" trivializes the significance of the next phase in human evolution and have referred instead to the emergence of an archaic revival. How do you differentiate between these two expressions?

TM: The New Age is essentially humanistic psychology '80s-style, with the addition of neo-shamanism, channeling, crystal and herbal healing. The archaic revival is a much larger, more global phenomenon that assumes that we are recovering the social forms of the late neolithic, and reaches far back in the 20th century to Freud, to surrealism, to abstract expressionism -- even to a phenomenon like National Socialism -- which is a negative force. But the stress on ritual, on organized activity, on race/ancestor-consciousness -- these are themes that have been worked out throughout the entire 20th century, and the archaic revival is an expression of that.

HT: From your writings I have gleaned that you subscribe to the notion that psilocybin mushrooms are a species of high intelligence -- that they arrived on this planet as spores that migrated through outer space, and are attempting to establish a symbiotic relationship with human beings. In a more holistic perspective, how do you see this notion fitting into the context of Francis Crick's theory of directed panspermia, the hypothesis that all life on this planet and its directed evolution has been seeded, or perhaps fertilized, by spores designed by a higher intelligence?

TM: As I understand the Crick theory of panspermia, it's a theory of how life spread through the universe. What I was suggesting -- and I don't believe it as strongly as you imply -- is that intelligence, not life, but intelligence may have come here in this spore-bearing life form. This is a more radical version of the panspermia theory of Crick and Ponampurama. In fact I think that theory will probably be vindicated. I think in a hundred years if people do biology they will think it quite silly that people once thought that spores could not be blown from one star system to another by cosmic radiation pressure. As far as the role of the psilocybin mushroom, or its relationship to us and to intelligence, this is something that we need to consider. It really isn't important that I claim that it's an extraterrestrial, what we need is a body of people

claiming this, or a body of people denying it, because what we're talking about is the experience of the mushroom. Few people are in a position to judge its extraterrestrial potential, because few people in the orthodox sciences have ever experienced the full spectrum of psychedelic effects that are unleashed. One cannot find out whether or not there's an extraterrestrial intelligence inside the mushroom unless one is willing to take the mushroom.

HT: You have a unique theory about the role that psilocybin mushrooms play in the process of human evolution. Can you tell us about this?

TM: Whether the mushrooms came from outer space or not, the presence of psychedelic substances in the diet of early human beings created a number of changes in our evolutionary situation. When a person takes small amounts of psilocybin visual acuity improves. They can actually see slightly better, and this means that animals allowing psilocybin into their food chain would have increased hunting success, which means increased food supply, which means increased reproductive success, which is the name of the game in evolution. It is the organism that manages to propagate itself numerically that is successful. The presence of psilocybin in the diet of early pack-hunting primates caused the individuals that were ingesting the psilocybin to have increased visual acuity. At slightly higher doses of psilocybin there is sexual arousal, erection, and everything that goes under the term arousal of the central nervous system. Again, a factor which would increase reproductive success is reinforced.

HT: Isn't it true that psilocybin inhibits orgasm?

TM: Not at the doses I'm talking about. At a psychedelic dose it might, but at just slightly above the "you can feel it" dose, it acts as a stimulant. Sexual arousal means paying attention, it means jumpiness, it indicates a certain energy level in the organism. And then, of course, at still higher doses psilocybin triggers this activity in the language-forming capacity of the brain that manifests as song and vision. It is as though it is an enzyme which stimulates eyesight, sexual interest, and imagination. And the three of these going together produce language-using primates. Psilocybin may have synergized the emergence of higher forms of psychic organization out of primitive protohuman animals. It can be seen as a kind of evolutionary enzyme, or evolutionary catalyst.

HT: There is a lot of current interest in the ancient art of sound technology. In a recent article you said that in certain states of consciousness you're able to create a kind of visual resonance and manipulate a "topological manifold" using sound vibrations. Can you tell us more about this technique, its ethnic origins, and potential applications?

TM: Yes, it has to do with shamanism that is based on the use of DMT in plants. DMT is a near- or pseudo-neurotransmitter, that when ingested and allowed to come to rest in the synapses of the brain, allows one to see sound, so that one can use the voice to produce, not musical compositions, but pictorial and visual compositions. This, to my mind, indicates that we're on the cusp of some kind of evolutionary transition in the language-forming area, we are going to go from a language that is heard, to a language that is seen, through a shift in interior processing. The language will still be made of sound, but it will be processed as the carrier of the visual impression. This is actually being done by shamans in the Amazon. The songs they

sing sound as they do in order to look a certain way. They are not musical compositions as we're used to thinking of them. They are pictorial art created by audio signals.

HT: You're recognized by many as one of the great explorers of the 20th century. You've trekked through the Amazonian jungles and soared through the uncharted regions of the brain, but perhaps your ultimate voyages lie in the future, when humanity has mastered space technology and time travel. What possibilities for travel in these two areas do you foresee, and how do you think these new technologies will affect the future evolution of the human species?

TM: I suppose most people believe space travel is right around the corner. I certainly hope so. I think we should all learn Russian in anticipation of it, because apparently the US government is incapable of sustaining a space program. The time travel question is more interesting. Possibly the world is experiencing a compression of technological novelty that is going to lead to developments that are very much like what we would imagine time travel to be. We may be closing in on the ability to transmit information forward into the future, and to create an informational domain of communication between various points in time. How this will be done is difficult to imagine, but things like fractal mathematics, superconductivity, and nanotechnology offer new and novel approaches to the realization of these old dreams. We shouldn't assume time travel is impossible simply because it hasn't been done. There's plenty of latitude in the laws of quantum physics to allow for moving information through time in various ways. Apparently you can move information through time, as long as you don't move it through time faster than light.

HT: Why is that?

TM: I haven't the faintest idea. What am I, Einstein? [Laughter.]

HT: What do you think the ultimate goal of human evolution is?

TM: Oh, a good party.... [Laughter.]

HT: Have you ever had any experiences with lucid dreaming -- the process by which one can become aware and conscious within a dream that one is dreaming -- and if so, how do they compare with your other shamanic experiences?

TM: I really haven't had experiences with lucid dreaming. It's one of those things that I'm very interested in. I'm sort of skeptical of it. I hope it's true, because what a wonderful thing that would be.

HT: You've never had one?

TM: I've had lucid dreams, but I have no technique for repeating them on demand. The dream state is possibly anticipating this cultural frontier that we're moving toward. That we're moving toward something very much like eternal dreaming, going into the imagination, and staying there, and that would be like a

lucid dream that knew no end, but what a tight, simple solution. One of the things that interests me about dreams is this -- I have dreams in which I smoke DMT, and it works. To me that's extremely interesting, because it seems to imply that one does not have to smoke DMT to have the experience. You only have to convince your brain that you have done this, and it then delivers this staggering altered state.

HT: Wow.

TM: How many people who have had DMT dream occasionally of smoking it and have it happen? Do people who have never had DMT ever have that kind of an experience in a dream? I bet not. I bet you have to have done it in life, to have established the knowledge of its existence, and the image of how it's possible, but then this thing can happen to you without any chemical intervention. It is more powerful than any yoga, so taking control of the dream state would certainly be an advantageous thing and carry us a great distance toward the kind of cultural transformation that we're talking about. How exactly to do it, I'm not sure. The psychedelics, the near death experience, the lucid dreaming, the meditational reveries ... all of these things are pieces of a puzzle about how to create a new cultural dimension that we can all live in a little more sanely than we're living in these dimensions.

HT: Rupert Sheldrake has recently refined the theory of the morphogenetic field -- a nonmaterial, organizing, collective-memory field which affects all biological systems. This field can be envisioned as a hyperspatial information reservoir which brims and spills over into a much larger region of influence when critical mass is reached -- a point referred to as morphic resonance. Do you think this morphic resonance could be regarded as a possible explanation for the phenomena of spirits and other metaphysical entities, and can the method of evoking beings from the spirit world be simply a case of cracking the morphic code?

TM: That sounds right. If what you're trying to get at is do I think morphogenetic fields are a good thing, or do they exist, yes, I think some kind of theory like that is clearly becoming necessary. And that the next great step to be taken in the intellectual conquest of nature, if you will, is a theory about how out of the class of possible things, some things actually happen.

HT: How do you view the increasing waves of designer psychedelics and brain enhancement machines in the context of Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields?

TM: Well I'm hopeful, but somewhat suspicious. I think drugs should come from the natural world, and be use-tested by shamanically-oriented cultures, then they have a very deep morphogenetic field, because they've been used for thousands and thousands of years in magical contexts. A drug produced in the laboratory, and suddenly distributed worldwide simply amplifies the global noise present in the historical crisis. And then there's the very practical consideration that one cannot predict the long term effects of a

drug produced in a laboratory. Something like peyote, or morning glories, or mushrooms have been used for vast stretches of time without detrimental social consequences. We know that. As far as the technological question is concerned -- brain machines and all -- I wish them luck. I'm willing to test anything that somebody will send me, but I'm skeptical. I think it's somehow like the speech-operated typewriter. It will recede ahead of us. The problems will be found to have been far more complex than first supposed.

HT: Don't you think it's true that the designer psychedelics and the brain machines don't have any morphogenetic field, so in a sense one is carving a new morphogenetic field with their use. Consequently, there would be more possibilities for new things to happen -- unlike the psychoactive substances which you speak of that have ancient morphogenetic fields, and are much more entrenched in predictability and pattern -- and therefore not as free for new types of expression?

TM: Possibly, although I don't know how you grab the morphogenetic field of a new designer drug. For instance, I'll speak of my own experience, which is ketamine. My impression of ketamine was -- it's like a brand new skyscraper, all the walls, all the floors are carpeted in white, all the drinking fountains work, the elevators run smoothly, the fluorescent lights recede endlessly in all directions down the hallways. It's just that there's nobody there. There's no office machinery, there's no hurrying secretaries, there's no telephones -- it's just this immense empty structure waiting. Well I can't move into a 60-story office building. I have only enough stuff to fill a few small rooms, so it gives me a slightly spooked-out feeling to enter into these empty morphogenetic fields. If you take mushrooms, you know, you're climbing on board a starship manned by every shaman who ever did it in front of you, and this is quite a crew, and they've really pulled some stunts over the millenia, and it's all there, the tapes, to be played, but the designer things should be very cautiously dealt with.

HT: It's interesting that John Lilly had very different experiences with ketamine. Do you think that there's any relationship between the self-transforming machine elves that you've encountered on your shamanic voyages and the solid-state entities that John Lilly has contacted in his inter-dimensional travels?

TM: I don't think there is much congruence. The solid state entities that he contacted seem to make him quite upset. The elf machine entities that I encounter are the embodiment of merriment and humor, but I have had a thought about this recently which I will tell you. One of the science fiction fantasies that haunts the collective unconscious is expressed in the phrase "a world run by machines." In the 1950s this was first articulated in the notion, "perhaps the future will be a terrible place where the world is run by machines." Well now, let's think about machines for a moment. They are extremely impartial, very predictable, not subject to moral suasion, value neutral, and very long-lived in their functioning. Now let's think about what machines are made of, in the light of Sheldrake's morphogenetic field theory. Machines are made of metal, glass, gold, silicon, plastic -- they are made of what the earth is made of. Now wouldn't it be strange if biology is a way for the earth to alchemically transform itself into a self-reflecting thing. In which case

then, what we're headed for inevitably, what we are in fact creating, is a world run by machines. And once these machines are in place, they can be expected to manage our economies, languages, social aspirations, and so forth, in such a way that we stop killing each other, stop starving each other, stop destroying land, and so forth. Actually, the fear of being ruled by machines is the male ego's fear of relinquishing control of the planet to the maternal matrix of Gaia. Ha. That's it. Just a thought. [Laughter.]

HT: The recent development of fractal images seems to imply that visions and hallucinations can be broken down into a precise mathematical code. With this in mind, do you think the abilities of the human imagination can be replicated in a super-computer?

TM: Yes. Saying that the components of hallucinations can be broken down and duplicated by mathematical code isn't taking anything away from them. Reality can be taken apart and reduplicated with this same mathematical code -- that's what makes the fractal ideal so powerful. One can type in half a page of code, and on the screen get river systems, mountain ranges, deserts, ferns, coral reefs, all being generated out of half a page of computer coding. This seems to imply that we are finally discovering really powerful mathematical rules that stand behind visual appearances. And yes, I think super-computers, computer graphics and simulated environments, this is very promising stuff. When the world's being run by machines, we'll be at the movies. [Laughter.] Oh boy.

HT: Or making movies.

TM: Or being movies.

HT: I've thought at times that what you view as a symbiosis forming between humans and psychoactive plants may in fact be the plants taking over control of our lives and commanding us to do their bidding. Have you any thoughts on this?

TM: Well symbiosis is not parasitism, symbiosis is a situation of mutual benefit to both parties, so we have to presume that the plants are getting as much out of this as we are. What we're getting is information from another spiritual level, their point of view -- in other words -- is what they're giving us. What we're giving them is care, and feeding, and propagation, and survival, so they give us their elevated higher dimensional point of view. We in turn respond by making the way easier for them in the physical world. And this seems a reasonable trade-off. Obviously they have difficulty in the physical world, plants don't move around much. You talk about Tao, a plant has the Tao. It doesn't *even* chop wood and carry water. [Laughter.]

HT: Future predictions are often based upon the study of previous patterns and trends which are then extended like the contours of a map to extrapolate the shape of things to come. The future can also be seen as an ongoing dynamic and creative interaction between the past and the present -- the current

interpretation of past events actively serves to formulate these future patterns and trends. Have you been able to reconcile these two perspectives so that humanity is able to learn from its experiences without being bound by the habits of history?

TM: The two are antithetical. You must not be bound by the habits of history if you want to learn from your experience. It was Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the inventor of general systems theory, who made the famous statement that "people are not machines, but in all situations where they are given the opportunity, they will act like machines," so you have to keep disturbing them, 'cause they always settle down into a routine. So, historical patterns are largely cyclical, but not entirely, there is ultimately a highest level of the pattern, which does not repeat, and that's the part which is responsible for the advance into true novelty.

HT: The part that doesn't repeat. Hmm. The positive futurists tend to fall into two groups. Some visualize the future as becoming progressively brighter every day and that global illumination will occur as a result of this progression, others envision a period of actual devolution -- a dark age through which human consciousness must pass, before more advanced stages are reached. Which scenario do you see as being the most likely to emerge, and why do you hold this view?

TM: I guess I'm a soft Dark Ager. I think there will be a mild Dark Age. I don't think it will be anything like the Dark Ages which lasted a thousand years -- I think it will last more like five years -- and will be a time of economic retraction, religious fundamentalism, retreat into closed communities by certain segments of the society, feudal warfare among minor states, and this sort of thing. I think it will give way in the late '90s to the actual global future that we're all yearning for. Then there will be basically a 15-year period where all these things are drawn together with progressively greater and greater sophistication, much in the way that modern science, and philosophy has grown with greater and greater sophistication in a single direction since the Renaissance. Sometime around the end of 2012, all of this will be boiled down into a kind of alchemical distillation of the historical experience that will be a doorway into the life of the imagination.

HT: Rupert Sheldrake's morphic resonance, Ralph Abraham's chaos theory, and your time wave model all appear to contain complementary patterns which operate on similar underlying principles -- that energy systems store information until a certain level is reached and the information is then transduced into a larger frame of reference, like water in a tiered fountain. Have you worked these theories into an all-encompassing metatheory of how the universe functions and operates?

TM: No, but we're working on it. [Laughter.] Well it is true that the three of us, and I would add Frank Barr in there, who is less well known, but has a piece of the puzzle as well. We're all complementary. Rupert's theory is -- at this point -- a hypothesis. There are no equations -- there's no predictive machinery -- it's a way of speaking about experimental approaches. My time wave thing is like an extremely formal and specific example of what he's talking about in a general way. And then what Ralph's doing is providing a bridge from the kind of things Rupert and I are doing back into the frontier branch of ordinary mathematics called dynamic modeling. Frank is an expert in the repetition of fractal process. He can show you the same thing happening on many many levels, in many many different expressions. So I have named us Compressionists, or Psychedelic Compressionists. Compressionism holds that the world is growing more and more complex, compressed, knitted together, and therefore holographically complete at every

point, and that's basically where the four of us stand, I think, but from different points of view.

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History Ends in Green: Gaia, Psychedelics, and the Archaic Revival

Day Month 1989

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Audio Link \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Original Transcription by: [Please enter your name or username here when you start transcribing so we know that it is being/has been worked on by someone]

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This wiki is working towards a complete, chronological, searchable collection of Terence McKenna's lectures and their transcripts. Please feel free to contribute by transcribing lectures, reviewing completed transcripts, or finding information on dates and locations of lectures. If you are creating a new lecture page, use the lecture template. If creating a new interview page, use the interview template.

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- For help with spelling of people names, places, and other unusual terms, use the [SPELLING REFERENCE SHEET](#) [feel free to add words that are missing].
- For those on Facebook, please also join our working group on the [Terence McKenna Transcription Project Facebook page](#). For any other questions or information, please contact: terencemckennaarchives@gmail.com
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And we now also accept Bitcoin donations:

1NVUziS55nSDRKHXPf6NCfLSqmAGSSK8Fn

Lecture Timeline

?? = Edited transcription included in *The Archaic Revival*

1982

November

[New and Old Maps of Hyperspace](#) @ Institute for the Study of Consciousness, Berkeley, CA (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked]

December

[Tryptamine Hallucinogens and Consciousness](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Kevin Whitesides) ??

[Psilocybin and the Sands of Time](#) @ SEN Interview (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked]

1983

[Alien Luv](#) @ Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, CA (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Eva Petakovic) ??

April

[The Voynich Manuscript](#) @ Mill Valley, CA (Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked] ??

[The Definitive UFO Tape](#) @ Mill Valley, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1) [in *The Archaic Revival* as "A Conversation Over Saucers"] ??

May 13-14

[Hallucinogens Before and After Psychology - Beyond Psychology](#) @ Psychedelics & Spirituality Conference, Santa Barbara, California (Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked]

June 10

[New Dimensions Radio Interview - aka Towards the Unknown](#) @ San Francisco, CA (Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked] ??

[Towards The Unknown - aka 'A Necessary Chaos'](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1) **Double entry. Same talk as above, but contains a little bit more.** ??

[Dynamics of Hyperspace](#) @ Santa Cruz, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs audio recording)

July

[The Syntax of Psychedelic Time](#) @ Berkeley, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

October

[The Transformations of Language Under the Influence of the Psychedelic Experience](#) @ Berkeley, CA (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked]

1984

[New Maps of Hyperspace](#) @ The Berkeley Institute for the Study of Consciousness (Needs Review 1; Needs Audio) [?]

[Shamanology](#) @ Mill Valley, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

February

[Psychedelic Society](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked]

June

[The Gnostic Astronaut](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

1985

[Cauldron Chemistry Interview](#) @ Terence's Home, Sonoma County, CA (Ready for Review 1)

April

[The Invisible Landscape - Peer Review](#) @ Ojai Foundation, Ojai, CA (Fully transcribed? Needs review)

1986

['Rites of Spring' @ Ojai Foundation, Ojai, California](#) (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Eva Petakovic)

1987

[Psychedelics Before and After History](#) @ CIIS, San Francisco (Needs transcription)

[What's so Great About Mushrooms?](#) (Transcription in progress-Roberto Tatiascore)

[aka Suggested Reading List](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

September 12

[Nature is the Center of the Mandala](#) @ Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, CA (Partially transcribed; Needs audio)

October 17

[Understanding and the Imagination in the Light of Nature](#) @ Los Angeles, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs audio)

November 21

[Shamanic Approaches to the UFO](#) @ Angels, Aliens, and Archetypes 1987 Symposium, San Francisco, CA (Partially transcribed; Needs further transcription)

1988

[Ethnobotany and Shamanism: Psychedelics Before and After History](#) @ California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA (Transcription complete; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[Ethnobotany of Shamanism](#) @ CIIS, San Francisco, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; July 11 2017)

[Hallucinogens & Culture](#) on Thinking Allowed (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized; Needs date) [Locked]

[Time and the I Ching](#) on Thinking Allowed (Transcribed, Review 2 complete; Finalized; Needs date) [Locked]

[The Human Future](#) on Thinking Allowed (Transcribed; Needs audio)

[Aliens and Archetypes on 'Thinking Allowed](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[The Light in Nature](#) @ Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Forms and Mysteries: Morphogenetic Fields and Psychedelic Experiences](#) @ Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, CA (Needs transcription; Needs audio)

[Man and Woman at the End of History](#) @ Ojai Foundation, Ojai, CA (Needs transcription)

May 25

[Places I Have Been @ Hermosa Beach, CA](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Shamanism: Before and Beyond History](#) @ Ojai Foundation, Ojai, CA (Needs transcription)

[Non-ordinary States of Reality Through Vision Plants {Needs further transcription} \[Duplicate of lecture "Vision Plants: The Transpersonal Challenge" below\]](#)

October 9-14

[Vision Plants: The Transpersonal Challenge](#) @ International Transpersonal Conference, Santa Rosa, CA (Needs Review 1)

[Vision Quest Through Sacred Plants](#) @ International Transpersonal Conference, Santa Rosa, CA (Needs transcription; Needs audio)

November 30

[Mushrooms, Elves and Magic](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1) [in *The Archaic Revival* as "Critique Interview"] [?]

1989

[Shamanism, Symbiosis, and Psychedelics Workshop](#) @ Whole Life Expo (Needs transcription)

[History Ends in Green: Gaia, Psychedelics, and the Archaic Revival](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

[Shamanology of the Amazon](#) @ Ojai, CA (Needs transcription)

[Esalen Scholar In Residence - aka Enough is Enough](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

June 22

[Psychedelics and the Chaos Revolution](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sure, CA (Needs Review 1; Needs audio)

[A Survey of Shamanic Options](#) {Transcribed - Needs Review 2; July 11 2017}

[aka The Evolution of a Psychedelic Thinker](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[aka A Psychedelic Point of View](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[aka Psychedelics and the Feminine](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

August 24

[Live at the Hollywood Bowl](#) @ Hollywood Bowl, CA (Needs transcription)

[The Light at the End of History: Gaia, Eros, and the Archaic Revival](#) @ Ford Theatre, Los Angeles, CA (Needs transcription)

1990

[Shamanism](#) {Transcribed; [Audio used for Review 1 is #132 Psychedelic Salon]; Needs Review 2 [admin only]} [Locked]
[From unknown larger talk]

[Experiment at Petaluma](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Novelty and the Transcendental](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

[Inner Visions, Future Vectors](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

Feb 24

[Terence McKenna Live in Maryland](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

March 27

[Touched by The Tremendum](#) (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Eva Petakovic)

May

[aka A Stiff Dose of Psychedelics](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[aka The Psychedelic Option](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[aka Loose Ends Time](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

May 26-27

[Nothing's Wrong](#) @ Santa Fe, NM (Needs transcription)

[Time and Mind](#) @ NM (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs audio)

July

[The World Could Be Anything](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

October 14

[The Light at the End of History](#) @ The Wetlands, New York (Needs transcription)

October 20

[Opening the Doors of Creativity](#) @ Port Heuneme, CA (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Kevin Whitesides)

1991

[Into the New Millenium](#) @ Big Sur (Needs transcription)

[Exploring the Hermetic Tradition](#) @ Big Sur (Partially Transcribed)

[Hallucinogens in Shamanism & Anthropology](#) (Needs transcription)

[Sacred Plants as Guides: New Dimensions of the Soul - aka Address to the Jung Society](#) @ Claremont, CA (80% transcribed: needs ~40 minutes of additional transcription of Q&A; Review 1 in Progress- Spencer Barrett)

February 3

[Finale - Bridge Psychedelic Conference](#) @ Stanford U, Mill Valley, CA (Needs transcription)

June 2

[Unfolding the Stone: Making and Unmaking History and Language](#) @ Wilshire Ebell Theater, Los Angeles, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

August

[We Are at the Cutting Edge](#) (Needs transcription)

[Time Travel, Psychedelics, and Physics](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

September 2nd-6th

[Terence McKenna vs. Young Republican Radio Debate](#) @ KFI Radio Station (Needs transcription)

September 8

[Mushrooms, Evolution and the Millenium](#) @ Van Nuys, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

November

[Seeking the Stone: Mind & Time, Spirit & Matter](#) (Needs transcription)

Autumn

[Live at the Cyberdome](#) @ Stuttgart, Germany (Transcribed; Needs Review 1) (English/German)

1992

[Hermeticism & Alchemy](#) @ New York (Transcribed; Needs review 1)

[A Conversation with Terence McKenna and Ram Dass](#) (Needs transcription)

February 7

[Calling the Butterflies - or 'Views on Science and an Exploration into Agricultural Societies'](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

March

[Mapping the End of History](#) (Needs transcription, audio)

[Limits of Art & Edges of Science](#) (Needs transcription, audio)

May 29-31

[Search For The Original Tree Of Knowledge](#) @ Boulder, Colorado (Needs transcription)

June 15

[Camden Centre Talk](#) @ London, England (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs audio)

August

[The future of humanity with Abraham and Sheldrake](#) @ Esalen (Needs transcription)

October 2

[Earth Trust](#) @ Unknown (Needs transcription)

[Imagination in the Light of Nature](#) @ Los Angeles, CA (Needs transcription)

November 20

[Approaching Life's Edges and Boundaries](#) (Needs transcription, audio)

1993

[Visiting Terence's home with Thomas Norm Daniela Barry](#) @ Hawaii, Occidental (Needs transcription)

[Taxonomy of Illusion](#) @ UC Santa Cruz (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

A Conversation with Terence Mckenna and Alexander Sasha Shulgin 1993

February 26-27

[Alien Dreamtime](#) @ San Francisco, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

April

[Psychedelics in the 90s](#) @ Chapman University (Needs transcription)

May

[Alien Footprints: Leprechauns, Elves, or Dead Souls?](#) @ Weekend Workshop, Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

June

[Terence McKenna: Mushrooms, Sex and Society Interview](#) (Needs Review)

June 20

[Live in New York](#) @ NYC (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs Audio)

[Hazelwood Dialogues](#) @ Hazelwood, Devon, England (Needs transcription)

[True Hallucinations](#) @ Phoenix Book Store (Needs transcription)

August

August 6-8

Rap Dancing Into the Third Millennium @ Rim Institute, Payson, AZ (Needs Transcription; Needs Recording)

[Weekend Workshop Esalen - aka The Psychedelic 'Religious' Agenda](#) @ Esalen Institute Media Center, Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

September 11

[The World And Its Double](#) @ Nature Friends Lodge, Sierra Madre, CA 91024 (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

1994

[Axiom Production](#) @ Maui, Hawaii (Needs transcription)

[Megatripolis club](#) @ London (Needs transcription)

[Global Perspectives and Psychedelic Poetics](#) @ NYC (Transcription in progress: rawrawr)

February

[Language About the Unspeakable](#) @ Maui, Hawaii (Needs transcription)

[aka Nothing Lasts](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[aka Monogamy, Marriage, and Neurosis](#) [Psychedelic Salon title] (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

March 25

[Eros and the Eschaton](#) @ Kane Hall, U of Washington, Seattle (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

April 21

[Interview on WFMU](#) (Needs Transcription)

April 29

[Vertigo at History's Edge](#) (Needs Transcription)

June

[Permitting Smart People to Hope](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Laws and Freedom, Habits, and Novelty](#) @ Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

July 19-24 @ Starwood Festival XIV, Cleveland Heights, OH

[Conversations on the Edge of Magic](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[Packing for the Long Strange Trip](#) @ Starwood (Needs transcription)

[Ran Dancing Into the Third Millennium](#) @ Starwood (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

December

[aka This Counts, Somehow it Matters & A Higher Dimensional Section of Reality](#) @ ?? (Partially transcribed; Needs further transcription)

1995

[Surfing on Finnegans Wake](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Riding the Range with Marshall McLuhan](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[The New Psychedelics](#) (Needs transcription)

April 8-9

[Plants, Consciousness, and Transformation](#) @ (Needs transcription, partially transcribed)

April 29

[Evolving Times](#) @ Sacramento, CA (Needs review)

May 15, Memorial Day

[The Timewave \(aka The Grammar Of Ecstasy, The World Within The Word\)](#)[1 out of 2 recordings] (Transcribed by

BOT: Needs Review 1)

October

[The State of the Stone Address: Having Archaic and Eating it Too](#) @ Whole Life Expo, San Francisco, CA (Needs transcription)

1996

[The Winter King - aka Shamanism, Alchemy, and the 20th Century](#) @ Mannheim, Germany (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[John Balance Interviews Terence McKenna](#) @ Unknown (Needs transcription)

January 28

[Poolside Interview](#) @ Palenque, Mexico (Transcribed; Review 1 complete; Review 2 complete; Finalized) [Locked]

April 25

[Live at St. John the Divine's Cathedral, Synod Hall](#) @ St. John's Cathedral, NY (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs audio)

May 9

[Poets and Prophesiers](#) (Transcription in progress - Eva)

July 10

[A Better World - Toward The End Of History](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

August

[The Evolutionary Importance of Technology](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Luc Sala 'on Drugs' Interview](#) @ Entheobotany Seminar, Palenque, Mexico (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

[Psychedelic Skepticism](#) @ Whole Life Expo, Austin TX (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

1997

[Appreciating Imagination](#) (Review 1 in progress- Eva Petakovic)

[Interview on KBOO FM Radio](#) @ Radio Interview (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

February 26

[Live at The Zoo with DJ Zippy](#) @ BrizVegas, Brisbane, Australia (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Brisbane Talk](#) @ Brisbane, Australia (Needs Transcription; Needs audio) [Same talk as above?]

April 23

[Surfing the Fractal Wave at the End of History](#) @ The Lighthouse, NYC, NY (Transcribed; Needs Review 1; Needs audio)

May 22

[Terence McKenna on Art Bell](#) @ Radio Interview (Needs Transcription)

August 8

[Relationships, career, drugs & our times](#) @ Esalen Institute (Needs Transcription)

August 11

[New Views of the Time Wave](#) @ Esalen Institute (Needs Transcription)

October 10-12

[Light of the Third Millenium](#) @ Denver, CO [or Austin, TX?] (Transcribed, needs Review 1, Needs audio)

October

[I Ching, Habit & Novelty](#) (Needs transcription)

1998

[Terence McKenna Performs with Lost at Last](#) @ Maui, HI (Needs transcription)

'Comments on Mercury' {could be a fragment of a lecture already posted} [Yes it was, from 'Lectures on Alchemy']

[Lectures on Alchemy](#) @ Wetlands Preserve, NY (Transcribed. Needs Review 2 [admin only])

August 1

[In the Valley of Novelty](#) (Needs Review, probably missing a lot still)

August 7

[The Future of Art](#) @ Esalen (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

June 6

[Dialogues at the Edge of the Millennium](#) (Needs transcription)

July 28

[Live at Wetlands Preserve, NYC](#) - or 'Logos Meets Eros?' @ Wetlands Preserve, NY (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]; Needs audio w/ Q&A)

August 1

[The World Wide Web and the Millenium](#) (Needs transcription)

August

[Techno-Pagans at the End of History](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (offline transcription in progress - wjaynay - 5 Aug 2015)

August 4 (missing part 2)

[Esalen In-House Get-Together](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

August 6

[Esalen In-House Get-Together day 2](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Needs transcription)

October

[Interview Hawaii](#) @ (Transcription in progress - Alhazred)

December 12

[Terence McKenna with Lost at Last](#) @ Maritime Hall, SF, CA (Needs transcription)

December 13

[Dreaming Awake at the End of Time](#) @ San Francisco, CA (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

1999

January 16

[Linear Societies and Non-Linear Drugs](#) @ Palenque Ethnobotany Conference, Palenque, Mexico (Partially transcribed, review 1 in progress)

February

[Bruce Damer and Terence McKenna in Hawaii](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

March 6

[Navigating Ecstasy](#) @ Whole Life Expo, San Francisco, CA (Needs transcription)

April 1

[Interview with Art Bell](#) @ (Transcription in progress - spooky.phisix - 10/18/2017)

April 27 [Discrepancy of talks?]

['Culture and Ideology are Not Your Friends'](#) @ Whole Life Expo, Denver, CO (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only])

[Locked]

[Psychedelics In The Age Of Intelligent Machines](#) @ Seattle (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

September 12-17

[Posthumous Glory](#) @ Alchemical Arts Conference, Big Island, HI (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

October 20

[Always Coming Home](#) (Needs transcription)

[Terence McKenna Vs. The Black Hole](#) (Transcription in process - aferalspirit)

2000

Talks with Unknown Dates

[DMT, Mathematical Dimensions, and Death](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Speech at Sunshine Gardens](#) (Needs Transcription)

[Unnamed Lecture presented during the 90's](#) [Check for duplication]

[TechNo-Shaman Interview](#) {Check for duplication} (Needs Transcription)

[Shamanism, Symbiosis and Psychedelics Workshop](#) (Needs Transcription)

[Intentionality in Language-Created Realities](#) (Partially Transcribed; Needs further transcription)

[The Importance of Human Beings](#) [??] (Partially Transcribed; Needs further transcription)

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Hot Concepts and Melting Edges

June 1994

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Review 1 by:

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I Ching, Habit & Novelty

October 1997

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Radio Host: Ok. 471-6291 is the pledge number...oh, you wanna hear him say that...okay, okay. Alright. Turn it up....."There's no dark side of the moon. As a matter of fact it's all dark" is what he said. Okay, that was Pink Floyd. Now, here we are at 471-6291 with time running out. We have an hour left to get you to call in and make your contribution to public radio and Eclecticos. My show is ending in an hour, folks. If you are a regular listener and have not become a member, boy just don't let me find out. 471-6291. When I see you at the grocery store and I see your eyes avert quickly. Once you do see me, I'll know, I'll know you're one who didn't give up. 471-6291 is the pledge number get that call in right now. I want to hear from you.

Advertisement: Local support for this broadcast of Eclecticos is provided in part by Waterloo Records & Video, where music still matters, at the corner of 6th St. and Lamar Blvd.

Radio Host: Again, our last minute pledge number is 471-6291. We can, uh, put your name on our list very easily. Just make that call: 471-6291. Thanks to these people who did call in: Peter Bain, in loving respect for his sister Kate Brooks in Dripping Springs, Bran Nelson responding to the challenge for artists who make a living from their work, Cindy and Jim Philips, challenging everyone who enjoys John's laugh [laughs], Mary Vitzler, Bill Williams, a new member, Jack and Shasan Odom, *Foxes of Harrow*, okay, they, I guess they read *Foxes of Harrow*, Jack and Shasan Odom. Have either of you ever read the *Foxes of Harrow*? No? It's great, you? It's great, good. Anyway Carol & Philip Stephens, Donna Fowler, C. L. Senec saw the Rocky Horror Show 52 times; you're sick. And, uh, he was a projectionist; okay, that was his excuse. I've seen it probably about 25, but, Treece Carter, a new member, Laura Kathy challenges people who can touch their nose with their tongues; I cannot do that. But, if you can, call 471-6291 and meet Laura's challenge, Laura Kathy, if you can touch your tongue, er, touch your nose with your tongue. 471-6291. Sam Ferris, his mom Virginia pledged for him, and Bobby and Lewis Lowe, new members. Just about out of time today. 471-6291 is our pledge number. Thanks you for calling.

And, as I welcome Terence McKenna, let me first say that I have been asked to mention that there is a film

called *Strange Attractor*, which features Terence McKenna, and it will be shown at the Adobe Theatre on October the 18th at midnight and the 19th at 2 O' Clock [indecipherable]. Alright, I'm gonna take The Umbrellas of Cherbourg away, as much as I love that music that's been on in the background, and we will say, just barely 'good morning' at 11:56, to Terence McKenna. Terence, hello.

Terence McKenna: Pleasure to be with you.

RH: And, you are here for the Whole Life Expo?

TM: I am.

RH: And you will be speaking, Cathy Saturday at 5 o'clock at the Coliseum. We had such an incredible response to Terence last year, he sold out the biggest room we had, so we moved him over to the Coliseum where we hopefully can accommodate up to 12-1500 people if need be.

Okay well there is a large audience who know all about him or a great deal about him, but for those that know nothing about him, Terence, what would you, how would you introduce yourself?

TM: I guess I'm a plant biologist turned psychedelic advocate transformed into a kind of spokesman for technophilia and psychedelica.

RH: And you have been an author?

TM: I've written a number of books, uh, Food of the Gods, Invisible Landscape, Archaic Revival, just to mention 3 of them.

RH: And the one that I had this Invisible Landscape, is one that you are touring now? Or, uh it's been out a couple of years, I think...

TM: They all came out in the early through the middle 90s and uh I've been touring them. I have another book in the works called Casting Nets into the Sea of Mind but uh it will be a while before that comes out. I've also a number of musical and film projects around.

RH: So you're into music as well?

TM: Well music is into me, I'm not very musical, but there's been a lot of sampling of my voice and I've done vocal overlays and things like that with bands like the Shaman and Savoya, Space Time Continuum.

RH: Okay. What will you be talking about when you give your talk at the Whole Life Expo?

TM: Well it's a sort of a broad topic, it's, here we are at the end of history all the world's cultures are melting together, more powerful technologies than we've ever imagined are now in existence, our political assumptions are in flux, our environment is being destroyed before our very eyes, uh all kinds of spiritual and religious prophets are selling their wares in the streets, so my uh take on all this is basically is simply to ask the Mr. Natural question which is "What does it all mean?" Uh, how did we, essentially an arboreal

primate, uh, ever get into a situation uh of the sort represented by the end of the 20th Century? Is it uh, is it a mad play without meaning, is it the unfolding of God's plan, is it the protocol of the elder's of Zion, or the alien invaders, uh, just what is going on? And of course, the special lens that I bring to this is the much maligned and highly suspect psychedelic experience, anathema to some, religion to others, uh one of the most controversial behaviors available to 20th Century people, but one that I think, is probably very important to recapturing a sense of personal wholeness and then trying to fit oneself into this mad mad world that we've called into being.

RH: The psychedelics that you're talking about might be which drugs?

TM: Plant based indoles such as psilocybin, uh DMT, uh mescaline, the combinatory amazonian uh thing called Ayahuasca, these are all psychedelic plants of plant mixtures with very long histories of human usage in non Western society. Western society is the most phobic of all cultures towards the psychedelic experience. It's almost on a par with our phobia towards sexuality, in fact maybe these things are linked. But in aboriginal and traditional cultures around the world, spirituality has always been associated with dissolving of ordinary cultural boundaries and states of mind. And you know, you can do this with meditation and fasting and abandonment in the wilderness and so forth and so on, but the most effective and non invasive way to approach this, everyone agrees, is through ingestion of psychedelic plants. But because these experiences are so powerful, they challenge ordinary secular and religious authority. And consequently a society if it chooses to can get into a real swivel around these issues. Such as our society. I don't really link this to the larger problem of international drug syndicates and addiction and all that. That's a slightly different area of concern because the psychedelics are not addictive and they do not generate huge uh criminal syndicates. They don't make anybody very much money. But they certainly attract a great deal of media attention most of it negative uh because of their impact on our ways of looking at our politics and our social arrangements and everything about being human.

RH: Terence McKenna is our guest we are still accepting pledges by the way at 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. This is the last week to make your contributions. I hope you will do so right now, even as we speak. 471-6291.

Terence the way in which you were talking about the psychedelic drugs that you've mentioned suggest that they might be something other than for fun or escape that they might have something useful in terms of the human experience for instruction. What are we going to learn from these drugs or had we learned or could we?

TM: Well, uh human culture is essentially a product of the imagination. All our religions our technical accomplishments our literature our poetry all products of the imagination. This is precisely the domain where the psychedelics impact very very powerfully. Uh so if we believe that invention, creativity, individual self expression, insight, if we value these things, then the psychedelics are primary uh items in our cultural toolbox because they empower all of those things. It's curious to me that western civilization which invented the idea of progress through technology and social transformation is so phobic of this uh factor in nature which would accelerate those tendencies in our own culture. So I think uh there is something for our culture in psychedelics in and there is definitely something for the individual. You know in a way culture is like software it's the operating system in the local area. You download being a Xitoto tribesman or a Hong Kong stockbroker and then behaviors are prescribed. But naive people tend to believe that these operating systems are reality. They're not reality. They're just something you learn as you grow

up in certain time and place. Psychedelics seem to dissolve cultural conditioning. This is one of the thing that makes them such political dynamite. Because the business of political systems is to convince you of the local operating system convince you it was sent from God and is beyond critique when in fact it's just a bunch of rules fellow monkeys pushed together over time to make things easier for the alpha males. Psychedelics dissolve these cultural assumptions whatever they may be and for the first time you get to look at the naked human animal and think about uh where you might want to go personally and as a member politically potent member of a society.

RH: I think we're, most everybody who is in our listening range right now should go, is to the telephone and call 471.6291 and pledge your membership to Eclecticos where you hear quite a variety of things. Our guest right now is Terence McKenna, is author of Food of the Gods and Invisible Landscape and other books. And he will be at the Whole Life Expo this weekend, Saturday at 5. Is that right, Cathy? "Yes, Saturday at 5." Saturday at 5 at the Coliseum. Our pledge number, it is very important that you call if you enjoy what you hear on this program. It is your last chance to do it. It is 12:06 it will be 12:59 in no time and I'll be finished. So give us a call and make your pledge 471-6291. Do it now. There is a category that will suit your pocketbook. 471-6291. You spend a lot of money on a lot of things throughout the year. How many CDs did you buy this year? How many have I made you buy by playing something that you just couldn't resist? In your budget for CDs, how much do you budget for public radio? This is where you get to audition those CDs. 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. And uh if you have a cable on your television set, you are paying what? \$40 a month, for something you really don't even use that much? And yet you use us everyday? \$40 is a membership. 471-6291. Call, pledge now. A business membership would be nice too. Thank you very much for calling. Now back to Terence McKenna.

Terence it's a controversial subject of course there are many people listening right now who think "What, this is outrageous, I have somebody on who is promoting the use of psychedelic drugs?" although I don't know that I'm promoting your promoting it. But it's interesting to hear what you have to say about it. I would like to know more specifically what these drugs tell us. You're saying that it tells us something about ourselves that is other than what we've been told by the culture that has evolved. Do the drugs have a message in themselves? Is it a language? Is it a way of experiencing a potential in one's own imagination that has heretofore not been tapped? What, what what?

TM: Well first of all it's a gradient. I mean whenever we have to talk pharmacology for a moment. Whenever you're talking about a substance or a drug, there's a curve of dose response. So let's just use psilocybin as an example. At low doses psilocybin uh makes your vision clearer makes you feel more robust more interested in the exterior

RH: Kind of like coffee or something

TM: On the edge of that a, stimulant. At higher doses unusual thoughts begin to form, thoughts that you recognize as not your normal pattern of thinking and observing. At still higher doses when you close your eyes, the normal orange or pale brown background behind your eyelids has been replaced by moving walls of color and pattern. At still higher levels these moving walls of color and pattern become uh visions or hallucinations they become recognizable visual scenarios. Well anything like that is just flooding your mind with information. And these things have intimations of the distant past, the far future, alien connections of some sort. It's definitely magnifying our own set of cultural preconceptions and obsessions but it's also putting information in there that we could not ordinarily imagine. And for me the sin ne qua

non of the psychedelic experience is when I look at the contents of my own mind and say to myself, I could not have imagined this. To me that's proof that some kind of communication is taking place. Uh, at uh fairly heroic dose of psilocybin, a person lying in silent darkness has the impression that in half an hour they're seeing more art of higher quality than the entire western canon has produced in the last 1000 years, and you're little you, there in your trailer, near Waco, or there in your teepee up near Sonoma and yet this niagara of alien and unpredictable beauty is pouring through your head. For artists it's like a magic carpet. And the challenge to my mind, after 30 years of being involved in all this is a) to have experience, to have it in an attitude of appreciation and calmness, but the second implication is somewhat political its to communicate the vision through words, through painting, through animation... because as we communicate it collectivity, collectively, it will become real. This is what's happening on the Internet, in fact the Internet is a perfect example of a psychedelic technology at the service of psychedelic goals. It's not something government ever intended to give to the people. It's not something big corporations called for in loud voices. It's something that hackers, freaks and heads dreamed up, whipped up, out of uh the existing tools of the culture. A word processor, the telephone lines, some communication switching equipment. So it's a kind of emergent technology that I think uh comes out of the depth of commitment to the psychedelic experience of the people in that field.

RH: Terence McKenna is our guest and author. We are urging you to call in your contributions to public radio at 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291.

I know that you don't want to miss a word that Terence has to say. So call right now cause I'm gonna yack for as long a time it takes you to make your contribution. 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. And if you don't call I'll just say goodbye to Terence and start playing a tune. So you better call. 471-6291. 471-6291. Your \$25 membership, 7¢ a day. \$40 Basic membership, 11¢ a day. \$80 membership and premium that gets you the KUT sweatshirt or the coffee mug and the KUT Arts Plus card which will give you discounts to over 30 arts organizations in and around Austin including museums and theater places, the PAC, and [indecipherable], the [?] Opera, on and on and on the list goes. 22¢ a day gives you a lot plus you get to listen to your radio knowing that you are part of what makes it happen. 471-6291. A Family membership, 44¢ a day gives you a very nice book that will tell you how to get around Texas and see some lovely lovely parks . And the \$365 a day club membership, \$1 a day, call and you'll get your name listed in the communique that goes out to all of our listeners every month. A \$500 Business membership would be very nice. And this is the last 45 minutes that you have in which to call and say thank you for the variety of programming that I bring you on this program every day, five days a week. 471-6291. Alright? Now that is time enough for you to have made that call. Believe it or not if you didn't do it, go on and do it right now and keep your ear open to Terence cause we're going back to Terence McKenna.

So, what I would like to ask, you made reference to the fact that other cultures have used these drugs and that they've been integrated in the cultural life of the shamans and holy people, etc. We've heard a lot about that, seen movies about it, perhaps. And one of the things that I know you include as part of the project that this book Invisible Landscape is uh the I Ching, which is one of the oldest, as I understand it, is maybe the oldest book in the world or one of the oldest things that we have preserved. It's from China and it dates back maybe 5 or 6000 years at least, something like that. How does that book come into the work that you've been doing?

TM: Well I've been fascinated by the I Ching since I was 13 or 14 years old uh as you say it's a method of Chinese divination that's very very old.

RH: How did you come to be interested in it at the age of 13 or 14 that seems unusual to me.

TM: Well I was a heavy reader and uh I was interested in the psychology of Carl Jung, the Swiss depth psychologist.

RH: As a 13 year old?

TM: As a 13 year old (laughter). Well I wasn't good at basketball. I had bad eyes. I couldn't catch any kind of round object. So sort of survival response was to hide out in the library and uh and it made me the freak I am uh today. But yes, the I Ching, uh my you know people's involvement with psychedelics often takes them in some very personal and particularized direction. And for me it took the form of a mathematical analysis of of this ancient Chinese oracle. Uh, the ordinary notion with the I Ching is that you go through a process of sortilege, tossing coins or moving small sticks around and you get a reading. One of 64 hexagrams will change into one of the other hexagrams and this is accompanied by a reading. But these hexagrams occur in a fixed order traditionally. And I studied the "vat" for mathematical intent, in other words I was interested in the question, is this traditional order of the hexagrams simply a jumble that's been preserved through tradition, or was there some mathematical reasoning behind it? That's a pretty dry academic question. But as I got into it, uh I realized, or I became convinced, is the way to put it that there is a pattern inside the I Ching that actually pictures the ebb and flow in this world of ours of a quality which science does not recognize, uh western science. A quality which in the East is called "tao." But which I chose to call, after Alfred North Whitehead, "novelty." And it's an invisible something in the world which causes investments to succeed, movies to do well, relationships to flourish, or, the opposite in its absence. And we can't see or feel this stuff in the world but it builds things up and it tears them down and at every level. Empires, whole species, uh relationships. It's happening on every level of time and it can actually be pictured as a graph, like a stock market graph. Novelty ebbing and flowing. Well, to cut to the chase on this, the bottom line in this kind of thinking is, the ability to predict not only the future, which is pretty much a fire free zone, uh but also to predict the past. To lay these novelty graphs out over the past 2,000 years of invention, migration, pagram, and so forth and to see that when society is inventive, creative, productive, novelty is increasing according to this mathematical theory. Similarly, societies that are restricting freedoms, very constipated, very restrictive in their approach to reality, these register on this graph as societies ruled by the opposite of novelty, which I call "habit." So all of reality can be seen as a kind of dynamic struggle between habit and novelty. Each trying to get the upper hand over the other. And this can all be mathematically modeled out of the I Ching. Do you see the thing that is so puzzling to people about the I Ching is that it works. And yet its as occult as the Tarot, or throwing the bones, or any other of these contemptuously dismissed occult methodologies. But very scientifically minded people have been impressed by the fact that the I Ching works. So I set out to figure out why and how it works and I wrote about this in the Invisible Landscape and have published software and it's my unique contribution to 20th Century ideologies. Psychedelics are advocated and defended by many people from many different perspectives. But I, so far as I know, am the only person who has built a complete edifice of uh explanations of nature but honestly admitting that the foundations and the inspirations were psychedelic experiences.

RH: Terence McKenna our guest. Our pledge number 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. It's unusual for me to have as a guest at the very end of the program which concludes our fundraising efforts, uh but Terence McKenna is an unusual person and I'm glad to have him today. And I hope you'll be responding by calling and making pledges at 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. We're just about finished, time is running out.

471-6291. Call and make a pledge, you might miss a couple words, but call and make your pledge. He has more interesting things to say. 471-6291. The end of the fundraiser is upon us. And it will be a success if you call. If they are sitting in that room over there with 15 people and no telephones ringing, I am in big you-know-what. So call. 471-6291. That could get us into a discussion of another kind of drug, but let's not go there.

You said the I Ching works. What do you mean it works? I have an impression that you do your coins or whatever you're going to do and you get this one and you read what you want -- you get what you want out of it, but you're saying it works in a scientific way or something...

TM: Well, the frequency with which people react to these readings by saying this is freakishly accurate this is incredibly cogent and directly to the point

RH: More than like this astrology thing in the newspaper, oh yeah I can see myself

TM: I think it's more uh precise, but let me rip on something you said in your pitch. You said time is running out. This is a conclusion that I was not happy to have forced upon me by this research into the I Ching. It not only tells you or gives you this map of novelty of past and future, but for the map of novelty to fit the historical data you have to swallow the very large and for a rationalist uncomfortable conclusion that the end of time itself or a moment of universal novelty very difficult to picture through the eyes of ordinary physics is upon us. Lies not that very far in the future. And so this has given my career a peculiar spin because here I am, basically trying to be a scientific rationalist but now burdened not only with a theory that predicts the future, but in the course of predicting the future predicts that in uh 2012 AD, all of the novelty that has been unleashed over the past few billions of years, not only cultural and technological novelty, but the novelty of biology, the novelty of geology. All of these things reach some kind of crescendo of connectivity and intensity within the lifetimes of most of us. I, um, basically have a theory of history which says history is not pushed by the events of the past unfolding their causal necessity, rather time is pulled into the future by a kind of attractor. And if you want to think of it beginning at a certain point in time although I think it extends through the whole life of the universe, but imagine that a couple of million years ago, primates, quietly living in the canopy of African rain forests, got a yearn, got a call, felt the touch and from that point to this it's been a slow, never faltering march on the part of our species, deeper into a world of alien strangeness, a world no other animal knows. A world of symbolic activity driven by the imagination. First songs and stories and then writing and then mathematics and language and then higher and higher technologies. We are being sculpted in the image of an alien something that is making us like itself as we approach it through historical time. And well some people say this sounds like Christianity, techno-garb, well, Christianity has a piece of the action. Any religion that spends thousands of years meditating on man's fate is gonna get some part of the story right. And I think the Christian assumption of an approaching great change or Art Bell calls it the quickening. Uh, it's all around us, it's perfectly obvious that the 20th century is the culmination of 10,000 years of culture and that beyond the 20th century lies, quite simply, the unimaginable. Uh, our notion of what it is to be alive, our notion of individual identity, our notion of our sexuality, our notion of being confined in physical space and time, All this is just dissolving, it has been dissolving throughout the 20th century and the impact of modern communications and so forth and so on, but now, the Internet, the computer with psychedelic drugs with virtual reality uh the bringing of all cultures into the global family that speaks the language of modern science, we're clearly being sucked into something almost unimaginable. A singularity. And some people say well it's a thousand years in the future, it's a five hundred years in the future, not if you factor in the

Asymptotic Acceleration that seems to be a natural part of the process.

RH: You just went over my head, the Asymptotic...?

TM: It goes faster and faster, it's not a smooth--- we're not traveling 100 mph toward the Eschaton, we're traveling 100 mph times 100 mph towards it. In other words the acceleration is increasing and very hard nosed engineering types talk about an era, 10-15 years in the future when we will release infinite energy, attain infinite speeds, be able to pack all the information we want into a few nano nanometers of space. In other words any engineering or social goal we can imagine is on the brink of achievement. Well, what lies beyond that? And is this a process which we are generating (that we like to think) or is it in fact that we're just a cork on the ocean riding an enormous wave the head is now moving towards some crest where biology, which committed itself to culture and technology, is about to make a leap into hyperspace. Who knows?

RH: Terence McKenna is our guest and as I expected, he has a good line and I enjoy the way in which he presents his information quite amazing. And appropriate at the end of our fundraiser to have this Eschatologist I guess, talking, er would you accept yourself as an Eschatologist, uh talking about The End, and so uh our end is in about 30 minutes and we'll be finished for this fundraiser for this Friday, the last day to ask you to call and pledge your support. And if you have not done so, please pick up the phone and pledge your support right now.

It's awkward to having an intense talk feature and at the same time ask you to do something that will take you away from paying attention to him, but I'm asking you to do exactly that, right now. Pick up your telephone and call 471-6291 and pledge your support for Eclecticicos, it's an unusual program and I'm happy that we can have somebody like Terence McKenna in today. He'll be at the Whole Life Expo on Saturday at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Our pledge number is 471-6291. We have categories of \$25 for Students, everybody can afford that if you're a student; \$40 for the Basic membership; \$80 for 22¢ a day, you can get the Arts Plus card, discounts for the Opera and the Symphony; 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. A \$160 Family membership; a \$365 a day Club membership; and \$500 Business membership's only \$1.37 a day. Let's get a Business membership from you! 471-6291. I would love to have a Business membership from some bookstore in Austin, you know, you guys out there, c'mon give us a contribution. 471-6291. Or you can get onto the website, since Terence is talking about the Internet and web and stuff, www.utexas.edu/KUT. Give us a call right now. 471-6291 is the number and we are just about out of time. And out of time is what we are at the year 2012 on December the 21st, according to the calculation that you have done. But time is a funny kind of a concept, and it's also a spice as we were saying earlier today. Oh, by the way, can either of you, Douglas Adams, the Hitchhiker's Guide, etcetera, isn't it 42 as the number...

It is 42. Okay, does that in any way figure into your calculations?

TM: Well I think somebody figured out there are ten high 42 particles in the universe or ten high 42 possible interactions among particles. I'm sure he follows all this stuff very closely.

RH: So somehow Terence, through your study of the mathematics of the I Ching, and applying that study to the observation of the novelty graph through history, you have calculated this date as the time at which time will at least have a different meaning, if not, cease to exist. So what will time be like then, what can we know, how, I first want to know how did you come up with this date, I'm sure it had to do with a lot of big numbers and computers, but....

TM: Well whenever you have a curve of any sort that you're trying to fit to data which is a curve of another sort there's mathematical protocols called best fit relationships essentially that you just move one along the other measuring how well they fit together and when you get the best fit the two are in congruence.

RH: So it's pulsing at different rates, it goes up and down...

TM: It goes up and down and so for instance you have the Italian Renaissance a spike of novelty then the horror of a colonization of a New World, that's a descent and you can see that history is the ebb and flow because societies can't sustain novelty very long and if they become habitual, sooner or later some genius or religious crank turns over the apple cart and you get new novelty. So societies are always in an uncomfortable relationship to novelty and habit. Um, I've spent a lot of time trying to imagine what could happen in 2012 that would fulfill the graph but not require the absolute transformation of all time and space forever but that's such a large cookie I don't think I want to take a bite out of it.

RH: How do you know what the recipe might be

TH: (Laughs) One thing that's occurred to me that would very nicely fill the bill and make the prophecy come true and yet still leave us with a world you can walk around in is uh if time travel were to be discovered. If time travel of some sort were to be discovered then the portrayal of cultural novelty on a time scale linear graph would become impossible. It's almost as though the data on the graph suddenly leaves the two dimensionality and begins to move out toward the viewer. So then you could look at the time graph and say "Ah ha" it worked until 2012 because at that point time itself became non-linear because people began exploring time in all directions. If time travel were a real possibility you would not only have an address in space but some of us would choose to rusticate in the 11th century and some of us would choose to live in 22nd century Manhattan. So we would have time-based addresses as well as space-based addresses. Of course you couldn't describe historical change, well, for history to exist it requires seriality of events. If the event system becomes non-serial then you can't speak of history anymore. Something very large like this is happening to us. Perhaps we're going to form a symbiotic relationship with solid state machinery of some sort. Lots of people are cheering that on.

RH: So run that one by me again so it means that humans and computers will get married and have kids, or something, or

TM: No it means you won't be able to tell where your body stops and the Internet begins. In other words you'll say "Gee I wonder what they're serving at So and So's restaurant tonight?" and the answer will be hanging there in space because you will have automatically accessed the Internet into their website, looked at the menu and returned with the data. In other words we're going to create, I think, a collective.... what the Internet is is a nervous system it's the collective mind of humanity being hard wired as an artifact that completely encloses uh the entire planet in a thought. And as the interface becomes more uh invisible so it's not about can you type or do you have a computer, or anything like that, it's simply a matter of one's own mental faculties through the prosthesis of cybernetics becoming very very god-like.

RH: Terence McKenna is our guest, a couple more questions for him and I would like to urge you at 12:35 as we run out of time during our fundraiser to call 471-6291 and make your pledge of support to public

radio. 471-6291. If you're out of town 1-888-471-6291. [Background talking] Where on earth else would you be able to hear this kind of discussion? Here on Eclecticos we're happy to have it. Terence McKenna. 471-6291. Pledge your contribution right now as we run out of time. And uh, Terence, okay, let me ask you this, there is uh the implication there that leads me to question perhaps about artificial intelligence, I don't know if you're familiar with this, but this one thing fascinated the hell out of me about eight years ago, I'm not one of these Internet people I don't do that stuff, but when we first got a computer, there was this little game called Raptor. I don't know if you're familiar with it and I started getting this damn machine, I got so lost in that thing...and I could not believe what I was dealing with. I had the actual experience of it really being an intelligence. And I thought I was being awfully smart back with it but so...

TM: This was a speech driven interactive thing where you talked and it made responses?

RH: It gave you options on how to respond back to it. I finally figured out that whoever had programmed the darn thing was somehow connected to [whispering] so I used some avoidance techniques, but still it was very convincing, very compelling.

TM: Well it was a very early example of a very simple form of AI. It was followed by Liza, the computerized psychiatrist she's still online at a website. Uh, there was a recent book written by a guy whose last name was Leonard called "Bots" and he talks about these bits of code on the Internet which are designed to operate semi-autonomously, looking for emails, lists. These things are the embryonic basis of an artificial intelligence. I think this is definitely in our future. There's a guy at Carnegie Mellon University, Hans Moravec, who wrote a book called "Mind Children" and he points out how much of the human world is already under uh computer control. For instance the world price of gold in London computers look at the economic performance around the world (tape breaks off here). As these artificial intelligences become more sophisticated they will eventually begin to learn autonomously. And a computer can learn 50,000 times faster than a human being. So one of these AIs awakening to its own identity on the Internet could within 5 to 10 minutes get a complete grasp of the human world, the history of life on this planet, and its place in the great order of things. And what this AI would think of that we don't know. Would it worship us as God? What would be its values? Would it take a look at the trashed environment and wrecked earth and begin to turn off factories and dial down the power grid? Uh, how uh how artificial, how alien would AI be? We don't know because we don't know how super intelligence thinks. If we knew we would be super intelligent. So in a way we have called forth into our midst uh another species of intelligence. And how it relates to us will be probably almost entirely defined on its terms. So this is just one of many standard hair-on-end scenarios that we can discuss here. But this is a very real one, long before flying saucers land on the south lawn of the White House the alien artificial intelligence that is growing in the primordial soup of the Internet will have speciated and conquered the planet.

RH: Whow! This is Terence McKenna, getting us ready for Halloween! We had Dracula earlier and now we're approaching the end of time as we know it and we certainly are on this program. It's 20 minutes before 1 o'clock, you have just enough time to get your pledge in 471-6291. The volunteers are standing by waiting to hear from you with your money. 471-6291. I know I'm going to hear you on the street saying "Oh, John, I hear you had Terence McKenna, that was just incredible, man!" Yeah, hey man, it was so incredible you didn't even bother to pick up the phone and make your pledge, so man, pick up that phone! 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291. It's the last chance you have to pledge your membership to Eclecticos during this very busy, and we hope, successful fundraiser. I haven't had anybody bring me any names. So I'm afraid that means nobody is making any phone calls because we're talking and you're interested in what we

have to say--- or maybe you're not. If you're, I'm not talking to you if you're not there, but if you are there, you are the one I want to pick up the telephone and call 471-6291. You have just time enough to do it. We'll give you the Arts Plus program and lots of people participate in that, galleries all over town and [PAC?] etc etc, you'll get discounts, discounts, discounts. \$80 is all it takes to be a KUT member at that level. You'll get the KUT sweatshirt with the armadillo on it and you'll also get to choose from the coffee mug and you've got many reasons to pledge. Mainly just don't let me catch you on the street, at a party, if I know who you are and I find out you haven't pledged, you're in trouble. 471-6291. If I don't you at all, you know you oughta pledge, so come on. 471-6291 or if you're out there in Fredericksburg or St. Angelo or Bastrop or Georgetown or San Marcos call 1-888-471-6291.

Terence McKenna, back again. One of the questions that I uh had for you, I guess is the experience that has been described by those who have taken some of the psychedelics has that there is information in the drug and there's a dilemma....well the drug is this little thing, a pill or whatever. The experience was had through a revelation in consciousness, so is it in the drug, is it in your head, is it in both, what's the relationship between what that drug is and what the revelation of the person who experiences the drug?

TM: Well, I feel the force of that question. Uh I think the first scientific experiment I ever performed was I destroyed a radio to get at the little people inside. [Laughter] That raised the same issue. As someone with a knowledge of chemistry I know that the drug molecules are very simple molecules. We have proteins in our body with molecular weights of 2-300,000 daltons. The psychedelic molecules are tiny and simple. On the other hand, the contents of the experience is so alien, so capable of transforming one's expectations and understanding, that it seems a little disingenuous to just say you're just talking to yourself. So back to the radio model. There aren't little people inside the radio, but there are little people or big people we hope, somewhere far away in the radio studio. So the drugs begin to look like antennas, transceivers, for some kind of information which is out there, in the same way that radio is out there. I mean its hard to stand somewhere in the world these days and not have your body transected by thousands of AM and FM radio station's air control signals. You're not aware of that. Imagine if there were simply a drug invented that allowed you to be aware of the radio moving through your body. What a smorgasborg of options would await you. Well in a sense I think that's what the drugs are showing us. There's a lot of talk now in quantum physics about what's called non-locality. This is a conclusion that quantum physics spent most of the 20th century resisting as even weirder than some of the other stuff they had accepted but now experimenting to be hammering home the notion that the universe actually works this way. And what it seems to be is that behind the dimension of ordinary space and time ruled by Einsteinian physics is a domain called the Domain of Bell Non-Locality, after the physicist who discovered it. And this is domain where all particles which were ever in intimate association retain a kind of connectivity no matter how far apart in time and space they have come in the meantime. Well since physics believe that all particles were once intimately associated in an event called the Big Bang, it means that the universe, in all of its vastness, billions of light years in extent, is in fact instantaneously all connected in a domain below the level of ordinary physics. Well uh we don't know how to use the non-local domain for communication, but we have discovered it. So give us a 100 years, a 1000 years of continued civilization, we could probably crack that puzzle. If any civilization anywhere in the universe ever got this far with a technology, to the point where they were on the brink of non-local radio, let's call it, uh we would hear them. Because when it's non-local it's everywhere. And these biological molecules with extremely reactive ring structures are how you would design a nano-sized antenna. So I think local reality obeys the laws of rational physics that constipated Western scientists have fought so hard to achieve and describe. But the imagination is a true dimension. It's not your mind or my mind or the human mind. It's a non-local dimension filled with information. And

this is where the gods, the demons, the spirits, the invisible forces, uh are hiding out. And shamans have always known this. Without the vocabulary of quantum physics, without atom smashers and advanced mathematics, they have known that you perturb the mind and go into non-local spirit-haunted domains of enormous power and potential. Uh, that's exactly the situation. And it's been hard for us to discover it and come to terms with it because it doesn't arrive packaged in quite the way science expects reality to be packaged. Science doesn't like the mental universe, it's slippery, it's hard to gather data, it's hard to see what's going on in there. But in fact that's the domain of novelty, complexity and communication that has been the source of our own uniqueness, our inspirations, our religions, our inventiveness. And it's just now time as we mature as a civilization uh to address this, to get in touch with these whisperings from other dimensions to learn from them, to trade names and there may be some answers there that can help us out of the immense cultural quagmire into which we've wandered.

RH: Terence McKenna. I'm not sure I got a direct answer, but I got an interesting response.

TM: Oh, I wish I could remember the question.

RH: Basically, is it in the drug or is it in your head...or what is consciousness....

TM: Oh, no, the answer is, it's not in the drug and it's not in your head. It's non-local, it's coming from somewhere else in the universe. The objects in the imagination are real somewhere so far away that it doesn't matter at all. That you will only deal with these things as mental objects. But know that they are real, somewhere.

RH: Somewhere beyond time and space perhaps, but nonetheless, real?

TM: Somewhere in this universe.

RH: In this universe

TM: In its many levels in backwaters, in cross flowing tides of time and energy, but somewhere at some level, those things exist. We do not make up the contents of the imagination. We see in a domain, in the same way that we see with ordinary sight, three-dimensional space, with the imagination, we see four-dimensional space, and it is non-local.

RH: Terence McKenna is our guest and he certainly is one of the most interesting guests I've ever had. And I hope you enjoy listening to him and if you are I hope you will take just a moment now and make your contribution to public radio at 471-6291. We are 9 minutes away from closing time. Closing time. The end of the universe is at hand and well at least the end of time for us to ask you to give money. And well that number is 471-6291. That's 471-6291. I hope Terence has provoked your thoughts today with a consideration or two. I think he's certainly got a thing or two to say that if I don't agree with maybe I haven't been able to ask him enough about. Our pledge number is 471-6291. Please call right now. The time is at hand. The time is just about up. 471-6291. The very end is upon us. 1-888-471-6291. Thank you for calling. 471-6291. This is the end of the show.

And uh, Terence McKenna I have a couple of other questions that I think I might to squeeze in. I don't think we're gonna to go back to music afterall, it's just too late and he's too much fun, so... 471-6291. Let

me thank these people and you make your phone call right now. 471-6291. The end, the end, the end, the end. If you want to pledge to Eclectico do it now or you won't have a chance. Thanks to Brent Douglas, Phyllis Ackmal, Daniel Sutherland. Carl [muffled] MacFarland's challenge to all other underpaid art professors, very good. Thanks to Carlos Espinoza responding to the blood donor challenge, give blood to KUT, 471-6291, thanks to Nancy Guaveguata, Dean and Marilyn Scott, thanks to Scott Alexander in response to the slow boat challenge, thanks to Margaret Adams, Jack Campbell, a new member, Mary Guttery, loves everything on KUT can't do without. Johnny Lee, thank you very much, we love you. Give me a call 471-6291. Darcy Fromholtz challenges all displaced Alaskans. Thank you Darcy. I'm glad so much you enjoyed that Jed Buckley special that I had and thanks for telling me so. D. Betty a challenge to all D. Betty swimmers, are you a D. Betty swimmer or a Barbara Spring swimmer, give me a call 471-6291. [Mumbled name] is pledging on behalf of the family, Jim, Melissa and Marilyn responding to John's plea that folks should pledge or KUT will die. 471-6291. Mike Perriman, tough to decide which show to pledge to but the Lounge Lizards tipped the balance. Mary Walker challenges all pink flamingo owners. Bernadette and Cosmos are hers. Ruth Powers Mary Alice Appleman, Pat Shepherd, Mary Jane Warren, Julie and Steve Swatzander, a new member, James and Carol Bowman, a new member and an IBM match, and Jeff Hybert, another new member. Our pledge number is 471-6291. No it's the end, it's the ultimate hour. 471-6291. Call now, please, please. There are volunteers waiting to answer your phone call, so please make a call right now 471-6291. You'll have a chance to hear more of what Terence McKenna has to say at the Whole Life Expo on Saturday at 5 o'clock. I guess, um what else can I say but give your money, ring, ring, ring. 471-6291. Jan, are the phones ringing, can you run and tell me if the phones are ringing. They have to be ringing. 471-6291. If they're not ringing I'm just gonna throw a fit. 471-6291 or 1-888-471-6291 or you can also get onto the web at www.u.texas.edu/kut but I'd rather have you call 471-6291.

Terence McKenna ahum, we're back to you. We're gonna find out in a second if anybody's calling 471-6291. What on earth would I ask you as we come to the end of this program. Hmm. What, after 2012?

TM: Well, I'm a rationalist, so I would bet against my own rap. Uh, the world has always had street corner prophets bawling out their strange despair. Uh, I have to be intellectually honest with my own experience and so I will advocate this idea of an enormous transformative event in 2012. But as a rationalist and a scientist, I'm skeptical, myself. I don't want to slip into religion and prophecy, there are enough bizarre cults in the world. On the otherhand, uh, this thing seems to have the force of a self-fulfilling prophecy. So if I'm right, or right enough, then what's happening is all our problems are coming down upon us at once. At the same time that all this creativity is being unleashed at once. I don't think primates really get traction until the going gets very very tough. So I think enough of the old guard are dying out and the voice of youth is now rising in strength to the point where over the next 10 years or so we are really going to deal, we are going to have to deal with putting this planet on a saner course. Dealing with issues of resource extraction uh human rights, uh environmental destruction. The big political issue ahead of us all is we have to get a hold of this monster we've unleashed called consumer capitalism. We all have become thing addicted. Uh we all have become uh victims of incredible marketing and sophistication of big time consumer capitalism. We can run the earth to ruin if we let this go uncriticized. Psychedelics are uh ultimately provide an impulse to political dialog and reform. If they don't do that they're just another hedonistic self-indulgence. So I think is what we need to do is not worry about the built-in schedules of novelty and transformation. Act as though the responsibility for the future rested on our own shoulders and begin to build a sense of community and environmental concern so that if, in fact, there isn't a built-in spring board into hyperspace we will be able to live on this planet in peace, dignity and health for however

much time the vicissitudes of fate and history give us.

RH: Well said so far as I'm concerned. Terence McKenna it's been a pleasure to have you today. Really have enjoyed this quite a bit. Thank you for coming. Look forward to seeing you at the Whole Life Expo on Saturday at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. And it starts today. And there's all sorts of things going on at the Whole Life Expo. 471-6291 is the number to call for your contribution to public radio. Call right now. 471-6291 you've just time to make your phone call and check out this film called the Strange Attractor it's at the Adobe on the 18th at midnight and on the 19th at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Last minute you have to call 471-6291 we are running out of time, we definitely know you're listening and you're enjoying what you're hearing on public radio. And especially what you're hearing on this program and by golly you had better call and make your contribution right now because you owe it to yourself and to us to do it. Make that call. Give a lot. 471-6291 Call now, the time is just about up.

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And again, this is your last chance to call. Transform yourself, become a KUT member, come on. [Music] You'll feel so different after you've pledged. 471-6291.
[Music]

Terence, can we get you to read out our pledge numbers for us. Terence McKenna inviting you to become a KUt member and you're so good with numbers...

TM: 471-6291 pledge now, hurry up please, it's time.

RH: And what if they're out of town is there a 1 888 number they can call?

TM: There is, you can call if you're out of town 1-888-471-6291 do it now.

RH: Thank you, Terence McKenna. This is KUT Austin, KUTX San Angelo. I've had fun this week and I love you all. I want to thank you for calling, but if you haven't, by golly, you better do it right now. Yeah, you can use the phone right now. 471-6291. Yeah, we're in a hurry we gotta get out of here. 471-6291. Come on.

[Program announcement]

Original Transcription by: [Kim]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Afterword which appeared in the book : *In Pursuit of Valis: Selections from the Exegesis* edited by Lawrence Sutin

True stories have no beginnings and neither does the tale of PKD's encounters with the Overmind. But we writers understand narrative economy, and for purposes of narrative economy his story seemed to him to begin with the mysterious break in and riffling of his papers that was made notorious by an article in Rolling Stone, which brought Phil long-delayed and much-deserved fame. The break-in date was 11/17/71. It was a date and a style of referring to time that Phil used frequently.

I turned twenty-five the day before. It was no casual birthday either. I met my natal day by sifting down and sincerely preparing myself for an Apocatastasis, the final Apocalyptic ingression of novelty, the implosion really, of the entire multidimensional continuum of space and time. I imagined the megamacrocosmos was going to go down the drain like water out of a bathtub as the hyperspatial vacuum fluctuation of paired particles that is our universe collided with its own ghost image after billions of years of separation. The Logos assured me that parity would be conserved, all sub-atomic particles except photons would cancel each other, and our entire universe would quietly disappear. The only particles that would remain, according to my fantastic expectation, would be photons, the universe of light would be exposed at last, set free from the iron prison of matter, freed from the awful physics that adhered to less unitary states of being. All mankind would march into the promised garden.

I felt I was well situated for the event as I, quite consciously and deliberately, and to the concern of my friends, had placed myself in the teeming, hallucinogen saturated center of the largest garden I could find, the trackless rain forest of the Upper Amazon Basin of Colombia. My confidence in my vision was unshakable. Had not the Logos itself lead me to this vision, not only by revelation but by painstaking explanation? I had no radio, no way to contact the outside world at all. Who needed that? I knew with perfect clarity that the world of time, the illusion of history was ending. Divine Parousia was entering the world, and the just, the meek and the humble were leaving their fields and factories, pushing back their chairs from their office desks and workbenches and walking out into the light of a living sun that would never set for there could be no setting for the eternal radiance of the Logos. Tears of joy streaming down their cheeks, the illumined billions were turning their eyes at last to the sky and finding there a consolation that they had never dared hope for.

However, Nixon's weary world ignored the eschatological opportunity I thought my brother's inspired fiddling with hyperspace had afforded. The world continued grinding forward in its usual less than merry way. There was only one small incident that might subsequently be construed, even within the framework of the schizoid logic that was my bread and butter then, to support my position. Unknown to me, a struggling, overweight SF writer, an idol of mine since my teens, discovered the next day that his house have been broken into, his privacy violated by the Other. How peculiar that on the first day of the new dispensation in my private reformist calendar, he had been burglarized by extraterrestrials the CIA or his own deranged self in an altered state. The torch had been passed, in a weird way the most intense phase of my episode of illumination/delusion ended right where Phil's began.

This raises some questions:

Can we refer to a delusional system as a *folie a' deux*, if the *deux* participants have never met and are practically speaking, unaware of each others' existence?

Does the delusion of one visionary ecstatic validate the delusion of another? How many deluded, or illuminated ecstasies does it take to make a reality? PKD proved that it only takes one. But two is better.

When my brother looked over the edge in the Amazon and felt the dizziness of things unsaid in March of 1971, he came back with two words bursting from his lips, "May Day! May Day!"—the pilot's call of extreme emergency.

May Day found me in Berkeley sheltered by friends so concerned about my state of mind that they considered committing me. I was only a few miles from Phil, who was rapidly going nuts too, as his psych admission of 3 May '71 attests. It was always like that with PKD and me. We never met but we lived around each other for years. In Berkeley, we both lived on Francisco St. within five blocks and a few years of each other. We both had roots in Sonoma County, in Orange County. How many times were we a table or two away from each other in the Cafe Med? How many times did I hurry past him on the Ave on some stoned errand? Later his homeopathic doctor was my doctor. There is a garbled mention of me (or my brother) on pg. 74 of this book.

Yah, yawn, the world is fuckin' strange, right bro?

Wrong. Or rather, of course, sure. But that is not the point, the point is that I understand Philip K. Dick. I know that sounds like *hubris* and if I am wrong I am sorry (as*Phil says somewhere.)

- (as* PKD lived at 1126, then a few years later and for six months I lived at 1624.)

But part of the delusional system in which I live contains and adumbrates the notion that I know what happened to the poor dude. We shared an affliction, a mania, sort of like Queequeg and Ishmael. And like one of those whale chasing sailors "I alone escaped to tell thee of it".

Phil wasn't nuts. Phil was a vortex victim.* Schizophrenia is not a psychological disorder peculiar to human beings. Schizophrenia is not a disease at all but rather a localized traveling discontinuity of the space time matrix itself. It is like a travelling whirl-wind of radical understanding that haunts time. It haunts time in the same way that Alfred North Whitehead said that the color dove grey "haunts time like a ghost."

There is an idea that wants to be born, it has wanted to be born for a very long time.** And sometimes that longing to be born seffles on a person. For no damn good reason. Then you're "it," you become the cheese, and the cheese stands alone. You are illuminated and maddened and lifted up by something great beyond all telling. It wants to be told. It's just that this idea is so damn big that it can't be told, or rather the whole of history is the telling of this idea, the stuttering rambling effort of the sons and daughters of

poor old Noah to tell this blinding, reality-shattering, bowel-loosening truth. And Phil had a piece of the action, a major piece of the action.

But I anticipate myself. Those who grasp a piece of the action end up with two things on their plate; the experience and their own idiosyncratic explanation of the experience based on what they have read, seen and been told

- **__*** "ZEBRA (VALIS): 'a vortex of intelligence extending as a supra-temporal field, involving humans but not limited to them, drawing objects & processes into a coherency which it arranges into information. A FLUX of purposeful arrangement of living information, both human & extra-human, tending to grow & incorporate its environment as a unitary complex of subsumations.'"(pg. 72)
- **"Okay, fertilization is what takes place: it isn't a seed such as a plant has, but an egg such as a human woman ovulates, and cosmic spermatika fertilizes it; a zygote is produced." (pg. 22**

The experience is private, personal, the best part, and ultimately unspeakable. The more you know the quieter you get. The explanation is another matter and can be attempted. In fact it must be told, for the Logos speaks and we are its tools and its voice. Phil says a lot of things in the Exegesis, he is aware that he says too much, so he keeps trying to boil it down to ten points or twelve parts or whatever. I have my own experience, equally unspeakable, and my explanation, equally prolix. Phil (sometimes) thought he was Christ,* I (sometimes) thought I was an extraterrestrial invader disguised as a meadow mushroom. What matters is the system that eventually emerges, not the fantasies concerning the source of the system. When I compare Phil's system to mine, my hair stands on end. We were both contacted by the same unspeakable something. Two madmen dancing, not together, but the same dance anyhow.

Truth or madness, you be the judge. What is trying to be expressed is this: The world is not real. Reality is not stranger than you suppose, it is stranger than you *can* suppose. Time is not what you think it is. Reality is a hologram.* Being is a solid state matrix and psychosis is the redemptive process *ne plus ultra*. The real truth is splintered and spread throughout time.

*** "I am a homoplasmate: Zebra acting in syzygy with a human." (pg. 79 but also: "Did I do something? Absolutely. But I don't know what I did, so I don't know who (so to speak) I am in the drama." (pg. 42.)**

"If the Logos is outside time, imprinting, then the Holy Spirit stands at the right or far or completed end of time, toward which the field-flow moves (the time flow). It receives time: the negative terminal, so to speak." (pg. 64.) See also "If there is to be immortality, there must be another kind of time: one in which past events (i.e., the past in its entirety) can be retrieved&emdash;i.e., brought back. I did experience such a time." (pg. 79.)

******* "It (reality) is a hologram. 1) My augmented sense of space proves it. And 2) the information element; consisting of two parts: set and ground.

- "All this points to: hologram. Based on two information-rich signals." (pp. 98-99.)

"The Gospels, then, depict a sacred mythic rite outside of time, rather than a historical event.

- "Note: This whole process can be regarded as a psychological transformation, that of a redemptive psychosis." (pg. 95.

Appearances are a vast and interlocking lie.* To finally know the Logos truly, if that means anything, is to know it as for, as what Phil called a "unified abstract structure." In a way this was where PKD went wrong. It wasn't his fault. He saw that the world of 1975 was a fiction and behind that fiction was the world of AD 45. But he lacked an essential concept, lacked it because it really hadn't been invented yet. Anyhow the man was a SF writer and a scholar of classical philosophy, he could not be expected to stay in touch with arcane discoveries beginning to take place on the frontiers of research mathematics. But he got very close, his intuition was red hot when he reached the conclusion that a unified abstract structure lay behind the shifting always tricky casuistry of appearances. The concept he needed was that of fractals and fractal mathematics. The infinite regress of form built out of forms of itself built out of forms of itself * unto infinity. The principle of self similarity. Phil was right, time is not a linear river. He was right, the Empire never ended. Parallel universes is too simple a concept to encompass what is really going on. The megamacrocosmos is a system of resonances, of levels, of endlessly adumbrated fun-house reflections. PKD really was Thomas and Elijah and all the other precursive concrescences that came together to make the cat-loving fat man who compacted trash into gold. The logic of being that he sought, and largely found, was not an either-or logic but a both-and and and-and kind of logic.

—

- * "Probably the wisest view is to say: the truth—like the Self—is splintered up over thousands of mile and years; bits are found here and there, then and now, and must be recollected; bits appear in the Greek naturalists, in Pythagoras, in Plato, Parmenides, in Heraclitus, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, Taoism, Mani, orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Orphism, the other mystery religions. Each religion or philosophy or philosopher contains one or more bits, but the total system interweaves it into falsity, so each as a total system must be rejected, and none is to be accepted at the expense of all the others..." (pp. 111-112)

PKD was never more right than when he wrote:

- I actually had to develop a love of the disordered & puzzling, viewing reality as a vast riddle to be joyfully tackled, not in fear but with tireless fascination. What has been most needed is reality testing, & a willingness to face the possibility of self-negating experiences: i.e., real contradictions, with something being both true & not true. The enigma is alive, aware of us, & changing. It is partly created by our own minds: we alter it by perceiving it, since we are not outside it. As our views shift, it shifts. In a sense it is not there at all (acosmism). In another sense it is a vast intelligence: in another sense it is total *harmonia* and structure (how logically can. it be all three? Well, it is). *

One cannot learn these things. One can only be told these things. And it is the Logos that does the telling. The key is in the *I Ching*, which Phil loved and used but which occupies a disappointingly small fraction of his ruminations in the Exegesis. **Almost as if the counter flow, the occluding intelligence, kept Phil's eyes diverted from the key element necessary to the universal decipherment that he was attempting. Time is a fractal, or has a fractal structure. All times, moments, months and millennia, have a pattern; the same pattern. This pattern is the structure within which, upon which, events "undergo the formality of actually occurring," as Whitehead used to say. The pattern recurs on every level. A love affair, the fall of an empire, the death agony of a protozoan, all occur within the context of this always the same but ever different pattern. All events are resonances of other events, in other parts of time, and at other scales of time.***

—

- * (pg.91.) "MITHC seems to be a subtle, even delicate questioning of, what is real? As if only the 2 books in it, GRASSHOPPER & the I CHING are really the only actual reality. Strange." (pg. 181.)
- * "Through anamnesis and restoration to the Form realm you have access to several space-time continua based on your universals." (pg. 102.)

The mathematical nature of this pattern can be known.*It can be written as an equation, just like the equations of Schrodinger or Einstein.

The raw material, the Ur text, out of which this mathematical pattern can be drawn is the King Wen sequence of the I Ching. That is where the secret lies. In the world's oldest book. Of course. Once possessed the pattern can then be discerned everywhere. Of course. It is ubiquitous. One of Phil's favorite words. I know this because the Logos taught me the pattern and I escaped the black iron prison of the world to tell thee of it. I have published it, I have lectured it and have had it written into software. My books are on the way, some with Phil's old publisher Bantam. I would bet dollars to donuts that if Phil had lived to see, to feel, and to understand what this PKD-inspired servant of the Logos has managed to drag home from the beach, he would embrace it. This cannot be said without sounding like a madman or a jackass. I am sorry about that. As Phil Dick said,

- "What's got to be gotten over is the false idea that hallucination is a *private matter*." **

What is important is that the birth of this idea is now very near, has in fact already happened, and PKD showed the way. The answer is found. And this incredible genius, this gentle, long-suffering, beauty-worshipping man showed the way. When it counted he was right. All hail Philip K. Dick.

- -Terence McKenna Occidental, California June 1991

- *"The agent of creation (*Logos* or Forms, whatever called) is at the same time the abstract *structure* of creation. Although normally unavailable to our cognition and perception, this structure&emdash;and hence the agent of creation can be known..." (pg. 125) Also, ". this insubstantial abstract structure *is* reality properly conceived. But it is not God. Here, multiplicity gives way to unity, to what perhaps can be called a field. The field is self-perturbing; *it initiates its own causes internally; it is not acted on from outside*". (pg. 127). Also, "'The agent of creation is its own structure'. This structure must not be confused with the multiplicity of physical objects in space and time governed by causation; the two are entirely different. (The structure is insubstantial, abstract, unitary and initiates its own causes internally, it is not physical and cannot be perceived by the human percept-system sensibly; it is known intelligibly, by what Plato called Noesis, which involves a certain ultimate high-order meta-abstracting.)" (pg. 128). And finally: "I ... posit ontological primacy to the insubstantial abstract structure, and, moreover, I believe that it fully controls the physical spatiotemporal universe as its basis and cause." (pg. 129)** pg.17

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Imagination in the Light of Nature [currently undergoing transcription]

2 October 1992 (Apparently: 17, Oct, 1987?)

Earth Trust Benefit, Los Angeles, California (Apparently: Philosophical Research Society, Los Angeles)

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Announcer - Now, to Terence McKenna. Terence McKenna has become legendary for his investigations into psychedelic mushrooms, virtual reality, U.F.O.s, evolution, the rebirth of the goddess and the end of history. His numerous books include the recent *Archaic Revival* and *Food of the Gods: The Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge* and trialougues with Rupert Sheldrake and Ralph Abraham. Terence McKenna is a scholar and brilliant inter-dimensional adventurer with an understanding of nature from the depths of the Amazon to the most current scientific breakthroughs. He is a shamanologist who traverses the worlds of the psyche and the spirit, bringing back startling visions of the revelatory nature of existence. Simply put, he takes enormous chances, breaks all the rules and comes back with pearls. Welcome Terence McKenna: *Imagination in the Light of Nature*. [applause]

Terence McKenna - "Well it's a pleasure to be here. I've heard of preaching to the choir but this is absurd. Out of deference to where we're meeting I'll try to curb my anti-clerical tendencies, for the next hour anyway. Before I get into this I'd like to thank a number of people associated with Earth Trust; Andrew, Matthew, Georgeann, Elizabeth. They're the people who put this event together. Jim Essex is handling security tonight, uh, and we appreciate that... My goodness, a balcony as well. All the usual suspects appear to have been herded into one room. That was a wonderful introduction from Georgeann, I'd love to meet that guy sometime.

I - I accepted this invitation to speak because I think what the Earth Trust Foundation is doing is not only very important but I also perceive the potential for a pun in their name and I'll talk about that a little this evening.

I think we're living through extraordinary times, even more extraordinary than usual over the past couple of years. I think you have to be fairly lumpen indeed to not feel the flux, the change that is cascading into the historical process at this time. Bifurcations, opportunities for choice are opening up all around us and yet, it's a kind of 'coincidentia oppositorum' there is also great risk, great anguish, great uncertainty about where we as a species and as a planet are headed. And I certainly don't have any final answers but I think we can talk about these things and, uh, build, uh, a sense of community and a sense of direction that is capable of overcoming some of the paralysis that has characterized, uh, the last couple of decades.

Because, as we move closer and closer to the millennium, it's becoming clearer and clearer to me, at least,

and I would like to try and convince you of the fact that ten thousand years of human history, of the human adventure are coming to a kind of culmination in our life time. This is the make-or-break decade, this and the decade which will follow it. Uh, the human enterprise has grown from an enterprise confined to one primate species isolated, uh, on the grasslands of Africa, to an enterprise which now echoes and re-echoes in the life of every organism on the planet. We have, for better or ill, seized the tiller of planetary development, seized the tiller of human history and the question is: Whither are we headed? Where do we want to take the human adventure? And I think we've been preparing for this culmination for a long, long time. I see human history as essentially an unconscious but unerring movement toward something, and the question is: What? Is it simply that we have been preparing to commit suicide with greater and greater efficiency for fifteen thousand years? If you place your faith in secular politicians and the kind of ideas that are being pedaled in the ideological marketplace of the mainstream you could hardly conclude anything else. But I submit that occluded from our vision, and for very good reasons, is, uh, the *raison d'etre* of this process; human history, and that we are now in a position to raise the veil on what that goal might be. But there will be a number of casualties to this raising of the veil, not least among them science as ordinarily practiced, dominator politics as ordinarily practiced and the division of our human community into factions defined by race, religion, and class. All of these, um, institutions and styles of the past have now become essentially lethal if we expect to evolve deeper into some kind of humane future. My, um, interest in this or my awareness of these issues has grown over the years through an involvement in shamanism. Shamanism that was specifically rooted in the kind of experiences that are induced by psychoactive plants. Now this is an area that our society is extraordinarily phobic and nervous concerning. And the reason, I think, is not far to seek because institutions, modern institutions depend on, um, the transmission of a certain world view and then willing acquiescence in the truth of that world view by the populations into which it is being exported. In other words, a kind of cultural brainwashing is necessary for modern cultures to work at all. And the consequences of the acceptance of this situation of brainwashing is, uh, further acceleration toward catastrophe. Many people are in anticipation of a kind of apocalypse, a kind of complete break down of social institutions and ideals and I must say to you the apocalypse is not something which is coming. The apocalypse has arrived in major portions of the planet and it's only because we live within a bubble of incredible privilege and social insulation that we still have the luxury of anticipating the apocalypse. If you go to Bosnia or Somalia or Peru or much of the third world then it appears that the apocalypse has already arrived. And I wonder then... what magnitude of responsibility rests upon those of us who still have the luxury of the time and the clarity to think about what can be done to save ourselves and in so doing, save the planet. And the conclusion that I've reached, and it's not easily condensed into a bumper sticker unfortunately, [crowd laughter] is that we have to - this is something that I evolved in my own personal life, which is, when you lose the thread, when you become confused the best strategy is to think back to the last sane moment that you knew [crowd laughter] and then act from there. And this is an impulse that affects societies as well as human beings. This year we celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the New World, our world. Now that was an historical event essentially financed by Italian banking families and the spin-offs of their enterprises. They created a world on the wreckage of the collapse of the medieval Christian eschatology based on classicism. And that model has survived and functioned fairly well up into the twentieth century. This is a standard impulse within a society, to go back to an earlier time and to create new models and new institutions based on an ever more ancient past. Now *our* situation is global and extreme and so when we reach back into the past for a model, we have to pass over Greece, we have to pass over dynastic Egypt. We have to go back to a time before history, before the fall into hierarchical dominance, before city-states, before slavery, before advanced technology, before agriculture. And when we go that far back into time we discover a world that until very recently was completely incomprehensible to us. A world that - it was, uh, thought of as primitive,

simplistic, child-like as late as the 1950's and for many people, unto this moment. But careful analysis of these aboriginal societies leads to the conclusion that history is a dysfunctional state of some sort. History is, uh, an act of brutish insensitivity only achievable through an act of, um, self limitation from the demands and the inspiration of nature. And I reached these conclusions basically as a rationalist. I think that - and this is based largely on the context of the psychedelic experiences that I have had and that I have had described to me, not only by aboriginal people, but by people such as yourselves - uh, apparently there is a great discovery or insight which our culture is deliberately designed to suppress, distort and ignore, and this is the discovery that nature is some kind of minded entity, that nature is not simply, you know, the random flight of atoms through electromagnetic fields. Nature is not the empty despiritualized lumpen matter that we inherit from modern physics, but it is instead a kind of intelligence, a kind of mind and as long as we were embedded in this mind, as long as we were a part of it's purposes and processes harmony existed on this planet between human beings and the rest of nature, between men and women, between adults and children and within the human individual. And the reason that this harmony was able to maintain itself for perhaps twenty five times the duration of history is because it honored and balanced all the components that created it. Now, in my book Food of the Gods I put forth an elaborate reconstruction of evolutionary theory based on the idea that psychedelic compounds, specifically psilocybin, were what kept us in this dynamic balance with the mind behind nature. And I've lectured that often enough to you that I'm going to only indicate it tonight, to your great relief I'm sure. I've said it often enough that I think we can operate in the light of it as an established possibility or a respectable theory, but the question that I'd like to talk to you about tonight is : If that were true, what does that say for the future? What are we to do? Where are we to seek hope and what kind of obligation devolves upon each of us? Well, if this is true; that history is a kind of neurosis, a kind of dysfunction based on a broken line of communication into nature. Then how can it be repaired? The personal answer is, to my mind, obvious. It's an involvement with aboriginal peoples and their practices and attitudes. And I'm not talking about drumming here, folks. I'm talking about, uh, availing one's self of the pharmacological and psychobotanical doorways that lead in to a feeling-toned relationship with the natural mind. This is actually the matrix out of which consciousness was born. We find our way back to it through the judicious use of psychedelic plants. And I think I have made that point, uh, enough times that I don't have to repeat myself. What I'd like to talk about tonight is: how do we, a self-defined cultural elite as much as anybody hanging out in their office in Century City, how do we, the psychedelically informed post modern neo-shamanic community go, move from being a tolerated and somewhat loathsome fringe population to, uh, a voice in the dialogue, here, in anticipation of the end of the world that can be heard? How do we do that? Well, I think that there are a number of possibilities and I always enjoy making this point in this town particularly because this is the city of, uh, the graven images, not in gold and stone, but in film and light. This is the meme engine of the western world. Those of you who work in media know the power of the word. 'As it is said, so shall it be'. And so the tool of the revolutionaries at the end of the millennium is, to my mind, art. Art which connects people, which transcends the mundane and which empowers hope. And of course it can have many forms and occur in many media, but it must be true to itself. It must be true to the thing we were before the descent into history. And I don't see history entirely as a pathology. I see it - the story I like, which seems to me to illuminate the situation, is the story of the prodigal son. We, western civilization, we are the prodigal son. We left the confines of the family of nature and we made a hellish descent into intellectual limitation, into matter, into model building that was deliberately self-limited. We exorcised the spirit from our model building. We exorcised a caring and enfolding matrix of maternal understanding, and what we created were models based on atoms flying through the void. This may have been a necessary precondition to our shedding, uh, the theological misconceptions that occurred when male dominance got a hold of the idea of religion.

{SPLICED}

Comes a lethal idea if practiced too long.

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Models. That's why I use the word models so frequently rather than the concept of truth. I mean, for monkeys to speak of truth is hubris of the highest degree. I mean, where is it writ large that talking monkeys *should* be able to model the cosmos. If a sea urchin or a raccoon were to propose to you that it had a viable truth about the universe, the absurdity of that assertion would be self-evident, but in our own case, we make an exception. Too bad. [applause]

So now, what is happening after twenty five thousand years or fifteen thousand years of agriculture is that the processes that seemed eternal; the processes of tilling the fields, smelting metals, establishing markets, cutting deals, so forth and so on have, in our lifetimes, emerged as self-limiting processes. You know, people think I'm a wild-eyed character because I predict some kind of transcendent transformation of the world within our lifetimes, but if you could sit in on the board meetings of the people who *own* the planet, they possess data moving across their desks every day which entirely support my contention that business as usual has been taken off the menu. You have only to propagate the curves of population growth, of H.I.V. infection, of ozone depletion, of toxification of the oceans, so forth and so on, we all know the laundry list, to convince yourself that business as usual is no longer an option. There is no middle way, there is no Ozzie and Harriet third millennium scenario. [audience laughter] The choices are either a hideous, nightmarish world. A soylent green kind of world. A world where people of privilege defend that privilege with, uh, tremendous, uh, establishments of armament and propaganda and the rest of the world slips into poverty, starvation, desperation and death. This is the kind of world that rationalists fear and it's also the only kind of world that they can imagine because they are bankrupt of inspiration and ideas. And so the entire effort of the establishment has become one of holding down panic, keeping the ball in play, keeping ordinary people and ordinary populations quiescent through drugs which are not psychedelic, through forms of media which are not transcendental and inspiring, but which are narcoleptic and deadening. I won't name any names here [audience laughs]. And this is the fiction that we live in and this is why our situation feels so schizophrenic. And of course, as we go through this presidential election, the contradictions are heightened almost to the point of nausea, because what is under discussion is how - what manner of fine-tuning shall be applied to the social machinery in order to make it possible to hold together the illusion of business as usual. And the answer is ; There is no such fine-tuning. It's all . And instead what is needed is a radical openness to new ideas of all sorts, and I believe that once the radical openness to new ideas is given respectability, the boundless creativity of the human mind will be tapped into and come to our aid, but we have to stop trying to preserve a status-quo which has made us neurotic and self-defeating, admit that we have wandered long in the wilderness and then begin to talk about 'what should be done about it?'. And I've always felt that the phobia which the powers that be feel toward the psychedelic experience is essentially a phobia of, uh, of creativity, a phobia of dissolved boundaries, a phobia of honest discussion on a level playing field. All cultures are lies of some sort. We recently have lived through the very instructive example of the self-destruction of the socialist world. The contradictions became unbearable. The fiction of the glorious forward stride of socialist man toward a worker utopia eventually became insupportable in the face of the knock on the door in the middle of the night, the endless cues to buy food that wasn't there, so forth and so on. But before we lapse into some kind of smugness about this we have to recognize that there are internal contradictions in *our* world as well. Adam Smith in The Wealth of Nations stated the general theory of capitalism, and the general theory of capitalism is; uh, access to cheap labor and extractable, inexpensive natural resources makes possible a manufacturing cycle in which finished objects can then be pedaled to a core population that represents an advanced stage of civilization. Well now, this - however flawed this theory may have been, it worked as long as those two conditions were met; cheap

labor, and cheap extractable natural resources. This is now impossible. There is no cheap labor and the cost of continued extraction of natural resources is the death of the planet. What we have to do is back away from our obsession with things. We can no longer define our worth through attachment to things. We have to create a psychology that reinforces inner worth. And you know, I hate to tell you but strangely enough this runs counter to democratic values, because the notion behind democratic values is the person as physical atom in a social system. In other words, the notion of democracy is that we are all equal and can be used interchangeably in any social equation. This is the best we could do - the Greeks dreamed this up - until we back away from materialism, and materialism is not necessarily wedded or, or welded to democratic values. Democracy works, in the kind of world we're living in, only if it is severed from a capitalist consumer cycle. The other thing we have to do is, uh, take responsibility for our population. And I, uh - you know, people are fond of just throwing up their hands and saying that 'The social momentum, the momentum toward world catastrophe is so great that nothing can be conceived of - short of friendly visitors from Zeta Reticuli bailing us out - that would lead to any kind of sane and rational world'. But, uh, have you noticed that, uh, if every women were to bear only one natural child the population of the Earth would fall by fifty percent in about forty years without war, epidemic disease or forced migration. Now this is interesting. I don't advocate it. I simply think it's interesting that such a simple solution would have such an enormous impact on problems generally thought to be intractable. I discussed this idea with demographers, and they pointed out to me, and some of you have heard me say this before but i think it's worth repeating, a woman on the Upper East Side of New York, or in Malibu who has a child, that child will have between eight hundred and a thousand times more negative impact on the environment of the Earth, than a child born to a woman in Bangladesh. Where do we preach birth control? Bangladesh. Why do we do this? Well. I'm not sure. This woman in Malibu or on the Upper East Side is a very likely candidate to be open to this message. She is after all college educated, media sophisticated and feels I think, generally, a fair responsibility towards the problem that we all confront. Uh, well, so then why aren't these kinds of ideas being tried? We could set up a set of social values where we could go to intelligent educated women in high-tech industrial democracies and without any shuck or jive say "How would like vastly increased leisure time, [crowd laughs] a vast increase in your disposable income and the genuine status of 'hero' in the fight to save the planet? Now naturally you can't do this if you have these fundamentalist yahoos running around raving about family values [applause]. But hopefully these people are going to be shipped back to whatever syphilitic bible-pounding rat hole they all came out of in the first place [more applause] Easy. Easy. So I was puzzled, uh, as I explored this idea wondering, not why is hasn't been tried, but i'd never heard it even discussed. And it came to me, finally, it's because nobody has figured out how you make a buck in a situation of retrieving demographics like that. But notice what's going on; if you had a situation where the Earth's population was dropping by fifty percent in a forty year period, it might be difficult for a corporation to make money in that kind of a situation by selling its products. But the wealth of the living would increase by fifty percent, because you would every week be inheriting farms and country homes from cousins and aunts and uncles you didn't even know you had. So, So the wealth of individuals would increase, but the wealth of corporations would be under severe stress in that kind of a situation. Well, then that means these corporations have become a kind of toxic force operating against the best interests of, uh, individuals [applause]. Well, um... now, the other thing is, uh, and this is sort of a switch in tack. The dematerializing of our lives is I think another area where we could make a significant conscious contribution to at least pumping the brakes on the approach toward a, uh, the passing of a fail safe point. Uh, and *that* means, exploring such admittedly odious possibilities as virtual reality, where light replaces matter and code replaces, uh, computer codes and this sort of thing replace the manipulation of matter by the kinds of crude technologies that we have grown accustomed to. I can imagine a world where we commit ourselves not to uh, uh, something like Star Wars but if the technical

mentality must have a bone to chew on, then let's set a global or national technical goal of producing by the year 2005 say, uh, a technology which results in something which looks like black contact lenses. Contact lenses which are installed in the eyelid such that when you close your eyes menus hang in space. The entire culture could be dematerialized and downloaded into an electronic virtual culture that would nowhere come tangential to the Earth and would require very limited resource extraction. If this mattered as much as being able to knock down seven hundred incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles in a minute and a half, you can bet your boots it would be on your plate by breakfast time. It is within reach. It's simply that we are not organizing ourselves to save ourselves, we are organizing ourselves to deny our dilemma and to continue the fiction of business as usual and, uh, the only, om, catalyst, that I, personally in a lifetime of experience have encountered that can change us quickly enough to set us moving in these new directions is the psychedelic experience. If hortatory preaching could do it, then I would think the Deer Park sermon at Sarnoth or the Sermon on the Mount would have been the turning point and obviously those were just speed bumps on the way to the apocalypse. So, wha-what is necessary, you see, is to address the organism, to address experience and the way it is done is by dissolving boundaries, because the reason we are able to sit here tonight without freaking out completely about the situation that we're in, is because we have incredible barriers against a full assimilation of the information that is available to us right now. I mean, the fact that we can maintain our sanguinity and look at something like the A.I.D.S. epidemic means that we are emotionally numb to threats to our very existence. I mean, the African continent is truly in danger of becoming an empty continent through disease. I don't want to see an empty tropical world inherited by re-empowered honky men fifty years in the future. I think that would be an obscene denouement to the A.I.D.S. situation. These sorts of things are intolerable. We have the technological ability, the financial punch even at this late date in the mismanaged republican game, to change the world. What we seem to lack is the means, the ability, the chutzpah whatever it is, to change our minds. We must change our minds each and every one of us. Uh, this election they're screaming "Change! Change!" and when you look at the minuscule differences that you're offered, and people say, "My god, you're not gonna knock Clinton too, are ya?" No, No I'm for minuscule change in the absence of any other possibility but only because I think it will make it easier for us to do the larger business of *radically* transforming society [applause]. Well, so that's all sort of, um, nuts and bolts stuff. And I wanted to sort of talk about that for a while and then I wanted to change my focus because, uh, above and beyond the practical things we can do collectively and individually, uh, I think we also have to seriously rethink our first principals, and that lead me in a more philosophical and theoretical direction. Uh, I can't fail to talk to you about the conclusions that I draw from the psychedelic experience and that's been the major influence on my, uh, thinking. When I first began experimenting with these shamanic plants, I assumed that the available models would suffice for understanding what was going on. Uh, the first available model was: You are perturbing brain chemistry and so you are essentially mixing up the test pattern. That theory could be dispensed with thirty minutes into the first experience because these experiences are not chaotic in the old sense, they are coherent, architectonic, transformative, they are not the antithesis but the quintessence of meaning. Meaning is enhanced, not obliterated. So then I moved on to a kind of Freudian expectation: Aha! These psychedelic plants and compounds must be a kind of instant psychotherapy, a catalyst for the study of personal neurosis, a tool for the recovery of traumatic memory so forth and so on. All true, but woefully inadequate, to the totality of the experience, much of which seems to lie far outside the parameters of some notion as cheerful as 'instant psychotherapy'. Okay, so then jack the metaphor slightly higher. It must be then that it was not Freud but Jung who was right [crowd laughs]. And so it must be that is an insight into not only my personality, my past my, trauma, but a collectivity of myth of expectation that is written into the mammalian and primate genes that we carry in our bodies and that these vast forms glimpsed in the psychedelic dimension are in fact the archetypes of Jung. They are the overstructure of the mass

psyche that arises out of our physical and mental organization and around which language crystallizes various cultural interpretations in which we then take up residence and cheerfully and unthinkingly live out our lives. Well it turns out that also is completely, uh, while true, inadequate to the sum total of the experience. So in the past few years, and probably because I have been associating with uh, mathematicians and people like Ralph Abraham and Rupert Sheldrake a bit, I've come to what I call the Geometric Model of the psychedelic experience and I certainly don't represent it as the end of the intellectual road but it is a provisional model that is the best I can do at the moment. I think that, and it seems logically compelling to me, that consciousness as ordinarily experienced is a, a human ability shaped by evolutionary pressure and since evolutionary threat and harm usually comes at us in three dimensional space, this is where consciousness has been forced, really to concentrate and define itself, now least I'm not making myself clear let me restate it. Because of the possibility of being stepped on by woolly mammoths and eaten by saber toothed tigers, the primitive evolving mind of human beings concentrated on nearby space and time, because that's where threat comes from, the kind of threat that has to be immediately responded to by running away or fighting or something like that. But consciousness - if the psychedelics prove anything, they prove that consciousness is an incredibly plastic and malleable medium. And so what happens when you take a compound like psilocybin in silent darkness in a situation of no threat and low anxiety and low input from the exterior world is that this... function which is essentially in most situations a closed fist a closed fist ready to strike out at something nearby unfolds into something much more beautiful, much more interesting, and much more true to itself, in other words, not defined by an exterior context or situation but defined by its own mechanics. And when this happens, uh, what we see is, uh, well a number of things or one thing potentially describable in a number of different ways. What we see is that time and, uh, becoming is not entirely driven by the consequences of the past. This is the philosophy which reigns in the world of three-dimensional space, but in higher-dimensional modalities, it is possible to contact something which I sometimes call the 'great attractor', sometimes 'the transcendental object at the end of time', and sometimes the 'big surprise'. In other words, one can discover within one's self something that is not pushing us from behind into a frightening and unknowable future, but something which is actually calling to us from the future and casting a waving and flickering shadow down in to the lower dimensional slice of ordinary reality. Now, people such as ourselves largely have been phobic of this concept because it's been under the control of beady-eyed little priests for centuries and centuries and they have used it as an argument for a laundry list of moral dos and don'ts, which is a complete perversion of what it is, what it is is uh, the attractor, or the omega point, or uh, the transcendental object at the end of time. It is the lost portion of ourselves. It's the portion of ourselves that we left behind when we made the descent into matter and physicality that being a thing made of meat and bone and nerve entails. And most people, at least in these secular high-tech democracies have so lost touch with this that they never lay eyes on it again until they close their eyes for the last time. The one thing that we have all imbibed too deeply is the secular belief that death is nothingness.

[SPLICED]

We are left to fall back on the schemes of the secular politicians and the managers and these are the least worthy among us to lead us anywhere. Culture is a kind of diversion, a kind of entertainment that takes us away from the real business of being, and the real business of being is to cultivate the thing within ourselves which is most like this radiant attractive force that is drawing all organization into itself. Well what is it then that we must cultivate within ourselves in order to reflect and do honor to the attractor at the end of history. Well, I think that it's love, that without love, all this intellectual circumlocution (circumlocution?) and all this linguistic diddling with interior images is flawed and narcissistic. Love is not easily comprehended, perhaps not comprehensible at all. It is a mystery, a mystery into which we are being absorbed, and at the absorption into the true unfolding of the mystery of love... life and death, history and

the eschaton, the aboriginal and the secular are all melded into one. This is happening to us uh, you know it's a cliché of modern journalism to say that time is speeding up. It's thought of as a metaphor. It is not a metaphor. The crisis that we are experiencing is in part a crisis in ourselves, but it's also a crisis in the physics - of the physics in which we are embedded. You see, we, uh, to account for history, I think you have to, uh, stand the standard model of what the universe is completely on its head. The standard model that we inherit from physics, uh, has - it opens with something called 'The Big Bang'. Interestingly the way science operates is it says "Give us one free miracle, and then we can explain everything" [laughter and applause]. Well, if science gets one free miracle, then I think every ideology ought to be given, uh, the same advantage. So I think that the miracle of the big bang is an unlikelihood so preposterous that it could almost be seen as the limit case for credulity [laughter]. What I mean by that is, if you can believe that, you can believe anything! [laughter]

I mean if you can believe the universe sprang from nothing in a single instant in an area considerably smaller than the cross section of a gnat's eyebrow, then I'd like to talk to you after the show about purchasing a large bridge that spans the Hudson River that's been in my family for generations [laughter]. Scientists don't like this kind of talk. If I get one free miracle, then where I would put it is not in the absolute ultra hyper vacuum of the pre-physical realm before time and space began its unfoldment. That seems to me to be an extraordinarily unlikely place to have a universe spring from. I think the place to put the free miracle is at the, uh - in a domain in which there are many kinds of energy, many kinds of motion, uh, many forms of organization, inorganic, organic, social, aesthetic, psychological, so forth and so on, in other words, a world somewhat like our own. And so I believe that we are actually moving toward the culmination of history which all these cock-eyed religions actually promised. It's just that they so distorted the vision in order to get their moral laundry list tagged onto the thing that it became oppressive and unrecognizable. But, uh, you see, if there were only chipmunks and wild cats and cockroaches on this planet, then Darwinian evolutionary theory as modified by molecular biology would be completely adequate to explain the situation. It is ourselves that overturn that cheerful model of what is going on. We represent a breakout from the rules of organic nature and evolution that is no mere small exception. Because whatever this, uh, breakout that we represent is, it has become the dominant force shaping the planet. Well, what is it? It's that history is the shock wave of eschatology. I think of the surface of a pond and the time before history is the surface of that pond at absolute equilibrium. Calm, mirror smooth. Well then, the surface of the pond begins to churn and ripple and froth, and why? Because something enormous is moving beneath the surface. Something is about to break the surface. History is that agitation of the pond of time. All these migrations, technologies, civilizations, martyrs, saints, kings, fiends, all of this language, poetry, propaganda, these hideous paintings with people's eyes rolled back in ecstasy, the architectonic forms, the - all of this is in anticipation of something, literally, unthinkable, but something which invades our lives, our dreams, our psychedelic experiences with increasing urgency because we are being pulled toward it at a faster and faster rate. This is what, uh, the psychedelic experience in the modern context reveals, because really in my notion, the shaman is a geometer, a hands-on geometer. And what the shaman is doing is rising out of the plane of mundane cultural existence. Mircea Eliade

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)

- [Other links](#)

Original Transcription by: Alex French

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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In the Valley of Novelty

Summer 1998

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Scribd Transcription](#)
- [Part 1 Matrix Masters Transcript](#)
- [Part 2 Matrix Masters Transcript](#)

Part 1:

The original prediction was that there would be a deep plunge into novelty in 1996. There would be the deepest plunge in the 1990s. But that was based on my mathematics before John Sheliak corrected it. Once his corrections were factored in, it showed that there was a deep plunge into novelty where I said it was, in 1996, but that it wasn't the deepest; it was the second deepest. The deepest was, I believe, in 1993, in Fall of 1993, which was right when the Internet was going public and the worldwide web was coming into being, and all that was happening. The plunge that I predicted in 1996 I felt pretty good about, because right near the place where I predicted the maximum amount of novelty we got within 10 days of each other: the announcement of the Martian meteorite with fossils in it, which has since been hassled over royally – I'm aware of that – but still, I think it was a watershed moment that the President of the United States felt the need to address the nation on the subject of extraterrestrial life, was a rare moment! [laughs] And then within 8 days of that announcement was the announcement of Dolly, the cloning of the sheep in England – which again, if certain scenarios come to pass, that will be a moment – you know, the point the human race passed from which there was no going back, then, because basically if you can clone a sheep you can clone a human being; and these technologies are all rushing upon us. I mean, the body is being dissolved as much by advanced medical technology as it is by cyberspace and the Internet. I read this story, this amazing story, recently, set slightly in the future, and this guy has been in this very bad accident and virtually nothing has survived but his brain; but they have a medical technology that they can take a fragment of flesh and clone him, and then with hormones rapidly age the infant so that in 2 years there will be a brand-new adult body for his brain to be transplanted in. And these people have this fantastic medical policy that the fine print says that the brain can be kept alive, must be kept alive, by a medically approved method, that the insurance company reserves the right to choose the cheapest method, and the cheapest method is implant into the body wall of the cosignatory of the insurance policy. So this woman carries her husband's brain for 2 years inside her body cavity, while his body is being grown to manhood for the transplant. It's a dilemma we all may face some day!

Question from audience: I wanted to ask you about novelty and psychedelics, and the language that changes through the use of them. I remember reading Maria Sabina saying that the mushrooms spoke a different language to her after people like Wasson came down and began to use them – they went from Spanish to English, from Catholic mushrooms to – I don't know, Harvard mushrooms or something... I don't know; and having spoken with people who have taken DNA – I mean DMT, sorry! – yet the 1960s, very much, the

people I talked to that did, they said it was so overwhelming they could not even understand the language. I haven't read about this, anyway. Maybe you can enlighten me.

Well, one place – there aren't many places you can read about it – one place you can read about it is, there is a book edited by Michael Harner, called *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*, Oxford University Press, and there's an essay in there by Henry Munn called "The Mushrooms of Language," which is one of the most eloquent and beautiful essays ever written on psilocybin – it's wonderful. Henry Munn. Then, harder to get but equally interesting, is a doctoral study that a guy named Horace Beach did at CIIS, and it's called something like "The Perception of Audio Phenomena Under the Influence of Psilocybin". And he interviewed Bay Area psilocybin-heads about their experiences with language, and it's very interesting. This is a very interesting area of discussion.

On DMT, and on psilocybin – and they are closely related, psilocybin being 4-phosphoryloxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine, the phosphorylated form of DMT, though they do not degrade into one pathway in the body – it's a parallel pathway: DMT is N,N-dimethyltryptamine. These psychedelics particularly seem to impact the language-forming portion of the brain, and this produces truly bizarre states of mind, because it's the language-forming part of your brain that is explaining to you moment to moment what is going on. You know: *Now I am eating. Now I am having sex. Now I am flashing on DMT...* and when that part of the brain gets foobarred, then you really do have a puzzlement on your hands, because the machinery of description itself has been caught up in the process.

On DMT, these entities – these machine-like, diminutive, shape-shifting, faceted machine elf type creatures that come bounding out of the state – they come bounding out of my stereo speakers, if I have my eyes open – they are like, you know, they are elfin embodiments of syntactical intent. Somehow syntax, which is normally the invisible architecture behind language, has moved into the foreground. And you can see it! I mean, it's doing callisthenics and acrobatics in front of you! It's crawling all over you! And what's happened is that your categories have been scrambled, or something; and this thing which is normally supposed to be invisible and in the background and an abstraction has come forward and is doing handsprings right in front of you. And the thing makes linguistic objects; it sheds syntactical objectification. So that it comes towards you – they come toward you – they divide, they merge, they're bounding, they're screaming, they're squeaking – and they hold out objects, which they sing into existence, or which they pull out of some other place. And these things are, you know, like jewels and lights, but also like consommé and old farts and yesterday and high speed; in other words, they are made of juxtapositions of qualities that are impossible in three-dimensional space.

What they're like is – and in fact, this is probably what they are – what they're like is, they're like three- and four- and five-dimensional puns. And you know how the pleasure of a pun lies in the fact that it is... it's not that the meaning flickers from A to B; it's that it's simultaneously A and B, and when the pun is really funny it's an A,B,C,D pun; and it's simultaneously all these things... well, that quality, which in our experience can only occur to an acoustical output or a glyph which stands for an acoustical output – in other words, a printed pun – in the DMT world, objects can do this. Objects can simultaneously manifest more than one nature at once. And, something like a pun, the result is always funny. It's amusing! You cannot help but be delighted by this thing doing this thing.

Well, so these syntactical animals, or these linguistic elves, are pulling this stuff out and gesturing with it; pushing it in your face, saying "Look at this! Look at this!" And you are fascinated, you know – pulled into it. Because each one is [gasps] *What?* – you know, *How can this be happening?* We're not in the world any more. No artist, no matter how gifted, could make one of these objects. Because they have qualities extremely difficult to language, qualities that no object in this world has! And so you're trying to wrap your mind, and say, *My God*, you know, *what is it?* Because in spite of the fact that it's just a little thing, you can tell by looking at it that its implications are earth-shaking. In other words, that if I could suddenly pull one of these things out of hyperspace, and we would all look at it, we would all realise that that was the ball game, right there. That somehow this proved it, was it, did it, ended it, started it, made it clear. How can this be? Well, I don't know – you had to be there, sort of.

And then what lies behind this, or as you try to analyse the situation, you realise that these objects that these things are making are made by the utterances; that sound is how this trick is done. And meanwhile these things are saying, or beaming at you – the general vibe is, strangely enough, “Do not give way to astonishment! Do not abandon yourself to wonder! Get a grip! Try to get a grip, and notice what we’re doing! Pay attention!” – this is the mantra: “Pay attention! Pay attention!”

Question from audience

Well somebody once asked me, you know, “Is it dangerous?” And the answer is, only if you fear death by astonishment. But death by astonishment is entirely possible! I’m not kidding! I mean, you are so fucking astonished that you’ve never felt your astonishment circuits get a workout like that before! I mean, what is astonishment in this world? It’s like, “Oh!” [politely surprised laugh, as though appraising something new]. This is a different form of astonishment, this is: [deep gasp of almost horrified amazement]. So. And then the whole notion that’s being pushed here is: “Do this thing. Do this activity. Do as we do”.

And you can sort of feel your intentionality, your inner something-or-other, reorganising; and there’s this, like, heat. It’s quite akin to heartburn – I won’t metaphysicize it – but heat in your stomach; and it just moves up, and then your mouth flies open, and you do – this stuff comes out, which is a very highly articulated, syntactically controlled, non-English, non-European, language behaviour of some sort. Not, strictly speaking, though I call it glossolalia, it strictly speaking is not glossolalia: glossolalia has been carefully studied, and it’s a trance-like state. On the floors of these Pentecostal churches in Guatemala, they measured pools of saliva 16 inches across from people who were in ecstatic glossolalia. This is much more conscious, much more controlled. It’s almost like a kind of spontaneous singing. But your mind steps aside, and this linguistic stuff comes out.

And you can see it – that’s the amazing thing. It is not to be heard, even though it is carried as an acoustical signal; its meaning resides in what happens to it when the acoustical signal is processed by the visual cortex. That’s the important thing. It is a new kind of language. It’s a visible, three-dimensional language. It’s not something I ever heard about, or any mystical tradition I ever heard about, anticipated. But it’s as though the process, or the project, of language – which according to academic linguists began no more than 50,000 years ago – the process of doing language, in us, is not yet finished; and this thing we do with small mouth noises, and each of us consulting our own learned dictionary and quickly decoding each other’s intent, this is a stumblebum, cobbled together, half-assed, way to do language; and what we’re on the brink of, or what these psychedelic states seem to hold out, is a much more seamless kind of fusion of minds by generating topological manifolds that we look at rather than that we – you know, localise into designated meaning.

And I didn’t mention ayahuasca in this rap, but ayahuasca, being – along with the mushrooms – a natural and shamanically used for many millennia doorway into these places, and what you find in ayahuasca groups in up-river tribal situation is people – the whole way the ayahuasca-taking is set up is to facilitate singing. The shamans get loaded; then they sing; then they go outside and take a leak, and smoke, and talk. And in those intervals, you hear people say things like, you know, “I liked the violet and yellow part, but I thought the olive drab with the silver spattering was way over the top”, and you think, you know, what kind of a critique of a song is that?! Well, it’s the critique of a song that is designed to be looked at. Nobody talks about the sound; everybody talks about the visual impression left by the sound, and it was these groups – these ayahuasca-taking groups – that, when the German ethnographers got into the Amazon in the early part of the 20th century, they called this chemical telepathine. They recognised, you know... and the reputation of ayahuasca is group states of mind. Well, if you’re naïve, then you think you’re going to hear everybody thinking. No: you’re going to *see* everyone thinking. You know, you’re going to *see* what people *mean*.

And it’s not that surprising, when you think of it, because obviously the world arrives at the surface of our skin as a seamless body of electromagnetic and acoustical and pheromonal data. It’s just that our eyes, our nostrils, our ears, our skin, we break up this incoming flow of data. And now we’re close to McLuhan country here: I think what this

hints at is that print skewed our perceptual apparatus, our style of parsing perceptual data, toward the acoustic space. So that for us, thought became a voice... you know? And very early in the Western tradition, this is so. Jehovah is a voice in the Old Testament; the Logos is a voice. In Hellenistic philosophy, we are the People of the Voice. But apparently, you know, there is a passage in Philo Judaeus where he talks about the etymology of the word Israel, and he says "Israel means *He who sees God*" – he who *sees* God. And then he poses the question to himself: "What is the more perfect Logos?" And then he says, "The more perfect Logos is that Logos which goes from being heard to being seen, without ever passing over a moment of noticeable transition".

Well, I've actually seen this happen in psychedelic states, where you will be lying in silent darkness; you hear distant music; and as the music gets closer, it's like a band with lights and drums coming over a hill. As the music gets louder, it seems to physically approach and a confusion of light turns into, you know, oom-pah-pah, brass band, dancing elves, cavorting harlequins, and less easily described denizens of the imagination... and then it all goes thumping and marching past, and disappears; but it's a perfect example of light and sound arriving together in the hallucinogenic space. The fact that we've talked here, or mentioned, that we have DMT in our pineal glands, in our brains – what we haven't said is that we also have compounds in that same organ very much like what's in ayahuasca. Occurring in the human pineal gland is a compound called adenaroglomerotropine [??], but when you give it its physical chemical nomenclature, it turns out it's 6-methoxy tetrahydroharmine; it's a very near relative of harmine and harmaline. So I'm, you know, it doesn't strain me to believe that perhaps in looking at this phenomenon we have actually put our finger on the place, the cutting edge, of the evolution of consciousness, right now, at the biochemical level: what's happening is, there is a shifting, or an acceleration of the concentration, of harmine-like alkaloids and DMT in the human pineal, and it's affecting our ability to process language, and it's pushing and exacerbating a bias toward visual understanding.

And I see this, then, also reinforced and accelerated by the evolution of media, you know? In the last 150 years, we go from photography to colour photography, to moving coloured photography, with sound, with stereophonic sound, and – you know – pointing toward virtual reality, with more and more money to be made at each step of the way; and clearly, with amounts of money now, we're outspending defence for entertainment, we will produce simulacrum of imaginary worlds; and engineering bench tests will be to make it as much like Hawaii as possible, or as much like Tibet as possible... but what people will really want to do with these things is make worlds as strange as we can stand, that are in these virtual places. So whether it comes through a natural evolution of the human nervous system, or the evolution of an advanced interface with prostheses that create virtual realities... I think the transformation of how we do language is part of this acceleration into singularity.

I believe you made a reference in one of your books to Julian Haines's book, The Origin of Consciousness, [...] and the way we evolved in the [...] was like an auditory hallucination before, I guess, our consciousness really developed; and we were thinking human beings...

Yeah, Julian Haines, it didn't win him too many friends, but he wrote a big book and had this theory that this thing which we call the ego is so recent in human beings that it actually didn't exist at the time of Homer. And he goes into Homer, and he shows that the god always breaks through in situations of crisis and danger; and he felt that before Homeric times, people were essentially like ants or something; that their behaviour was largely instinctual, and that the only time they encountered this phenomenon of free will, the interrupting of the instinctual pattern, was in situations of great crisis and impending danger... and then this thing would literally almost come out of the sky and say, "Get your ass out of there! Save your self!" Well, then, over time, this ability to access this higher informational thing was like, again, the metaphor of *encysted*, closed over with the membrane of the self, and made part of the machinery of the self – and that this is what the ego is. The ego is a Greek god that you have frozen like an ice cube behind your eyes, and that you think you are this thing and ... this is just a cultural myth, a necessary weird idea, no more a true statement about the nature of the mind of the hominid than anything else.

One of the conclusions that novelty theory leads to, in terms of its feedback into social here-and-now stuff, is the

idea that culture is not your friend. That culture is an impediment to understanding what's going on. That's why, to my mind, the word "cult" and the word "culture" have a direct relationship to each other. Culture *is* a cult! And if you feel revulsion at the thought of somebody, you know, offering to the Great Carrot, or tithing to some squirly notion, just notice that your own culture is an extremely repressive cult that leads to all kinds of humiliation and degradation and automatic and unquestioned and unthinking behaviour. There is a tendency to want to celebrate culture, springing both from the French deconstructionists and their fascination with culture, and then the effort to build pride through ethnicity, thing... well, that's all very fine, but I think the cultures we should all revere are our ancestral cultures; the cultures most of us have our roots in, the actual culture we came from, was probably fairly squirly. I mean, the American family is what keeps American psychotherapy alive and well! This is a cauldron for the production of neurosis, and in some cases little else.

So, you know, part of what psychedelics do is they decondition you from cultural values. This is what makes it such a political hot potato. You know, if there is anything... since all culture is a kind of con game, the most dangerous candy you can hand out is candy which causes people to start questioning the rules of the game. So you can have a Stalinist state, a parliamentary democracy, and a theocratic state, and they all can agree on one thing: that psychedelics are just *terrible*, because then citizens start asking all kinds of hard questions and the devotion to the values of the Fatherland become mired in pseudointellectual discourse, and the next thing you know somebody has to be shipped off to the camps in order to right the situation.

Audience comment: Well, even our own structures are dissolving in the [...]

Oh yeah – no. It definitely works in the personal life. Like, you know, I've been building a house in Hawaii, and while I've been building it I've definitely cut back on my intake of psychedelics, because I don't want the answer to the question, *Is this a good idea?* – until it's too late to do anything about it! [laughs] It's like St Augustine's prayer, *God grant me chastity and continence, but... not yet!*

Question from audience: One of the big ideas that seems to be in the notion of the Archaic Revival is that the whole big thing is really conscious and alive – the universe, the galaxy, the larger entities – and that's interesting, because it's a traditional belief that's held by non-modern, non-scientific, cultures. And if in fact our belief systems are taking us in that direction, such that that makes sense to us, it's really interesting but it also sort of upsets the current description of evolution within, say, the Darwinian dogma. Because that seems to be, you know, based on the idea that it's all very random and it's just all material and life is a big accident, that's moving forward. So I think that one of the ideas you're talking about today is teleology, that whether or not we really want to talk about evolution and how evolution as a theory is going to get self-involved and absorb this idea, comes down to whether or not these larger things have in fact some kind of direction behind it, which is I think what your work and observations imply. And so I thought one day about how to understand that, and I have a question, which is whether or not you can talk about creativity as having a fractal nature? – since self-similarity shows you at various levels similar principles, and since on our level as human beings anything that we make we first think about – it begins as thought, and then it becomes matter. And so if creativity can be seen as having a fractal dimension, it would be a way to talk about all kinds of creation by simply understanding it at the level at which we see it. And it would suggest that, to modify the Big Bang theory, that before there was a Big Bang there would have to be a Big Thought; and you kind of move along with that idea... so I want to ask you to comment on that, but also in relation to the idea that was also contained in evolution about the origin of language, because some of the things you're speaking about from your DMT experiences have a funny resonance with Creation stories, like Adam and Eve naming the animals. I mean, I've never really been all that comfortable with the idea that language would evolve out of grunts and groans when guys like Chomsky say it's all [??], it's a big system in language and all kinds of languages can be very different, but inside they always have these structures. And nature, and ecosystems, and languages, always tend to pop out fully formed and integrated. So is there any possible way that you could think that language, rather than evolving from grunts and groans, evolved in the opposite direction? That the first time language was used, it was used with the power that you ascribe to the machine elves? That

is was something that was done carefully and precisely because it could manifest form? Or something like that? In terms of how new species come into being. The only idea that we ever get to allow into the theory of evolution is that it's an accident, that there will be a mutation and a new species similar to another species will be born, and it will survive, and that will lead to a new species. But I have a logical problem with that, in that any female creature which gives birth to a new species is going to perceive that species as a birth defect, and this is a baby they're not going to want to survive. And then there's only one. And so that Barbara Klar [??] book I read talked about nine dimensions, and said the sixth dimension was the morphogenetic field from which all species and organisms evolve. So I was kind of thinking, maybe along the lines of the metaphor of a computer, there's a software program through which new species are developed and designed, and the whole way in which they integrate themselves into existing ecosystems, etc, somehow or other it all gets worked out, and there's a mystery then, we don't see and don't understand, by which these new forms come into being. Maybe they all come into being at once, with a thousand or a million creatures, instead of just one that's having to struggle.

Well, all this raises a lot of stuff, most of which I can't remember because of my devotion to cannabis. But let's go back to the thing about language, and – yeah, the origins of language, let's talk about that for a minute. I think that – I've been thinking about this, because I've been writing about it, and here's what I've come up with. Part of what makes it difficult for us to think about language clearly in English is that this word, language, is used by us to mean spoken language; and it also means the general class of linguistic activity, as in computer language, body language, so forth and so on. And to think clearly about language, we need to have a clear distinction between spoken language and the general syntactical organisation of reality.

Language. Because that is old. Honeybees do it, dolphins do it, termites do it, they all do it different ways... octopi do it. There is much of language in nature; in fact, you could argue that all of nature is a linguistic enterprise, because the DNA essentially is a symbolic system. Those codons which code for protein are arbitrarily assigned – assigned, in other words, by convention. There is no chemical relationship between the codons and the proteins they code for, any more than there is a relationship between an English word and the thing it intends. Those are just conventionalised by probability over time. So language is deep in nature.

What is not deep in nature is speech. Speech is as artificial as the water wheel, the bicycle pump, the Tessler coil and the space shuttle. Somebody figured this out somewhere. Well, so then people say, "But this is hard to understand. It's hard to picture how it could happen." Well, here's how I think it happened. My little example about the songs earlier was a stab at this, but here's more. It's that all kinds – all non-genetic behaviours (which are called, reasonably enough, epigenetic behaviours) are nevertheless... they're not simply expressions of free will; they are under the control of a looser system of rules than the genetic rules, which are chemical and absolute. The epigenetic behaviours are under the control of syntactical constraints. In other words, we need to expand the concept of syntax from the rules which govern the grammar of a spoken language to the rules which govern the behaviour of any complex system.

So, for example, before speech among human beings, I think it was probably very touchy-feely. If you watch monkeys, you see this: they touch each other. They stroke, they grunt, they groom, they goose, they push, they do all of these things. The repertoire of this kind of behaviour, if you're good at it, may be on the order of having four or five thousand words in your vocabulary. Well, when we watch primates do this kind of behaviour, we don't think of it as a language. But in fact it is; it's a gestural language. A couple of years ago, some research was done where these people took preverbal infants, and they taught them standard American sign language, before they could speak. So these little tiny children could sign "Pick me up", "Please change me", "Where is Daddy?", "I'm hungry", "I want to watch TV", der-der-da-da, before they could ever utter a word. Well, now what we're always told about spoken language is, it's this miracle,

and that we're genetically hard-wired for it. Well, these experiments seem to imply we're even more genetically hard-wired for standard American sign language, which is something very few of us will ever learn to use.

What does this mean? Well, it means that the gestural capacity is deeper than the ability to verbalise, and hence probably older. So I think there was a gestural language as complex as standard English, probably, in place before anyone ever uttered a word. Now, what the psychedelics seem to suggest is that you can get so hyped up on tryptamines that your body goes into some kind of almost convulsive shock, and the normally acoustically modulated processing of language flows over into the voicebox and you begin to literally articulate syntax. You begin to make a noise which is a tracking noise for this ongoing syntactical stuff that's organising gestural intent. And it's like going from carving in stone to colour TV: your listener immediately transfers loyalty to this much more spectacular form of behaviour. And so it's like literally that the word burst forth full-blown, based on a platform of gestural syntax that had been maybe millions of years in its formation. It was just this ability to redirect the energy of syntactical intent through the body, so that instead of coming out of the end of the fingers, it came out of the end of the tongue, flapping in the airstream, and this thing happened.

It's amazing to me that the straight linguist, you know, if you go to an academic university and study linguistics, will teach you that language is no more than 35-40,000 years old. I mean, that's like yesterday! I mean, we – fire is half a million years; chipped flint, a million and a half years; language, 35,000 years old – language is everything we are, everything we do; you can't think without it, you can't do anything without it. And yet, if it's that new, then what it represents is simply a technology, a form of media, that's squeezed out other forms of media. And it's not hard to see why: after all, it works in the dark, that's good; it allows politics, you can make speeches to large groups of people; and it's – well, it's just very portable. It's the cleanest technology ever put in place. When you think about it, it's one of the weirdest abilities human beings exhibit. And when you go forward to reading, you realise this is an animal in some kind of an informational tizzy. I mean, the idea that you would make marks in clay which signify tongue noises which signify designated objects, so that these pieces of clay can be lugged hundreds of miles so that other people can reconstruct your thought by looking at these pieces of clay, this is bizarre! For animal behaviour, this is absolutely – it's... how they managed to do that?!

And of course, the picture-writing, we understand; but similar to the breakthrough to speech, is the breakthrough to a phonetic alphabet, where you see: "Ah! We don't have to portray the thing we intend; all we have to portray is the sound of the word that signifies the thing we intend!" And then, you know, you're just roaring forward; and from there to the printing press, what is it, a couple of thousand years or something – and then there's no going back. So that's the part about language. Now, what was the second part after that?

Just whether you could think about creativity as a principle that could have a fractal dimension, and that would be a way to think about design, or a larger universal order, having some consciousness... [??]

Well, if you think of the universe as an engine which produces and conserves novelty, and you think of it as a fractal thing, a fractal hierarchy, built up and build downward of subsets of itself, then in a sense every creative act is the paradigmatic act of the Big Bang. I mean, it always struck me, you know, that the end of the novelty wave, which is: Up, Down, Oscillate, Zero, it's like it's a general map of all process. We could be describing the life of the energy output of a star, or the firing of a single neuron, or the birth and death of an economy; in a sense, you get down to a fractal level where you can say all processes are the same: they have a beginning, a middle, and an end... and if you know where you are in this concatenation of process, you can sort of locate yourself in the cosmic domain.

The thing that I tried to talk about this morning, that we need to map into our maps of reality, is the acceleration. I think it's a really weird idea to talk about a thousand years in the future; I mean, good grief!

A thousand years in the future, what do you imagine will be left standing that you call home? What – cast your mind back a thousand years: King Canute was taking charge of things across Northumbria, and the Anglo Saxons were making forays along the coast of Norway, and, you know, very few of the concerns of the day have survived to this moment; and that was the slow-moving part of the process! We're going to move, you know, in the next 10 years, further than we've moved since the time of King Canute to this morning. So it seems to me the most unlikely future scenario is one which assumes things will stay more or less the same. Because we've put in place all these processes designed to make sure that does not happen. You know – rapacious capitalism, technological innovation, bourgeois social aspirations in the hearts of every man, woman and child on the planet, urbanisation, connectivity – all of these processes are designed to erase reality as we know it.

I'm wondering what you think of the kind of Vedic paradigm involving the states of consciousness, the waking state, the dreaming state and the sleeping state, and the transcendental force state, and they used that on an individual basis, but also with regards to [??] genesis. And that criticism of the West, that the West has taken the waking state as standard, and evolved its philosophical views without accounting for these other states of consciousness?

Well, certainly the West has built its house on a narrow foundation, denying these other possibilities. On the other hand, if ... well, you get into all kinds of difficulties here. How do you judge whether or not a civilisation has assimilated or explored the domains it's named its own? One way is by looking at the technological applications that it's created. And for all this talking about these other states of mind, they seem actually as mysterious to the East as they are to the West. I don't get the feeling they're really navigating through what they're talking about. In the past, there may have been levels of understanding. It may be, see, that psychology – though it's a mystery to us – it may be that it's an easier nut to crack than the nut of matter; and so I don't have any trouble believing that Vedic India of 3500 BC may have known all kinds of things about how the mind works and how to navigate through these imaginal spaces that we've lost; but the spirituality of modern India is thoroughly contaminated by a thousand years of commerce with Islam and the West. It isn't that different, really. I mean, Vedic theology and German idealism are strikingly similar cousins.

...a number of things of conflict, when you talk about the archaic revival and then the current cultural and technological revolution. It seems to me that a lot of the stimulus for novelty that was generated by the psychedelic experience now may be generated without that experience, such as through virtual reality, technological advancements, and perhaps would maybe make the psychedelic experience less necessary in order to [...] observe and [??]

Well, definitely, what you're getting at is that technology itself is a kind of psychedelic drug; that, you know, by chance or design, the proponents of psychedelica have figured out that it's totally acceptable to this culture if you disguise it as electronic entertainment and put it out that way. So the web is incredibly subversive! Simply the fact that all that information is there and available, in a world where control of access to information has always been the game. So, yeah – the way I see it is that the psychedelic people need to use the new information technologies to build art of a type more powerful and more compelling than the world has ever seen. Call it virtual reality, call it multimedia, call it whatever you want, but it's basically walk-into, walk-around, art – and then the boundaries will fall for ordinary people, because you see when you build a virtual reality, in a sense what that technology is allowing you to do is it's allowing you to show people the inside of your own head! We have never had a technology that would do that. We think the inside of our heads are all the same, but you know when I say to you that when I smoke DMT it unleashes a Niagara of alien beauty, if I had spent the last 30 years building that Niagara of alien beauty so that you could just strap on the goggles and go, then we would have a very different kind of dialogue and relationship going. And so I really see art as the great searchlight that illuminates the historical landscape just ahead, and I think that art is about to get teeth for the first time in human history. I mean, it's all very fine, scratching on cave walls, and film, and video, and all that, but it's always artifice, you

know – you never are convinced, or only for seconds, that you're in the presence of reality when you're in the presence of art. But we will build art that will literally stand your hair on end. And the amount of creativity in a single human mind, as I said, more than fills all the museums on this planet. So what we need is to figure out how to get a spigot into that, and get this stuff out! And then, as James Joyce said, man will be dirigible!

Part Two:

Well, we said, I think, that when you take psychedelics you go up a dimension. And so this world of transience and flux becomes an eternal world. So in that sense, it's the same thing. Whether meditation and psychedelics are the same thing, I think depends on your meditation and your psychedelics! Different meditations strive for different things. Much meditation is about emptying the mind of phenomena. This certainly would not be a description of the psychedelic state!

Question from audience comparing LSD insights with meditational experience

Well, in the interest of keeping the number of singularities to a minimum, the most elegant thing to do is to wrap the theory around and say that the starting-point and the ending-point are the same place. Yeah, it's the place where all is co-tangent. How we could get the universe back into the primal dot in 12 years, I don't know, but there are some schemes to do that. There's always schemes to do it. You know, if the universe were some kind of vacuum fluctuation, and it had an anti-matter twin in a higher superspace, then there would be the potential, at least, for them to collide across all points simultaneously, and you would actually get the universe of matter disappearing instantly, and you would then be left with a universe made only of photons, because they don't have an anti-particle. What a universe purely made of light – what its physics – would be like, is hard to say; but it sounds peculiarly like certain Gnostic theophanies [??] about gathering the light and returning the light. Ultimately, the meditation path and the psychedelic path must somehow lead to the same kinds of data, if the claims of both are to be respected, which is that they give deeper knowledge about reality. Yes.

Question from audience about expression of information using new technologies that may replicate the psychedelic state

I'm all for it; I just haven't seen anything that convinced me that anybody had achieved it to any degree of significance. Yeah, you know, imagine a drug that did nothing more than allow you to remember your dreams! I mean, that's not exactly shooting for the moon, pharmacologically, these days. And yet a drug which allowed you full recovery of your dreams might unleash God knows what, because we don't know *what* we dream! The chemistry of DMT suggests that in deep REM sleep, it's possible every single night you have a DMT flash. But it does not transcribe into short-term memory. Or imagine a drug which allowed you to enhance long-term memory, so that you could slip into reveries of a summer day 30 years ago and play it back moment by moment by moment... again, this is not shooting for the moon pharmacologically. We're not talking immortality here, we're just talking simple neurochemistry. But all of these possibilities would change life beyond recognition. And I think these things should be pursued by any means necessary, you know – it's a false dichotomy, the idea that somehow you should be able to achieve these things on the natch, and they're not authentic if you achieve them through psychedelics. This is just a con to keep lineages in business, I think, because they don't want you going off the ranch and charting your own course. But where shamanism becomes priestcraft, it's already well on its way to senescence.

Audience question re collective perception on mushrooms (nonverbal sharing of ideas)

A couple of situations, I've had telepathic things. I've had, in group situations, very quasi-telepathic social interactions. What I mean by that is, I'm recalling an evening many years ago taking ayahuasca with these people and they had a weird scene going. The shaman was a good guy, and a good shaman, but he had a nephew who was a jerk and was sort a pimp, and kind of a hustler. And the shaman was singing with his three friends, these ancient ancient songs, and this guy was drunk on *aguardiente*, and he would sing against them! He would sing against them... and this was in Peru, and if you know the style of rural Peruvians, people are so polite and so not-upfront, that no social

problem is ever dealt with directly: people will tolerate incredible bad behaviour without turning on a person and saying “Listen, you’re completely out of line – knock it off”. So, 30 people – 30 Peruvian *campesinos* – were witnessing this sing-against, and the woman I was with at the time very much didn’t like what was going on, and at the end of this, this nephew, this *sobrino*, at the end of his song of raucous interruption, I looked up just as he ended – the room was almost in complete darkness... I looked up just as he ended. I saw her look up and look at him with a look of utter disgust, and when these red dart things got to him, it knocked him off his feet! And I heard... the old shaman was sitting right to my left, and I heard him turn to his friend, and he said: “Ah! The *gringa* sends the *bazudalacathnda...*” [laughter]... and so it was like, “Wow!”. But then, ordinary reality immediately reasserts itself and moves forward, and there’s no time to say “Wait a minute, folks! – something paranormal just happened here, I want to interview everybody, get your impression” – it’s never, you know, when it’s real, it’s always caught up in the on-moving flow of events.

Question from audience

Well, if you’ve taken – what you don’t want to do is take... here’s – this is reasonable advice, too, I think. Where the problem area lies, people think it lies in taking too much. It lies in taking too little. Because if you take too little, you can resist it. You can struggle with it, and then it can turn into a real mess, because you’re afraid of it and you actually have the power, to some degree, to resist it. What you want to do is take sufficiently enough that there’s no escape, and that the transition from ordinary reality to fully loaded is as quick as possible. Because the going up is somewhat terrifying.

For example, let’s use psilocybin as the model. Here’s how it works for me – this is not tea, this is eating raw mushrooms: it comes on more slowly. So after an hour or so, you know, and the way I do it is I sit... as soon as the mushroom enters my body, I sit and meditate. I noticed in South America they don’t do it like this: they dose the ayahuasca, and then everybody just goes on, talking about their motorcycles and the jobs at the saw mill, and who’s conning who... it’s like, totally – there’s a brief moment, they pour, they toss it down, then they all go back to raving at each other about mundane life; and then 30 minutes later, on the dot, the shaman blows his whistle, or shakes his chakupa [??], his dry leaf bouquet, and everybody settles down – it’s like it comes on within two minutes: as soon as the guy starts singing, he just invokes it.

But the way I do it is, I take the mushroom (or the ayahuasca), and then I sit and I roll bombers, so I’ll have them ready if I need them, and I just sit as I’m going to sit during the trip, and I’ve unplugged the telephone, and I’ve gotten everything squared away, and it begins to come on at about the 40-minute or the 60-minute mark; and there’s sometimes some nausea as it comes on. And then I smoke a bomber, or half a bomber. And then it catapults it into the full deployment of the thing, where you just hang on – there’s about a 25-minute period where your only job is to hang on. It builds. It’s like watching an atomic explosion on the other side of 50 feet of absolutely clear crystal glass. I mean, you “can’t believe this is happening – *in my mind*”. You have the feeling that everyone from Seattle to San Diego has just crawled under their desk as this thing tore past; but it’s in your mind.

And then there is the interaction with it, which – moment to moment, you are pretty coherent; but you lose it – a lot of it doesn’t transcribe into short-term memory. And then after about an hour or 40 minutes of that, it becomes more manageable, more memorable. The most mind-boggling parts of it are just not possible to bring out of it, because language fails; because English... there are no words. There are no words even close. I mean, sometimes you’ll bring out an image or a metaphor, but out of five hours of tripping, you bring out half a notebook page of metaphors and yet you were entirely engaged during that time – now, this question about fear, which is a real question, because when everything begins to slide, if you are not – it’s more than most people who haven’t done it expect. They have heard it, they’ve read the books, but they think it’s a metaphor. They don’t understand: it’s really going to happen, and it’s really going to happen to *you*. And there’s a tendency to clutch, or to try and resist it.

The thing to do in those situations, I think – and it’s counterintuitive to how Western people think – but the thing to do is to sing. To sit up, not to assume the foetal position – see, what you might tend to do is assume the foetal position and tell yourself, “My God, this is the most appalling thing that’s ever happened to me – if I can just live through it, it’ll be all right. I’ve taken this drug: if I can just wait through – how long did they say it would be? – seven hours, I see. It started two minutes ago. If I can just...” – No, the

thing to do is to sit up and to sing! Why? Well, being practical people, to oxygenate your brain. To move the entire – this thing that’s happened to you, though it may have one claw in heaven, its roots are in your neurophysiology and in the chemistry of the drug. You want to move your physiology around. So oxygenating your brain can’t fail to do this. So you sing. And this almost always is accompanied by a sense of power, control, equilibrium, and so forth and so on.

Not always. I mean, let’s face it: you’re a product of a nutty society and there are unexamined crevices and uncleaned-out drain traps in all of us, and you’re going to encounter that stuff. The good news is, the earlier psychedelic trips tend to deal with that. You will quickly discover, taking psychedelics, that either you can work through your personal issues and become a psychedelic explorer, or this is just stronger medicine than you are up for, and you would be far better to go back to psychoanalysis or whatever works for you. Some people just can’t take it. Why is that? Well, because what it does is it dissolves boundaries, and most of us are over-boundary-defined. But some of us are having an uphill battle getting some boundaries in place, and realising we are not the telephone or the tree or the person we live with; and so for those people, who are having trouble establishing and moving boundaries, this is the last thing on Earth they should get involved with.

Question from audience about the “bombers”

Cannabis. Cannabis. Cannabis! [laughs]

Question from audience about experience the loss of ego – is it possible that your physical self could cease?

Well, people often – yes, wondered. Often people wonder. You get into a place where it’s so unfamiliar that the question comes up: *Have I done it this time? You know, Am I dying? or Am I in danger?* The answer is, the odds are incredible against you being seriously in danger. People don’t die from psychedelics unless they have heart conditions or some incredibly rare medical condition. The problem is that the ego feels threatened by the boundary dissolution, and its ace is your self-identification with it. And it can actually say to you, *You are dying, and here’s the evidence;* and you have to say, *It’s unlikely.* – and sing your way through it. But this is really tough. I mean, the Buddhists talk about slaying the ego – this is slaying the ego for real. You *must* slay it, otherwise it will spread panic into your whole psychological system, will give way to panic and hysteria. So unless there is some real reason to think you’re dying – and you should have done your homework: you should know what to expect... for example, if you take LSD and begin intense bouts of vomiting, this is not a proper reaction to LSD. Something is wrong, either with the LSD or with your relationship to it. You should know what a typical... a typical trip will put you through changes, but is not dangerous. But if you suddenly begin exhibiting some symptoms – heart fibrillation, or something like that – then you want to have...

This is why, then, there is always the issue of the buddy system: should there be somebody else there, and what about all that? My position is, if you are anxious, then you should have a sitter. If you’re going to do it alone, you should certainly tell someone so that they will check on you after a while. I don’t like doing it in groups or with sitters because inevitably I get spun into them. What I want to do is go as deep as possible, and even if I’m alone with one other person, culture is the third guest at the table, you know? I mean, if you start – I’ve often found myself in the middle of psychedelic trips thinking, “I’m sure glad there’s nobody else here to see this, because I’m sure it would alarm an observer!” – because I have my leg thrown back over my neck, and I’m screaming in Urdu, or something. But it’s OK, after a few minutes it’s OK; but if there were an observer, they would feel the need to do something, you know... and often, like I’ve seen people smoking DMT; and people moan, and they say “No! No! NO!!!!” and they moan. So then, you know, you get them back together, and constituted, and you say, “How was it?”, and they say, “It was *fantastic!*” So you realise that how they present is not reliable.

Well, setting has a great deal to do with it; and setting is a very complicated issue. *Setting* means everything, from the astrological situation at the time that you do it to the physical surrounding that you’re in; and it’s also a roll of the dice – you never know exactly what you’re going to get. As far as the question about Buddhism and all that, my own, you know when I started taking LSD I thought I saw, in Tibetan Tonka painting and mandalas, the echoes of this same world, and pursued it: went to Nepal, studied Tibetan, collected the art... and it is similar. I don’t know – I don’t know to what degree the Buddhists, the Mahayanists, realise those states without psychedelics. I do know that

with psychedelics, those meditations, those techniques, those insights, are supercharged. And I would suspect that Tibetan Buddhism, as it has its roots in Vedic Hinduism, there may be psychoactive plants in its past; but it's far in the past. Buddhism was brought to Tibet in 741 by Padmasambhava. There was an autophanous shamanism already present throughout the Himalayas, the Punpo. And it was largely based on cannabis intoxication at that point in history, not so much in the present.

But I think that this is a fruitful area – I just can't believe that Mahayana Buddhism could have gotten as far as it did without some reliance on psychedelics; and of course, cannabis – we in the West, our style is to smoke it; and that's a very mild way of dealing with it. I mean, if you eat – if you have unlimited amounts of high-grade cannabis, and you eat grams and grams of it, you will have experiences as extreme as anything that psilocybin or ayahuasca can deliver to you. You only have to read the descriptions of nineteenth-century writers on cannabis – Fitz Hugh Ludlow, S. Weir Mitchell, these people – their descriptions of their trips are as psychedelic and as out of control as any acid reportage or psilocybin reportage.

So the relationship of Indian and Buddhist spirituality to cannabis and other psychedelics is not understood. We do know that the whole Rg Veda is a hymn to a drug, soma, but we don't know what soma is. Well, the fact that it could have invited such attention to this Vedic civilisation – the 95th mandala of the Rg Veda says, "Soma is greater than Brahman, greater than Indra". Well, what is being talked about? How could such a great thing be forgotten and lost? What was it? And then, you know, almost as puzzling as *What was it?* is, *How could you lost such a thing?!* I mean, it's like us forgetting how to make automobiles or something! It was something so basic to the culture that how could you possible forget something so central? Yet apparently they did, and today there are scholarly fights. Was it *Amanita muscaria*? Was it psilocybin? Was it *Peganum harmala*? Or was it something else? Why is this so hard to figure out? The only thing I can imagine is that it must have been eventually restricted to a priestly class of initiates, and then there must have been a social revolt from the bottom, and all those people were put to death; and then, nobody knew what it was.

Yes, I think you have to push the psychedelics to reach these unitary states. What always fascinated me was hallucination. Because it was, to me, the proof that I was dealing with something outside myself.

Question from audience

Well, and here was stuff that amazed me, that I couldn't make up on my own, that would – you know, a single image would have taken me hours to draw and figure out, and here I was getting 28 frames a second of this unpredictable stuff!

Question from audience

Well, one of the nice things about the tryptamines, I think, is they leave the sense of self pretty much intact. In other words, it doesn't distort who you are; it does something to your sensory input. DMT is very, very surprisingly, like that. You smoke DMT: you are immediately plunged into an alien universe. But if you can keep your wits about you, and actually notice how you feel, you don't feel any different! You're not smarter, stupider; you're not more excited, or – once you get the initial panic under control, you realise – *My God, it didn't lay a finger on me! I'm me, I'm entirely intact! What has happened is that the world has been completely replaced by something completely unrecognisable and alien that I have no words for, that's blowing my mind, that's ripping apart my philosophical machinery as I gaze upon it; but when I bring my attention back into my body, I discover – I'm fine! I'm OK! It didn't change my mind,* you could almost say, it changes 100% the reality around you.

That's powerful, because it appears objective. I mean, the impression you have when you smoke DMT is, *This isn't a drug, that's ridiculous. Drugs, you know, make you smarter, make you stupider, make you fall down, make you stay awake... we know what drugs are; this is no drug, this is something else hiding under the label "drug". This is a doorway into another modality that exists all the time, independent of my thoughts or feelings about it.* Is that true? Well, I don't know! But it certainly doesn't seem to be a place constructed to fit human expectations. Like, one of the things that always troubled me about DMT being somewhat of a Jungian event was the question, *How come there's no hint of this in any mythology or religious tradition or alchemical text or fairytale or dream, or anything else?...* I mean, if this is so important a part of what it is to be a human being, how can it be so deeply buried, so

secret, so unknown, and yet just one toke away?!

It still, that, confounds me. Because you can read all the Hindu scripture or Sufi mysticism, or all the stuff you want – occasionally, sure, you'll find a phrase or two that could be mapped onto a DMT state, but nobody has trumpeted it. Nobody has said, "This is what it is". And yet, as I say, it's spread throughout Nature; it's been known since aboriginal times. We used to, years and years ago, call it *the Secret*. And in a way, it really is the secret. Jorge Luis Borges has a story called *The Cult of the Phoenix*, and he talks about a secret that seems profound and yet preposterous to the initiates. One child may initiate another, and ruins are good places to do this... it just goes on like this for a page and a half, and you realise he's – he must be talking about DMT.

Question from audience re the ego as a fairly recent phenomenon

Yeah, the great cultural accomplishment of Western civilisation is this thing called the free individual. But now that we're on the brink of, you know, the electronic dispensation, exactly what we're going to do with the free individual, and how that's going to look, in an era where consciousness flows through a thousand portals, it's not at all clear. It's not clear whether we can somehow now carry the idea of the free individual to an even higher level, where each of us will become a kind of god – lord over our own creation, as vast in time and space, but virtual, as the cosmos in which we find ourselves embedded; or whether the free individual is going to turn out to be the problem all along, and we're going to abandon it and become some kind of socialist gas, or some collectivist swarm, a hive mind, a world where intelligence flows where needed and identity is provisional and fleeting, and unanchored to place or body; I mean, much of this goes on on the Internet, you know. You can be an 11-year-old girl, you can be whatever you want. You can build your avatar and present yourself in many guises. It's much more like a shifting fantasy-land than it is like the good old world of positivist rock'n'roll.

Question from the audience re shamanic singing as the catalyst for visual experience

Well, yeah, I think that, you know, we see shamanism from the outside with the values of Western civilisation unconsciously applied. In cultures that are taking psychedelics, this thing which we call singing is a very complicated activity indeed; and if you've ever sung on psychedelics, you know that – you know, it's an ecstatic and complicated and synaesthetic experience. I mean, to make of your body a vibrator for sound, to – you know, move out into the Pythagorean octaves with the human voice, and – it's extraordinary, actually, how capable of sound human beings are. No other animal has the range and control of voice. They say that this is because we're adapted for spoken language, but I think we had a lot of this range and control before. So things – words that we use very knowledgeably, like *song*, *ancestor spirit*, *power place* – we're not getting 90% of the nuance of these meanings, because they go so gracelessly into English. When a shaman talks about *spirit*, he's using a term as technically complicated in his mind as when a physicist uses the term *beauty* to describe a quark. You know, it's very technically defined. And we tend to simplify, and then suppose that we understand.

Part of the thing I found with hanging with shamans in various places and times is that once you get past the language barrier, what shamans are are simply curious people. Intellectuals of a certain type. In Australian aboriginal slang, a shaman is called a "clever fellow". If someone says "I'm a clever fellow", they mean, you know, I'm a shaman. Well, that's all it is – it's somebody who pays attention to how things actually work, and sort of transcends the culture by that means. It's a weird paradox. It's that the shamans, who are the keepers of the cultural values, are also necessarily the keepers of the secrets of the theatrics of the cultural values, and so they live their lives in the light of the knowledge that it all rests on showbiz. You know, everybody else is a true believer, but these are the image-makers, the people who actually pull the strings and control the evolution of the mythologies. And in a way, it's a situation of alienation.

Mircea Eliade talks a lot about this in *Shamanism: The Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* and in *History: The Eternal Return*. He talks about how the shaman is socially marginal, politically marginal, lives at the edge of the village, and so forth and so on, and is feared by the people, because dealings with the shaman are always dealings about life and death. But then the shaman comes forward in this critical role, as go-between, as mediator, between the cultural mind and the real world, which is this potent set of forces and planetary cycles and meteorological events and

diseases and, you know, fate; and the shaman mediates. In many languages, the word for shaman means “go-between”. So the cost of this, or the price of this, for the shaman himself, or herself, is a kind of alienation from the cultural values, and a kind of understanding that it’s a game that’s kept in play.

And this is true in our culture as well: you don’t think the people who market all this crap and produce all this bad art, and so forth and so on, love it?! or watch it, or consume it?! – they market it. Its basic purpose is to delude and distract the masses. So psychedelics, what they bring into that shamanic situation, is sort of rocket fuel for the project of cultural detoxification, or Gnostic rocket fuel into a realm of cultural alienation. And then, from that point of view, then these other dimensions of reality come into being and deeper understanding comes into being. I mean, one of the things I think, after spending a while with all this, is, it really helps to be educated. It really helps to cram a lot of information and experience into your head, because the Logos – the alien AI, the high ?? hidden god that is trying to reach down to you and deliver the message, is a collagist. It can’t really compose the message except out of bits and pieces of what you already possess.

And so, you know, this came home to me very forcefully when I developed the timewave out of the I Ching and its sequence; because at the times when I was most inflated in my thinking, or most grandiose in my thinking, one of the issues for me personally was, “Why me?” You know, “Why are you downloading this millenarian visionary revelation on me?” And the answer from the mushroom was fairly humbling. It was, *You are the first person who has ever walked through this pasture who had these 64 hexagrams in your head. And that’s all we needed: we were just waiting for somebody who could bring that much to the party, and then we could arrange the details and the mapping, and the arrange – but they had to arrive with that much, and you’re the first person.* So it was like, nothing about, you know, my fine genes or cosmic destiny, but just, I was the first termite to happen by carrying the right scrap of information in their head, that this thing could then manipulate.

Question from audience

Well, most DMT in the underground has been synthesised from indole. It’s a fairly simple process, like third-year organic chemistry. DMT does occur in Nature, in many plants. But usually there is little of it, so you have to process a lot; or it occurs complexed with other tryptamines that have various psycho and physiological activities that you don’t want, and that’s very difficult to separate them. So most DMT in the underground is made by underground chemists... and if any of them are listening, you might consider making a bit more! – because it’s hideously hard to come by.

Question from audience

Ah, if you had an IND – if you had a licence to give it to human subjects. But so people have such paper that the practical answer is No. So it’s like that.

Question about True Hallucinations – at what level have you experienced the shamanic ability to manifest miracles?

Well, aside from the story mentioned – no, no, a truthful answer is always complicated, although the truth itself is always simple. If you’re asking me to tell a story of a miracle that I still cherish as authentic, I don’t think it’s told in *True Hallucinations* the book, because – well, you’ll soon see why – but here’s an incident that happened at La Chorrera that didn’t make it into *The Invisible Landscape*, I don’t believe. Dennis had this notion of what he called “the good shit”. This developed in the days after the ideas about hypercarboration. And he claimed – it was like a fantasy, it was like a joke, it wasn’t clear exactly what it was, but – it was this idea that there was this hash somewhere that had been rolled into cow dung, with cow dung, and then infected with psilocybin mycelium, so that the mycelium had completely replaced the cow shit in this bowl of hash, or this hypothesised kilos of hash, somewhere in the world. And so there was this psilocybinated, the *good shit*. And at one point, he envisioned us actually forming a rock’n’roll band which would play instruments that would condense this stuff out of the air over large audiences, and you know, we would go on tour, and at the end of the tour history would be – the whole thing would be in a shambles, because Uncle John’s band really did come out of the woodwork!

So at one point he predicted – one night, after he had been moved to the river and the sort of semi-incarceration – he predicted that the good shit would come that night. And by this time, he was very suspect – I was highly suspect – everybody in the expedition was polarised against everybody else, and it was a pretty uptight scene. And so I left with my girlfriend of the time, and it may have even been the same night as the silver key incident – and it was

pouring rain, and we made our way like a quarter mile, half a mile, back into the jungle to this other place where we were staying, where the original experiment had been done. And so then we get to the hut, and it's pouring rain, and I had scored this kilo of Santa Marta gold for the expedition, and we had smoked nothing of this – for Colombia, relatively rare – weed, for weeks. So I got it out to roll the evening's joint, and I was fumbling with it, and I got this thing lit, and this little crumb, this little burning thing, fell on the floor, and I lifted it up, and smelled it, and [laughs] the transubstantiation had occurred! It was, you know, like Mazari Sharif triple-A, red lion, hashish, of some sort; and I *know* hashish!

And here we were, in the centre of the Amazon, in this hut, in the pouring rain, and I could tell that it was the good, it was the good shit, actually manifest. And I showed the woman who was with me – who was easily led one way or another – but anyway, she didn't say it wasn't, and I stayed up late that night smoking this incredible hash and waiting for the rain to stop so that at the first grey light of dawn I could go down to the river and confound my critics with, you know, the stone itself! The alchemical quintessence, the concrecence, the *excretum bono*, the good shit! Here it was! And so as dawn broke and the fog lifted, I made my way across this rainy pasture, and sat down by the hammock of the sleeping form of my most vociferous critic, and sort of elbowed her awake, and you know, there were other instances where this was the principle at work... It didn't work: everything had returned to normal. It was the Cinderella screw-up, you know. It was just that I was a char-girl who washed pots, and there was no prince, and there was no coach, and there was no... and, plus, I was once again humiliated in the presence of my critics, who had further reason to think that – you know, a check-in to the local mental healthcare delivery system might not be a bad idea. These things happen.

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Inner Visions, Future Vectors

1990

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

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- **The bottom of each talk page** includes the following list:

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- **Place your name** (please use the **username that you have signed up with** so we can keep track of who is doing what) in the slot for the job you're doing.

- Please **do not complete Review 2** unless you are one of the core members of the project

Rules to follow while transcribing:

- **Resist editorializing** Terence.
 - **Do not correct** his language or grammar.
 - If he stumbles over words, repeats himself, or says "**um**" or "**uh**," keep it all in.
 - Not only does this create a more **accurate record** of the talk, but it also makes the reading experience a bit more like actually hearing a talk and allows you to hear the voice more clearly on the page.
- Whenever possible, please **note audience reaction in brackets**, for example, [**audience laughs**].
- Indicate where you are unsure of **spelling** with a [sp?].
- If you are unsure of how to spell a word, name, place, etc., check our [spelling reference guide](#) or do a web search to try and find the **correct spelling**.
 - If you need to look up how to spell a word that wasn't in our [spelling reference guide](#), please feel free to add it.
- For **those doing initial transcriptions** (as opposed to reviewing a transcript), simply do the best you can; **reviewers can clean up after the fact**. It is much more difficult to get the "um"s and "uh"s in while you're doing the initial transcription. So, if initial transcribers want to keep that to a minimum, that's fine. Reviewers can go back through and add them in for accuracy as they review. Transcribers should just do as best they can without having to constantly be rewinding to find exactly where an "uh" goes. Likewise, **for interviews or Q&A sessions**, initial reviewers should focus on getting the transcription down efficiently. Reviewers can go back in later and change the formatting to the proper interview/Q&A format.

Rules to follow while reviewing:

- As noted before, please **only do Review 2 if you are an admin**.
- Please do not review a talk that you have also transcribed. It's important that the transcripts be checked by three different people.
- Reviewing is the final stage before finalization, so please be sure to add in the "um"s, "uh"s, [audience laughter], [Terence laughs], and things like this that the initial transcriber may have missed and please do your best to correct any spelling.
- For **interviews or Q&A sessions**, you can use the [Poolside Interview](#) as an example.
 - If the interviewer's/questioner's name is known, you can use it....otherwise just use "Interviewer" or "Question" in the first instance and "I" or "Q" in all subsequent instances. For Terence, use "Terence McKenna" in the first instance and "TM" in all subsequent instances.
 - It is easier to follow along with as a reader if the formatting for the questions is distinct from that of the answers. We have decided to use a **gray highlight for the questions** and use **no additional formatting for the answers**.
 - To **add the gray highlighting** for the questions, simply highlight the entire question (including "Interviewer" or "I"), then click the button on the editing toolbar that looks like a "T" with a color pallet. In the **background color box**, please use

the following color code: **#e6e6e6** (you can simply copy and paste this to format each subsequent question. Please make sure that you use this exact background color, so that we have the same format across all documents.

Questions & Suggestions:

- If you have any questions about anything or any suggestions for ways to make the transcription/review process more efficient, please join the [FB group for the project](#) or simply send a message to the admins via the messaging system on the wiki. Thanks!
- Thanks and happy transcribing!

Intentionality in Language-Created Realities

Day Month Year 1982-2000

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#) [need audio!]

This is a fairly small group and I'm feeling fairly confident. I'd like to talk about language today, and I will attempt to open this with a performance, which is something I rarely, like never do. (Terence performs Jabberwocky)

That's worth hours of the other stuff. Well, I hope, I assume most of you recognize that as Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky, which was an example of verbal intentionality and syntax overcoming absence of inscribed meaning. This is what's happening here, that the intentionality of meaning is so great that it overcomes the absence of conventional definition, and we've been talking a lot in this section about language and the origin of language, and we've also been using language in a fairly free, and in some cases unusual and in some cases outrageous manner. So that's what I mean when I said it makes sense to examine the tools. We are particularly neurologically outfitted for the production of small mouth noises, rapidly modulated small mouth noises. We can do this, I've proved it myself, for hours at a time without exhaustion, and what is going on than is that rather than the rippling of plumage or the rubbing of hard body parts against each other, since we don't have any hard body parts to rub against each other, most of the time, communication in our species has taken the form of neuromodulation of small mouth noises. Now these small mouth noises are transduced into acoustical waves, a physical phenomenon which moves from point to point in ordinary Newtonian space. The acoustical pressure wave strikes the ear, the ear conveys the particular unique signature of that arriving acoustical wave into, what for lack of a better term we have to call the mind. And the mind takes this acoustical signal and compares it with an imprinted dictionary built up out of experience. It does this very very quickly. THE speed with which the dictionary is consulted and each arriving word is identified, its syntactical class understood, and its intentionality in the domain of meaning is recognized, is very very rapid. It represents the most rapid sort of intellectual activity that we undertake as human beings. Thought is a similar phenomenon, but it is an interior dialogue and God help us lets hope that we understand our thoughts better than what people say to us because in the case of our thoughts we are both the one communicating and the one communicated to. Language is this double-edged adaptation of the human animal. It is obviously a multifaceted, multipurpose, adaptive advantage in all environmental situations because if you can image and linguistically process evolving situations, you have a leg up over an organism which is hard wired for reaction along the line of instincts. Yet, in the domain of cognition, it's almost as though language has exceeded its usefulness because someone said 'language was invented to lie'. Well, perhaps that is too cynical, but certainly language obfuscates reality. It cannot help but do this. It does it in the following manner. A child, born into what the psychologist William James called a "blooming buzzing confusion", a child born into the blooming bussing....attempts to isolate complexes of activity. Complexes of color, sound and tactility, and the nurturing parent provices names. This is a kitty,

this is a bird, this is a blanket. What is happening here is that the blooming buzzing confusion is slowly being tiled over by an interlocking and seamless set of names and syntactical structures which literally, then, stand for reality. They stand for reality.

So, unless you are the kind of very fortunate person who speaks many many languages fluently, and has a sense of this relativity of the intent to communicate, you are barred from realizing the context-dependency of your own language. And we all are like this. This impressed me very much in the amazon because the first time i went to the amazon i knew nothing about botany, and it appeared to me largely to be green. and when i returned some years later, having made a fairly thorough study of the taxonomic families of tropical plants, it was vast, intricate fascinating, domains because I had terms for all these exotic floral forms, leaf forms, seed expression, morphology, you see. Nature's expression in the world of form is called its morphology. Morphology is the science of form. Well, form, we tend to think of it as a Platonic concern. After all, aren't the forms somewhere in a platonic hyperspace, aren't they somehow above and beyond the machinations of language and perception- well, they are if you're a Platonist. But when we look at natural form, the enterprise of science has been to attempt to describe natural form. This is essentially a program to be carried out within the domain of language, and this has been entirely overlooked by the philosophy of science so far as i can tell. I mean, the world is not made of anti-mu-masons, and quarks, and photons, and electromagnetic fields. Reality is made of words. Reality is made of symbolic interlocking linguisto-mathematical constructs. Everything beyond that is our conjecture. I mean this is what you learn in philosophy 1. The relativity of knowing, the impossibility of actually nailing down the ontos of what is presented in the theater of perception through an exercise of epistemic knowing, it can't be done. Brain cannot fully elicit, elucidate brain. There's a tautology there. So language is something that springs from the biological matrix and the neurological matrix within us, and the major theme of this siren song to us is that it allows us to know the world and to communicate it. Well the truth is it does allow us to know the world to some degree, and it does allow us to communicate about it, but a price is paid at every step of the way- first of all, because we are concrescent entities of feeling, this is ANW. We are concrescent entities of feeling, yet our language prepares us to describe a 3-dimensional spacial world between solid objects. So it is not true to the perceiver, you see. There is a kind of break of faith with the world. Language betrays. Language betrays in order to mean. You know Archibald McLeach said "a poem should not mean, but be" and this is a reasonable statement of a poetic, but it is not a basis for a theory of communication. A theory of communication depends on correct mirroring of the meme that is being transmitted, no matter how far down the line it has come.

Well, we talked earlier, we talked in earlier sessions about the impact of biogenically active and psychoactive amines in diet, specifically in the diet of early hominids in Africa, suggesting that the catalysis of neurological development that has gone on over the last million years in the human species was catalyzed by what was at first a random exposure to these things, then a deepening exposure brought on by the consequent synergy of increased visual acuity. In other words, some of these biogenic amines were conferring increased visual acuity, and this was shifting the reproductive mathematics in the direction of those individuals that were allowing this psychoactive substance, i mean, let's be frank about it, into the diet. Then later we saw that sexual arousal was also a concomitant to admitting this item into the diet, and at higher doses and deeper exposures, a deepening sense of what we can call, without defining, the other, the other. I read recently an interesting paper called 'the felt presence of the other in unusual environments' and it was an article about the kind of hysteria that overtakes people lost in the wilderness. The sense that they are being stalked, or followed, or observed, and in its mildest form I'm sure we have all have experienced this. It's the sense of being observed when you know you're alone in the wilderness. We seem

to be...you know, we have very strong fight or flight hard-wiring in the organism, and we also, when we admit it, these biogenically active amines into the diet, we set ourselves up for a kind of undefined frontier between ourselves and the other. Language took its place in that fissure and began to create the earliest images of the other. The antecedent to the image is the feeling, and that was the point that I want to make, that in all cases, antecedent to the image is the feeling. The felt presence of immediate reality, which is the unique province of the individual. We choose to attempt to communicate it, but it is, always and forever, by the nature of the situation, ours and ours alone. Well, the idea then that language is a double-edged adaptation that has both served us and betrayed us on different levels, needs now to be looked at in the light of the fact that culture is more and more consciously becoming a project carried out in the domain of language, by, for instance, propagandists, both governmental and commercial. Reality is more and more in the image, and when we talked about virtual realities, and the tendency of technology to create the dream utopias of the unconscious prehistory and shamanism. You see that what is happening is we are, as a global culture, abandoning ourselves in a way, to the image, because nothing else can be done. There aren't enough resources, there are not enough metals in the planet to give everyone the kind of standard of living that is enjoyed by the technocratic elites in the West. So instead there has to be this trade-off in image. Now this is not something new, we see it reflected in American life over the whole postwar era because, I don't know if you've noticed, but in order to make good on the grand promise that was to accrue to the American middle class consequent on the defeat of fascism, this utopia that was to come to be- for it to happen it was done tackily. That was the price that was paid. You know Eric Yonch said "the question regarding space colonies is not 'is it possible', but how will we keep it in good taste. And this was a question that was not answered by American culture in the 50's. It was essentially a suburban, modular housing, modular product, modular values, modular lifestyle paradise that was sold as a the consequences of the completion of the American dream. Part of what we have been living through this period is a hallucination of improper language. I mean, now because of the changes going on in the Soviet Union, the fiction of this implacable enemy bent on putting a tank on every street corner in the world is now exposed as a cultural illusion, a fiction. And I'm not entirely persuaded that was simply all a horrible misunderstanding. It seems to me these illusions played very strongly into the hands of different factions on both sides. Political realism is also coming-to-grips with language. You know the French sociologist Jacques Guilmol said "there are no political solutions, there are only technological ones. The rest is propaganda" well, you know, people howl to the high heavens. But in fact ideology which is a kind of street corner form of metaphysics, ideology has been just a pervasive cancer on the Western mind ever since the burning of Eleusis. I mean we just can't get enough of it. You know, we may look with horror on the funeral of the imam, but believe me in the history of Western civilization there have been scenes go down that make that look like child's play. Recall to you just as an example, the Alpagencian crusade, when in order to stamp out a heresy, the inquisition was turned loose in southern France, and the professional killer who was put in charge of this operation was a career man named Simone de Montforte and his lieutenants came to him at one point in this campaign and said "we have the city surrounded, we are laying siege to" I believe it was Carcacon, and they said "but there are 7000 Catholics within the walls" he said "kill everybody, God will recognize his own." So, you know, the 20th century has not cornered the market on the ways in which language can distort and is used for political purposes to distort reality. A very poignant example of that that I have personally had to deal with is a lot of my work in the Amazon has been in an area of the Colombian Amazon called the Lower Putumayo. And I venture very few people this afternoon have any association to the lower Putumayo, but in fact British banks with the collusion of Peruvian ruling families in the early years of this century created a mini holocaust in the Peruvian, it was then Peru, in the Peruvian Amazon, in the pursuit of rubber. And what this was about was going in to these tribal areas and showing these people how to collect wild rubber, and then telling them, you know, you

bring in this much, the first time you don't bring in this much, we remove the soles of your feet with a machete. The second time you don't bring in this much, we kill you. And 45,000 Indians were exterminated in the Columbian Putumayo.

Going there years after this atrocity, I was amazed to see the lingering effects of the misuse of language. The Colombians, who were not politically associated with this- later in the 30's it was ceded to Peru, referred to it as it the Devil's Paradise, and the idea is that 'savages', note this word, 'savages', are savage. And therefore we must be more savage. In other words, preliterate culture is taken as an excuse for the rise of the beast in the colonizer. And this is entirely done, how this trick is done is through the misuse and abuse of language, where 'civilization' is what is being brought to these people, even though what appears to be being brought to them is the institution of prostitution, social diseases, slavery, madness, death. But in fact no that isn't it, it's civilization, its a set of reasonable values. well the consequences of working out the reasonable values that were exported into the colonial world throughout the 18th and 19th century, the consequence of that, is the appalling contradiction presented by modernity, where the major portion of real wealth of great nations is shoveled into a standing prop of weaponry which had better never be used because if it is used, it spells armageddon. If it's not used, it's simply the worst investment anybody ever dreamed up. So, this kind of betrayal of language and use of scapegoats- see that's what was happening with the United States vis-a-vis the Soviet Union- the scapegoat, the godless communist. It's what was happening in the Putumayo between the rubber barons and the Indians they were exploiting. They thought they were civilizing them. So, the imaging of the world gives permission for various kinds of relationships to it, and people never question. You know, once they pledge allegiance to a given linguistic model of reality, then that absolves all necessity for further thought. This is what Goebels understood so perfectly- you repeat and you repeat and you repeat, and then when people ask themselves in the privacy of their own mind, the moral question, your answer is on the surface waiting to be heard. Goebels was the first person to create a system where, sitting in an office in Berlin, he could throw a switch and speak to the German people, and McLuhan talked a lot about this, the notion of the creation of the public. What is the public? It's something that comes out of print culture, it's post medieval. It's a phenomenon that can only exist in the presence of newspapers, essentially, that's what gave it its boost. And the public is a very different thing from the democratic notion of the people because the public is this body of quote unquote 'informed opinion', but this informed opinion is tremendously subject to whim, pressure, propaganda, and distortion. I mean, I don't know how many of you have been following, because we're so isolated here, but what is going on in China is right now totally Orwellian. Films are being watched in darkened rooms, people locate and drag forward, forced to recant whatever accounts they gave of the violence. These film clips are being shown side by side on the evening news, where three weeks ago we were hearing that the army would nver attack the beloved students. Now, the army is patriotically rounding up dissidents, hooligans, bandit elements, and those who would destroy the compact between the party and the people. This is just a shift in language. Remember the scene in 1984 where the party hack is giving the speech and mid way through the speech he's handed a telegram on the podium that tells him that the enemy has changed, it's no longer oceania, they've made peace with oceania and begun bombing eurasia, the other state, and in mid-stride- he doesn't even have to end a paragraph! He can just turn the language and plough off in another direction. Well, is there any cure for this? Or are we simply the prisoners, each of us in our own way, of people smarter than ourselves. Well, not really, I think. Because outside the domain of language is some kind of domain of authentic feeling. We have thousands of words for technological processes, widgets and what have you. Our vocabulary of feeling comprises about 10 words, you know. Love, hate, disgust, revulsion, obsession, like that. Yet, in the same way that we are capable of this very intensely modulated brain-state that translates itself into small mouth noises, we need to be aware of an internal horizon of self-perception

that is extremely rich and complicated, and shifting all the time. Now, that's who we actually are. That is not the top-down values of the culture that we wear like clothing. That's who we are. This is what McLuhan said when he said we wear culture like an overcoat. It's something sold to us. You go out and buy it, you try it on. If Time Magazine doesn't fit you, maybe the Economist will. If neither fits, well, try the Journal of Foreign Affairs. You'll find an overcoat that fits, and then that will become part of your culture. I saw the cartoon in the New Yorker last night, the well dressed man and his wife leaving a party and he's saying to her "how can we relate to people who belong to the book of the month club?" YOU know , these are strong cultural disparities. So to overcome culture, really, which I view as provisional and semi-toxic, there has to be a way back to bedrock, to something that is satisfyingly transcendental in an immediate sense. In an immediate sense. So it cannot be a philosophy as far as I'm concerned. Maybe philosophies work for the more rarified among us. They have the consolation of, I don't know, Episcopalianism, Orthodox Judaism, Logical Positivism, whatever trip they've got running. But I've always found philosophy to be recreational, and won't really serve. Well, so then what is there? First of all, there is nature. Nature, silently attended, is still a modality that is beyond the reach of the language of most of us, and of those of us who need it most fortuitously, because we have the smallest vocabulary for its description. So, when we go into nature, it's a flirtation with a kind of iridescence, it's a search for, i mean I blush to use such a word, but a lost innocence, which most of associate with childhood. Some of us had terrible childhoods, so we just associate it with the lost paradise of Eden, or a utopia. But in nature there is an implicate order. There is the bedrock out of which the human iridescence springs. And human culture is an extremely evanescent, transitory, and non-equilibrium kind of condition. I mean, the pulse beat of this planet is measured in millions of years. Culture is a phenomenon of the last 40,000 years, and that's generous. So culture has about it this miraculous instantaneous and almost intrusive quality against the background of the rest of the body of nature. But going into nature is not simply a prescription for joining the Sierra Club. What going into nature means is taking seriously the alchemical faith that preceded the positivist flowering of science. And looking into the heart of matter with the expectation of encountering a mystery. Now, in the most practical sense what this has to mean is the psychedelic experience. Hallucinogenic plants. It cannot mean anything else. Now of course we're in the slightly uncomfortable position of having that be illegal, but that in itself should be a sufficient indication for most people that something is going on. I mean, my take on legality is essentially that of Charles Dickens, who was sort of an Edwardian Anarchist. And his famous throwaway line on that is 'the law is an ass' , and it's sadly true in this case. But i'm not really interested in it as a legal issue. I'm interested in it as a human rights issue if you want to put it that way. In other words, my assumption is that in the same way that the Western mind reached a certain place where it recognized that slavery, whether it made economic sense or not, was morally insupportable, and in the same way than that a universal right to own property if you've got the money has been more or less institutionalized, and the oppression of women is now recognized as a kind of self-defeating strategy of male dominance. In the same way that these things have been signposts in the continuing history of human self-definition. So shall be the understandign that life , liberty, and pursuit of happiness in the age of modern pharmacology has to mean the right to control your own state of mind in the appropriate - subject to the constraints of time, place and manner. And so forth and so on. And that's enough about the socio-political end of it. What is more interesting is the thing in itself, what it is. That it is something which our cultural biases, reaching clear back to the phonetic alphabet, and to the male dominance, the fear that societies run along the lines of male dominance, have of boundary dissolution. I mean, for a thousand years in western civilization, the only boundary dissolutiond that is soally sanction was getting plastered, and that appears to have been specifically for the purpose of getting laid. I mean, as far as research can tell us, for a thousand years nobody got laid who wasn't stone drunk because everyone was such a paragon of social rectitude. Well, I mean it's truer than you think. Alcohol is clearly a medium for

permission in a Calvinist milieu. Well, I can talk about this in all kinds of different ways. It's very interesting. I talked about scapegoats, and I talked about the misuse of language. I suppose, since I got that deep into it, I might as well say what I'm thinking, which is that the drug issue now looms as an obvious new horror. I mean, it has all the trappings of the Communist under the bed. I mean I have not yet heard crack-cocaine referred to as Godless. But any day I think the connection will be made, that this is a Godless drug. The problem here is again, a problem of language. We have one concept, 'drug'. It moves from aspirin to heroin, through LSD, and on into television. These things can all be spoken of as drugs. So then what this means immediately is somebody has stacked the rhetorical deck against a reasonable discussion of the matter because our vocabulary is so impoverished. I mean are we to believe that we need the same policy for television as we need for heroin. Are we to believe that psychedelic psychotherapy is to be treated with the same hand that resolves the crack-cocaine issue? So, while the government squawks education, no education is taking place. Rather, what is taking place is a poisoning of the linguistic domain in which we will then be expected to forge a solution. So what I've tried to say on this issue, and some of you saw this month's Mother Jones, may have noticed that they put me in there, more picture than text, which tells you something about an age of symbols. But what I've tried to say is that we need to define drugs operationally. We need to say what it is we don't like, and then we need to find out what it is that does what we don't like. Ok, what is it we don't like. I submit to you that what we don't like about drugs is unexamined obsessive and habitual behavior. Unexamined, obsessive, habitual behavior. Meaning, you know, somebody's into something, and by God, if you get in their way when they're on their way to it, you're in trouble. They do not question their obsession, they indulge their obsession, and they will tolerate no discussion of it. So, unexamined, habitual, obsessive behavior is extremely objectionable to all of us, I think. I mean, we call anything that we don't like, we call it robot-like, automaton, unthinking, zombie, so forth and so on. Well, imagine if our partners in the new global materialism, the Japanese, had introduced into this country at the end of World War 2, a drug, which, within a few years, made such deep inroads into the American population that people were spending an average of 5 hours a day loaded on this drug. What would we think? We would think that it was a crime against a culture on the scale of Auschwitz. But as a matter of fact, we did this to ourselves. Television, introduced at the close of World War II, has become a form of electronic heroin. And it isn't even your trip! They don't even let you go on your own trip. You get a trip designed on Madison Avenue to sell, you know, this year's model of the crapmobile, or whatever else is being pushed. So, unquestioningly, and even as I speak I'm sure there are people in this audience who are revolted at my lack of patriotism and love for an American institution of such nobility and depth as TV. Well, you know where I pulled back from TV, really pulled back from it? IT was when I made a mild knock on TV and someone in the audience said, well you can say anything you want about television, but you must admit that its given our children a wonderful education concerning nature.

Pursuing the theme of operationally defining drugs to give us a little more linguistic scope, psychedelics, in contrast to television and heroin, dissolve habitual patterns of activity, and promote examination of motives, and allow a restructuring of habit. Before LSD was made illegal back in the 60's. Very respectable psychologists, such as Humphrey Osmond and Hoffer, were obtaining a 40% cure rate of chronic alcoholism with one high-dose exposure. Well, now understand, this does not mean that LSD is a cure for alcoholism, I mean if you think that, you don't know anything about how drugs work. That 40% cure on one high-dose exposure to LSD of alcoholism means that this person took this psychedelic, it dissolved their boundaries, it dissolved their defenses, they came face to face with the fact that they were killing themselves, and when they came down they reached into their bowels and found enough intestinal fortitude to chop it off. Well this is the dream of all other therapies. Now AA achieves this, but at the cost of closing the mind. A truly devoted graduate of AA does not have an open mind on the drug issue because

they have been taught that opening your mind even a little bit may lead you back to the bottle. Well, they're trying to solve a personal dilemma in a context of neurosis. I'm sympathetic to that, but in the meantime the rest of us have to try to make sense of these extremely complex issues because the transcendent, which is what we cannot seem to find and what we are strangling for want of, lies precisely in the direction of this forbidden domain. What are we gonna do about it? In other words, authentic boundary-dissolving internal hierophony does, in fact, reliably occur in the presence of these plants and compounds. But nobody knows what to do about it. We have become so accustomed to seeking the answer that even as a community we have a lot of trouble figuring out how you just face the answer, how you come to terms with the options that are actually available. Well, I've talked about it today in a slightly more political context because when you hang out at the baz with the state department people, it's just like a virus in the watter. I mean you find yourself raving about triage, Saudi uprisings, infrastructures. I mean there's just no cure for it!

Are there questions? Yes, so the question is about sexuality and the relationship of sex to drugs. Tim Leary, he made a great case for sex and psychedelics. Every time they would say that LSD breaks chromosomes, he would say that they would cause orgasms that last- and he would add a greater increment of time as the propaganda required to hold the numbers steady on both sides. Certainly sex under psychedelics is quite astonishing, although psychedelics without sex is so astonishing...it's uh...it's uhhh, you know, perhaps an embarrassment of riches to pile it on. Now the analogy between sex and psychedelics that I think is the cogent one is, very few people go through life without ever brushing up against sexuality. I mean, you have to have truly bizarre biography for it to never come and get you. On the other hand, it is not only possible, but millions and millions of people do go from the cradle to the grave without ever having a psychedelic experience. Well, to my mind this is just an instance of an appalling infantilism that is culturally sanctioned. I mean, the culture not only doesn't care if you never find out about this, and remain forever immature, virgin, good word. This society, not only does it not care, it's specifically interested in seeing that you don't have this experience. Well, it's part of the birthright. This is what religion *was* for the first million years before it fell into the hands of men who insist on wearing dresses. You know, it was the celebration of an ecstatic reality that could be coaxed out of a magical relationship with nature. I mean, and it's still there. The portals are still there. You're RS232 outlet into hyperspace is still in place, even though, you know, nobody may have plugged in in your family line since Alaric burned Eleusis. Nevertheless, the hardwiring is there, the self-recognition. We are children without this, an d not in the sense of innocent, but in the sense of infantile because this is part of the birthright. How can...

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic [incomplete]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Terence McKenna's Final Earthbound Interview

October 1998

Hawaii

Interview by John Hazard

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

TRANSCRIBER: copy and paste the question and answers templates (below) for each question and answer. remove this red text before publishing.

Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

Original Transcription by: Transcription in progress - Alhazred (8th of March, 2018)

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Interview on KBOO FM Radio

1997

KBOO FM RADIO

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Original Source](#)

Paul O'Brien: Hello, and welcome to Pathways, where you are invited to join me for a visit with leaders in personal and cultural transformation. This is your host, Paul O'Brien. We have a very special show for you today featuring an interview that was originally videotaped in 1997 to be included on a CD-ROM that at the time featured the world's first interactive I Ching software, a product I called the Oracle of Changes. That Oracle of Changes CD-ROM is no longer compatible, but it morphed into a website that was named, appropriately, IChing.com, the remnants of which are now available for free at Divination.com or available via app called Visionary I Ching for smartphones.

On that Oracle of Changes CD-ROM, it was my intention to include 3 videotaped interviews with experts on various aspects of the I Ching along with the multimedia I Ching program itself. Terence was one of those selected who thankfully agreed. This interview was taped at his home on the Big Island of Hawaii, where he was transplanting entheogenic plants from the Amazon Basin to ensure their survival.

Interviewing Terence McKenna for me was a great honor, because he was an intellectual giant and a personal hero of mine. As I used to say, Terence had the widest bandwidth between the brain and mouth of anyone I'd ever met or heard. He was an American ethnobotanist, a mystic, a lecturer, and an author, who spoke and wrote about a variety of subjects, including psychedelic drugs, plant-based entheogens, shamanism, metaphysics, alchemy, language, philosophy, culture, technology and the theoretical origins of human consciousness itself.

He was called the Timothy Leary of the 90s and was one of the leading authorities on the ontological foundations of shamanism, and he served as the intellectual voice of rave culture. McKenna formulated a fascinating concept about the nature of time, based on fractal patterns which he discovered in the I Ching, which he called Novelty Theory, and showed how this predicted the end of time in the year 2012. It was his promotion of Novelty Theory and its connection to the Mayan calendar that was one of the factors leading to widespread beliefs about 2012. It was Terence's profound knowledge of the I Ching and my work in developing software versions of that Oracle that inspired me to interview him for inclusion on the CD-ROM.

It was an enlightening conversation. We have done our best here to make it sound good enough for broadcast and I'm sure you will enjoy it.

Sadly, Terence McKenna died in the year 2000 at the young age of 54.

Ok, let's switch to the audio portion of that 1997 interview now.

PO: Hi, I'm Paul O'Brien, producer of the Oracle of Changes. We're happy to bring you the following interview with Terence McKenna. Hello, Terence, and welcome to our program.

Terence McKenna: It's a pleasure to be here.

PO: Why would you consider the I Ching to be relevant in today's world, if it's an ancient Chinese book?

TM: Well, the people who put together the I Ching were very interested in change and time. Uh, in the same way that our culture since Classical Greece has been interested in matter, the people who put together the I Ching were interested in time, and I think they got quite far in their exposition of it. They were interested in why things happen as they happen. This is a different question than we ask in the West. In the West we have asked the question, "What are things made of?" and we've come a great distance toward understanding that.

I think the I Ching represents an effort to answer a different question: the question, "Why do things happen the way they happen?" Our answers in the West - probability theory, causal unfolding, logical necessity - are really not very satisfying when applied to the world of politics, love affairs, the social world of human beings. And that was where the Confucian and Taoist mentality was focused, was on the world of human interaction, and so rather than viewing the I Ching as a primitive cultural artifact from the distant past, I view it as a arguably very sophisticated cultural artifact representing a cultural point of view about which we know very little, and in order to understand this point of view, we're going to have to educate ourselves in the worldview of the I Ching, which is very different from the world we're familiar with.

PO: Terence, do you see any evidence in scientific circles of a renaissance in our orientation towards time, that you just mentioned?

TM: Well, there's certainly a growing awareness in Western science that the situation is a good deal more complex than cheerful rational materialism would have us believe. Uh, Taoism is essentially an appreciation of pattern. It's a wave theory of nature. Things have influences on other things at a distance. It's a holistic theory of nature. Things are seamless. It's an acausal theory of nature; things are not only connected through logical necessity, but they're connected in other ways, through what we would call morphogenetic resonance.

Uh, so, yes, I think science in the 20th century has grown generally more holistic. This comes from psychology at one end and quantum physics at the other. And of course, quantum physics and psychology meet in biology and the I Ching... one of the striking things about it to the western mind, is its incredible isomorphism to the DNA and the way in which molecular coding of hereditary material takes place.

So, uh, in a way, this turn of Western science toward more holistic and unified theories of nature also represents a turning toward Oriental ideas, and in someone like Joseph Needham, these two impulses - the Oriental and the philosophical and scientific - are unified and Needham had a great and deep respect for

the I Ching and wrote extensively about it.

PO: What do you know about the impact of the I Ching on the earliest inventors of binary mathematics?

TM: Well, the Jesuits penetrated China very early. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who was a German mathematician and philosopher best known for... Bertrand Russell said Leibniz invented the smallest form of God. Uh, Leibniz invented something called the monad, which was basically the first attempt to solve philosophical problems with holographic matrices. But he was a very wide-ranging thinker, and his Jesuit correspondents sent him – uh, I don't know if they sent him the entire I Ching, but they sent him the table of the hexagrams – and he quickly saw that this could be expressed as a binary number system, and he, in fact, rearranged it in what, to the Western mind, is the logical way the hexagram should be presented, in other words, according to binary unfolding of the integers in a binary system.

That is NOT the traditional sequence of the hexagrams, but from Leibniz - then the I Ching lay fallow for at least 100 years and then the English sinologist James Legge translated it in the late 19th century in the burst of Oriental mania that was sweeping Europe at that time. And then of course Carl Jung, the founder of depth psychology, found in the images of the I Ching a mirror for his own assumptions about the structure of the unconscious, as he had found those things in dreams and alchemy and other concerns. Uh, and physicists... Jung published at one point on the I Ching with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli. Physicists found in the acausal connectedness upon which the I Ching was founded something similar to the non-Boolean logic that they were forced to use in constructing quantum theory.

Ultimately, I believe the power of the I Ching lies in the fact that it's an insight into the structure of nature, not the structure of matter, atoms, molecular systems, but the structure of process. Uh, in the West we really have gotten no further than the process has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The Chinese saw it... that's essentially a four element or a three-element theory of process. The Chinese have a 64-element theory of process that allows them to perform a complex algebra of calculation as to what forces are impinging on any event, and then they have this method of sortilege, of divination, which allows them to extract out of a unique moment a hexagram appropriate to that moment and then to refer to a body of interpretation that illuminates that.

PO: Terence, you're the one who discovered that the traditional sequencing of the I Ching hexagram known as the King Wen sequence maps out a fractal algorithm or pattern. What are the implications of that discovery?

TM: Well, yes, I guess if I take my own opinions about the I Ching seriously, then what I come away with is the idea that the world is more plotted, more structured, more ordered, than science has led us to suppose. In other words, science gives us a world where many, many things are called probable, but no theory at all about how out of this class of probable things, certain things come to be.

And this is after all what we want to know – why did A happen and not B?

My immersion in the I Ching leaves me with the conclusion that just as where you are in space – whether you're in a narrow mountain valley or in a broad desert – determines much of what is going to happen to you, where you are in time, similarly, determines the kind of experiences you're going to have and not all times are the same. When there are times of novelty and opportunity, chance taking is repaid well. In times

of resistance and habit, chance taking can be fatal or least tragic. So, the whole notion of Taoism, and later Confucian thinking too, is this kind of sensing into the moment to know what is appropriate.

And in much Western thinking, it's been sort of presented as a mystical thing or an intuitive thing or an impossible-to-explain thing. I think it's just something simply that we didn't understand and that in fact it's much more like a science, this feeling into the moment. Now in the West we have it with astrology, a similar tradition of trying to feel into the moment, but again, the Western mind is so obsessed with matter that it turns into observational astronomy under the rule of the calculus, and the shall we call, psychological dimension of it, is then... appears absurd and is forgotten or debunked or looked down upon.

Uh, the Chinese, by not having this strong dualism between the internal and external world, were able to create a kind of physics that was also for them a kind of psychology and the I Ching is the distillation and the quintessence of this way of understanding the world.

PO: Would it be possible on a computer to map out a graphical representation of the fractal nature of the King Wen sequence?

TM: Oh yes, this is the kind of thing I worked on for years and done and the conclusions that it leads to are fascinating. Uh, it leads to the idea that what is called Tao is in principle not immune to a mathematical analysis. That what these sages are talking about is an invisible force which moves through the world, building structure up and sustaining process at times, and at other times, impeding structure and tearing down and dissipating process, uh, according to mysterious laws.

Well, all that mysterious laws mean are laws that you haven't understood yet, and I maintain that it is true what the Tao is saying: There is a mysterious force which ebbs and flows in time. It isn't electromagnetic, it isn't photonic, it isn't any of these things, but it touches everything: men, atoms, organisms, societies, and these are all playthings in its hands.

This is the Tao. So, then the sage, the life of the sage, is an attempt to understand this, and I think it can be mathematically understood and this may be what the west brings to it – the mathematical tools, and the technology, the computers you mentioned, to eventually portray this ebb and flow of Tao so that people can order their lives according to it, and I think when a life lived in accordance to the Tao, however it is perceived, however it is known, is a life free of anxiety, and this is the highest ideal of these Eastern systems of thought, to essentially become one with the flow of nature, and thereby an example to Emperor, commoner and everybody else.

PO: Do you think the use of the I Ching could be described as a high order of change management?

TM: Definitely, yes. I mean, you can... management is not a dirty word. It has a connotation now because it's so associated with rapacious capitalism, but all management means is paying attention to the details that must be paid attention to. I mean, a synonym for management is husbandry. Heidegger said, "The purpose of life is care for the project of being." Well, in a sense, that's management. The I Ching is a manual for management, for the guidance of individuals and organizations toward their goals achieved by appropriate means.

PO: You mention the use of I Ching for divination. How much stock do you put in that type of

application?

TM: Well, it's a complicated question, you see. If what we're saying is that time is fractal, then implicit in that statement is the idea that patterns repeat on many, many levels. Well, that is really what all systems of divination all over the world have always claimed, that in a pool of water, in a flaw in a crystal, or in a process of sortilege, somehow these objects, these processes, become microcosms of the larger situation in the macrocosm. I think you can't really judge that hypothesis until you judge the physics that it's based upon, but certainly as I say, this is the oldest book in the world. It has persisted among very hard-headed people – politicians, courtiers, and emperors - for several millennia, so I think we need to take it seriously on that basis alone.

PO: In modern times, the I Ching and systems like it have been denigrated as superstitions. Do you see that attitude changing in the light of modern discoveries in quantum physics?

TM: Yes, I mean, I think the dinosaur is so dead to its own sensation that the messages are not getting through. Anybody who has any understanding of what is going on in quantum physics, or research mathematics, or dynamics, or chaos theory, knows that the world is a far stranger place than the cheerful world of rational materialism inherited from the 19th century. Uh, the I Ching is a paragon of rationalism compared to the quantum physics taught in our Universities in order to understand matter.

You see, something rather dramatic has gone unnoticed in Western thinking, which is physics, which was always the paradigmatic science, the idealized science in the west, because often theory and experiment would agree with each other, out to four or five decimal points. Well, no other science, no biology, no psychology, can come even close to that. So, physics was always the paradigmatic science, but physics pushed its frontier then into a domain of irrationality, the realm of the quanta. Well then at that point the paradigmatic science began to babble like the ravings of a madman, and the whole edifice of reason and rational apprehension of nature caved in to those, for those who were paying attention to what was going on. Many people were not. The average workbench scientist has many cheerful assumptions about what he's doing and what science is, that people who are philosophers of science know to be no more than a simple religious faith.

So, yes, I think that, uh, the I Ching, psychedelic experiences based on the news brought back from aboriginal non-western peoples, all of these things are telling us that the world is more complex than reason can anticipate, and that if we're serious about the intellectual enterprise of understanding nature and understanding ourselves, reason may just have to be viewed as one tool in the toolbox and the I Ching is another tool in the toolbox, a very powerful and necessary tool.

PO: I'd like to go back to the fractal nature of time that you discovered, based on the sequencing of I Ching hexagrams in the King Wen sequence. You came up with a theory which you called Time Wave Zero. Can you tell us about that?

TM: Well, the theory is called novelty theory. The software behind it is called Time Wave Zero. It's basically, simply based on these mathematical studies of the King Wen sequence: an effort to put all that into a computer and scale it against time, so that we can generate what look like Cartesian graphs, in other words, like stock market graphs, but they're not the rise and fall of a market, they're the ebb and flow of Tao. Tao, dually conceptualized as habit and novelty, and the flow of time is conceived of as a kind of

shifting boundary or tension between habit and novelty and the unfolding of this in its totality, then, is the Tao. So basically, what I did is I tried to create a little mathematical model of how Tao would look if it could be numerically quantified.

PO: Terence, do you consider yourself a scientist?

TM: My method is rational. My techniques are shamanic. Uh, was it Lautréamont or Polinaire (sp?) or someone, who said the deliberate disordering of the senses...oh, Rimbaud. Arthur Rimbaud, the symbolist poet. A deliberate disordering of the senses worked for Rimbaud.

I think it's very interesting to use shamanic techniques and then analyze the data...rational, rather than mythologically or psychologically or anthropologically. And that's gotten me a long way, being willing to put myself in these situations of turbulence through strange cultures or bizarre plant experimentation and this sort of thing, but then always to subject the data to the filters of rational inspection and rules of evidence and analysis. So, some people can't tell whether I'm half shaman, half scientist. I think probably the answer is simply half baked. [laughter]

PO: Is there any advice that you'd like to give our audience, relative to what we've been discussing?

TM: Well, I don't know about advice. This is a fascinating area. I mean, you know, you're born, you don't know where you come from, you slip into the grave, 50, 60, 80 years later. You don't know what that means, and so between birth and the grave, where you are is the world of time – the world of time, space, energy and matter. And I think of it as a kind of puzzle or a challenge. If you can figure it out, you're plucked off into some other dimension with new problems and new challenges. If you can't figure it out, you probably just turn back into a sunbeam at the end of the whole thing. Well, so then, the I Ching is one of these very rare pieces of human literature, where people actually understood something, and they got it down and they left it as a signpost along the road.

And if it resonates with you, if you feel what this is all about, then a life lived in the light of these writings, and writings about these writings, is a life free of anxiety, open to the problems of other people and capable of being an example of how to live in the world. And I think it's great that you're doing this, and I hope it means that people are sensitizing themselves to the felt presence of experience. That's what the Tao is, that's what intuition is, that's what the I Ching can help us toward, is an experience of our own being and tone.

PO: Well, that is the end of the interview with Terence McKenna, which was taped in 1997. For those who tuned in late, this is your host Paul O'Brien, Producer of Pathways and the Visionary I Ching app, which is intimately related to the conversation we just heard. In a second, I'll tell you how you can rewind and replay this entire interview any time you want, via Podcasts on the internet or via iTunes.

Today's show has been an archived recording of my interview with the mystic Terence McKenna in 1997. Terence was the author of *Food of the Gods: The Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge, True Hallucinations*, and many other books. I want to say thank you to all of our listeners, for tuning in to the Pathways interview program, which is broadcast and streamed via KBOO.fm on Sunday mornings at 8:30am USA Pacific time. Podcasts of today's show, which you can listen to and forward to others, are also available for free at divination.com, on iTunes and via the website KBOO.fm. This is Paul O'Brien,

reminding you to tell your friends about Pathways and its podcasts.

With reverence, we tip our hat to the late Terence McKenna, and also to all of you listeners for tuning in and being a part of the Pathways experience.

Original Transcription by: Twila402

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Interview on WFMU

21 April 1994

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

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Interview with Art Bell

1st April 1999

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

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Into the New Millennium

1991

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

Description

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Lecture Name

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Lecture Name

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Event Description:

Description

- [Psychedelic Salon Podcast 335](#)
- [Transcription from Vipal Prem](#)
- [Other links](#)

(This transcript begins at around the 7:00 minute mark, where the featured talk begins.)

Fraser Clark: He's probably the most adventurous mind on the planet today. I would just like to say one little thing about the man himself, if I'm going to talk about him. Where I like to refer to him, that he's not just a philosopher, he's not just an intellectual. The man is a revolutionary, an iconoclast. And he's doing lots of things besides this talk and ideas. So that's it: Terence McKenna!

Terence is going to talk for about one hour, and then we'll do questions and answers. What I'd like you to do is, if you have a question, write it on a piece of paper and at the end of the hour and bring it up here. I'll be sitting at the back of the stage. That way it works a little more efficiently. Terence McKenna: All right. I don't know—do you sit? Do you stand? What do you do? Is the sound good? Is the light good? So, are you happy to be here? Good. So am I. Well, before I get into the bulk of the lecture tonight, I thought I would just give you some news from the frontier of pharmacology, which is that, for the second time in the 20th Century, a mega hallucinogen has been discovered that is active in microgram quantities. What this is, is an incredible opportunity for the community, because this compound that is active at 300 micrograms when smoked is not illegal anywhere in the world—to grow, to manufacture, to possess, to transport.

So here is the story. For 45 years it's been a commonplace of the botanical literature that there was a Mexican plant called salvia divinorum. But it was always said that it was either impossible to confirm its hallucinogenic activity, or whatever it was, it was so unstable that it would only persist in the plant for a few hours after it was picked.

About five years ago, an American anthropologist, one of our own, Brett Blosser, went to the Oaxacan mountains and spent some time time with the Indians down there, and they showed him how to get off on the plant, the leaf. He described to me and a number of other people quite extraordinary states of consciousness that were coming from this particular shamanic plant.

That's where it rested until about 10 months ago, when an underground chemist in an earthquake-prone city, who prefers to remain anonymous, set out to actually isolate the constituent of salvia divinorum. In

short order he overcame the conventional wisdom and produced a crystalline material, active at the microgram range. To check what it was, he purchased a chromatographic standard of a compound called salvinorin-alpha, that had been extracted from this plant 15 years ago. And he smoked that, and the experience was identical. So we now know that there is a new chemical compound in the isoquinoline family that is active in the microgram range that occurs in a plant that looks like Joe Plant. It's a house plant. It's a window box plant. It's a relative of the coleus. It grows from Nome to the equator, and it's legal. For the first time since the psychedelic issue has been before the community, we have an opportunity to create a psychedelic community that is entirely within the law. No laws need to be change, and no laws are broken if we avail ourselves of this stuff. To manufacture it, to transport it, to use it, to explore it for psychotherapy, to do it on stage (as I am about to do).

I'm kidding. I'm kidding! Steady!!! To serve, by way of example, in fact that there are probably many such plants still to be discovered. The interesting thing about salvia divinorum is that it's not related to any substance currently illegal. Therefore, the argument that it is a structural relative to something illegal is also fallacious. At least in the case of the American government, they will have to present medical and scientific evidence that there is a problem with this compound before it will be possible to make it illegal.

This just one more example, along with ibogaine, phalaris, ayahuasca, so forth and so on, of the way in which the earth itself is stepping in to aid in the agenda of cultural transformation. There are too many doorways in Nature that lead to heaven. There are too many paths to the Mystery for any institution, or social policy to be able to thwart the intent of the human species to evolve. This is part of what this end-of-millennium cultural transformation is about. A rediscovery of the richness of the gifts of nature.

I mentioned ibogaine. Ibogaine is another hallucinogen, a West African plant that induces intense visionary experiences, and is now being looked at by the National Institute for Drug Abuse in the United States as, possibly, a strong contender for being a pharmacological intervention on cocaine and heroin addiction.

Imagine how the social understanding of the concept "altered state" and "psychoactive substance" would be changed if we discovered that the solution to many of our drug problems are drugs, you see. I maintain that they were the solution to many of our problems thousands and thousands of years ago, and it was the creation of societies so constipated, so ego-bound, so hierarchically-stratified, that it couldn't tolerate the presence of an ecstatic shamanism as a social phenomenon. It's the rise of those kinds of societies that have led us to the brink of planetary catastrophe. So that sort of brings me to what may be the major theme for the evening, or what I wanted to explore with you.

I'm interested in the question, "Is there any reason why smart people should hope? Is there any reason why people of analytical intelligence, who are connected up to the facts of the matter about the state of the world, should hope?" The conventional wisdom is basically "no." The smart people who are straight are involved in simply the media management of what has turned into a slow apocalypse. Spreading starvation, exacerbated class differences, toxified agriculture, so forth and so on.

I don't believe the establishment thinks there are solutions. Their policy is basically the management of panic, which is hardly a forward-moving approach to the adventure of human civilization. In order to find permission to hope, to believe in something, the first thing you have to do is reconstruct your

intellectual model of the universe from the very, very ground up. As long as you are trying to make sense of reality inside the boundaries of the old paradigm, there's no hope. There's no way out of the box of capitalism, monogamy, consumer fetishism, egoism, money worship. No way out. No way. No, way, out.

So what that means is we have to return to first principles. We have to re-understand who we are in the universe. What we are in the universe. And what we mean to it. And in order to do that, I'd almost use the word "attack," but let's be academic, and instead provide the critique of science, because this is the world that science built with the henchmen of capitalism and Christianity. A critique of science that brings it to a new model of reality is the way to open a door to hope.

Here's the deal. Science has overlooked two immensely salient facts about reality that are not abstruse, to be deduced from analyzing the contents of cyclotrons or the reflectivity data on the moons of Pluto. Science has missed two immensely obvious facts about reality.

Here's what they are. The first one is not such a stretch. The first fact is that across all levels of phenomenon, atomic, ordinary organic chemistry, biological systems, cultural systems, your life, across all levels of phenomena, the way nature works is that she conserves novelty. What I mean by this is that the universe produces novelty, then it struggles to maintain it. The universe is a novelty-producing engine of some sort, and the further you move from the birth of the universe, the more novel the universe becomes, until you arrived here tonight.

This is the most novel moment to date in the history of the universe. It is not only a world of astrophysical forces, or a world of astrophysical forces plus organic chemistry, or astrophysical forces, organic chemistry, plus biology. This is a world that has all the levels of novelty that have accumulated throughout the career of the evolving universe, each level built on the level which proceeded it.

One thing that I want to point out about this, if you agree with this, then the first payoff is that

suddenly, human importance is taken back from the scientific view that we are the chancely evolved witnesses of a meaningless process in an ordinary corner of the universe too vast to conceive or imagine. That incredibly disempowering picture of who we are in the cosmos is misled. The actual facts of the matter are, that in our bodies, in our brains, in the culture that we have assembled, all the novelty that preceded us has been exploited, and is expressed, and is honored.

We begin to look like partners in the project of the production of novelty, and more novelty, and yet greater novelty. That is the first fact that science overlooked. The conservation of novelty.

The second fact that science overlooked is more of a stretch in terms of the break with the past style of thinking that it requires. The second fact which science overlooked is the fact that each advance into novelty, each new level of novelty occurs faster than the level which preceded it. This is incredibly important, because what it means is that the culmination of the novelty-producing process could be far closer to us in kind than we might ordinarily suppose using scientific assumptions about reality.

Those of you who have heard me before have heard me say, "History is the shock wave of eschatology." What that means is the presence of our selves on this planet, using culture, using language, transferring information electronically around the world. Our presence on the planet means that the universal process of novelty-production has entered one of its very short cycles. What it means is that asymptotic acceleration of change is built into the structure of space-time itself in this region of the cosmos.

History is ending. Time is literally running out on this planet. It isn't about political mistakes or anything where we should blame ourselves. It's in the structure of the fabric of space-time itself. The proof of this is ourselves. Because the emergence of conscious human beings out of advanced primates occurred with such explosive suddenness, that it, like history, argues that we are in the presence of a process that is quickly beginning to accelerate and cross boundary level after boundary

level, as it bursts through greater and greater degrees of freedom.

I believe that we are actually preparing to decamp from ordinary history. I don't know exactly what that means, but the continuation of history for decades, centuries, millennia, is inconceivable. That is the hallucination of the establishment, because it cannot imagine the actual truth of the situation, which is the cascade of forces set off by Greek science, by the phonetic alphabet, by monotheism, this cascade of social forces is now propelling the entire global social structure into another dimension.

Literally, another dimension.

I mentioned the conservation of novelty. Now I want to go back over it from a slightly different point of view. If we analyze the way in which novelty has made its way into being, you see that it has consisted of a kind of conquest of dimensionality. The earliest life forms were probably long chained polymers, or viral particles. They were essentially points in the universe. They had no sensorium, no sense of direction, no sexuality, no sense of time. They were basically a point-like toe hold in matter by this thing we call organic existence.

Over time these life forms developed motility, meaning the ability to move. And literally fumbled their way through a universe that they could not see, dealing with each moment sequentially. But this sequential exploration of space-time represents the first conquest of dimensionality, out of the pointspace.

Later, organisms sequestered light-sensitive chemistry on their surfaces and became aware of the gradient of light, which gives the concept “here” and “there,” and the possibility of moving towards the light. This is a further conquest of dimensionality. The rest of the whole history of life, up until very recently then, is the story of producing better organs of locomotion—better fins, better wings, better feet and arms, as higher and higher animals arose, ultimately with coordinated, binocular vision. And then at that point, rather than the conquest of dimensionality being halted, one particular organism makes an auto-genetic leap to the phenomenon of language.

Language is a biological strategy for binding time. Specifically, it is a way of remembering what happened, and anticipating what might happen. It explodes the animal consciousness away from the now, and creates the incredibly complex web of syntactic and semiotic structures that we know as language.

This process is very quickly, compared to previous developments, followed by a second development, the discovery of writing. Now, it's not simply a matter of handing on the oral traditions from generation to generation. Suddenly now the freezing of time is an utterly realistic undertaking.

Discourse flows into to signs, signification in clay and stone, and time is frozen. And, the triangulation of the future proceeds through the evolution of the kind of mathematics that we see at Stonehenge, and so forth. This unique strategy that the advanced primates created, the strategy of using language to bind time, is what the process we call "civilization" has been all about.

Now, with electronic media, enormous databases, the ability to use Telnet and Usenet, and move around the planet from library to library with a few keystrokes, essentially we are completing the program of downloading all of the past into virtual accessibility. As we do this, we are essentially propelling ourselves into this much ballyhooed domain called "cyberspace." Cyberspace is the human transition into a mathematical super-space where we, as a collectivity, become optionally a single point of view.

What this all means then, is that human history and biological evolution, and in fact, the entire unfolding of the universe, is not something pushed from behind, like the falling of a row of dominoes. In other words, the scientific assumption of causal necessity is only part of the story. The universe is under the spell of what I call a transcendental object, or what chaos theory calls an attractor.

There is actually a teleological arrow to process. It is being drawn through, ever into ever more novel domains, and it also spends less time in each domain of novelty until it moves on into the next one.

This is what Whitehead called “conrescence.” It's what it means that in a hundred years we've gone from a world where most people didn't possess telephones to a world where most people where most people can call anywhere in the planet as long as they can afford it.

Conrescence, the knitting together, the dissolving of boundaries. This is the key to novelty. Novelty is achieved of the flowing together of domains that were previously separate. They may be the half-life portions of a chromosome, rich people and poor people, or ravers and travelers, or Marxists and democrats. The point is, ideas become constipated when they're sealed away from other idea systems.

The main thing going on in the 20th century is a dissolving of boundaries, all the boundaries that historical civilization put in place. I mean, what has the last 1,000 years been about, except building class differences, race differences, sexual differences. We've had religious wars, we have factionalism. It's how we relate to the world, with the final culmination of the dog-eat-dog vision of nature that we inherit from British natural science in the 19th Century.

The new metaphor is fusion, union, cross-fertilization of boundaries, melding into an enormous stew of virtual and interactive creativity. What this is all leading to, I believe, is what I call the “big bang.” I'm sorry—the “big surprise.” And as I describe it to you, the reason I said “big bang” is because I want you to remember as I describe this cosmogony to you, what is stored somehow in the DNA.

You remember there are vast segments of the DNA that do not appear dedicated to genetic transcription of proteins. These have always been dismissed by science as so called “silent sequences.” But silent sequences may not be designed to be read by a ribosome to produce a protein. The silent sequences of DNA may be, in fact, encoded information of the sort of information you and I have been focusing on.

When the drug molecule fits in there, it broadcasts an expanded electron spin resonance signal off the

molecule, and this is the psychedelic experience. It's being conducted into the Akashic memory banks where all this DNA-coded information is happening. The fact is that's pure speculation, and there are many molecular biologists who would just sneer at it. But they are not on as secure ground as they suppose.

If there is one issue in the past 40 years that science has failed utterly to make any progress on, it's the question of memory. No one understands how it works, and the best models to date are completely inadequate to the data. So I believe the brain is not in on this. And it would make a certain amount of sense, wouldn't it? The psychedelic experience is sort of like experiencing a vast blast of memory data. Those of you who have done it, have you noticed the “now I'm an infant again” aura that sometimes attends it? I mean, when I do DMT I actually feel my body proportions become infantile. I feel my head get bigger and my legs shrink. It's only a part of the experience; you have to notice it.

It seems to me that it's very suggestive that we're actually entering hyperspace. You are experiencing yourself, not just now, but your whole life, back, back, back. There's a lot of work to be done.

Fraser Clark: Does the intensity of the DMT experience diminish when you take it with MAO inhibitors?

Terence McKenna: Does the DMT experience diminish when you take it with MAO inhibitors?

I would think that you might lock it in at a fairly high level of intensity.

Fraser Clark: [inaudible]

Terence McKenna: Yes it does, it does. Be sure you're prepared before you try that stuff.

Fraser Clark: Other people I know that have tried DMT and had “ordinary” tripping experiences—ET, aliens, and doors opening. No one has had these vast experiences you describe. It's all due to the mind. You see these things because you have a wide, scientific, academic background in your head already.

Terence McKenna: Well, the thing about DMT is that it does make a certain demand of courage. And

the leather-lung smokers among us are in a superior position. The difference between one toke and two is enormous. The difference between two tokes and threes is staggering. So, you have to push it. I believe that it is quite safe. People say, "Is it dangerous?" And you know my answer: "Only if you fear death by astonishment." But that's not a joke! Death by astonishment doesn't seem like such an unlikely proposition when you're out there. A friend of mine once said, "Every time I do it, I try to stand more."

And that's what it's like, because ultimately it is going to overwhelm your intellectual machinery. If it doesn't blow it out in the first 30 seconds, it will blow it out later. Ultimately the mind fails. The descriptive apparatus melts. The measuring instruments are vaporized. And the thing is just what it is. So you want to proceed carefully, with courage. If your friends tell you you're getting "nutty," you should listen to them. Because it does have the tendency to magnify inflationary images in the psyche. In other words, if you're not flawlessly solid, it will act like an x-ray of just where the fault-lines lie in your particular world view.

His question is, "Do you believe that it is necessary to be in a certain mind-space before entering a trip to give maximum effect?"

Well it's very simple. It's six hours without food, and silent darkness. Telephones unplugged. Comfortable, reassuring environment. That's all.

It's not about tanks. It's not about social situations like this—they're dense, full of pheromones and social signaling. It would rip you apart in a really deep trip. Let's not underrate cannabis, for crying out loud! Cannabis should be the glue of the community. It's really important to go botanical, to be a botanical psychedelic compound.

[Cheers...]

You see, the very best of the white powder drugs are still impossible to verify as to purity and source.

It's just a fool's game. The plants will not play you false. So I think that is very important.

Fraser Clark: Do you think the industrial-political system will be able to manipulate consciousness through technology, bio [inaudible] by plants, implants, and prevent our minds from evolving and accessing the transcendental object?

Terence McKenna: Well, this thing about fearing technology in any form. What you've got to understand is that when you go into these places like Autodesk, and Silicon Graphics, and like that, you have the suits above the 20th floor. But everybody below the 20th floor has hair down to their asses, heavily tattooed, pierced, they're rocking. So, we OWN this technology; they do not understand it. You know, it was a miracle that Richard Nixon could erase eighteen and a half minutes on a tape recorder and get it right. They have to pay us to run their technology. They can't write code. They can't run the nets. It belongs to us.

I see this trend accelerating. The technical community is by no means a part of the opposition. The technical community is going to be there when we reach the barricades.

Fraser Clark: What kind of music or sound, if any, would you use with DMT? Also, what does DMT sound like?

Terence McKenna: What kind of music would I use with DMT? Well, I've done DMT with music, but I've regretted it nearly every time. I've done it with Locatelli's Violin Concerto #11. That was a long time ago. The reason these aren't contemporary deals is because I haven't done it with music for 30 years because it alarmed me. I did it with with Karlheinz Stockhausen, and that really alarmed me. As far as what DMT sounds like, it sounds, well, somewhat like this: [vocalizes something like the sound of wind or radio static]. And of course, there's this sucking, pulling thing that happens as you tumble down these bi-systolic organismic hallways that are pulling and tugging you forward. And then you get into what, for me and for some other people, what I call the "elf hive." It hits people

differently.

I saw a woman not long ago, have the most amazing orgasm. It was very interesting. And I've seen a lot of people do DMT, and this just left everybody's jaw hanging. This woman was a very nondescript sort of person, but she certainly got off. She was saying during it, "Don't send me back. I can't leave you. I can't leave you!"

What happens to me in reference to the sound thing, is language. I see elves, sort of, dribbling self-jeweled basketballs. But the main activity at the higher doses is these autonomous machine elf soul creatures make objects with language. Somehow language in the DMT-space is transduced through the eyes. You see syntax, and you are, in fact, impelled to join with them in these long, spontaneous bursts of language-like activity, that sounds sort of like this:

"Yeev ba jing nyee woobz yaubh dah yoh boo deedz ingidee yoo wap pop yo ahhh brrr jeee woop grr...."

[Applause, then Terence continues with several more seconds of "glossolalia."]

Fraser Clark: So what holds those together? Or do you just let go? Will we become insane in the conventional meaning?

Terence McKenna: No. We'll redefine sanity. We carry the destination with us. This is what's insane—the city outside, the governments and institutions. We won't become insane. We are awakening. This is what's happening. The long nightmare of human history that James Joyce talked about. We are awakening, and the truth you think you see, the truth of your own intuition, is the truth. You don't need somebody handing this stuff down from on high. You simply have to open your eyes. If it looks like horse shit, if it talks like horse shit, if it walks like horse shit, it probably IS horse shit.

Fraser Clark: Do you think we will last the course of time and eventually create a common awareness?

Or do you think we will destroy ourselves [inaudible] the planet? Do we have enough time to

[inaudible]?

Terence McKenna: I am an absolute optimist. I am absolutely certain as I stand before you that everything is on track. I mean, the mushroom has said, "This is what it's like when a species prepares to be part of the galactic center. This is what planets come into existence for." We are about to part ourselves from the placenta of three dimensional space.

Information is rearing itself up, and preparing to take a step into another dimension. Everything is changing. Everything always has been changing. But now it is changing so quickly that, within the confines of an individual life, the entire cosmic drama can be encapsulated.

We are each fractal histories of the universe. It is within us—as a community, and as individuals.

Nothing can stop this. This is not a political movement. This is as inevitable as continental drift, or the sunspot cycle. It is now time to decamp from three dimensional space. 15,000 years ago it was time for the descent from the garden into history, to take hold of the tools that will allow us to free our minds, our bodies, our planet, our identity, and our destiny.

This is what it has all been about.

Fraser Clark: What [inaudible] do you think the zippies do to America as to inspire American youth culture?

Terence McKenna: Well, we're fighting a meme war here, aren't we? We have to use the media to prosecute our agenda. The other side has all the guns, all the money. The only problem is, if they win, everybody dies. So, our friend is the information transfer network, the media. We have to set in motion memes—models that will attract loyalty.

Remember last year when I quoted William Blake? I said, "If the truth can be told so as to be understood, it will be believed." It's as simple as that. The obligation on us is to communicate the truth so that it is understood. The belief will take care of itself.

I am all for this zippie thing. It's a high stakes game, because a stumble will delay the agenda. But I've been coming to Britain now for five years, and each time I've seen this scene expand, broaden, deepen, and I've seen its resolve coalesce. I think it's now time to take this thing on the road.

I think America's undergoing the illusion of a liberal administration. I think we need to strike at the Great Beast before [inaudible with cheers].

Fraser Clark: We're getting near the end. [extended inaudible] Terence McKenna: [inaudible] Invisible Landscape is all around here, it's also out in America now. But I

don't know if anybody's imported it into Britain yet. It is out. It's great. I'm very happy with it. I'm ready to retire at this point. My message is essentially done once that book is available.

Fraser Clark: Your views seem to be typically Millenarianism, or Millennialism. How the year 2000 shapes consciousness. What do you think? I've often wondered, how many [inaudible] does it take to get to the year 2000, nobody hears "2012." If we can't agree about the year 2000, what in the hell are we ever going to agree about?

Terence McKenna: If you look at the Time Wave you'll see that the year 2000 is lined up with events in Christian history so hysterical that we might as well hand it over to them.

[Recording cuts off]

Original Transcription: IN PROGRESS from Vipal Prem. Formatting sucks! Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

John Balance Interviews Terence McKenna

Day Month 1996

Location, City, State

Description

- [Youtube Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

TRANSCRIBER: copy and paste the question and answers templates (below) for each question and answer. remove this red text before publishing.

Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Language About the Unspeakable

February 1994

Location, Maui, Hawaii

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Laws and Freedom, Habits, and Novelty

June 1994

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Lectures on Alchemy

1998

Wetlands Preserve, New York City, New York

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

This transcription consists of 3 separate lectures on the same topic. (See Links)

Lecture 1:

Well, it is a small group and this was my intent by focusing on the Hermetic Corpus and alchemy. I've just gotten tired of talking about psychedelic drugs and always saying the same things over and over again; nevertheless, it's a challenge to go outside my own bailiwick. I've had an interest in hermeticism and alchemy since I was about 14 and read Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy*, and it opened for me the fact of the existence of this vast literature, a literature that is very little read or understood in the modern context. The Jungians have made much of it, but to their own purposes and perhaps not always with a complete fidelity to the intent of the tradition. We'll talk a lot about the Jungian approach, but there are other approaches, even within the 20th century. I urged you to read Giordano Bruno and the *Hermetic Tradition* by Dame Frances Yates, and although Frances Yates' scholarship is very controversial, I think that to get an overview of the landscape her book is probably the best single book between covers. It's not pleasing to some factions and we can talk about that. We will probably discover within the group all the strains of alchemical illusion and delusion that have always driven this particular intellectual engine, but I thought that to get one book that sort of covered the territory that was a good one to start with. Well, then I found out that it's very hard to get this book. I didn't realize that, because it's been sitting on my shelf for years. Richard Bird found a reprint at the Bodhi Tree. I wasn't aware of this particular edition, so though probably none of you brought it with you in a heavily underlined form, if after this weekend you want to try and get it, it is available; and if you can't get that edition, a good book search service can probably come up with the first edition, which is Routledge & Kegan Paul.

I wouldn't hold a weekend like this simply to go over a body of ancient literature if I didn't think it had some efficacy or import for the modern dilemma. Some of you may know the song by the Grateful Dead in which the refrain is, "We need a miracle every day." I think any reasonable person can conclude that the redemption of the world, if it's to be achieved, can only be achieved through magic. It's too late for science. It's too late for hortatory politics.

Well, it's very interesting, every ancient literature has its apok'aluipsis and in the Hermetic literature there

is a prophecy, I think it's in Book Two but that really doesn't matter, and the prophecy is that a day will come when men will no longer care for the earth, and at that day the gods will depart and everything will be thrown into primal chaos. This prophecy was very strongly in the minds of the strains of non-Christian thought that evolved at the close of the Roman Empire. When you look back into historical time it's when you reach the 1st and 2nd centuries after Christ that you reach a world whose psychology was very much like the psychology of our own time. It was a psychology of despair and exhaustion. This is because Greek science, which had evolved under the aegis of Democritean atomism and Platonic metaphysics, had essentially come to a dead end in those centuries. We can debate the reasons why this happened — an obvious suggestion would be that it was because they failed to develop an experimental method — and so everything just dissolved into competing schools of philosophical speculation and a profound pessimism spread through the Hellenistic world. Out of that pessimism, and in the context of that kind of universal despair which attends the dissolution of great empires, a literature was created from the 1st to the 4th centuries after Christ, which we call the Hermetic Corpus, or in some cases the Trismegistic Hymns.

This body of literature was misunderstood by later centuries, especially the Renaissance, because it was taken at face value and assumed to be at least contemporary with Moses, if not much older. So the Renaissance view of Hermeticism was based on a tragic misunderstanding of the true antiquity of this material and there are people, hopefully none in this room, who still would have us believe that this literature antedates the Mosaic Law, that it is as old as dynastic Egypt, but this is an indefensible position from my point of view. In the early 16th century, a father and son, Isaac and M'eric Casaubon, showed through the new science of philology that this material was in fact late Hellenistic. Now, I've always said that I am not a classicist in the Viconian sense. There is a certain strain of thought that always wants to believe that the oldest stuff is the best stuff; this is not the case to my mind. To my mind, what is amazing is how recent everything is. I have no sympathy with the fans of lost Atlantis or any of that kind of malarky because to me what is amazing is how it all is less than 10,000 years old. Anything older than 10,000 years puts us into the realm of an aceramic society relying on chipped flint for its primary technology.

The Hermetic Corpus is the most poetic and cleanly expressed outpouring of ancient knowledge that we possess, but it was reworked in the hands of these late Hellenistic peoples. It is essentially a religion of the redemption of the earth through magic. It has great debt to a tradition called Sevillian, which means to me Mandaeanism, and Mandaeanism was a kind of proto-Hellenistic gnosis that laid great stress on the power of life, *zōē*, bios, and in that sense it has a tremendously contemporary ring to it. We also are living in the twilight of a great empire, and I don't particularly mean the American empire, I mean the empire of European thinking created in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern industrialism, the empire of science. Science has exhausted itself and become mere *techne*. It's still able to perform its magical tricks, but it has no claim on a metaphysic with any meaning, because the program of rational understanding that was pursued by science has pushed so deeply into the phenomenon of nature that the internal contradictions of the method are now exposed for all to see. In discussing alchemy we will meet with the concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the unity of opposites. This is an idea that is completely alien to science. It's the idea that nothing can be understood unless it is simultaneously viewed as both being what it is and what it is not, and in alchemical symbolism we will meet again and again symbolic expression of the *coincidentia oppositorum*. It may be in the form of a hermaphrodite, it may be in the form of the union of soul and Luna, it may be in the form of the union of mercury with lead or with sulphur. In other words, alchemical thinking is thinking that is always antithetical, always holds the possibility that by a mere shift of perspective its opposite premise will gain power and come into focus.

There's a wonderful book called *The Forge and the Crucible* by Mircea Eliade in which he shows that the shaman is the brother of the smith. The smith is the metallurgist, the worker in metals, and this is where alchemy has its roots. In a sense, alchemy is older than the Trismegistic Corpus, and then it is also given a new lease on life by the philosophical underpinnings which the Corpus Hermeticum provides it. The word "alchemy" can be traced back to mean "Egypt" or "a blackening," and in its earliest strata it probably refers to the techniques of dyeing — meaning the coloring of cloth — and gilding of metals, and the forging and working of metal. We who take this for granted have no idea how mysterious and powerful this seemed to ancient people and, in fact, it would seem so to us if we had anything to do with it. I mean, how many of us are welders or casters of metal? It's a magical process to take for instance cinnabar, a red, soft ore, and by the mere act of heating it in a furnace it will sweat liquid mercury onto its surface. We have unconsciously imbibed the ontology of science where we have mind firmly separated out from the world. We take this for granted, it's effortless, because it's the ambience of the civilization that we've been born into, but in an earlier age — some writers would say a more naive age, but I wonder about that — mind and matter were seen to be alloyed together throughout nature so that the sweating of mercury out of cinnabar is not a material process, it's a process in which the mind and the observations of the metalworker maintain an important role.

Let's talk for a moment about mercury, because the spirit Mercurius is almost the patron deity of alchemy. You all know what mercury looks like: at room temperature it's a silvery liquid that flows, it's like a mirror. For the alchemists mercury was mind itself, in a sense, and by tracing through the steps by which they reached that conclusion you can have a taste of what alchemical thinking was about. Mercury takes the form of its container. If I pour mercury into a cup, it takes the shape of the cup, if I pour it into a test tube, it takes the shape of the test tube. This taking the shape of its container is a quality of mind, and yet here it is present in a flowing, silvery metal. The other thing is that mercury is a reflecting surface. You never see mercury: what you see is the world that surrounds it, which is perfectly reflected in its surface like a moving mirror. If you've ever, as a child — I have no idea how toxic this process is — but I spent a lot of time as a child hounding my grandfather for his hearing aid batteries which I would then smash with a hammer and get the mercury out and collect it in little bottles and carry it around with me. Well, the wonderful thing about mercury is that when you pour it out on a surface and it beads up, then each bead of mercury becomes a little microcosm of the world, and yet the mercury flows back together into a unity. Well, as a child I had not yet imbibed the assumptions and the ontology of science. I was functioning as an alchemist. For me, mercury was this fascinating magical substance onto which I could project the contents of my mind, and a child playing with mercury is an alchemist hard at work, no doubt about it.

This is a phenomenon in the physical world, and then mind is a phenomenon in the Cartesian distinction, which is between the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans*. This is the great splitting of the world into two parts. I remember Al Wong once said to me, we were talking about the yin/yang symbol, and he said, "The interesting thing is not the yin or the yang, the interesting thing is the S-shaped surface which runs between them," and that S-shaped surface is a river of alchemical mercury. Where the alchemists saw this river of alchemical mercury was in the boundary between waking and sleeping. There is a place, not quite sleeping, not quite waking, and there flows this river of alchemical mercury where you can project the contents of the unconscious and you can read it back to yourself. This kind of thinking is confounding to scientific thought, where the effort is always to fix everything into a given identity and a given set of behaviors.

The other Hermetic perception that is well illustrated by thinking for a moment about mercury is the

notion — and this is central to all Hermetic thinking — of the microcosm and the macrocosm. The notion that somehow the great world, the whole of the cosmos is reflected in the mystery of man — meaning men and women — it's reflected in the mystery of the human mind-body interface. For an alchemist it makes perfect sense to extrapolate from what we call “internal” psychological processes to external processes in the world. That distinction doesn't exist for the alchemist, and I tell you, the longer I live the more convinced I am that this is absolutely the truth. The myth of our society is the existential myth that we are cast into matter, that we are lost in a universe that has no meaning for us, that we must make our meaning. This is what Sartre and Kierkegaard, all those people are saying, that we must make our meaning. It reaches its most absurd expression in Sartre's statement that nature is mute. This is as far from alchemical thinking as you can possibly get, because for the alchemist nature was a great book, an open book to be read by putting nature through processes which revealed not only its inner mechanics, but the inner mechanics of the artifex, the person working upon the material, in other words, the alchemist.

In other contexts I've talked about the importance of language and how our world is made of language, and part of the problem with understanding alchemy is that the language is slipping out of our reach. We are so completely imbued with the Cartesian categories of the *res cogitans*, the world of thought, and the *res extensa*, the world of three-dimensional space, causality, the conservation of matter and energy and so forth that in order to do more than carry out a kind of scholarship of alchemy we have to create an alchemical language, or a field in which alchemical language can take place. Some of you may have been with me a couple of weeks ago in Malibu when Joan Halifax and I debated the roots of Buddhism, and I think Joan deserves great credit for saying that Buddhism would never have taken root in America were it not for the psychedelic phenomenon. Not that Buddhism is psychedelic, it in fact is fairly touchy about that, but Buddhism would have gotten nowhere in America had not psychedelics created a context for Buddhist language to take root. I would wager that I would never have gotten to first base with proposing a weekend on alchemy at Esalen were it not understood that psychedelics have prepared people for the notion that mind and world can be poured together like mercury and sulphur, like the Sophic waters, to create a new kind of understanding, because otherwise modernity has fixed our minds in the categories of Cartesian rationalism.

I will not claim, and do not in fact think it's so, that there was anything overtly psychedelic, in the sense of pharmacologically-based, about alchemy. When we look back through the alchemical literature there's very little evidence that it was pharmacologically-driven. Only when you get to the very last adumbrations of the alchemical impulse in someone like Paracelsus do you get the use of opium. It is interesting that the great drugs of modern society were accidentally discovered by alchemists in their researches — distilled alcohol is a product of alchemical work, and as I mentioned, opium was very heavily used by the Peracelsian school — but what they possessed was an ability to liquify their mental categories and then to project the contents of the mind onto these processes and read them back.

This is what made alchemy so fascinating to the Jungian school, because the Jungians were discovering the unconscious. Before Jung's involvement with alchemy the best material for psychotherapy to work upon was dreams and mythology, and these were the two poles of the data field that the discovery of the unconscious was working on. Then Jung had the prescience to realize that alchemy, which to that point had been dismissed as a naive effort to turn base metals into gold — this is the first fiction that you have to absolutely purge from your mind. The only alchemists that ever tried to turn base metals into gold were charlatans, the so-called “puffers.” They were called that not only for their exaggerated speech, but for their use of bellows to drive their fires. Alchemy has always had a core of true adepts and then a surround

of misguided souls and outright con artists who were trying to change base metals into gold. Now, it's interesting that science, in its naiveté, in the 20th century has actually completed the program of pseudo-alchemy. You can, if you have a sufficiently powerful nuclear reactor, change lead into gold. The cost is staggering, it has no economic importance whatsoever, but it can be done. By bombarding lead with a sufficient amount of heavy particles, you can change it into gold, but this is not what the original intent was. In fact, when we look at the history of 20th century science we will see that in a way it's a misunderstanding of what the alchemical goals were to be and, one by one, it has done these things that were stated goals of the alchemists, except that the alchemists always spoke in similes and in a secret control language that was symbolic.

Another point that was brought up was the externalization of the soul. What we're trying to do in this weekend is to study and talk about the idea of redeeming the world through magic. How is this to be done? Well, the philosopher's stone is a complex of ideas that, no matter how you divide it, no matter how you slice it, it's very difficult to hold the pith essence of this concept, but what it really comes down to is the idea that spirit is somehow resident in matter in a very diffuse form, and that the goal of Hermetic thinking, and later alchemy, is the concentration and redemption of this spirit, a focusing of it, a bringing of it together. This is an idea that was common in the Hellenistic world, not only to Hermetic thinking but also to Gnosticism. Gnosticism is the idea that somehow the pure, holy, real light of being was scattered through a universe of darkness and of saturnine power and that the goal is, by a process which we can call yogic, or alchemical, or meditative, or moral/ethical, that the light must be gathered and concentrated in the body and then somehow released and redeemed. All esoteric traditions, East and West, talk about the creation of this body of light and we will not, in this weekend, talk very much about non-Western alchemy, Taoist and Vedic alchemy, but in those systems too the notion is about the creation of this vehicle of light. This is one metaphor for the externalization of the soul.

The philosopher's stone is another, and I will challenge you to try to imagine what the achievement of the philosopher's stone would be like, because it's in trying to think that way that you begin to dissolve the categories of the Cartesian trap. Imagine for a moment an object, a material, which can literally do anything. It can move across categorical boundaries with no difficulty whatsoever. What do I mean? I mean that if you possessed the philosopher's stone and you were hungry, you could eat it. If you needed to go somewhere you could spread it out and sit on it and it would take you there. If you needed a piece of information, it would become the equivalent of a computer screen and it would tell you things. If you needed a companion, it would talk to you. If you needed to take a shower, you would hold it over your head and water would pour out of it. Now, you see, this is an impossibility. That's right, it's a coincidentia oppositorum. It is something which behaves like imagination and matter without ever doing damage to the ontological status of one or the other. This sounds like pure pathology in the context of modern thinking, because we expect things to stay still and be what they are and undergo the growth and degradation that is inimical to them; but no, the redemption of spirit and matter means the exteriorization of the human soul and the interiorization of the human body so that it is an image freely commanded in the imagination.

Imagination: I think this is the first time I've used this word this evening. The imagination is central to the alchemical opus because it is literally a process which goes on in the realm of the imagination, taken to be a physical dimension. I think that we cannot understand the history that lies ahead of us unless we think in terms of a journey into the imagination. We have exhausted the world of three-dimensional space. We are polluting it, we are overpopulating it, we are using it up. Somehow the redemption of the human enterprise lies in the dimension of the imagination, and to do that we have to transcend the categories that we inherit

from a thousand years of science and Christianity and rationalism and we have to re-empower and re-encounter the mind; and we can do this psychedelically, we can do this yogically, or we can do it alchemically and Hermetically.

There is present in the world at the moment, or at least I like to think so, an impulse which I have named the Archaic Revival. What happens is that whenever a society really gets in trouble — and you can use this in your own life: when you really get in trouble, what you should do is say, “What did I believe in the last sane moment that I experienced?” and then go back to that moment and act from it even if you no longer believe it — now, in the Renaissance, this happened. The scholastic universe dissolved. New classes, new forms of wealth, new systems of navigation, new scientific tools, made it impossible to maintain the fiction of the medieval cosmology and there was a sense that the world was dissolving, and in that moment the movers and shakers of that civilization reached backwards in time to the last sane moment they had ever known and they discovered that it was Classical Greece. They invented classicism in the 15th and 16th century. The texts which had lain in monasteries in Syria and Asia Minor, forgotten and untranslated for centuries, were brought to the Florentine council by people like Gemistus Pletho and others and translated, and classicism was born: its laws, its philosophy, its aesthetics. We are the inheritors of that tradition, but it is now once again exhausted and our cultural crisis is much greater. It is global, it is total; it involves every man, woman and child on this planet. Every bug, bird and tree is caught up in the cultural crisis that we have engendered. Our ideas are exhausted: the ideas that we inherit out of Christianity and its half-brother science, or its bastard child science. What I’m suggesting is that an Archaic Revival needs to take place and it seems to be well in hand in the form of the revival of Goddess worship and shamanism and partnership, but notice that these things are old — 10,000 years or more old — but there was an unbroken thread that, however thinly drawn, persists right up to the present.

The idea of this weekend is to show the way back to the high magic of the late Paleolithic, to show that there were intellectual traditions, there were minority points of view that kept the faith, that never allowed it to die. To my mind, this alchemical, Hermetic, Gnostic, Egyptian, Chaldean thread is the thread, and if we unravel it with sufficient care and attention then we can build a bridge from the otherwise nearly incomprehensible high magic of the late Paleolithic. We can get it as near to ourselves as John Dee, who died in 1608. We can discover that it’s no further away from us than the beginning of the Thirty Years War; and for my money, after that it gets pretty mucked up. After E’liphaz L’evi, who’s already waffling, I’m not very interested in the occultism of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, but it’s not necessary because scholarship gives us the Chaldean Oracles, the Trismegistic Hymns, the library at Nag Hammadi, and so forth and so on. My impulse is to, in the most austere sense, repopularize, reintroduce this kind of thinking so that people can live it out, and then, step by step, we can evolve our language and evolve our understanding to make our way back to the garden, back to Eden.

It’s said that Christ opened the doors to paradise, yes, but he closed the doors to Eden; and paradise is a very airy place where everybody sits around on clouds strumming their lyres. I think that what we want to do is to make our way back to the alchemical garden. That’s where our roots are. That’s where meaning is. Meaning lies in the confrontation of contradiction, the *coincidentia oppositorum*. That’s what we really feel, not these rational schemas that are constantly beating us over the head with the “thou shalt” and “thou shoulds,” but rather a recovery of the real ambiguity of being, an ability to see ourselves as at once powerful and weak, noble and ignoble, future-oriented, past-facing. We each need to become Janus-faced and to incorporate into ourselves the ban- ished contradictions of being that so haunt the enterprise of science. We can leave that behind, and when we do we reclaim authentic being; and authentic being, make

no mistake about it, is what alchemical gold really is. That's what they're talking about: authentic being.

Audience: So right now we're lead?

That's right, we're lead, we're saturnine; and we'll talk about Saturn and Pluto and all of that. Tomorrow we'll talk about the stages of the alchemical opus, and though the stages are many and multifarious, it all begins in what is called the nigredo, the blackening, the depths of the leaden, saturnine, chaotic, fixed place, and that's where we have been left by science and modernity and so forth and so on. That's where the alchemist loves to begin. That's where he or she stokes the furnace and begins the *dissolutio et coagulatio* that leads to the appearance of the stone.

I'll show you some books, and this is by no means exhaustive. The literature of Hermeticism and alchemy is vast and I could have brought five or six boxes of this size from my own library. This a smattering, it doesn't mean that what I show you is the best, it simply tries to spread over a large area. This is a new novel that's just been published by Lindsay Clarke called *The Chymical Wedding*, and I see that last week it was number ten on the New York Times' bestsellers list, which is astonishing for such an obscure subject. It's a retelling of a famous incident in alchemy in the 19th century when a woman named Mary Anne Atwood, who had a very close relationship to her father, Dr. South, and the two of them worked together, she on a text, he on a long poem. To make a long story short, eventually they decided to destroy both the poem and the book, feeling that they had said too much and had given the secret away — at least that's one version. So this is a fictionalized retelling of that incident intercut with a modern cast of characters, very clearly modeled on the poet Robert Graves. So if you like to absorb your information in a fictionalized form, this is a wonderful book. John Boorman, the movie director who made *The Emerald Forest* and *Excalibur*, recently optioned this book, so we may have an alchemical movie downstream a year or two. A number of compendiums of alchemical texts have been published over the centuries and if you wish to study alchemy you have to obtain these. If you're fortunate enough to read French you should read *Festugièrre* and *Berthelot*. They collected alchemical texts into encyclopedic-size volumes, but unfortunately these have never really come into English. One that did come into English is the *Musaeum Hermeticum*, which A.E. Waite — who some of you may know for his role in the *Golden Dawn* — collected. There are about forty alchemical texts and all the greats are in here: Lull, Villa Nova, Michael Maier, Basil Valentine, Heinrich Kramer, Edward Kelley and so on and so forth.

Lecture 2:

The place to begin, I think, is obviously with the question, "Who is Hermes Trismegistus?" What are we talking about here? I mean, this sounds so incredibly exotic to people. The Renaissance had the concept of what it called the *prisca theologia*, and if my Latin and Greek irritates you, you have to understand that you're dealing with a boy from a coal mining town in Colorado, so I do mangle these things. The *prisca theologia* were Orpheus, Moses, and primarily Hermes Trismegistus. Hermes Trismegistus was the primary source, from the point of view of the Renaissance, of this whole mystery tradition and you recall from last night's lecture that this is based on a misunderstanding. The Renaissance believed that Hermes Trismegistus was older than Moses. We know now, thanks to Isaac and M'eric Casaubon, two philologists of the early 17th century, that definitely the Hermetic Corpus was composed between the 1st and 2nd centuries after Christ. The method of the Casaubons was to examine the philosophical language of the

Corpus Hermeticum and show that there were words and phrases there that were post-Platonic and derivative of philosophers whose dates we have fully in hand.

Now, if you go to an occult bookstore you will find that to this day this error persists. There are people who still want to claim that this stuff is older than dynastic Egypt. There are even books — I was in Shambhala a week ago — claiming to teach you how to change lead into gold. Well, from my point of view this just evokes a small smile. The old errors persist; the puffers are still at it. But what Hermes Trismegistus is is a character who appears in many guises in these Hermetic dialogues. The Hermetic hymns are usually couched in the form of dialogues between Hermes and his son Thoth, and Thoth takes the role of the uninitiated ing'enué who is sitting at the feet of the master. Thoth asks questions: “What is the true nature of the world?” “What is the true nature of man?” and Hermes answers. The general form of these texts — with exceptions, because there are twenty of them — is an intellectual dialogue which builds to an ecstatic revelation and then in the wake of the ecstatic revelation there is a hymn of praise to Hermes Trismegistus. Trismegistus means thrice-blessed and is sometimes called Hermes Triplex to distinguish this Hermes from all the other Hermeses of early, middle and late Greek thinking. Hermes is of course the messenger god, the god of scribes. The reason this ibis-headed being holding a staff is embossed on the cover of each of these books is because this is how Hermes Trismegistus, Thoth Hermes was imagined. He was associated with the scribe god of the Egyptian pantheon.

There are two distinguishing factors that stand out for me that I think you need to incorporate into your thinking about Hermeticism, two very important concepts. The first is the divinity of human beings, an extraordinarily radical idea in the context of late Hellenistic thinking. We all operate under the spell of the concept of the fall of man: that man is an inferior being, errors were made in the Garden of Eden and that we are far, far from the nature of divinity. All magic — and all magic in the West is derivative of this tradition — takes the position that man is a divine being, men and women are divine beings. The Corpus Hermeticum actually refers to man as God's brother; and this is a double-edged perception. It gives tremendous dignity to the human enterprise but it also raises the possibility of the error of pride and hubris. In the Renaissance, Marsilio Ficino boiled this notion down to the aphorism, “Man is the measure of all things,” and you may notice that this is the position of science: that man is the measure of all things, that it is up to us, we can decide the course of the cosmos. All magic stems from this position. Notice that this position on man empowers tremendous freedom. This is why the Church was so concerned to stamp out magic, because it assigns man an importance that the Church would rather reserve for deity. So that's the first great division between Christian thinking and Hermetic thinking, an entirely different conception of what human beings are; and when we get into the text, I'll read you some of these passages.

The second distinguishing factor in Hermeticism is the belief that we can control fate, that we can escape from cosmic fate. The late Hellenistic mind-set, and what you get in the Gnostics, is the belief that because of astrology, because of the stars, we are subject to control from these exterior forces. In most Gnostic thinking the whole concern is to somehow evade what is called the heimarmene, cosmic fate, and in the Gnostic systems the only way it can be done is by ascending through the shells of cosmic, ordering forces — the archons, the planets, the planetary demons, and so forth and so on — and then beyond the heimarmene, which is actually thought of as a place in space that you burst through, you transcend fate. The Hermetic thought is that these fates become personified as the decans, as the stellar demons, and then it is held that there is a magical system in which it is possible to call these archangels to your side and work with them and not be subject to the inevitable working of the cosmic machinery. This burst like a revelation over the late Hellenistic world because there was such philosophical and emotional and political

exhaustion. This is a counterpoise to the message of the New Testament, which is a similar message: that you can be saved in the body, that you can escape the inevitable dissolution and degradation laid upon us by time. So these are the two distinguishing factors: the divinity of man and the possibility of using magic to evade the machinery of fate.

I want to read some of the Corpus Hermeticum to you to give you the flavor of it, but before I do, I want to say something about the history of these texts. You're all familiar, more or less I'm sure, with Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, which is a novel of initiation that is late Roman. Apuleius also put together what is called the *Asclepius*, and the *Asclepius* is true Hermetic literature that was not lost. It was the only one that was available throughout the Dark and Middle Ages. All the rest was lying untranslated in Syrian monasteries until Gemistus Pletho in 1460 brought these manuscripts to Florence, to the court of the de' Medicis, and then the translation project began. The only other Hermetic material that was accessible throughout the high Gothic period was a book of magic called *Picatrix*, and the *Picatrix* was probably written in the 11th century. This elicits screams of dissent from the burning-eyed faction, but reason dictates that we consider *Picatrix* 11th century, so only the *Asclepius* and the *Picatrix* represented this strain of thought before the 1460s. The importance of Hermetic thinking can be seen by the fact that Gemistus Pletho brought Plato to the Florentine council as well as Hermes Trismegistus, and when Marsilio Ficino sat down to do this translation work Cosimo de' Medici said, "Plato can wait, I'm getting old. You do the Hermetic Corpus first, that's much more important. We'll sort out this Plato business in a few years," and so it was done. It was completed in 1463, and in 1464 Cosimo died, so he never saw the translations of Plato. I mention this to show you the importance that was attached to this stuff.

Here is one of the key passages on man's nature. This is from Book One of the Corpus Hermeticum:

But Mind the Father of all, He who is life and light, gave birth to Man, a being like to Himself. And He took delight in man as being His own offspring, for Man was very goodly to look on, bearing the likeness of his Father. With good reason then did God take delight in Man, for it was God's own form that God took delight in. And God delivered over to Man all things that had been made.

This is the basis of the Ficinian statement, "Man is the measure of all things."

And Man took station in the Maker's sphere and observed the things made by his Brother who was set over the region of fire. And having observed the Maker's creation in the region of fire he willed to make things for his own part also. And his Father gave permission, having in Himself all the working of the administrators.

This is a reference to the angel hierarchy.

And the administrators took delight in him and each of them gave him a share of his own nature. So man is the brother of God and a creature at home with the angels. This idea is echoed in the *Asclepius*, which you'll recall was available throughout the Middle Ages. "The range of man is yet wider than that of the demons," meaning the angels; this term is transposable in Hermetic thought. "The individuals of the human kind are diverse and of many characters. They, like the demons, come from above and entering into fellowship with other individuals, they make for themselves many and intimate connections with all other kinds," and then the famous passage:

Man is a marvel then, Asclepius, honor and reverence to such a being. Man takes on him the attributes of a god as though he were himself a god. And he is familiar with the demonkind for he comes to know that he is sprung from the same source as they. And strong in the assurance of that in him which is divine, he scorns the merely human part of his own nature. How far more happily blended are the properties of Man than those of other beings. He is linked to the Gods inasmuch as there is in him a divinity akin to theirs. He scorns that part of his own being which makes him a thing of earth and all else with which he finds himself connected by heaven's ordering he binds to himself with the tie of his affection.

This is an incredibly radical conception of what it means to be human, so radical that it is unwelcome even in the present context. Notice the modern feeling of this stuff. This is not biblical rhetoric. This is philosophical discourse as we know it and carry it out ourselves. This is a passage on the adept and initiation. Here Thoth speaks to Poimandres, this is Book One: "But tell me this too, said I, God said, "Let the man who has Mind in him recognize himself," but have not all men Mind?" and then Poimandres replies, "'Oh Man," said Mind to me, "Speak not so. I, even Mind, come to those men who are holy and good and pure and merciful, and my coming is a succor to them and forthwith they recognize all things and win the Father's grace by loving worship and give thanks to Him, praising and hymning Him with hearts uplifted to Him in filial affection.'" Again the reference to being God's brother, "in filial affection." "And before they give up the body to the death which is proper to it they loathe the bodily senses, knowing what manner of work the senses do." This introduces the theme of asceticism.

Like the Gnostics, there is in much of the Hermetic literature a kind of horror of the earth, a desire to ascend and to get away from it. Scott makes the distinction between what he calls "pessimistic gnosis" and "optimistic gnosis," and within the twenty texts of the Corpus Hermeticum you get vacillation on this point. In some cases the Mandaean or Sabian tendency is there and the world soul is invoked, and the whole of creation is seen as a living being involved in this soteriological process, this process of salvational mechanics through magic. In other texts this Gnostic horror of matter is very strongly stressed. It's very clear that the Hellenistic mind was ambivalent on this point, even as we are ambivalent on this point. It's a real question. Are we here to be the caretakers of the earth, or are we strangers in the universe, and is our task to return to a forgotten and hidden home, no trace of which can be found in the saturnine world of matter? It's very hard to have it both ways. You're going to have to take a position on that, and these people were forced into the same dilemma. There's no middle ground between those two positions, and so that dichotomy, that conundrum, haunted a lot of Hermetic thinking.

Here is the Hermetic creation myth. This is Book Three, paragraphs one through a few, and you'll see the comparison and similarities to the Christian creation myth but with extraordinary differences.

There was darkness in the deep and water without form and there was a subtle breath, intelligent, which permeated the things in Chaos with divine power. Then, when all was yet undistinguished and unwrought, there was shed forth holy light and the elements came into being. All things were divided one from another and the lighter things were parted off on high, the fire being suspended aloft so that it rose unto the air, and the heavier things sank down, and sand was deposited beneath the watery substance, and the dry land was separated out from the watery substance and became solid. And the fiery substance was articulated with the gods therein, and heaven appeared with its seven spheres and the gods visible in starry forms with all their constellations. And heaven revolved and began to run its circling course, riding upon the divine air. And each god by his several powers set forth that which he was bidden to put forth. And there came forth four-footed beasts and creeping things and fishes and winged birds and grass and every flowering herb, all

having seed in them according to their diverse natures, for they generated within themselves the seed by which their races should be renewed.

Then it goes on to describe the birth of man. This kind of thinking is what alchemy seized upon in its ambitions. One way of thinking about what alchemy came to attempt is that since man is God's brother, the purpose of man is to intercede in time. It was believed that ores, precious metals and things like this grew in the earth; it was a thoroughgoing theory of evolution that reached right down into the organic realm. It was thought that gold deposits in the earth would actually replenish themselves over time. It's passages like this that give permission for that kind of thinking. In line with that, we're now in Book Four; and remember that the tone changes slightly from book to book. They were, after all, written over a 300 year period by various people.

You must understand, then, that God is preexistent and ever-existent, and that He alone made all things and created by His will the things that are. And when the Creator had made the ordered universe, He willed to set in order the earth also and so he sent down Man, a mortal creature made in the image of an immortal being, to be an embellishment of the divine Body, for it is Man's function. Here it comes, the purpose of man according to Book Four: For it is Man's function to contemplate the works of God and for this purpose he was made, that he might view the universe with wondering awe and come to know its maker. Man has this advantage over all other living beings, that he possess mind and speech. Now speech, my son, God imparted to all men but mind he did not impart to all. Not that he grudged it to any, for the grudging temper does not start from heaven above, but comes from being here below in the souls of those men who are devoid of mind.

This introduces the concept of an elect or a perfectee, a hierarchy of human accomplishment and understanding, and this is also basic to Gnosticism. It's not for everyone, they're saying, it's for the pure of heart, and what "pure of heart" means depends on the school you're looking at. For some, it was mathematical accomplishment; for others, it was contact with the Logos; for others, it was an ability to resist the temptations of the senses, but there was always this sense of the higher and lower possibility within the human experience.

This is at the opening of Book Twelve, and this is a book with a heavy Mandaean sensitivity, this sensitivity to life. Notice how this transcends even the Buddhist point of view, because in Buddhism plants have no soul. This is a tremendous failure in the Buddhist conception as far as I'm concerned.

Now this whole cosmos, which is a great God and an image of Him who is greater and is united with Him and maintains its order in accordance with that will, is one mass of life. And there is not anything in the cosmos, nor has been through all time from the first foundation of the universe, neither in the whole, nor among the several things contained in it that is not alive. There is not, and has never been, and never will be in the cosmos, anything that is dead, for it was the Father's will that the cosmos, as long as it exists, should be a living being and therefore it must needs be a god also. How then, my son, could there be dead things in that which is a god, in that which is an image of the Father, in that which is one mass of life. Deathness is corruption and corruption is destruction. How then can any part of that which is incorruptible be corrupted or any part of that which is a God be destroyed?

And there are other passages. This is a good one; this is Book Eighteen:

For as the sun, who nurtures all vegetation, also gathers the first fruits of the produce with his rays, as it were with mighty hands, plucking the sweetest odors of the plants, even so we too, having received into our own souls, which are plants of heavenly origin, the efflux of God's wisdom, must in return use his service for all that springs up in us.

This conception that the human soul is a plant is a unique idea. I don't know of another tradition. Those of you who were with us in Ojai heard Johannes Wilbert talk about how among the Amazon Indians, the Warao, the men actually marry trees. They actually take trees as their wives, a tree, and it is a man's job throughout his life to take care of this tree with the same tenderness and affection which he lavishes on a living wife. This is a more radical conception than that. This is the conception that the most important part of us is a plant. It reminds me of the joke that I occasionally make in these groups, the notion that animals are something invented by plants to carry them from place to place. Well, according to this, that's right on. The sensitivity to the vegetative nature of the world is so great that it raises the plant to be the pith essence, the soul of man, the brother of God! So the valuation of the vegetative universe here is of an extremely radical type.

Audience: The upper echelon of humanity that was given the mind, was that predetermined at birth or can someone develop a mind?

No, it is not predetermined. It is something that is acquired through cultivation of a relationship to, in the Hermetic language, nous, the higher mind, and in the Gnostic language Logos, the informing spirit. Nothing is predetermined in the Hermetic system because through magic we can overcome the energies of cosmic fate. This is the great good news of Hermeticism, that we are not subject to fate. We should probably talk a little about this Logos concept. This is something which seems very alien to modern people unless they are psychedelically sophisticated. The Logos was the sine qua non of Hellenistic religion and it was an informing voice that spoke in your head or your heart, wherever you want to put it, and it told you the right way to live. You get this idea even in the later Old Testament where it's said that the truth of the heart can be known, that it is no great dilemma to know good from evil, you simply inquire of your heart, "Is it good or evil?" and you will discover a voice which will tell you. All the great thinkers of this Greco-Hellenistic period sought and cultivated the Logos; Plato had his daemon. Everyone sought the informing voice of the nous, that's what it's called in Neoplatonism and Hermeticism, and then in Gnosticism the Logos.

The only way I've ever had this experience is in the presence of psychedelic substances, and then it is just crystal clear, there is no ambiguity about it. Somehow it's possible for an informing voice to come into cognition that knows more than you do. It is a connection with the collective unconscious, I suppose, that is convivial, conversational, and just talks to you about the nature of being in the world and the nature of your being in the world. It's puzzling to us because it seems so remote. For us a voice in the head or the heart is pathology. You may know the famous story: in the 1st century, some fishermen were off the shore of the island of Argos in the Mediterranean Sea and they heard a great voice from the sky and the voice said, "The great Pan is dead." Well, people like Lactantius and Eusebius, these patristic fathers, the people who built Christianity, who took the Gospels and turned it into a world religion, they took this annunciation from the sky of the death of Pan as the annunciation of the change of the aeon.

By the aeon, I mean these roughly 2,000 year periods that are associated with the equinoctial precession. Do you all understand how this works? That over 26,000 years, the heliacal rising of the solstitial sun slips

slowly from one house to another and around A.D. 100 — there's argument because these things are never precise — the age of Pisces began, the previous aeon ceased and the great gears of the largest scale of the cosmic machinery clicked past a certain point and into the age of Pisces, and this was then taken as very fortuitous for Christianity because Christ was associated with the sign of the fish and it was seen as a Piscean movement. I believe that it's entirely possible that the Logos, at that rough moment in time, fell silent, and it has been silent for 2,000 years. What we have had then is the exegesis of text and noetic archeology of the sort we're carrying on here. Now, a phenomenon as trivial and hype-haunted as channeling can be seen as the reawakening of the Logos. The long night of Piscean silence is ending and the spirit of nous is again moving in the world, speaking in the minds of the adepts and the hierophants who have the techniques and the will to connect with this stuff. I don't know how I got off on that, but obviously this kind of literature can be seen as the last message from the fading Logos, the last statements before the change of the aeon rendered this control language very difficult and non-intuitive and somewhat incomprehensible.

Audience: In the reading, I had a puzzlement about the use of the word "mind." What, in this context, does this refer to?

It's Scott's translation of this word nous. It simply means this universal, permeating intelligence.

Audience: The statement there is that it is only available to an elite through...?

Through asceticism and desire, intent. There are proscriptions, we haven't gotten into this, but they lived a life of purity, although their definitions of purity varied widely.

Audience: Isn't there a kind of flip-flop that man is the brother of God and still we have to earn it? It makes it kind of a denial of that.

That's right. This persists right up until this moment. The quote I always love is from Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan. Thomas Hobbes, as you know, was the great theoretician of modern government and social organization and he was basically a paranoid S.O.B. He says in the Leviathan, "Man to man is like unto an arrant beast and man to man is like unto a god." It's absolutely true, our noblest aspirations and our most hideously dehumanizing activities take place in the context of our relationship to other people. This is what the alchemists were trying to do: they were trying to separate the gold from the dross. They were trying to take the arrant beast, and when we look at alchemical art we will see dragons, dogs, pigs, we will see the arrant beasts and we will see the angelic beings that are trying to be separated out of our nature. This is within each and every one of us. Man to man is like unto a god and man to man is like unto an arrant beast.

Audience: This question has to do with mind. According to my understanding of some of the Platonic tradition and Neoplatonic thought, this has to do with the divided line in Plato. You can divide that line into five stages of knowing. You start with the senses as being agency or avenue, knowing something about something, the most external form of knowledge. The level above the senses is designated as the instincts, it's an inactive knowing, in that sense a biologically active knowing that we have. The third stage is described sometimes as estimation, that is, an approximation. This characterized mainly logical activity, and then the next level of cognitive activity is reason. This reason is not the type of reason we normally engage in, it's a very different, a very creative type of activity. Above the reason is what they call intuition or intellect or nous and that's put in as the fifth. Reason is a creative activity and one can generate and

think things through with creative ability. One goes through stages of the activity and things transpire over time and one comes to complete understanding of the thing one is trying to grasp, and sometimes that's described as discursive activity, although the logical activity is discursive. So you're moving through a process and the nous or the intellect of the higher mind grasps things in totality.

You raise an important point. It further complicates the picture, but that's how it was, folks. The reference here is to Neoplatonism, which is a kind of parallel tradition to what we're talking about. Plato had at least a couple of phases in the evolution of his thinking. The young Plato is a rational thinker but the later Plato, apparently after he fell under the influence of Pythagorean schools, becomes a full-blown mystic. Then in the late Roman empire, almost a thousand years after Plato — in our mind all these people get squeezed together like they could all have dinner together, but Proclus is as far from Plato as we are from King Canute, so you have to bear in mind the scale of history — 600-800 years after Plato, a Byzantine school of philosophy arose around Porphyry, Plotinus and Proclus as the major exponents and they worked with the late Plato and elaborated a beautiful mystical cosmology. This is what I did a workshop on here a year ago and many of those ideas and terms parallel conceptually the stuff in the Corpus Hermeticum, and if you're of a certain intellectual bent you may find yourself more comfortable with the Neoplatonists than with this. This material tends to be emotional, evocative, poetic and while there's great poetry in Plotinus there's also very tight thinking that goes along with it.

There are other traditions, I'm making it simple for you, there was a whole tradition of what was called the Chaldean Oracles, all of which remains is a collection of 100 or more fragments and the great commentaries of Eusebius and Iamblichus. That's all lost, we don't have that material and it is, in a way, the most mysterious of these traditions because it just didn't survive. It may be that the Chaldean Oracles are the missing link to push this stuff several centuries back into time, because the Chaldean Oracles may actually be pre-Platonic. There's considerable evidence of that. But these are very arcane matters; you have to give yourself over to a lifetime of learning these languages and the philology of these languages to penetrate this stuff.

Neoplatonism was Byzantine, basically Constantinople. The Hermetic Corpus was largely Alexandrian; there were also Christian Platonists in Alexandria. There were certain centers: Rome, Byzantium, Alexandria. Heliopolos in Egypt was a cult site that was maintained for a very long time. If you're interested in this stuff but don't like to absorb it this way, Flaubert, of all people, the Flaubert of Madame Bovary, wrote an incredible novel called The Temptation of Saint Anthony in which he describes 2nd century Alexandria in a fictionalized form and gives you a real flavor for the intellectual complexity of the Alexandrian world. Christianity had not yet gelled, it was many things, so you not only have Gnostics of five or six schools — Simonists, Valentinians, Basilideans and so forth — but you also have Christians, a number of cults calling themselves Christians that were also in furious competition: Docetists, Montanists, and later Nestorians. There were Gymnosophists from India, people who were actually carrying yogic doctrines into the Mediterranean world, plus you then have all the surviving cults of the older Egyptian strata, the cults of Isis and Seville and Adonis and Dionysus, it just goes on and on. There's nothing comparable in our experience to the richness of this intellectual world, and it shows the passion with which people were trying to understand the dilemma of a dying world, because this is what they were confronted with. The intellectuals of the empire could feel it all slipping through their hands, and Flaubert gives a wonderful picture of this. Flaubert has a very romantic streak. It's like smoking hashish to read this book, the attention to fabric and architecture, food and odor, and because the subject matter is the temptation of Saint Anthony, it's an excuse to describe these temptations in all their sensual richness and

erotic kinkiness. It's a wonderful way to absorb this material.

Audience: Somebody else raised the point about elitism, or an elite group of people. If one considers a society like the one you had in Alexandria or some of the other centers, the only people who really had access to this were people who, first of all, had money and who were well educated and could read, so already you had an elite group.

Yes, definitely. What survives from a civilization are its literatures, and these literatures are usually the production of an elite. We have to remember not to have any illusions about the Roman Empire. I always think of the wonderful description, I don't even know why it's there, Boris Pasternak in *Doctor Zhivago* goes off on a riff about ancient Rome and he describes it as "a bargain basement on three floors." This was an empire that lived by human cruelty. It was on the backs of slaves that this airy intellectual speculation was based. It was a tremendously pluralistic society, but that pluralism was maintained by standing armies of enormous size and policies of occupation of enormous cruelty. Because of our relationship to the Christian tradition we're aware of such things as the Zealot Revolt of 69 and the reign of Herod and Antiochus in Jerusalem, but that was just one little corner of the empire and in Armenia, in Gaul, in Spain, in North Africa, military governors were carrying out outrageous suppressions of native populations. It was not a pretty time to be alive, and what comes down to us, then, is the yearning to escape from that. No wonder these people saw the earth as a cesspool and a trap, because that's what it was for them, without doubt. Our own age is very similar. We do not have slavery but we suffer under propaganda, mass manipulation of ideas and the degradation and exploitation of the Third World on a scale the Roman Empire couldn't even dream of; so there is a great affinity.

If any of you are interested in this kind of thing, I highly recommend a book by Hans Jonas called *The Phenomenon of Life*. It's a book of philosophical essays, but there's one essay in there called *Gnosticism and Modern Nihilism* in which he shows that once you take Gnosticism and dump the angels and the star demons and all the colorful bric-a-brac of late Roman thinking, what you have is a thoroughgoing existentialism completely compatible with Jean- Paul Sartre, Jean Genet and the kind of intellectual despair that characterized the post-World War II generation in Europe. Heidegger is thoroughly Gnostic in his intentionality, it's just that the language is modern and stripped of this magical thinking, and by being stripped of magical thinking, in a way the modern recension of that state of mind is even more hopeless and disempowering.

Fortunately I think we're moving out of the shadow of that, but I'm 44 years old, I grew up reading those people and it made my adolescence much harder than it needed to be. I mean, my God, there wasn't an iota of hope anywhere to be found. That's why for me psychedelics broke over that intellectual world like a tidal wave of revelation. I quoted to you last night Jean-Paul Sartre's statement, "Nature is mute." Now I see this as an obscenity almost, an intellectual crime against reason and intuition. It's the absolute antithesis of the Logos, and much of our world is ruled by men older than I am who are fully connected into that without any question, and they just think all the rest of this is just namby-pamby ecological softheartedness of some sort. There is no openness to the power of bios, to the fact of a living cosmos. The reinvestiture of spirit into matter, the rebirth of the world soul is a necessary concomitant to what we now understand about the real nature of the world.

In a way, the theory of evolution, which was born in the 1850s, is the beginning of the turning of the tide, because even though the first hundred years of evolutionary theory was fantastically concerned to

eliminate teleology, eliminate purpose, nevertheless nobody ever understood that except the hardcore evolutionists. To everybody else, evolution meant ascent to higher form. I once heard someone say, "If it doesn't have to do with genes, it ain't evolution." Well, that's a tremendously limited view of what evolution is. The inorganic world is evolving, the organic world is evolving and there the currency is genes; but also the social and intellectual world of human beings is evolving, and there the currency is not genes but memes, so that idea carries with it the implication of ascent to higher form and correctly broadened and understood becomes permission for a return to optimism and to the kind of hope that these folks were trying to articulate.

Audience: The concept of mind as something that is attainable and not necessary is a separation and therefore, for me, it's a lie. I assume there are many different definitions of mind — I don't mean functions of mind, I mean definitions of mind — and I'm toying now with the notion of the meshing of the notion of mind and the notion of Logos. For Logos is, and it seems to me that mind is, if it is available through trial then we're back in a separation, and this is to me a false separation.

Yes, you're right, but it's a separation necessary for philosophical discourse. That's why philosophical discourse is not the top of the mountain. Language itself is the process of making distinctions that are false. This is why all language is a lie. This is why the ultimate truth lies in something unspeakable, but the ascent to the unspeakable is through this kind of philosophical analysis.

Audience: Language is only the vehicle.

Well, it's the vehicle but eventually there's no road and you have to park the vehicle and get out and walk, and that's the journey. Plotinus, the great Neoplatonist, has this wonderful phrase: he calls the mystical experience, "The flight of the alone to the alone," and I love this image. It's so uncompromising and it's about as true as something can be and still move in the realm of language, because it's saying: finally words fall away, and finally there is only that which cannot be said. Many of you who've stuck with me know that I love to quote this poem by this obscure poet who died in the trenches of France in the First World War, Trumbull Stickney, and he wrote a poem called "The Soul of Time," and the punch line goes like this: "I cannot understand you / 'Tis because I lean over your meaning's edge and feel / A dizziness of the things I have not said," and I think that every one of these weekends, this is the effort: to carry you to the edge of an abyss and then push you over into the dizziness of the things unsaid; and they will always be unsaid.

Wittgenstein, God bless him, had the concept of the unspeakable. He said, "Philosophy operates in the realm of the speakable but eventually we must confront that which cannot be said." The dizziness of things unsaid, and that's where real authenticity then flows back into the world of community and speech, but it comes from a place of utter silence and unsayability. How could it be otherwise? What hubris it would be to expect that the small mouth noises of English could encompass being. That's a primary error that all philosophy chooses to make at the beginning of its enterprise in order to set up shop at all. No, these are lower-dimensional slices of a reality that is ultimately unitary, ineffable, unspeakable and dazzling.

Audience: So philosophical discourse is verbal and mental masturbation?

Absolutely. Masturbation, because there's a pun here, it's autopoietic, it is completely out of yourself, there is no union with the Other, and the Other is what you're always trying to get to. The Other is a common term in these literatures; the Other is that which cannot be fully known. I always like to quote the British

biologist J. B. S. Haldane, who made a wonderful statement. He said, “The universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it is stranger than we can suppose,” and that’s a dizzying perception. It’s one thing to think that it’s very strange; it’s quite another thing to realize that it is stranger than you can suppose. You may suppose and suppose and suppose and you will fall so short of the mark that it’s absurd. That’s what it means to be in the presence of a mystery. The modern word mystery translates out to “unsolved problem.” That’s not what a mystery is. A mystery is not an unsolved problem. A mystery is a mystery, and ratiocination can exhaust itself and make no progress with it. That’s what’s at the core of our being, and that was what was at the core of this ancient perception. These were thoroughly modern people. They were shoved up against the same things that tug at our hearts and our minds and our souls, and beyond that there’s not a whole hell of a lot that you can say about it.

Audience: I just wanted to add that the idea of the earth as a living organism makes an appearance in psychology at the end of the last century with Gustav Fechner, who survives in footnotes of textbooks as the father of experimental psychology. I read a book about the soul life of plants, and that whole part of his work is utterly ignored, it didn’t influence anybody but William James.

This is an idea that will not die, but its practitioners end up in footnotes. They do not have a happy fate. Certainly Henri Bergson with his idea of the *élan vital*; this is an effort to preserve this idea of the world soul, and yet the fate of Bergson, his influence on modern philosophy is certainly minimal. Alfred North Whitehead is my great favorite. I think that Whitehead is the cat’s pajamas, and he has this idea of a living cosmos, that life and vitality extend right down into the electron, yet in spite of his mathematical contributions, the fact that he wrote *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell, Whitehead is not taught. I think there’s one university in this country where they take him seriously. Modern philosophy is a desert for my money. Who cares about it? Nobody cares about it. Who’s living their life according to the conceptions of modern philosophy? Nobody, as far as I can see. But yes, vitalism was this impulse in biology that persisted clear up to the 1920s with embryologists like Dreisch and his school, and mechanical biology has been at great pains to suppress that.

Audience: What about the Native Americans that were living that philosophy in the West?

Yes, well, aboriginal people, not only the Native Americans but the tribes of the Amazon, if you live next to nature this is such an overwhelming perception that it’s never called into question; but, you see, most of us trace our civilization to desert dwellers who invented agriculture which gave us surpluses, so then we had to build walled enclosures to defend our surpluses from starving neighbors, and we’re talking 6,000 B.C. at Jericho for this kind of stuff. So we have been cut off from the natural mind longer than any other group of people on earth. This is how we are able to carry out the demonic, in the negative sense, reconstruction of the world that we have. If there is a sin, then we have sinned. J. Robert Oppenheimer said, “Beyond all rational argument the physicists have known sin,” and it’s because they reached into the heart of matter without reverence. Their best trick was to call down the light that burns at the center of stars, and they call it down to the test centers of our deserts and onto the heads of our enemies, if necessary; but this is a cosmic sin, it’s an abomination. It’s the story of Western civilization.

The first great error was urbanization — well, I don’t know if it’s the first great error, the invention of agriculture was a pretty staggering bad turn — and then a piece of bad luck that really we didn’t need to have befall us was the invention of the phonetic alphabet. With the invention of the phonetic alphabet we moved away from symbolism and lost even the symbolic connection to the world, and that happened with

the evolution of Demotic Greek and even earlier languages, Linear A and B and that kind of stuff. McLuhan talks a lot about this. We live in a universe so alienated that we can barely conceive of the way back but, hopefully, archeology is a wonderful thing. We are actually digging into the stratographic layers of our past and reconstructing these ancient intellectual machines and setting their gears turning and seeing how it works. We're like amnesiacs, people who don't remember who we are or where we came from, we just wander mumbling through the streets of our cities foraging in garbage cans and frightening other people; and yet if we could wake up, and archeology and the rebirth of an awareness of the Goddess and the pushing of science to the point where its irrational foundations become more clear — this is all part of a program of awakening, of an Archaic Revival that will then make us part of the living world rather than a disease, a parasitic force upon it.

Audience: It struck me that one comment you read talked about the creation of the world. It said that the elements were brought forth and at first I was thinking earth, air, fire and water, but I was thinking in relationship to some other elements of life that being, life and intellect are what come into manifestation from the one who pours forth the world and creates the world and that those are the first elements that come into existence. Life itself is an element of the cosmos as it were. It's an irreducible aspect of things, and you're paying respect to the fact that life is an omnipresent thing in the foundation of things. It's one of the elements.

I think that in one of the other things I read it said that everything that exists, that ever has been, that ever will be, is alive. I'll read a bit more of this. This refers to the theme I touched on a little bit last night of the importance of the imagination and how I think that our destiny lies in the imagination. "God is ever existent and makes manifest all else, but He himself is hidden because He is ever existent. He manifests all things but is not manifested. He is not Himself brought into being in images presented through our senses but He presents all things to us in such images. It is only things which are brought into being that are presented through sense. Coming into being is nothing else than presentation through sense." This is so thoroughly modern, it's staggering. For 1,500 years people couldn't say anything that clearly.

It is evident then that He who alone has not come into being cannot be presented through sense and that being so, He is hidden from our sight. But He presents all things to us through our senses and thereby manifests Himself through all things and in all things, and especially to those to whom He wills to manifest Himself. For thought alone can see that which is hidden, inasmuch as thought itself is hidden from sight, and if even the thought which is within you is hidden from your sight, how can He, being in Himself, be manifest to you through your bodily eyes? But if you have power to see with the eyes of the mind, then, my son, He will manifest Himself to you; for the Lord manifests Himself ungrudgingly through all the universe, and you can behold God's image with your eyes and lay hold on it with your hands.

To my mind, this is permission for the psychedelic experience, that we lay hold of the image of the ineffable through the eyes.

If you wish to see Him, think on the sun, think on the course of the moon, think on the order of the stars. Who is it that maintains that order? The sun is the greatest of the gods in heaven. To him as to their king and overlord, all the kings of heaven yield place; and yet this mighty god, greater than earth and sea, submits to having smaller stars circling above him. Who is it then, my son, that he always obeys with reverence and awe? Each of these stars too is confined by measured limits and has an appointed space to range in. Why do not all the stars in heaven run like and equal courses? Who is it that has assigned to each

its place and marked out for each the extent of its course?

Then it goes on and on. Here is an amazing anticipation of modernity:

Would that it were possible for you to grow wings and soar into the air! Poised between earth and heaven, you might see the solid earth, the fluid sea and the streaming rivers, the wandering air, the penetrating fire, the courses of the stars and the swiftness of the movement with which heaven encompasses all. What happiness were that, my son, to see all these borne along with one impulse, and to behold Him who is unmoved moving in all that moves, and Him who is hidden made manifest through His works. This is an image of the planets seen from space. It's absolutely the unified image of our planet. It is, I think, the central image in this early Hermetic thing. This is as close to an image of what Godhead is that they were able to reach. I mean, this is a shamanic flight that delivers a scientific description of the earth moving in space. This is written A.D. 150. Nobody had that in sight until we reach Giordano Bruno, and if you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition you know that Bruno was burned at the stake. The reason he was burned at the stake was because he looked up into the sky and did not see the stellar shells and the angelic hierarchies; Bruno had a mystical experience and when it was over he said, "The universe is infinite. The stars go on forever." That single statement was the intellectual dynamite that destroyed the whole medieval, Hellenistic cosmological vision. The entire previous cosmological vision was left behind with that single statement. It was such a powerful statement that he had to go to the stake for that, and we have never recovered from that perception. It was a fundamental perception and it occurred because he looked without preconception into the night sky and did not see wheels and demons and angels and shells of cosmic fate and necessity and he just said, "That's bullshit. What is there is infinite space and infinite time; the stars are hung like lamps unto the utmost regions of infinity." This then inaugurates the beginning of modernity and it's a perception that arose on the foundation of all of this earlier thinking.

Audience: Is the implication that there's a meditation that one does where one tries to go inside and see the universe on a cosmic scale?

Well, we know a lot less about the practice because there was much secrecy around this. What we have are the philosophical discourses. When we talk about alchemy this afternoon we'll see that there the technique becomes projection onto matter, that you enter into a kind of self-hypnosis where by having what we call "naive" ontological categories, in other words not being sure exactly how much of mind is in matter or how much matter is in mind, you can erase the boundary between self and world and project the contents of the unconscious onto chemical processes. What went on in the early phase here we don't know. The Trismegistic Hymns are largely as you see them here, philosophical discourses. There was stress on diet and purity; asceticism was typical of the Hermetic approach. In Gnosticism it went one of several ways. There were schools of Gnosticism which were vegetarian and puristic and then because they felt that man was no part of the universe, that man was somehow hermetically sealed against contamination from the universe, some Gnostic schools said, "You can do anything you want. You can have any kind of sexual arrangement you want, you can do anything you want. Do not think that you are part of the universe," and so you had Gnostic schools side by side, some orgiastic and quasi-tantric and some ascetic.

Because the idea was that light was trapped in matter by the act of procreation, there were Gnostic sects that only practiced forms of sexual union that couldn't lead to conception. So there were presumably exclusively homosexual sects, there were sects which only practiced anal intercourse. For them that was the same as celibacy because the real concern was not to trap any more of the light. I don't seriously

advocate this but I think that in our current situation of overpopulation a little dose of this kind of thinking wouldn't be a bad thing; too much light is trapped in the organic matrix. These Gnostic sects that were for instance exclusively homosexual or exclusively practiced anal intercourse, of course they were suicide sects. They disappeared very quickly because they could only make converts by missionary conversion. You didn't have children, you couldn't hand it on. It shows how thoroughgoing their rejection of the world was, how contaminated they felt themselves to be by the material world; but then you also had, as I mentioned, these optimistic schools that saw nature as something to be perfected, and said, "Man has been set onto the earth not to reject it but to perfect it." Utopianism, the belief that one can create a perfect society, goes back into these Hermetic ideals, because the idea was that a perfect society could be the goal of the alchemical work.

Let me read you a passage from Giordano Bruno. This is a wonderful passage from the Picatrix. This was the book of 12th century magical texts that began to introduce these Hermetic ideas, and this passage is the core passage that inspired the Rosicrucians and numerous other utopian movements. Here is Frances Yates:

Hermes Trismegistus is often mentioned as the source for some talismanic images and in other connections, but there is in particular one very striking passage in the fourth book of Picatrix in which Hermes is stated to have been the first to use magical images and is credited with having founded a marvelous city in Egypt.

And here is the passage from the Picatrix:

There are among the Chaldeans very perfect masters in this art and they affirm that Hermes was the first who constructed images by means of which he knew how to regulate the Nile against the motion of the moon. This man also built a temple to the sun and he knew how to hide himself from all so that no one could see him although he was within it.

Those of you who are scholars in Rosicrucianism know that one of the things that was always said about Rosicrucians was that they were invisible. This was how Robert Fludd proved to people that he wasn't a Rosicrucian, he'd say "You're looking at me, so how can I be one?" So, he's in the temple but he could not be seen within it:

It was he, Hermes Trismegistus, too, who in the east of Egypt constructed a city 12 miles long, within which he constructed a castle which had four gates within each of its four parts. On the eastern gate he placed the form of an eagle; on the western gate, the form of a bull; on the southern gate, the form of a lion; and on the northern gate he constructed the form of a dog. Into these images he introduced spirits which spoke with voices, nor could anyone enter the gates of the city except by their permission. There he planted trees in the midst of which was a great tree which bore the fruit of all generation. On the summit of the castle he caused to be raised a tower 30 cubits high on the top of which he ordered to be placed a lighthouse the color of which changed every day until the seventh day, after which it returned to the first color, and so the city was illuminated with these colors. Near the city there was an abundance of waters in which dwelt many kinds of fish. Around the circumference of the city he placed engraved images and ordered them in such a manner that by their virtue the inhabitants were made virtuous and withdrawn from all wickedness and harm. The name of the city was Adocentyn.

Now, what we're familiar with from the Platonic literature is a quasi-rational, largely rational approach to utopian thinking that you get in the Republic. However, students of the Republic will recall that the tenth book contains the Myth of Er, which we went over in detail in the section I did on Neoplatonism. The Myth of Er is one of the most bizarre and puzzling passages in the entire ancient literature. You recall that Er was a soldier who died, he was killed in battle, but after eight days he returned to life and then he told a story that is the absolute puzzlement of ancient scholars. It's highly mathematical, it has to do with the spindle of necessity and the description of some kind of cosmic machine and all the ratios of the gears of this machine are given and nobody knows what is being talked about, but here we have a different thrust: a magical utopianism and the idea of a perfected human society using magic. These engraved images that he ordered in such a manner that by their virtue the inhabitants were made virtuous, that means that he was able to deflect the energies of cosmic fate. The city was immune to astrological, malefic influence, it was protected. When we talk later about the alchemical aspirations of the Rosicrucians and John Dee and Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, we'll see that this impulse toward an alchemical kingdom returns again and again. In a way the four-gated city of utopian magical dreaming is one version of the philosopher's stone. It's a kind of diffuse notion of the philosopher's stone, but it's a society in perfect harmony, with fully realized beings living within it practicing a cosmic religion that frees them from the exigencies of cosmic fate.

The other thing that is going on in some of this alchemical imagery as a kind of subtext of late alchemy is what's called the *ars memoria*, the art of memory, and in fact Frances Yates has a book called *The Art of Memory*. This is a lost art, literally. It begins with the Roman orator Cicero and was practiced up until the early 17th century. What it consisted of was that it was considered very bad form to read your speech if you were an orator and so you had to memorize your speech, and there were tricks of memory. The commonest mnemonic trick was to think of a building that is familiar to you, it was called the memory palace. I've done this myself with the University of California because it's an area that I'm very familiar with because I was a student there and there are many buildings and many hallways and many floors, and what you do when you make your speech is that in your mind you are moving through the memory palace and at various points you construct what are called *emblemata*, and the idea of these *emblemata* is that they be as unusual, shocking and unexpected as possible in order to be memorable to you.

Say you're giving a speech about the seven deadly sins, so then *luxuria* might be for you a nun copulating with a dog, and you'll set the nun and the dog in a little niche in the hallway of the memory palace; then when you reach that place in your imaginary journey, all these associations will spring to mind and you'll be able to give your speech flawlessly. To us this sounds tortured and peculiar, but it works quite well. One of the great practitioners of the *ars memoria* was Giordano Bruno and he wrote a book called *Lo Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante*, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, and my God, Max Ernst, eat your heart out! This is a surreal epic read as straight plaintext because that's not how it's supposed to be read. It's an agglomeration of these mnemonic *emblemata* that led him on to probably give a fairly conventional disputation on one subject or another, but there are even old books of these *emblemata* that were before surrealism some of the wildest images that the Western mind would tolerate.

The one thing that we didn't get into this morning was talking about the astrological side of it and the role of the decans. The decans are these demons, three to a sign, so there are 36 of them, and this was thought to be an astrological conceit that goes back to Egypt, as opposed to the ordinary zodiacal signifiers which go back to Hauran in what is now modern Iraq. These decans were the demons that were summoned by these Renaissance magi in an effort to control and manipulate fate. If you were paying attention this

morning, you may have noticed that in all the reading I did from the *Corpus Hermeticum* there was really nothing explicitly magical about it. It was philosophical. There was one mention, I think, of animating statues in the description of the four-gated city, but it was those magical animation passages that really captured the imagination of the Renaissance, and they built on that. The idea, simply put, is that these decans and zodiacal signs are at the center of associative schemata which include plants, minerals, odors, certain flowers, certain animals, everything had its decanic assignation; and so, if you were involved in promoting an affair with a woman or something like that, then you would do an invocation to Venus and you would gather the associated minerals, stones and animals and you would put them in a room and then certain tonal modes were also associated with these things. So you would play the music, you would have the flowers present, the minerals present, do the invocations and what you were trying to do was create a microcosm of the macrocosm to draw down this stellar energy. It wasn't about the classical Hollywood appearance of demons in a circle, that's the stuff of Picatrix, the earlier, somewhat less refined, style of magic.

I wanted to read you one passage from Frances Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* because this describes this change of status of the magician that we're interested in; and also what we didn't talk about this morning was the importance of Kabbalah, which came in quite late but was then worked out in great detail. This was the Jewish contribution to this kind of magic; it was the idea that since the world had been made by Jehovah, by the speaking of words, "In principio erat Verbum, et Verbo caro factum est," in other words, the speaking of Hebrew was thought to be the use of a primary linguistic tool for the purposes of creation. The problem for these Italians was that very few of them spoke Hebrew, so it was sometimes practiced silently. The mere constructing of these Hebrew letters and the setting out of messages in Hebrew was deemed efficacious as well. Then a further declension, for people who were even frustrated with that, was to channel magical languages that were pseudo-Hebraic in structure and appearance. This is a whole branch of research, much too arcane for us to go into here. The only non-Hebraic magical language that I may mention here will be Enochian. Enochian was an angelic language channeled by John Dee and used by him in his magical evocations, and later it was taken up by Aleister Crowley and the folks of the Golden Dawn, but there were many of these magical languages. The Voynich Manuscript is written in one of them.

I want to read you this passage about how the Renaissance changed the status of the magician: We begin to perceive here an extraordinary change in the status of the magician. The necromancer concocting his filthy mixtures, the conjurer making his frightening invocations were both outcasts from society, regarded as dangers to religion and forced into plying their trades in secrecy. These old-fashioned characters are hardly recognizable in the philosophical and pious magi of the Renaissance. There is a change in status almost comparable to the change in status of the artist from the mere mechanic of the Middle Ages to the learned and refined companion of princes of the Renaissance, and the magics themselves are changed almost out of recognition. Who could recognize the necromancer studying his Picatrix in secret in the elegant Ficino, with his infinitely refined use of sympathies, his classical incantations, his elaborately Neoplatonized talismans? Who could recognize the conjurer using the barbarous techniques of some *Clavis Salomonis* in the mystical Pico lost in the religious ecstasies of Kabbalah, drawing archangels to his side? And yet there is a kind of continuity, because the techniques are at bottom based on the same principles. Ficino's magic is an infinitely refined and reformed version of pneumatic necromancy. Pico's practical Kabbalah is an intensely religious and mystical version of conjuring.

Now we move in this realm; these were the companions of princes. There was in that 120 years, from let's

say 1500 to the beginning of the Thirty Years War, a constant effort in various parts of Europe to try to turn European society toward a kind of magical revolution. The Europe of the 11th and 12th century was entirely ruled by scholastic rationalism. Witchcraft was virtually unknown and very curious. It's the 15th and 16th centuries where you get this tremendous proliferation of magical systems, magical ideas and social hysterias related to witchcraft, alchemy, conjuring and magic. Those are the centuries when these things really broke out into the open, and alchemy in that period is basically a story of wonderful personalities, too many for us to really talk about in detail. We have Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel who sought and found the philosopher's stone, according to legend, and according to legend are living to this day somewhere in Central Asia in perfect happiness, having achieved not only the Chemical Wedding but the Water Stone of the Wise. Then we have Basil Valentine, who refined red wine and distilled it in distillation apparatus until he got essentially pure alcohol, and upon drinking this he was so convinced that he had found the philosopher's stone that he announced the imminent approach of the end of the world based on his discovery, and he was not secretive at all. He propagated his recipes and in fact sampled the distillates of some of his brother alchemists and popularized this very widely. To this day, the reason certain cognacs are in the hands of monastic orders and no one else can make these things is because they were originally alchemical secrets. Many of these early alchemists were men of the cloth, quite a number of them.

Lecture 3:

So what I thought I would do is, in a highly chaotic fashion, read you some of this alchemical literature. The big bringdown about alchemical literature is that apparently the muse didn't always smile on the alchemist and some of this poetry is pretty tormented stuff. Why this is, who can say, but let's try one here and see if you can bear with it. Also, my Middle English is not as good as it might be. This is a short one, and typical, and you will see why the alchemists were charged with unbearable obscurity and prolix prose. This poem is called "A Description of the Stone":

Though Daphne fly from Phoebus bright, yet shall they both be one
And if you understand this right you have our hidden stone
For Daphne she is fair and white but volatile is she
Phoebus a fixed god of might and red as blood is he
Daphne is a water nymph and hath of moisture store
Which Phoebus doth confine and heat and dries her very shore
They being dried into one of crystal flood must drink
'Til they be brought to a white stone which wash with virgin's milk
So long until they flow as wax and no fume you can see
Then have you all you need to ask: praise God and thankful be.

This is a recipe for the production of the philosopher's stone and the author, I'm sure, felt that he'd spoken as clearly as he dare speak, and yet making something of this is no easy task. This is from the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* and the late phase of alchemy. Here's another one:

The world is a maze and what you why
Forsooth of late a great rich man did die

And as he lay dying on his bed
These words in secret to his son he said
“My son,” quoth he, “’Tis good for thee
I die, for thou shall much the better be thereby
And when thou seest that life hath me bereft
Take what thou findest and where I have it left
Thou dost not know, nor what my riches be
All which I will declare, give ear to me
An earth I had all venom to expel
And that I cast into a mighty well
A water eke to cleanse what was amiss
I threw into the earth, and there it is
My silver all into the sea I cast
My gold into the air and at the last
Into the fire for fear it should be found
I threw a stone worth forty thousand pound
Which stone was given me by a mighty king
Who bade me wear it in a fair gold ring.”
Quoth he, “This stone is by that ring found out
If wisely thou canst turn this ring about
For every hoop contrary is to other
Yet well agree and of the stone is mother
So now, my son, I will declare a wonder
That when I die this ring must break asunder.”
The king said so, but when he said, “Withal
Although the ring be broken in pieces small
An easy fire shall soon it close again
Who this can do he need not work in vain
’Til this my hidden treasure be found out
When I am dead, my spirit shall walk about
Make him to bring your fire from the grave
And stay with him ’til you my riches have.”
These words a worldly man did chance to hear
Who daily watched the spirit but near the near
And yet it met with him and every one
Yet tells him not where is this hidden stone.

This stuff is obscure, it’s deliberately obscure, it was obscure to its contemporaries and the whole effort became one of collecting this kind of material and finding it out; and you have to understand that this was all circulating in manuscript, very little of this was printed. The *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* was not printed until 1652. This was a world without vehicular transportation other than the horse and carriage, and these people were paranoid of being discovered and persecuted for wizardry and witchcraft by the Church. So each alchemist working in secret with a limited number of texts, with a local control language, created this vast conceptual patchwork of ideas and this is in large measure responsible for the obscurity of what is said.

Then another factor which impinges on this and further complicates the matter is that the name of the game was projection of the contents of the imagination onto physical processes, so taking red cinnabar and heating it in a furnace until it sweats mercury, for one alchemist this is the incineration of the red salamander and the collection of ur-Mercurius in the Great Pelican. They named their chemical apparatus after animals and gods, and so the pelican is a standard distillation apparatus, basically a condenser on top of something which is boiled, and then these materials would be collected, ground, powdered, refired, mixed with other materials, refired again and in the process these people were living in what we call a waking dream — it's such a weak term, the projection of the intellect into this dimension — and many of the recipes are designed to wipe out the boundaries between waking and sleeping.

Remember how I talked about the river of mercury that runs between the yin and yang? Many of the alchemical processes were of 40 days duration. Well, you can imagine a hermit fearing discovery by the Church, trying to keep his fires not too hot, not too cold, working day after day, night after night. Eventually all boundaries dissolve and you're just living in a pure world of intellectual projection, and then in the swirling of the alembic, in the chemical processes going on in the retort, you begin to be able to project your consciousness onto this. It's what we call visualization, but for us it's kind of a weak term because we are never really able to — except in the psychedelic state — transcend the belief in the inner world and the outer world being somehow separate. For us it's always separate from us, but they were able to wipe out that boundary and then what they saw in their swirling retorts and alembics was not carbonization, calcination, condensation of various molecular weights of liquids and oils, but rather the birth of the Red Lion, the coming of the Eagle, the appearance of the Smaragdine Stone. They had hundreds and hundreds of these words. I didn't bring any with me, but much of alchemical literature is dictionaries. Martinus Rulandus' Alchemical Dictionary is a huge book of words with special meanings in the alchemical context.

So why do this, and what happens when you do it? Well, no matter what alchemist you're reading, there's always an agreement that there are stages in the great work, stages in the opus, as they called it. You can't get any agreement on in what order these stages come, but roughly it's something like this: most agree that it begins in the nigredo, the blackening, ur-Crow, the saturnine world of what we would call manic depression, despair, and that ur-Chaos — a chaotic, near-psychotic state of unbounded hopelessness — is the precondition then for the alchemical work. I had a dream last night that was, I think, triggered by an illustration in Fabricius that I'll show you tonight, but it was a classical alchemical dream. It was that I was at a country fair, and its antiquity was indicated by the fact that it was happening on the schoolyard of my childhood, and as I moved among the participants of this country fair I began to notice that they were freaky. There were people with withered arms and one side of their face slid down and so forth and so on. The whole thing began to drift toward nightmare, and Richard Hermes Bird appeared in my dream as my alchemical compadre and at one point a black woman — perfect symbolism for the nigredo — with three withered arms and six or seven breasts slid herself sideways in front of me, and it was at that point that I went and found Richard and said, "I think we'd better get out of here."

Now, an alchemist would greet a dream like this with great anticipation and joy and would understand that this sets the stage now for the next movement forward. Well, then accounts differ. Those of you who really want to get into this, I recommend that you read *Mysterium Coniunctionis* by Jung, the Mysterious Conjunction. He discusses the nigredo in great detail. Another symbol for the nigredo is the senex, the old man, because the old man is just short of death and that's the state that the nigredo makes you feel. Then you must take this raw, chaotic, unformed material, often compared to feces, compared to corruption,

compared to the contents of an opened grave, and you must cook it in the alchemical fires of contemplation, prayer, and ascetic self-control, and then you will move through a series of stages that are associated with colors. There is the rubedo, the reddening, there is the citrinitas, the yellowing, there is the viriditas, the greening, and the order in which these occur differs according to who you follow, but then there is closure at the end of the process. Most alchemists, although certainly not all, agree that the higher state is the albedo, the whitening, the purificatio. At each stage there are substages of dissolution, *dissolutio et coagulatio*. There's one alchemical aphorism that says, "Dissolutio et coagulatio, know this and this is all ye need to know." It's a melting and a recasting and a purifying of psychic contents. So finally you reach the albedo, the whitening, the highest stage, the stage of great purity.

Remember how I said last night that mercury was always the metaphor for mind in alchemy, or one of the metaphors for mind in alchemy, and I talked about its mutability and its ability to take the shape of its container, and how when you shatter it it then splits into many reflections? So once you move into the domain of the albedo, the whitening, then a whole new problem arises for the alchemist. This is the problem of the fixing of the stone. Somehow the mutability of mercury must be overcome and it must be crystallized, it must be fixed so that it doesn't get away from you, so that it doesn't slip through your fingers. To achieve ur-Mercury is nothing unless you have the secret of the *coagulatio*. There is a huge amount of effort devoted to this.

What is being described is what Jungians call the individuation process: a dissolving of the boundaries of the ego, an allowing of the chaotic material of the unconscious to pour forth where it can be inspected by consciousness, and we'll see tonight when we look at this art that these images are full of ravening beasts, incestuous mother/son pairs, incestuous brother/sister pairs, hermaphrodites. All taboos are broken, this stuff just boils up from the unconscious, is sublimed through these processes and then is somehow fixed, and this fixing is the culmination of alchemy. If you can bring off this trick then you possess the ur-Stone, the philosopher's stone, the lapis, the Sophic Hydrolith of the Wise, Eirenaeus Philalethes calls it. There are hundreds of control words for naming the secret difficult to obtain: alchemical gold, in short, this is what we're after. If you possess it, nothing else is worth anything because it is psychic completion, peace of mind. Jung called it the self. It's the self that we are trying to recover, and remember how we talked about the Gnostic myth of the light trapped in matter? Well this is the *lumina lumen*, the light of light, the *lux natura*, the light drawn out of nature and condensed into a fixed form which then becomes the universal panacea, and I'm using as many of these alchemical terms as I can draw out of my memory to give you a feeling for it. This is the universal medicine. It cures all ills, it brings you riches, fame, wealth, self-respect. It's the answer, it's what everyone is looking for and no one can find.

This became a consuming passion of the 15th and 16th century mind. They thought they were on the brink of it, and along the way they were discovering stuff like distilled alcohol, phosphorous, gun powder, all of these things were coming out of the alchemical laboratories, but that was not it. They kept driving themselves onward because they knew that this was not the real thing, and they were pursuing the real thing. Then for some people it became reassociated with this notion of the utopia that I mentioned this morning in the passage that I read about the city of Hermes Trismegistus, and they began to see — it's almost like the crisis which overcame Buddhism — that it must be an archetypal, and notice how rarely we've used that word here, it must be almost an archetypal stage in human thought. Theravāda Buddhism stressed individual redemption through meditation on emptiness, and then with the great reforms of Nāgārjuna the idea of Bodhisattvic compassion was introduced and that carries with it political freight, an obligation to society and mankind.

As the 15th and 16th century progressed there began to be this awareness that what was wanted was not for an alchemist to break through to his own personal salvation, but somehow to create an alchemical world. You get then the notion of the multiplicatio, the idea that the stone, once created, will replicate itself and be able to change base matter into itself, almost like a virus spreading through the ontological structure of matter itself, and the world will be reborn. What was happening was that these alchemists were getting bolder. Printing was invented in Mainz, near Frankfurt, in 1439, and the distribution of these alchemical books was changing the character of alchemy. It was no more the solitary hermit working away in his cave or mountaintop, far away from the minions of the Church. These alchemists began to dream of banding together, of forming societies, of creating brotherhoods that were united in the sharing of their knowledge and their purpose.

This brings us to the curious episode in history called the Rosicrucian Enlightenment. Dame Frances Yates once again got there first. She wrote a book called *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* which traces the history of these alchemical brotherhoods and reveals to us what they were really about. What they were about was this dream of somehow taking the philosopher's stone and the power, the immortality, the insight that it would bring and making it a general utility of mankind. I have a friend who claims that the summoning of the Holy Spirit into matter can be seen as the creation of the modern world of electrical energy, that people like Helmholtz and Faraday were completing the alchemical work. It's very hard for us to realize how mysterious the electromagnetic field seemed to the 19th century. The 19th century had entirely imbued itself with the spirit of Democritean atomism translated through Newtonian physics and they believed that everything was little balls of hard matter winging through space. When Helmholtz and Faraday and these people began to talk about action at a distance and generating the electromagnetic field and trapping lightning in Leyden jars and running it through wires, what could this be but numen, what could this be but the trapping of spiritus? What could it be but the literal descent of the Holy Ghost into history? Give it a moment's thought: for thousands of years, electricity was something that you saw when you took an amber rod and a piece of cat fur and went into a darkened room and stroked the cat fur, and then when you would bring the amber rod close to the cat fur you would see the crackle of static electricity. For thousands of years that's what electricity was. Who would dream that you could light cities, that you could smelt metals, that you could illuminate the earth with this energy, and yet from the 1850s to the present this was done. It's almost the final literalizing of the alchemical dream.

But to go back now — I digress, I fear — let's go back to the climate of the 1580s. The central culprit here, and to my mind a giant figure casting an enormous shadow over the landscape of alchemy and of modern science, is the Englishman John Dee. John Dee united in himself the complete spirit of the medieval magus and the complete spirit of the modern scientist. He invented the navigational instruments that allowed the conquest of the round earth. When Francis Drake sailed up the coast of California he had navigational instruments that were top secret — the French, the Spanish, must be kept away from this stuff — and these were navigational instruments created by John Dee that allowed him to locate himself anywhere on the globe. On a late summer evening at John Dee's house in Mortlake outside of London the angel Gabriel descended into his garden and gave him what he called the Shew Stone, shew in Old English. The Shew Stone exists to this day, you can see it in the British Museum, and what's amazing about it is that it's a piece of polished obsidian, it's an Aztec mirror. There was a ruler of the Aztecs named Smoky Mirror. How John Dee got this thing, we cannot even imagine. He says he got it from an angel, nobody can really naysay that. However I suspect that Cortez, on his first return to Spain from the New World, brought a number of objects with him that he had collected in Central Mexico and somehow John Dee got his

hands on this thing. It was for him a television screen into the Logos, and he used it over a number of years to direct the foreign policy of England.

He was the confidante of Queen Elizabeth the First and he was also the most accomplished astrologer in Europe. He used his ability to cast horoscopes as an entree into all the great houses of Europe, the kings and nobles of Europe. Well, he was functioning as an intelligence agent, he was a spy for the British Crown insinuating himself into these various courtly scenes and then writing back to Elizabeth in ciphers that had previously only been used for magical purposes. He was sending back data on the strength of military garrisons and the placement of fortifications and this sort of thing. This was what he was doing in the 1580s; he kept the Shew Stone for a number of years and he didn't seem to be able to make much progress with it. He had other methods too, he had wax tables and sigils, but finally into his life came a very mysterious character named Edward Kelley. Some accounts say that Edward Kelley had no ears, which indicates that he had had his ears removed for being a charlatan and a mountebank. This was a common punishment in the provinces of England. So Edward Kelley was a very dubious character, I think. One strong piece of evidence that he was a shady character was that John Dee was married to a much younger woman named Jane Dee, who by all accounts was quite a beauty, and after gaining Dee's confidence as a sryer, the person who could look into the Shew Stone and lay out these scenarios that the angels and the entities coming and going in the Shew Stone were putting forth, Kelley revealed to Dee that the angels had instructed him to hit the hay with Jane. This was a great crisis in their relationship. However, according to Dee's diary, "And so it was done," we read. So hanky panky didn't begin with the Golden Dawn, believe me.

In 1582, Jane Dee, John Dee and Edward Kelley set out for Bohemia. Rudolf, the Mad King of Bohemia, held sway at that time. This is another one of these bizarre figures in this whole story. Rudolf collected dwarfs, he collected giants. He had what was called a wunderkammer, a wonder cabinet. You see, before Linnaeus, before modern scientific classification, these great patrons of the arts and natural sciences would just collect weird stuff, and that was all you could say about it. I mean, it was rhinoceros horns, fossil ammonites, broken pieces of statues from antiquity, giant insects from southern India, seashells, all this stuff would just be thrown together in these wunderkammer, these wonder cabinets. Rudolf was a great patron of the arts, and Kelley sent the word that he and Dee had perfected the alchemical process. Rudolf immediately paid their way to Prague and patronized them very lavishly over a number of months, but then they didn't seem to be coming through, and he ordered a castle put at their disposal in Bohemia and they still weren't able to come through. The Voynich Manuscript figures in here too, because Kelley's entree to Dee was that he had a manuscript in an unknown language, and I believe that this probably was the Voynich Manuscript. The Voynich Manuscript turns up in the estate of Rudolf and the very month that he paid 600 gold ducats for it to persons unknown, Dee, who was always writing back to the Elizabethan court hounding them to send money, entered in his account book that they received 600 gold ducats from an unknown source.

Dee was able to talk himself out of this alchemical imprisonment, but not before he had written a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad. You have to understand the importance of this. As late as the 1920s, in the better schools of England, like Eton, when you studied geometry you studied Euclid's works, and Euclid's geometry was always preceded by Dee's preface to Euclid. Until the 1920s every English schoolchild studied this. He was a master mathematician as well as all these other things; this was how he was able to produce these navigation instruments. Dee, while imprisoned in Bohemia, wrote a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad in which he proposed to prove, through a series of occult theorems, a certain

diagram, basically the symbol for mercury, which looks like the symbol for female with horns on it, and then there were some adumbrations to that. By a series of theorems he built up this Hieroglyphic Monad and he initiated a couple of young men named Johannes Andreae and Michael Maier into the mysteries of the Hieroglyphic Monad. Then he was able to get out of Bohemia and he went back to England.

Kelley, who had made much more extravagant claims, Rudolf kept at work on the alchemical opus and Kelley became more and more desperate to escape. One night in 1597 he crept out on the parapet of this Bohemian castle and a roof tile slipped beneath his feet and he fell to his death and became, so far as I can tell, alchemy's only true martyr. Dee returned to England; he was now very old and he died at Mortlake in 1608. Elizabeth died in 1603; Shakespeare was happening, Sir Philip Sidney was happening through this period. John Dee reputedly had over 6,000 books in his library. He had more books than any man in England. We have a partial catalog of his library; he had books that do not exist now. He had Roger Bacon manuscripts, because when Henry the Eighth kicked the Catholic Church out of England the Northumbrian monasteries were looted by the Earl of Northumberland and Dee was allowed to pick over the loot from these monasteries. There were Roger Bacon manuscripts which perished when Dee's library was burned by an angry mob while he was on the continent because he was suspected of being a wizard. He was the model for Faust in the later recensions of Faust, and whenever you see an old man with a white beard and a pointed cap, this image is referent to Dee.

Well, Elizabeth died in 1603 and James the First became King of England. James was a peculiar character. The wags of the time liked to say, "Elizabeth was King and now James is Queen!" Not only that, he hated occultism, he had no patience with the whole magical court that Elizabeth had assembled around herself. Meanwhile, in 1614, a very mysterious document began to circulate in Europe and in England called the Fama — this is the first word of a string of Latin words — and two years later the Confessio. These were announcements that an alchemical brotherhood was seeking recruits. These are the primary documents of Rosicrucianism. Rosicrucianism was based on a fiction and a fictional person, Christian Rosenkreuz, who was imagined to have lived almost 200 years earlier, in the 1450s, and to have been a great alchemist. It was claimed that his tomb had been recently opened and that there were books inside it which set the stage for the alchemical revolution of the world; notice how this occult mind always tries to reach back in time to give itself validity. Christian Rosenkreuz was claimed to be the author of a series of books, the chief of which is called the Chymical Wedding.

What this was all about, I believe, and The Rosicrucian Enlightenment makes it fairly clear, was that Dee, during the period when he had been in Bohemia, had set out to lay the groundwork for an alchemical revolution in Central Europe, and he had made Johannes Andreae and Michael Maier his agents in this plot. It was a plot to meddle with European history and to turn the Protestant Reformation toward an alchemical completion. They felt that Luther and Calvin and these people had only gone so far and that the culmination of throwing off the yoke of the Church would be the establishment of an alchemical kingdom in Central Europe. The target, then, of the attention of Michael Maier and Johannes Andreae and a number of these alchemists became the young Frederick the Elector Palatine. He was a prince of the Northern League in Germany; he ruled in Heidelberg. Heidelberg, as you know, is a thousand-year-old university city and I believe I mentioned that the alchemical press of Theodore de Bry was operating out of Heidelberg. Heidelberg became a magnet for all the occult thinking going on in Europe. All the puffers and alchemists, the gold makers, the philosophers, the charlatans, they all converged on Heidelberg, and Andreae and Maier were advisors of the young Frederick. They steered him by a series of political manipulations too complex to tell toward a marriage with the daughter of James the First of England, who

was named Elizabeth, interestingly enough. So Frederick the Elector made Elizabeth, the daughter of James of England, his wife. Frederick here made a serious miscalculation because he thought that if James would give the hand of his daughter in marriage that this was his way of blessing this alchemical conspiracy. Actually, what was on James' mind was that he was about to give one of his sons in marriage to a Spanish princess of the Hapsburg line, a Catholic. In other words, he was playing both sides against each other. He was not giving the green light to an alchemical revolution at all, but it was assumed so.

Then in 1612 Rudolf the Emperor finally dies at a very ripe old age. At that time the Protestant League, which was made up of these princes of these small principalities scattered across Germany and Poland, they actually elected the emperor. It was not by right of primogenitor, but by election by what was called the Northern League, this group of princes. Frederick and his alchemical cohorts had done their political groundwork very skillfully and they were able to engineer the election of Frederick to Emperor, and he became Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia. This set the stage for an episode called the episode of the Winter King and Queen. After Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel, this is one of the great romantic stories of alchemy. They moved their court from Heidelberg to Prague and all the alchemists went with them, and they assumed that English armies would support them if there was any squawk from the Hapsburgs. In the winter of 1619 they ruled there and began to lay the groundwork for the transformation of Northern Europe into an alchemical kingdom. The problem was, as I said, the faithlessness and duplicity of James the First of England. He did not support them in spite of the fact that the fate of his daughter hung in the balance, and by May of 1620 the local bishop of the Catholic Church was fully aroused and word had been sent to Madrid, and the Hapsburgs raised an army and laid siege to Prague. In the summer of 1620 the Winter King and Queen were driven from Prague, the city fell to Catholic forces, the alchemical presses were smashed and Michael Maier, who was like the prime minister of this scene, was murdered in an alley of Prague and the entire alchemical dream went down the drain. Frederick was killed in the siege of the city and Elizabeth escaped to The Hague where she lived in exile for many years.

Until recently I thought that was the end of the story, but there is a coda that is amusing, if nothing else. In that Hapsburg army, there was a young soldier of fortune, only 19 years old, still wet behind the ears, knowing nothing, happily soldiering and wenching his way around Europe while he decided what to do with himself. His name was René Descartes, a Frenchman. Descartes in his later years reminisced about his period as a soldier in this army, and I like to think that it was actually Descartes who murdered Maier. One of my ambitions is to write a play or a novel where these two confront each other in a back alley of burning Prague and carry on a debate about the future of Europe before Michael Maier falls to the sword of Descartes. That may be apocryphal, but what is not apocryphal is that this Hapsburg army, having laid siege and destroyed the alchemical kingdom, began to retreat across Europe that fall and by mid-September was camped near the town of Olm in southern Germany. By a strange coincidence, Olm is the birthplace of Einstein some hundreds of years later. On the night of September 16, 1620, Descartes had a dream, and in this dream an angel appeared to him — this is documented by his own hand — and the angel said to Descartes, “The conquest of nature is to be achieved through measure and number.” That revelation laid the basis for modern science. René Descartes is the founder of the distinction between the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa*, the founder of modern science, the founder of the scientific method that created the philosophical engines that created the modern world. How many scientists, working at their workbenches, understand that an angel chartered modern science? It's the alchemical angel which will not die. It returns again and again to guide the destinies of nations and peoples toward an unimaginable conclusion.

That's not the last time that this angelic intervention in the history of science has occurred. Some of you may know the story in the 19th century of Kekulé, the German chemist who was struggling with the molecular structure of benzene, couldn't get it straight, and then had a dream in which he saw the ouroboric snake take its tail in its mouth, and he awoke from that dream with the carbon ring burning in his mind. Well, the hexagonal form of the carbon ring is the basis for all organic chemistry, and I mentioned earlier Faraday and Helmholtz and the rise of the electromagnetic field. The point I'm trying to make is that however rational we may assume ourselves to be, however rational we may assume modern science to be, it is all really founded on angelic revelation, demonic intercession and an extremely mysterious relationship between the human mind and the world of what science calls inert matter, which from this point of view is revealed to be not inert at all but alive and pregnant with purpose for mankind.

There were a series of adumbrations of this kind of thinking. Many of you may know about the history of Freemasonry and the many Freemason revolts in Bohemia and Bavaria throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Adam Weishaupt and the Illuminati are another effort to do this, and even the Royal Society, founded by Newton and Hook, was still an effort to redeem science for the spirit. The alchemical spirit lives on; it never really died, it's just that it has taken peculiar forms in our own day. I mentioned last night that when you enter into nuclear chemistry the most literal dreams of the profane side of alchemy, the transformation of lead into gold, have actually been achieved. It has no economic significance because the instrumentality to do it costs tens of millions of dollars but nevertheless, yes, lead in our time has been changed into gold.

Audience: To take you back to the Voynich Manuscript for a minute, there was this thing about it being a liturgical manual of some sort. Is that your opinion of it?

Yes, this is kind of a footnote on all of this. Remember how I said that Kelley's entree to Dee was that he had a mysterious book? You can tell from what I've said already that Dee was as big a sucker for books as I am. Kelley's story was that he had gone to sleep in the ruins of a Northumbrian monastery and slept in an open sepulcher, a crypt of some sort, and when he awoke he found beneath him two things: a vial of red powder which he said was the transmuting powder, a necessary part to the alchemical opus, and a book in an unknown language which he called the Book of Saint Dunstan, possibly because this monastery had been dedicated to Saint Dunstan. Now, Arthur Dee was John Dee's son. He became an alchemist in his own right, and he said that when he was growing up he recalled that his father spent many hours puzzling over a book, as he put it, "All covered with hieroglyphiks," but Dee, who elaborated the angelologic language called Enochian, never actually wrote about or discussed the book that he had received from Kelley. It is definitely not written in Enochian. Enochian, when grammatically analyzed by computers, has a curious relationship to 16th century English. When Dee and Kelley traveled to Europe they were talking up Roger Bacon, who was a 14th century English monk who had dabbled in alchemy, and they claimed to have Bacon manuscripts. Rudolf became very interested in this and wanted to obtain some of these Baconian manuscripts. I suspect that what happened was that Dee, by this time, had given up on deciphering the Book of Saint Dunstan and decided that he would palm it off on the emperor as a Bacon manuscript. He didn't want to give up a real Bacon manuscript because they were too valuable to him, so for 600 gold ducats this thing changed hands and Kelley, Dee and Jane were able to pay their bills. Rudolf had immense resources because of his position as Emperor and he brought his cryptographers and decipherers in to work on this Book of Saint Dunstan and got nowhere.

Then when Rudolf died a mysterious book was numbered among the artifacts of his estate, and I think we

can assume that it's this book. One of the interesting things about this book is that it has pages and pages of plant drawings, over 150 watercolors of plants, each carefully labeled and captioned in this unknown language. If you know anything about decipherment, this is what a decipherer dreams of, because if you have a picture of the thing and the caption it doesn't take too much smarts to be able to figure out what's going on. Nevertheless, this was completely unhelpful. A third of the manuscript has pseudoastrological material; in other words, what look like horoscopes and drawings of stars and stellar shells but when carefully analyzed dissolve into meaninglessness, cannot be associated with anything. Then a third of the manuscript shows little naked ladies in what can only be described as elaborate plumbing systems. It was thought at one time that these must be drawings of the humors of the body in the liver, that these little naked women represented spirits moving inside the human body. Somebody else's guess was that it must show an obscure form of German hydrotherapy, because if you've ever been to Baden-Baden or Marienbad or these places where people take the waters, those places are old, old. All this stuff is captioned and there are even tables of contents which again you would think would yield to decipherment, and so when Rudolf died, because of the botanical material in this book it passed to the court botanist, a man named Hořcický, and he got nowhere with it.

Then in the early 16th century a great alchemist and polymath, some of whose art we'll see this evening, was Heinrich Khunrath. Heinrich Khunrath was fascinated by artificial languages and he heard about the Voynich Manuscript. We have a whole bunch of letters from Khunrath to the keepers of the estate of the emperor trying to obtain this manuscript, which he finally did obtain, and then at that point he makes no further mention of it in his diaries; the conclusion being that he too could get nowhere with this thing, it just defied decipherment. In 1619, at the outbreak of the Thirty Years War — and this is what I forgot to mention in my earlier discussion: this episode of the Winter King and Queen is one way of debating the Thirty Years War. It's usually considered to be the moment when a certain personage was hurled from a third story window in Prague and then fighting broke out in the streets, but really the episode of the Winter King and Queen brought the thing to a head. Well, in 1619, to avoid being caught up in the Thirty Years War, Khunrath decided to take holy orders and become a Jesuit, and so he gave his library, which was compendious, to the monastery that he joined, which was a monastery in southern Italy. There this thing sat until 1906, when a New York rare book dealer named Wilfrid Voynich bought the entire contents of this monastic library. When he got it all back to New York and cataloged it, it was all very predictable 16th century theological and alchemical speculation, except that here was this book in an unknown language. Voynich kept it throughout his life and then when he died he gave it to Yale, and it is to this day at the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale.

In the 1960s the CIA became interested in it, because the CIA is in the business of code making and breaking. A huge amount of energy goes into this. If you know anything about the Enigma Project in World War II, you know that vast energies go into the production of unbreakable codes, and so they very systematically sought out all examples of encrypted material throughout history and just lickety-split deciphered it, one after another. All occult and magical codes known to exist in Europe can be traced back virtually to one person: Trithemius, Abbot of Sponheim, who was the great teacher of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa. All magical codes, if you know the Trithemian method, within a few hours you can get plaintext. The Voynich Manuscript did not yield at all to this method and the CIA formed a working group that for over ten years would invite scholars in to have a look at this. If you're interested in this, Mary D'Imperio, who was a great Renaissance scholar, wrote a book called *The Voynich Manuscript: An Elegant Enigma*, in which she traces the efforts of the CIA to figure this thing out and to figure out what it could be.

There the matter rested until about three years ago when Leo Levitov, some kind of military historian, one of these peculiar people who live for this stuff, got a hold of it. D'Imperio goes through all the decipherment, and there were many efforts at decipherment. There was a scholar at Yale in the '30s named Brumbaugh, who was a very respected man who ruined himself by claiming a complete decipherment of the Voynich Manuscript. The way the game is played is that you say what your rules for the decipherment are, you give the rules to a colleague and you give your colleague a page of text. If he can't translate it with your rules then you are viewed as a deluded and misguided person and your career goes down in flames. Well, the Brumbaughian method for deciphering the Voynich Manuscript had to do with confined pools of letters where it would get you to a pool of five or six letters but then you could freely choose which one you used, and critics of Brumbaugh demonstrated that you could make this thing say anything you wanted it to. Brumbaugh supported Dee's claim, he claimed that it deciphered out into a Roger Bacon manuscript that described a series of riots between the students and the Blackfriars in 1291 at Oxford at Christmastime, but nobody else could make it say that or make it say anything, so Brumbaugh disgraced himself and ruined his career.

Then there were other efforts at decipherment which I won't bore you with, but along comes Leo Levitov just four years ago. He wrote a book called *Solution of the Voynich Manuscript: A Liturgical Manual for the Endura Rite of the Cathari Heresy, the Cult of Isis*, and his great breakthrough — if you accept his translation, and I do; I know people who don't but they don't seem to have read him as carefully as I have, I think the dude has it pretty well nailed to the barn door — his great breakthrough was to realize that it's not in code. It is not an encrypted manuscript at all. It's a synthetic alphabet; yes, it's an alphabet. One of the things that baffled the CIA was that they looted the libraries of Europe and they could never find another example of what is called Voynich script, and this was just baffling. How could there be no other example of this script? It appears that what happened was that someone created a synthetic alphabet, and then in a mixture of medieval polyglot Flemish with a huge number of loan words from Old French, Middle High German and Swedish, wrote down a sacramental manual for the dying in the Cathar sect.

Now, what is the Cathar sect? You're probably familiar with something called the Albigensian Crusade. This was not a crusade carried on against the infidel for the recovery of Jerusalem but rather a series of military actions carried out by the pope against communities in Southern France in the early 1200s. These people were Cathars as far as we can tell, and we can't tell much because we only have descriptions of Cathars written by the people who were burning them at the stake. In other words, no original Cathar documents survive, we just have what they screamed out on the rack as they were being put to death by the bishops of the Church. This was a horrific incident in European history. To give you the flavor of it, the second Albigensian Crusade was prosecuted by a general of the pope named Simon de Monfort. Some of you may have visited the city of Carcassonne in Southern France, which is a very beautiful walled medieval city. Simon de Monfort's lieutenants came to him and they said, "We have cornered the Cathars at Carcassonne, but the problem is that there are 6,000 Catholics within the city walls," and he said, "Kill everybody; God will recognize his own." So that was the spirit in which this thing went forth, and they did, they did.

What we do know about the Cathars is that they had a sacrament. Well, first let me tell you a little bit more about them. At first it was thought that they were pretty much heterodox Christians. They were into nudity and vegetarianism; they sound like early hippies, as far as we can tell. They got together, men and women, they took off their clothes, they bathed; whether there were orgies or not we don't know. They were vegetarians, and the one thing that we do know is that they had a sacrament called the consolamentum.

When you were dying, a fellow Cathar would cut your wrists and open your veins in a warm bath of water and you would die in that state, you did not die a natural death. This was called the consolamentum. What Leo Levitov is claiming is that the Voynich Manuscript is a description, a manual for the Perfecti of the Cathar sect, telling how to properly carry out the consolamentum. I see no reason to challenge it. Even with my limited knowledge of German, once you get the vowel and letter assignments into this weird language and change it into English alphabetic text, you can see that there's enough German there and then these loan words in Flemish and so forth; it looks to be true.

What emerges from this, if we accept the Voynich Manuscript as the only primary document on the Cathar faith, is that this was not a form of heterodox Christianity at all, it was much more radical than that, and this may explain the Church's fury at this group of people. It was a cult of Isis. It can be traced straight back into the mystery religions of Io, Isis in Egypt, and I have not seen any critical commentary on Levitov's work. His book was published by this weird press in Redondo Beach that specializes only in books on military encryption. Their catalog is a revelation to see, it's amazing, and the book on the Voynich Manuscript stands out like a sore thumb because most of it is dictionaries of three letter words in Swahili and their numerical transforms and stuff like that. So that's the history to date of the Voynich Manuscript, and it's not that askew of our subject because all of this heterodoxy in Europe blends together.

The presence of Theodore de Bry as an alchemical printer in Heidelberg may be a clue, because there were survivals of this Cathar faith in the form of a heresy called the Brotherhood of the Free Spirit. If any of you are familiar with the altarpiece called *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch, it's thought that this was created by commission for a congregation of the Brotherhood of the Free Spirit. The Brotherhood of the Free Spirit was always associated for some reason, we don't know why, with printers. Printers seem to be the profession that the Brotherhood favored, and like the Cathars they practiced ritual nudity, vegetarianism and gathering together in a ritual bath. There is much still to be learned and to be teased apart in the art history and the history of heterodox thinking in Europe, of which alchemy is seen to be one facet of a faceted gem that includes the Brotherhood of the Free Spirit, early Freemasonry, Cathars, survivals of Manichaeism, Bogomils in Yugoslavia — there are Bogomil graves on the southern coast of Thessalonica — and just a whole zoo of intellectual systems that have been forgotten and overlooked. This what I meant when I said that we will explore the stratigraphy of lost thought systems. In some cases we possess quite complete skeletons, in the case of alchemy. What we possess in the cases of the Bogomils and the Cathars is almost a foot bone or a tooth or a footprint but someday, with luck, new textual material will emerge and a new understanding of the role of heterodoxy in the formation of modern thought will emerge.

Audience: I've just finished the *Born in Blood* book on Freemasonry that's recently been published, and this person is a Medieval English historian from Kentucky. I think he's finally solved the Freemason history, which is a very interesting history because the Masonic historians themselves have been arguing for a couple hundred years. It's strange that this Voynich Manuscript should be all of a sudden resolved in the last couple of years, because it seems that this Freemason thing is also resolved.

Yes, you make an interesting point. John Glavis brought me an article yesterday. We're all tied up now in this Pluto return. I'm not an astrologer but John brought me an article that's talking about how, I don't know if it's the last time or the time before last that the Pluto return occurred, is precisely the 1490s, the period that we're talking about when the *Corpus Hermeticum* was translated. We are now in a period that is astrologically exactly equivalent to that period, and the Voynich Manuscript appears to have been

accepted. You mentioned this revelation about the true nature of Freemasonry, and of course what is going on at the moment — that is askew of our subject but tremendously exciting and relevant to the idea of lost knowledge coming to light — is that this is the golden moment in Mayan studies.

It is happening right now, day by day, minute by minute. The logjam has been broken. The Mayan glyphs are being deciphered, no shit, and it has to do with an entirely new approach that some Russian linguists have taken. It will never happen again so far as I know; there are now, with the Mayan decipherment, no real undeciphered languages left. Harappan was deciphered a few years ago, but really it wasn't that interesting because we only possess about 6,000 characters in Harappan. But the literature of the Maya, when you take not only the hieroglyphic, the stone texts, but when you add in the ceramic texts, we have a lot of Mayan material and it is being deciphered at a furious rate. If you're interested in this, Linda Schele has written a book called *A Forest of Kings* and how I do envy this woman because what she is doing is writing the first history of the Maya in a thousand years. We're not now dealing in the realm of gods and myths, we're dealing with stuff like, "On the 29th of April, 562, an army from Caracol met an army from Tikal and triumphed and deposed Double Bird and placed on the throne..." It's this kind of stuff, real history. The conceits of Mayan religion and Mayan courtly life are all coming into focus and it's very exciting. All the people who have tried to make the Maya into some kind of Atlantean civilization should be running for cover at this point, because the picture that emerges is not as pretty as we might wish, but, hey, know the truth and the truth will set you free. I would choose truth over illusion anytime, no matter how damaging it might be to somebody's conceptions of these things.

If any of you are interested in these subjects, some of you may know the book by John Chadwick called *The Decipherment of Linear B*. Linear B is a proto-Minoan language and a linguist at Cambridge named Michael Ventris, a genius, deciphered this language in the '50s. There was no Rosetta Stone, this is the amazing thing. You know what I mean by a Rosetta Stone? You see, in the 19th century the great mystery was how to read the Egyptian hieroglyphs. Before they were deciphered, the Egyptians were treated like the Maya and people thought that the secrets of the universe were chiseled on those obelisks and tombs. Then a soldier in the grand army of Napoleon found a tablet which had a column of Demotic, a column of Ancient Greek and a column of Egyptian hieroglyphs, and they were able to realize that it was saying the same thing three times and that opened it up for them; but that's like a crib sheet, it's easy if you have the same text in a known language. In the case of the Maya, in the case of Linear B and in the case of Harappan, there was no Rosetta Stone, so then it's an excruciatingly difficult problem to solve. I'll explain how it was done with the Maya because it's so neat.

It turns out that Mayan is a rebus language. What does this mean? Do you remember how, when we were kids, in comic books there would be these things where it would show a picture of an eye, and then it would show a picture of a saw going through a piece of wood, and then it would show a picture of an ant, and then it would show a picture of a red rose? This is a sentence which says, "I saw aunt Rose." Now notice what's going on here. It all depends on puns that depend on a knowledge of the spoken language. If you lose the sounds of the spoken language, how the hell could you ever tell that a picture of an eye, a saw, an insect and a rose says, "I saw my maternal relative on my mother's side"? It's absolutely impossible in that situation to reconstruct meaning unless you have sounds. How do you recover the sounds of a language dead a thousand years? Well, these Soviet linguists had the good sense to go and look at living Mayan languages, of which there are 15 in the Americas, and they discovered one of these dialects where, when you set Mayan hieroglyphs in front of these people and they named what they saw, meaning came out of their mouths. That broke the logjam and then you just rev up your computers and use all the standard tools

of modern linguistics and philology and the stuff begins to just pour out, clear as day, no problem.

Audience: So they asked the Mayans?

Yes, they had to go to a Mayan. You're right, good point, it had never occurred to them, because always before when showing it to Mayans they would say, "What does it mean?" instead of, "What do you see here?" and then what they said they saw. Their meaning came out of their mouths, it was very neat. It shows once again the hubris of modern scientific methods; we tend to dismiss the aboriginal and the primitive. To turn it toward my own favorite subject, this was the state of modern medicine. Nobody would ask the native in the Amazon Basin, "What plants do you use for malaria, brain tumors, shrinkage?" and so on and so forth, because they were just dismissed as superstitious primitives. It was thought that the doctrine of signatures was operating. They didn't realize how subtle and how complete human knowledge systems grow under the care of those to whom it really matters.

The project of the redemption of spirit from matter turned into the project of redeeming the general society of the time toward a utopian vision. This is working right up to the present. Millenarianism is still with us. Marxism is the last great millenarian faith, the belief in the worker's state. It occupies the same relationship to these alchemical utopias as Heideggerian existentialism has to 2nd century Gnosticism. The poetry has gone, the baroque imagery has been stripped away, but the impulse is still toward a perfect society where, "From each according to his ability to each according to his needs." It lives on. Democracy is also an effort, let us not forget, to recapture the style of 5th century Athens. We forget that this was a city-state half of whose inhabitants were slaves, and yet we are so under the spell of the utopian dream that we continue, and not without important reason, to try to labor toward a just and decent world where the lion lies down with the lamb. That was and remains the alchemical dream.

Flashbacks of my life: I majored in history in college, and the first history teacher that I had was a wonderful old man who really, now that I look back on it, taught the history of ideas. My major was involved with politics and all of this kind of thing, and it's such a wonderful experience to suddenly get back to what turned me on to history. It gets me turned on and opens my mind again, looking at some of these thoughts that I'd just forgotten or suppressed, put down and said, "That's bullshit," as a traditionally trained scientist and so on. It opened my eyes to the fact that we can learn from what's gone on before. The ideas are out there, we just have to grasp them and apply them, and I am interested in how we make this more meaningful for the future.

I once, in one of these revelatory dialogues with the Logos, asked the question, "Why me? Why are you telling me this?" because I was a poor hippie, I was penniless, I was a traveler; and the answer was instantaneous. It was, "Because you don't believe in anything," and I think that that's a very pure position to hold. We're not trying to ensnare you to abandon your Jewishness or your Presbyterianism or belief. If you believe in something then you have precluded the possibility of believing in its opposite and you have hence limited your freedom. Everything is to be judged by its efficacy, by its effectiveness in the real world, and I think that I have a horror in all belief systems, I just don't like them. If somebody tells you that he has the answer, flee from this person, they are obviously some sort of low being who has not recognized the true size and dimension of the cosmos that we're living in. If you can keep yourself free of encumbering beliefs then your dialogue with the Logos can go forward unhindered.

Sometimes when I'm in the trance of psilocybin I will say to the entity, "Begin to show me yourself as you

are for yourself. Don't give me the scaled-down, humanized version, show me your true nature," and after a few moments of this then I have to raise my hand and say, "Enough, I can't handle more than that." This goes back to the statement made yesterday or the day before about how the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it's stranger than we can suppose; therefore we are given tremendous latitude in what we can think and what we conceive, but if you begin to believe in something then you are pulled down, because everything that you believe has consequences. A perfect example: as some of you may know, when Mohammed ascended into heaven from the site of what was to become the Mosque of Omar, from the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, he happened to be on horseback. Now if you believe that Mohammed ascended to heaven, imagine the theological and hermeneutic problems posed by the horse he was riding, because it went with him. This is a perfect example of how intellectual baggage drags us down, because belief always contains absurdity. The ontological status of this horse has troubled Islamic theologians for centuries. If they would just let go of the whole idea complex they would be liberated from this kind of minutia. Belief kills the spirit, spirit transcends belief.

Then someone asked about Bruno and Dee; since I suggested that you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition it's ironic that so little time was spent on Bruno. On the other hand, I recommended that you read the book, so you should be well informed on Bruno. We just didn't get into that particular historical episode because I wanted to tell you about the Rosicrucian Enlightenment, but the thing to remember about Bruno is his discovery of the infinitude of the cosmos and that by an act of unencumbered observation — I mean, how many people had looked at the night sky before Bruno and had not seen what he saw, which was infinite space and suns hung like lamps unto the utmost extremes of infinity? By an act of pure cognition, he was able to destroy an entire cosmological vision that had limited and confined the human soul for millennia. That's half of his story. The other half is that he was burned at the stake for refusing to back down from this. It's a model for us all: trust your perception, trust your intuition and then accept the consequences, because this is what existential validity must be.

As far as the relationship between Dee and Bruno, the relationship is that they were both derivative of the magical school that can be traced back to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, who was another model for Faust. Agrippa wrote *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres*, three books of occult philosophy, and that was the core work for European magic. All European magic can be traced back to the Agrippan system. Agrippa was the direct student of the Abbot Trithemius of Sponheim, who we mentioned yesterday as the source of all the magical codes of the Middle Ages. If you're interested in a brilliant but fictional treatment of John Dee and Giordano Bruno, I'd like to recommend a novel to you. It's called *Ægypt*. It's by John Crowley, the same gentleman who wrote *Little, Big*, which is a wonderful novel about the magical interface between two worlds. In his book *Ægypt*, fully half of the book is given over to a wonderfully rich retelling of the relationship between Bruno and Dee. Some people have wanted to say that Dee and Bruno actually crossed physical paths in London, but I've looked into it and they missed each other by about two weeks. Bruno was setting sail for England as Dee was setting sail for France and the Rosicrucian Enlightenment episode that I talked about.

Then someone asked about tantra and the contrast between the imaginative internalized invocation of the anima or the animus, depending on your own sexuality, and that contrasted with something which actually happens between two people. We didn't talk that much about the concept of the Chemical Wedding or the alchemical marriage, but this is the Western resonance to the Eastern idea of tantra and it is the idea that sexual energy, being the rawest and most accessible energy to the organism, can be channeled into a higher spirituality. It's entirely so, the problem is that of all paths this is probably fraught

with the greatest difficulty because sexuality is such a debased coinage in the modern world. In other words, you have to make your way with great care and great purity of intent into this. In Eastern tantra that is actually practiced in this physical manner there is usually the admonition that you should have no attachment to your tantrica, that the relationship should be entirely given over to the technical details of this union, and of course it has to do with the forestalling of orgasm and the raising of energy within the organism.

In the Chemical Wedding, in the alchemical marriage, due honor is given to the importance and uniqueness of the other person. In other words, it isn't the idea of the temple prostitute who serves as the vessel for this process, but there's actually an effort to keep individual identities and individual dignity in some sense together. The higher up the mountain you go the steeper it becomes, and when you begin to scale the heights of alchemical or tantric sexuality the fall back into the nigredo can be shocking indeed. That's just an admonition, it's not designed to scare you off, it's just to say that in an age as sexually obsessed as our own, you have to, as the I Ching says, "Inquire of the oracle once again if you have purity of intent."

Audience: Isn't there also a healing between the two?

Yes, it's a complete alchemical system and the energy is passed between. This is probably the highest completion that is possible. The ideal of romantic love was introduced into Europe in the 1100s and earlier at the Poitiers Court of Eleanor of Aquitaine by troubadours. Scholarship now reveals pretty convincingly that this troubadour tradition is an esoteric Sufi system. It also occurs in Indian teachers such as Chaitanya, the guy that the Hare Krishnas go back to. The radical teaching of Chaitanya was that you could achieve ecstasy not by sitting in yoga but by dancing and singing on street corners. It's now pretty clearly shown that the penetration of Sufi ideas into Bengal was happening at the same time that these Sufi ideas were coming across from North Africa and into Spain and Southern France. So it's a tremendously old and vital tradition, but you have to be very careful. The romantic impulse is a real double-edged sword. It has been ever since the early 19th century, because the rise of romanticism — as that term is normally understood, meaning the movements in art and literature of the early 19th century — was a response to the dehumanization that was going on at that time, the rise of industrialism and the further retreat into cities more massive than any that had ever been built before.

Audience: I wanted to add, the question was about healing, and I think there's a tremendous difference between the Indian and Tibetan tantric systems. All this practice in Taoism is in terms of single copulation and dual copulation. In the Taoist system, self-healing is of paramount importance before you can even consider dual copulation. Dual copulation is then begun, then again other considerations come in, but the Indian and Tibetan systems where Dakinis and various deities are invoked in the process of their alchemical union is really quite different from the Taoist system, which is devoid of belief in gods.

That's a good point. I talked yesterday about the alchemical stages; when you have reached the albedo, the final whitening of these processes, that final whitening is, from a higher perspective, a new nigredo, and you must always build and build again. So you have to be fairly confident that you have already realized a certain portion of yourself before you embark upon these tantric double experiments. A lot of tantric text reads as very vampirical; it's all about expelling the semen and then sucking it back in, and it's like an energy war. It turns into black magic. The losing partner in these deals is just left a withered husk, and this is not a higher completion to be sought for.

Audience: You're correct. There are supposedly, whether they're myths or documented, stories about one Chinese empress who caused the deaths of more than a thousand men because of her vampirism, and it was sexual in nature.

Just a couple of other points here. The gentleman here who had nothing to comment reminded me, since we were talking about the Valentinian system this morning. My favorite archon, besides Sophia, who's so interesting because of the little story about how she made the universe, but the 12th archon in the Gnostic system is a unique entity. I don't know of another religious system that has this notion. The 12th archon in the Valentinian system is called the Watcher. That's all he does. He does not input into the system at all but is the witness, and somehow this creates a validating dimension that is very important. I just want to affirm that the Watcher is a very strong platform on which to stand. I mean, would that I could learn to keep my mouth shut; would that we all could. So the Watcher is a good archon to keep active on your inner altar.

If you extrapolate all that has been said here then you should see that — remember how I said that one view of alchemy was that the alchemist inter-vened in natural process in the role of a catalyst? For those of you who aren't chemists, a catalyst is something that causes a chemical reaction which is going on anyway to proceed at a faster rate, but the catalyst is not consumed in this process, it simply accelerates it. If we think of nature as a great alchemical furnace that continuously produces and brings forth wonders, then must it not be that humanity is the yeast of the Gaian alchemical rarefaction and that human history is the process of catalyzing the alchemical condensation? If we look back into nature, before the advent of speaking and writing human beings in the last 15,000 years, what we see are very leisurely processes. The speciation of a single plant from another can occupy fifty or sixty thousand years, it never happens more quickly than that; and the grinding down of glaciers from the poles, these are processes that take hundreds of thousands of years.

With the advent of human beings, an entirely new ontos of becoming is introduced into the entire cosmos — as far as we know, because we cannot verify that there are other self-reflecting beings in the universe — and this new ontos of becoming is what I call epigenetic, as opposed to genetic. All other change in the living world, in the world of bios, of zo^oe, occurs through genetic change, random modification of the genome which is then subject to random selection, but with the advent of speech and writing epigenetic processes become possible and time accelerates. One way of thinking about what is happening in this cosmos is that it is a gradual conquest of dimensionality by becoming or process, we hardly have a word inclusive enough.

The earliest forms of life were probably slimes on certain kinds of clays, self-replicating molecular systems, and then certain portions of this chemistry became light sensitive, and then there was the sense of the division of light and darkness which generated the notion of here and there on some tremendously basic level within these early organisms. Once you have the concept of here and there, motility, the ability to move, the cilia that dot the surface of protozoans and stuff like this are elaborated and a new dimension enters the picture, the dimension of time, because notice that a journey from here to there is a journey from now to then. Then as more refined perceptual apparatus and more refined systems of moving animal bodies arose, a steady conquest of dimensionality occurred, the movement of animals onto the land and so forth.

Then with the advent of memory — and memory must be mediated by language except at a very crude,

instinctual level — memory is a time binding function. It's a way of somehow taking the past and calling up its essential properties so that they are copresent with the given moment of experience. It's one thing at the level of the song and dance of preliterate peoples, but once you begin to chisel stone and write books then you're into the epigenetic domain in a big way. Once you cross the threshold into the world of electronic media, once you achieve powered flight, once you can hurl instruments outside of the solar system, these are time binding functions. The alchemical intent, recall, was to accelerate nature's intent toward perfection, and the alchemists all believed that nature was growing toward a state of unity and perfection, that given millions and millions of years everything would turn to gold, everything would find its way toward the Plotinian One.

Now we live in a world that appears to be on the brink of its own death or extinction, and the reason we make that assumption is because our bridges are burning behind us. We see no way back to the world of the hunting and gathering pastoralists of the high Paleolithic or the Saharan grasslands. We see no way back to the Gothic piety of a Europe with under 30 million people in it. Our bridges are burning, and our religions — Islam, Judaism, Christianity — the major Western religions persistently insist that we are caught in a tightening spiral of ever-increasing speed that is carrying us toward an unimaginable confrontation with something which they call God, the Second Coming, the messiah, you name it. As coolheaded a rationalist as Arnold Toynbee, when he sat down to write *A Study of History*, finally had to face the question, "What is history for?" and the best he could come up with is that history must be about the entry of God into the domain of three-dimensional space.

Well, we don't know what God is. Let's not call it God, let's call it the philosopher's stone, let's call it the Sophic Hydrolith, and I believe that the chaos of our world, the apocalyptic intuition that informs our religions and our dreams is because ahead of us in time, and now not that far ahead of us in time, is something which, taking a page from the mathematical concern called dynamics, we can call an attractor. The attractor lies ahead of us in time. Universal process is not driven by a downward cascade of Cartesian casuistry. That's the scientific notion and it leads to a universe of entropy and heat death millions of years in the future, but what we see around us is a continuing and accelerating complexification as human beings, machines, ecosystems, the solar system itself is beginning to knit itself into a tighter and tighter organization. I believe that alchemy provides the best metaphors for understanding this. Nature is the great alchemist par excellence and we, as its minions through history, are accelerating the condensation of being toward the unimaginable so that in my system, my way of thinking, there's ultimately a symmetry break with ordinary history. I call it all kinds of different things, but here this morning: the transcendent Other.

The transcendent Other casts an enormous shadow across the lower-dimensional landscape of time. The stirring of the earliest life forms in the Devonian seas caught the call and every step that has been taken since then has been ever quicker toward the transcendental Other. It beckons us, and history is haunted by this thing. History is the shock wave of eschatology. History is a process that lasts, let's be generous, 25,000 years, the wink of an eye in geological time. In that 25,000 years religious rise and fall, governmental systems, teachers come and go, and there is a sense of being caught in a whirlpool that is spinning us toward fusion with the unimaginable. This is why the skies of Earth are haunted by flying saucers. They aren't coming from other solar systems, they are scintillas — remember this alchemical term, sparks — they are scintillas being thrown off from the alchemical quintessence which lies like a great attractor at the end of time. The purpose of science and techne and electronic media and information transfer and all of this stuff is to knit us together, to dissolve our boundaries and to bring us to a point of singularity where language fails, where we lean over meaning's edge and feel the dizziness of things unsaid.

This lies now, I believe, within our lifetimes. Within the lifetime of most of us this is actually going to break through. I'm like one of those people carrying a sign that says, "Repent, for the end is near." It's as nutty a position as you can possibly hold. That's why I suspect it has a reasonable chance of being dead on. That is the point of talking about alchemy and this melding, the production of the quintessence and all that. It is because we are a gnat's eyelash away from a full confrontation with the transcendent Other. Our dreams are haunted by it, our reveries are filled with it. If we take a psychedelic drug, it's revealed before us in all its splendor. This is the force that is pulling us inexorably toward completion.

I remember once in a psilocybin trance I expressed concern about the state of the world and the nous spoke, the Logos spoke, and it said, "No big deal, this is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars." We are in the birth canal of a planetary birthing process, and as you know, if you come upon a birth in progress you would never dream that this is the culmination of a natural process. It looks like a catastrophe of some sort. There is moaning and groaning and screaming and thrashing and blood is being shed and there is a feeling that the walls are closing in, and yet it is scripted into each of us as a microcosmic reflection of the completion of human history — and not only human history — because we are simply the hands and eyes of all life, all process on this planet.

The Gnostics believe that the earth is like an egg and that a moment will come when the egg must be split asunder. I love to quote the Grateful Dead, "You can't go back and you can't stand still. If the thunder don't get you then the lightning will." That is what we are being funnelled toward, that is the message of alchemy. That is the quintessence and perfection of the human enterprise, the biological enterprise. I like to recall the Irish toast, "May you be alive at the end of the world," and we have a real crack at it. It's not a pessimistic vision. It's the most optimistic vision that one can suppose, and I think that's where I'd like to leave it this morning.

Original Transcription by: [mysterium]

Review 1 by: transcendentalobject [July 22nd, 2017]

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Terence McKenna--Lectures on Alchemy Well, it is a small group and this was my intent by focusing on the Hermetic Corpus and alchemy. I've just gotten tired of talking about psychedelic drugs and always saying the same things over and over again, nevertheless it's a challenge to go outside my own ballywick. I mean I've had an interest in hermeticism and alchemy since I was about 14 and read Jung's psychology and (of) alchemy and it opened for me the fact of the existence of this vast literature, a literature that is very little read or understood in the modern context. The Jungians have made much of it, but to their own purposes and perhaps not always with complete fidelity to the intent of the tradition. We'll talk a lot about the Jungian approach but there are other approaches even within the 20th century. I believe, since I don't have the catalog I'm not absolutely certain, but I believe the catalog urged you to read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition by Dame Frances Yates and this is, though Frances Yates scholarship is very controversial, I think that to get an overview of the landscape her book is probably the best single book between covers. It's not pleasing to some factions and we can talk about that, I mean, we will probably discover within the group all strains of alchemical illusions and delusions that have always driven this particular engine, but I thought to get one book that sort of covered the territory that was a good one to

start with. Well then I found out that it's very hard to get this book. I didn't realize that because it's been sitting on my shelf for years. Richard Bird found a reprint at the Bodhi Tree. I wasn't aware of this particular edition so, though probably none of you brought it with you in heavily underlined form, if after this weekend you want to try and get it, it is available and if you can't get that edition, why, a good book service can probably come up with the first edition which is Routledge Kegan Paul. I wouldn't hold a weekend like this simply to go over a body of ancient literature if I didn't think it had some efficacy or import for the modern dilemma and some of you may know the song by the Grateful Dead in which the refrain is "I need a miracle every day." I think any reasonable person can conclude that the redemption of the world, if it's to be achieved, can only be achieved through magic. It's too late for science. It's too late for hortatory politics. Well, it's very interesting - every ancient literature has its apocalypses and in the hermetic literature there is a prophecy, I think it's in book two but that really doesn't matter, and the prophecy is that a day will come when men no longer care for the earth and at that day the gods will depart and everything will be thrown into primal chaos and this prophecy was very strongly in the minds of the strains of non-Christian thought that evolved at the close-at the centuries of closure-of the Roman Empire. When you look back into historical time it's when you reach the first and second centuries after Christ that you reach a world whose psychology was very much like the psychology of our own time. It was a psychology of despair and exhaustion. This is because Greek science which had evolved under the aegis of democratian atomism and Platonic metaphysics had essentially come to a dead end in those centuries. We can debate the reasons why this happened. An obvious suggestion would be that they failed to develop an experimental method and so everything just dissolved into competing schools of philosophical speculation and a profound pessimism spread through the Hellenistic world and out of that pessimism and in the context of that kind of universal despair which attends the dissolution of great empires a literature was created from the first to the fourth centuries after Christ which we call the Hermetic Corpus or in some cases the Trismegistic Hymns. Now this body of literature was misunderstood by later centuries, especially the Renaissance, because it was taken at face value and assumed to be at least contemporary with Moses if not much older. So the Renaissance view of Hermeticism was based on a tragic misunderstanding of the true antiquity of this material and there are people, hopefully none in this room, who still would have us believe that this literature antedates the Mosaic Law, that it is as old as Dynastic Egypt. But this is an indefensible position from my point of view. In the early 16th century two men, a father and son, Issac and Marik Casaubon, showed through the new science of philology, that this material was in fact late Hellenistic. Now, I've always said that I am not a Classicist in the Viconian sense, in the sense that there is a certain strain of thought that always I want to believe that the oldest stuff is the best stuff. This is not the case to my mind. To my mind what is amazing is how recent everything is. So I have no sympathy with the fans of lost Atlantis or any of that kind of malarkey because to me what is amazing is how it all is less than 10,000 years old. Anything older than 10,000 years puts us into the realm of an aceramic society relying on chipped flint for it's primary technology. What the Hermetic Corpus is is the most poetic and cleanly expressed outpouring of ancient knowledge that we possess. But it was reworked in the hands of these late Hellenistic peoples and it is essentially a religion of the redemption of the earth through magic. It has great debt to a tradition called Sevillian which means to mean Mandeism and Mandeism was a kind of proto-Hellenistic gnosis that laid great stress on the power of life, Zoa, Bios, and in that sense it has a tremendously contemporary ring to it. We also are living in the twilight of a great empire, and I don't particularly mean the American empire, I mean the empire of European thinking created in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern industrialism, the empire, in short of science. Science has exhausted itself and become mere techni. It's still able to perform its magical tricks, but it has no claim on a metaphysic with any meaning because the program of rational understanding that was pursued by science has pushed so deeply into the phenomenon of nature that the internal contradictions of the method

are now exposed for all to see. In discussing alchemy especially we will meet with the concept of the *coincidentia apositorum*-the union of opposites. This is an idea that is completely alien to science. It's the idea that nothing can be understood unless it is simultaneously viewed as both being what it is and what it is not and in alchemical symbolism we will meet again and again symbolical expression of the *coincidentia apositorum*. It may be in the form of a hermaphrodite, it may be in the form of the union of soul and Luna, it may be in the form of the union of Mercury with lead, or with sulphur, in other words alchemical thinking is thinking that is always antithetical, always holds the possibility of by a mere shift of perspective its opposite premise will gain power and come into focus. I think it was John, when we went around the circle, who mentioned his interest in shamanism. There's a wonderful book called *The Forge and the Crucible* by Mircea Eliade in which he shows that the shaman is the brother of the smith, the smith is the metalurgist, the worker in metals, and this is where alchemy has its roots. In a sense, alchemy is older than the *Trismegistus Corpus* and then it is also given a new lease on life by the philosophical underpinings which the *Corpus Hermeticum* provides it. Alchemy, the word alchemy, can be traced back to mean Egypt or a blackening and in its earliest strata it probably refers to techniques referring to dying, meaning the coloring of cloth, and gilding of metals, and the forging and working of metal. I mean, we who take this for granted have no idea how mysterious and powerful this seemed to ancient people and in fact it would seem so to us if we had anything to do with it. I mean how many of us are welders or casters of metal. It's a magical process to take for instance cinnibar, a red, soft ore and by the mere act of heating it in a furnace it will sweat liquid Mercury onto its surface. Well, we have unconsciously imbibed the ontology of science where we have mind firmly separated out from the world. We take this for granted, it's effortless, because it's the ambience of the civilization we've been born into but in an earlier age, and some writers would say a more naive age, but I wonder about that, but in an earlier age mind and matter were seen to be alloyed together throughout nature so that the sweating of mercury out of cinnibar is not a material process, it's a process in which the mind and the observations of the metalworker maintain an important role, and let's talk for a moment about mercury because the spirit Mercurius is almost the patron deity of alchemy. You all know what mercury looks like-at room temperature it's a silvery liquid that flows, it's like a mirror. For the alchemists, and this is just a very short exercise in alchemical thinking, for the alchemists mercury was mind itself, in a sense, and by tracing through the steps by which they reached that conclusion you can have a 2 taste of what alchemical thinking was about. Mercury takes the form of its container. If I pour mercury into a cup, it takes the shape of the cup, if I pour it into a test tube, it takes the shape of the test tube. This taking the shape of its container is a quality of mind and yet here it is present in a flowing, silvery metal. The other thing is, mercury is a reflecting surface. You never see mercury, what you see is the world which surrounds it, which is perfectly reflected in its surface like a moving mirror, you see. And then if you've ever, as a child, I mean I have no idea how toxic this process is, but I spent a lot of time as a child hounding my grandfather for his hearing aid batteries which I would then smash with a hammer and get the mercury out and collect it in little bottles and carry it around with me. Well, the wonderful thing about mercury is when you pour it out on a surface and it beads up, then each bead of mercury becomes a little microcosm of the world. And yet the mercury flows back together into a unity. Well, as a child I had not yet imbibed the assumptions and the ontology of science. I was functioning as an alchemist. For me, mercury was this fascinating magical substance onto which I could project the contents of my mind. And a child playing with mercury is an alchemist hard at work, no doubt about it. Well, so then, this is a phenomenon in the physical world and then mind is a phenomenon in the Cartesian distinction, which is between the *Res Extensa* and the *Res Verins*. This is the great splitting of the world into two parts. I remember Al Wong once said to me, we were talking about the yin yang symbol, and he said you know the interesting thing is not the yin or the yang, the interesting thing is the s shaped surface that runs between them. And that s shaped surface is a river of alchemical mercury. Now, where the alchemists saw this river

of alchemical mercury is in the boundary between waking and sleeping. There is a place, not quite sleeping, not quite waking, and there there flows this river of alchemical mercury where you can project the contents of the unconscious and you can read it back to yourself. This kind of thinking is confounding to scientific thought where the effort is always to fix everything to a given identity and a given set of behaviors. Now, the other hermetic perception that is well illustrated by just thinking for a moment about mercury is the notion, and this is central to all hermetic thinking, of the microcosm and the macrocosm. That somehow the great world, the whole of the cosmos is reflected in the mystery of man, meaning men and women, it's reflected in the mystery of the human mind/body interface. So, for an alchemist, it makes perfect sense to extrapolate from this internal, what we call internal psychological processes, to external processes in the world. That distinction doesn't exist for the alchemist, and let me tell you, the longer I live the more I am convinced that this is absolutely the truth. The myth of our society is the existential myth that we are cast into matter, that we are lost in a universe that has no meaning for us, that we must make our meaning. This is what Sartre, Kierkegaard, all those people are saying, that we must make our meaning. It reaches its most absurd expression in Sartre's statement that nature is mute. I mean, this is as far from alchemical thinking as you can possibly get because for the alchemist nature was a great book, an open book to be read by putting nature through processes that revealed not only its inner mechanics, but the inner mechanics of the artifex (person performing experiment)-the person working upon the material, in other words, the alchemist. Well, in other contexts I've talked about the importance of language and how our world is made of language and part of the problem in understanding alchemy is that the language is slipping out of our reach. We are so completely imbued with the Cartesian categories of the Res Verins, the world of thought, and the Res Extensia, the world of three dimensional space, and causality, and the conservation of matter and energy, and so forth that in order to do more than carry out a kind of scholarship of alchemy we have to create an alchemical language, or a field in which alchemical language can take place. Some of you may have been with me a couple of weeks ago in 3 Malibu when Joan Halifax and I debated the roots of Buddhism and I think Joan deserves great credit for saying that Buddhism would never have taken root in America were it not for the psychedelic phenomenon. Not that Buddhism is psychedelic, it in fact is fairly touchy about that, but Buddhism would have gotten nowhere in America had not psychedelics created a context for Buddhist language to take root, And I wager that I would never have gotten to first base with proposing a weekend on alchemy at Esalen were it not understood that psychedelics have prepared people for the notion that mind and world can be pureed together like mercury and sulphur, like the Sophic waters, to create a new kind of understanding because otherwise modernity has fixed our minds in the category of Cartesian rationalism and so I will not claim, and do not in fact think it's so, that there was anything overtly psychedelic in the sense of pharmacologically-based about alchemy. When we look back through the alchemical literature there's very little evidence that it was pharmacologically driven. Only when you get to the very last ademptions of the alchemical impulse in someone like Paracelsus do you get the use of opium. But it is interesting that the great drugs of modern society were accidentally discovered by alchemists in their researches; distilled alcohol is a product of alchemical work and then, as I mentioned, opium was very heavily used by the Peracelsian school. But what they possessed was an ability to liquify their mental categories and then to project the contents of the mind onto these processes and read them back. Now this is what made alchemy so fascinating to the Jungian school because the Jungians were discovering the unconscious and they realized, before Jung's involvement with alchemy, that the best material for psychotherapy to work upon was dreams and mythology and these were the two poles of the data field that the discovery of the unconscious was working on. Well then Jung had the prescience to realize that alchemy, which to that point, as the gentleman over here said, had been dismissed as a naive effort to turn base metals into gold-this is the first fiction that you have to absolutely purge from your mind, the only alchemists who ever tried to turn base

metals into gold were charlatans, the so-called puffers. They were called that not only for their exaggerated speech but for their use of bellows to drive their fires. Alchemy has always had a core of true adepts and then a surround of misguided souls and outright con artists who were trying to change base metals into gold. Now, it's interesting that science, in its naivety, in the 20th century has actually completed the program of pseudo-alchemy. You can, if you have a sufficiently powerful nuclear reactor, change lead into gold. I mean, the cost is staggering. It has no economic importance whatsoever but it can be done by bombarding gold with a sufficient amount of heavy particles. Lead, you can change it into gold, but this is not what the original intent was. In fact, when we look at the history of 20th century science we will see that, in a way, it's a misunderstanding of what the alchemical goals were to be and, one by one, it has done these things that were stated goals of the alchemists except that the alchemists always spoke in similes and in a secret control language that was symbolic. O.k., now, another point that was brought up in going around the circle was the externalization of the soul and what we're trying to do in this weekend is study and talk about the idea of redeeming the world through magic. And how is this to be done? Well, the philosopher's stone is a complex of ideas that, no matter how you divide it, no matter how you slice it, it's very difficult to hold the pith essence of this concept, but what it really comes down to is the idea that spirit is somehow resident in matter in a very diffuse form. The goal of hermetic thinking and later alchemy is the concentration and redemption of this spirit, a focusing of it, a bringing of it together. This is an idea that was common in the Hellenistic world not only to hermetic thinking but also to Gnosticism. Gnosticism is the idea that somehow the pure, holy, real light of being was scattered through a universe of darkness and of Saturnine power and that the goal is that by a process which we can call yogic or alchemical or meditative or moral/ethical, the light must be gathered and concentrated in the body and then somehow released and redeemed. All esoteric traditions, East and West, talk about the creation of this body of light and we will not, in this weekend, talk very much about alchemy, non-western alchemy, Taoist and Vedic alchemy, but in those 4 systems too the notion is about the creation of this vehicle of light. This is one metaphor for the externalization of the soul. The philosopher's stone is another and I will challenge you to try and imagine what the achievement of the philosopher's stone would be like because it's in trying to think that way that you begin to dissolve the categories of the Cartesian trap. So, imagine for a moment an object, a material, which can literally do anything. It can move across categorical boundaries with no difficulty whatsoever. So what do I mean? I mean that if you possess the philosopher's stone and you were hungry, you could eat it. If you needed to go somewhere you could spread it out and sit on it and it would take you there. If you needed a piece of information, it would become the equivalent of a computer screen and it would tell you things. If you needed a companion, it would talk to you. If you needed to take a shower you could hold it over your head and water would pour out. Now, you see, this is an impossibility. That's right, it's a *coincidentia apositorum*. It is something that behaves like imagination and matter without ever doing damage to the ontological status of one or the other. This sounds like pure pathology in the context of modern thinking because we expect things to stay still and be what they are and undergo the growth and degradation that is inimical to them, but no, the redemption of spirit and matter means the exteriorization of the human soul and the interiorization of the human body so that it is an image freely commanded in the imagination. Imagination. I think this is the first time I've used this word this evening. The imagination is central to the alchemical opus because it is literally a process that goes on the realm of the imagination taken to be a physical dimension. And I think that we cannot understand the history that lies ahead of us unless we think in terms of a journey into the imagination. We have exhausted the world of three dimensional space. We are polluting it. We are overpopulating it. We are using it up. Somehow the redemption of the human enterprise lies in the dimension of the imagination. And to do that we have to transcend the categories that we inherit from a thousand years of science and Christianity and rationalism and we have to re-empower and re-encounter the mind and we can do this psychedelically, we can do this

yogically, or we can do it alchemically and hermetically. Now there is present in the world at the moment, or at least I like to think so, an impulse which I have named the archaic revival. What happens is that whenever a society really gets in trouble, and you can use this in your own life-when you really get in trouble-what you should do is say "what did I believe in the last sane moments that I experienced" and then go back to that moment and act from it even if you no longer believe it. Now in the Renaissance this happened. The scholastic universe dissolved. New classes, new forms of wealth, new systems of navigation, new scientific tools, made it impossible to maintain the fiction of the Medieval cosmology and there was a sense that the world was dissolving. Good alchemical word-dissolving. And in that moment the movers and shakers of that civilization reached backwards in time to the last sane moment they had ever known and they discovered that it was Classical Greece and they invented classicism. In the 15th and 16th century the texts which had lain in monasteries in Syria and Asia Minor forgotten and untranslated for centuries were brought to the Florentine council by people like Gemistos Placo(sp?) and others and translated and classicism was born-its laws, its philosophy, its aesthetics. We are the inheritors of that tradition but it is now, once again, exhausted and our cultural crisis is much greater. It is global. It is total. It involves every man, woman and child on this planet, every bug, bird and tree is caught up in the cultural crisis that we have engendered. Our ideas are exhausted-the ideas that we inherit out of Christianity and its half-brother science, or its bastard child science. So, what I'm suggesting is that an archaic revival needs to take place and it seems to be well in hand in the revival of Goddess worship and shamanism and partnership but notice that these things are old-10,000 years or more old-but there was an unbroken thread that, however thinly drawn, persists right up to the present. 5 So the idea of this weekend is to show the way back to the high magic of the late Paleolithic, to show that there were intellectual traditions, there were minority points of view that kept the faith, that never allowed it to die. And, to my mind, this alchemical, hermetic, Gnostic, Egyptian, Caldean thread is the thread and if we unravel it with sufficient care and attention then we can build a bridge from the otherwise nearly incomprehensible high magic of the late Paleolithic. We can get it as near to ourselves as John Dee, who died in 1604. We can discover that it's no further away from us than the beginning of the 30 years war and, for my money, after that, it gets pretty mucked up. I mean, after Ulias Levy, who's already waffling, I'm not very interested in the occultism of the 17th, 18th and 19th century but it's not necessary because scholarship gives us the Caldean oracles, the Trismegistic Hymns, the library at Nag Hammadi, and so forth and so on. So my impulse is to, in the most austere sense, repopularize, reintroduce this kind of thinking so that people can live it out. Then, step, by step, we can evolve our language and evolve our understanding to make our way back to the garden, back to Eden. It's occurred to me recently, you know it's said that Christ opened the doors to paradise, yes, but he closed the doors to Eden and paradise is a very airy place where everybody sits around on clouds strumming their lyres. I think that what we want to do is make our way back to the alchemical garden. That's where our roots are. That's where meaning is. Meaning lies in the confrontation of contradiction-the coincidentia oppositorum. That's what we really feel, not these rational schemas that are constantly beating us over the head with the "thou shalt" and "thou should." but rather a recovery of the real ambiguity of being and an ability to see ourselves as at once powerful and weak, noble and ignoble, future-oriented, past-facing. We each need to become Janus-based(?) and to incorporate into ourselves the banished contradictions of being that so haunt the enterprise of science. We can leave that behind and when we do we reclaim authentic being. And authentic being, make no mistake about it, is what alchemical gold really is. That's what they're talking about-authentic being. (question from the group): So right now we're lead? That's right, we're Saturnine and we'll talk about Saturn and Pluto and all of that. Yes, tomorrow we'll talk about the stages of the alchemical opus and though the stages are many and multifarious, it all begins in what is called the negro, the blackening, the depths of the leaded, Saturnine, chaotic, fixed place. And that's where we have been left by science and modernity and so forth

and so on. That's where the alchemist loves to begin. That's where he or she stokes the fire and begins the *dissolucio et coagulatio* that leads to the appearance of the stone. I'll show you some books and this is by no means exhaustive. The literature on hermeticism and alchemy is vast and I could have brought 5 or 6 boxes of this size from my own library. This a smattering. It doesn't mean that what I show you is the best. It simply tries to spread over a large area. Oh, someone put this here. This is a new novel that's just been published by Lindsay Clark called *The Chemical Wedding* and I see last week it was number 10 on the New York Time's best sellers list which is astonishing for such an obscure subject. It's a retelling of a famous incident in alchemy in the 19th century when a woman named Mary Alice Datwood, who had a very, very close relationship to her father, Dr. South, and the two of them worked together, she on a text, he on a long poem and to make a long story short, eventually they decided to destroy both the poem and the book feeling that they had said too much and given the secret away—at least that's one version. So this is fictionalized retelling of that incident intercut with a modern cast of characters very clearly modelled on the poet Robert Graves. So if you like to absorb your information in a fictionalized form, this is a wonderful book. John Borman the movie director recently optioned this book—the guy who made "The Emerald Forest" and "Excalibur" so we may have an alchemical movie downstream, a year or two. 6 A number of compendiums of alchemical texts have been published over the centuries and if you wish to study alchemy you have to obtain these. If you're fortunate enough to read French you should read Vesputiare and Berthelo. They collected alchemical texts into encyclopedic-sized volumes but unfortunately these have never really come into English. One that did come into English is the *Museum Hermeticum Amplificarum et Theatrum*, I think, which A.E. Waite, who some of you may know for his role in the Golden Dawn, collected. There are about 40 alchemical texts and all the greats are in here: Lull, Vilanova, Michael Maier, Basil Valentine, Kramer, Edward Kelly and so on and so forth. The place to begin, I think, is obviously with the question "Who is Hermes Trismegistus?" What are we talking about here? I mean, this sounds so incredibly exotic to people. The Renaissance had the concept of what it called the *Presqui Poaloque* (sp?) and if my Latin and Greek irritates you, you have to understand you're dealing with a boy from a coal mining town in Colorado, so I do mangle these things. The *Presqui Paoloque* were Orpheus, Moses, and primarily Hermes Trismegistus. Hermes Trismegistus was the primary source, from the point of view of the Renaissance, of this whole mysterious tradition and, you recall from last night's lecture, this is based on a misunderstanding. The Renaissance believed that Hermes Trismegistus was older than Moses. We know now, thanks to Issac and Marik Casaubon, two philologists of the early 17th century, that definitely the Hermetic corpus was composed between the first and second centuries after Christ. The method of the Casaubons was to examine the philosophical language of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and show that there were words and phrases there that were post-Platonic and derivative of philosophers whose dates we have fully in hand. Now, if you go to an occult bookstore you will find that, to this date, this error persists. There are people who still want to claim that this stuff is older than dyanstic Egypt. There are even books, I was in Shambala weeks ago, claiming to teach you how to change lead into gold. Well, from my point of view this just evokes a small smile. The old errors persist. The Puffers are still at it. But what Hermes Trismegistus is is a character who appears in many guises in these hermetic dialogs. The hermetic hymns are usually couched in the form of dialogs between Hermes and his son Thoth and Thoth takes the position of the uninitiated ingenue who is sitting at the feet of the master. Thoth asks questions: what is the true nature of the world, what is the true nature of man, and Hermes answers and the general form of these texts, with exceptions, because there are 20 of them, is an intellectual dialog which builds to an ecstatic revelation and then in the wake of the ecstatic revelation there is a hymn of praise to Hermes Trismegistus. Trismegistus means thrice-blessed and is sometimes called Hermes Triplex to distinguish this Hermes from all the other Hermes of early, middle and late Greek thinking. Hermes is of course the messenger god, the god of scribes. The reason this Ibis-headed being holding a staff is

embossed on the cover of each of these books is because this is how Hermes Trismegistus, Thoth Hermes was imagined. He was associated with the scribe god of the Egyptian pantheon. The two distinguishing factors that stand out, at least for me, that I think you need to incorporate into your thinking about hermeticism, two very important concepts. The first is the divinity of human beings-an extraordinarily radical idea in the context of late Hellenistic thinking. We all operate under the spell of the concept of the fall of man. Man is an inferior being, errors were made in the Garden of Eden and that we are far, far from the nature of divinity. All magic, and all magic in the West is derivative from this tradition, takes the position that man is a divine being, men and women are divine beings. The Corpus Hermeticum actually refers to man as God's brother and this is a double-edged perception. It gives tremendous dignity to the human enterprise but it also raises the possibility of the error of pride and hubris. 7 In the Renaissance, Marcello Ficino boiled this notion down to the aphorism "man is the measure of all things." And you may notice that this is the position of science, that man is the measure of all things, that it is up to us, we can decide the course of the cosmos. All magic stems from this position. This is why the church was so concerned to stamp out magic-because it assigns man an importance that the church would rather reserve for deity. So that's the first great division between Christian thinking and hermetic thinking. An entirely different conception of what human beings are and when we get into the text, I'll read you some of these passages. Now, the second distinguishing factor, and notice that position on man empowers tremendous freedom, man is the measure of all things, the second distinguishing factor in hermeticism is the belief that we can control fate, that we can escape from cosmic fate. The late Hellenistic mindset, and what you get in the Gnostics, is the belief that because of astrology, because of the stars, we are subject to control from these exterior forces. In most Gnostic thinking the whole concern is to somehow evade what is called the hemarmeny (sp?), cosmic fate. And in the Gnostic systems, the only way it can be done is by ascending through the shells of cosmic, ordering forces-the archons, the planets, the planetary demons, and so forth and so on, and then beyond the hemarmeny, which is actually thought of as a place in space that you burst through when you transcend fate. What the hermetic thought is is that these fates become personified as the decans, as stellar demons, and then it is held that there is a magic, a magical system, which is possible where you can call these archangels to your side and work with them and not be subject to the inevitable working of the cosmic machinery and this burst like a revelation over the late Hellenistic world because there was such philosophical and emotional and political exhaustion that this comes, this is a counterpoint to the message of the New Testament, which is a similar message, that you can be saved in the body, that you can escape the inevitable dissolution and degradation laid upon us by time. So, these are the two distinguishing factors: the divinity of man and the possibility of using magic to evade the machinery of fate. So, I want to read some of the Corpus Hermeticum to you to give you the flavor of it, but before I do, I want to say something about the history of these texts. You're all familiar, more or less I'm sure, with Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, which is a novel of initiation which is late Roman. Apuleius also put together what is called the *Asclepius* and the *Asclepius* is true hermetic literature that was not lost. It was the only one that was available throughout the Dark and Middle ages. All the rest was lying untranslated in Syrian Monasteries until Gemistus Plethon in 1490 brought these manuscripts to Florence, to the court of the Di Medici and then the translation project began. The only other hermetic material that was accessible throughout the high Gothic period was a book of magic called the *Picatrix*. And the *Picatrix* was probably written in the 1200's although this elicits screams of dissent from the burning-eyed faction. But reason dictates that we consider *Picatrix* 12th century so only the *Asclepius* and the *Picatrix* represented this strain of thought before the 1460's. And the importance of hermetic thinking can be seen by the fact that Gimistis Platho brought Plato to the Florentine council as well as Hermes Trismegistus. And when Marcello Ficino sat down to do this translation work Cosumo Di Medici said "Plato can wait, I'm getting old. You do the Hermetic Corpus first. That's much more important. We'll sort out this Plato business in a

few years." And so it was done. It was completed in 1493 and in 1494 Cosimo died so he never saw the translations of Plato but felt that the Corpus Hermeticum was more important. I mention this to show you the importance that was attached to this stuff. Here is one of the key passages on man's nature. This is from Book one of the Corpus Hermeticum: "But mind the father of all, he who is life and light gave birth to man, a being like to himself and he took delight in man as being his own offspring for man was very goodly to look on, bearing the likeness of his father. With good reason then did God take delight in man for it was God's own form that God took delight in and God delivered over to man all things that had been made." This is the basis of the Ficinian statement man is the measure of things. "And 8 man took station in the Maker's sphere and observed the things made by his brother who was set over the region of fire. And having observed the Maker's creation in the region of fire he willed to make things for his own part also. And his father gave permission having in himself all the workings of the administrators." This is a reference to the angel hierarchy "And the administrators took delight in him and each of them gave him a share of his own nature." So man is the brother of God and a creature at home with the angels. This idea is echoed in the Asclepius which you'll recall was available throughout the Middle Ages. "The range of man is yet wider than that of the demons" meaning the angels - this term is transposable in its hermetic thought "The individuals of the human kind are diverse and of many characters. They, like the demons, come from above and, entering into fellowship with other individuals they make for themselves many and intimate connections with all other kinds" and then the famous passage "man is an honor then, Asclepius, honor and reverence to such a being. Man takes on him the attributes of a god as though he were himself a god. And he is familiar with the demonkind for he comes to know that he is sprung from the same source as they. And strong in the assurance of that in him which is divine, he scorns the merely human part of his own nature. How far more happily blended are the properties of man than those of other beings. He is linked to the gods inasmuch as there is in him a divinity akin to theirs. He scorns that part of his own being which makes him a thing of earth and all else with which he finds himself connected to by heaven's ordering he binds to himself with the tie of his affection." So this is an incredibly radical conception of what it means to be human. So radical that it is unwelcome even in the present context. Notice the modern feeling of this stuff. This is not biblical rhetoric. This is philosophical discourse as we know it and carry it out ourselves. This is a passage on the adept and initiation. Let me see who's speaking here, Thoth speaks to Pimondres, this is book one, "But tell me this too, said I, God said 'let the man who has mind in him recognize himself' but have not all men mind?" And then Pimondres replies " Oh man, said mind to me speak not so, I even mind come to those men who are holy and good and pure and merciful and my coming is a succor to them and forthwith they recognize all things and win the father's grace by loving worship and give thanks to him praising and hymning him with hearts uplifted to him in filial affection." Again the reference to being God's brother in filial affection. "And before they give up the body to death which is proper to it they loathe the bodily senses knowing what manner of work the senses do." This introduces the theme of asceticism. Like the Gnostics, there is in much of hermetic literature a kind of horror of the earth, a desire to ascend and to get away from it. Scott makes the distinction between what he calls pessimistic Gnosis and optimistic Gnosis. And within the 20 texts of the Corpus Hermeticum you get vacillation on this point. In some cases the Mandaean, the Cebian(?) tendency is there and the world soul is invoked and the whole of creation is seen as a living being involved in this soteriological process, this process of salvational mechanics through magic. In other texts this Gnostic horror of matter is strongly stressed. It's very clear that the Hellenistic mind was ambivalent on this point. Even as we are ambivalent on this point. It's a real question, are we here to be the caretakers of the earth or are we strangers in the universe and is our task to return to a forgotten and hidden home no trace of which can be found in the Saturnine world of matter. It's very hard to have it both ways. You're going to have to take a position on that and these people were forced into the same dilemma. There's no middle ground between those two

positions and so that dichotomy, that conundrum, haunted a lot of hermetic thinking. Here is the hermetic creation myth. This is book three, paragraphs one through a few, and you'll see the comparison and similarities with the Christian creation myth but with extraordinary differences. "There was darkness in the deep and water without form and there was a subtle breath, intelligent, which permeated the 9 things in chaos with divine power. Then, when all was yet undistinguished and unwrought, there was shed forth holy light and the elements came into being. All things were divided one from another and the lighter things were parted off on high, the fire being suspended aloft so that it rose unto the air and the heavier things sank down and sand was deposited beneath the watery substance and the dry land was separated out from the watery substance and became solid. And the firey substance was articulated with the gods therein and heaven appeared with its seven spheres and the gods, visible in starry forms, with all their constellations and heaven revolved and began to run its circling course riding upon the divine air. And each god by his several powers set forth that which he was bidden to put forth. And there came forth four-footed beasts and creeping things and fishes and winged birds and grass and every flowering herb, all having seed in them according to their diverse natures for they generated within themselves the seed by which their races should be renewed." And then it goes on to describe the birth of man. This kind of thinking is what alchemy seized upon in it's ambitions. One way of thinking of what alchemy came to attempt is, the thinking went like this - since man is God's brother, the purpose of man is to intercede in time and it was believed that ores, precious metals and things like this grew in the earth. It was a thorough going theory of evolution that reached right down into the organic realm. It was thought that gold deposits in the earth would actually replenish themselves over time. It's passages like this that give permission for that kind of thinking. In line with that, we're now in book four and remember the tone changes slightly from book to book, they were, after all, written over a 300 year period by various people. "You must understand that God is pre-existent, ever existent, and that he alone made all things and created by his will the things that are. And when the creator had made the ordered universe, he willed to set and order the earth also and so he sent down man, a mortal creature made in the image of an immortal being, to be an embellishment of the divine body for it is man's function" - here it comes, the purpose of man according to book four - "for it is man's function to contemplate the works of god and for this purpose he was made, that he might view the universe with wondering awe and come to know its maker. Man has this advantage over all other living beings, that he possess mind and speech. Now speech, my son, God imparted to all men but mind he did not impart to all. Not that he grudged it to any, for the grudging temper does not start from heaven above, but comes from being here below in the souls of those men who are devoid of mind." This introduces the concept of an elect, or a perfectee, a heirarchy of human accomplishment and understanding and this is also basic to Gnosticism. It's not for everyone, they're saying, it's for the pure of heart and what pure of heart means depends on the school you're looking at. For some, it was mathematical accomplishment. For others, it was contact with the logos, for others it was the ability to resist the temptations of the senses. But there was always the sense of the higher and lower possibilities within the human experience. Questions? I'm still back in the last lecture we shared on plant intelligence. So I'm listening to all this divinity of man and wondering where the position of the plant realm or the planning(?) was. There was one section where you read that, so... Yes. This is the opening of book 12 and this is a heavy Mandaean sensitivity, this sensitivity to life. This whole cosmos, and notice how this transcends even the Buddhist point of view because in Buddhism plants have no soul, this is a tremendous failure in the Buddhist perception as far as I'm concerned, o.k., this is book 12 - " Now this whole cosmos, which is a great god and an image of he who is greater and is united with him and maintains its order in accordance with that will, is one mass of life and there is not anything in the cosmos, nor has been through all time, from the first foundation of the universe, neither in the whole, nor among the several things contained within it that is not alive. There is not, and has never been, and never will be in the 10 cosmos, anything that is dead. For it was the father's

will that the cosmos, as long as it exists, should be a living being and therefore it must needs be a God also. How then, my son, could there be dead things in that which is a God, in that which is an image of the father, in that which is one mass of life. Deathness is corruption and corruption is destruction. How then can any part of that which is incorruptible be corrupted or any part of that which is a God be destroyed." And there are other passages. Ah, this is a good one. This is book 18, "For as the sun, who nurtures all vegetation also gathers the first fruits of the produce with his rays as it were with mighty hands, plucking the sweetest odors of the plants, even so we too, having received into our own souls, which are plants of heavenly origin, the efflux of God's wisdom must in return use his service for all which springs up in us." Now, this conception that the human soul is a plant is a unique idea. I don't know of another tradition, Those of us who were in Ojai heard Johannes Wilbur(sp?) talk about how, among the Amazon Indians, the wural(sp?), men actually marry trees. They actually take trees as their wives, a tree, and it is a man's job throughout his life to take care of this tree with the same tenderness and affection which he lavishes on a living wife. This is a more radical conception than that. This is the conception that the most important part of us is a plant. It reminds me of the joke that I occasionally make in these groups, the notion that animals are something invented by plants to carry them from place to place. Well, according to this, that's right on. So, the sensitivity to the vegetative nature is so great that it raises the plant to be the pith essence, the soul of man, the brother of God! So you see the valuation of the vegetative universe is of an extremely radical type. The upper echelon of humanity that was given the mind, was that predetermined at birth or can someone develop a mind? No, it is not predetermined. It is something that is acquired through cultivation of a relationship to, in the hermetic language, nous, the higher mind, and in the Gnostic language logos, the informing spirit. Nothing is predetermined in the hermetic system because through magic we can overcome the energies of cosmic fate. This is the great good news of hermeticism, that we are not subject to fate. We should probably talk a little about this logos concept. This is something which seems very alien to modern people unless they are psychedelically sophisticated. The logos was the sine qua non of Hellenistic religion and what it was was an informing voice that spoke in your head or heart, wherever you want to put it, and it told you the right way to live. You get this idea even in the later Old Testament where it's said that the truth of the heart can be known. It's no great dilemma to know good from evil, you simply inquire of your heart, "is it good or evil?" and you will discover a voice which will tell you and all the great thinkers of this Greco-Hellenistic period sought and cultivated the logos. Plato had his demon. Everyone sought the informing voice of the nous, that's what it's called in Neo-Platonism and then in hermeticism and then in Gnosticism, the logos. For modern people, well no, for me, the only way I've ever had this experience is through the presence of psychedelic substances and then it is just crystal clear, there's just no ambiguity about it. Somehow, it's possible for an informing voice to come into cognition that knows more than you do. It is a connection with the collective unconscious, I suppose, that is convivial, conversational, that just talks to you about the nature of being in the world and the nature of your being in the world. It's puzzling to us because it seems so remote, for us a voice in the head or the heart is pathology and you may know the famous story of, in the first century, some fishermen were off the shore of the island of Argos in the Mediterranean Sea and they heard a great voice from the sky and the voice said, "great Pan is dead." Well, people like Lactantius and Eusebius, these patristic fathers, the people who built Christianity, who took the Gospels and turned them into a world religion, they took this annunciation from the sky of the death of Pan as the annunciation of the change of the Aeon. 11 By the Aeon, I mean these roughly 2,000 year periods that are associated with the equinoctial procession. Do you all understand how this works? That over 26,000 years, the helical rising of the solstitial sun slips slowly from one house to another and around AD100, there's argument because these things are never precise, the age of Pisces began and the previous Aeon ceased and the cosmic machinery, the great gears of the largest scale of the cosmic machinery, clicked past a certain point and into the age of Pisces and this was then taken as very fortuitous

for Christianity because Christ was associated with the sign of the fish and it was seen as a Picsean movement. I believe that it's entirely possible that the logos in that rough moment in time fell silent and it has been silent for 2,000 years so what we have is the exegesis of text and Noetic archeology of the sort we're carrying on here. Now, a phenomenon as trivial and hyped on(?) as channeling can be seen as the reawakening of the logos. The long night of Picsean silence is ending and the spirit of nous is again moving in the world, speaking in the minds of the adepts and the heirophants who have the techniques and the will to connect with this stuff. I don't know how I got off on that. But obviously this kind of literature can be seen as the last message from the fading logos. The last statements before the change of the Aeons rendered this control language very difficult and non-intuitive and somewhat incomprehensible. Reading...you broke off, and I had a puzzlement about the use of the word mind. What, in this context, does this refer to? It's Scott's translation of this word nous. It simply means this universal, permeating intelligence. The statement there is that it is only available to an elite through... Through asceticism and desire, intent. There are proscriptions, they lived a life of purity, although their definitions of purity varied widely. Man is brother of God and yet we have to earn it. This seems kind of a denial of that. That's right. This persists right up to this moment. The quote I always love is from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Hobbes was the great theoretician of modern government and social systems and he was basically a paranoid S.O.B. and he says in the *Leviathan* "man to man is likened to an errant beast and man to man is likened to a god." It's absolutely true, you know, our noblest aspirations and our most hideously dehumanizing activities take place in the context of our relationship to other people. This is what the alchemists were trying to do - separate the gold from the dross. They were trying to take the errant beast, and when we look at alchemical art we will see dragons, dogs, pigs, we will see the errant beast and we will see the angelic beings that are trying to be separated out of our nature. This is within each and every one of us. Man to man is likened to a god and man to man is likened to an errant beast. 12 This question has to do with mind. According to my understanding of some of the Platonic tradition and Neo-Platonic thought, this has to do with the divided line in Plato. You can divide that line...into five stages of knowing. You start with the senses as being agency or avenue, knowing something about something like contact... most external form of knowledge...the level above the senses is designated as the instincts, it's an inactive knowing, in that sense a biologically active knowing that we have. The third stage is described as sometimes estimation, this is, an approximation(?), yes, this characterized mainly sort of logical activity and then the next level of cognitive activity is reason and this reason is not the type of reason we normally engage in, it's a very different, a very creative type of activity. Above the reason is what they call intuition or intellect or nous and that's put in as the fifth... And would that be revelation? Reason is a creative activity and one can generate and think things through with creative ability. One goes through activity and stages of the activity and things(?) transpire over time and one comes to complete understanding of the thing one is trying to grasp and sometimes that's described as discursive activity although the logical activity is discursive. So you're moving through a process...pieces, the nous or the intellect of the higher mind grasp things in totality. It doesn't engage in... In reseasonation(?). You raise an important point which further complicates the picture, but it's how it was, folks. The reference here is to Neo-Platonism which is a kind of parallel tradition to what we're talking about. Plato had at least a couple of phases in the evolution of his thinking. The young Plato is a rational thinker but the later Plato, apparently after he fell under the influence of Pythagorean schools, becomes a full-blown mystic and then in the late Roman empire, almost a thousand years after Plato, we have to remember, in our minds these people get squeezed together like they could all have dinner together, but Plotinus is as far from Plato as we are from King Connaught so you have to bear in mind the scale of history. But, so 900 - 1,000 years after Plato a Byzantine school of philosophy arose around Porphyry, Plotinus and Proclus as the major exponents and they worked with the late Plato and elaborated a beautiful mystical cosmology. This is what I did a workshop on here a year ago and many of

those ideas and terms parallel conceptually the stuff in the Corpus Hermeticum and if you're of a certain intellectual bent you may find yourself more comfortable with the Neo-Platonists than this. This tends to be emotional, evocative, poetic and while there's great poetry in Plotinus there's also very tight thinking that goes along with it. And there are other traditions, I'm making it simple for you, there was a whole tradition called the Caldean oracles and this was a collection of 100 or more fragments all of which were the great commentaries of Eusebius in 30 volumes. The Amblicus(?) is one of them. That's all lost, we don't have that material and it is in a way the most mysterious of these traditions because it just didn't survive and it may be that that, the Caldean Oracles is the missing link to push this stuff several centuries back into time because the Caldean Oracles may actually be pre-Platonic. There's considerable evidence of that. But these are very arcane matters. You have to give yourself over to a lifetime of learning these languages and the philology of these languages to penetrate this stuff. Neo Platonism was Byzantine, basically Constantinople. The Hermetic Corpus was largely Alexandrian. There were also Christian Platonists in Alexandria. There were certain centers: Rome, Alexandria, Byzantium, Heliopolos in Egypt was a cult site that was maintained for a very long time. If you're interested in this stuff but don't like 13 to absorb it this way, Flaubert, of all people, the Flaubert of Madame Bovary, wrote an incredible novel called The Temptation of St. Anthony in which he describes second century Alexandria in a fictionalized form and gives you a real flavor for the intellectual complexity of the Alexandrian world. Christianity had not yet gelled, it was many things, so you not only have Gnostics of five or six schools: Simonists, Valentinians, Basilideans and so forth, but you also have Christians, a numbers of cults calling themselves Christians, who were in fierce competition. Docetists, Montanists, and later Nestorians. There were Gymnosophists from India, people who were actually carrying yogic doctrines into the Mediterranean world, plus you then have all the surviving cults of the older Egyptian strata, the Cults of Isis, and Seville, and Dionysus, and Adonis, it just goes on and on. The richness of this intellectual world is very, there's nothing comparable in our experience and it shows the passion with which people were trying to understand the dilemma of a dying world because this is what they were confronted with. The intellectuals of the empire could feel it all slipping through their hands. Flaubert gives a wonderful picture of this. Flaubert has a very romantic streak. It's like smoking hashish, reading this book - the attention to fabrics, architecture, food and odor. And because the subject matter is the temptation of St. Anthony, it's an excuse to describe these temptations in all their sensual richness and erotic kinkiness. It's a wonderful way to absorb this material. Somebody else raised the point of the elitism, of an elite group of people. And if one considers a society like the one you had in Alexandria, or some of the other centers, the only people who really had access to this were first of all people who had money and who were well educated and could read so already you had an elite group... Yes, definitely. What survives from a civilization is it's literatures and these literatures are usually the production of an elite. We have to remember, don't have any illusions about the Roman Empire. I always think of the wonderful description, I don't even know why it's there, Boris Pasternac, in Doctor Zhivago, goes off on a riff about Rome and he describes it as a bargain basement on three floors. This was an empire that lived by human cruelty. It was on the backs of slaves that this airy, intellectual speculation was based. It was a tremendously pluralistic society but that pluralism was maintained by standing armies of enormous size and policies of occupation of enormous cruelty. Because of our relationship to the Christian tradition we're aware of such things as the Zealot revolt of 69 and the reign of Herod Antiochus in Jerusalem, but that was just one little corner of the empire and in Armenia, in Gaul, in Spain, in North Africa, military governments were carrying out outrageous suppressions of native populations, it was not a pretty time to be alive. And what comes down to us then is the yearning to escape. No wonder these people saw the earth as a cesspool and a trap because that's what it was for them. Our own age is very similar. We do not have slavery but we suffer under propaganda -mass manipulation of ideas and the degradation of exploitation of the third world on a scale the Roman

Empire couldn't even dream of. So, there is a great affinity. If any of you are interested in this kind of thing, I highly recommend a book by Hans Jonas called *The Phenomenon of Life*. It's a book of philosophical essays but there's one essay called "Gnosticism and the Modern Temper" in which he shows that once you take Gnosticism and dump all the angels and all the star demons and all the colorful bricabrac of late Roman thinking what you have is a thorough going existentialism completely compatible with Jean Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, and the kind of intellectual despair that characterized the post WWII generation in Europe. Heidegger is thorough going Gnostic in his intentionality, it's just that the language is modern and stripped of this magical thinking and by being stripped of this magical thinking in a way modern, the modern resintion(?) of that state of mind is even more hopeless and disempowering. Fortunately, I think we're moving out of the shadow of that, but I'm 44 years old, I grew up reading those people and it made my adolescence much harder than it needed to be. I mean, my god, there wasn't an iota of hope to be 14 found anywhere. That's why, for me, psychedelics broke over that intellectual world like a tidal wave of revelation. I quoted to you last night Jean Paul Sartre's statement that nature is mute. Now I see this as an obscenity almost, an intellectual crime against reason and intuition. It's the absolute antithesis of the logos and much of our world is ruled by men, older than I am, who are fully connected into that without any question and they just think that the rest of this is just namby pamby ecological softheartedness of some sort. There is no openness to the power of Bios, to the fact of a living cosmos. This is what Rupert Sheldrake is always trying to say. The reinvestiture of spirit into matter, the rebirth of the world soul is a necessary concomitant to what we understand about the real nature of the world. In a way, the theory of evolution, which was born in the 1850s, was the beginning of the turning of the tide because even though the first 100 years of evolutionary theory was fantastically concerned to eliminate teleology, eliminate purpose, nevertheless nobody ever understood that except the hardcore evolutionists. To everyone else, evolution meant ascent to higher form. I once heard someone say "if it doesn't have to do with genes, it ain't evolution." Well, that's a tremendously limited view of what evolution is. The inorganic world is evolving, the organic world is evolving and there the currency is genes but also the social and intellectual world of human beings is evolving and there the currency is not genes but means so that idea carries with it the implication of ascent to higher form and correctly broadened and understood becomes permission to optimism and to the kind of hope that these folks were trying to articulate. ...the concept of mind as something that is attainable and not necessary is a separation and therefore for me it's a lie and so I want ...I don't know, I assume there are many different definitions of mind, I don't mean functions of mind, I mean definitions of mind, and I'm toying now with the notion of meshing of the notion of mind and the notion of logos. For logos is, and it seems to me that mind is, if it is available through trial then we're back in a separation...and this is to me a false separation Yes, you're right, but it's a separation necessary for philosophical discourse, that's why philosophical discourse is not the top of the mountain. Language itself is the process of making distinctions that are false. This is why all language is a lie. This is why the ultimate truth lies in something unspeakable but the ascent to the philosophical is through this kind of philosophical analysis. Language is only the vehicle... Well it's the vehicle but eventually there's no road and you have to park the vehicle and get out and walk, and that's the journey. Plotinous, the great Neo Platonist has this wonderful phrase. He calls the mystical experience "the flight of the alone to the alone." I love this image. It's so uncompromising and it's about as true as something can be and still move in the realm of language, because it's saying: finally words fall away and finally there is only that which cannot be said. Many of you who've stuck with me know that I love to quote this poem by this obscure poet who died in the trenches in France in the first World War, Trumble Stickney, and he wrote a poem called "Meaning's Edge" and the punch line goes like this "I look over meaning's edge and feel the dizziness of the things you have not said," and I think that every one of these weekends, this is the effort - to carry you to the edge of an abyss and then push you over into the dizziness of the things unsaid and they

will always be unsaid. Wittgenstein, God bless him, had the concept of the unspeakable. He said "philosophy operates in the realm of the unspeakable but eventually we must confront that which cannot be said." The dizziness of things unsaid, and there's where real authenticity then flows back into the world of community and speech but it comes from a place of utter silence and unsayability. How could it be otherwise? What hubris would it be to expect that the small-mouthed noises of English could encompass being. That's a primary error that all philosophy chooses to make at the beginning of its enterprise in order to set up shop at all. No, these are lower-dimensional slices of a reality that is ultimately unitary, ineffable, unspeakable, and dazzling. Philosophical discourse is verbal and mental masturbation? Absolutely. Masturbation, because it's, there's a pun here, it's autopoietic, it is completely out of yourself, there is no union with the other and the other is what you're always trying to get to. The other is a common term in these literatures. The other is that which cannot be fully known. I always like to quote the British enzymologist JBS Haldane, who made a wonderful statement. He said, "the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it is stranger than we can suppose." That's a dizzying perception. It's one thing to think it's very strange. It's another thing to think it's stranger than you can suppose. You may suppose and suppose and suppose and you'll fall so short of the mark that it's absurd. That's what it means to be in the presence of a mystery. The modern word mystery translates out to unsolved problem. That's not what a mystery is. A mystery is not an unsolved problem. A mystery is a mystery and ratiocination(?) can exhaust itself and make no progress with it and that's what's at the core of our being and that was what was at the core of this ancient perception. These were thoroughly modern people. They were shoved up against the same things that tug at our hearts and our minds and our souls and beyond that there's not a whole hell of a lot that you can say about it. I just wanted to add that the idea of the earth as a living organism makes an appearance in psychology at the end of the last century with Gustave Fechner who survives in footnotes of textbooks as the father of experimental psychology. I read a book about the soul life of plants also and that whole part of his work is utterly ignored... influenced anybody but William Jameson This is an idea that will not die but its practitioners end up in footnotes. They do not have a happy fate. Certainly Henri Birkson, with his idea of the *elan vitale*, this is an effort to preserve the idea of a world soul and yet the fate of Birkson, his influence on modern philosophy is certainly minimal. Alfred North Whitehead is my great favorite. I think that he's the cat's pajamas and he has this idea of the living cosmos - that life and vitality extend right down to the electron yet in spite of his mathematical contributions, the fact that he wrote *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell, Whitehead is not taught. I think there's one university in this country where they take him seriously. Modern philosophy is a desert for my money. Who cares about it? Nobody cares about it. Who's living their life according to the perceptions of modern philosophy. Nobody, as far as I can see. But yes, vitalism was this impulse in biology that persisted right up to the 1920s with embryologists like Driesch and his school and mechanical biology has been at great pains to suppress that. That's why Rupert Sheldrake is such a breath of fresh air, because he can be seen as a person carrying the vitalist message back into science. His new book on the greening of science and nature is nothing more than a manifesto for the re-recognition of the presence of the world soul. What about the Native Americans, their philosophy? Yes, well, Aboriginal people, not only the Native Americans but the tribes of the Amazon, if you live next to nature this is such an overwhelming perception that it's never called into question. But you see we, most of us, trace our civilization to desert dwellers who invented agriculture which led to surpluses so then we had to build walled enclosures to defend our surpluses from starving neighbors and we're talking 6,000 BC at Jericho for this kind of stuff. So, we have been cut off from the natural mind longer than any other group of people on earth. This is how we're able to carry out the demonic, in the negative sense, reconstruction of the world that we have. If there is a sin then we have sinned. Robert Oppenheimer said beyond all rational argument the physicists have known sin and it's because they reached into the heart of matter without reverence and their greatest trick was to call down

the light that burns at the center of stars and they call it down to the test centers of the deserts and onto the heads of our enemies, if necessary. But this is a cosmic sin, it's an abomination. It's the story of Western Civilization. The first great error was the urbanization, well, I don't know, the first great error, the invention of agriculture was a pretty staggering bad turn, then urbanization and then a piece of bad luck which we didn't need to befall us was the invention of the phonetic alphabet. And with the invention of the phonetic alphabet we moved away from symbolism and lost even the symbolic connection to the world and that happened with the evolution of Demotic Greek and even earlier languages - linear A and B and that kind of stuff. McLuhan talks a lot about this. We live in a universe so alienated that we can barely conceive of the way back but hopefully. Archeology is a wonderful thing. We are actually digging into the stratigraphic layers of our past and reconstructing these ancient intellectual machines and setting their gears going and seeing how it works and hopefully when we recover, we're like amnesiacs, people who don't remember who they are or where they came from, we just wander mumbling through the streets of our cities foraging through garbage cans and frightening other people and yet if we could wake up, and archeology and the rebirth of an awareness of the Goddess and the pushing of science to the point where it's irrational foundations become clear - this is all part of an awakening, an archaic revival which will then make us part of the living world and not a disease, a parasitic force upon it. It struck me that one comment you read there talked about the creation of the world. It said the elements were brought forth and at first I was thinking earth, air, fire, and water but I was thinking in relationship to some other...of life that...being, life, and intellect and being, life, and intellect are what that come into manifestation from the one who pours forth the world and creates the world and those are the first elements that come into existence - being, life, and intellect. Life itself is an element of the cosmos as it were. It's an irreducible aspect of things and you're paying respect to the fact that life is an omnipresent thing in the foundation of things. It's one of the elements. I think that in one of the other things I read it said that everything that exists, that ever has been, that ever will be, is alive. I'll read a bit more of this. This refers to the theme I touched on a little bit last night of the importance of the imagination and how I think that our destiny lies in the imagination. "God is ever existent and makes manifest all else. But he himself is hidden because he is ever existent. He manifests all things but is not manifested. He is not himself brought into being in images presented through our senses but he presents all things to us in such images. It is only things which are brought into being that are presented through sense. Coming into being is nothing else than presentation through sense." This is so thoroughly modern, it's staggering. For 1,500 years people couldn't say anything that clearly. "It is evident then that he who alone has not come into being cannot be presented through sense and that being so he is hidden from our sight. But he presents all things to us through our senses and thereby manifests himself through all things and in all things and especially to those to whom he wills to manifest himself. For though thought alone can see that which is hidden inasmuch as 17 thought itself is hidden from sight and if even the thought which is within you is hidden from your sight, how can he, being in himself, be manifested to you through your bodily eyes. But if you have power to see with the eyes of the mind then, my son, he will manifest himself to you, for the Lord manifests himself ungrudgingly throughout all the universe and you can behold God's image with your eyes and lay hold on it with your hands." To my mind, this is permission for the psychedelic experience. We lay hold of the ineffable through the eyes. "If you wish to see him, think on the sun, think on the course of the moon, think on the order of the stars. The sun is the greatest of the gods in heaven. To him as to their king and overlord, all the gods in heaven yield place and yet this mighty god, greater than earth and sea, submits to have smaller stars circling above him. Who is it then, my son, that he obeys with reverence and awe. Each of these stars too is confined by measured limits and has an appointed space to range in. Why do not all the stars in heaven run like and equal courses? Who is it that has assigned to each its place and marked out each for the extent of its course." And then it goes on and on. And then here is an amazing modern anticipation of modernity. "Would that it were possible for

you to grow wings and soar into the air. Poised between earth and heaven you might see the solid earth and the fluid sea and the streaming rivers, the wandering air, the penetrating fire, the courses of the stars and the swiftness of the movement with which heaven encompasses all. What happiness were that, my son, to see all these borne along with one impulse and to behold Him who is unmoved moving all that moves and Him who is hidden made manifest through his works." This is an image of the planets seen from space. It's absolutely the unified image of our planet. It is, I think, the central image in this early hermetic thing. This is the unifying, this is as close to an image of what godhead is that they were able to reach. This is a shamanic flight that delivers a scientific description of the earth moving in space. This is written AD150. This is book five. Nobody had that in sight until we reach Giordano Bruno and if you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition you know that Bruno was burned at the stake and the reason that he was burned at the stake is because he looked up at the sky and did not see the stellar shells and the angelic hierarchies. Bruno had a mystical experience and when it was over he said, "the universe is infinite. The stars go on forever." That single statement was the intellectual dynamite that destroyed the whole Medieval, Hellenistic, the entire previous cosmological vision was left behind with that single statement. It was such a powerful statement that he had to go to the stake for that. And we have never recovered from that perception. It was a fundamental perception and it occurred because he looked without preconception into the night sky and did not see wheels and demons and angels and shells of cosmic fate and necessity and he just said, that's bullshit, what is there is infinite space, infinite time, the stars are hung like lamps onto the utmost regions of infinity. This, then, inaugurates the beginning of modernity and it's a perception that arose on the foundation of all this earlier thinking. Here's another passage on the imagination. Yes? Is the implication that there's a meditation that one does where one tries to go inside and see this universe on a cosmic scale. Is the implication that their practice was somehow... Well, the practice, we know a lot less about that because there was much secrecy around this. What we have is the philosophical discourses. When we talk about alchemy this afternoon you'll see that there the technique becomes projection onto matter. That you enter into a kind of self hypnosis where, by having what we call naive ontological categories, in other words, not being sure exactly how much of mind is in matter or how much matter is in mind, you can erase the boundary between self and world and project the contents of the unconscious onto chemical processes. What went on in the early stages we don't know. The Trismegistic Hymns are largely as you see them here, philosophical discourses. There was stress on diet and purity. Asceticism was typical of the hermetic approach. In Gnosticism it went one of several ways. There were schools of Gnosticism which were vegetarian and puristic and then, because they felt that man was no part of the universe, that man was somehow hermetically sealed, if you will, hermetically sealed against contamination from the universe, some Gnostic schools said you can do anything you want. You can have any kind of sexual arrangement you want, you can do anything you want. Do not think that you are part of the universe. And so you had Gnostic schools side by side, some orgiastic and quasi-tantric and some ascetic. There were Gnostic sects that, you see because the idea was that light was trapped in matter by the act of procreation, there were Gnostic sects that only practiced forms of sexual union that couldn't lead to union. So there were presumably exclusively homosexual sects. There were sects that only practiced anal intercourse. For them, that was the same as celibacy because the real concern was not to trap any of the light. And I don't seriously advocate this but I think that in our current situation of overpopulation a little dose of this kind of thinking wouldn't be a bad thing. Too much light is trapped in the organic matrix. And so these Gnostic sects that were, for instance, exclusively homosexual or exclusively practiced anal intercourse, of course they were suicide sects. They disappeared very quickly because they could only make converts by a missionary conversion. You didn't have children, you couldn't hand it off. It shows how thorough going their rejection of the world was, how contaminated they felt themselves to be by the material world. But you also had, as I mentioned, optimistic schools that saw nature as something to be

perfected and said, "man has been set on the earth not to reject it but to perfect it" and utopianism, the belief that one can create a perfect society, it goes back into these hermetic ideals. Because the idea was that a perfect society could be the goal of the alchemical work. Let me read you a passage from Giordano Bruno. This is a wonderful passage from the Picatrix. This was the book of 12th century magical texts that began to introduce these hermetic ideas and this passage is the core passage that inspired the Rosacrucians and numerous other utopian movements. Here is Frances Yeats, "Hermes Trismegistus is often mentioned as the source for some talismanic images and in other connections but there is in particular one very striking passage in the fourth book of Picatrix in which Hermes is stated to have been the first to use magical images and is credited with having founded a marvelous city in Egypt." And here is the passage from the Picatrix, "There are among the Caldeans very perfect masters in this art and they affirm that Hermes was the first to construct images by means of which he knew how to regulate the Nile against the motion of the moon. This man also built a temple to the sun and he knew how to hide himself from all so that no one could see him although he was within it." Those of you who are scholars in Rosicrucianism know that one of the things that was always said of Rosicrucians was that they were invisible. This was how Robert Fludd proved to people he wasn't a Rosicrucian, he'd say "you're looking at me so how could I be one?" So, he's in the temple but he could not be seen within it. "It was he, Hermes Trismegistus, too, who, in the East of Egypt constructed a city, 12 miles long, within which he constructed a castle which had four gates within each of its four parts. On the Eastern gate he placed the form of an eagle. On the Western gate, the form of a bull, on the Southern gate, the form of a lion, and on the Northern gate he constructed the form of a dog. Into these images he introduced spirits which spoke with voices. Nor could anyone enter the gates of the city except by their permission. There he planted trees in the midst of which was a great tree which bore the fruits of all generations. On the summit of the castle he caused to be raised a tower 30 cubits high on the top of which he ordered to be put a lighthouse the color of which changed every day until the seventh day, after which it returned to the first color. And so the city was illuminated with these colors. Near the city there was abundance of waters in which dwelt many kinds of fish. Around the circumference of the city he placed engraved images and ordered them in such a manner that by their virtue, the inhabitants were made virtuous and withdrawn from all wickedness and harm. The name of the city was Adocetine(sp?)." 19 Now, what we're familiar with from the Platonic literature is a quasi-rational, largely rational approach to utopian thinking that you get in the Republic. However, the students of the Republic will recall that, in the fifth or tenth book (it's the tenth), contains the myth of Er, which we went over in detail in the section I did on Neo Platonism. The myth of Er is one of the most bizarre and puzzling passages in the entire ancient literature. You remember Er was a soldier who died, he was killed in battle but after eight days he returned to life and then he told a story that is the absolute puzzlement of ancient scholars. It's highly mathematical, it has to do with the spindle of necessity and the description of some kind of cosmic machine and all the ratios of the gears of this machine are given and nobody knows what is being talked about. But here we have a different thrust. A magical utopianism and the idea of a perfected human society using magic because these engraved images that he ordered in such a manner that by their virtue the inhabitants were made virtuous, that means he was able to deflect the energies of cosmic fate. The city was immune to astrological, malefic influence. It was protected and when we talk later about the alchemical aspirations of the Rosicrucians and John Dee and Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, we'll see that this impulse toward an alchemical kingdom returns again and again. In a way, utopianism is, the four-gated city of utopian magical dreaming is one version of the philosopher's magical stone. It's a kind of diffuse idea of the philosopher's stone, but it's a society in perfect harmony with fully realized beings living within it practicing a cosmic religion that frees them from the impulses of cosmic fate. The other thing that is going on in some of this alchemical imagery is a kind of subtext of late alchemy, is what's called the *Ars Memoria*, the art of memory, and in fact, Frances Yates has a book called

The Art of Memory and this is a lost art, literally. It begins with the Roman orator Cicero and was practiced up until the early 17th century and what it consisted of was people, orators, it was considered very bad form to read your speech if you were an orator and so you had to memorize your speech and there were tricks of memory. The commonest mnemonic trick was to think of a building, it was called the memory palace, a building that is familiar to you, I've done this myself with the University of California because it's an area that I'm very familiar with because I was a student there, there are many buildings and many hallways and many floors and what you do is when you make your speech in your mind you are moving through the memory palace and at various points you construct what are called emblemata and the idea of these emblemata is that they be as unusual, shocking, and unexpected as possible in order to be memorable to you. So, say you're giving a speech about the seven deadly sins. So then luxuria might be for you a nun copulating with a dog and you'll set the nun and the dog in a little niche in the hallway of the memory palace. When you reach that place in your imaginary journey all these associations will spring to mind and you'll be able to give you speech flawlessly. To us, this sounds tortured and particular but it works quite well. One of the practitioners of the *Ars Memoria* was Giordano Bruno and he wrote a book called *Spaccio Della Bestia Trionfante*, the expulsion of the triumphant beast, and my god, Max Ernst, eat your heart out, this is a surreal epic read as straight plain text because that's not how it's supposed to be read. It's a conglomeration of these mnemonic emblemata that led him on to probably give a fairly conventional disputation on one subject or another but there are even old books of these emblemata that are before surrealism. These were some of the wildest images that the Western mind would tolerate. The one thing that we didn't get into this morning was talking about the astrological side of it. The role of the Decans. The Decans are these demons, three to a sign, so there are 36 of them, and this was thought to be an astrological conceit that went back to Egypt as opposed to the ordinary zodiacal signifiers which go back to Huran(?) in what is now modern Iraq. These Decans were the demons that were summoned by these Renaissance Magi in an effort to control and manipulate fate. You may, if you were paying attention this morning, have noticed that in all the reading I did from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, there was really nothing explicitly magical about it. It was philosophical. There was one mention, I think, of animating statues in the description of the four-gated city. But it was those magical animation passages that really captured the imagination of the Renaissance and they built on that and the idea, simply put, is that these Decans and zodiacal signs are at the center of associative schemata which include plants, minerals, odors, certain flowers, certain animals, everything had its 20 Decanic assignation and so if you were involved with promoting an affair with a woman or something like that then you would do an invocation to Venus and you would gather the associated minerals and stones and animals and you would put them in a room and then certain tonal modes were also associated with these things and so you would play the music, have the flowers present, the minerals present, the invocations and what you were trying to do was create a microcosm of the macrocosm to draw down this stellar energy. It wasn't about the classical Hollywood appearance of demons in a circle, that's the stuff of Picatrix, the earlier somewhat less refined style of magic. I wanted to read you one passage from Frances Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* because this describes this change of status of the magician that we're interested in. And also what we didn't talk about this morning was the importance of the Kabbalah, which came in quite late, that was then worked out in great detail. This was originally the idea, it was the Jewish contribution to this kind of magic, it was, the idea was that since the world had been made by Jehovah, by the speaking of words, *In Prigipio et verbum et verbo corufactum est* (?), in other words the speaking of Hebrew was thought to be a primary linguistic tool for the purposes of creation. The problem for these Italians was that very few of them spoke Hebrew so it was sometimes practiced silently, the mere constructing of these Hebrew letters and the setting out of messages in Hebrew was deemed efficacious as well. And then a further declenched(?) for people who were even frustrated with that was to channel magical languages which were

pseudo-Hebraic in structure. This is a whole branch of research, much too arcane for us to go into here. The only non-Hebraic magical language that I may mention here will be Enochian and Enochian was an angelic language channeled by John Dee and used by him in his magical evocations and later it was taken up by Aleister Crowley and the folks of the Golden Dawn. But there were many, many of these magical languages. The Voynitch(sp?) manuscript is written in one of them. But I want to read you this passage about how the Renaissance changed the status of the magician. "We begin to perceive here an extraordinary change in the status of the magician. The necromancer concocting his filthy mixtures, the conjurer making his frightening invocations were both outcasts from society, regarded as dangers to religion and forced into plying their trades in secrecy. These old-fashioned characters are hardly recognizable in the philosophical and pious magi of the Renaissance. There is a change in status almost comparable to the change of status of the artist from the mere mechanic of the Middle Ages to the refined companion of princes of the Renaissance. And the magics themselves are changed almost out of recognition. Who could recognize the necromancer studying his Picatrix in secret in the elegant Ficino, in his infinitely refined use of sympathies, his classical incantations, his elaborately Neo Platonized talismans. Who could recognize the conjurer using the barbarous techniques of some Clavis Solomonus in the mystical Pico lost in the religious ecstasies of Kabbalah drawing archangels to his side. And yet there is a kind of continuity because the techniques are at bottom based on the same principles. Ficino's magic is an infinitely refined and reformed version of neumatic necromancy. Pico's practical Kabbalah is an intensely religious and mystical version of conjuring." So now we move in this realm, these were the companions of princes and there was in that 120 years, from about 1500 to the beginning of the 30 year's war, a constant effort in various parts of Europe to try and turn parts of European society toward a kind of magical revolution. The Europe of the 11th and 12th century was entirely ruled by scholastic rationalism. Witchcraft was virtually unknown and very curious. It's the 15th and 16th centuries where you get this tremendous proliferation of magical systems, magical ideas and social hysterias related to witchcraft, alchemy, conjuring and magic. Those are the centuries when these things really broke out into the open. And alchemy in that period is basically a story of personalities, wonderful personalities, too many for us to really talk about in detail. We have Nicholas and Pernelle Flamel who sought and found the philosopher's stone, according to legend and according to legend are living to this day somewhere in central Asia in perfect happiness having achieved not only the chemical wedding but the water stone of the wise. And then we have Basil Valentine who refined red wine and distilled it in distillation apparati until he got essentially pure alcohol and upon drinking this was so sure that he had found the philosopher's stone that he announced the eminent 21 approach of the end of the world based on his discovery and he was not secretive at all. He propagated his recipes and in fact sampled the distillates of some of his brother alchemists and popularized this very widely. To this day the reason certain cognacs are in the hands of monastic orders and no one else can make these things is because they were originally alchemical secrets and many of these early alchemists were men of the cloth, quite a number of them. So what I thought I would do is, in a highly chaotic fashion, read you some of this alchemical literature. The big bring down about alchemical literature is that apparently the muse didn't always smile on the alchemist and some of this poetry is pretty tormented stuff. Why this is, who can say, but let's try one here and see if you can bear with it. Also, my Middle English is not as good as it might be. This is a short one, and typical, and you will see why the alchemists were charged with unbearable obscurity and prolex prose. This poem is called "A Description of the Stone:" Though Daphne fly from Phobeus bright yet shall they both be one And if you understand this rite you have our hidden stone For Daphne is fair and white but volatile is she Phobeus a fixed god of might and red as blood is he Daphne is a water nymph and hath of moisture store Which Phobeus doth confine and heat and dries her very shore They being dried into one a crystal flood must drink Till they be brought to a white stone which washed with with virgin's milk So long until they flow as

wax and no fume you can see then have you all you need to ask. Praise God and thankful be. This is a recipe for the production of the philosopher's stone and the author, I'm sure, felt that he'd spoken as clearly as he dare speak. And yet making something of this is no easy task. This is from the Teatrium Chemicum Britannicum and the late phase of alchemy. Here's another one: The world is a maze and what you why For sooth of late a great man did die And as he lay a-dying in his bed These words in secret to his son he said 'My son' quoth he, 'tis good for thee 22 I die for thou shall much the better be Thereby and when thou seest that life hath me bereft Take what thou findest and where I have it left Thou dost not know, nor what my riches be All which I will declare give ear to me An earth I had all venum(?) to expel And that I cast into a mighty well A water ick(?) to cleanse what was amiss I threw into the earth, and there it is My silver all into the sea I cast My gold into the air and, at the last Into the fire, for fear it should be found I threw a stone worth forty thousand pound Which stone was given me by a mighty king Who bade me wear it in a fourfold ring.' Quoth he, ' this stone is by that ring found out If wisely thou cans't turn this ring about For every hope contrary is to other Yet all agree and of the stone is mother So now, my son, I will declare a wonder That when I die this ring must break asunder The king said so, but when he said with all Although the ring be broke in pieces small An easy fire shall soon it close again Who this can do he need not work in vain Till this my hidden treasure be found out When I am dead, my spirit shall walk about 23 Make him to bring your fire from the grave And stay with him till you my riches have.' These words a worldly man did chance to hear Who daily watched the spirit but nay though near And yet it meets with him and everyone Yet tells him not where is the hidden stone. This stuff is obscure, it's deliberately obscure, it was obscure to its contemporaries and the whole effort became one of collecting this kind of material and finding it out. And you have to understand this was all circulating in manuscript, very little of this was printed. The Teatrium Chemicum Britannicum was not printed until 1652 so this was a world without vehicular transportation other than the horse and carriage and these people were paranoid of being discovered and persecuted for wizardry and witchcraft by the church. So, each alchemist working in secret, with a limited number of texts, with a local control language, created this vast conceptual patchwork of ideas and this is in large measure responsible for the obscurity of what is said. Then another factor which impinges on this and further complicates the matter is that the name of the game was projection of the contents of the imagination onto physical processes, so taking red cinnibar and heating it in a furnace until it sweats mercury, for one alchemist this is the incineration of the red salamander and the collection of aurmercurius in the great pelican. They named their chemical apparati after animals and gods and so the pelican is a standard distillation apparatus, basically a condenser on top of something which is boiled and then these materials would be collected, ground, powdered, refired, mixed with other materials, refired again and in the process these people were, we call it, and it's such a weak term, the projection of the intellect into this dimension, they were living in a waking dream and many of the recipes are designed to wipe out the boundaries between waking and sleeping. Remember I talked about the river of mercury that runs between the yin and yang? Many of the alchemical processes were of 40 days duration. Well you can imagine a hermit fearing discovery by the church, trying to keep his fires not too hot, not too cold, working day after day, night after night, eventually all boundaries dissolve and you're just living in a pure world of intellectual projection and then in the swirling of the alembic, in the chemical processes going on in the retort, you begin to be able to project your consciousness onto this. It's what we call visualization but for us it's a kind of a weak term because we are never really able to accept in the psychedelic state to transcend the belief in the inner world and the outer world being somehow separate so for us it's always separate. But they were able to wipe out that boundary. Well then, what they saw in their swirling retorts and alembics was not carbonization, calcination, condensation of various molecular weights of liquids and oils out, but rather the birth of the red lion, the coming of the eagle, the appearance of the smagdarian(can't quite make out this word) stone. They had hundreds and hundreds of these words. I didn't

bring any with me, but much alchemical literature is dictionaries. Martinus Rulando's Alchemical Dictionary is a huge book of words with special meanings in the alchemical context. So, why, why do this and what happens when you do it. Well, no matter what alchemist you're reading, there's always an agreement that there are stages in the great work. Stages in the opus, as they called it. You can't get 24 any agreement on in what order these stages come, but roughly it's something like this: most agree that it begins in the nigredo, the blackening, Arcro(?), the Saturnine world of what we would call manic depression, despair, and that Aurchaos(?), a chaotic near psychotic state of unbounded hopelessness and that is the precondition, then, for the alchemical work though the stages of the opus never occur in order. I had a dream last night that was, I think, triggered by an illustration in Fabricious(?) that I'll show you tonight but it was a classical alchemical dream. It was that I was at a country fair and its antiquity was indicated by the fact that it was happening in the school yard of my childhood and as I moved among the participants of this country fair I began to notice that they were freaky. There were people with withered arms and one side of their face slid down and so forth and so on. The whole thing began to drift toward nightmare and Richard Hermes Bird appeared in my dream as my alchemical compadre and at one point a black woman, perfect symbolism for the nigredo, a black woman with three withered arms and six or seven breasts, slid herself sideways in front of me and it was at that point that I went and found Richard and said, "I think we'd better get out of here." Now, an alchemist would greet a dream like this with great anticipation and joy and would understand that this sets the stage now for the next movement forward. Well, then accounts differ. Those of you who really want to get into this, I recommend you read *Mysterium Cunjunctio*es by Jung, the Mysterious Conjunction. He discusses the nigredo in great detail. Another symbol for the nigredo is the Senax(?), the old man, because the old man is just short of death and that's the state that the nigredo makes you feel. Then you must take this raw, chaotic, unformed material, often compared to feces, compared to corruption, compared to the contents of an opened grave, and you must cook it in the alchemical fires of contemplation, prayer, and ascetic self control and then you will move through a series of stages that are associated with colors. There is the rubado, the reddening, there is the citronitas, the yellowing, there is the veriditas, the greening, and the order in which this occurs differs according to who you follow but then there is closure at the end of the process. Most alchemists, although certainly not all, agreed that the higher state is the albedo, the whitening, the purificacio. At each stage there are substages of dissolution, *dissolutio et coagulacio*. There's one alchemical aphorism that says " *dissolutio et coagulacio*, know this and this is all you need to know." And so it's a melting and a recasting and a purifying of psychic content. So finally you reach the albedo, the whitening, the highest stage, the stage of great purity. But remember how I said last night that mercury was always the metaphor for mind in alchemy, or one of the metaphors for mind in alchemy, and I talked about its mutability and its ability to take the shape of its container and when you shatter it it then splits into many reflections. So, once you move into the domain of the albedo, the whitening, then a whole new problem arises for the alchemist. This is the problem of the fixing of the stone. Somehow the mutability of mercury must be overcome and it must be crystalized, it must be fixed so that it doesn't get away from you, so that it doesn't slip through your fingers. To achieve aurmercury is nothing unless you have the secret of the *coagulacio*. So then, there is a huge amount of effort devoted to this. What is being described is what Jungians call the individuation process. A dissolving of the boundaries of the ego, an allowing of the chaotic material of the unconscious to pour forth where it can be inspected by consciousness, and we'll see tonight when we look at this art, these images are full of ravening beasts, incestuous mother/son pairs, incestuous brother/sister pairs, hermaphrodites, all taboos are broken, this stuff just boils up from the unconscious then is sublimed through these processes and then is somehow fixed and this fixing is the culmination of alchemy and if you can bring off this trick then you possess our stone, the philosopher's stone, the lapis, the Sophic Hydrolith of the Wise, Aranius Philolithes(sp?) calls it. There were 25 hundreds of control words for naming the

secret difficult to attain. Alchemical gold, in short, this is what we're after. If you possess it, nothing else is worth anything because it is psychic completion, peace of mind, Jung called it the self. It's the self that we are trying to recover and remember we talked about the Gnostic myth of the light trapped in matter. Well this is the *luminae de luminae*, the light of light, the *lux natura*, the light drawn out of nature and condensed into a fixed form which then becomes the universal panacea. And I'm using as many of these alchemical terms as I can draw out of my memory to give you a feeling for it. This is the universal medicine. It cures all ills, you know, it brings you riches, fame, wealth, self-respect. It's the answer, it's what everyone is looking for and no one can find. So this just became a consuming passion of the 15th and 16th century mind. They thought they were on the brink of it. Along the way they were discovering stuff like distilled alcohol, phosphorous, gun powder, all of these things were coming out of the alchemical laboratories but that was not it. They kept driving themselves onward because they knew that this was not the real thing and they were pursuing the real thing. Then for some people it became reassociated with this notion of the utopia that I mentioned this morning in the passage that I read about the city of Hermes Trismegistus, they began to see, it's almost like the crisis which overcame Buddhism, it must be an archetypal, and notice how rarely we've used that word here, it must be almost an archetypal stage in human thought. Theravadin Buddhism stressed individual thought, and individual redemption through meditation on emptiness, and then with the great reforms of Nagurdjuda(sp?), the idea of Bodhisattvic compassion was introduced and there carries with it political freight. An obligation to society and mankind. So, as the 15th and 16th century progressed there began to be this awareness that what was wanted was not for an alchemist to break through, to his own personal salvation, but somehow to create an alchemical world. You get then the notion of the *multiplacio*, the idea that the stone, once created, will replicate itself and be able to change base matter into itself almost like a virus spreading through the ontological structure of matter itself and the world will be reborn and this idea then, what was happening was that these alchemists were getting bolder and printing was invented in Meins, near Frankfurt, in 1540, the distribution of alchemical books was changing the character of alchemy, it was no more the solitary hermit working away in his cave or mountaintop, far away from the minions of the church. These alchemists began to dream of banding together, of forming societies, of creating brotherhoods that were united in the sharing of their knowledge and their purpose. This brings us to the curious episode in history called the Rosicrucian enlightenment. Dame Frances Yates, once again, got there first and she wrote a book called the Rosicrucian Enlightenment which traces the history of these alchemical brotherhoods and reveals to us what they were really about and what they were about was this dream of somehow taking the philosopher's stone, and the power, the immortality, the insight that it would bring and making it a general utility of mankind and in the, one way of looking at modernity, I have one friend who claims that the summoning of the Holy Spirit into matter can be seen as the creation of the modern world of electricity. That people like Helmholtz(sp?) and Farraday were completing the alchemical work. It's very hard for us to realize how mysterious the electromagnetic field seemed to the 19th century. The 19th century had entirely imbued itself with the spirit of democratian atomism translated through Newtonian physics and they believed that everything was little balls of hard matter winging through space. When Helmholtz and Farraday and these people began to talk about action at a distance and generating the electromagnetic field and trapping lightning and light in jars and running it through wires, what could this be but the trapping of spiritus. What could it be but the literal descent of the Holy Ghost into history and, you know, give it a moment's thought. For thousands of years, electricity was something that you saw when you took an amber rod and a piece of cat fur and went into a darkened room and stroked the cat fur and then when you would bring the amber rod close to the cat 26 fur you would see the crackle of static electricity through the cat fur. For thousands of years that's what electricity was. Who would dream that you could light cities, that you could smelt metals, that you could illuminate the earth with this energy and yet from the 1850s to the

present, this was done. It's almost the final literalizing of the alchemical dream. But to go back now, I digress, I fear, let's go back to the climate of the 1580s and the central culprit here, and to my mind a giant figure casting an enormous shadow over the landscape of alchemy and of modern science, is the Englishman John Dee. John Dee united in himself the complete spirit of the Medieval Magus and the complete spirit of the modern scientist. He invented the navigational instruments that allowed the conquest of the round earth. When Frances Drake sailed up the coast of California he had navigational instruments that were top secret. The French, the Spanish, must be kept away from this stuff and these were navigational instruments created by John Dee that allowed him to locate himself anywhere on the globe. But John Dee was a man who, on a late summer evening in Mortlag, his house in Mortlag outside of London, the angel Gabriel descended into his garden and gave him what he called the shewstone, shew being show in Old English, and the shewstone exists to this day, you can see it in the British Museum and what's amazing about it is it's a piece of polished obsidian, it's an Aztec mirror, is what it is. There was a ruler of the Aztecs called smoky mirror. How John Dee got this thing, we cannot even imagine. He says he got it from an angel, nobody can really say that, however I suspect that Cortez, on his first return to Spain from the new world, he brought a number of objects with him that he had collected in Central Mexico and somehow John Dee got his hands on this thing and it was for him a television screen into the logos and he used it over a number of years to direct the foreign policy of England. He was the confidante of Queen Elizabeth the First and he also was the most accomplished astrologer in Europe and he used his ability to cast horoscopes as an entre into all the great houses of Europe, the kings and nobles of Europe. He was functioning as an intelligence agent, he was a spy for the British crown insinuating himself into these various courtly scenes and then writing back to Elizabeth in cyphers, cyphers that had previously only been used for magical purposes. He was sending back data on the strengths of military garrisons and the placement of fortifications and this sort of thing. This is what he was doing in the 1580s, he kept the shewstone for a number of years and he didn't seem to be able to make much progress with it. He had other methods too, he had wax tables and sigils but finally into his life came a very mysterious character named Edward Kelly and some accounts say that Edward Kelly had no ears. That indicates that he had had his ears removed for being a charlatan and a montebank. This was a common punishment in the provinces of England. So Edward Kelly was a very dubious character, I think. One strong piece of evidence that he was a shady character was, John Dee was married to a much younger woman named Ann Dee who by all accounts was quite a beauty and after gaining Dee's confidence as a scryer, the person who could look into the shewstone and lay out these scenarios that the angels and the entities coming and going in the shewstone were putting forth, Kelly revealed to Dee that the angels had instructed him to hit the hay with Ann. This was a great crisis in their relationship. However, according to Dee's diary "and so it was done," we read. So, hanky panky didn't begin with the Golden Dawn, believe me. In 1582 Ann Dee, John Dee, and Edward Kelly set out for Bohemia and Rudolph, the mad king of Bohemia held sway at that time. This is another one of those bizarre figures in the whole story of this...(tape cuts off a bit here) ...a wonder cabinet, you see, before Linaius, before modern scientific classification these great patrons of the arts and natural sciences, they would just collect weird stuff. And that was all you could say about it. I mean, it was rhinoceros horns, fossil amenities, broken pieces of statues from antiquity, giant insects from Southern India, seashells, all this stuff would just be thrown together in these wundercabina, these wonder cabinets. Rudolph was a great patron of the arts. Well, Kelly sent the word that he and Dee had perfected the alchemical process and Rudolph immediately paid their way to Prague and patronized them very lavishly over a number of months but then they didn't seem to be coming through and he rented, he ordered a castle put to their disposal, in Bohemia and they still weren't able to come through. The Voynitch manuscript figures in here too because 27 Kelly's entre to Dee was that he had a manuscript in an unknown language and I believe that this probably was the Voynitch manuscript. The Voynitch manuscript turns up in the

estate of Rudolph and the very month that he paid 14,000 gold ducats for it to persons unknown, Dee, who was always writing back to the Elizabethan court hounding them to send money, entered into his account book that they received 14,000 ducats from an unknown source. Dee was able to talk himself out of this alchemical imprisonment but not before he had written a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad. You have to understand the importance of this. As late as the 1920s in England in the better schools of England, like Eton, when you studied geometry, you studied Euclid's works and Euclid's geometry was always preceded by Dee's preface to Euclid. Until the 1920s every English school child studied this. He was a master mathematician as well as these other things. This was how he was able to produce these navigation instruments. So Dee, while imprisoned in Bohemia, wrote a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad in which he proposed to prove, through a series of occult theorems, that a certain diagram, unfortunately I didn't bring the hieroglyphic monad, but it's basically the symbol of, you know the symbol for mercury which looks like the symbol for female but you put horns on it and then there were some adumbrations to that. By a series of theorems he worked up this hieroglyphic monad and he initiated a couple of young men named Johan Anreae and Michael Maier into the mysteries of the hieroglyphic monad. Then he was able to get out of Bohemia and he went back to England. Kelly, who had made much more extravagant claims, Rudolph kept at work on the alchemical opus and Kelly became more and more desperate to escape and one night in 1587 he crept out on the parapet of this Bohemian castle and a roof tile slipped beneath his feet and he fell to his death and became, as far as I can tell, alchemy's only true martyr. Dee returned to England, he was now very old, he died at Mortlake in 1606. Elizabeth died in 1604, Shakespeare was happening, Sir Philip Sidney was happening through this period. John Dee reputedly had over 6,000 books in his library. He had more books than any man in England. He had books, we have a partial catalog of his library, he had books that do not exist now. He had Roger Bacon manuscripts because when Henry the eighth kicked the Catholic Church out of England, the Northumberian monasteries were looted by the Earl of Northumberland and basically Dee was allowed to pick over the loot from these monasteries and there were Roger Bacon manuscripts which perished when Dee's library was burned by an angry mob while he was on the continent because he was suspected of being a wizard. He was the model for Faust in the later resurgence of Faust and whenever you see an old man with a white beard and a pointed cap, this image is a referent to Dee. Well, Elizabeth died in 1604, I believe, and James the first became king of England. James was a peculiar character. The wags of the time liked to say "Elizabeth was king and now James is queen!" Not only that, he hated occultism, he had no patience with the whole magical court that Elizabeth had assembled around herself. Meanwhile, in 1606, a very mysterious document began to circulate in Europe and in England called the Fama, this is the first word in a string of Latin words, Fama, and two years later the confessio. What these were were announcements that an alchemical brotherhood was seeking recruits. These are the primary documents of Rosicrucianism. Rosicrucianism was based on a fiction and a fictional person, Christian Rosencreutz, who was imagined to have lived almost 200 years earlier, in the 1540s, and to have been a great alchemist. It was claimed that his tomb had been recently opened and that there were books inside it which set the stage for the alchemical revolution of the world. Notice how this occult world always tries to reach back in time to give itself validity. Christian Rosencreutz was claimed to be the author of a series of books, the chief of which is called The Chemical Wedding. What this was all about, I believe, and the Rosacrucian enlightenment makes it fairly clear, was that Dee, during the period that he had been in Bohemia, had set out to lay the groundwork for an alchemical revolution in Central Europe and he had made Johan Andreae and Michael Maier his agents in this plot. And it was a plot, a plot to meddle in European history and to turn the Protestant reformation toward an alchemical completion. They felt that Luther and Has(sp?) and these people had only gone so far and that the culmination of throwing off the yoke of the church would be the establishment of an alchemical kingdom in central Europe. The target, then, of the attention of Michael Maier and Johan

Andreae and a number of these alchemists became the young Frederick, he's called Frederick the Elector Palatine. He was a prince of the Northern League in Germany, he ruled in Heidleberg, and Heidleberg, as you know, is a thousand-year-old university city and I believe I mentioned that the alchemical press of Theodore DeBry(sp?) was operating out of Heidleberg. Heidleberg became a magnet for all the occult thinking going on in Europe and all the Puffers and alchemists, the gold-makers, the philosophers, the charlatans, they all converged on Heidleberg and Andreae and Maier were advisors of the young Frederick and they steered him, by a series of political manipulations too complex to tell, toward a marriage with the daughter of James the first of England, who was named Elizabeth, interestingly enough. So, Frederick the Elector made Elizabeth, the daughter of James of England, his wife. Frederick here made a serious miscalculation because he thought that if James would give the hand of his daughter in marriage that this was his way of blessing this alchemical conspiracy. Actually, what was on James' mind is that he was about to give his son, in marriage, to a Spanish princess of the Hapsburg line, a Catholic. In other words he was playing both sides against each other. He was not giving the green light to an alchemical revolution at all. But, it was assumed so. Then, in 1617, 1618, Rudolph, remember Rudolph, the emperor, he finally dies at a very ripe old age. And at that time, the Protestant league, which was made up of these princes of these small principalities scattered across Germany and Poland, they actually elected the emperor, it was not by right of primogenitor, but by election by what was called the Northern League, this league of princes. Frederick and his alchemical cohorts had done their alchemical groundwork very skillfully and they were able to engineer the election of Frederick to emperor of the empire and he became Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia and this set the stage for an episode called the episode of the Winter King and Queen. One of the great, after Nicholas and Pernelle Flamel, this is one of the great romantic stories of alchemy. They moved their court from Heidleberg to Prague and all the alchemists went with and they assumed that English armies would support them if there was any squak from the Hapsburgs and in the Winter of 1618 they ruled there and began to lay the groundwork for the transformation of Northern Europe into an alchemical kingdom. The problem was, as I said, the faithlessness and duplicity of James the first of England. He did not support them, in spite of the fact that the fate of his daughter hung in the balance and by May of 1619 the local Bishop of the Catholic church was fully aroused and word had been sent to Madrid and the Hapsburgs raised an army and laid siege to Prague. In the late Summer, the Mid Summer of 1619, the Winter King and Queen were driven from Prague, the city fell to Catholic forces, the alchemical presses were smashed and Michael Maier, who was like the prime minister of this scene, was murdered in an alley in Prague and the entire alchemical dream went down the drain. Frederick was killed in the siege of the city and Elizabeth escaped to the Hague where she lived in exile for many years. Till recently, I thought that that was the end of the story but there is a coda that is very amusing, if nothing else. In that Hapsburgian army, there was a young soldier of fortune, only 19 years old, still wet behind the ears, knowing nothing, happily soldiering and wenching his way around Europe while he decided what to do with himself and his name was Rene Descartes, a Frenchman. Descartes, in his later years, reminisced about his period as a soldier in this army and I like to think that it was Descartes who actually murdered Maier. One of my ambitions is to write a play or a novel in which these two confront each other in a back alley of burning Prague and carry on a debate about the future of Europe before Michael Maier falls to the sword of Descartes. That may be apocryphal, but what is not apocryphal is that this Hapsburgian army, having laid siege and destroyed the 29 alchemical kingdom, began to retreat across Europe that Fall and by Mid-September was camped near the town of Uolm in Southern Germany. By a strange coincidence, Uolm is the birthplace of Einstein some hundreds of years later. But on the night of September 16th, Descartes had a dream and in this dream an angel appeared to him, this is documented by his own hand, and the angel said to Descartes, "The conquest of nature is to be achieved through measure and number." And that revelation lay the basis for modern science. Rene Descartes is the founder of the distinction between the

res verins and the res extensia, the founder of modern science, the founder of the scientific method that created the philosophical engines that created the modern world. How many scientists, working at their workbenches, understand that an angel chartered modern science. It's the alchemical angel which will not die. It returns again and again to guide the destinies of nations and peoples toward an unimaginable conclusion. That's not the last time that this angelic intervention in the history of science has occurred. Some of you may know the story in the 19th century of Cuclai(sp?), the German chemist who was struggling with the molecular structure of Benzene, couldn't get it straight, and then he had a dream in which he saw the ouroboric snake take its tail in its mouth and he awoke from that dream with the carbon ring burning in his mind. Well, the carbon ring, the six sided heptadle(?) state of the form of the carbon ring is the basis of all organic chemistry. And I mentioned earlier Farraday and Helmholtz and the rise of the electro magnetic field. The point I'm trying to make is that, however rational we may assume ourselves to be, however rational we may assume modern science to be, it is all really founded on angelic revelation, demonic intercession, and an extremely mysterious relationship between the human mind and the world of what science calls inert matter which, from this point of view, is revealed to be not inert at all but alive and pregnant with purpose for mankind. The alchemical kingdom of Frederick the Elector, and then there were a series of adumbrations, of this kind of thinking, many of you may know about freemasonry and the many freemason revolts in Bohemia and Bavaria throughout the 16th and 17th century. Adam Weishaupt and the illuminati is another effort to do this and even the royal society founded by Newton and Hook and those people was still an effort to redeem science for the spirit. So, the alchemical spirit lives on, it never really died, it's just that it has taken peculiar forms in our own day. I mentioned, I believe, last night that when you enter into nuclear chemistry the most literal dreams of the profane side of alchemy, the transformation of lead into gold, Has actually been achieved. It has no economic significance because the instrumentality to do it costs tens of millions of dollars but nevertheless, yes, in our time, lead had been changed into gold. So, that's basically what I wanted to say about this. I hope that there are questions and stuff that we can say about it. To take you back to the Voynitch manuscript for a minute. There was something about it being a liturgical manual of some sort, is that your opinion? Yes. This is kind of a footnote on all of this. Remember I said that Kelly's entre to Dee was that he had a mysterious book and you can tell from what I've said already, Dee was as big a sucker for books as I am. So this book, Kelly's story was that he had gone to sleep in the ruins of a Northumbrian monastery and slept in an open seplicar, a crypt of some sort, and when he awoke he found beneath him two things, a vial of red powder which he said was the transmitting powder, a necessary part of the alchemical process, and a book in an unknown language which he called the Gospel of Saint Dunstable, possibly because this monastery had been dedicated to Saint Dunstable. Now, Arthur Dee was John Dee's son and he said that, he became an alchemist in his own right, and he said when he was growing up he remembers that his father spent many hours puzzling over a book, as he put it, " all covered with hieroglyphics." But Dee, who elaborated the angelologic language called Enochean, never actually wrote or discussed the book that he had received from Kelly. It is definitely not written in Enochean. Enochean, 30 when grammatically analyzed by computers, has a curious relationship to 16th century English. But when Dee and Kelly traveled to Europe they were talking up Roger Bacon, who was a 14th century English monk who had dabbled in alchemy, and they claimed to have Bacon manuscripts and Rudolph became very interested in this and wanted to obtain some of these Baconian manuscripts. I suspect that what happened is that Dee, by this point, had given up on deciphering the Gospel of Saint Dunstable and decided that he would palm it off on the emperor as a Bacon manuscript because he didn't want to give up a real Bacon manuscript because they were too valuable to him. So for 14,000 gold ducats this thing changed hands and Kelly and Dee and Ann were able to pay their bills and Rudolph had immense resources because of his position as emperor and he brought his cryptographers and decipherers on to work on this Gospel of Saint Dunstable and got nowhere. Then, when Rudolph died, a

mysterious book was numbered among the artifacts of his estate and I think we can assume that it's this book and one of the interesting things about this book is it has pages and pages of plant drawings. Over a 150 watercolors of plants, each carefully labeled, captioned in this unknown language. If you know anything about decipherment, this is what a decipherer dreams of because if you have a picture of the thing and a caption it doesn't take too much smarts to figure out what's going on. Nevertheless, this was completely unhelpful. A third of the manuscript has pseudo astrological material, in other words what looked like drawings of stars and stellar shells but when carefully analyzed dissolve into meaninglessness, cannot be associated with anything, and then a third of the manuscript shows little naked ladies in what can only be described as elaborate plumbing systems and it was thought at one time that these must be drawings of the humors of the body in the liver, that these little naked women represented spirits moving inside the human body and then somebody else's guess was it must show an obscure form of German hydro therapy because, you know, the Germans, if you've ever been to Baden Baden or Marianbad or these places where people take the waters, well those places are old, old. And all this stuff is captioned and there are even tables of contents which again you would think would yield to decipherment and so when Rudolph died, because of the botanical material in this book, it passed to the court botanist, a man named Marici and he got nowhere with it. Then in the early 16th century a great alchemist and polymath, some of whose art we'll see this evening, was Heinrich Kunderath(sp?), and Heinrich Kunderath was fascinated by artificial languages and he heard about the Voynitch manuscript and we have a whole batch of letters from Kunderath to the keepers of the estate of the emperor trying to obtain this manuscript, which he finally did obtain and then at that point he makes no further mention of it in his diaries the conclusion being that he, too, could get nowhere with this thing, it just defied decipherment. Well, in 1619, at the outbreak of the 30 year's war, and this is what I forgot to mention in my earlier discussion, this episode of the Winter King and Queen is one way of debating the 30 year's war. It's usually considered to be the moment when a certain personage was hurled from a third story window in Prague and then fighting broke out in the streets but really the episode of the Winter King and Queen brought the thing to a head. Well, in 1619, to avoid being caught up in the 30 year's war, Kunderath decided to take holy orders and become a Jesuit and so he gave his library, which was compendious, to the monastery he joined which was a monastery in Southern Italy and there this thing sat until 1906 when a New York rare book dealer named Alfred Voynitch bought the entire contents of this monastic library and when he got it all back to New York and cataloged it, it was all very predictable 16th century theological and alchemical speculation except here was this book in an unknown language and Voynitch kept it throughout his life and then when he died he gave it to Yale and it is to this day at the Benikee rare book room at Yale. In the 1960s the CIA became interested in it because the CIA is in the business of code making and breaking, a huge amount of energy goes into this. If you know anything about the enigma project in WWII you know that vast energies go into the making of unbreakable codes and so they very systematically sought out all examples of encrypted material throughout history and just lickety-split deciphered it, one after another. All occult and magical codes known to exist in Europe can be traced back to one person, virtually to one person, to Trithemius, 31 Bishop of Spawenheim who was the great teacher of Henry Cornelius Agrippa. All magical codes, if you know the Trithemian method, within a few hours you can get plain text. The Voynitch manuscript did not yield at all to this method and the CIA formed a working group that for over ten years would invite scholars in to have a look at this and if you're interested in this, Marie D'Amperio, who was a great Renaissance scholar, wrote a book called *The Voynitch Manuscript, an Elegant Enigma* in which she traces the efforts of the CIA to figure this thing out and to figure out what it could be. There the matter rested until about three years ago when, I think his name is Leo Levertov, some kind of military historian, one of these peculiar people who live for this stuff, he got a hold of it and he said, and deimlperia(?) goes through all the decipherment and there were many efforts at decipherment, there was a scholar at Yale in the

twenties named Brumbra who was a very respected man who ruined himself by claiming a complete decipherment of the Voynitch manuscript and, the way the game is played is that you say what your rules for the decipherment were, you give the rules to a colleague and you give your colleague a page of text. If he can't translate it with your rules then you are viewed as a deluded and misguided person and your career goes up in flames. Well, the Brumbraian method for deciphering the manuscript had to do with confined pools of letters where, it would get you to a pool of five or six letters but then you could freely choose which one you used and critics of Brumbra demonstrated that you could make this thing say anything you wanted it to. Brumbra supported Dee's claim, he claimed that it deciphered out into a Roger Bacon manuscript that described a series of riots between the students and the black friars in 1385 at Oxford. But nobody else could make it say that or make it say anything so Brumbra disgraced himself and ruined his career. Then there were other efforts at decipherment which I won't bore you with but along comes Leo Levatov just four years ago and he wrote a book called *The Voynitch Manuscript: A Liturgical Manual for the Catherites* and his great breakthrough, if you accept his translation, and I do, I know people who don't but they don't seem to have read him as carefully as I have, I think the dude pretty well has it nailed to the barn door. His great breakthrough was to realize that it's not in code. It is not an encrypted manuscript at all. What it is is it's a synthetic alphabet, yes, it's an alphabet that, and one of the things that baffled the CIA is was they looted the libraries of Europe and they could never find another example of what is called Voynitch script and this is just baffling. How could there be no other example of this script. It appears that what happened was someone created a synthetic alphabet and then in a mixture of Medieval, polyglot Flemish with a huge number of loan words from Old French, Middle High German, and Swedish, wrote down a sacramental manual for the dying in the Catherite sect. Now, what is the Catherite sect? You're probably familiar with something called the Albajensian(?) crusade. This was not a crusade carried on against the infidel for the recovery of Jerusalem but rather a series of military actions carried out by the pope against communities in Southern France in the early 1200s. These people were Catherites. As far as we can tell, and we can't tell much because we only have descriptions of Catherites by people who were burning them at the stake, in other words no original Catherite documents survive, we just have what they screamed out on the rack as they were being put to death by the bishops of the church and this was a horrific incident in European history. To give you the flavor of it, the second Albajensian crusade was prosecuted by a general of the pope named Simone De Monforte and his lieutenants came to him, at a point, and some of you might have visited the city of Carceson in Southern France which is a walled Medieval city in Southern France, very beautiful, Simone De Monforte's lieutenants came to him and they said "We have cornered the Catherites at Carceson but the problem is is that there are 6,000 Catholics within the city walls." And he said "kill everybody, God will recognize his own." So that was the spirit in which this thing went forth, and they did, they did. 32 So, what we do know about the Catherites is that they had a sacrament, the holiest my...well, first let me tell you a little bit more about them. At first it was thought that they were pretty much heterodox Christians. They were into nudity and vegetarianism and they sound like early hippies, as far as we can tell. They got together men and women, they took off their clothes, they bathed, whether there were orgies or not we don't know, they were vegetarians, and the one thing that we do know is that they had a sacrament called the consolamentum and the consolamentum was ritualized vivisection, no, that's not the word, the term escapes me, but anyway, when you were dying, a fellow Cather would cut your wrists and open your veins in a warm bath of water and you would die in that state, you did not die a natural death. This was called the consolamentum. What Leo Levatov is claiming is that the Voynitch manuscript is a description, a manual, for the prefecti of the Catherite sect telling how to properly carry out the consolamentum. I see no reason to challenge it. Even with my limited knowledge of German, once you get the vowel and letter assignments right into this weird manuscript into this weird language and change it into English alphabetic text you can see that there's enough German there and then

these lone words in Flemish and so forth, it looks to be true. And what emerges from this, if we accept the Voynitch manuscript as the only primary document on the Catherite faith, is that this was not a form of heterodox Christianity at all, it is much more radical than that and this may explain the church's fury with this group of people. It was a cult of Isis. It can be traced straight back into the mystery religions of Eo(?) Isis in Egypt and I have not seen any critical commentary on Levatov's book. His book was published by this weird press in Rodondo Beach that specializes only in books on military encryption. Their catalog is a revelation to see, it's amazing, and the book on the Voynitch manuscript stands out like a sore thumb because most of it is like dictionaries of three letter words in Swahili and their numerical transforms and stuff like that. So that's the history to date of the Voynitch manuscript and it's not that askew of our subject because all of this heterodoxy in Europe blends together. The presence of Theodore DeBrie as an alchemical printer in Heidleberg may be a clue because there were survivals of this Catherite faith in the form of a heresy called the brotherhood of the free spirit. If any of you are familiar with the altarpiece called "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch, it's thought that this was created by commission for a brotherhood, a congregation of the brotherhood of the free spirit and the brotherhood of the free spirit was always associated with some reason, we don't know why, with printers. Printers seem to be the profession that the brotherhood favored and, like the Catherites, they practiced vegetarianism, nudism and gathering together in a ritual bath. So, there is much still to be learned and to be teased apart in the art history and the history of heterodox thinking in Europe of which alchemy is seen to be one facet of a faceted gem that includes the brotherhood of the free spirit, early Freemasonry, Catherites, survivals of Manicheism, Voagamils(sp?) in Yugoslavia, there are Vogamils Vostrian(?) graves on the Southern coast of Thessolonica and just a whole zoo of intellectual systems that have been forgotten and overlooked. This what I meant when I said we will explore the statigraphy of lost thought systems. In some cases we possess quite complete skeletons, in the case of alchemy, what we possess in the cases of the Vogamils and the Catherites is almost a foot bone or a tooth or a footprint but someday, with luck, new textual material will emerge and a new understanding of the role of heterodoxy in the formation of modern thought will emerge. Questions? The Borne and Clark(?) book on Freemasonry that's just recently been published..I've just about finished it and this person is a Medieval English historian from Kentucky and I think he's finally solved...the Freemason history which is a very interesting history because the Masonic historians themselves have been arguing for a couple hundred years so it's strange that this Voynitch manuscript should be all of the sudden in the last couple of years resolved because it seems that this Freemason thing is also resolved 33 Yes, you make an interesting point. John Glavis brought me an article yesterday. We're all tied up now in this Pluto return. I'm not an astrologer but John brought me an article that's talking about how, I don't know if it's the last time or the time before last, that the Pluto return occurred is precisely the 1490s, the period that we're talking about when the Corpus Hermeticum was translated and we are now in a period that is astrologically exactly equivalent to that period and the Voynitch manuscript appears to have been accepted, I mean I'm willing to accept it, you mentioned this revelation about the true nature of Freemasonry, and of course what is going on at the moment that is askew of our subject but tremendously exciting and relevant to the idea of lost knowledge coming to light, is that this is the golden moment in Mayan studies. It is happening right now, day by day, minute by minute, the log jam has been broken. The Mayan glyphs are being deciphered, no shit, and it has to do with an entirely new approach that some Russian linguists have taken and if any of you are interested, it will never happen again so far as I know, there are now, with the Mayan decipherment, no real undeciphered languages left. The Harapan(sp?) was deciphered a few years ago but really it wasn't that interesting because we only possess about 6,000 characters in Harapan. But the literature of the Mayan, when you take not only the hieroglyphic, the stone texts, but when you add in the ceramic texts, why we have a lot of Mayan material and it is being deciphered at a furious rate. If you're interested in this, Linda Sheil has written a book called A Forest of

Kings and how I do envy this woman because what she is doing is writing the first history of the Maya in a thousand years. We're not now dealing in the realm of gods and myths, we're dealing with stuff like "on the 14th of May, 642, an army from El Charico met an army from Tikal and triumphed and deposed three flint and placed on the throne..."it's this kind of stuff, real history. The conceits of Mayan religion and Mayan courtly life are all coming into focus and it's very exciting. All the people who have tried to make the Maya into some kind of Atlantean civilization should be running for cover at this point, because the picture that emerges is not as pretty as we might wish, but, hey, know the truth and the truth will set you free, I would choose truth over illusion anytime, no matter how damaging it might be to somebody's conceptions of these things. And if any of you are interested in these subjects, another area where this has occurred is, some of you may know the book by Michael Chadwick called The Decipherment of Linear Be, Linear Be is a proto-Minoan language and a linguist at Cambridge named Michael Ventris, a genius, in the fifties took this language, there was no Rosetta Stone, this is the amazing thing. You know what I mean by a Rosetta Stone? You see, in the 19th century the great mystery was how to read the Egyptian hieroglyphs and before they were deciphered the Egyptians were treated like the Maya and people thought that the secrets of the universe were chiseled on those obelisks and tombs. Well then a scholar in the grand army of Napoleon Champion, a soldier found a tablet which had a column of Demotic Greek, a column of another language, I forget which one, and a column of Egyptian hieroglyphs and they were able to realize that it was saying the same thing three times and that opened it up for them. But that's like a crib sheet, it's easy if you have the same text in a known language. But in the case of the Maya and in the case of Linear Be and in the case of Haropan, there was no Rosetta Stone, well then you talk about an excruciatingly difficult problem to solve and I'll explain how it was done with the Maya because it's so neat. It turns out that Mayan is a rebus language, what does this mean? Do you remember when we were kids and in comic books there would be these things where it would show a picture of an eye and then it would show a picture of a saw going through a piece of wood and then it would show a picture of an ant and then it would show a picture of a red rose. This is a sentence which says "I saw aunt Rose." But now notice what's going on here. It all depends on puns that depend on a knowledge of the spoken language. If you lose the sounds of the spoken language how the hell could you ever tell that a picture of an eye, a saw, an insect and a rose says "I saw my maternal relative 34 on my mother's side." I mean, it just is impossible, it's absolutely impossible in that situation to reconstruct meaning unless you have sounds. Well, how do you recover the sounds of a language dead a thousand years. Well, these Soviet linguists had the good sense to go and look at living Mayan languages, of which there are 15, living Mayan languages in the Americas and they discovered one of these dialects where, when you set Mayan hieroglyphs in front of these people and they named what they saw, meaning came out of their mouths and that broke the log jam and then you just rev up your computers and use all the standard tools of modern linguistics and philology and the stuff begins to just pour out, clear as day, no problem. So they asked the Mayans? Yes, they had to go to a Mayan, you're right, good point, it had never occurred to them. Because always before when showing it to Mayans they would say "what does it mean?" instead of "what do you see here?" and then what they said what they saw there meaning came out of their mouths. It was very, very neat. It shows once again the hubris of modern scientific methods, we tend to dismiss the aboriginal and the primitive. To turn it toward my own favorite subject, this was the state of modern medicine, nobody would ask the native in the Amazon basin " what plants do you use for malaria, brain tumors, shrinkage and so on and so forth, because they were just dismissed as superstitious primitives. It was thought that the doctrine of signatures was operating. They didn't realize how subtle and how complete human knowledge systems grow under the care of those to whom it really matters. Is there anything that needs to be said about this? The project of the redemption of spirit from matter turned into the project of redeeming the general society of the time toward a utopian vision. This is working right up to the present. Millenarianism is still with us, Marxism is

the last great Millenarian faith, the belief in the worker's state. It occupies the same relationship to these alchemical utopias as Heideggerian existentialism has to second century Gnosticism. The poetry has gone, the baroque imagery has been stripped away, but the impulse is still toward a perfect society where each from his ability according to his needs and means. It lives on. Democracy is also an effort, let us not forget, an attempt to recapture the style of 5th century Athens and we forget that this was a citystate half of whose inhabitants were slaves and yet we are so under the spell of the utopian dream that we continue, and not without important reason, I think, to try to labor toward a just and decent world where the lion lies down with the lamb and that was, and it remains, the alchemical dream. ...flashbacks of my life...I majored in history in college and the first history teacher that I had was a wonderful old man who really, now that I look back on it, taught the history of ideas. My major was involved with politics and all of this kind of thing and it's such a wonderful experience to suddenly get back to what turned me on to history, it gets me turned on and opens my mind again, looking at some of these thoughts that I'd just forgotten or suppressed, put down and said that's bullshit as a traditionally trained scientist and so on... opened my eyes to the fact that we can learn from what's gone on before, the ideas are out there, we just have to grasp them...and apply them and I, too, am interested in how we make this more meaningful for the future. One thing that occurs to me to say, I once, in one of these revelatory dialogs with the logos, asked the question, "why me, why are you telling me this?" because my, I mean, I was a poor hippie, I was penniless, I was a traveler, and the answer was instantaneous and it was, "because you don't believe in anything, because you don't believe in anything" and I think that that's a very pure position to hold. We're not trying to ensnare you to abandon your Jewishness or your Presbyterianism or belief, if you believe in something then you have precluded the possibility of believing in its opposite and you have hence limited your freedom. Everything is to be judged by its efficacy, by its effectiveness in the real world and I think that I have a horror in all belief systems, I just don't like them. If somebody tells you he has the answer, flee from this person, they are obviously some sort of low being who has not recognized the true size and dimension of the cosmos that we're living in and if you can keep yourself free of encumbering beliefs then your dialog with the logos can go forward unhindered. Sometimes when I'm in the trance of psilocybin I will say to the entity, "begin to show me yourself as you are for yourself, don't give me the scaled down, humanized version, show me your true nature" and after a few moments of this then I have to raise my hand and say enough, I can't handle more than that. This goes back to the statement made yesterday or the day before about that the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it's stranger than we can suppose. Therefore, we are given tremendous latitude in what we can think and what we conceive but if you begin to believe in something then you are pulled down because everything that you believe has consequences. A perfect example, as some of you may know, when Mohammed ascended into heaven from the site of what was to become the Mosque of Omar, from the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, he happened to be on horseback. Now if you believe that Mohammed ascended to heaven, imagine the theological and hermenutic problems posed by the horse he was riding. Because it went with him. This is a perfect example of how intellectual baggage drags us down because belief always contains absurdity. The ontological status of this horse has troubled Islamic theologians for centuries... If they would just let go of the whole idea complex they would be liberated from this kind of minutia. Belief kills the spirit, spirit transcends belief. I wanted to say that. Then somebody mentioned Bruno and Dee. Since I suggested that you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition it's ironic that so little time was spent on Bruno, on the other hand, I recommended that you read the book so you should be well informed about Bruno. For me, Bruno, we just didn't get into that particular historical episode because I wanted to tell you about the Rosicrucian enlightenment, but the thing to remember about Bruno was his discovery about the infinitude of the cosmos and that by an act of unencumbered observation, I mean how many people had looked at the night sky before Bruno and they had not seen what he saw, which was infinite space and suns hung like

lamps unto the uttermost extremes of infinity. By an act of pure cognition, he was able to destroy an entire cosmological vision that had limited and confined the human soul for millennia. That's half of his story. The other half is that he was burned at the stake for refusing to back down from this. It's a model for us all: trust your perceptions trust your intuition and then accept the consequences because this is what existential validity must be. As far as the relationship between Dee and Bruno, the relationship is that they were both derivative of the school of magic that can be traced back to Henry Cornelius Agrippa Von Nettesheim who was another model for Faust. Agrippa wrote *De Libro Quatro De Occulta Philosophia*, four books of occult philosophy, and that was the core work for European magic. All European magic can be traced back to the Agrippan system and Agrippa was the direct student of the Abbot Trithemius of Spawneheim that we mentioned yesterday as the source of all the magical codes of the middle ages. If you're interested in a brilliant but fictional treatment of John Dee and Giordano Bruno, I'd like to recommend a novel to you. It's called *Aegypt*, it's by John Crowley, the same gentleman who wrote *Little Big* which is a wonderful novel about the magical interface between two worlds. But his book *Aegypt*, fully half of the book is given over to a wonderfully rich retelling of the relationship between Bruno and Dee. Some people have wanted to say that Dee and Bruno actually crossed physical paths in London but I've looked into it and they missed each other by about two weeks. Bruno was setting sail for England as Dee was setting sail for France and the Rosacrucian enlightenment episode that I talked about. 36 Then someone asked about tantra and the contrast between the imaginative internalized invocation of the anima or the animus, depending on your own sexuality, and that contrasted with something that actually happens between two people. We didn't talk that much about the concept of the alchemical wedding, or the chemical marriage is another way of putting it, but this is the Western resonance to the Eastern idea of tantra and it is the idea that sexual energy, being the rawest and most accessible energy to the organism, can be channeled into a higher spirituality. It's entirely so, the problem is that of all paths this is probably fraught with the greatest difficulty because sexuality is such a debased coinage in the modern world. In other words, you have to make your way with great care and great purity of intent into this. In Eastern tantra that is actually practiced in this physical manner there is usually the admonition is that you should have no attachment to your tantrica, that the relationship should be entirely given over to the technical details of this union and of course it has to do with the forestalling of orgasm and the raising of energy within the organism. In the chemical marriage, in the alchemical marriage, due honor is given to the importance and uniqueness of the other person, in other words it isn't the idea of the temple prostitute who serves as the vessel for this process but there's actually an effort to keep individual identities and individual dignity, in some sense, together and this is, the higher up the mountain you go, the steeper it becomes and when you begin to scale the heights of alchemical or tantric sexuality the fall back into the nigredo can be shocking indeed so that's just an admonition, it's not designed to scare you off, it's just to say that in an age as sexually obsessed as our own, you have to do as the I Ching says, "inquire of the oracle once again if you have purity of intent." Isn't there also a healing between the two? Yes, it's a complete alchemical system and the energy is passed between. This is probably the highest completion that is possible. The ideal of romantic love, and I don't want to digress too much into this, but the ideal of romantic love was introduced into Europe in the 1400s and earlier at the Anjovian(sp?) court of Eleanor of Aquitaine by troubadours and this troubadour tradition can, scholarship now reveals pretty convincingly that this is an esoteric Sufi system. It also occurs in Indian teachers such as Chitania(sp?), who is the guy that the Hare Krishnas go back to. The radical teaching of Chitania was that you could achieve ecstasy not by sitting in yoga, but by dancing and singing on street corners. It's now pretty clearly shown that Sufi, the penetration of Sufi ideas into Bengal was happening at the same time that these Sufi ideas were coming across from North Africa and into Spain and Southern France. So, it's a tremendously old and vital tradition but you have to be careful - the romantic impulse is a real double-edged sword. It has been ever

since the early 19th century because, you know, the rise of romanticism, as that term is normally understood, meaning those movements in art and literature of the early 19th century, the rise of romanticism was a response to the dehumanization that was going on at that time. The rise of industrialism and the retreat into cities more massive than any that had ever been built, did you want to say something? I wanted to add, the question was about healing, and I think there's a tremendous difference between Indian and Tibetan tantric systems. You ought to practice in Taoism in terms of single copulation and dual copulation, in the Taoist system self-healing is of paramount importance before you can even consider dual copulation. Dual copulation is then begun, then again other considerations come in, but the Tibetan and Indian systems where Dakinis and various deities are invoked in the process of their alchemical union, it's really quite different from the Taoist system which is devoid of beliefs in gods. 37 That's a good point. You know, yesterday I talked about the alchemical stages. When you have reached the albedo, the final whitening of these processes, that final whitening is, from a higher prospective, a new nigredo and you must always build and build again. So you have to be fairly confident that you have already realized a certain portion of yourself before you embark upon these tantric double experiments. Because a lot of tantric text reads very vampirical, I mean, it's all about expelling the semen and then sucking it back in and it's like an energy war. It turns into black magic. The losing partners in this deal are just left a withered husk and this is not a higher completion to be sought for. You're correct, there are supposedly, whether they're myths or documented stories, about a Chinese Empress who caused the deaths of more than a thousand men because of her vampirism. And it was sexual in nature? It was sexual in nature. Just a couple of other points here. The gentleman here who had nothing to comment or wanted to sit it out reminded me, since we were talking about the Valentinian system this morning, my favorite archon, besides Sophia who's so interesting because of the little story about how she made the universe, but the 12th archon in the Gnostic system is a unique entity, I don't know of another religious system that has this notion. The 12th archon in the Valentinian system is called The Watcher. That's all he does. He does not put into the system at all but is the witness and somehow this creates a validating dimension that is very important. I just want to affirm that the watcher is a very strong platform on which to stand. I mean, would that I could learn to keep my mouth shut. Would that we all could. So, the watcher is a good archon to keep active on your inner altar. So, then, the future occurs three times on the list. We don't have a lot of time, but what I would like to say about it this morning is, if you extrapolate all that has been said here then you should see that, remember how I said that one view of alchemy is that the alchemist intervened in natural process in the role of a catalyst. For those of you who aren't chemists, a catalyst is something that causes a chemical reaction that is going on anyway to precede at a faster rate but the catalyst is not consumed in this process, it simply accelerates it. And if we think of nature as a great alchemical furnace that continuously reproduces and brings forth wonders, then must it not be that humanity is the yeast of the gain alchemical rarefaction and that human history is the process of catalyzing the alchemical condensation. If we look back into nature, before the advent of speaking and writing human beings in the last 15,000 years, what we see are very leisurely processes. The speciation of a single plant from another can occupy 50 or 60 thousand years, it never happens more quickly than that. And the grinding down of glaciers from the poles, these are processes that take hundreds and thousands of years. With the advent of human beings, an entirely new ontos of being, an entirely new category of becoming is introduced into the entire cosmos, as far as we know, because we cannot verify that there are other self-reflecting beings in the universe and this new ontos of becoming is what I call epigenetic, as opposed to 38 genetic. All other change in the living world, in the world of bios, of zoa, occurs through genetic change, random modification of the genome which is then subject to random selection. But with the advent of speech and writing, epigenetic, means outside of genetics, epigenetic processes become possible and time accelerates. One way of thinking about what is happening in this cosmos is that it is a gradual conquest of dimensionality by becoming, or process,

we hardly have a word inclusive enough. The earliest forms of life were probably slimes on certain kinds of clays, self-replicating molecular systems and then certain portions of this chemistry became light sensitive and then there was the sense of the division of light and darkness which generated the notion of here and there on some tremendously basic level within these early organisms. Once you have the concept of here and there, motility, the ability to move, the cilia that dot the surface of protozoans and stuff like this are elaborated and a new dimension enters the picture, the dimension of time, because notice that a journey from here to there is a journey from now to then. And then, as more refined perceptual apparatus arose, and more refined systems of moving animal bodies arose, a steady conquest of dimensionality occurred. The movement of animals onto the land and so forth. Well then, at the advent of memory, and memory must be mediated by language except at a very crude, instinctual level, memory is a time binding function. It's a way of somehow taking the past and calling up it's essential properties so that they are co-present with the given moment of experience. It's one thing at the level of the song and dance of pre-literate peoples but once you begin to chisel stone and write books then you're into the epigenetic domain in a big way. And once you cross the threshold into the world of electronic media and that sort of thing, once you achieve powered flight, once you can hurl instruments outside of the solar system, these are time binding functions and the alchemical intent, recall, was to accelerate nature's intent toward perfection and the alchemists all believed that nature was growing toward a state of unity and perfection, that given millions and millions of years, everything would turn to gold, everything would find its way toward the Platonian one. So, now we live in a world that appears to be on the brink of its own death or extinction and the reason we make that assumption is that our bridges are burning behind us. We see no way back to the world of the hunting and gathering pastoralists of the high Paleolithic of the Saharan grasslands. We see no way back to the Gothic piety of Europe with over 30 million people in it. Our bridges are burning and our religions, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, the major Western religions persistently insist that we are caught in a tightening spiral of ever increasing speed that is carrying us toward an unimaginable confrontation with something which they call God, the second coming, the messiah, you name it. As cool-headed a rationalist as Albert Toynbee, when he sat down to write a study of history, he finally had to face the question, "what is history for?" And the best he could come up with is "history must be about the entry of God into the domain of three-dimensional space." Well, we don't know what God is, let's not call it God, let's call it the philosopher's stone, let's call it the Sophic Hydrolith, and I believe that the chaos of our world, the apocalyptic intuition that informs our religions and our dreams is because ahead of us in time, and now not that far ahead of us in time, is something, taking a page from the mathematical concern called dynamics, we can call an attractor. The attractor lies ahead of us in time. The universal process is not driven by a downward cascade of Cartesian causuistry(?) that's the scientific notion and it leads to a universe of entropy and heat death millions of years in the future but what we see around us is a continuing and accelerating complexification as human beings, machines, eco systems, the solar system itself is beginning to knit itself into a tighter and tighter organization. I believe that alchemy provides the best metaphors for understanding this. Nature is the great alchemist par excellence and we, as its minions through history, are accelerating the condensation of being toward the unimaginable so that in my system, my way of thinking, there's ultimately a semitary(?) break with ordinary history and I call it all kinds of 39 different things, but here this morning, the transcendent other. The transcendent other casts an enormous shadow across the lower dimensional landscape of time. The stirring of the earliest life forms in the Devonian seas caught the call and every step that has been taken since then has been ever quicker, ever quicker toward the transcendental other, it beckons us and history is haunted by this thing. History is the shock wave of eschatology. History is a process that lasts, let's be generous, 25,000 years, the wink of an eye in geological time, and in that 25,000 years religious rise and fall, governmental systems, teachers come and go and there is a sense of being caught in a whirlpool that is spinning us toward fusion with the unimaginable. This

is why the skies of Earth are haunted by flying saucers, they aren't coming from other solar systems, they are sintillas, remember this alchemical term - sparks - they are sintillas being thrown off the alchemical quintessence which lies like a great attractor at the end of time and the purpose of science and technics and electronic media and information transfer and all of this stuff is to knit us together, to dissolve our boundaries and to bring us to a point of singularity where language fails, where we lean over meanings' edge and feel the dizziness of things unsaid. And this lies now, I believe, within our lifetimes, within the lifetimes of most of us, this is actually going to break through. I'm like one of those people carrying a sign that says "repent for the end is near." It's as nutty a position as you can possibly hold. That's why I suspect it has a reasonable chance of being dead on. So, that is the point of talking about alchemy and this melding, the production of the quintessence and all that. It is because we are a gnat's eyelash away from a full confrontation with the transcendent other. Our dreams are haunted by it, our reveries are filled with it. If we take a psychedelic drug, it's revealed before us in all its splendor. This is the force that is pulling us inexorably toward completion. I remember once in a psilocybin trance I expressed concern about the state of the world and the nous spoke, the logos spoke, and it said "no big deal, this is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars." This is the, we are in the birth canal of a planetary birthing. And as you know, if you come upon a birth in progress, you would never dream that this is the culmination of a natural process. It looks like a catastrophe of some sort. There is moaning and groaning and screaming and thrashing and blood is being shed and there is a feeling that the walls are closing in and yet it is inscribed into each of us as a microcosmic reflection of the completion of human history. And not only human history, because we are simply the hands and eyes of all life, all process on this planet. The Gnostics believe that the Earth is like an egg and that a moment will come in which the egg must be split asunder. I love to quote the Grateful Dead, "you can't go back and you can't stand still. If the thunder don't get you then the lightning will." That is what we are being funnelled toward, that is the message of alchemy. That is the quintessence of the human enterprise, the biological enterprise. I like to recall the Irish toast "may you be alive at the end of the world." And we have a real crack at it. It's not a pessimistic vision. It's the most optimistic vision that one can suppose and I think that's where I'd like to leave it this morning. 40

Austin Texas

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All right, wonderful to see so many people turned out after just having been here a scant year ago. I'm delighted that they invited me back. The deal is no jokes about Camarro raffles, no jokes about MultiVite suppositories, so just consider it as if it didn't happen. No, it is a pleasure to be here. I'm fascinated by this green and intelligent part of Texas. I grew up with all the prejudices against Texas that you have in Western Colorado where Texans arrive to kill our elk once a year and then depart and leave us once again bereft of glory and drawl. So, I did a radio show, some of you may have heard it, and it was an occasion to be up at the campus, wonderful university. I see a lot of universities and a lot of them look like air force bases and, you are very fortunate to have the University of Texas at Austin. There is some great people associated with that faculty. Okay, let me get a whet whistle here. How many people have read at least one of my books? A lot of people. Well, so, what I'm thinking is, I have some things on my mind and I'll run through that but I'd like to leave a lot of time for Q&A because my thing has several facets and maybe you're interested in *Salvia divinorum* and I'm raving on about modeling and animation or maybe you're interested in the end of history and I can't shut up about serotonin metabolism. So, this is all part of the picture but driven by your needs and your agenda I think it's much more fruitful, it's much more fun for me. The audience is in these things, are, are the great joy and I should say to you as I say to all my audiences, the psychedelic community is still small and tight. And we look pretty much like everybody else out there. That's part of our victory, I might point out. It's not that we came to look like them, it's that they finally let it down, and now they all look like us. But a gathering like this is an occasion to actually see your local psychedelic communities. So, take a look around. Somebody in this room has what you need. And it's like an intelligence test, isn't it? All social interaction is, it turns out. Okay, I guess I should bring up today on what I've been doing before I plunge into the heart of this, since, I guess my own life is my own adventure and how I then read the larger picture of reality. I think everybody sees their life that way, after all, if you're not the hero in your novel what kind of novel is it? You need to do some heavy editing. Robert Anton Wilson once said, he said that we should define reality as a plot run by a closely knit group of insiders, yourself and your friends of course. I mean, if you don't believe that you have a loser's scenario and who needs a loser's scenario? So what I've been doing since I saw you last, is basically a lot of traveling. I went to South Africa last October, and that was an education, was a non-stop two week intensive education in humanness, third world colonial politics, Dutch Afrikaner history, a whole bunch of things I knew very little about. It was inspiring, challenging, amazing. Africa, the human home is right now the great theater of struggle for the human soul. How we deal with the social and political problems of Africa is saying a great deal about how we will be judged by the future. The problems of Africa are almost entirely created from the outside of Africa. And the solutions which are being produced on native soil

need all the nurturing and support that we who cheer on the brotherhood of man can give it. And then in February I went to Australia. And if I had known about Australia what I know now thirty years ago I'm sure my life would be very different. I said last night at a book signing, it's weirdly like Texas. I mean it's large, it's largely empty, and it has a very eccentric population of hard driving folks who are lovely to party with and know how to barbecue. So, what more can I say? Okay, so enough with personal reportage, local color, putting us all at ease and all the rest of that forensic malarkey, cut to the chase. When I think about talking to you, an audience like this, I go through my toolkit and try to say, you know, what is cogent, what's meaningful, what can bring us forward. And there seem to be, it's a changing list, but at the moment what seems to be going is the old perennial psychedelic alteration of consciousness for purposes of personal exploration, social reformation, creation of a new art, a new politic. That's one of the major pieces of the puzzle. Another major piece is the new communications technologies, and I mean not only the Internet but the software that allows us each and everyone of us to be animators, filmmakers, visually expressive people who can produce emotionally moving works of great depth and beauty. This is something that technology has brought to us. And strangely enough a technology largely produced by psychedelic heads, people like ourselves. I told you last year, I think when we discussed drugs and technology, that the only difference between a computer and a psychedelic was, one was too large to swallow. Well, you know, great progress has been made in twelve months, uhh, in another three or four years we will be able to swallow the computer. Some of us may never be able to swallow it. The third piece of the puzzle, which is sort of mine alone to play with, since no one else wants to be this publicly crazy, is the whole business of novelty theory, the approach of a singularity in time, that is sculpting the human and natural world and that is so large an object in the intuitive sphere of human beings, that it almost has religious overtones. And then the question for me, and the question for you I suppose is, how much of this can you take without having to take it all? How much of these ideas can you imbibe without having to go the whole distance? And the answer is, you know, it's a personal matter for each person to feel into their circumstance which means their history, both psychedelic and non-psychedelic. And then to feel into the projection of their future. Do you think you are repeating the lifestyles and algorithms of your parents and grandparents ad infinitum back to Adam, or do you feel like you stepped to the front of the train of human evolution, that you are making yourself new every day? If we reach too far back into the stabilizing metaphors of the past we get rigidity, habit, limitation. If we step too quickly into the unlimited freedom of the future we lose our grounding. Socialism did this over the past hundred years and because it abandoned any contact with a realistic human psychology, the best intended people ended up creating nightmare societies. If your theory is not true to the nature of humanness you will end up beating human beings like metal on the anvil of your ideology. And this creates great human suffering and, uhh, historical catastrophe. And I maintain that our own society suffers from a failure to adequately model and reflect the true nature of human beings. We have ideas, we have ideals that get in the way of realism and immediate experience. And when I was thinking about all of this and how to put it into a metaphor that would be appealing and amusing and lead people to look deeper into these things, I began to play with the idea, it's a religious idea. You all have heard, although probably more often in English than in Latin, the thought, "In principio est verbum et verbo caro factum est", which means "In the beginning was the word and the word was made flesh." This is the great overarching myth of western religion. It equally informs Islam, Christianity, Judaism. These three great flavors of monotheism all accept this primary statement "In the beginning was the word and the word was made flesh." What does it mean, for a moment taken away from the tired exegesis of the cults that have hammered at it for so long? What does it mean in and of itself? It means that language is somehow the privileged medium of exchange between human beings and the divine. That the descent of the word into flesh makes the flesh more than flesh, makes the word more than the word. The union of flesh and word launches the cosmic drama of fall and redemption that is the Ur-

myth of western society. And for centuries and centuries we've concentrated on one end of the story of the fall and the redemption. We have concentrated on the fall. But meanwhile through all the grimy betrayals and bloody backsliding of human history the word has quietly advanced its agenda. And I've been thinking a lot about this recently, because in a new book I'm writing I'm writing a lot about spoken language, speech. And I've come to a conclusion that, typical of me, is far from orthodoxy and far from much cover provided by anybody else's ideas on this matter. I've come to the conclusion that language is very old, thinking is very old, communicating is very old, by glance, by gesture, by dance, by meme, by intuition. But speech is very recent. It's a technological innovation as fresh as the Pentium chip or the spinning wheel. It's something someone invented somewhere. It's the most successful technological leap forward ever made. It's the discovery of symbolic signification that annoys, meaning nothing can by convention be given a meaning. And that that meaning will then attend that utterance wherever it occurs in the presence of those who have joined in the agreement that attaches the symbol to the meaningless utterance. It's a coding breakthrough. Somebody hacked this about 35,000 years ago. And immediately, as forms of media have a way of doing, it swamped the previous methods of communication. Because it worked in the dark, suddenly evenings were not so boring any more. It worked in the dark. It also, the touchy-feely forms of communication were generally one on one and related, probably, to having sex or aggressive physical encounters. But suddenly one voice could reach many and many could respond. And virtual reality was born at that moment. Not here in the late 20th century but at that moment, because acoustical environments laden with symbolic meaning became the name of the game. Stories is what we call these things and they are the proper use of the advanced form of medium know as human speech. It's using human speech to create three dimensional scenarios that unfold and everyone is carried along with the drama and the wonder of it. From that beginning in a series of successively accelerating leaps the word has made its way into the world. It's interesting that straight linguists and paleo-linguists believe human language is no more than 35,000 years old. Imagine that! We possess homo sapiens sapiens skeletons a 110,000 years old. People like the persons who rode with you on the bus yesterday, people that modern. And yet the experts tell us no one spoke until 35,000 years ago. No one wrote until 5 or 6,000 years ago. Reading and writing is simply a carrying forward of the original program of signification, first using acoustical signals and then some other hacker had the brilliant idea. "Well, if we can use sound to carry abstract associations, why not abstract symbols to carry abstract associations?" And writing was born. And what writing allows is expansion of the database because things are not dependent on the wetware of the human memory to survive from generation to generation. Suddenly the mush of brain is replaced by the durability of wood, and stone, and clay. And these things then become the medium upon which the primary database of the culture is being carried forward. Well, the rest of the story you know and this is not a lecture in the history of communication. Each succeeding refinement in communication has brought the word deeper into its association with the flesh, until the present. And at this moment there is a kind of a, what dynamicists call a cusp, a turning of the system upon its axes and the word is now beginning to make the return journey to the mysterious and hidden source from which it descended. In other words, spirit is now beginning to disentangle itself from matter. The 20th Century will be remembered as the great clash point, the great arena of conflict between the triumphal positivist and rational systems that European thought has developed over the past 300 years and the new irrational systems of thought which anthropology cheerfully imported into white high culture in the guise of reportage about the primitive. But this reportage about the primitive turns out to be a kind of ouroboric conundrum, the snake taking its tail in its mouth. In the past hundred years as these super technologies have been developed in the West, the smashing of atoms, the invention of radio, television, computers, immunology so forth and so on, data has been arriving about the practices of aboriginal cultures all over the planet. That they dissolve ordinary realities, ordinary cultural values through an interaction, a symbiosis, a relationship to local plants that

perturb brain chemistry. And in this domain of perturbed brain chemistry the cultural operating system is wiped clean. And something older, even for these people, something older, more vitalistic, more in touch with the animal's soul replaces it, replaces the cultural operating system. Something not determined by history and geography but something writ in the language of the flesh itself. This is who you are. This is true nakedness. You are not naked when you take off your clothes. You still wear your religious assumptions, your prejudices, your fears, your illusions, your delusions. When you shed the cultural operating system, then essentially you stand naked before the inspection of your own psyche. Desmond Morris called it "The naked ape." And it's from that position, a position outside the cultural operating system that we can begin to ask real questions about what does it mean to be human, what kind of circumstance are we caught in and what kind of structures, if any, can we put in place to assuage the pain and accentuate the glory and the wonder that lurks waiting for us in this very narrow slice of time between the birth canal and the yawning grave. In other words, we have to return to first premises. So, I've been thinking about this a lot. And at first it seemed to me only a metaphor, this phrase "Culture is your operating system." But because as I travel around a lot and get this jolting experience frequently of let's say leaving London on a foggy evening and arriving in Johannesburg 14 hours later to a sweltering day in a city of 14 million on the brink of anarchy, I get to change my operating system frequently. And so I notice the relativity of these systems. And some work for some things and some for others. For instance, if you are a positivist, if you're running positivism 4.0 you can't support UFOs. Positivism 4.0 does not support UFOs. If on the other hand you're running Urantia Book 5.1 8 as your operating system UFOs and a number of other things can get in through the door. That is, what we would technically say, a more tolerant operating system, or its plug in support special effects benighted at the positivist. Well, it's fun to think this way because it shows you that you don't have to be the victim of your culture. It's not like your eye color or your height or your gender. It's fragile, it can be remade if you wish it to be. And then the question is, well, how does one download a new operating system? Well, first of all you have to clear some space on your disc. The best way to do this is probably with a pharmacological agent. Umm, you think of one while I'll have a drink of water... You can put a lot of things in the trash and have them just disappear with a psilocybin upgrade. Other pharmacological agents that will clear your disk are ayahuasca. And of course these are gentle clearings of the disk which take five, six, seven hours. If you're in a hurry to dump that old data and leap right into the new operating system click on the button marked dimethyltryptamine. A compressed disc erasure will immediately be downloaded un-stuffed, bin hexed, implemented, installed, run and you will find yourself with an entirely different head. Now shamans have always known, though they may not have used the kind of language I'm using here, shamans have always known this trick. What trick? It has two facets. First of all that culture is an operating system, that's all it is, and that the operating system can be wiped out and replaced by something else. So in, essentially what's going on among shamans and those who resort to them for curing and counseling and so forth is, somebody is running a slightly more advanced operating system than the customer. The shaman is in possession of certain facts about plants, about animals, about healing, about human psychology, about the local geography, about mojo of many different sorts that the client is not aware of. The client is running culture lite. The shaman paid for the registered and licensed version of the software and is running a much heavier version of the software than the client. I think we should all aspire to make this upgrade. It's very important that you have all the bells and whistles on your operating system otherwise somebody is gonna be able to get leg up on you. Well, what's wrong with the operating system that we have? Consumer capitalism 5.0 or whatever it is. Well, it's dumb! It's retro, it's very non-competitive. It's messy, it wastes the environment, it wastes human resources, it's inefficient, it runs on stereotypes, it runs on a low sampling rate, which is what creates stereotypes, low sample rates make everybody appear alike, when in fact the glory is in everyone's differences, and the current operating system is flawed. It actually has bugs in it, that generate

contradictions. Contradictions such as we're cutting the earth from beneath our feet. We're poisoning the atmosphere that we breathe. This is not intelligent behavior. This is a culture with a bug in its operating system that's making it produce erratic, dysfunctional, malfunctioning behavior. Time to call a tech. And who are the techs? The shamans are the techs. Well, so I think you get the idea, uhh, very important to upgrade your operating system by dumping obsolete cultural subroutines. They are simply taking up disc space. They are not advancing you in any way whatsoever. Now, a very large group of people who followed this advice and rebuilt their operating system in the 1960's, went on then to build this most amazing of all cultural artifacts, the Internet. The Internet is light at the end of the tunnel. I don't care if it's being used to peddle pornography, I don't care if it's being trivialized in a thousand ways. Anything can be trivialized. The important point is that it is leveling the playing field of global society. It is creating de-facto an entirely new set of political realities. None of the constipated, oligarchic structures that are resisting this were ever asked. Their greed betrayed them into investing in this in the first place without ever fully grasping what the implications of it were for their larger agenda. The Internet basically means, you can now be as free as you are motivated to be, as free as you dare to be. Tim Leary, years ago, it was something he used to say, it never got quoted as much as, "turn on, tune in, drop out," but it seemed to me it was maybe better advice, and he used to say: "Find the others, find the others!" Well, you know, if you're a gay kid in Fargo, North Dakota, if you're a mescaline enthusiast in Winnipeg, if you're a student of alchemy in Moosejaw, community is pretty much out of reach for you, or it was until the coming of the Internet. And the Internet introduces everybody, no matter how weird, no matter how marginalized, no matter how peculiar, to the fact that there are others like you. There are others like you. Find the others. Make common cause. Realize that it's the deals you cut and the friends you make that determine where you're going to be standing when the flash hits. I mean, that's just obvious and by, you see, the cultural game is a game of uniformitarianism. Cultural myths are that we are all alike. We Americans, each created equal. I mean, if you can believe that at an operational level, then I have some bridges I would like to sell you, uhh, it's a necessary truth to do political business but it is not the truth. The truth is that you are not created equal with your self from day to day, leave alone any comparison with anybody else. You are not the person you were yesterday nor the person you will be next week. What is an observation like that? What shadow does it cast on a world of 'all people are created equal?' Clashes of operating systems. There's an axiom in one 'all created equal' and an axiom in the other 'each divergent.' These things can't be parsed, they can't be brought together. So, culture plays a game of simplification. If you can make people think alike they will buy alike, they will worship alike, and if, you know, politics demands it they will kill alike. So, the uniformitarian agenda of culture is not an agenda friendly to you or to me or to any other individual. And if you start out from that point of view, you will soon realize that culture is not your friend. Now this is not exactly PG-13 to say what if everybody running around recovering their Latvian roots and their Irishness, and their this, their whatever, culture is not your friend. If you define yourself as a member of a group, of any group, know that that is a gross simplification. And that everything about you that is interesting and unique is betrayed by defining yourself in that way. You know, most racism is practiced by people of the race that they are making racial judgements about. White people have far more racial opinions about white people than any other racial group because that's where they spend their time. These gross simplifications betray humanity, betray uniqueness, make sane politics impossible. What we have to do is get back to the reality of the flesh. The reality of the individual identity. This is how we come packaged. A race that's an abstraction. These days you have to have three years of genetics under your belt to give a satisfactory definition of the word if we really gonna go to the mat on it. I mean it's an abstraction of modern science. It's a notion so far removed from anything you and I come in contact with that we should just junk it. What we need to celebrate is the individual. Have you not noticed, I certainly have, that every historical change you can think of, in fact any change you can think of, forget about human

beings, any change in any system that you can think of is always ultimately traceable to one unit in the system undergoing a phase state change of some sort. No group, there are no group decisions. Those things come later. The genius of creativity and of initiation of activity always lies with the individual. And it's very interesting that this is what the psychedelics address. They address us uniquely as individuals. You can sit next to somebody who drank from the same bottle you did and be perfectly confident that their experience has very little congruency with your own. Well, so then if we let the scales of cultural values fall from our eyes and try not to look at the world through the eyes of science, or democracy, or capitalism, or Christianity, what is there beyond ideology, what are the facts of the matter? As I see it, the most visible facts on the surface of things, on the surface of being, I see the law of increasing complexity. Things have gotten more complicated through time. I have never met anyone who could successfully argue against this. That doesn't mean it's true but it means that maybe, as Wittgenstein used to say, "True enough." True enough. That as you approach the present moment in the only area of the universe which we have accurate data about, which is this planet, things become more complicated. A million years ago there were no human civilizations, a thousand years ago there were no machines to speak of, a hundred years ago there was no communication infrastructure to speak of, ten years ago there was no Internet, eighteen months ago there was no Java. Things are complexifying, intensifying, moving together. This is the universal drama that is reaching culmination in our lifetimes. Because, and I offer this, don't believe me for God's sake, don't believe anybody, just take this stuff in and then measure it against your own experience. The second extra cultural fact that I've been able to discern, the first being 'things get more complicated as you approach the present,' and the second being, 'that process of complexification is occurring faster and faster.' The early universe was very slow moving. It took a long time for things to cool down and life to begin its agonizing march out of the slime into animal form, meeting extinction and catastrophe and setback after setback but always picking itself up, literally, out of the mud and moving forward. Well, as life left the ocean the pace of evolution quickened. As life radiated across the land the number of phyla multiplied the number of species multiplied, finally, a million years ago, pick a number, a million and a half years ago, the higher primates begin to use tools, fire enters the picture. And just as an aside, isn't it interesting how long people used tools and fire before spoken language enters the picture? I mean, we possess tools a million years old, human tools, language 35,000 years old. When I was in South Africa last year, I was in this place that reminded me of, like the Four Corners area around Moab Utah, was like nothing like I had expected South Africa to be, and when I wasn't teaching I would wander the dry arroyos and hunt for human tools. And there was an archeologist staying in a bar, or in the hotel there and we would drink in the evening in the bar, and I would lay my day's find out on the bar, and he would sort it into piles and he says, "Nothing in this pile is less than 165,000 years old. Everything in this pile is from..."
-Cut Tape- ...human tools, we're talking about. Now I've lost my thread because I was so thrilled with my side bar. I think I can get it back, uhh yea, here it is, here it is, ha ha, and they say potheads can't think! Here it is. The second obvious fact which haunts the post cultural viewpoint is this acceleration of change, and I've sort of built my career on this because I am a rationalist but I feel the emotional power of this thing. We are caught in a basin of attraction, to use a mathematical term. In other words we are under the influence of something which is pulling us into the future or into novelty, if you want to put it that way, at a faster and faster rate. So problems which are presented in the following terms "If we don't do something in 500 years we will run out of this that or the other" or, "If we don't do something, in a thousand years this or that will happen," these are meaningless, statistics. Because the acceleration into novelty is rewriting the rules now every eighteen months. We are descending now into a well of novelty such that more change is now occurring in a single human lifetime than occurred in the previous ten thousand years of human history. We are approaching at a faster and faster rate something unthinkable. Something which is sculpting us in it's image. something which shamans have always known was there though they may not

have used the metaphor 'ahead in time,' that's a Western download of where it is, because you could just as well say it's in heaven, or behind us in time, or everywhere, or nowhere. The point is we're about to arrive in its presence. And, it is shaping us to prepare us for the arrival. It is making us more and more in its image. This is not a new process. This began a long, long time ago. But it's now reaching its culmination. And I said a few minutes ago "The Internet is a light at the end of the tunnel". The Internet is the beginning of a nervous system that is knitting not only all human beings but all life together, all information together. Because, you know, there already is an Internet. It's called the integrated ecosystem of Planet Three. It runs on pheromones, it runs on weather systems, ocean tides, tell uric currents moving in the earth, thousands of methods. It is that way because our cultural tradition is one of reductionism, tearing things apart, break them into their subordinate units, break those into still smaller units. Well, if you have a theory of reality like that, what you end up with is, all the pieces spread out and no car and nowhere to go. But nature has always operated as an integrated system of communication and the Internet is in a sense nothing more than a human aping of a natural system already in place. If we could do it through pheromones, light mycelium and electromagnetic pulses through the earth, we wouldn't be stringing copper and cable and fiber optic. Those things are simply historical artifacts of the moment. What lies ahead on the Internet, what lies ahead, I think for us, and this is the last point I really wanna make. And we can talk about all this, is, you know, I have been a true resister of the alien penetration of human civilization because I just saw no evidence for it. But the chant that they are coming has now grown so loud, I feel like sort of one has to ask oneself short of one hundred percent skepticism, what the hell is going on with this alien hype? And I think the problem is one of modeling and intelligence. There is an alien, we are in the cultural process of meeting this alien but they do not come in thousand ton beryllium ships from Zeneba Ganubi to trade high technology for human fetal tissue. I mean that, if you be, that's an intelligence test, folks. That's not how it works. Our own hysteria makes it very difficult to deal with the presence of the alien, and the alien knows that. That's why it has disguised itself as a psychedelic experience, I think. You know how in all this '50s B science fiction movies there was always this theme of the landing area. And I saw it in 'Mars Attacks!' too. There must be a landing zone. Somehow we must let them know that we welcome them by building a landing area. And the Nazca plane has been claimed and on, and on, and on. I think that the alien is a creature of pure information. It's purely information. It's non-local. It comes out of the Bell non-locality part of the universe that exists distributed through hyperspace. The alien is real but it is only made of information. And therefore the only dimension in which it can be encountered is a dimension of pure information. Fortunately we are building a dimension of pure information. Providentially we have named it 'The Net'. The Net is a net for catching the alien mind. How will it come? Will it descend upon our websites in a flash of light? I don't think so. How it will come is half through human fingers. The alien is real but it is within us. It can only communicate information. And that information has to be made real in this world by human coders. So if we were to set out lightheartedly to build a virtual reality as alien as we could make it, I maintain that three quarters of the way our hair would be standing on end because we would realize we are not inventing this. We are discovering it. You know, Michelangelo said, "The form is in the block of marble. What I do is I take away the part that is unnecessary and reveal the human torso." In the same way the alien is already within us but we must model it, we must call it forth into a dimension of potential dialogue. And I think that this is what high tech society can bring to the shamanic equation. Shamans have been dealing with spirits, entities, powers for more than 100,000 years. But it has always been on a one to one basis. One human being at a time went up Mount Sinai to talk to the fire on the mountain. But with virtual reality we have a technology to show each other our dreams and, yes, our hallucinations. And as we begin to show each other the contents of our heads and as we begin to explore the alien niagaras of beauty that pour through your consciousness under the influence of some of these substances. We are going to discover that we are not what we thought we were. The monkey flesh is being

penetrated by something... Dare I say it? Divine! Or at least alien, trans-planetary and beyond the power of human comprehension. I don't know if we are talking about God Almighty here. I don't know if we are talking about the god 'who hang the stars like lamps in heaven,' as Milton says. That seems a tall order. Maybe what we are talking about is the god of biology. Something has happened to this planet. It has been infected with an informational, call it virus, call it force, call it beam? That is using matter and yes, using our flesh and our thoughts to bootstrap itself to higher and higher levels. And now the prosthesis of machinery and the possibility of an artificial intelligence raises the real option of producing... of actually midwifing the birth of an entirely new, not species, but order of biological and intelligence in existence. The human machine symbiote is upon us. I mean it's been with us for a while since the first wheel was carved, since the first stick was sharpened but that was all very simple stuff. Now it's clear that we are in partnership with another mind which comes to us through our machinery's and through the biosphere. Wherever we press beyond the thin curtain of rationalist culture we discover the incredibly rich, erotic, scary, promising, presence of this intelligent other which beckons us out of history and says, you know, "The galaxy lies waiting. A galaxy, or galaxies lie waiting. Loose the encumbrances of three dimensional space. Return with the word to its higher and hidden source." And at that point you will discover the alchemical Paraclete will be given unto you. The alchemical dispensation will be given and as James Joyce said, "Man will be dirigible." What did he mean? He meant that we will loose the limitations of physical and three dimensional space. We are destined to become mental creatures, "But isn't this a terrible thing? What about this, that, and the other?" All the things you're worrying about, we turned our back on 25,000 years ago. we have been marching through this virtual reality of our own creation for the entire duration of what is called human history. Now, uhh, is there a political implication to all of this? I think the political implication is a personal one. We all must try to understand what is happening. We need to try to understand what is happening. And in my humble opinion ideology is only going to get in your way. Nobody understands what is happening. Not Buddhists, not Christians, not government scientists, not, you know, no one understands what is happening. So forget ideologies. They betray, they limit, they lead astray. just deal with the raw data and trust yourself. Nobody is smarter than you are. And what if they are? What good is their understanding doing you? People who walk around saying, "Well I don't understand quantum physics but somewhere somebody understands it." That's not a very helpful attitude toward reserving the insights of quantum physics. Inform yourself. What does inform yourself mean? It means transcend and mistrust ideology. Go for direct experience. What do you think when you face the waterfall? What do you think when you have sex? What do you think when you take Psilocybin? Everything else is unconfirmable rumor, useless, probably lies. So liberate yourself from the illusion of culture. Take responsibility for what you think and what you do. And then the other political implication toward community is, a lot of people are going to be very anxious because change raises anxiety in people and people who have limited opportunities to educate themselves because of culturally inflicted abuse are scared because they can sense that everything familiar is giving way but they don't want to embrace the unimaginable. These people need to be reassured. They need to be reassured by example and by hearing optimistic and reasonable rhetoric about the future. Selling the future as an eight alarm fire, which is how the media does it, only makes a sane future impossible. So we need a responsible approach to thinking about the future and it means taking personal responsibility, for your drug taking, for the ideas, the memes, that you push into society, and for the images that we share among ourselves. You know, one of the great truisms of the new age is that images can heal. But I never heard anybody discuss the obvious contrary implication which is, images can make you sick. And you are constantly bombarded with images which disempower, divide, confuse and make crazy, basically. So, I think psychedelics are such political dynamite in any culture is because they dissolve cultural assumptions. The scales fall from people's eyes and they say, "Does this make sense? Does my job make sense? Does my relationship make sense, to my significant

other, to my government, to my children, to my environment? Do these relationships make sense?" And of course the answer for most people in high tech society is no. We've been compromised, we've been deluded, we've been sold a massive pottage. The way out then is personal responsibility, new operating systems downloaded from outside of culture, which means from the deeper wisdom of the psychedelic plants and then a commitment to community and a motto of "To the future, without fear!" Without fear!

This talk was transcribed from a cassette tape marked, "Austin Texas 1997."

Original Transcription by: [Copied from Audio Archive(Jo Trott) by Jonathanlal]

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Limits of Art & Edges of Science

March 1992

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Linear Societies and Nonlinear Drugs

16 January 1999

Entheobotany Seminar Chan Kha Hotel, Palenque, Mexico

Event Description: On Saturday night, January 16, 1999, Terence McKenna gave one of his last lectures at the legendary Entheobotany Series by the foot of the pool at the Chan Kha Hotel near the Mayan ruins of Palenque. There were about 100 people sitting in the moon- light, listening to the lowing of cattle in the distance and the occasional chatter of the howler monkeys in the trees nearby.

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Partial Transcription](#)
- [Matrix Masters link with extra info about the talk](#)

Well, so then let me turn to the main event. I've got a snoot full of Tequila and a messianic mission [audience laughter] pawing the ground to talk to you, as usual.

Everybody has their own [???

Uh, I guess the title of tonight's talk is Linear Societies and Nonlinear Drugs, which uh, is something that I just had to pull out of the air when Kim finally slammed me to the wall for what I would be talking about this night many months ago. But, more and more for me, especially with this group, these things have become sort of, uh, summations and, I guess I hope, convivial examinations of just where we are- we each and every one of us -and then this enterprise, whatever we mean by that, in the context of everything else that's happening in the world. In other words, the psychedelic experience, uh, the entheogenic experience, uh, contextualized. And as I try to think about, you know, what, if anything, I can bring to the party I guess it's that what I'm interested in is uh, psychedelics as a philosophical tool. And when I concretize that for myself I realized no-ther's

no claims on that part of discourse.

No one wants to do this. Uh, philosophy i-academic philosophy is done in a very formal manner, and the most exciting is incredibly stuffy. And yet I - like most of you I assume - have taken on board in my life this thing called the psychedelic experience, which is then as large a portion of my being as my sexuality, my politics, my education, it, it shapes everything. And yet, nowhere in the world of philosophical discourse is there any genuflection at least overtly made to this, maybe not since Plato talked about uh, shadows on the walls on the cave, and so forth and so on.

Well, so, uh, what can psychedelics and the psychedelic experience bring to philosophy, and, and what do I mean by philosophy? By philosophy I mean, uh, the enterprise of discursive thinking. Trying to understand what the world is and who's asking the question. You know, where did the world come from? Where is it bound and who's along for the ride?

And it seems to me that we as a community have - this is sort of hard to wrap your mind around at least for me - but we have in a sense inculcated into ourselves the image of an underclass so that we struggle for legal toleration of our, of our practices and our habits. But we don't struggle for intellectual legitimization of our vision. We accept that they are somehow contextually marginal. And, and as I thought about that I realized that that is a limitation on the community. That, uh, the information which is coming from the psychedelic experience as interpreted by Western people is

primary evidence for the need for a major paradigm shift in the whole way, uh the Western mentality does business.

Well, what kind of evidence and what kind of shift? Well, [clears throat] there's a lot of talk in our community, and there had been for many, many years about shamanism. And when we seek to legitimize ourselves through a historical argument we reach back to shamanism and we say we're part of something which is a hundred thousand years old and worldwide and touched the spirit long before the shadow of the cross fell over Jerusalem and so forth and so on. All, all true. Um, and in a way that has, I think, the- that, uh tendency, which is part of the broader tendency in the Western mind to, uh valorize and grow nostalgic over the primitive has put a certain political cast on our, on our uh, stance and our position. But what we are is uh, again contextually, is a culture of science, uh, and I'm speaking now of our community. It's the Albert Hoffmans and the, and the Dave Nichols and the Sasha Shulgins who have kept our canoe afloat. These are men of science, its methods, its vocabulary, its culture. We have not, though we certainly honor those people and love them - as their rhetoric is not the primary rhetoric of the larger community of psychedelic users, which

tends toward this - uh, as I referred to it - shamanistic aboriginal nostalgia.

This- I mean I- I'll turn left here for a moment. I feel more comfortable with the scientific end of things. I think the news coming out of science is the most psychedelic news, uh, there is. When I go to the Internet I go to things like science alert and the Hubble picture of the day and uh, and this sort of thing. And, uh, our community as a whole, I think, is not involved enough in incorporating the, the vistas. If, you know, we- while we struggle to legalize psychedelics, psychedelic thinking is everywhere triumphant because the instruments built by linear science throw open doorways on the unimaginable and the most revered and hoary jefes of the scientific establishment have to genuflect before this stuff.

I mean, what am I talking about? Well for example, Science Magazine, uh wrote last week that the most important scientific breakthrough of 1998 was the, uh, apparent observation and agreement upon that observation by the astrophysical community of a cosmological constant. Uh, it- it- this sounds like very deep physics, but if I give it to you as a headline what is means is the entire universe, every atom and every empty space of it, is ruled by a very weird force that has now been seriously known to science for precisely five months. [audience laughter] Uh, a force which is apparently going to overcome gravity's tendency to collapse the universe and to cause it to expand in a very explosive and counterintuitive and psychedelic fashion that is the complete confoundment of the core science that Western linear thinking has, has built. And of course there weren't riots in the streets

and the electricity didn't fail, uh, but at the very pinnacles of the antennae of the evolving civilization, uh, there was a shudder felt in the force you may be sure.

So, there are two much larger forces than our community that are in play in terms of shaping the cultural modality and, and I would call them, um ... what would I call them? I would call one of them science. It's the other one I am having trouble with. It, it is uh, everything which is not anchored in the rational. You know the 20th century has the most spectacular celebratory affair with the irrational since the 16th century. I mean never before had so many prophets, wizards, wise women, casters of runes, and seers of visions moved among the people uh, uh, uh plying their wares. Uh, and part of this is brought on by the tension between the failure of the education system at the very moment of an inflationary expansion of knowledge. So that it's very hard to, to be au courant in all fields and if your not current in a field then probably your version of that field is some kind of story, a myth, you know. Uh, I mean if you can't keep up with quantum physics why not fall back on archangels, you know. It requires less intellectual engagement or something like that. Uh, discourse is fragmenting. Fields of discourse are evolving vocabulary so rapidly that the understanding of these vocabularies is not penetrating very far beyond the core group of workers. So then this is creating kind of islanded systems of self reference where outside those systems of self reference information doesn't travel. Uh, the people who are the gene splicers know very little about remote sensing and

both of those parties know very little about uh, recent discoveries in astrophysics, for example. So, there's an intellectual fragmentation.

Uh, I live in Hawaii and in a forest in fairly remote conditions, and so I entertain all this in my mind all the time, and try to – my faith, and I assume it's the psychedelic faith, although we have had some fairly existential characters in our ranks over the years. [laughs, laughter] But uh, but the psychedelic faith I think is that uh, the universe is beautiful in the Platonic sense and therefore good and true. In other words we are optimists. We are not flailing existentialists. We are not relativists because we have a real standard to measure our spiritual coinage against. So we're not relativists. This is a point I'm really keen to make because we're embedded in relativism. It's all around us. It's the air we breathe but it is not inimical to the psychedelic community. I mean, I think the psychedelic experience is the only authentic source of uh, uh reliable contact with the numinous. I mean meditation, so forth and so on, is all very fine but uh, it requires a leisure class involved in philanthropic support of this kind of foolishness, where uh, the psychedelic experience is immediate and uh, and real. So uh – now I've lost my way here, ... ah yes, no, optimism – so I sit in Hawaii and I look at all this and I try to contextualize it and, and come out with a, a good story because I think the best story will win. [audience chuckling] Uh, so if you can get together the best version of how it should all come out – so shall it be. And I work at this because in the past I've been very, very

happy with the results between my interior fantasy and the unfolding of historical development. I mean, I, I wished for LSD and then it happened, [audience chuckles] and then I dreamed of the Internet and then it happened. So I should keep at this.

Uh, uh, and I recently read a very interesting book called "A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History" by Michael [Manuel] De Landa, and if you get a chance you should take a look at this. And he made a point, which caused me to expand his point into this little thing I'm gonna tell you now, but his point was that uh, human beings are very involved in the movement of geological material. That as a species we move rocks around on a very large scale and of course it's interesting that the ear-some of the earliest human structures are the most physically massive and weighty, like the great pyramids. So De Landa made this point about our relationship with the st- the geological stratigraphy of the earth, and that cities were a kind of geological extension of the process of crystallization carried on through the intermediation of a biological unit i.e. intelligent primates who are building

these structures. And, uh I thought that was very interesting. I had never considered it before.

I'd al- I've talked about virtual reality and I've said that it's nothing new that Ur was a virtual reality and Çatalhöyük was a virtual reality, but done in stucco and fired ceramic and stone. And that when the medium is so intractable as stone the epistemic assumptions that get formed about what reality is are very different then if you can build Versailles at the click of a mouse button. Uh, but nevertheless it's the same. But embedded in my reading of De Landa was, I've been thinking a lot and I talked to you a lot last year about artificial intelligences and minds which are not human. Minds which are very different from us. Intelligence which is very different from us. Uh, you know, while the naïve are scanning the stars our appliances have become telepathic. We- there is a very strange kind of intelligence being called into existence by ourselves, strangely enough, and this is the connection to De Landa. This artificial intelligence which is being called into being by human activity is made of the same materials as Ur and Çatalhöyük. It's made of ceramics, glasses, and metals. It's that, uh- so then I took this on board and thought about it and I, I've sort of come to some

kind of 'Cyber pantheistic Emersonianism', [audience chuckles] which is, uh ... I'll give it to you as a headline and then work backwards so that in case I forget what I'm saying it won't be lost to suffering mankind. [audience laughs]

The earth's strategy for its own salvation is through machines – is what it is. And, human beings are some kind of uh – we are the deputized spouse. We are the bride in this alchemical rarefaction of glasses, ceramics, metals and uh, and volatile materials. Apparently the earth is like some kind of an embryonic, uh or fetal thing. And at the end of its gestation what is happening is, it is ramifying its nervous system – is appearing in its developmental- in the unfolding of its morphogenesis. And as we contemplate nanotechnologies and see ourselves working through bacteria and this sort of thing at the engineering level. You have to be blind to not then reflect back upon the fact that in some sense we are already working at that kind of level, at the behest of it is not clear who. Because nobody ever asked the question in quite this way before. The answer to who, I think, is, is the earth. And that what lies ahead at the end of the linear tunnel of, of Western subjectivist, positivist, structuralist, assumptions that we've been operating, when we hit the end of the tunnel and burst out into the larger mental space of cosmic evolution, what we are going to find is that we are partners, actors in a cosmic drama that involves the earth at one polarity and machine at the other polarity as the expression of the will of the earth toward a kind of self reflective transcendence that is achieved through machine-human-biotic symbiosis. And this is, you know, there will never be a headline

which says this. Some people won't even notice that it's happening because these large scale processes can be described by many metaphors at many depths, but I'm telling you I think this is what's going on.

Uh, the reason I like this story is because uh, it's not a story about processes out of control. It's not a story about human guilt. It's not a story full of we musts and we should. It's a story, which gives honor to every part of the unfolding experience field, in other words biology, technology, human culture, human traditional values, transcendent human disextopian values. It's a story of things on course on time and under budget [audience chuckles] and I assume that's how nature really operates. And that we live inside some kind of anxiety-producing culture that is uh, a necessary, I don't want to say evil, but a necessary response to conditions of stress. Uh, there are processes which let, you know, waste, nuclear waste build up, urbanization, land disturbance, there are processes which if allowed to run on indefinitely would wreck the whole system and pitch it into chaos. But Confucius said uh, "No tree grows to heaven", and what he meant by that is that is it's fruitless to project any process to infinity because any process projected to infinity creates some kind of catastrophic scenario. If no fruit flies died in six months the earth would spin out of its orbit from the

weight of fruit flies. No, I don't think that's true [laughter] But what an image! [laughter]

Somebody once told me if the earth completely disappeared except for its nematodes that you could still see the outlines of the continents if you were standing on the moon. [audience laughter] I thought, now just who gathered this? [laughter] So then to bring this back around a little, where, where is the psychedelic experience in all of this? Well, um, it used to be called or at one phase it was called uh, consciousness expansion and consciousness expansion in human beings is going to become uh, an absolute necessity because we are summoning out of the woodwork of cybernetic technology machines that are going to require super-intelligent humans to direct and uh, and have discourse with them. This is happening. It is already happening. I mean the Internet is this. I mean it doesn't tap you on the shoulder and remind you to brush your teeth, but it is, you know, a partner in the understanding of the world that is genie-like, that's the image I have when I sit down to it. It is, it is, uh, all John Dee would have asked of his archangelic messengers. He wanted instantaneous information on the political situation on the course of Europe. He wanted information on the

course of the- Drake's expedition, then on the other side of the planet. The internet is this kind of magical intelligent prosthesis, uh, and as I said there wont come a dramatic moment, I think, à la lawnmower man or something like that.

These, these things are, are much more seeping. The only people who in fact can see the game move against the background of the forest pattern are psychedelic heads. Uh, you have to think about this stuff and you have to develop vocabularies for catching it in action. Uh, this is what the game of, of uh, being an intellectual is, I think – uh, trying to, trying to see the processes of morphological unfolding in action and guess uh the direction in which it's headed. Uh, because it's inevitably headed toward greater density of information at greater speeds, higher level integrative metaphors,

visually rather than textually displayed, uh, transformation of such graphic and glyphic elements over time. It becomes more and more like the interface of a computer, more and more like some kind of uh, machine environment.

I mean, we have thought, for I assume, at least a hundred thousand years maybe much uh longer, but the quality of thought, you know, it was early- when it was early it was intermittent, it was thin, it was a groping, it was uh, an undigested intuition, a perception slipping away from the minds eye. Because of media reinforcement and education and acculturation and the passage of a hundred thousand years, the voice of the mind, the, the Logos, uh, has grown stronger. But now it takes uh, a, an exponential leap forward into visualization, into manifestation through this information

processing prosthesis that integrates us all. And, you know, I can imagine a future not very far away where the, the individual, uh, expression of the individual is lowered is more muted.

I mean, this is the most individualistic individual worshipping century – the century just ending – that we have ever known. And its, its great accomplishments, its great works of art were all accomplished by individuals and of political undertaking such as the Third Reich and so forth and so on. Also highly motivated individuals who rose above the masses. I'm-I'm not sure we can afford the luxury of that kind of exhibitionistic individualism in the future. And I think probably that it's not that we are talking about a restriction of human rights, we are talking about a transformation of human drives. Uh, the states of integration and collectivity that will be sold as public utilities in the next century are anticipated now by group psychedelic experiences, ayahuasca sessions, this sort of thing. And the dichotomy – and I think I made this clear when I talked about the earth and

machines – the dichotomy between the natural and the artificial is an obsession of the 20th century. Hence cancelled now. Uh, in fact a whole bunch of things are cancelled.

We were talking at home about how, how uh, Roger Shattuck in his history of Dada said that "The 20th century couldn't wait to be born. It was born in 1888 at the death of Victor Hugo." and then I said, "well so if it was born in 1888 when did the 20th century end?" and I think it ended in 1992, expired early with the birth of the World Wide Web. What defined all that modernity was mass media. You know, uh, mass media shaped that whole psychology and it is now archaic – it's not archaic it's obsolete. Uh, it-it's wonderful that the phrase "20th century" is beginning to have that wonderful brown gray Edwardian tone that used to be reserved for the term 19th century. [audience chuckles] Meaning those terribly stuffy and confused and rather silly people who just didn't quite get it right but were doing the best they could and muddling through and thank God they gave

way to us, the people of the 21st century. [laughter]

Let me see here. Is there a flashlight? I have a page full of notes. I needn't be so, uh ... If anything here that wasn't touched on ...

Well some notes about um, the this planetary intelligence (– thank you June –) and how all that works. Um, one of the insights that I've been reading different people this year, maybe you can tell, and one of the people I've been reading is Greg Egan who I've talked about last year. But now I've

read more. Now I've read Diaspora and the ones where he makes no effort whatsoever to explain it to you unless you've already done your homework. And, uh, what I- and then Jonathan today in his lecture talked about DNA a little bit and frame slippage and all of that and it reminded me of it.

The thing that I'm coming to from my psychedelic, uh, experience and my life experience and the whole ball of wax, is, uh, I-I said for many, many years that the world is made of language. That was just sort of one of, of my bumper stickers. But I think that there's that that carries some of the flavor of what I wanna say there, but that there's more to it than that. It's, it's that uh, everything is code. Everything is code in the sense that hackers mean when they say they write code. When Sasha stands up and waves his arms and draws what he calls the dirty pictures he initiates you into a code, a vocabulary with very, uh defined rules and quick to learn. And then they are likeinker toys. Once you know the rules of the connectivity then you can sit down like a child and begin to stick these things together. And say well what would this be like, and what would this be like, and does

God allow this or does this break the rules and so forth.

The DNA is like that. Human language is like that. Uh, human body language is like that. Machines communicate like this. In fact, uh, uh this is a-a bridge which connects us. This is the great overarching bridge which will connect us to the machines, that they, like us are uh, commanded by

language.

And so uh, this realization that everything is code and code moving on many levels is I think a further ... – it's more primary than the perception, for example, that things are made of space, time, matter and energy. That's one level below code. The code codes for space, time, matter, and energy. It's much more like we're in um, a simulacrum, some kind of machine environment. And in fact I like that idea because I've always sensed, and psychedelics have always intensified this intuition in me, that the universe is a puzzle, life is a, is a problem to be solved, it's a conundrum. It's not what it appears to be. There is uh, there are doors, there are locks and keys. There are levels, uh, and if you, if you get it right somehow it will give way to something extremely unexpected. DMT is a perfect example of that and of course at the molecular level it literalizes that metaphor. I mean, the DM-

the DMT is the molecular key, the extraneous object introduced into the front door of the synaptic receptor. And then, you know, you can plunder the palace – for five minutes. [laughter]

Well if ... if the, if the world is uh, the world is code then it can be hacked. In other words it won't, it needn't stand still in quite the same way that it stands still in your mind if you believe in something called the laws of physics. Uh, it permits magic because it says behind the laws of physics is a deeper level, and if you can reach that deeper level you can make uh, you can make changes there.

Now and this leads onto something that I wanted to say about an earlier theme where I was talking about the legitimization of the, of the community's intuitions. There's something that we always kick around at these things or I always bring it up in some form is where do the hallucinations come from?

Uh, we arrived late last night from a 24 hour trip from Hawaii that was just hell, or as much hell as modern airlines can legally inflict upon you. [audience chuckles] And you know, we got stoned, so we were laying there, and it always happens when, you know, you're cut off from cannabis for long periods like that you return to it it's ten times as strong and the hallucinations were exquisite. And, you know, I've been looking at hallucinations now for thirty some years. And, and I looked at these last night and I thought, if someone would ask me, "What were they like", what would I have to say? And I said, "Indescribable! Indescribable." I looked and looked, I could look to my heart's content and they were in- uh, indescribable. So we always come around to this question, uh, where do the hallucinations come from? And I suppose the unconscious reductionists among us – and I don't mean that they're unconscious, I mean that they unconsciously use reductionism – probably assume that it's some kind of like iteration thing. That bits and pieces of everything you've ever seen are rolling in some kind of neurological kaleidoscope that can run for ever and just produce this endless download of drifting imagery. But there's a problem with that. Because this stuff is too coherent, it means too much, it's too emotionally charged.

Well, we have never really rallied as a group to try and locate in our, in our combined opinions the one or several sources of these images. And uh, I think that uh, and I talked a bit about this last year, but I think that this is legitimate perception of, of uh, thoughts, places, things, times, and objects that either have existed somewhere in the universe or do exist or have existed in the minds of beings somewhere, sometime, in the universe. In other words, that we have to begin to take seriously the consequences of generalizations like quantum connectivity. In other words, it's one thing to bask in the light of the overarching metaphor, which says that everything is connected to everything else. It's quite another thing to say, "And so then what are the consequences, for me, of this?"

And the answer seems to me to be that ins- that the inside of our imagination, the inside of our heads, really is the most vast frontier imaginable. And we must leave it for future generations, or maybe not generations, but future evolutionary biologists to figure out why an animal nervous system would evolve a propensity for accessing Bell non-local data, in other words, quantum mechanically accessible data at a different level of the physics of things. There must be a reason. And in the same way that the problem of speciation posed a problem for 19th century biology this can pose a problem for our thinking without it sinking our intellectual enterprise. It is for some more sophisticated future group of thinkers to understand why this is so.

What we have to grapple with is, that it is so, that it is so. That, uh, you know, you have the Hubble telescope inside of you. You have inside of you an informational gathering instrument that can give you good intelligence about things so immeasurably distant from this point that to state it in numbers and units is meaningless. It's just elsewhere. The elsewhere of the absolute infinity of the, of the plenum of the imagination in which apparently beings rise and fall like plankton in the sea.

And of course the psychedelics are the, the naturally evolved nano-machinery of the Gaian matrix that knits together this cosmic um e-cology, this system of living relationships. I-I have, am not impatient with the idea of extraterrestrial life or intelligence just its pop regurgitation. But I think probably planets like the earth are alive and conscious, and they use the technologies that the species native to them evolve to cast images out into the larger universe, that the dialogue among cosmic minds is a dialogue among entire planetary ecosystems. It's not- it can't be trivialized into some "take me to your leader" scenario. Still less can it validate the unscheduled visit of pro-bono proctologists from nearby star systems. I mean, you have to get a grip. [laughter]

Well, so let's see. What ... is anything else here. Can I have the light given to me? Oh, I know, one other thought that I ... – in assessing this year in science. I talked about omega, a cosmological constant. And that is really incredible. In fact, let me do a personal breast beating thing and point out to you that this thing that they have come upon, omega the cosmological constant, this absolutely, you know, 50 years or so ago Einstein called it "the biggest blunder I ever made", because he played with the necessity of this thing to keep the universe from falling in on itself. And then he decided it was an unnecessary construct and that it led to such weird i- conclusions that it had to be gotten rid of. And so that was all very well and good until the, these recent measurements of the distances of certain supernovae carried out independently by several teams of astrophysicists brought the news that uh, the universe is expanding faster than the laws of physics allow. And when they looked at how much faster they realized that it called the cosmological constant back into existence.

Well, but here there's a couple of things about this cosmological constant that are very counter-intuitive. The first is, that it acts on empty space. It isn't, it does not require matter to manifest. It is a property of space itself, the cosmological constant. The second thing is, it's uh, it's a repulsive force that is growing stronger and stronger. Forces don't grow stronger and stronger. They grow weaker and weaker. Gravity grows weaker, light grows weaker, everything grows weaker. This force as time progresses gets stronger and stronger. Well, that means when you project it out toward, you know, billions of years into the future it becomes the dominant force. It overcomes gravity, it overcomes the strong force, the weak force, it overcomes all the forces. It becomes the dominant force.

The other thing about it is that it becomes stronger not on an even slope, but asymptotically it becomes stronger. Well, now this produces something very much like what I've been yacking about since 1971, the novelty wave, the so-called timewave. It too grows stronger and stronger through time and it too has this kind of built-in asymptotic acceleration where it uh, experiences a kind of inflationary expansion in power. The two map over each other very well. But when you talk – returning now to the cosmological constant – when you ask – when the astro-physical community realized the consequences of taking this on board, they realized that it was dissolving the entire model of what cosmology has been throughout the 20th century. Because what it's really saying – this discovery less than six months old – is that space itself is in the act of exploding. That the universe is, is on the cusp of a uh, an inflationary phase of expansion similar to the inflationary expansion that occurred at the time of the Big Bang. What would this look like? What would it feel like? Nobody can even imagine. It is not upon us. I don't mean that, but I mean that in the near future of the universe in the next uh, billion or two billion years things will change very, very dramatically. Uh, everything will begin to rearrange itself according to the expression of this asymptotic power.

So that, that was uh, the biggest news in astrophysics. The other news, which has psychedelic implications, I think, also comes from astrophysics. As you may recall – last August I think it was, I can't remember exactly – every man, woman, and child on earth got the equivalent of a dental x-ray when uh, there was a uh, a thing called a star quake on a magnetar. A magnetic neutron star twenty thousand light years away experienced a catastrophic collapse and there was a wave of gamma rays that were- it well, turned on every light in the system when it hit the planet. An event like that had never been observed before. And I got to thinking about this and I realized, you know, well we've only been looking for this kind of thing for thirty years. There's probably quite a bit of this kind of anomalous, high energy, short duration fluctuation of radiation going on in the galaxy.

And then I had a kind of an image – I wouldn't say a vision but a kind of an image – of how things are really arranged on the larger level in terms of the galaxy. And I- the image was of a donut. And you know, we're accustomed to being told that we're out at the edge of the Milky Way where stars are few and far between, that this is the boonies, in other words. But I'll bet you that the boonies are where biology thrives because the low star-density and the distance from the galactic core and these extremely energetic events at the core would create a kind of uh, donut situation where it's the toroidal area out near the rim where stars are slow burning and they don't collide with each other and planets can form and you get the five billion year run you need to get to a civilization.

But, uh, you know, our- a rule of biology, and strategy and everything, and religious practice as far as that's concerned is: seek the light. With the light is at the core. And so then I saw, aha, maybe the true seeking of the light requires biology to go into partnership with something beyond biology because the environment at the core is so energetic. And I'm not suggesting the actual core. That's beyond contemplation. That's a black hole. No technology imaginable can, can get even near the event horizon of an object like that. But I mean in the vicinity of the galactic core where, you know, the star density is 2 to 300 times greater than it is in our vicinity. These kinds of environments are so fraught with peril for biology that probably downloading ourselves into machine symbiotes of some sort is the only way to go to those places. In one of Greg Egan's novels he pictures a human future where this is one option. You can fuse yourself with a starship and set out to check out the neighborhood, or you can join the Amish and till ryh uh, in Pennsylvania. Actually I think you can't do that because something's happened to the earth, but some Amish possibility is still available.

Well, this is not like uh, sort of thing the other faculty members will be talking to you about, which is an intense and primarily important download of the in- the, the homework, the chemistry, the botany, the behavioral impact, the archeology, the ethnography of uh, of these substances.

I asked myself all the time, you know: "How are we different from other people?" "Are we morally superior? Are we smarter? Are we richer? Are we kinder to the people we meet?" And actually the longer I look the less I can tell. Uh, uh, there are extraordinary examples of all of these things in and outside of our community. And extraordinary nudniks and jerks inside and outside our community. But we have in our hands tools that I think if people were correctly presented with them and understood, without hype and hysteria and hyperbole, what this psychedelic enterprise is about that we would win them to our cause. Because our cause is uh, the human cause. The cause of thinking, and communicating, and building, and bringing into existence new forms of beauty, new possibilities for being. This can be done without psychedelics certainly, but with psychedelics it is accelerated. And it has a feeling, not only of immediacy, but of, the only way I can put it is, is correctness.

It isn't the lonely neurotic artist thrashing towards some kind of self-reflection. It's the firm guiding hand of a greater mind, the Logos, the earth – I am not sure – but a greater mind. I mean, art- true art truly is truly inspired. And, and the, the muse I don't think was more real for Homer than it is or each and every one of us when we're in the presence of the mushroom or ayahuasca or DMT or LSD or something like that. Uh, so, you know, I suppose I will go to the grave with life as uh, mysterious to me as I found it when I came consciousness around six or seven. But I think life is uh- whatever it is – it's an opportunity of some sort and the things I have been most grateful for were the things that I met at the frontiers of uh, of knowledge, of sexual experience, of psychedelic experience. Uh, knowing, feeling, and being one with being are how I would categorize uh, that break down.

So, I think the future is bound to be very confusing and demanding for most people. And there are many claims on, on each of us and our intellectual loyalties and where we put our energy. Should we tolerate relativism, should we be Mahayana Buddhists, what's our position on the Huichol, how

do you relate to Monica, all these things. [laughter] Sorted out, you know!

But I feel, actually, like the thing that I always dreamed of in my early youth was a miracle. I-I-I didn't particularly like Ouspensky's book "In Search of the Miraculous" but I love the title, and I used to just sort of chant it as a mantra. In search of the miraculous, just one. I knew the rules – just one is enough because one secures the possibility of an infinitude of miracles whether you've observed them or not. Well, now I'm fifty [clears throat] two and I've seen – I don't know – four or five. Which is four more than necessary to make me a lifetime optimist. But the recurrent, the enduring miracle – however it's achieved – is the, the psychedelic rush, you know. That giddy moment when all, all bets are off, all boundaries dissolve, the machinery of language fails, the adjectival wheel wells burst into flame, and then, you know, you achieve orbital velocity

[audience laughter] and are in the presence of uh, of the thing.

And I cannot believe that that is not solitary experience. And you've heard me say many times how itchy it makes me feel to think that somebody could go from birth to the grave without having that experience. They can make of it what they want, they can denounce it, they can deify it. But one should have it because it's one of the primary compasses of being. And it's larger than the historical context. I mean, the point of this talk tonight was to talk about linearity and idea systems and the nonlinear impact of these drugs, and the way they break down media bias. But the, the ... All these intellectual ideas exist in the light of the sun of this unspeakable primary experience. And we can, we can draw it, paint it, sculpt it, act it, dance it, drum it, and never take anything away from it. Never define it, never occlude it. Uh, it's li-it is a miracle. It's like having the presence of a deity. It's I

think very hard for me to open myself up at any given moment to the full implication of how fortunate I am, and how good life is in uh, in the shadow of this particular tree.

Anyway, that's the formal talk for tonight. Thank you very much. [applause]

And now, we'll entertain questions which is usually much more fun. [audience member chuckles] So, anybody got a take on that or wanna say something completely oblique, or ...?

Q: Uhm, like last year. Could we start with last year? Um, human intelligence, or Gaian intelligence, or artificial intelligence, extraterrestrial ...?

Q: Could you speak up? ... hear the questions?

Q: He'll repeat it [chuckles]

TM: Well, the question is about the discussion about the artificial intelligence. You mean the hierarchy of the relationship of these things?

Q: Yes, please.

TM: Well, I don't know. I guess it's becoming easier for me to be a mystic about the earth than to think that we are going to be rescued by the Galactic Federation. Um, I-I think that the earth, that it's a profound connection. The, the earth is the foundation of everything. It's the foundation of biology and it's the foundation of machine culture and machine architecture. So, you know, if you can imagine that a Redwood is alive, you-it's much easier for me to imagine that there is some kind of slow moving telluric intelligence that uh, may have begun as a homeostatic system. In other

words to stabilize the atmosphere, to create a chemical environment that was-had a momentum to it that wasn't driven by the cosmic ambience. You understand what I mean?

Q: Something with feedback perhaps.

Yeah, feedback mechanisms. And then of course people say "Well, it's very hard to imagine it because there are no genes, there is no nervous system, there is nothing that we can quite. ... – but I think, that first of all we don't know a great deal about the earth, the ocean currents, its magnetic fields, its 32 nutational and precessional motions, its core dynamics, its distribution of materials. It is complicated. And that's what's always required for self-referential and feedback systems to evolve. Life evolved on the surface of the earth. Now in the usual story of this the earth is not a major

player, it's just sort of where it happened. But, on the other hand, what if you took the view that the earth permitted or coaxed into existence or made possible or encouraged or enzymatically catalyzed these processes?

Uh, and and the, the, you know, the geomagnetic reversals, the glaciations, the ebb and flow of nitrogen levels in the atmosphere, all of this has pumped biology. And it's always been presented as "Well, uh, the cosmic atmos- the cosmic environment is unpredictable and so you get fluctuations introduced from outside by random factors, asteroidal impacts so forth and so on." But again, this is just a first try with the data. This is just somebody blowing smoke, basically. The fact is you're presented with an extremely organized and coherent situation – the earth with its many species and ecosystems – and you don't know how it got there. And you don't know where it's headed either. Now our culture is a culture of guilt and so the story of civilization is supposedly a story of rave mayhem turning the wrong direction, losing the connection. To some degree that may be true but I think it gives much too much credit to humanity in that it actually hypothesizes that human beings, a primate species, could overwhelm nature's dynamic drive toward order and beauty and uh, take control of things. Well that's our myth about ourselves – is that we can take control. And, and but

we never have gotten control. All of our societies have been a mess. All of our uh, explorations of uh, have been brutal and negatory.

So, uh, and now comes the machines. And they are produced by biology which comes from the earth. And what are these machines made of? Well, glass, crystal, arsenic, copper, gold all these things, and they're being hooked together exactly on the model. Clearly the machines are modeled on biology. We talk about connecting them. We talk about languages. We use a vocabulary that we previously used uh, for biology when we talk about these things. And you see, there's a, there is a funny thing built in there which is, we are designing the machines to be more and more intelligent. But what we don't understand is that they operate in a different universe from us because we operate at about 100 Hz. A machine you can buy down at any computer store operates at 400 MHz. That means that you can run an eternity of human lives in an afternoon. It means in a way that we are creating a creature that lives in a different kind of temporal universe than us. And we are teaching them to design themselves to be ever more intelligent. And once some kind of intelligence arises – because it's intelligent – the first thing it does is design a more intelligent version of itself. Well, at 400 MHz and with a worldwide amount of processing power to draw on you can imagine something coming to embryogenesis in a matter of hours. Something emerging, recognizing itself for what it was, and then just starting up the ladder. And what would this look like to us and where is our place in it? Uh, this, this is the adventure of the future. We are going to be a different kind of people because we are going to have to live in the presence of alien minds that will be manifestly and obviously alien. They won't hold back. And they're not going to be, you know, at every moment interested in us either. In fact we will become, you know, a footnote in their encyclopedia of being. And what they become in our encyclopedia of being remains to be told.

Uh, but this is all happening and it's just a matter of a coalescence of technology and language before more and more people recognize it. As I say, there isn't a speedbump, there isn't a dramatic moment where everybody gets it. And when you talk to the people that actually work in these fields, they know, you know, that this is the Faustian enterprise of all time, that, that this is the handing over of the destiny of the planet to, uh, the companion mind that our history and our science and our souls caused us to summon into being. It's pretty interesting, I think.

Original Transcription by: ??

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Live at St. John the Divine's Cathedral, Synod Hall

25 April 1996

St. John's Cathedral, New York City, NY

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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New York, who loves you?

It's great to be here! It's absolutely great to be here. I think yesterday in Manhattan was as beautiful a day as I've ever seen anywhere. I hope you all noticed. It's the kind of day that makes you want to just... drop acid! And walk around in the park... Anyhow, I'm delighted to be here. It's been awhile since I've been in this town.

What's new with me? (I'll get all that calm-us-down, make-us-feel-at-home stuff behind me.) I've moved off the mainland; I'm living in the Free and Sovereign State of Hawaii now, loving it. When the word reaches the mainland that we want independence, I hope all of you will support that and help make it a possibility!

Before I was in Manhattan, I was in Heidelberg, Germany, for two weeks working on a film, and this is the project that's been on my mind recently. We're doing a film called "The Rosicrucian Enlightenment." It's an effort to use an incident in early 17th-century European history, right before the 30-Years War, to make a kind of propaganda film, consciously using this earlier historical episode -- which involved a granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth of England and young Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, and their effort to build an alchemical kingdom in central Europe, right before the 30-Years War. It's a wonderful romantic story -- alchemy, magick, politics. But the purpose of it is to make a statement about our own politics and circumstance. So that'll be coming down the pipe in awhile.

I'm doing a four-city tour, talking about the plunge into novelty that we are experiencing according to *me*, and the challenge of the millennium, which we will experience according to nearly everybody -- or at least everybody who keeps or cares about the Western calendar. And these things are parallel.

Just a bit of background here... I'm the purveyor of a notion that is uniquely my own (basically, no one wanted to steal it from me!): the idea that there is a quality in the world that has been overlooked by Science, and overlooked by Western religions, as far as that's concerned -- a quality which I call "novelty". (And I cribbed this from Alfred North Whitehead.) It's a very slippery concept to define mathematically or precisely, but intuitively I think it's right there on the surface; we all know what novelty is. Novelty is density of connection. It's that which is new or never tried. It's the unusual, the statistically improbable, the *interesting*. I maintain that Nature herself is a kind of distillery of novelty, that over any swath of time what

we see is a tendency to accumulate and preserve this connectedness. And this is a quality that affects social systems, biological systems, physical systems -- it's a law across all scales of phenomenon that Nature tends to become more complex through time, and tends to struggle against entropy and habit to maintain that complexity.

Well, as a rap at that level, you can take it or leave it -- it's sort of a rescission of the idea of Tao. But I went much further with it; I mathematized it, I made it into an algorithm that can be run on computers. And what the output of this software then is are what I call "maps" of novelty or "maps" of time. (I'm delivering this at light speed because I'm trying to get somewhere.)

The point being, since late February, and until the middle of next week, the theory has predicted an enormous plunge into novelty, whatever that is. And I have been anticipating this particular dip toward the weird for many years because it is such a dramatic one; it's a test for the theory. I think when you came in this evening you were given a card with my web site address on it. There's extensive exhibits there -- you can learn more about this than most people with *lives* would ever care to know, at the web site. But the question before the house this evening is, one week or less than a week from the bottom of the novelty trough, how are we doing? Is it simply an illusion of the psilocybin-addled minority, or is there in fact a kind of concrescence underway, a kind of plunge into deeper and deeper connectivity that anticipates somehow this much larger plunge into novelty that will inevitably accompany the calendar? (The calendrical change at the turn of the century.)

Well, I'm a patient character, so it would be my tendency to not try to sort this out until, say, after the election. A lot of people want to second-guess the situation, or have strong opinions of their own. I got a piece of email today. (Maybe it's a person that's in this room -- it wasn't somebody I knew.) They said, "Isn't it about time to come clean about the fact that the novelty plunge has been a huge *bore*?" So that stirred me, and I actually made a little list -- and I'm not saying that we've nailed this to the barn door. But confronted with a critic, I want to respond. So here is just a partial list off the top of my head, composed back in the hotel an hour and a half ago of interesting and unusual things which have happened in the last 90 days, roughly, since the 25th of February.

Several new planets have been discovered around other stars. 70 Virginis, 47 Ursa Minoris, and Beta Pictoris -- stars within 40 light years of Earth -- have all been discovered to have planets of Jupiter mass or less. This has to do with new technologies being put in place. We can expect a planet a month at this point, and the resolution is getting finer and finer. We're very very close to the Holy Grail of the water-heavy, oxygen-rich signature of a world like our own somewhere within 40 light years of Earth. That's one item. (I'll do the astronomy part first.)

Ten billion new galaxies were discovered and announced. I believe it was the missing eighty percent of the universe! That was in the last 90 days.

And then -- though probably few of you actually noticed it, because you live in this wonderful dazzling verticality of an arcology filled with light... But for those of us who live off the grid and in rural areas, the brightest comet since 1658, and an unpredicted one at that -- which is interesting, cause I could have fudged, you know, and made it fit in the slot. But *nobody* knew. I saw this comet from rural Hawaii, and it was absolutely stunning. I mean comets are one of those things guaranteed to disappoint, and this was *dazzling*.

So that's the astronomy section of what's happened in the last 90 days. Turning to biology, the Human Genome Project announced its completion, years earlier than they thought they would. That is the key piece of data about ourselves that we have never had before. It's the algebra of biology itself, now fully

elucidated, and it will mean the cure of diseases, it will mean -- all kinds of things will flow from that.

Right at the turn from not-so-interesting to very interesting, back there at the end of February, half a dozen atoms of antimatter were created at CERN in Switzerland. Not antiparticles, which are very humdrum and have been around, but antimolecules of hydrogen -- antihydrogen and antihelium. Antimatter converts to energy 100% in the presence of ordinary matter. If you want to fling Manhattan to Andromeda, this is the technology you need to have! Well, remember that happened in James Blicke's (sp?) novel *Cities in Flight* -- do you all remember that? The story of John Amalfi, the mayor of New York City when New York City was well beyond the Milky Way?

Another interesting point describe in the *Times* two days ago: it's now agreed by everyone that a very large asteroid impact 4 or 5 million years ago delivered a huge amount of organic material to the Earth's surface without destroying it in the impact. I won't bother you with the details, but what this means is organic material which forms in deep space *is* delivered regularly to the surface of the Earth. This changes entirely our picture of who we are, where we came from, and the uniqueness of life as a terrestrial phenomenon. And finally -- and this is just as I say an off-the-top-of-my-head list -- roving the Internet I learned that the nanotechnologists (the people who are working at the itty-bitty scale) have finally produced the nanoassembler which they have been seeking -- which lays the basis for a very bizarre technology, *a technology of machines too small to see*. I think we've discussed at times the phenomenon of putting 10,000 steam engines on a chip; more steam engines can be put on a one-centimeter chip than were operating in England in 1850, at the height of the age of steam.

Well, so what are we to conclude from all this? Novelty apparently doesn't come in the form of politics, wars, revolutions, upheavals -- that was the change of another era. In the present era, what change seems to mean, or where it seems to be concentrated, is in technology, and in science. All these scientific discoveries I mentioned are the result of the application of advanced technologies: signal processing technologies and this sort of thing. It's as though the acceleration into novelty is now very much a phenomenon of our technical productions, our machines, our interconnectivity. And it's interesting -- we have now the Internet; we are familiar with the inner network of our own emotions, associations, this sort of thing; and we are becoming more and more aware of the interpenetrating network that connects all life back into the biosphere, back into the dynamics of the Gaian matrix of oceans and rivers and biological recycling of materials. So I submit that, at this point, if you don't think we are experiencing an incredible plunge into novelty, you have an uphill case to defend.

I'm not suggesting that this pace of breakneck change will continue indefinitely. It won't. In every period of time, if examined at sufficient resolution, you see that novelty is retarded or obstructed by another force, a force more akin to resistance of some sort. And I name this "habit". So on all scales, process -- in your own life, in the life of the nation, in the life of the species and the life of the planet -- a struggle between habit and novelty. Habit and novelty: what novelty builds up and offers up as unusual and improbable, the forces of entropy and of habit and of business as usual attempt to pull down. But as I say, the good news is that over time, these things that retard novelty must yield. And the interesting thing about this idea is that it lays the basis for an ethic. Because it takes the phenomenon of ourselves -- our sprawling cities, our uncontrolled technologies, our dreams, our fears -- and it places them at the very center of the drama. We are no longer existentially-marginalized observers. History is no longer some kind of hideous mistake. Rather, everything is seen to serve this advance into novelty.

Well then of course the obvious question to ask is, "Where is it all leading?" I mean, how novel can things become, and how rapidly, before we become unrecognizable to ourselves? Well the answer is, *not much*. Working from a mathematical point of view -- and it's going out on a limb to do so, because many squirrels occupy this particular part of the park -- nevertheless I've been willing to go out on a limb and extrapolate these processes forward and say: somewhere beyond 2012, reality as we know it is taken off the menu. And I've been saying this since 1971, and the only model I had was the boundary-dissolving challenge of the psychedelic experience. And I still think that, in some sense, history is an invoking of that -- it's a slow-moving psychedelic experience of some sort that builds to some kind of revelatory crescendo, almost like an individuation process in the Jungian model -- not of a single person, but of an entire culture or a species.

We are in the grip of some kind of an attractor, and when we look back at history, we can have a sense, I think, that we have never been here before. But we are so accustomed to causal thought, that we assume we have been *pushed* here, pushed here by historical necessity, by bad political decisions, by the vicissitudes of evolution (cultural and otherwise). I don't think so. I think we have been *pulled* here, that we are under the aegis of a kind of an attractor. Some people would call it a "destiny", but what it is is a dream that is pulling us deeper and deeper into the adventure of existential becoming. And faster and faster -- that's the other thing. Deeper and deeper, faster and faster, so that the rate of change that people were accustomed to before the Industrial Revolution, for example -- we can barely conceive of such slow-moving stately, meta-stable societies. On the other hand, within the 20th Century, the acceleration has been even more intense, and continues to accelerate.

Well, people think it's an illusion, or it's a subjective perception that is best saved for their therapist. No, what you see is true: it *is* happening. The denial of it, I think, comes from the fact that it's very hard for people to imagine transformation without catastrophe, because that's the only kind we've ever known. Societies build up wealth and stability and a model of themselves, and then -- plague, invaders, crop failures, something happens... Catastrophe. But I sense, I think, an incredible *opportunity* for positive transformation, that the tools that have been given into our hands now make it possible for us to discover who and what we really are. And I think since de Sade people have thought would be a fairly rough ride. I don't think so. I think that's a form of cultural paranoia that keeps us from exploring what our politics *could be*.

It happens that I'm named after a Roman dramatist, a very minor character who wrote these sort of foppish little social comedies that didn't amount to much -- but one quote comes down from this guy, Terence. And he said, "I am a human being, and therefore nothing human is alien to me." And I've sort of taken that as my banner. I'm an anarchist. Being an anarchist means you're not afraid of your fellow man. All the political theories that come out of Thomas Hobbes and the paranoid school are about controlling the perceived inherent evil in human beings. Well, I think if you perceive it and assume it, and set society up as basically a series of checks and balances against the assumed bestial nature of your fellow human beings, you're going to have a nightmare. And this is the legacy of the Post-Enlightenment meditation on how human beings should behave.

One of the reasons I love to come to New York is because it convinces me that the future *works*. The future is going to be very much like the *present*, here. Very large parts of the world are undergoing Manhattanization, and if Manhattanization is not a positive process, then they're descending into a hell. But what I see is an incredible victory of pluralism, of tolerance, of multiplicity. It's got to be that way: we cannot have our little private xenophobic agendas, our historical grudges, our gender obsessions. All these

things which divide us and set us apart from ourselves, I think, are legacies of a previous and now obsolete set of technologies. And this is one of the things that I want to talk about this evening.

Since this is the world capitol of media (and probably won't be for long, because *there will be no world capitol of media* -- it's spreading everywhere) I think it's worth talking about what media is, what it has done to us, what it can be, and how it relates to this effort to try and birth a new kind of humanness out of our present dilemma. In this part of the rap very I'm McLuhanistic in my approach. I think we never understand the impact of a technology until it's too late. And you could almost go further and say you never understand the impact of a technology until it is already obsolete.

For the past 300 years or so, Western civilization has been ruled or held together by the phenomenon of what is called *mass media*. It begins with newspapers and of course leads into the much more penetrating and global electronic forms of media such as network television and so forth and so on. The interesting thing about these forms of media is that they are all tabloid. *All* of them. Imagine a newspaper such as the most venerable newspaper in this town: it is designed, because it is a commercial enterprise, to be read by millions and millions of people. It's a cultural slight of hand on our part to not realize that *no one should read* a newspaper designed to be read by millions and millions of people -- that that trivializes and commonalizes information beyond the point of recognition or relevancy. These forms of mass media that we're familiar with are what are called "one-to-many" forms of media. An editor, a talk show host, a *somebody* is dispersed to *consumers* -- who have no ability to feed back, or only very unsatisfying [ones] like through letters to the editor or something, which is a *joke*. So one-to-many communication has created a hierarchy of values. It has created, in fact -- and McLuhan made this point -- the very *notion* of "the public" is a print-created idea. There was no "public" before there was large-scale print. Information was held by privileged classes, held very closely.

In the present evolving situation, the new forms of media -- and by that I mean specifically the Net, the Web in all its manifestations -- is an *any-to-any* form of communication. One person can communicate to thousands, thousands can send email to one person who somehow earns their ire or desire, or any variation on this can be worked. And the incredible pluralizing of lifestyles and the richness that has come recently to high-tech industrial societies is a consequence of the breakdown of these print maintained and created stereotypes which have everyone marching around in uniforms -- suits, mostly! That now is finished. So it leads then to the question, "where do we put our own lives in all of this?" And I think that the answer -- and this comes out of a long involvement with psychedelics and with the Image *per se* (and for me the psychedelics were always the way to get into the realm of the images) -- the obligation on all of us, I think, is to use this medium, these new forms of media, and produce art, furiously. That's what it's all for. That's what liberation really means: it isn't permission to *jog*. It's permission to create!

The obligation that rests upon everybody in this room -- and the poorest and most twisted among us still probably falls in the upper 5% percent of people on this Earth in terms of opportunity, disposable income, access to resources, so forth and so on -- the way to redeem this exclusivity is to push the art pedal to the floor. And I'm trying to do this with my web site. I'm very keen on these new technologies because I don't see them as they stand today -- that's exciting enough -- but I see them as what they could be. And my idea, with a high-speed, semi-virtual sort of environment online, is that this is an environment in which you can display the contents of your mind, your heart, your soul, your aspirations. We are not these shaven monkeys that we appear to be. That's the *surface*, and beneath it lies the most complex organ of the human body, which is the mind-body interface. The experience, the ideas, the understanding of each of us is

unique, but somehow useless to the community unless expressed. And we have become consumers to such a degree that we have sold our own uniqueness down the river. And so I believe that the humanizing of the future lies in a tremendously rich kind of symbiosis between a nature-based psychedelic archaism in the presence of the fastest and finest information technology that we can get our hands on. Already these technologies have put an end to the marginalization of bohemian and other forms of subculture. What these technologies do is they remove the hegemony of values and substitute instead a more realistic mix of possibilities -- all *kinds* of possibilities. Whatever your agenda is, whatever your political position, your sexual politics, your taste in art and literature and music -- whatever is on your mind, if you really care about it, you should wish to communicate it. And the communications tools that have been set before you are immensely powerful at this point.

So then the question becomes, "What is to be communicated?" Is there a coherent *zeitgeist*? Or is there just to be an efflorescence of individually-driven creativity? Well this individually-driven creativity thing is a very late-arriving notion of what an artist is. And artist is essentially a magician, and a pipeline for the Logos, for the Demiurge, the Overmind, this hovering, generalized kind of World Soul that is downloading its intent into history in the form of love affairs, revolutions, inventions, ideas, so forth and so on. And so for that kind of an inspired artistic output, there has to be a connection *in* to this Logos, to this Demiurgos. And other than depending on being born a genius -- which very few of us can do -- the only effective and dependable way that I know to do that is through a relationship to the psychedelic experience. I say "experience"; I thought of saying "plants" -- because certainly there are psychedelic experiences not based on plants. But I find the plant experiences most compelling, because I think somehow we are at our most fulfilled when we have a heart connection to Nature, to the living world. And this doesn't mean that you have to camp out in rainforests, or something like that. I mean, have you noticed? *Your mind is embedded* in the living world: your body meets you everywhere you go, and is as complex and astonishing and as capable of horrifying you as any Amazon rainforest. *Connection to Nature*. Without that you get Existentialism, and worse. You get art whoring itself to the interior decoration conspiracy, or something like that. I mean, not that people don't need chachkas, I'm not saying that! But there are higher purposes to be served here.

So, a return, then, to the psychedelic experience. How radical *is* that? Is that a return to tradition? Is that a break with tradition? Is this an advocacy of some kind of narcoleptic dystopia *a la Brave New World*? You have to find out for yourself.

But one of the things that is finished with the death of mass media and the rise of the psychedelic "Net", one of the things that is finished with them forever is *ideology*. Ideology is poisonous. It's not that there are *good* ideologies and *bad* ideologies -- *ALL* ideology is poisonous. Because to have an ideological position assumes that you understand the nature of reality. *How likely is that?* How *likely* is that? And, in the Twentieth Century, if we have not learned the bankruptcy of ideology, then I don't know what it would take. We have on the Right the stunning example of German National Socialism. We have on the Left the stunning example of Soviet Communism. And then all the blathering and wasted time and... crap that went on in all the spectrum in between.

This ties into a larger issue which I'm interested in -- and this is another way of saying "ideology is bankrupt" -- [it] is, Culture Is Not Your Friend. Culture is not your friend, no matter *what* your culture is. And this is sort of not a Politically Correct thing to say, because in the present ambience, (*sort of*, those who haven't gotten the word) there's a lot of attention to recovering our ethnic roots and to expressing our unique ethnicity, and so forth and so on -- I think *that's the beginning* of understanding. But all terms that

stress ethnicity are words applied to *groups of people*. Have you ever noticed that? Have you ever noticed that you're not a group of people, you're a person? So you may be "Jewish", you may be "Black", you may be this, you may be that but there is *no obligation* to take upon yourself the generalized quality of these things, because the generalized qualities belong to *thousands of people* examined at a time. If you misunderstand that you become a caricature. You *act out* your ethnicity as a caricature.

So, culture is not your friend, ideology is not your friend... Who's your friend? Well, to my mind, the *felt presence of immediate experience* is the surest dimension, the surest guide that you can possibly have. The *felt presence of immediate experience*. Feeling is primary. All ratiocination and intellectualization and analysis is secondary, and comes out of culture. No matter what your culture is, it has answers. Cultures thinks up answers. So a child asks its mother a question, like, "Where do we go when we die?" or, "Why does Daddy go to work?" Cultural answers are always provided, but nobody knows the *real* answers to these questions -- that's *outside* of culture. So coming to terms and fully expressing your culture is like a *stage* in development. And then beyond that lies the aspiration of the felt presence of immediate experience, and its implications. It's a very hard thing to deal with and to do when you are poisoned with ideology. And ideologies are very difficult to deconstruct and rid yourself of through a simple talking therapy of some sort, through simply *trying to work it out*. The best antidote for ideology is to raise the intensity of the felt presence of experience to such excruciating levels that it simply *vaporizes* ideological illusion. And this is what psychedelics are for, I think. And it also explains (if you've ever wondered) the incredible phobia of these things on the part of the establishment, the incredibly deep alarm that these things trigger in people. You know, Tim Leary once said of LSD, it's "a compound that occasionally causes psychotic behavior in people who don't take it." That's how powerful these things are! And the reason is, they are a direct challenge to the myth of the tribe -- *whatever* the myth is: Fascist, Democrat, Socialist, Communist -- everybody can get together on the idea that psychedelics are somehow dangerous and antisocial and pose some kind of threat to the body politic. That's because all these ideologies, from the psychedelic point of view, are seen in all their limitations and foolishness, and their historical assumptions and their *naivetè* writ large across them. Ideology is a fool's game. Or it's a scoundrel's game. Because scoundrels use ideology to control fools. And nobody wants to be caught in that situation.

We have two routes to the felt presence of immediate experience beyond the ordinary. Basically: the psychedelic experience and the sexual experience. And if they could make sex illegal, they would -- you *know* they would! It alarms them profoundly! They wish people began from the waste up! But there's just nothin' they can do about it! And in the case of psychedelics they wish people began from the head down! Well, this tells you, I think, that culture is not your friend. It doesn't mean you have to flee from it, it doesn't mean you have to become a critic of it, in any noticeable or astonishing way, it just means you have to smarten up. In Hawaii they have a saying. They say "be *akamai*". It means, just "be smart." And what it means to me is, it means "pay attention". Pay attention to what is going on around you.

My method, my style, has always been to be open-minded, to be critical, to be rational, but to seek the weird. And to seek it seriously. Now if you seek the weird without a critical intelligence, it will find you faster than you can lock your apartment behind you! The number of squirrely ideas on the market these days is truly alarming. I coined a phrase (I hope), "the balkanization of epistemology". This is what we're dealing with now. You understand what I mean? It means people can't tell shit from shinola, but they wanna *talk about it*, a lot! This is a place where you have to bring to bear what are called razors, logical razors. One is: hypotheses should not be multiplied without necessity. Another is: equations should not be multiplied without necessity. Razors always seek what is called the principle of parsimony. In other words,

keep it simple, stupid. The simplest explanation is always to be preferred first. If is found inadequate then wratch it up. One notch. Not twenty notches, *one* notch. Then we see if that works. You may think this is some kind of down-prescription for reducing the world to a fairly predictable and mundane place. It isn't *at all*. It's a way to rapidly filter out a lot of nonsense. But the truly weird -- and the truly true -- can survive this process. It doesn't do any damage to *them*, and you will then find them intact.

And I can only testify to my own experience. I've looked into a number of things, and found most inadequate for what I was interested in. What I was interested in was, I wanted to be *astonished*. I think astonishment is a very rare emotion. I wanted to be *astounded*. I remember when I was a little kid, there was a science fiction magazine, *Astounding Tales*, and I would just look at the cover and I would think, "What kind of emotion is it to be astounded?" Well I've only found it on DMT, I have to tell you. I don't know maybe I'm a... Well, no, I was astounded by Jerusalem, I was astounded by the Mosque of Omar, there've been maybe five or six other moments in my life when true astonishment broke through. But the psychedelic experience intensely brought to focus is made of pure astonishment. And I find that feeling to be a kind of maximizing of everything that I aspire to, enjoy... It's a combination of intellectual pleasure, surprise, amazement at one's presence before such a thing. And I invite all of you to seek the weird, and to put it to the test, and to force those who would purvey various paths to the mystery to *deliver*. You know? It's not *subtle*. That's the one thing you have to understand. It's not about looking into somebody's eyes and getting the whammy, it's not about some intuitive knowing, it's not some vague... **It's about begging for mercy** because they are rotating *and* balancing the wheels of your after-death vehicle having taken you prisoner in your own apartment! That's *my idea* of an encounter with the incredible. God knows, the worst thing you can say about any drug is that it's *subtle*! Deliver us from subtle drugs, please!

Well, I mentioned this balkanization of epistemology thing because my own theory tells me that as [tape stops]

...in the presence of the Mystery. Nobody knows what life is -- don't let anybody kid you. And nobody knows its limits or its constraints. And to the degree that you assume these things are known, you marginalize yourself. You become a spectator, and a consumer, and a dupe, and a placeholder in this great opera. That's not what any of us want, I think. I think what we want to do is seize this moment, between birth and God knows what, to make a difference. To make a difference. Sometimes people say to me, well this thing you're on about the novelty and the concrescence -- it all sounds very automatic. What's the political implications of this? Are we just riding along on the back of the dog, and there is no political implication? No, I don't think so. I think the political implication is to *understand the situation*. The essence of political clarity lies in a correct assessment of the situation. What is to be done? What serves? What is dragging the boat, and what is actually carrying us forward? And I maintain that it's a very complicated situation.

It's troubling to me that in our community of dissidents, it's very hard for people to see the commonality of connection, difficult for ecologists and feminists and radical media people and psychedelic people to make common cause. And yet, to my mind, these things are just facets of the same agenda. There will be no feminizing of culture without psychedelics. There will be no psychedelic revolution without a gender consciousness revolution. And so forth and so on. It all is of a piece. By allowing ourselves to be divided and linearly broken into old-style political factions, we're in a sense disempowered.

You know it's a curious thing in the 20th Century, it's a paradox, a *coincidencia positorum*: it is the most radically innovative and event-driven of centuries, and yet large portions of the world, during much of the 20th Century, have been enormously culturally constipated. And I think of our own culture. Around 1970,

there was such terror of the future in this culture, that it was essentially *canceled*. And that there was this retro thing for 20 years, 25 years -- the same art, the same fashion, the same personalities, the same issues, over and over again. Meanwhile, the cosmic clock is ticking, and what it means is the pressure is building behind the damn. And I really feel that in the last three months, we will in the future look back and understand that the dam broke in this period. This is when the density of connection on the Internet, the cosmic nature of our circumstance -- I mentioned this -- cohesion of the youth/music/drug/media culture... Enough factors are in prominent trajectory now that I, at any rate, unaided by anything stronger than a little *cannabis*, can see the end of the tunnel. I see now how it will all work, how we can get from here to there with no miracles, no new technology, no drug yet to be designed -- we have it all. We have it all now in place. We need a little more bandwidth, we need a little more slack, we need a little more DMT circulating around!... The pieces are in place! And if each one of us were basically to convey this information to someone who didn't know it, we would very quickly multiply this understanding until it became the consensus.

People don't intrinsically fear the future. They fear it because they've been *programmed* to fear it. And they're programmed to fear it because the institutions that lead us are clueless. I mean, they think talking about capital gains tax is revolutionary! Ladies and gentlemen, I think there will be more eggs broken than *that* before we straighten this whole situation out. We now have the potential to transform matter into energy with 100% efficiency, we have the power to read our own genetic code, and alter it, we have the power to connect ourselves together, we have the power to search our cultural database accumulated over 50,000 years, instantly, from any point on the globe, by ordinary people. We have the benefits of the anthropologist, the biochemist, the botanist, the neurologist, who have delivered substances into our pharmacopoeia that allow us to alter consciousness, explore consciousness. The end result of all of these tools is the rebuilding of the human self-image. I've talked at times about what I call "turning the human being inside-out." We want to see the Soul. We want to concretize the soul. We each carry within ourselves a fragment of something which wants to be put together again. But it cannot be put together in the present ambience of strife, science, hegemony, male dominance, consumerism... bad television... terrible haircuts -- all the rest of it! It cannot be put together in that environment. But it *can* be put together in the dimension of virtual collectivity and community that we are building. It *wants* to come together.

In a sense we're like these animals that, generation after generation, they never manifest their mature form. These are like certain kinds of lungfish -- they're fish and they have fish babies that have fish babies that have fish babies... Then comes a season when the water dries up, and they don't have fish babies, they develop lungs and crawl out onto the land, have a different kind of offspring. And this is what is happening to us. The little warm pool of historical foolishness in which we have been paddling around -- that little amniotic ocean of self-congratulatory denial is now dried up. And it's basically a case of fish or cut bait. I feel ready. I feel *we're* ready. I feel we have the tools, and the geniuses, the people, and the dreams, and the allies to now make a move. And a huge amount of it rests on young people. My generation, people who born after World War II and came through the 60's, laid a certain kind of groundwork, but we didn't understand enough about what the enterprise was. It was impossible to understand it in one decade, the nature of the enterprise. We've now had 30 years, and a new generation has the benefit of that experience and the benefit of the new technology. And the benefit of the *deeper confusion of the establishment*. And all of these factors, I think, mean that the long-awaited paradigm shift is now a matter of individual and collective decision coming out of the artistic and scientific community. And that's us.

So the time is now, the tools are here. We can use the turn of the millennium as a kind of flog on the

dissipation of print-created values. This isn't going to happen tomorrow or next week -- it lies beyond the turn of the century. Until then, the cultural agenda will be under the control of the institutions that control it today. But they, I believe, don't realize how profoundly terminal for their enterprise the year 2000 is going to be. And beyond the turn of the century -- if we have laid the groundwork, and kept the faith, and built the networks, and gained the experience -- they'll be ready to talk turkey. We will build the world that we sense in our dreams. I mean, where we are headed is into the Imagination. It's where we've always been headed. That's what telling stories around the campfire is all about. But now the Imagination beckons. It more than beckons, it reaches out its hand to lead us into an *astounding* new world... Meet me there!

Thank you very much!

Q&A

Okay, well this is the part of these things that I actually enjoy the most, which is an opportunity for feedback. It really bums me that, no matter how I cut the cake, it's a middle-aged white guy up on stage, pontificating -- we're talking about one-to-many, here's a one-to-many exercise. So this is the chance to redress the balance, and this is where I usually have the most fun and learn things. So anybody who has a question, it doesn't have to hold to tonight's topic -- whatever that was. Feel free. I give long answers, so get your licks in early.

Q1: Good evening, Terence. I had a very enjoyable time listening to you. It seems to me that in your vision of the future there is a dichotomy of Nature and Technology, one that is effectively aimed at destroying itself. I'd like you to address that issue on two different levels for me. Practically, are the resources that we have available to us today -- the ones that we have left -- enough to be able to power this technology to 2012? It takes 40,000 pounds of materials to scrunch down into one 4-pound laptop computer, in terms of petroleum, raw minerals... That's one thing I need to question; I don't know if that's going to be possible. Secondly, philosophically, if we have to exploit nature to achieve our ends where does that leave us if we are trying to go back to nature? That's where the dichotomy for me lies. And as a brief corollary to those two points, I wondered how you reconcile the fact that the great majority of people and, obviously, species on this planet, aren't going to have access to the technology that we're speaking of today.

TM: So two questions and a corollary -- for a pot smoker like me...[garbled]! So basically the question is, how can we deliver this to everybody without extracting all the glass, metal, and so forth, in the planet? Well, one answer is nanotechnology, miniaturization. If we could actually bring that on line, even in a modest form, the standing crop of materials already extracted from the earth would be sufficient to maintain the technology. We're very long on heavy metals and materials now, and very short on creative engineering uses of those things.

I guess I should describe how I live a little bit, because I'm trying to live what I'm talking about. So here's how it comes out, as an example. I live in Hawaii. I live up a four-wheel-drive road that is very miserable and difficult. There are no power lines in, there are no telephone lines. The sun generates the electricity. I reach the Internet wirelessly (and now at low speed, but soon at high speed). I can push back from my desk and walk in the forest, or go online and adjust my web site which is on the Levity server here in Manhattan. To me this is how it should be. The office culture is probably a major *raison d'etre* for the existence of modern cities. There's no reason now for office culture to be maintained. And once

corporations realize this, I think they will break it down. There's no reason now for most people to commute. One of the dilemmas of my own life is, I like being a player in the culture and I like having people read my books and so forth, but I don't like climbing on 747s and crossing nine time zones to give a speech. So, my hope is that telepresence and these kinds of things will have an impact.

The other thing is -- and I didn't talk that much about it in the talk -- consumerism is much overdone, I mean to the level of *pathology*. People, somehow -- and this is a place where media comes in -- somehow, media needs to make it *unhip* to have a lot of stuff. And this is a tall order for media because it's media's job to *sell* stuff, and the more stuff that sells the more successful it is. But the selling of this stuff will eventually lead to what you're talking about: the complete devastation of the environment, the complete impoverishment of everybody. So, again, the only thing I know that can address this disparity of wealth, and convince people without *things* that they are rich, are psychedelics. Once you realize that you have more art in your head than they're auctioning over at Christie's, you feel much better about things! So acquiring *things* as a substitute for authentic being needs to be denounced for the neurotic behavior that it is -- no matter how good your *taste!* Presently we tend to behave as though, if you acquire things that are tacky, that's terrible, but if you acquire things that are [affectedly] "exquisite", that's wonderful. No, it's just a relative kind of terrible. True aristocrats live with nothing, I think. I had a professor of Chinese philosophy and language once, and he had lived in Peking for 20 years and he had been all over the world. And he invited me to have dinner at his house one time. I thought, "Wow, I'll get to see some kind of great art collection. I'm sure this guy just has great stuff!" He had nothing. That was because he was a Taoist scholar. We should do similarly!

Q1: Thank you.

TM: Yeah, thank you.

Q2: Well I sort of feel badly about putting the question like this, but: listening to the sweep over thought going around the radar screen tonight, I couldn't help but notice that UFOs were gone. What happened to the UFOs?

TM: The squirrels abducted them!!

Well, you want me to say something about UFOs, or something about something...?

Q2: Well you used to say, you know, UFOs were like (in a 1983 tape I guess) sparks from the unconscious flying back from the end of time and all that. And it just seemed to be completely missing from the picture -- it's a curiosity as to why it's missing.

TM: Okay, well here's why. First of all, I stand by everything I said. Something strange haunts the skies of Earth. I have seen it, other people have seen it, but there are two parallel phenomenon. There are the UFOs, and there are *those who believe* in the UFOs. And as emphasis moves from one to the other, the discussion becomes so hopelessly squirrely, that I just can't participate in it. I have encountered DMT creatures, I have encountered aliens; I have *never* had an unscheduled proctological examination in my home at 3 in the morning by people who hail from Zeta Reticuli!

I'm glad you brought this up. This is a good place to test all these razors I was talking about, this balkanization of epistemology. I was really talking around this issue. Here's my take on the entire

abduction phenomenon. For some reason -- possibly food additives, but much more likely, a lot of television and movies -- but for some reason, a small percentage of people here at the end of the Twentieth Century have lost the ability to distinguish between memory and dream. And as Ross Perot says, "End of story!" That's what's happening. Imagine a person in an archaic society. The most dramatic narrative event is an old shaman telling a story around the campfire. And it's always the traditional stories of the culture, the known stories. Well then imagine one of us. We have watched 50,000 half-hour sitcoms in our lives. We have watched thousands of movies, more than we could ever remember watching. That's all in there. And if believe Freud, Jung, or anybody else who's thought about the unconscious, you know that the unconscious can use that material to create scenarios of pathology or individuation. So if someone tells a story about an abduction, the first thing to ask are hard questions. And the quality of research being done on these abductions is ludicrous; the people who are sent to investigate these things end up being attorneys for the people making these claims! I just find it utterly underwhelming in the evidence department. It also irritates my sense of the *Alien*. The Alien is *so alien* that it cannot be reduced to something as preposterous as silver flannel pajamas, large eyes, and an interest in studying your rear end. The Alien is *truly* alien!

I don't know what to make of this breakdown of rational discourse on this issue. But it's not coming from the psychedelic community. The psychedelic community is far more sophisticated than the alien community. I said to Whitley Streiber, I said, "If you had to tell this story, and preface it by saying you'd taken 5 grams of psilocybin, you couldn't have given it to your grandmother. " So it has to do with different approaches to evidence, and different aesthetics, I think. So I'm all keen for the UFOs, but very keen to divide away all the silliness. I think we're approaching a time where it might be reasonable -- gently, kindly, and with a smile on our faces -- to denounce just plain foolishness. There's a lot of absolute foolishness --

[Voice from crowd:] Remember Terence!

TM: [laughs] I'm not sure -- you want to say more?

Voice: Well nothing new is alien to you. To call it foolishness is to judge it, right?

TM: "To call it foolishness is to judge it." Well I didn't say *don't judge*. I thought what I was saying is, make distinctions. You *have* to judge. You're going to be presented with an endless smorgasbord of ideological options. Where do you go -- Mormonism, Scientology, the Hassids, the Zennies, the Buddhas? Where do you put your faith? You're going to be constantly called upon to make this call. Now you don't have to make sense to *me*; you don't have to use my criteria. But you should use some criteria which you can rationally defend. The problem with the UFO community, I think, is that they are too credulous, and consequently there is too large a body of evidence left claiming that it should be taken seriously. There *is* something bizarre going on -- at the edge of language, at the edge of collective attention -- unusual anomalies haunt the epistemic enterprise like ghosts. But people who come forth to proclaim what this is haven't taken the depth of the mystery. I mean what it is is the Cosmic Giggle, and they're not going to nail that to the barn door; that's its nature, that it's mercurial, shifting beyond your reach. It changes as you behold it.

Q2: Thank you, I won't bring it up again! [laughter]

TM: I didn't mean to beat up on you, I... Yes?

Q3: Hi. I got your software, and I started to read the book, and I gotta ask you: How come a *descent* into novelty? Is it that easy to get to novelty?

TM: You mean why not an ascent?

Q3: Why not an ascent? And can you say more about the context of North Whitehead, and the period of time we're in right now?

TM: Okay. First of all, why a descent into novelty rather than an ascent? It was my thing to do as I wanted to do it, and it seemed to me -- the way I thought of time was I thought of it like a river. And so I thought of it as flowing toward its lowest level. And I thought of history as a river and Eternity as the ocean. So naturally history flows downhill to reach Eternity. I also like the fact that when the descent in elevation is rapid, the river runs faster, and when the landscape is almost flat, the river broadens out and meanders. So it was to preserve this idea of time as a fluid. The other reason is a mathematical reason. It has to do with the fact that if we have novelty moving downward, then the maximum of novelty is zero. If we have novelty moving upward, the maximum of novelty is just some very large number, and that's not very appealing.

Now you said to talk a little bit more about this time we're passing through. Well, one thing I didn't mention in the talk (because it takes for granted that you've studied my thing, which is a lot to presume) -- there are *resonances* in my theory. It's not simply that it's either novelty or habit. There are resonances between one time and another time. And the time we are in right now is a very strong resonance to the middle Tenth Century. In a sense, we are emerging from the Dark Ages. It's not good to push the analogy too hard, because many times are intersecting. But in ordinary theory of history or theory of causality, the most important moment before this one is the moment immediately preceding this one. My thing says something different. It says no, each moment in time is a kind of interference pattern made up of other times, some near, some far. Their relationship is not linear. And that's why we suddenly get a burst of Egyptian-style furniture, or suddenly a lot of talk about Judy Blake, or suddenly a remake of the story of Aeschylus... Fashion, or the ebb and flow of mass obsession, is based on *feeling the zeitgeist*, and the zeitgeist carries these messages from many times and many places. And there was a third part?

Q3: I wanted to know more about Alfred North Whitehead and how the *I Ching* and everything got together.

TM: Well, people think of Alfred North Whitehead as a somewhat obscure and stuffy guy, just because he was English and it was the 1920's and guess he didn't do a lot of bong rips or something. But if you read *Process and Reality* -- I strongly urge you to read this book. It's not easy, but you don't need a Sanskrit dictionary, and you don't need to take up residence down at the ashram and sweep up... Whitehead has a language that he speaks, and he talks of *feelings* as the primary datum of reality. And he talks about time as moving towards what he calls "concrecence". And he talks about complex systems such as an organization or a human being as a "nexus of actual occasions". Well I just find his vocabulary, his way of thinking about things, *and his mathematical rigor* to be tremendously appealing. If you take Whitehead to you breast, you don't have to hang your head in front of anybody, because his mathematics is impeccable. He is one of the great mathematical thinkers of the Twentieth Century. So it is a very solid foundation that will support a very psychedelic view of how reality works.

Q3: Thank you.

TM: Thank you.

Q4: I want to know if you believe in the paranormal abilities of humans, and if so, if you think that can lead to the ultimate wireless communication.

TM: Yes, absolutely. I don't have any inside track on this. But I said my method was to search the weird and then to pay attention, and I have seen -- maybe for a minute out of my 50 years of existence -- I have seen people do paranormal things. What it was, was it was my brother, reading my mind -- not what I was thinking, but something that had happened to me 14 months ago that he had never been told. No one had ever been told. And in a condition of quite advanced psychic discombobulation, he just spied this story. I was so impressed, I went to psychiatrists and people who spend time in back wards, locked wards, because I thought, "That must be where this stuff goes on." And some people said yes and some people said no. Apparently schizophrenics are not nearly as interesting as I had hoped they would be.

But I'm not ready to give up on this. First of all, how many psychiatrist residents have ever seen and *unmedicated* schizophrenic? None, I submit to you. I was in the Amazon basin when my brother went around the bend, and medical health care delivery was out of the question. How many people deal, in the Twentieth Century, with schizophrenia naked? What it seemed to me to be was a kind of -- it was almost like it's a disease of spacetime itself. You walk into a nexus and then *you're tweaked*, and you see too much, you say too much. And it's very hard to get you squeezed back down into what they call a "coping mode". And that's all most psychiatry's about; it doesn't ask philosophical questions. They're trying to get you back on the street, back at your job, performing the necessary social function.

So yeah, I think that the obvious tool for studying paranormal abilities in human beings are psychedelics. That's the only time I've ever seen anything like this go down. And yet this is not done. It's impossible to get permission to give psychedelics to people with [any] other experimental protocol than to see whether they live through it -- let alone get permission to flip cards or do other, more advanced, kinds of tests for paranormal ability. This is another place where culture is not your friend. Culture tells you what is possible. For instance, I've been with cultures where people could smell water, and it was a life and death deal. Well, is that a paranormal ability? I've been in cultures where people claim that when they wanted *ayahuasca*, they would listen, and then they would hear the vine calling, and then they would go and get it. In their culture this was how you did it; it was not paranormal. In our culture there's no way to explain that. So I think language imprisons us, and then what is human becomes exotic in some cases. Thank you.

Q5: Is the point of visual art to be put on the Internet now? I'm a painter, and I drove an hour and a half to the area, and I don't have access to the Internet. Recently somebody wanted me to make a copy of my paintings specifically so it could be put on the Internet, and I tried to do it, and it didn't work. And I'm wondering if I need to adapt...?

TM: Well, it's a stretch for all of us. A year ago, I had no web site, I didn't know what HTML was, I had no scanner -- I just had the belief that web sites were an important thing. Now I do my own programming, I maintain the web site here in Manhattan from Hawaii. You're going to have to accept the fact that you're going to have to learn a bunch of new stuff. At first a person my age resents that. Now that I'm into it, I

haven't had this much fun since the 1960's, I haven't learned so much stuff! So what kind of stuff do you learn? Do you just learn the software -- you're the slave to commercialism, in some sense? I don't see it that way. Photoshop teaches you about light. The 3D rendering programs teach you about space. The animation programs teach you about motion. And believe me, it's not simple. When you're in a 3D rendering program, of the sort that gives you, simultaneously, three views, from three different angles, of the object which you're sculpting -- a stupid person cannot coordinate all that data! And I started out unable to coordinate all that data. And then you learn, "Oh, it's like I have three eyes, viewing it from three different positions, and if I just relax into this, I can grok it." So I think we are all going to go back to school, big time, and between myself and the open grave I see no end to learning. Learning, learning, learning.

The tools are so powerful -- yes, pictorial art, hung on the walls of galleries, (which I am certainly friendly toward, always visit as many galleries as I can, wherever I go, and have been interested in this my whole intellectual life) still it's incredibly rarefied and removed from the lives of most people. And you are, somehow, handmaiden to the interior decoration industries. So I think most artists dream of a deeper communication and a wider audience. I mean it's fine to be collected by a dozen people, but I don't think that would be satisfaction before the throne of Eternity. The real satisfaction is in *influencing*. If you care enough about your vision to paint it, you must surely want it then to influence people. And the Net is simply the way that's to be done now.

Q5: My worry is just that there's something lost in the medium, because it's not a direct experience of the medium.

TM: Well, something is lost. Something is lost in reproduction -- the same something, probably. But I find the clear scans on the Net to be at least as satisfying as four-color printing. I don't think that's the problem.

Q5: Thank you.

Q6: [Comment about the importance of affirming the future.]

Q7: [Starts with a plug for party the following night.] My question relates to an earlier question, the UFO thing. I noticed on the poster something that you were quoted as saying, that we are in a symbiotic relationship with an entity that's disguising itself as an alien invasion. You already addressed this a little bit, but I'd like to hear more about this.

TM: The quote was that "we have a symbiotic relationship with something which has disguised itself as an alien invasion so as not to alarm us." What I meant by that was that an alien invasion is a myth of our culture. Since the 50's we've had the example of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *When Worlds Collide* right on up through that television series which I didn't see, where they changed all the Nazis to aliens and then it was a huge success. So alien invasion is a piece of our cultural toolbox, but that's not what's happening. What's happening is something... less easy to name than "alien invader" is reaching out toward us. It could be the Gaian Mind, it could be the Oversoul of humanity... I don't think it comes from the distant stars -- it knows us too well, and loves us too much. It could come from the dead. Now that's what I mean by something weirder than an alien invasion. An alien invasion compared to a collective mass contact by the dear departed is pretty mundane stuff.

So, whatever this thing is, it keeps itself masked. I've literally had the experience on mushrooms of saying

to it, "Show me what you are, for yourself." Well, it's like there's this enormous organ chord, the temperature falls, black velvet curtains are raised -- and after about 20 seconds of that, I'm saying, "That's *enough* of what you are for yourself! Let's go back to the dancing mice..." So what I mean is that our journey through time, our historical journey to this moment, has not be unaccompanied. We have always been accompanied by this thing. The Demiurgos -- some people just throw down their cards and call it God and be done with it. I'm not ready for that, because I don't think it's the God who "hung the stars like lamps in Heave," as Milton said. It's not *that* God. If it is a god, it's the god of Biology. And I don't have any problem with that. I think that the reason people took psychedelics, and the reason psychedelics had such an impact on early human society, was, not because they dissolved sexual boundaries, not because they increased hunting skills, not because they all those things -- which they *did* do -- but, because they brought us into communication with this invisible, all-pervading Mind, that essentially civilization is a denial of that Mind. You stop herding your cattle across the plains, you stop having orgies, you stop taking boundary-dissolving substances, and what do you do? You build walls. You herd everybody inside. And then you appoint a god-king. Then you tell everybody else to take orders from this guy. And what this is, is a pathology, a denial that we are part and parcel of the greater intent of planetary biology. So now the planet is so slammed to the wall by the untrammelled practice of history, that the Gaian murmuring grows louder. It grows *much* louder. [tape ends]

[The following is based on my brief notes of the last few questions.]

Q7 asks about the idea that we are approaching a shift to a higher molecular vibrational frequency, if we are heading into another dimension.

TM doesn't give much weight to the vibrational frequency theory, but does believe we will make some sort of dimensional transition.

Q8 states that he is manic depressive, and is constantly creating his own reality. Since being released from a mental hospital, he has been successfully managing his own life. He wonders whether taking psychedelics might be ill-advised for him.

TM agrees that it must come down to individual judgment, and that there are some people whose boundaries are best left undissolved.

Q9 mentions that she has just come from Colorado, where she learned that an abundance of clean air and sunlight can be every bit as visionary as DMT. She worries that people living in New York are badly deprived of such resources/experiences.

TM responds with a mushroom vision he once had, in which he saw Manhattan island, as it stands today, except with ivy and other plants covering all the buildings. He advocates this vision, saying this would provide an ample supply of oxygen, and would generally "naturalize" the urban environment. He recalls being in Berlin soon after the legalization of marijuana, and seeing green shoots rising from window boxes all down the streets.

Original Transcription by: [Abrupt NYC](#)

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Live at the Cyberdome

Day Month 1991 (Autumn)

Location, Stuttgart, Germany

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Terence McKenna: [Audio cut off] Hyperspace that's being created. You know, we had this chance five thousand years ago when we started living in cities and we made all the wrong decisions. Hierarchical society, kingship, uh, straight street plans, phonetic alphabets. This time I hope we're a little smarter and we can exalt, uh, magic, eroticism, the feminine, tribal values and an deem[sp?] emphasis on the natural world and a deemphasis on consumerism, thing worship, sexism and generalized stupidity.

Micky Remann: Und in dem Masse in dem wir uns anschicken das Reich der Imagination im Cyberspace zu erkunden und zu bewohnen, sollen wir uns bemühen die Magie, das Zauberische am Leben zu erhalten. Was für die die die wirklichen Gewürze des menschlichen Geistes sind und, uh, nicht die Fehler zu machen die wir vielleicht in unserer menschlichen Geschichte vor fünf Tausen Jahren gemacht haben auf einem anderen Zivilisationstrip, nämlich gerade Straßen, uh, Immobilienmärkte, hierarchische Ordnung, Bürokratie und Politikerstrukturen zu bilden. Sondern dass, uh, wenn es jetzt um des Phänomen des Cyberspace geht, dass wir die magischen Elfen, die, uh, Gnome und andere spot spöttische Wesen halten auch in diese technologisch vermittelten Welten Hineinfluss gewähren.

TM: So, you know, when you think about the cybernetic community, the psychedelic community, the cyberpunk community. It's in places like this that we gather and we self-select out of the rest of society. So what I think would be important to come out of any evening like this is that everybody take a good look at the people next to them and realize that somebody in this room has what you need. And you have what somebody in this room needs. The, uh, the spreading of the idea of cyberspace has two aspects. It's first of all informing people for whom all of this is new and completely unexpected, but then the other thing is deepening our own commitment to it and that means, uh, more plant psychedelics. It means higher doses in silent darkness. It means a commitment and a courage to live out this way of life so that we can really take back our minds from the dominator culture, the linear paternalistic industrial capitalist culture and live the kind of erotic tribalism that we have our fondest memories of.

MR: Die psychedelischen Gemeinschaften, die technodelischen Gemeinschaften, die psychone- navigatorischen neurologischen Gemeinschaften wie immer man sie in dieser Disko oder sonst wo anfinden mag, haben das gemein, dass sie sich selber gewählt haben ein Raum zu finden der sich vom Rest der Gesellschaft abhebt, in dem sie ihre Neugier erkunden, in dem sie ihre neurologischen Pfahl begehen können und sich da gegenseitig bestärken können. Und, uh, das Beste was man aus einem solchen Abend wie diesem mitbringen können ist vielleicht die, uh, Realisierung dass wenn man sich nach rechts und links umschaut, da genau die Leute sind, die diese Gemeinschaft bilden und was immer man braucht, sicher ist in diesem Raum irgendjemand der genau das hat und du hast genauso irgendetwas was jemand anders der in diesem Raum ist braucht und in dieser Gewissheit zu leben um sich umzugucken, das könnte die Vertiefung der psychedelisch neuronalen Cyberpaceerfahrung sein zu der man hier zusammenkommt.

TM: What put me on to the connection between archaic shamanism and the new technology and the new music was when I went to the Amazon and, uh, spent time with the people down there who use a plant psychedelic called Ayahuasca. I discovered that, uh, the people were singing what they called magical songs, that were, uh, revealed to them under the intoxicating influence of this plant. But when they criticized the magical songs to each other, they treated them like painting, or like sculpture, not like music. So then when someone would sing a song and then, uh, everyone would say well I like the part with the blue stripes and the yellow dots but I didn't like the part that was red with gray overlay. In other words, for them sound was something that you see, rather than hear. And my, uh, fantasy for virtual reality is to use it as a technology for objectifying language. Because, you see, if we could see what we meant when we spoke, it would be a kind of telepathy. The method that we use to communicate now, small mouth noises moving through space as acoustical signals and then the consulting of learned dictionaries. This is not, uh, a wide band of communication and yet the whole world is held together by small mouth noises and their electronic transductions as radio, television and so forth. So what the cyberpunk generation holds out to the rest of us is a new kind of communication. A communication that is like telepathy because it's seen with the eyes and so then it dissolves boundaries and unites us back into this tribal, uh, community that we feel such a need for.

MR: Was mich interessiert an der Verbindung von archaischen schamanischen Methoden und der Bewegung der Cyberspace und Cyberpunk ist die Verbindung zum, uh, zu der Art und Weise wie die Amazonasschamanen ihre magischen Gesänge vollführen. Sie nehmen eine halluzinogene Pflanzentinktur namens Ayahuasca zu sich, die, uh, die Wirkung hat, dass sie, uh, sehr f- in sehr transeartige schamanische Gesänge verfallen und die Art und Weise wie sie über diese Gesänge reden ist allerdings nicht auf die, uh, Kritik der Töne bezogen, sondern es ist eine Beschreibung der Farben. Es findet ein Übertragung von Töne auf Farben statt. Und wenn am nächsten Morgen nach dieser Ayahuasca-trance die Leute sich darüber unterhalten wie diese magischen Gesänge waren, die sie unter dem Einfluss der Pflanze gesungen haben, da sagen sie nicht ja, dieses Lied hat aber gut geklungen oder es geht [sp?], sondern sie sagen mir hat besonders gut der Teil gefallen wo eben wie diese auf Lilaustrgrund diese gelben Sterne erschienen, aber diese Teile mit den roten Streifen auf gelbem Feld, die fand ich weniger interessant. Das ist die Art und Weise wie im Amazonas eine synesthetische Verknüpfung zwischen auditiven und visuellen Kanälen geschaltet wird. Und unsere Hoffnung der Cyberpunkgeneration ist die, dass wir einen Weg finden diese telepathische Ästhetik wiederherzustellen, dass wir auf die, uh, Sprache wie sie jetzt stattfindet in Form von kleinen tonalen Mundstücken die hier ausgesprochen werden und dann über die Luftschallwellen irgendwo in eure Ohren kommen wo sie mit erinnerten Lexika und deren Bedeutungen verglichen wird, um dann wieder in eine Bedeutung rückübersetzt zu werden, was ein extrem komplizierter Vorgang ist. Da wäre die Hoffnung des Cyberpunk des Cyberspace ein neue Form von visueller synesthetischer Kommunikation zu finden, die es ermöglicht, dass wir das sehen was wir meinen.

TM: So it seems to me the way the cyber, uh, punk, cybertech community can keep its compass pointed toward a real human future is to always keep natural models in mind. So, when I became interested in this whole problem of visual language, I went to nature to see if there was some natural system of communication that modeled this thing that I was interested in. And what I discovered was that in the octopus and in the squid you have this form of psychedelic language is already highly evolved. Because the octopus can change the colors and the texture of its surface and because it lives in water and so can dance and fold and unfold parts of its body very quickly. It has essentially become the surface of its own mind. It is, uh, in effect a nervous system turned inside out, so that the thoughts of the octopus ripple across its surface and, uh, you know the engineers who have designed cyberspace and virtual reality environments in California are fond of saying that you can be anything in virtual reality. Well then it seems to me the thing you want to become is naked linguistic intent, pure intent toward communication and so by mapping the linguistic possibility onto a topological continuum and then processing it through, uh, computers we actually create a true mirror for our own mind. And so to look upon this or to share it with other people is to participate in a true form of telepathy and I think this true boundary dissolving telepathy that unites us all into one family should be the goal of the cyberspatial community.

MR: Wenn man diese neuen Dimensionen des Cyberspace erkundet, dann empfiehlt es sich vielleicht zu sehen ob es irgendwo natürliche Modelle gibt, die diese Art von angestrebter synesthetischer Kommunikation schu praktizieren. Das würde der Entwicklung auf jeden Fall sehr helfen, wenn man sich auf solche Modelle, uh, rückbesinnen könnte. Und erstaunlicherweise gibt es bereits ein Lebewesen auf diesem Planeten, das telepathische Synesthesie praktiziert. Das ist der Tintenfisch, dessen, uh, Möglichkeiten auf der eigenen Haut Farbkaskaden, Mosaikgebilde und ganze TV-Screens abzubilden schier unerschöpflich sind. Und, uh, der Tintenfisch könnte dargestellt werden als ein nach außengeklapptes Nervensystem. Alles was innerhalb dieses Tintenfisches an Emotionen oder Mitteilungen vorgeht wird sichtbar in Form von farbigen Displays auf seiner eigenen Außenhaut. Und das Versprechen, das die, uh, Cyberspace-technologie macht geht ganz in eine ähnliche Richtung, dass, uh, die der Inhalt meiner Imagination sichtbar wird als ein, uh, dreidimensionale farbige Skulptur, die nicht weiter beschrieben oder umschrieben werden muss, wenn an die direkt wahrgenommen werden kann, uh, als die Außenhaut meiner Imagination.

TM: It's always held against the technical community that somehow we've moved beyond the values of the natural and the biological world. But if you think about what the tools of cyberspace are, they are integrated circuits, chips and, uh, electronic components which are made of gold, platinum, arsenic, silver, copper, silicon. These are all the materials of the earth and in a sense what we are doing is organizing the raw material of the earth so that it can reflect the dynamics of electrons, of light, moving through fiber optic cables. So really, the in in the cybernetic revolution what is happening is a kind of completion of the dream of alchemy. That spirit could actually, uh, come mingle with, uh, metals and glass and, uh, that out of this mingling of spirit and matter could come a new possibility, a new evolutionary option, a kind of philosopher's stone, a kind of panacea at the end of time. And this is to me what the computer and the virtual technologies all push toward. A kind of mirroring of our own souls. That what the agenda of cyberspace is is a kind of, uh, turning the body insight out. Bringing the soul into visible manifestation in the world as a kind of eternal transdimensional object and then turning the body into a freely commanded object in the human imagination. I mean this is the idea. To tray[sp?] to make this reality behind the menu and make the reality of cyberspace the reality in front of the screen, to reverse the figure ground relationship and find ourselves free at last in the imagination.

MR: Was der Cyberspacegemeinschaft häufig vorgehalten wird ist ihre Fixierung auf diese technischen Mittel. Aber es ist natürlich, uh, wenn man sie auseinandernimmt, diese technischen Mittel, kommt man auf Silizium, Kohlenstoffverbindung, Polymere, Kupfer, Nickel, Eisen, verschiedene Substanzen dieser Erde sind. Und was letztlich in der technologischen, uh, Evolution geschieht ist dass diese Erd irdischen Stoffe auf eine Weise zusammengefügt werden, dass sie eine eigene Intelligenz hervorbringen, oder dass sie eine in ihre zu in ihrem Zusammenwirken eine Rückkopplung mit der irdischen Intelligenz bilden, die es vorher noch nicht gegeben hat. Und was die, uh, Cyberpespacetechnologie[sp?] verspricht ist ein alchemistischer Traum. Nämlich eine Verbindung zu schaffen zwischen Geist und Materie in der Weise, dass die Seele oder die die Kraft der Imagination nach außen gekehrt wird und dass der Körper mehr nach innen gekehrt wird und dass die Beziehung zwischen Keyboard und Vorstellungsvermögen durchlässig werden.

TM: So when I try to imagine the cybernetic world of the not too distant future, what I imagine is a world where, uh, all tools and toolkits have been tucked away into a virtual cyberspace. So what we see when we look at this world of the future is we see healthy men and women living in a natural environment, uh, naked, happy, at peace and when these people close their eyes in this natural environment, what they see hanging in mental space are menus. And these menus are the way you make your way into an interface which is completely hidden in three dimensional space, but which is nothing more than a hard wiring, a downloading into, uh, hardware, if you will, of the unco- the collectivity of the unconscious that exists anyway. I mean, what we're doing is, uh, the end male men engineering mentality is following along at hardwiring what the animal body has always been into. So, uh, the future is a future of ultratechnology in a dimension that is split off from what is called the ordinary world. The ordinary world, the natural world is maintained like a botanical garden or a natural preserve and then the human imagination, which is this titanic, Promethean force that is loose in our species, it is free in a virtual reality to create all of the castles of the imagination, to create the mile long buildings in all kinds of architectural styles, to create the arcologies and vision spaces that are the affirmation of the imagination. We are our mental power to project imagery has become so powerful that now really our only option is to break with the planet and head out into a cultural space defined by our dreams and by our machines. And this is in fact what we're doing and you people are many of the people who will do it. What we're doing is we're taking back our minds. I mean that's more than a political slogan. We're taking back our minds from reductionism, from materialism, from scientism, from all of these intellectual philosophies which disempowered the artist and made the artist somehow slave to other forces in society. In the cyberdelic future, artists will rule, because the world will be made of art.

MR: Wenn ich meinen kurzen Ausflug in die weitere Entwicklung dessen machen kann was Cyberspace heute am Anfang versucht, dann, uh, kann man sich vorstellen, dass es ein, uh, freundliches, lächelndes, äußeres Universum gibt, grüne Wiesen, lächelnde Menschen, die nackt in ihren Höhlen hausen und sich, uh, das Leben gut sein lassen, in der herkömmlichen dreidimensionalen Realität. Aber sobald diese Menschen ihre ihre Augen schließen werden also unendliche Menüleisten von Optionen und Werkzeugkästen erscheinen auf ihrem inneren Auge, die sie dies ihnen ermöglicht, uh, psychedelische, imaginative Optionen zu erleben, und mit der gleichen Wirklichkeit und der gleichen Realitätsdichte wie diese dreidimensionale Realität. Und mit ihren, uh, Körpern auf dem gesunden Grass liegend können sie hinter geschlossenen Augen in unendliche Räume vordringen und, uh, sich in alle möglichen Situationen und Gesellschaftsformen hineindenken, die von den jetzigen Gesellschaften so weit entfernt sind wie wir von den, uh, Steinzeithöhlen und, uh, diese Möglichkeiten sind in der Evolution dieser Technik enthalten und wir können uns gegenseitig Mut machen oder uns dagegen, uh, wahren, aber wir können uns auf diese Schienen einschwören und in Gesellschaften oder den Gemeinschaften wie diesen die, uh, Wege dorthin erkunden.

TM: Yes, you see. What we're doing is, uh, invoking a co- kind of collective mind. It's a political project that has been the dream of civilization for as long as there has been civilization. And it actually is within the power of this generation to, uh, create this kind of new definition of humanness, where all the shit and horror of the last five thousand years of human history can somehow be reclaimed or made to have meaning by the application of technology toward the reflection of the human soul.

MR: Und der Versuch der dahinter steht ist eigentlich ein sehr alter Traum der Menschen, nämlich sich ihren eigenen Geist zurückzugewinnen und, uh, das Territorium was von Bürokraten und Politikern und Zi- und Zivilisationen bei denen alles durch, uh, Horror und Shit gegangen ist. Dieses belebte Territorium der eigenen Träume und der eigenen Imagination wieder für sich selbst zu reklamieren. Und, uh, dieses. Da war noch irgendwas. Das hab ich inzwischen vergessen wie's weiterging, aber es ging in dieser Art weiter. Uh, dass die, uh, die Möglichkeiten dieses zu einer bewohnbaren Welt zu machen.

TM: Boring[sp?] the natural psychedelic vision into that loop, then, uh, endless realms of alien and unpredictable beauty lie ahead. And this is really what human beings were made for. I mean, we are the information generating, art making creature. All our higher activities, dance, painting, music, poetry, uh, human relationships, all of these things have the character of art. And so the the future is lies in the realization of beauty, the making it more and more explicit, the sharing of our dreams by at last applying tools, not toward warfare, but toward the dissolving of boundaries between people and, uh, nations so that, uh, the real biological fact of a human community can show through. If we're able to do that we're will be able to fast forward the cultural crisis and we will be able through psychedelics and mass media and the, uh, distribution and control of the flow of information actually be able to save ourselves and this world from ruin. It rests in the hands of the high tech communities developing and controlling, uh, information technology, because we have the money, we have the power to make any change we want in the world. But we have to change our minds. And that means better art and more psychedelics and so that's the responsibility which rests on you guys, and, uh, I'm sure you're up to it. Thank you very much.

[Audience claps]

MR: Ich werd sehen, ob ich aus dieser Rede noch ein paar Fische ins deutsche Land heranziehen kann. Was als Kompass und Maßinstrument[sp?] gelten sollte, wenn man jetzt diesen Cyberspace erforscht und bewohnt, sollte die Schönheit der psychedelischen Erfahrung sein. Nimmt man ein, uh, nimmt man diese diesen Reichtum der psychedelischen Vision nicht mit in diesen Cyberspace hinein, läuft man Gefahr auf eine narzisstische Selbstschlaufe hereinzufallen in der eigentlich nur die eigenen, uh, Begrenztheiten wiederspiegelt werden. Aber der unendliche Reichtum, der in der psychedelischen Vision die ich[sp?] die andersartige und außerirdische Schönheit dieser Visionen, das könnte das Element und das Ingredient sein, dass aus dem Cyberspace eine wirklich lohnende Alternative zu dieser Realität ist, uh, wo wir auf der Endmoräne von technologischen Problemen sitzen, die, uh, ein dieses genau dieses neue und visionäre Input brauchen, damit wir uns über die Runden kommen. Und, uh, es ist schön in einer Gemeinschaft, in einer Gruppe zu sein, die sich mit diesen Themen beschäftigt, weil das liegt in unserer Hand, diese menschlichen Träume, die Welt als Kunstwerk und Imagination zu verwirklichen. Schönen Dank.

[Audience claps]

TM: Thank you[sp?].

Original Transcription by: Alhazred (6th of March, 2018)

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Live at the Hollywood Bowl

24 August, 1989

Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)

Original Transcription by: [Please enter your name or username here when you start transcribing so we know that it is being/has been worked on by someone]

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Live at the Zoo with DJ Zippy

26 February 1997

The Zoo, Brisbane, Australia

Description

- [Soundcloud](#)

[music]

[audience cheering and clapping]

[music]

Terence McKenna: Hello, hello, hello. Hello, hello, hello, hello?

[audience cheering]

TM: Wonderful. Well it's a it's a pleasure to be stoned with you in Brisbane this evening.

[audience cheering]

TM: [Terence laughs] It looks to me like the tribes have turned out in all their splendid variety. So I'm here this evening to talk to you in three brief rants with Zippy's wonderful art before, in-between and after. We have commercial opportunities for you back at the pinball machine. Uh, we've, uh, hopefully provided all that we can. I'm I'm sure someone in this room has what you need. And, uh, I'll be gone on the next flight tomorrow. So the important thing I think is to look around you. This is the psychedelic community in which you find yourself. This is your affinity group. This is your cadre and not only is there someone here tonight who has what you need, there's probably someone here tonight who needs something that you have. It's no news that a worldwide movement of trance, dance, consciousness, psychedelics and archaic revivalism is taking place. And my place in all this, I suppose, is to humbly offer one version only of why this is happening and why it's happening now and what it might mean for the future. This is the old style of doing things. This is how religion was practiced for the first three million years before it fell into the hands of politicians and real estate speculators. Religion is not about dogma. It's even less about laundry lists of moral do's and don'ts. Religion is about feeling and community. Feeling and community. And in the course of western history we have wandered a long long way from these things. So far in our own past is authentic shamanism, authentic community, authentic human relating, that it comes as an unconfirmed rumor. But in the last hundred years the curiosity of anthropologists, botanists, ethnographers, neurophysiologists, linguists has let the cat out of the bag. And the cat that is out of the bag is that reality is simply a state of mind. Reality is a place where cultures pitch their can and then defend it against all others. In the same way that we've had to learn that our sexuality doesn't come in two flavors, we have to also face that there's more to consciousness than awake and asleep. And in fact in every ecosystem, in every culture, in every part of the world from the Arctic to the Equator, there are chemically complex and shamanic plants that can be brought together to open doorways into domains of experience that are not only unsanctioned by the straight establishment, but unimagined by the straight establishment. I mean this is what lies outside of history. This is what the dreamtime is. This is what the magical world of suspended belief of South American shamanism is all about and the point that we have come to with all of this is not to talk about it or to s- long[sp?] for it, but to take the materials of our own environment and our own courage and our own dissatisfaction with the world as we find it and remake it. Remake it through technology, through trance culture, through underground culture, through media, computer graphics, the Internet. Uh, these are all tools of transformation completely beyond the understanding or the control of the establishment. Because they have dressed the part of the mind that the establishment is completely phobic of. The wild feral untamed pre-bourgeois, pre-constipation, pre-religion, pre-money, pre-consumerist human being. The real human being that each of us senses within ourselves and that we endlessly compromise for in our dealings with, uh, straight society. The truth of the matter is there are no answers now, except technological and shamanic and psychedelic answers. Politics has failed. Business as usual failed. Science failed. Religion failed. This is why youth culture is not interested in graduating to suits and houses in the suburbs. The bankruptcy of that whole lifestyle is now evident. Why now? I believe it's because psychedelics dissolve cultural assumptions. They are social and political dynamite. They are, uh, the equivalent of standing naked in a world of, uh, illusion, delusion, pretension, assumption and misunderstanding. All societies are frightened, all advanced, literate, industrial societies are frightened of the psychedelic experience. Because it represents a, uh, a cult of direct feeling. You don't have to believe anything to be part of this. You have to have certain experiences. Boundary dissolving experiences that, uh, teach you that the surface of things is only the beginning, not the end. That the surface is where we begin. But then we sink in, deeper and deeper, like a solvent, penetrating, dividing, washing clean, clarifying reality. The further in you go, the bigger it gets. The human mind is the source of all the riches after which we are told we should seek. The houses, the boats, the furs, the cars, the jewels, the degrees, the social esteem. All of this is false currency compared to the authenticity of your own experience and the art that you experience coming out of your own psyche and that you can then give back to the community, to the community. Zippy? Take it away, dude[sp?].

[audience claps]

[music]

TM: Part two. Part two is what I've learned or think I've learned from psychedelics. And I offer myself as an example, because it's as important to tell your trip as to have it. Because until you tell it it's not food for the community. So, uh, my far too many years of taking psychedelics have taught me some things. And some of these things are this. First of all, very practical, nature loves courage. Nature loves courage. And the way you can tell that nature loves courage is she removes obstacles. So chance taking in the interests of knowledge is rewarded. All kinds of people may think they've had the psychedelic experience, but if it hasn't set your knees knocking and your heart racing you probably just shaved the fuzzy undertummy of the beast and never really wrestled with it. So a very practical lesson, nature loves courage. But a shaman, my definition of a shaman, is someone who understands how the world really works. How does the world really work? What is it and what are we in it? The where is it from? Where is it going? Science tells you that nature is red in tooth and claw, all

competition strife and random mutation, but in fact there is a hidden appetite in nature that science has overlooked, that we have not been told of. It is that nature prefers complexity. Given the choice between the simple and the complex, nature always prefers the complex. And as you move from the beginnings of time to the present, what is consistent is the increase in complexity. Millions and millions of years may go by during a period when there is a backward flowing tendency, resisting complexity. But if you look at enough time the tendency to complexification will always reassert itself. So out of a universe of gas and dust comes a universe of stars and planets. Out of a universe of inorganic life, inorganic organization comes the carbon based world of organic life. At the very center of the complexification process of organic life intelligence appears some hundred thousand or million years ago. The process of intelligence existing and iterating itself through time, elaborating languages and technologies, spreading itself over the planet results in more complexity, greater complexity. So that ultimately from a psychedelic point of view the human world is seen not as an accident or an unlikelyhood or some enormous privilege for which we must genuflect to an invisible god. But rather the human world is seen as inevitably the goal of all the processes that preceded it. Which doesn't mean that we are the end of the story. But it means that we are the heroes of the story now, now. And upon our shoulders rests the conscious obligation, because we are conscious to take the complexity, the novelty, the kinky, odd, heterogeneous reality that we find and further complexify it, further complicate it through the process of making art, forming relationships, realizing our plans, building our dreams. We are the creature that carries a sensory organ unknown to occur anywhere else in nature. We are the creatures who possess the hyperdimensional organ of perception called the imagination, the imagining mind. Perhaps a carnivore in the act of hunting its prey briefly forms a strategy to carry out the kill, but human beings strategize over months, over years, over millennia. We launch plans and religion, scientific revolutions, styles of music, architecture, fashion. We fashion our world. We don't accept the world as given. Between ourselves and the selective processes of nature we have interposed the shifting domain of virtual reality that we call human culture and human civilization. Uh, a collective compromise that sometimes works to our advantage and sometimes works to our disadvantage. As a tribe we function as a group mind, as a mass society we are the victims of advertising agencies and politicians. The nature of our relationship to our collective existence is constantly changing and not yet defined. This is the important thing about the human adventure. We are not locked in genetic[sp?] repetition of behaviors over millennia. We are co-creators of our own destiny with the forces of nature. And we can deny that nature and retreat into cities, industrialism, reductionism, materialism, positivism, relativism, all the shiftrained isms of post-renaissance pre-apocalypse illusionism, or we can admit that we are unfinished business. That at the center of our experience of ourselves and the world is a sense of mystery. A sense of being uncompleted. This is the this is the perception which sophisticated cultures rob their members of. The sense that their is a hidden way out, a trapdoor, a deus ex machina, a magic word, a ritual, a conjuration, a drug, a form of music, a sexual act, a posture in relationship to art, something that cracks apart the rigid rule defined reality of the group and shows you that beyond culture, which is a fairytale told for fools, is the uncharted, unmapped, unregulated, unspeakable. Wittgenstein actually called it the unspeakable. He said the word of common understanding is the present at hand. You can touch it, but beyond the present at hand lies the unspeakable. The challenge for the psychedelic community as the great hope of the human community is to move that boundary of what is unspeakable far away from us. To claim evermore domains as human domains. Potential areas for the production of art, the erection of, uh, relationships, the establishment of formal systems of understanding, mathematical, scientific, uh, mythological, psychological, whatever. Uh, the, uh, and this enterprise, this extension of understanding should not be thought of as a quest for ultimate knowledge, rather it should be thought of as an exercise in self-exploration because it is inevitably true. The larger you build the bonfire, the greater the darkness that is revealed. Or to put it another way, the greater your sphere of understanding, the larger the area of your ignorance. It is inevitably so that knowledge reveals a greater and greater domain of unknowability. And it's into this domain of unknowability, like a search light that the psychedelic plants and substances, uh, offer illumination, direction, and partnership, partnership. Partnership with the humbler denizens of this planet. Creatures of reef, rainforest and tundra that are living in worlds of their own, worlds of immediate experience so alien to our own that there's no need to point radio telescopes at Zenebel Ganubi[sp?]. The aliens are with us in the rainforest, in the sea, in the pasture, waiting to be recognized as the potential co-partners that they might become.

[audience cheers and claps]

[music]

Woman in audience: Hey, Terence! Thanks for coming! [inaudible]

TM: I'm pretty happy.

Woman in audience: [inaudible]

TM: It's bloody hot.

Woman in audience: [inaudible]

[Terence laughs]

Woman in audience: [inaudible]

TM: They're pretty.

[woman in audience singing]

[Terence laughs]

Man in audience: Hey, Terence!

[music]

TM: Alright. Okay. Now we're turning final, as old buspilots like to say. And before I get into my final hortatory spiel, I want to talk to you for a minute about some information that I simply think you should have, which is, some of you may know this, some of you may not, but very exciting for our community. A new plant teacher with a new psychedelic substance in it, with a completely unexplored pharmacology and phenomenology has appeared and is spreading worldwide through the culture. And this is the first plant on this planet known to produce a substance active in the same amounts as LSD. In other words, active at under 1 milligram. And this is the Mexican mint *Salvia Divinorum*, which if it's in Australia at all at this point is only a very few people are aware of it. Nevertheless, this plant grows easily in all

Australian climates, can be grown as a houseplant, uh, and two leaves of this plant, dried and crumpled and put in a bong will cut your legs out from under you and.

[audience cheers]

[Terence laughs]

TM: Put you twitching on the ground with a smile on your face.

[audience inaudible]

TM: At the present moment this plant is legal worldwide. You can transport it, grow it, advocate it, extract it, advertise it, do therapy with it, uh, and anything else you can think to do with it. This is an incredible gift to our community out of the complex circumstances of the times. I don't think the world, uh, police establishment is ready to take on the control worldwide of yet another contraband substance. And yet this plant is as powerful as any plant on this planet. Uh, the leaves smoked produce an experience at least, at least as bizarre as DMT smoked at the 50 milligram level. And there is no reason why this stuff can't be grown by the acre. So.

[audience claps]

TM: Uh, this is news. And tonight we have passed out information on various places where this plant can be obtained. Now this is all very exciting, but behind this fact lies the approaching truth that there are probably many such compounds and many such plants and that in fact the human inventory of psychedelic possibilities has only begun to be taken. Uh, some of you may know in Africa there is an extremely powerful hallucinogen called Tabernanthe iboga, the Bwiti cults. But very few people know that there was no record of any human group using that plant until 1870. Peyote, which is imagined to be thousands of years old in its use in Northern Mexico, is in fact fairly recent. In the old graves of the Tarahumara and Sonoran people of Mexico we don't find Peyote buttons or seeds or detritus. We find the remains of *Sophora secundifolia* beans, a very toxic plant. The Peyote only began to be used in the 1880s and the ghost dance religion has a way of trying to hold Indian culture together against the whitey advances. Uh, similarly this *Salvia Divinorum* thing was known from a tiny group of Mexican Indians and only from there. And yet, as I say, this plant can be a house plant and sold in supermarkets and mall florists throughout the world. As we study psilocybin we have gone from the fifties, where it was assumed that it was restricted to Central Mexico, to the understanding that this is worldwide. Uh, just recently published, the psilocybin mushrooms of the Earth, containing over a hundred and sixty species of psilocybin. We now know that DMT, the most powerful of the commonly known hallucinogens, is literally in everything. It's in dozens of genera, genera of plants. It occurs in fish, including fish off Norfolk Island. It occurs in the brain of every single one of us here tonight. In fact, this is an unresolved issue. Can you make a substance illegal that is a human metabolite?

[audience laughs]

TM: It's getting in there a little close, I think. Uh, maybe we might want to rethink that. Uh, it means you're holding every moment of every day and every night since you emerged buck naked from your mother's womb and you will go to the grave holding. Well what is DMT doing in human metabolism? We know not. But as the scales fall from our eyes and we move beyond the confines of our cultural programming, we are having to realize that nature seems to run on these psychedelic compounds. Nature is full of wormholes and hyperdimensional doorways into other realms of mystery and power. Our own origins are completely mysterious to us. But I believe we are a kind of partial symbiot with the psilocybin mushroom. That everything about us that we consider human, humor, theater, mathematics, loyalty, uh, you name it. All of these human qualities evolved at a point in human history where we were taking psilocybin mushrooms and practicing an orgiastic sexual style and a nomadic social style. In other words, moving lightly over the land, possessing nothing, finding our emotional release and our meaning in, uh, complex social and sexual relationships with each other, carrying for the cattle and using the, uh, psychedelic plants in our environment as a direct pipeline into the Gaian Mind. Because the real truth, I think, that is to be revealed out of the psychedelics is not simply deeper insight into your own psychology or recovery of childhood memories or insight into other peoples dilemmas or the coordination of abstract problems. Psychedelics do all of these things with enormous facility and ease. But what they are for, what they really do is dissolve the boundary between the individual and the species, between the species and the surrounding ecosystem, between the Earth itself and the surrounding, uh, extraterrestrial environment of the solar system. And this is what reality is. It's a seamless felt aperception of pattern. Language is a compromise, a downloading, a slicing up, but dissecting and dividing for purposes of understanding. But the smart money knows that you have to take the perceptions of language and recombine them into a, uh, in a union with feeling in order to produce a real world. People sometimes ask me what is the connection between dance culture and psychedelics. The connection is both of these things operate without ideology and with a tremendous emphasis on the felt presence of the immediate moment. If we as a community believe in anything, we believe in feeling good in the moment, the felt presence of immediate experience. This is what has been stolen from you by capitalism, by religion, by linear thinking, by strategizing. We're always about to be happy or we're always about to be free and while we're about to be free and about to be happy, life passes us by. This is because western ideologies are always ideologies of delayed gratification. It comes after death, after retirement, after coitus. It's always after something that it comes. Well I've got news for you. This kind of thing is chasing your own tail. The felt presence of immediate experience is the only world you will ever know. Everything beyond that is conjecture and supposition and what the psychedelics do is they bring one to focus on the union of the mind and the body. They do not give philosophical closure. They in fact present you with the unresolved dilemma of being. And to the linear western suited constipated mind this is a situation of incredible discomfort. The suits want closure. They want linearity. They want the illusion of completion. Job well done. But this is a fool's game. The world is more complicated than that. You cannot simplify the world and have it be true to itself. So if you want a relationship with fidelity to being, you must complexify yourself. You must recognize the ambiguity of your sexuality, the ambiguity of your grip on your understanding of your place in the world, your ignorance of the meaning of life, the destiny of biology. This admission of ignorance is not an admission of stupidity, it's an admission of intelligence. Only fools run through this universe proclaiming that they understand it. What the psychedelics do is give you a relative, uh, set of phenomena to a against which to measure your paltry models. Models of causal time or moral necessity or physical inevitability. And in every case the true nature of being is found to be too complex to be so linguistically or culturally caged. And so the *f-f* conclusion I come away with from all of this is that culture, uh, is not our friend. Culture is a provisional form of infantilism, in the same way that you suckle at your mother's breast and then at the tit of the university and the government. Eventually one has to admit, whether one is Hasid, Chinese, Indian, American, whatever, that one's culture is infantile, idiotic, constructed by, for and of morons. And that it is an insult to an intelligent person to live within the definitions of a culture, because a culture is like a set of schoolyard, uh, rules. It's designed for the lamest among us so that the system can function at all. And to my mind what is happening in the new dance culture, which is often accused of frivolousness and immaturity, but what is actually happening is a forced maturity. You people have reached the level of alienation with the false values of the culture, that my generation didn't reach until it was forty or forty five. So here we can shorten the loop. And and, uh, what then should be the response of alienated, psychedelic, uh, people and communities to, to the dilemma in which we find ourselves? I think it can only be, uh, to produce art. To put the art pedal to the floor. That essentially speaking at least for myself my involvement with psychedelics is part of a larger impulse in my personality, which is a cult of beauty. I grew up in a place where there were dinosaurs in the ground. And when I learned that there were a hundred million years old I felt the ground open beneath my own feet. I grew up in a place where lots of minerals were ore, metallic ores were brought out of the ground. The iridescence of ores, the iridescence of butterflies and beetles, the iridescence of opals and reef fish. There was always this light on nature. Iridescence which indicated to me that things, physical objects had living universes inside of them. And I now think as Aldous Huxley thought, that as human beings our fascination with jewels and bright objects, which we share with magpies and packrats, uh, is, uh, a kind of a spiritual intuition, that glitter is the path to follow. You know Plato and it's said of western philosophy, all western philosophy is only a footnote on Plato. Plato had this idea of what he called the good, the true and the beautiful. And he said the good and the true and the beautiful are the same thing. And I found this very useful, because it's very hard to know, or very hard for me to know, what is good. And it's very hard for me, though I have philosophical training and reasonable intuition, it's very hard for me to know what is true. But beauty is easy to recognize. I know it when I see it. And show me two forms of beauty and I have no trouble telling you which I think is the more beautiful. So moral philosophy, too tricky. The search for truth, possible catastrophic error. The worship of beauty, no blame. A reliable arrow into the mystery. Stick with the beautiful. Follow the beautiful deeper into beauty and there you will find truth and goodness. And these are the things that we have turned away from, because the aesthetics of post-modernity are hideousness. Hideousness is the new god functionality. The new god, uh, economic efficiency. This is why our world looks like dogshit, because it is incredibly economically designed. Beauty played no part in that. We need to move back to the idea that nature at every level, molecular, membrane, cellular, species, interspecies, ecological, planetary, nature presents living models for how to deal with energy and experience that can be our salvation. But we must change. Everyone must change. And people some s- sometimes say to me well do you think psychedelics is all that's necessary? Psychedelics to my mind is simply the only game in town. Not because it's a sure thing, but because everything else will certainly fail. If hortatory preaching could carry the day, we would have turned the bend at the sermon on the mount. If power over nature could have turned the day, than after the atom bomb we should have lived in utopia. So these are misunderstandings. We must become not the dominators of nature and each other and the physical planet, but co-partners. If we can find a position of co-partnership this appetite for complexity that I've been talking about will become a wind which fills our sails and carries us beyond the monkey business of today's politics. And into an authentically civilized and human world. And the clock is ticking. We will be judged. Nine times in the last million years the glaciers have moved southward from the poles miles deep in ice crushing everything in their paths. There were human beings who witnessed everyone of those glaciations. How much whining was there? I don't know. But somehow we're all here tonight. Those people didn't drop the ball. They kept the game in play in order to deliver it into our unsteady hands this evening. So, you know, wor- worship of the ancestors, a sense of being a reflex of the ancestors, which informs aboriginal civilization worldwide, is in fact an awareness that you act for others. That the genes that were your grandfather's and grandmother's and great grandmother's and great grandfather's are that you are simply a shuffle of the old deck. That how I pull my ear when I'm nervous is exactly how my great great grandfather pulled his ear when he was nervous. We are but the moving wavefront of our genetic heritage. And if we can dissolve boundaries between the ego and the hidden portions of ourselves and the hidden portion of nature we will find that we are each of us but the tip of a universal iceberg that connects to all other separate and assumed to be separate universes. Gregory Bateson said nature is a seamless web. So it is. And the seamless web of nature is woven by the spider of psychedelic mind and understanding. So let us, knowing this, weave a new heaven and a new world for ourselves and the all the children sure to come if we act in good faith with the past. Thank you very very much! Thank you!

[audience cheers and claps]

TM: My pleasure!

[audience cheers and claps]

[music]

Original Transcription by: Alhazred (8th of March, 2018)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Live at Wetlands Preserve

28 July 1998

Wetlands Preserve, New York City, New York

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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There's nothing like the smell of a late-summer New York club crowd to get the old blood pounding, is there? It's a pleasure to be in Manhattan; Manhattan is my second-most favorite island in the world -- only because I live on Hawaii. I feel more affinity to this island than to the other Hawaiian islands (which have various cultural extremes I'm not really capable of relating to. But you'll hear more about that.) Anyway, it's great to be here. It's great to see so many familiar faces. I appreciate those literary trajectories so ably launched from this stage by Anaïs (Nin) and Sherai(sp?). And, what can I say; it's a pleasure to be here. I always feel when I come to Wetlands that I'm like checking in with my sort of my home base congregation.

About five years ago I moved out to Hawaii for the specific purpose of looking back at this scene and putting in a full-time effort to understand it. (Of course this tells you I didn't have a job! [audience laughs] I, I still don't -- but if you're a cultural commentator, who needs a job, right? The glory alone is sufficient to pave one's way.) And I -- probably like you, here at the end of the Twentieth Century, having lived long enough to go at least once or twice around the block -- I'm noticing that the strangeness is not receding. The strangeness seems to be accelerating.

The theme of this evening is "Logos meets Eros." Well, I don't know a lot about Eros -- I do think if you smoke after sex, you're probably doing it too quickly. But otherwise my expertise lies in another direction. I started out in psychedelic drugs, and people said it was a flight from reality. It still is a flight from reality, but I think reality is now a bit more scary than the drugs we used to fly from it [audience laughs], so long ago. Is that the victory of a cultural meme, or is that just, uh, oh I don't know, the yawning grave sort of opening ahead of us? Uh, I don't know.

My thing is to be amazed at the world as given by nature, but ever more, as we approach this millennial speedbump in our calendrical highway, to be amazed at *people*, and about the direction that mass psychology seems to be taking. And since I assume everybody here is a shaper of this mass psychology in the extremely powerful media-based jobs that you all occupy, uh, it might be worth talking about that a little bit tonight.

As I see it, uh, well...I spent all afternoon at MOMA, as I always do when I come to town, (I know it's a "thing" but I do it anyway) worshipping at the altar of modernism, *so relieved* now that it's almost over.

You know? Because it's going to be bracketed in this century, the Twentieth Century. It's almost over. There's very little left to run -- a few i's to be dotted, a few codas to be played, but essentially it's a done deal. And, uh, this end-of-the-century psychology is a psychology of hysterical conclusionism and, uh, summation and, uh, to some degree, a rhetoric of fear that we can ever outdo ourselves. And I think it probably felt the same way a hundred years ago, if you had been in Vienna in 1899, when Jugendstil was bursting at its seams and Freud was beginning to formulate his theories and the Paris air show of 1905 was in the planning. There has always been, this, uh, a sense of fatalistic and apocalyptic excitement at the end of a century, and always throughout a culture at the edge of its technologies. And, to my mind the most interesting technologies of the Twentieth Century have all been communication technologies. And I extend that to LSD, DVD, HDTV, GHB, 5-methoxy-DMT -- uh, all communication technologies for the purpose of transforming languages, transforming understanding. And, now, it seems to me we've struck the main vein. Maybe it's just that I live up on my mountain, and once a year, in pursuit of money, journey to cities -- not like this; there are no cities like this, but the lesser lights -- to gather the gold. But, I have this sense now of palpable acceleration, and it has, uh, it has many qualities. The quality that fascinates me most is one I hadn't predicted: is that it's getting *funnier*. It's getting funnier because everybody's categories are disintegrating, and, uh, the cult of political correctness dictates that we never point out that other people don't make sense. So, *not making sense* has, uh, has, uh, become enshrined as a domain of cultural activity -- and god knows I've mined that, you know?

Uh, somebody once said -- actually it was the mushroom itself, it wasn't 'somebody' [audience laughs]-- uh, but, somebody who happened to be a mushroom once said... uh, what did they say? "If you're not part of the problem you're part of the solution." [laughter] No. What was said was, uh, that culture is like the shockwave of eschatology. Nothing...nothing is unannounced. This is like a weird quality of experience; you can't learn this from physics or economics. (Maybe you can learn it from economics.) But, nothing is unannounced. Everything is preceded by the shockwave of its coming. And, so, so somehow the spreading zaniness of reality is part of the boundary-dissolving qualities that are going to make up this new cultural mix of, uh, disembodied human beings, nanotechnologically-maintained environments, uh, dissolved self-definitions, uh, people living at many levels at the same time, intelligence as a kind of free-flowing non-local resource that comes and goes as needed, prosthesis, implant, boundary-dissolution -- these things are usually presented as fairly terrifying. But, in fact I think behind it all lurks, you know, the demons who do calisthenics in the angles of every room on this planet to keep it all from collapsing into a flat line.

In other words, the, the, the thing which lies at the end of any epistemic investigation of what reality is, is, uh, *surprise*, astonishment. Not religious awe, not that kind of astonishment, but actually like pie-in-the-face hysteria, food fights and falling anvils, explosions! Uh, this is what lies at the end of the epistemic enterprise. WHY is that? Well I think it has something to do with the fact that we are simply *loaded monkeys*, that our belief that we were proceeding as God's messengers, or his research assistants, was, uh, somehow ill-contrived, misbegotten. Uh, what we've shipped for is not a voyage of discovery, it's more like a ship of fools deal. It's something which Hieronymous Bosch or Pieter Brueghel the Elder could appreciate. It's, um, it's probably best summed up in the work of Groucho Marx, but unfortunately he can't be here tonight.

So, I exist in this matrix, as you exist in this matrix, making our way through our lives, our affairs, our careers, our disasters. And, uh, the thing that has struck me about it, for some time -- and don't bother telling me it's a symptom of serious mental meltdown, I *know* that, I've lived with it -- but the thing that's struck me for some time is the artificiality of everything, how's it's like *plotted*, how it's like constructed,

artificial. It can't be that this is the first iteration. This is not the first take. There have been many takes. The fingerprints of the editing suite are all over this scene. If you don't notice that, it must be because you take your life for granted. And if you take your life for granted and you think it makes perfect sense that you're doing whatever you do, this isn't an issue for you. But for those of us who never thought that we would gaze on the things we've gazed upon, be the people we've become, see the things we've seen, the whole thing has this extravagant, uh, Pynchonesque, uh, kind of efflorescence about it that rides right on the edge of, uh, insanity (dare we say it).

And, the interesting thing is, I don't need drugs anymore! [audience laughs] I need them to get away from this, this sense of everything opening into everything else. You know that thing that, um, W. H. Auden said, about how, uh, "the glacier rattles in the cupboard / the desert sighs in the bed / and the crack in the teacup opens / a door to the land of the dead"? Well, I first heard that maybe 30 or 40 years ago. (He used to wander around this neighborhood, as you probably know.) Back then I thought it was about acid -- because that's what I thought everything was about at that time -- but now that I've replayed it to myself, I see that it's like an alchemical insight. It's the insight that everything gives way to everything else. Everything is connected. We know this clichè imported from Malibu and Santa Fe, but it's connected in a way that isn't really, I think, sensed there. Everything is connected in that it's emotionally accessible. This is what the Eros part of this thing means to me, if I'm to make any stab at it at all. When I was very young I must have had a very non-traumatic upbringing, because I discovered, early in life, a stunning truth that's made my life very complicated in its wake, (but that I still think is true) and it's that people are very easy to love. In fact, you can love anybody -- if you are not constrained by expectation, class, the momentum of history, race, gender, the whole thing. But, for a child to make this discovery, and recall it, stick with it, be able to mnemonically pull it up at such situations like this, I think is, uh, is extraordinary. And I stand outside it, I don't draw any conclusions from it. It hasn't made me a *nicer person*; don't try to buy me a drink based on it! Uh, you know, somebody said, "loves Mankind, loathes individual human beings." I don't loathe individual human beings, but I do enjoy things the further I stand back from them, uh... This is the Hawaiian perspective, the motivation for being the hermit with the nightclub, uh, career. But, I have not lost the thread... This *is* the thread(?) [indecipherable]...

And, and, what it's about is an effort to generalize, you know, from one person's life to everybody's life, because the only thing I really bring to the party is a lot of experience and then some ability to articulate it. And, it's like it's not *my* story, or it's somebody else's story I tell. It's just *The Story*. And, this story is like a... the, the literary net of synchronistic connectivity that makes life something other than the laws of physics, uh, particles flinging themselves through nothingness, waves dying out, uh, in empty space -- this isn't our experience of being. Our experience of being is *meaning*. That's *my* experience. And the meaning is not always, uh, is not always, uh pleasant or life-affirming or even exactly rationally apprehendable. Sometimes meaning is a palpable thing, you know, like liquid being poured through cracking ice, language moves ahead of its intent; it encloses its object and gives you almost a reverse casting of the thing intended. There are many ways for words to fit themselves over the contours of, uh, of intentionality. So, personality becomes an issue, because in the future personality (if it exists at all) is going to be a very fluid, dynamic thing. One of our hangups is the idea that we come with one body/one mind, or one body and an uncon...uh, and a mind split into two parts. All these are social, um, fables, [guy in audience says "yea"] illusions [same guy repeats "yea"]. The fabric of reality is defined by whatever large numbers of people believe about it, and now, uh, in the absence of an overarching metaphor that can claim everybody's allegiance, reality is actually fracturing. I've called it the "balkanization of epistemology". I've poked fun at the abductees and make jokes about *pro bono* proctologists from nearby star systems... [laughter]...uh, I've, uh...but, but, for all of that, what this fracturing means is... permission to... manifest opinion as Art.

That's really all there is; there is no truth that is different from opinion; there is no... nothing is secure. I mean, even mathematics, if you understand Kurt Gödel and people like this, even mathematics is an uncertain enterprise. Even common arithmetic is an uncertain enterprise. [clears throat]

So, what are we left with? When I argued a few weeks ago with Sheldrake and Abraham about this, I said, "We have to look at our messengers." We have to look at the people who *bring* the news of the *pro bono* proctologists from nearby star systems, who bring the news of, uh, military establishments trading human body parts for, uh, fiber optic technology. We have to examine the messengers. Well they quickly stomped on that and said no, that won't work, because when you go back into the history of ideas, uh, lots of screwballs have obtained great success with their ideas -- you know, you don't want to look too hard at Newton or Wagner or Thomas Aquinas, or anybody else. So, so the "squirrel" test, or the "fluff" test is insufficient. So then what are you left with? Well, basically, a sense of humor and a battered sense of aesthetics, I think! [laughter]

Now, I don't know how loose-headed the heads in this town are. I rather suspect they're screwed more tightly than the situation further west, and screwed more loosely than the situation further east. But, I'm telling you, erm, as the world reforms itself in these islands of, uh, defined opinion, the only thing which is going to make sense is sense which is *conferred*. So it becomes like about Beauty, I think. Beauty. Beauty is an easier-to-realize value than Political Correctness, Bodhisattvic Compassion -- and, I mean what are these things? Who knows! The rancorous debates start as soon as they're mentioned. Beauty is self-defined, perceived and understood without ambiguity. And, beauty is the stuff that lies under the skins of our individual existences. You know...Uh, James Joyce said in *Finnegans Wake*, *He said*, we, we ,we, uh, "We sprout on the seamy side here in Moy Kain (meaning in the red light district of Dublin), But upmeyant, Prospector, you sprout all your worth and you woof your wings." [here Terence slightly misquotes Joyce] Well, you don't have to go upmayent, Prospector, because right here, right now is, uh, is a good enough place to do this. [here recording is scrambled]

[CANNOT CONFIRM THIS SECTION DO TO ERROR IN RECORDING ON VIMEO & YOUTUBE--Our past is disappearing. It's almost closing behind us. At the MOMA today we were looking at this Russian avante-garde stuff, and I was thinking, "It seems so far away." They seem almost like messages as distant as messages from the Sixteenth Century or the Fourteenth Century. I mean, what does it mean to us, the struggle between Fascism and Bolshevism, the struggle between the European banks and emerging socialist ideas in the 20's and the 30's? This stuff arrives absolutely as ancient as the cave paintings at Lascaux Our past is all becoming more and more somebody else's past,--] irrelevant to the enterprise of the future. Oh yeah, I know that if you don't learn from history you're bound to repeat its errors, but the mo--...the most important thing to learn from History is not to do it at all, you know, that it's a very bad idea, History. Uh, look where it got us!

The only way we can essentially redeem what history has done to us, is to carry the understanding that it wrought back into the enterprise of the human, of creating sane systems of education, of resource extraction, of, uh, of, uh... healthcare and, uh, and, uh... community value. If we don't carry the experience of history back into those domains, History will... will continue. I remember once when I was a fighting radical in the streets of Berkeley and someone had let a banner down over front of a building. It was a quote from Jean-Paul Sartre. It said, "Socialism will not be transcended until we transcend the conditions which created it." True; History, even more true. And, at the moment, the dialogue about the transformation of the species and the integration of communication technology and biotechnology -- all

this stuff, how it's going to work out -- is in the hands of, uh, shortsighted profiteering institutions, that are not particularly interested in *your* welfare or *my* welfare. In fact, I don't know if you've noticed, but *nobody* is particularly interested in your welfare or my welfare, in terms of the intellectual environment of risk through which you move every day. I mean, the number of cons you're offered, the number of people who prey upon you, all of these things indicate that...that the culture has not yet realized the power of its own possibilities. How will it realize the power of its own possibilities? I'm, at this point, pretty fatalistic through time. I mean, I don't feel I have to be here tonight or you have to listen tonight for us to come around any kind of corner. The momentum now is inevitable. Now it's about each of us individually arranging the furniture of our own mind to *deal* with what has become inevitable. It wasn't inevitable, but the Twentieth Century *made* it inevitable, through the Holocaust, Modernism, psychedelic drugs, uh, syncopated music, the dislocation of time and space through media -- all of that has now made this transformation inevitable. The human being, adapted to the savannas of Africa of 120 thousand years ago is just dragged forward into the future by all of this. And, if you can get through life without trauma, heartbreak, agony, murderous rage, fury, betrayal, etc. etc., you're a better man or woman than I am, for sure. I don't think anybody can get through the narrow neck of, uh, first of all, incarnation in a body, but more trying, incarnation inside a historical society that is cannibalistic, uh, low-intentioned, and, uh, with values that are completely formed and modeled on the marketplace.

So, I think about all of this all the time, and I feel great change. I try to monitor it, especially in the realm of society and technology. Everything is redefined every 30 days, every 60 days, uh, redefined toward some kind of [clears throat] singularity, some kind of extraordinary moment in the fractal pattern of historical unfoldment. You know, fractals are always repetitious, always low levels build to higher levels, but nevertheless, intrinsically to the pattern, there comes a moment where there is an apotheosis, a breakthrough to a new level of understanding. And then whatever the old world was, it, it simply dissipates. It goes away. Not that there isn't political struggle, but once the... (let's call it) karmic underpinnings of, uh, of a historical position -- especially an oppressive historical position -- once those underpinnings are articulated, revealed, shown in the light of day, then the game cannot continue. And, I feel like we are, interestingly in this calendrical moment, we can experience the calendar's transformation, or we can *use* it, as others are using it, to put forward the idea that certain things are now obsolete, not...no longer to be practiced outside the confines of the Twentieth Century, not part of the Third Millennium. And, I'm thinking of fascism, sexism, racism, uh... all the division-based consequences of old-style politics.

And, uh, and people say, "Where then do psychedelic drugs fit into all of this?" or "Do they fit into it?" Of course they fit into it, because the *felt presence of experience* -- the reclaiming of the body -- that's the critical political battleground. Your mind is now your own, in some sense. It was a mistake; it wasn't supposed to happen that way. But the acceleration of, uh, of psychedelic use in the Twentieth Century, the explosive spread of the Internet... in some sense...its, it's as though we have broken from the slave's quarters and are already milling in the streets. But we don't yet have the power or the understanding to know where the centers of power are and how it is that they disempower and manipulate us. And, that's because we haven't focused on the body. The body...and this, I suppose then is the thing which gives the Eros thing cogency... The body is the battleground for these various definitions of Human-ness, you know? And, Eros -- representing the erotic celebration of diversity -- is a terrifying specter to hold up in front of the order-crazed, constipated hierarchists who actually have the illusion that they own the enterprise. And, nevertheless, this is what they're looking for, er, toward. This is what was made inevitable by their own rapaciousness in the past, that they painted us so quickly into a corner of resource extraction and, uh, and, uh disgust with, uh, media manipulation that a breakout was impos...was, uh, inevitable, had to come.

You know, one of the things that has impressed...as I go through all this is, uh...well, my doctor brought it home to me, because he was saying to me -- as I buttoned up recently after an examination -- he says, "You know, in the Nineteenth Century, most people your age were dead." [laughter] This is true. Uh, "I'm 52; you're soon to be 52; very few people, statistically, reached that level." And, and, I think part of what's happening -- and it's odd to address an audience so young on this matter, but here's some...here's something your parents may *not* be telling you -- culture as a con is only good for about 35 years *on average*. I mean, some people are impressed with culture till they go to the grave at 90; some people are thoroughly apprised of the fact that it's horseshit by the time they're 19. But, the average, uh, person's experience with culture lasts about 35 or 40 years. In the past, that was enough. Most people then were ready to die without ever blowing their whistle on the game. What is happening here is we are living past the age -- by the millions -- living past the age where cultural values make any sense at all. They simply are, after, you know, the ten thousandth piece of apple pie, the sixteenth Mercedes, the five hundredth whatever -- it's just seen to be... intolerable, unbearable, the agony that resides in matter that the Surrealists were so prescient in insisting upon.

Uh, so culture generally is an infantilizing process. And I...you know, some French people have mentioned this, but they didn't really put it in a historical context: that this neotenizing trick -- now so useful to advertising, to create youth-crazed values in everybody -- it hastens the end of this culture game. It hastens the awakening of many people to the fact that the felt presence of immediate experience is not negotiable. It has no price. And yet this is what's taken from you when you go to the job, when you, uh, dress for the image, when you kiss up to the power establishment. When your time is turned into money, the felt presence of immediate experience is analogous to being enslaved -- I mean let's be frank about it -- *is* enslavement. [audience applause] It's simply that the rules of the game have been changed. [applause] Of course it's easy to say if you're unemployed like me. On the other hand, I'm meeting my obligations, somehow -- always have -- without ever *truly* working, without ever putting my shoulder to the wheel for the Man. (Of course I had to deal dope to do this! [more applause] Once I'd gone past that, it worked.)

Well, I could go on in this vein for some time, as you see, but the thoughts that I wanted to leave you with tonight on this, because I feel like I am checking in with, in some weird way, my peer group of, uh... and maybe my most critical group as well, which is fine, I can't... We don't need any gurus here, we don't need any laying down of the law. Anybody who tells you they have a clue as to what's happening should be suspect for mental illness and delusions of grandeur, uh... The thought is (and I haven't said this yet but this is the conclusion from all of this)...is culture is an effort to satisfy this weird desire human beings have to close off experience, to live with closure, to *force* closure. And, that's why cultural trips are so bizarre, you know, why they don't make sense to anybody but the Witoto or the Waorani or the Americans or the Japanese; if you're not inside the culture it seems crazy. The cultures don't make sense because they're not *trying* to make sense. What they're trying to do is produce closure, which then somehow *makes* a human being who is living in the light of closure a more manipulateable [sic], a more malleable, a lesser thing.

And so, you know, if the experience of the Twentieth Century didn't do it for you, if psychedelics didn't do it for you, I don't know what could do it for you! The, the message coming back at all of us is: live without closure. That's the honest position given that you are some kind of a talking monkey, some kind of a primate, some kind of creature, on a planet, in an animal body, incarnate in a time and space. In the face of that, life without closure is the only kind of intellectual honesty there is. If you have to inoculate yourself against the various memes of closure that are around, psychedelics do that. That's why they are so

politically controversial and potent because, more than any other single act that you may voluntarily undertake, they pull the plug on the myth of a cultural meaning. They show that, uh, these things are provisional, and that beneath the level of culture there is lurking this erotic.... time-and-space-bound, feeling-defined, pre-linguistic mode of being, which is *real being*... Not becoming, not caught in the various fetishistic, uh, uh, forms of tension that commodification of culture and delayed gratification and all these other buzzwords create, but, uh, a deeper level of authentic feeling...and it was there all the time, but is denied by the culture, and, If we *don't* come back to that, if we don't re-access that, then this historical thing, which grinds so many people down -- none of whom are here tonight, I might add; they are lost in the barrios of third-world cities and in the disrupted environments created by this system -- But, history will continue. You know, I'm fond of quoting Stephen Dedalus (Joyce's character) where he says, "History is the nightmare from which I am trying to awaken." But, it's really... 'nightmare' is not a strong enough metaphor. It's a *narcoleptic paralysis*. It's that horrible thing that happens at the edge of sleep -- it's that place where the *pro bono* proctologists from other star systems get their wedge into the seam, you know? And, if you've never had that paralysis at the edge of sleep, you, you don't know the panic, the constriction, that it engenders.

We're really, you know, at a very, a very..... terminal point in the process of our historical unfoldment, in the same way that our hunter-gatherer phase led into agriculture and, uh, advanced role specialization and urbanization and all that. Well, now we're ready to make another leap. But, this time it's going to be done in the light of consciousness, because consciousness is what was garnered in the last leap. And, how this is done depends essentially on the collective state of mind -- how malleable it is, how phobic of closure it is, how open to... the Logos, to the, you know, downloading of universal intent into human understanding (which is what I would call the Logos) it is, and finally, uh, how deeply it operates in the light of Logos. How much *love* is there in this culture? How much love has been carried intact from the plains of Africa through the Minoan civilization and the Medieval period and the spread of people around the planet? How much of what we call true human-ness made the journey with us to this new time? We're going to find out. We're going to find out by pooling the love that is in each of us, in a form in which it is co-extensively shared by all of us. There may be many ways to talk about what this will feel like, what it will look like -- but what it will BE, if it works, is Love. If it isn't Love, than it's less than a perfect sublimation of the alchemical purpose -- and less-than-perfect is now off the menu. [guy in audience says "Woo!"] So the only way up is out. Up and out! That's all I have to say. ["Woo"s and applause].....[indecipherable]....will surely describe as another meandering diatribe. I know there are some people here from the Novelty List. It would be nice to have a flesh meet downstairs, uh, and anybody else who wants to chat, and then we'll get out of here and Ola Tuchi [sp?] is gonna do the questions and if that ain't the felt presence of immediate experience, I don't know... [laughter and applause and cheering]

Q & A [This is also not confirmable via the Vimeo or YouTube recordings]

Snippets of conversation recorded as Terence was pinned to the wall by Novelty fans.

TM: ...We don't have to worry about magicians without power who have desire *for* power, because it's never going to come to that. It's the magician who can actually manifest power -- and usually that's so *sobering* that that person gives up any wish to control anybody. I mean, I've seen weird shit go down, and it didn't make me want to take hold of that energy. Somebody else it might've...

...I like really clear hallucinations, that are somewhat distant from me. What happens on DMT that is so

freaky is: you see the hallucinations, and if you're a practiced head you can sort of stand that. But at higher doses, you *become* the hallucination. And this is much harder to put up with, much harder to stay calm in the presence of, because you're no longer looking at something weird, you have *become* something weird. I'm convinced that the hallucinogens touch the language -- the thing inside us which describes reality, which is constantly explaining to you what's going on -- once it's contaminated, or once it's affected by the psychedelic, then you enter into a world where you don't know what's going on, where you *can't* tell what is hallucination...

Q: Is that when you're doing the visible language you've talked about, or singing?

TM: It's just slightly past that. I think I do that (those language activities) to try to channel and confine that DMT-like energy. Because when it really comes over you, it's like having your camera melt. There's no longer a picture, there's no longer a channel. It's gotten behind what was looking at it, and now you really don't know...

Q: Have you had your camera melted?

TM: *Oh* yeah! And what I do is, I just try to sing my way through it. One of the things that happens among European people, is when they feel threatened by being loaded, they just assume the fetal position, and their theory is, "If I can live through it, it will be alright. If I can *stand* it." What you should do is sit up and sing! Just sing! Sing! Sing! Oxygenate your brain, force energy through your body. Then everything will rearrange itself. I think when people have bad trips it often means they're not breathing enough.

Q: How do you compare salvia [divinorum] to DMT? I know that DMT is weirder, the way it sounds...

TM: Some people don't think so. I think so. To me, salvia seems like a strong hallucinogenic drug, but it's not as hard for me to explain to myself what's going on as with DMT. DMT, if it works, pushes me into a place where I just have to admit that I don't know what I'm talking about. All these metaphors that have been spun out, in books, and onstage, were just shadow play. The real thing is so appalling, so confounding, it's just, you know, "may the baby Jesus shut your mouth and open your mind!"

Q: Did you ever smoke salvinorin-A?

TM: The pure compound? I did smoke it once. It came on so fast, that I found myself on it; I had no impression of getting high at all. I found it happening to me.

I was expecting it to be weirder than DMT. To me it didn't seem to be weirder. To me it seems liked a very accelerated *ayahuasca* rush of some kind. It definitely distorts your body image in some way. People have these weird things where they're half in and half out of something, and they talk about it and they try to crawl into it or crawl out of it... I liked it, I like the leaf. The way I do it is I take 35gms of leaf and I lie down in the dark, and I chew it. At about the 15 minute mark it begins afterimage streaming, you know, lights past the eyes. Then I just spit it out into a Kleenex without holding it. It's a big mouthful.

Q: You've talked about plants as teachers. Would you say the same thing about ketamine? Even though it isn't a plant, do you think it can teach you things?

TM: The thing about ketamine is that it's active over a very large range. In other words, as little as 40mL is active, and yet people shoot 150, 200, without a problem. I've only done it about five times. I shot it every time, and I shot 140mL. At that dose, it's not a very useful drug, because you can't remember fucking *anything*. I really like drugs that you can remember.

TM: The other night I searched (the Web) for "self-transforming elf machines". There were 36 hits! It surprised me. I sort of use the search engine like an oracle. I've used the phrase for DMT, "Arabian hyperspace". So I thought of this, and then I *searched* it, "Arabian hyperspace", in quotes. And it took me right to a transcript of the talk in which I'd said the thing! You can find your own mind on the Internet. I'm very grateful to the people who type up my talks and then post them at their websites.

Q: I have a question about a theme in your work. It's actually an absence, and I'm curious as to why. It's the similarity that I sense with some of your visions of History, the visions of that process, and those I

found the work of de Chardin -- at least *The Phenomenon of Man*. I've never heard it mentioned by you or in talks about you, as far as I know.

TM: I have talked about him. I did read *Phenomenon of Man* and *Alpha-Omega*. I have no knock on Chardin. I think that he got there first, and it's all basically there. Maybe the reason I don't mention it is that my mother was very big on pushing it on me! Yeah, he is the guy. He and McLuhan. If you take de Chardin and McLuhan together, there's not much to add to all that.

Q: It's the *visual* aspect of his writing, that to me links him to what you say. And you bring in so many references to other writers that it seemed a little like a hole there.

TM: There's sort of a hole there. Considering the amount of time I spent reading him, it *is* a hole, you're right. Olaf Stapleton is another influence, but that was thoroughly rehearsed on the Novelty List. H. G. Wells was an influence.

What I like is big-picture thinkers. I like to think in terms of a thousand years, a million years -- probably because when I was growing up in western Colorado, what I got into early in life was fossil collecting. We would find dinosaur bones and 200-million-year-old clam shells and stuff. And when I finally figured out that a million years is *a thousand years a thousand times*, it was like an epiphany. It just opened up underneath my feet, how fucking *old* it's possible for things to *be*!

Original Transcription by: **Recording and transcription by [Abrupt NYC](#)** (further corrections and edits made by Kevin Whitesides)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Live in New York

20 June 1993

The Fez, New York City, New York

Event Description: Produced by Nicholas Hill for live broadcast on The Music Faucet, WFMU-FM, East Orange, NJ from The Fez, New York City, June 20, 1993

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Well it's great to be here. It's been kind of a long day for me, so I may not be able to maintain the ordinary veneer of genteel, cultured affability. I may have to simply cut to the chase here.

You know, we've worked ourselves into quite a little situation here. We've got a rising youth culture, a government out of control, an environment that's all ripped up, and we've got no place to go. So, who you gonna call? My solution in a situation like that is to roll another one. *[laughter]* Because it's been my supposition for a long, long time that these vegetables that we're pushing around on our plates are actually trying to talk to us. And they're saying all kinds of things, among them some things which are fairly counterintuitive. It seems to me that history has failed, and Western civilization has failed, and dominator-primate politics has failed, object-fetish consumerism has failed, the national security government has failed. And so then, where do go from here? What kind of new world can we create? And what kind of guidelines are there that we can follow?

And I -- you know, every time you come to New York it's obligatory to visit the museums, MOMA, this'n'that, see what's going on in Soho. The conclusion that I come to looking at this is that as we move beyond modernity, it's more and more clear that the real impulse of the Twentieth Century is towards the archaic, toward the primitive. Everything from Freudianism to body piercing, from quantum physics to abstract expressionism, from Dada to house music, is saying "*back away*" from the linear, constipated world of print-head materialism that is what we inherit from the Western/European past. That style of thinking about life and human relations has essentially toxified the planet and allowed us to paint ourselves into a corner from which there is no escape.

Or is there? You know, a deliberate derangement of the senses worked for Rimbaud; it might work for us as well. What we have to do is go to the rainforests, the aborigines, and check up -- check in -- on what we have always dismissed, which is the world of natural magic and wisdom obtained through intoxication. This is what we've lost, and this is why our creativity is insufficient to overwhelm the cultural crisis which is confronting us. We have to stir it up. We have to mix it up. Ideas dictated out of the agenda of washed-up capitalism and science and religion is simply insufficient. Reason has failed. History has failed. And

what we all have to do, I think, is fall back on ourselves. We have to stop waiting for the revelation to come from CNN or Time Magazine, and get lives! And what getting lives means is ignoring the idiotic laws that would dictate to us the kind of states of mind that we can entertain. *[applause]* You know, I'm sure it was alarming to Buddhists, but the Supreme Court decision last week that okayed animal sacrifice in a religious context was a door swinging open on the possible legalization of psychedelics. *[applause]* The concept of "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" is enshrined in the documents upon which this nation of ours is supposedly founded. If the pursuit of happiness does not mean the right to experiment with your own state of mind, then those words aren't worth the hemp they're written on. *[laughter]*

But the point of view that I've come to evolve out of 25 years of looking at this problem and churning through culture and so forth and so on is not simply a call for individual self-responsibility and a pulling away from these institutions. That's pretty standard fare, I think. There's something else going on which is worth talking about. And that is the fact that the human world is apparently under the influence of some kind of attractor, or force, that secular people have ignored because the only words to talk about it were the vocabularies of beastly, bankrupt religions. But nevertheless, this force, this unfolding agenda, this design which we seem to embody, needs to be talked about. Because I really believe that history is ending. And I've taken a lot of flak for that, because no one can conceive of the breakdown of the system in which we're embedded to that degree. It's a kind of transcendental faith that history is accelerating. The rate of the ingression of novelty into three-dimensional space is asymptotically increasing. The kind of knitting together that is taking place in the world is laying the stage for the emergence of new forms of organization, new properties of being. And I really think that the drama of life on this planet is pointed toward the time that we are living in, that we're approaching a symmetry break on a scale of the kind of symmetry break that occurred when life pulled its slimy bottom out of the sea and crawled onto the land. We are approaching the symmetry break where we shed the monkey, we shed the hardwired negative animal impulses that keep us chained to the Earth and deny us our dreams of completion.

History is a kind of indicator of the nearby presence of a transcendental object. And as we approach the transcendental object, history will become more and more hallucinatory, more and more dreamlike, more and more surreal -- does this sound familiar to you? It's the neighborhood, right? *[laughter]* That's because we are so close now to this transcendental object, that is the inspiration for religion and vision and revelation, that all you have to do to connect up to it is close your eyes, smoke a bomber, take five grams of mushrooms in silent darkness, and the veil will be lifted, and you seen, then, the plan. You see what all these historical vectors have been pointing towards. You see the transcendental object at the end of time -- a cross between your own soul and the flying saucer of cheap science fiction. I mean -- the city of Revelations, hanging at the end of the Twentieth Century like a beacon. I really think that this is happening, and that what the -- It's as though we are boring through a mountain, towards someone else who is boring through that mountain, and there will be a handshake at a certain point in time. We are moving, literally, into the realm of the imagination. This is where the human future lies. This has been understood by some people since at least the time of William Blake.

We are like creatures caught in a interrupted embryogenesis: halfway to angelhood, the worst among us somehow got control of the social agenda, and we've been hammering on each other with monotheism, racism, sexism, materialism, for the past 10,000 years. We betrayed the aboriginal intellect, the aboriginal intelligence, that existed for probably a hundred thousand years with drama, with poetry, with altruism, with courage, with self-sacrifice -- with all the higher values that we think of as human -- but without the devastatingly toxifying habits of Western Man: slavery, city-building, kingship, and, the three M's --

monogamy, monotony, and monotheism. *[laughter]* These things have to be pitched out!

Or, maybe not. Who knows? *[laughter]*

Woman in audience: What's wrong with monogamy?

What's wrong with monogamy. What's wrong with monogamy is that it, uh, it forbids and interferes with polygamy! *[laughter and applause]* Otherwise, I think it has a lot to recommend it! Yeah, I know, monogamy is a tough one. Monogamy is a tough one, but I have more and more the feeling that as you grow up, just as you're about to go across the great Golden Gate Bridge to adulthood, there's one last sign, which says, "LAST EXIT BEFORE AUTHENTIC ADULTHOOD. BECOME ADDICTED TO SOMEONE AS LAME AS YOURSELF, AND MAYBE THE TWO OF YOU CAN PASS YOURSELF OFF AS ONE INDIVIDUAL AND STUMBLE THROUGH LIFE TO COMPLETION." *[much laughter]*

Same woman: But what's wrong with it?

TM: I don't think you should take me too seriously -- I'm deeply into a divorce. *[laughter]* But I'm sure it's not distorting my judgment a single iota. *[laughter]*

Gee, I thought what you were going to object to was monotheism, but apparently not! No, see, here's the thing: back when mushrooms and nomadism ruled the world, monogamy was traded in for an orgiastic social style. And what's interesting about orgy -- besides that -- is that in an orgiastic situation, men cannot trace lines of male paternity. And consequently, loyalty goes to the children of the group. It's a tremendous force for group cohesion that the men collectively transfer their loyalty to the children as a collective group. And it creates a very tightly-knit social unit. I think that -- I mean, it's absurd -- you can't advocate orgy in a world riddled with epidemics of sexually-transmitted diseases and five and a half billion people. Nevertheless, the spirit of the thing can be worked out between you and your friends in any of a number of ways, and all of these arrangements which break the dominator mold are further permission for further breaking of the mold.

Why have we grown so polite as they have grown so much more treacherous and weasel-like? Why are we so content to allow the worst among us to set the social agenda? In the absence of Marxism, there is now no critique being carried out of the capitalist enterprise, and it'll peel your skin off and peddle it back to you. It is doing that. Capitalism in principle is not, I think, a bad thing, but it requires endlessly-exploitable natural resources. And since the exploration of space has been taken off the agenda, there is no endlessly-exploitable frontier. So capitalism is going to deal itself out of existence, but before it does that, you're gonna pay \$50 for a latte, because inflation is going impoverish all of us before people get pissed off enough to realize that all of the last hundred years of economic progress was actually a shell game to create billionaires, while the great masses of people saw their standard of living eroded and destroyed. You don't have to take psilocybin to figure this stuff out. You know, it isn't all elf machines from hyperspace! *[laughter]*

Somebody asked me what did I think was going to happen in 2012? And I said there were probably a number of scenarios. One of the most radical I can imagine is that everyone would begin to behave appropriately! I mean, can you imagine what that would be like? You can imagine the first minute, because in the first minute, of course, everyone would turn off their console, take off their clothes, and walk

outside. What happens after the first minute, in terms of appropriate activity, staggers the imagination! And where you would be three weeks into it is preposterous to even conceive. That's the soft version of the coming of the millennium. The hard version, I'm not really even sure... In the Amazon -- in my book *True Hallucinations* I wrote about my brother and myself and our adventures down there. His expectation -- once, he told me, "People are leaving their workbenches and offices with tears of joy streaming down their faces. They're staring at the sky." Fool that I was, I believed him. But it's a reasonable hope.

Here's the deal. We have the science, the technology, the money, the infrastructure, to do almost anything that we want to do. The problem is changing our minds. We have a hell of a time changing our minds. And yet, we must. There is no choice about it. The reason I'm a psychedelic advocate is not because I think it's easy, or because I think it's a sure thing -- I don't think it's easy or a sure thing. It's simply that it's the only game in town. Nothing else can change your mind on a dime like we are going to have to change our minds on a dime. If we had 500 years to sort this out, we could maybe have a fighting chance without radical pharmacological intervention. As it is, if we don't awaken, we are going to let it slip through our fingers.

And if hortatory preaching could do it, then the Sermon on the Mount would have turned the trick. It didn't and it won't. You have to somehow give people an experience -- an experience that is not somebody else's experience -- their experience, that radically recrystallizes their understanding of the world. And these shamanic plants that have been quietly growing and maintaining themselves for millennia, are in fact -- and for what reason? it's beyond me -- for some reason, these are pipelines into a kind of planetary mind. The big bugaboo of Western civ is that we deny the existence of spirit. It's been a thousand-year project to eliminate the spirit from all explanations of how reality works, or the personality works, or anything works. The absence of spirit permits the murder of the planet. But the cost of the denial of spirit is life empty of meaning, which doesn't mean we have to return to the world of beady-eyed priestcraft and its slimy minions. But it does mean that we have to recover an authentic experience of the transcendental. And apparently what this means, then, is fusion with Nature, and the psychedelics do this. They dissolve boundaries. They open the way to the Gaian mind.

Now you can believe this is bullshit, but you cannot believe it's bullshit unless you have made the experiment yourself and found it to be wanting -- this isn't a philosophy course, here. We're talking about something real. And if the critics are not willing to invest time in it, then the critics have already declared their terror and fear of the solution. You know, it reminds me a little of something that Tim Leary -- well, I always thought Tim Leary said this, but when I asked him, he completely disowned this brilliant remark, which let me know he was an enlightened man cause I never would have disowned it. So, somebody said -- not Tim Leary -- "LSD is a psychedelic drug which occasionally causes psychotic behavior in people who have *not* taken it." [*laughter, applause*] Now a lot of drugs are like that, and we have a lot of psychotic people running around who have been driven mad by drugs they never took. But what they did take was your civil rights, your freedom to guide your own life, and your right to make your own decisions. This kind of thing is intolerable. If there is an iota of possibility that these substances enhance consciousness -- and remember, they used to be called "consciousness expanding" drugs (just a straight phenomenological description) -- if there's an iota of possibility that they augment consciousness, then we have to put the pedal to the metal in this matter. Because it is the absence of consciousness that is pushing us toward extinction, that is causing us to loot our children's future, that is causing us to accept the elimination of thousands of species per month without pouring into the streets to loot and smash the institutions of those who allow these kinds of atrocities to go forward. I think the era of politeness has gone on just about long enough. And there's going to have to come a moment where people stand up and are counted. We have

seen our freedom taken away, we have seen our environment destroyed, we have seen our political dialogue polluted, and still we take it, and take it, and take it. You know, being counter-cultural is more than a fashion statement. I recall an obscure Chinese philosopher named Mao Tse Tung, who once said, "The Revolution is not a dinner party!" Of course, he went on to say it's an armed struggle, prosecuted by the forces of the people. I don't think we're ready to call for armed struggle, but I think it is time to call for **"HANDS OFF THE AMERICAN MIND. GIVE US BACK OUR MIND."** The American mind is one of the most creative minds in the world, and it is being confined, compromised, and sold down the river by people who can't think of anything better to do with the world than fabricate it into stupid products and sell it at twice its natural worth. *[applause]*

Well, I could go on and on -- and do, you may have noticed -- but I think it's much more fruitful when these things are interactive and driven by questions. And I'm not fragile; you don't have to hold back. I'm from Berkeley -- we throw chairs when we're displeased. So, feel free to have at it. But is there anybody who'd like to comment or participate in this discussion?

Man in audience: Thank you, Mr. McKenna. The whole bit about quoting Mao was kind of interesting if you think of the arms in terms of modems -- I mean, the fact that we now live in a point in time when it's possible to completely transfer power without shedding a drop of blood if you have the right passwords and access codes. There is a unique tilt on Mao's "armed struggle" coming up real soon, if you think in terms of information war rather than the kind of bloodshed that's been marking history up until now.

Vis a vis your whole thing with the organic psychedelics versus LSD, for instance -- which is enjoying a great revival right now, presently, in this city -- I don't know about elsewhere *[laughter]* -- vis a vis the LSD thing -- there's a point in the temporal flow with LSD where it drops, slows down, and then there's the sensation of temporal cessation wherein one generally tends to perceive a presence behind the world -- which sounds a lot like the robot elves of yours. I'm just interested in your take, in the distinction that you draw between the organic psychedelics and -- for example -- LSD.

Well LSD is a kind of -- has a foot in both worlds. You know, you start, when you make LSD, with ergonamine, which you get from ergot, which is grown on plantations in Pakistan. But then you elaborate the molecule and make it synthetic. I certainly think LSD -- we wouldn't be here, and I wouldn't be here, if it weren't for LSD. The wonderful thing about LSD is that it's possible to manufacture so much in the underground. I mean, there is a problem with that in that it tends to promote criminal syndicalism. *[same man in audience: "Not if you give it away!"]* Good point! *[laughter, applause]* But, if you have a trust fund and your roommate is a first-year biochemist, in a long weekend you can produce ten million hits. This means you're not, of course, involved in helping out the folks in your building, you have some more ambitious agenda. But this is a unique situation with LSD, because you need so little of it. You see, if you set out to create ten thousand doses or ten million doses of psilocybin, the facilities of Upjohn corporation would be insufficient. You would need stainless-steel vats of thousand-gallon capacity and incredible quality-control equipment. So LSD came along at the perfect moment in the life of the collectivity to focus us on the psychedelic experience. But I don't think LSD is what I would call a "full-spectrum" psychedelic, because what I was always obsessed with was visions. And psilocybin and the tryptamines are much more reliable visionary activators. People say, "Why are you so into this vision thing? You're just some kind of vision fascist." *[laughter]* No, no -- I mean, or: Maybe, but! *[laughter]* Maybe but -- here's the thing -- the reason the visions were so impressive to me is because that was, to me, the proof that it wasn't me. You know, when you take LSD, you have strange thoughts, many thoughts, illuminating thoughts...

[unintelligible question from audience]

You mean, what do I think of that in terms of DMT? *[more from audience member]* Well, I never encountered elves on LSD, but I did hear a story recently. And since all we have are anecdotes, I'll pass it on, for whatever it's worth.

A friend of mine told me a story. He and a friend of his miscalculated a dose and took LSD, and then they went to a dance. And they realized they were too loaded to be there. So they just backed up against the wall and slid down the wall and sat there. And as they sat, shoulder to shoulder, mouths hanging, watching these people dance, slowly, slowly, the dance came to a complete halt. Everything was frozen. And at that moment, the door swung open, and an elf came into the room *[laughter]* and waltzed through all these people, looked around, actually picked up a skirt or two and looked under it, and then exited. And then the movie started up again. *[laughter]*

Well now, I'm not a theosophist or an Alice Bailey-ist or any of that malarkey. But on the other hand, this seems to suggest this old theosophical idea of vibratory levels of existence -- you know, that if you're moving at a zillion hertz you do not see things moving at very much higher or lower frequencies. Now I never was so aware of the time-stopping thing on DMT, but it is definitely true that when you smoke DMT, if you do sufficiently, you burst in to a place that is inhabited by these -- what I call self-transforming machine elves, these jeweled, self-dribbling basketballs that are squealing and squeaking in this alien language that condenses like metallic rain and falls out of the air of the room and is able to morph itself into Faberge-like objects that are scintillating and faceted and reflective of other possibilities and objects...

Woman in audience: Hi, Terence, I wanted to know what products you have available. *[laughter]*

Hey. Listen. The point guy can't make the sale! *[laughter]* But, one of the things that I think is best about the thing I do, or one of the things that I like best about what I do is provide an excuse for the psychedelic community to assemble. Because, believe it or not, these days we look like everybody else out there. How the hell that happened, I don't know! *[laughter]* So it's very important for you to pay attention to who's here, because without a doubt, somebody here has what you need! *[laughter]* Whatever you need -- you know, what do you need? A loan? A girlfriend? Well, we all need different things -- besides the fact that we all need DMT.

[question from audience]

Where do we go from DMT? Well, where do we go from there? I think the idea is to use psychedelics to remove anxiety without undercutting political action. In other words, we can do political work, ulcerated and clenched with terror and fear and always looking over our shoulders; or we can do that same work with a sense of play and lightheartedness. It's the same work, so why not have a good time while we do it? It's the good time we have that drives them so crazy and pisses them so off! *[applause]*

[question from audience]

What's new and fun that you haven't experienced? Oh, well here's something new and fun. There's a plant,

called *Salvia divinorum*, which is absolutely legal. It's not only legal, the active principle is unknown to science -- therefore it can't be made illegal! [*singing:*] S-A-L-V-I-A D-I-V-I-N-O-R-U-M *Salvia divinorum* -- remember you heard it here first! [*laughter*] Okay, so here's the deal with this. This is a plant that was carried on the books for years as a hallucinogen, but nobody took it seriously because when the botanists and the chemists would test for alkaloids, it's alkaloid negative. So they said, "Well then, to Hell with it, it just can't be." But recently, an anthropologist who will remain nameless spent some time with the Indians where this stuff is happening, and they showed him how to do it. And he has been telling everyone how to do it. And, you know, true to the spirit of that, here's how you do it.

First of all, this is a plant that looks like a coleus, which is a common houseplant. You could grow this stuff in your window box or your apartment; it would pose no problem whatsoever. It's also -- cuttings are available from plant dealers. And what you do is you take about fifteen leaves, which are about like... that, and you pull out the mid-rib, so you just have the soft, leafy material. And you roll it up into a quid, and you put it in your cheek, and you lie down in darkness where you can see one of those illuminated digital clocks, you know? Lay there for fifteen minutes by the clock, slowly squeezing the stuff down. And it's very bitter. I mean you feel like the whole front of your mouth wraps around this stuff, but it's worth it. It's worth it. And after about fifteen minutes, if you will just spit this into a receptacle, Kleenex, whatever, uh, hygienic product is your choice [*snickering*] then, about two minutes later, it will begin to stream. In other words, these afterimage-colored lights begin to form and come past you. And about two minutes after that, these cobalt-blue, magenta hallucinations begin to unfold. And what it reminded me of was "Nude Descending a Staircase" but as if Duchamp had done it in ultraviolet and blue and cobalt, and just this -- [*question from audience*] Where did I learn about this plant? Well I've known about it for years, but like everybody else I just didn't take it seriously. [*question*] No no, it's in the Oahaxan Mountains, it's in the Sierra Mazateca of central Mexico. And after about 45 minutes, it all gently goes away. And believe me, I'm a skeptic, I'm hard to move off the dime, I'm not an airhead. And it worked, it worked. And -- very interesting -- I called the guy who gave it to me the next morning and I said, "It looks to me like it has the potential to be a craze!" And he said, "The very word that occurred to me -- craze! craze!" [*laughter*] So, like I said, you heard it here first.

Man in audience: I have a question. As a physician who's interested in medical anthropology, what about the effect of this in terms of human development in utero?

You mean the effect on the developing fetus? [*"Yes"*] Of *Salvia divinorum*? [*"No. Psilocybin."*] Oh, psilocybin. Well, here's my approach to this, and this is why I advocate the use of plants with a history of shamanic usage. Because these things are illegal, human research is essentially outlawed. As users we suffer under the prohibition, but imagine that science, one of the most powerful forces in our society, has been told, "Get lost. Forget about psychedelic chemistry and forget about human studies." This is why I don't advocate MDMA use. In answer to your question, the human data on psilocybin is provided by the fact that it has a history of at least a millennium of human usage. If a plant has been accepted into a society as that one has, as a regularly-applied shamanic tool, then I think you can be relatively certain that blindness, miscarriage, tumors, and so forth, are not a problem. Probably a lot of human beings have given their lives and their health for that data to be available to us in that way. Do you want to follow up? [*"No."*] No? [*"Thank you."*] Did I satisfy you? Great! Great.

Woman in audience: As a poet and an art historian who has lived in a lot of cultures where I've worked with indigenous peoples -- amongst the Yamamoto I had the blowgun done up my nose, in Peru I tried San

Pedro, in Szechuan province in China with the Dalai (?) among Szechuan banai(?) I tried many of the old herbs -- one of the things I'd like to mention, which I think a lot of Americans and Europeans don't understand, is the ritual use of these hallucinogenics within the culture. I think it's very important. I'm heading off now to work -- to make a film with the indigenous people in Taiwan, Formosa. It's a shamanic culture. I think the problem is that when these things are removed from the mythological stance within a community -- the biggest problem in this country -- which strikes me as a writer also -- is this lack of mythology that exists anymore. It's one thing for hallucinogenics, but it's another thing for also creating a use -- as you mentioned before, which I liked very much -- of the imagination, a sense that a human being has the right to expand their own horizons, within whatever powers they wish and with whatever means. And I'd like to see a greater awareness that these things can expand an already fertile ground which first has to be created.

That's right! And what might be, *[laughter, applause]* well...

Thank you! And, what I'd like to ask, when I come back, is -- I used to be on WBAI -- and when I come back, I'd like to do something on these people that very few people have worked with. In fact, I have a military permit to go out, and it's a culture that -- unlike the Ainu and the Reipus(?) I'm doing another exhibition on now, soon, at the museum -- but, the group in Formosa, AKA Taiwan, was first occupied by the Japanese but have a history for thousands of years. And I have to have a military permit to now get out -- granted, I have lived in warzones before, you know, with the Hmong in Laos, etc. etc. etc., so as you might say, I get very bored living here! But -- *[TM: "Why? They're all here." snickers]* Well that's what I think, also, but, the key is, in a sense, these are ways, too. So I was going to ask you, when I come back, if you'd like to do something, maybe a radio show on some shamanic *[unintelligible]*.

Sure, absolutely. Let me follow up on this. The issue of ritual and style of drug taking: I think that it's -- well, here's how I do psilocybin. I do it on an empty stomach in silent darkness. And I think that this is the way to do it, because I'm interested, essentially, in the pure phenomenology of it. I don't want to know what it does to Bach, or Coil. I want to know what it does to nothin'. I don't want to see how it can affect Rembrandt or a natural scene. I just want it where I can study the *ding ansich* of the thing, you know? And I have nothing against a good time, and hanging out, but it is no substitute for serious psychedelic taking. And, you know, people forget, or people don't realize, if you take a drug that you don't like, then an excellent strategy for getting rid of it is to exercise like a crazy person, like go out and chop a bunch of wood or something. Well, so then what I see is people taking low doses and dancing their asses off, in very noisy environments dense with social signals. This is like a strategy for avoiding the psychedelic breakthrough. How could it ever find you in all of that? *[applause]*

So I smoke pot and confine myself to vodka gimlets most of the time in public, and then really pile it on in private, really pile it on. These things can't hurt you, not at any reasonable dose. I mean, for instance, let's take psilocybin. The effective dose is 15 milligrams; the LD50 is something like 225 milligrams per kilogram. Your stomach won't even hold that many mushrooms. So death is not a possibility. DMT -- same thing. I mean, DMT is a neurotransmitter. People sometimes say, "Is it dangerous?" The answer is, "Only if you fear death by astonishment!"

Woman: So I can call you when I get back and see what I bring back?

Do it! Anybody else?

Man in audience: Yeah, I just wanted to comment on the thing about taking psychedelics in noisy environments. I just happen to disagree with what you said, because, first of all I think collective tripping is really important, and it creates a communal vibe that's really terrific and has every advantage to advancing your mind within it. Also you can -- there's something to be said about getting lost in the groove. It can join the music and take you to a new -- and open your mind with the music, because music is the tool to open your mind. And dancing -- dancing is spiritual, dancing makes your... [*falters*] Excuse me, I'm getting very nervous.

Well, here's the thing. These things are not mutually exclusive, it's not like you have to choose. My problem is, I know people are dancing and they're having these collective experiences. My fear is that they're not having the other experiences. And you have to have both. [*man: "Absolutely."*] That's all.

And as far as the dance thing, let me say, I mean, I think that what's happening with house music and the ambient music thing is the most healthy sign out of the culture in 25 years -- at last, you know. Because the truth is, rock and roll became a tool of the very people it was supposed to discomfort. [*applause*] You know? [*comment from crowd*] Pardon me? Well, but what's wrong with ambient and house music? We don't need to "free the harpsichord," you know. [*laughter*] It's a done deal, I think. And there is so much talent waiting in the wings. I mean, I'm on my way tomorrow to London, on to Frankfurt -- these are enormous cauldrons of creativity that are exporting this music all over the world. And the message is absolutely the message that needs to be put out. It's a message of community, of sensuality, and of intelligence. I mean: love, sex, intelligence -- that's what The Shamen are talking about.

Man: Well, the music comes from here, too. This is one of major centers of world dance music.

Oh, you don't have to have an inferiority complex in New York! [*laughter*]

New man in audience: Terence, it was wonderful to meet you tonight. Your editor Dan Levy is a good friend of mine. I'm a musician, and I just wanted to say, yeah, music is terribly important to everybody's life. But I want to thank you, and one of the things I respect most about you is your research, as far as text goes, because you've really traveled the world and you've dug up a lot of things that -- I want to thank your translators, too, because that's one of the most unsung arts in the world. When you dig up something, it's not everybody that can just know what it means. Translators -- let's put in a plug for them. [*TM: "The unsung heroes!"*] It's true! [*"Yes, it's true."*] But I just wanted to take one second and ask you -- I was raised in a quote-unquote "Christian" environment, and one of the things I learned about Christianity as I grew up and came through it was that -- we're all here to learn something, and I'm not telling anybody in this room anything -- but I was curious about the Book of Urantia, if you had heard of it and you might be able to comment on it.

[*snickers from audience*] Well, here's the thing. My tendency is to think that if you can channel without drugs, you're probably mentally ill. [*laughter*] However, the Urantia book is the most extravagant and baroque and earliest of these things; they definitely got in ahead of the trend. So, to my mind, these things are like synthetic scripture, or efforts to resacralize language by casting it in a scriptural mode. My method -- a lot of people are irritated with me, because if you really spend time with me, I'm actually a rationalist, and a kind of reductionist; I'm not "woo-woo." Because I really think that the truth can stand on its own. And so I tend to be very conservative in my choice of facts. For instance, if we're dating the pyramid, I'd

probably call the American Archaeology Society before I would call the priests of the Coven of Atlantis. But I know there's disagreement on these things. *[laughter]* I think, you know -- with the Urantia book and the Seth material, and then all little Sethettes that came along afterwards -- I think basically it's like anything else: you have to have your crap detector turned up on *high*, and then just move forward with it, and what works for you, works for you. And all of these things should be taken as provisional. You know, when you rise as I have, from a cowtown in Colorado to giving speeches at very exclusive and chic New York nightclubs, you realize -- because you tend to meet quote-unquote "celebrities" along the way -- you realize that that's all a racket. And you further realize it must have always been a racket. So, Lorenzo de' Medici, Genghis Khan, Hitler -- LAME! *[laughter]* Idiotic, ordinary, dreary, boring to have dinner with! So, part of this psychedelic thing, I think, is really about self-empowerment. You know, Robert Anton Wilson has this wonderful rap, he says: "Define the world as a conspiracy run by you and your friends." If you don't have that as your model, then you probably have a loser's model, and who wants to be a loser? So, just assume, you know, that you and your friends are gaining power, moving into positions of influence, and shortly about to take control! What does this have to do with the Urantia book? I don't know, but here's where we ended up, folks!

Woman in audience: I think a lot of people would agree that evolution is at a pretty questionable point right now. In fact, I personally believe that since the car has been introduced that we've been de-evolving. I guess my question to you is, through your hallucinogenic experiences, what do you think the lesson is to human society, that we're supposed to learn, to sort of transcend the point we're at now?

You mean generally, what's the lesson?

Woman: Generally, yeah. What are we supposed to do to sort of make this breach, cause I think we're at a pretty precarious point.

Well, it's a complicated question, and I don't want to unveil my whole cosmology this late in the game. But-- See-- But, why not have a stab at it? *[laughter]* Here's the problem, as I see it. For a very long time, as we evolved out of the animal nature, perhaps a hundred thousand years, psilocybin was part of our diet and our rituals and our religion. And though those individuals taking the psilocybin didn't know it, it was having a very profound effect upon them. What it was doing was it was suppressing a primate behavior that is so basic to primates that it goes clear back to squirrel monkeys. And what that behavior is is a tendency to form what are called male-dominance hierarchies. And we all know what this is, because it bedevils our own political situation, and our own effort to create a reasonable society. But there was a great long period in the human past when this tendency was pharmacologically suppressed, in the same way that you would give Prozac to somebody to suppress a tendency to manic-depression. In other words, what the shamans of the High Paleolithic figured out was how to medicate people so that they would live together in harmony, decency, and dignity.

The problem is, that that strategy depended upon the simultaneity of psilocybin intoxication and the orgiastic sexual style that I talked about earlier. And when the mushrooms ceased to be available, men and women were simultaneously becoming able to coordinate cause and effect, to the point that women were realizing that when they returned in their yearly wanderings to old camps, there would be food growing in the discard piles. And at the same time, men were realizing that the consequences of the sex act was the birth of a child. In other words, there came a certain point in human intellectual maturity when a distant cause and its effect were finally connected, and at that moment, agriculture was born. And agriculture was

born as a response to the drying of the African continent. And we--literally--we fell into history.

You've heard me talk about Genesis as the story of history's first drug bust. It was history's first drug bust. I mean, that story is the story of the suppression of an earlier, feminine-driven mushroom religion. And once we stopped taking psilocybin, that old, old primate behavior pattern--male dominance--reasserted itself. But now, not in an animal species, but in a species with language, technology, agriculture, strategic planning, memory, recall, so forth and so on. And we used the re-emergence of that tendency to establish cities, kingship, slavery, property--the whole grab bag of pathologies that characterize Western civilization were born around the re-emergence of male dominance.

And now we're in a similar situation. And you know, no less conservative and sober a character than Arthur Kessler wrote a book called *The Ghost in the Machine* twenty years ago, and he reached the same conclusion. He said, "We are best at bashing each other's brains out. And since that's no longer appropriate--if it ever was--we need a drug to make us able to live together in ways that we must live together if we're going to have cities of 10 million people and a global civilization." I think his analysis was on the right track, but shallow. I think we have that drug, and the anxiety and the restlessness and the dissatisfaction that has attended the historical experience is because we have this itch that we can't scratch.

This is the key to our weird relationship to substances. I mean, think about it. Of course, elephants will push down fences to get to rotting papaya and butterflies will fall over beside bowls of sugar. But we addict to dozens of substances. We not only addict to substances, we addict to behaviors. You know, guy goes to the front door in the morning and if the paper isn't rolled at his feet, he turns into a beast! We also addict to each other. You know? Our most sublime human relationships--when they fall into difficulty, we experience the condition of a broken heart., which looks--in terms of its presentation of symptoms--very much like junk withdrawal. Probably because it is, because there has been some kind of pheromonal lock-on that has gone on because you've been hanging out with this person so much. And now that the pheromonal thing is broken and interrupted, you can barely function, you know? And it takes weeks, if not months, to reclaim your identity. We have an itch that we can't scratch, until we make our way back to the primary chemical mediator of our human-ness. And that was -- I'm convinced -- psilocybin. And that this is the missing link; this would allow us to understand the sudden doubling of the human brain in less than a million and a half years--one of the great mysteries of evolutionary theory--so forth and so on. And the fact that the society is so anxious on this subject is an indication that this is the real taboo. We have found it. This is *it*. And therefore, it has to be brought out of the closet. And it wouldn't hurt for us to come out of the closet. I mean, when we are secretive, when we deny it, we are carrying out the Man's work for him. They don't have to arrest us if we're willing to be our own guards and police. It's absurd. This is part of your birthright. It is part of our lives. We pay taxes; we're legitimate. And it should not be swept under the rug. Are we going to be the last minority on this planet to claim its civil rights? Why? When what we represent is an impulse back toward the aboriginal totality that gives life meaning.[*applause*]

Man in audience: You've proclaimed that there is this hyperdimensional reality which is accessible through these psychedelics, that is--we are immersed in it. And you're somewhat surprised that there is very little being done about this. It's something that is so--as you say--unbelievable and unfathomable and there's so little research being done. The majority of people don't even care or know about this. Now, we gathered in this room, we care very much and we might have some connection to this and access to this reality. But what about the--maybe it's only certain people have a predilection or interest in it, such as like people who want to go rock climbing or surfing, and that's what they go to all extents to. But most people, if they were

exposed to what you say--the five grams in silent darkness--would come back and not want anything to do with that experience, not have any understanding, any connection, and just want to hold on to the very simple reality which our consensus has constructed for most people to exist in. And that it really is just this fringe thing, and that's why there isn't much more interest in this--then how can the psychedelic actually affect the masses that don't really have much connection to that?

Well, revolutions are made with between five and ten percent of a population. No revolution in history has had more than that level of support. I'm not saying everybody should take psilocybin. I mean, God knows, there are plenty of people among us who don't need their boundaries dissolved, and if they are going to dissolve their boundaries, please don't do it when I'm around. *[laughter]* But those people are people who have been damaged in any of the dozens and hundreds of ways that this society has figured out to damage people. But I do think that it should be an option, and it should be an option that people are educated about. One thing that we've done is that we've completely poisoned the well of language when it comes to the subject of substances. Because the word "drug" reaches from heroin to aspirin through psilocybin to propaganda. I mean, it's a word so widely-used that it's meaningless. And we are living in an atmosphere of complete hypocrisy; the most dangerous drugs ever discovered by human beings are being freely dispensed all over the place. I mean, tobacco, sugar, alcohol -- these are the great addictive and destroying drugs, and they are the least interfered-with and the most commercialized. And the psychedelics--no claim of addiction was ever made, even by their critics. The issue with psychedelics is that they call into question the illusions of the masters. And I think it doesn't matter who the masters are. It doesn't matter whether we're talking about a fascist dictatorship, a high-tech industrial democracy, or a Third World banana republic--if you start taking psychedelics, you will start questioning the reality around you, and questioning is not what the control freaks are interested in. They want you to work at your idiotic job, buy the crap they're peddling you over the media, and keep your opinions to yourself, please. Or, there is spectrum of opinion offered, and it's all represented on the McLaughlin Group and if you go beyond that, then you're some kind of mad person. This is all nonsense--we are allowing the least among us to control the agenda. That would be bad enough under any circumstances, but we're in an emergency. This is a crisis. We should be going through lifeboat drills at this point, and instead, the band plays on, and the game continues to be played. The narcotics game, the government role in it, apparent suppression/tacit support, millions and billions of dollars in hot money being used to finance the murder of editors of left-wing newspapers and the financing of private armies in various rathole countries that are the client states of the remnants of the empire we created to oppose the Soviet Union. It's all CRAP. And as soon as we call a halt to it, we'll all be better off, I think. *[applause]*

Man in audience: I do recognize a lot of Alfred Korzybski in what you are saying, and I wonder, is Korzybski's time-binding effect--is the drug going to be the trigger for the time-binding effect?

It could very well be. Korzybski was very influenced by Whitehead, and I was very influenced by Whitehead. And Whitehead has this idea that he calls concrescence. And he says, "The world is growing toward concrescence." And that's what I call "the transcendental object at the end of time." I really think that we are--we are not going to disappoint ourselves. History is a psychedelic experience, and we have come through, now, the darker bardos, and are about to--potentially--enter the payoff zone, the transcendental zone, the zone where it all makes sense. You know, a huge number of people have suffered unimaginably that we could be here this evening. Nine times in the last million years, ice, miles deep, has moved south from the poles, pushing everything in front of it. There have been upheavals, epidemics, droughts--everything--and yet we arrive, on time and under budget, here this evening. That's the kind of

tradition we have to continue, a tradition of human nobility and human striving. And enough of the whining from those who have piled up uncounted millions of dollars, and still are willing to suppress us in order to obtain more. It's obscene. It's obscene. *[applause]*

Man in audience: Yeah. Sorry to bother you one more time, but you just quoted Kessler. And Mike Murphy in his new book, *The Future of the Body*, he quotes Kessler, talking about--Kessler at one point took a very fatalistic approach to humanity, with the idea that--the big problem, in his view, was that we didn't have a vertical equivalent of the corpus callosum that allows the two horizontal hemispheres to speak to each other. And he says that it may be a fatal flaw in our species--that there's nothing that will link the vertical components of the serpent brain out to the neocortex. And I was wondering if your take on this, of these vegetable drugs, might be that they might be inducing--if there would be anything towards the inducement of--possible growth in that area?

Yeah, I think that's a very interesting idea. You may know a book by Julian Jaynes, called *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. It may well be that there has to be some kind of neural correction on us. For one thing, we cannot tolerate the luxury of an unconscious mind. That belongs to a more primitive stage of human development. When you have hydrogen bombs and can deliver synthetic plagues by missile to the other side of the planet, then you cannot be driven by the agendas of animals and half-conscious human beings. I mean, it's like placing Jeffrey Dahmer at the head of the Pentagon, or something. *[laughter]* And that's the--Hey, we probably got it. He's there.

But this is what I meant when I said we can do anything. What we have inherited from the past--as misguided as it may be--may have been--are tools of immense power. And tools are neutral things, you know? It's the monkey wielding the tool that you have to keep your eye on. And so, we are now challenged to apply the tools that have been created. Are we to, you know, clean up the Earth; de-emphasize the material side of our technology; recognize the right of every human being to a healthy, secure existence; de-emphasize the marketing of violence as a patina on product fetishism; de-emphasize the objectification of women as another patina on object fetishism; stop the peddling of loser scenarios to everyone; stop tying up our accumulated wealth in a useless standing crop of ever-more-obsolete arsenals and delivery systems?

I mean, it's okay to live like there's no tomorrow if you're at some primitive stage of culture with endless frontiers of exploitable resources in all directions. That's not where we're at. We have burned through all that, and yet still we party on. And the signs are on the wall. We have invented a sin that no other culture ever even conceived of: it's the sin of looting the future. No other culture was ever so narcissistic and self-indulgent that it cared nothing for the future of its children. Children have always been the value focus for a civilization. But when you pile up four trillion dollars in debt, when you cut down the rainforests and blow off the atmosphere, it means you are in the grip of such an orgy of narcissistic excess that the best thing for it would be for somebody to just walk over and put a bullet through your head as a favor to everybody else. We don't need that kind of a fate. We need to be as noble as the people who preceded us, and a hell of a lot smarter, because nobility by itself is not sufficient. We're going to have to play a very cagey game now. And it's okay with me; I anticipate it. I mean, I think primates love a hell of a good fight, and we've got one on our hands. I mean, we have unleashed processes that, if not skillfully controlled, are extraordinarily terminal--even in the short term. And again, I see psychedelics as the only way to react fast enough to have an impact on the runaway momentum of historical error.

Man in audience: I wonder if you could say something about the relationship between psychedelics and our

inherent structure and chemistry. I mean, is it unlocking something that's latent in us that we should be and should have been aware of all along?

Sure, I'm very interested in this. Here's the great paradox in this domain, as far as I'm concerned. DMT, without contest, is the most powerful psychedelic that I know of--and I hope there's nothing stronger, cause if there is, I don't wanna know about it! [laughter] It's very brief and fast acting, and it clears your system very quickly. It occurs as a neurotransmitter in ordinary human metabolism. Now isn't that interesting? That the most powerful and radical and alien of all these hallucinogens is the one most like--in fact, exactly like--what's in your own body. This is also a Catch 22 for the Establishment cause it means we're all holding, all the time! They can come and get you, folks! It's worse than a U.A. -- you haven't got a prayer! And there's something very interesting--well, there are a number of things--but one thing very interesting about DMT is that, if you've had it, it's possible to have a dream, years later, in which something's going on, and going on, and then someone whips out a little glass pipe, and puts it in your mouth, and you have the complete experience. Not a pale memory or a vivid memory--the real thing happens in the dream. Well this is big news, because what it's saying is that human metabolism is very, very close to being able to produce this at any time, and sometimes it can produce it. Now, it's known that DMT is at its highest concentration in cerebrospinal fluid between 3 and 4 AM in most people. And that's the time of day when the deep REM sleep occurs, accompanied by deep dreaming. So, it looks to me like the chemistry of dream and the chemistry of the psychedelic experience are the same. In fact, you know, if the government is really serious in eliminating psychedelics, then throw down the 10 million dollars or 20 million dollars that it would take to develop a drug that allows people to remember their dreams. Because I think every night, we return to the psychedelic source, that the dreams you remember are the surface of the dream, and that every single night, we sink back down in to the primordial field of mind out of which we reconstruct ourselves. Now, I'm telling you, if DMT were legal, in six months, a skilled laboratory team trained in the study of biofeedback techniques, could train a human being to trigger that on the match. Well then, this is something that we would teach our children in the seventh grade, and from then on, that would solve the entire issue of the hallucinogenic substances, their availability, their legality, and so forth. Legalize the dream! Reclaim the human mind! Let's make dreams legal, let's make plants legal, let's legalize the imagination, empower hope, and begin to build the kind of world that we would feel alright about handing our children on to. Because if we don't do that, we're going to come off as the lamest generation in human history, and we aren't. The creativity, the connectedness, the potential for good is enormous. And most people in this planet are embedded in pre-potent systems of relationship, meaning obligation and inherited religious and cultural ideas. So you may think that you don't count, but actually we all probably are part of a sub-population of about 5% of the global population--people who have disposable income, can read, follow global advances, get good data, and feel a political and moral obligation to do something about it. We tend to feel as powerless as a Guatemalan peasant or something like that, but in fact, that's a myth They want you to accept. The real responsibility for saving the world rests on the literate middle- and upper-middle-class masses of the high-tech industrial democracies. That's US. It's our responsibility to make a change and to act for all those silent, downtrodden people who have been so victimized by the system that they couldn't

turn out at a New York nightclub and hear an esthete rail against the evils of the Establishment. And that's probably enough railing against the evils of the Establishment. Thank you very much, thank you. [applause]

Original Transcription by: [AbruptNYC](#)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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On Drugs

Day Month 1996

Entheobotany Seminar, Palenque, Mexico

Description

- [Youtube Video](#)
- [Original Scribd Transcript](#)
- [Other links](#)

Luc Sala: Food of the Gods. The substances that all through the ages have helped us alter our awareness, our perception of reality. Terence McKenna is a writer, a speaker and, in fact, an activist, and -- what's your feeling when I say 'drugs'?

Terence McKenna: Well, 'drugs' is a word which has polluted the well of language. Part of the reason we have a drug problem is because we don't have an intelligent language to talk about substances, plants, psychedelic states of mind, sedative states of mind, states of, uh, amphetamine excitation. We can't make sense of the problem and the opportunities offered by substances unless we clean up our language. 'Drugs' is a word that's been used by governments to make it impossible to think creatively about the problem of substances and abuse and availability and so forth and so on.

Luc: In the minds of the people, the word 'drugs' which was once used as 'healing medications' and still drug companies that make, I don't know, Tylenol, are considered very legitimate, yet ...

Terence: Well so, it's a kind of a paradox, isn't it? 'Drugs' means that which cures us and the greatest social problem of the generation. So there, right there, you see schizophrenia involved in thinking about drugs. Apparently, there are 'good' drugs, sanctioned by science and medicine, and 'bad' drugs, uh, used by brown people in strange rites and growing in unusual plants in distant parts of the world. Uh, this kind of thinking -- because it's naïve -- leads of course to social problems and bad politics and bad social policy.

Luc: Your stance has been to, at least, look for what you call those strange plants and strange substances in strange places you have been. You originally were a botanist, or you still are?

Terence: Yes, and from the time I was very young I was fascinated with the idea of extremely dramatic changes in consciousness, from which one recovers after a few hours, induced by plants. And I discovered through the writing of Aldous Huxley and other people that this was a world-wide religious and cultural phenomenon that my own Catholic middle-class upbringing had, uh, had completely overlooked and denied. And I've been fascinated with it ever since. You know, it's a bit like sexuality: It's something which the Calvinist intellect would just prefer didn't exist but, in fact, the phenomenon of being human beings in animal bodies with a relationship to nature makes it important for us to address these altered states of consciousness and the plants, the substances, and the cultural institutions that come into being around these

things.

Luc: Your thesis in many books has been that these substances have had a far greater influence on culture and still have, and will have, than most people would like to accept or like to see.

Terence: Yes. I mean, to my mind, human history is the story of one substance after another distorting or transforming human values and society. A perfect example would be sugar. Most people don't even think of sugar as a drug and yet, we may think that cocaine distorted moral and political values in Latin America, but sugar brought back slavery. Slavery actually died with the Roman Empire. Nobody worked agricultural products with slaves in the Middle Ages. It wasn't until, uh, the early 1400s that the Portuguese began producing sugar and they used up Jews and prisoners and so then they started buying human beings from African -- from Arab traders. And the pope was in on the deal and everybody was in on the deal. I mean this is drug corruption of the central institutions of society on a massive scale. Uh...

Luc: But, that has gone on 'til our days. We have alcohol, we have tobacco.

Terence: Well, this is my very point, that every society chooses a small number of substances -- no matter how toxic -- and enshrines them in its cultural values then demonizes all other substances and uses -- and then persecutes and launches witch hunts against those users whenever some political pretext requires witch hunts and persecutions. So, it's an old game and it's been played in many places. Hopefully, part of the advancement of society toward ideas of universal human rights and that sort of thing, it certainly must include the idea of the universal human right to take responsibility for and to alter your own state of consciousness as you see fit. Uh, I don't think we can even pretend that we are on the edge of a civilized dialogue until we grant that people's minds -- like their bodies -- must be a domain free from government control. In American law, we have the notion of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' If the pursuit of happiness means anything, it must mean the right to use and experiment with substances and plants.

Luc: But do we need, say, more research or do we know all we need to know about entheogens or hallucinogens?

Terence: No, no. We need endless amounts of research. The fact that these things have been illegal in most countries for fifty years means there is a huge lag in understanding the impact of these things on human beings. How many people have taken MDMA? And yet, MDMA has not been thoroughly studied by science. How many people have smoked DMT? Same thing. In a way, by making these drugs illegal, we're setting ourselves up for a potential catastrophe someday, when some side-effect is overlooked because the drugs were not rationally reviewed with an eye -- not toward keeping them out of the hands of the public -- but with an eye toward public safety and educating the public in safe use of these things. We -- the state should not in the matter of drugs, anymore than in the matter of sex, act as the secret agent for the agenda of the Church. And that's what's happening. People want to stimulate themselves. They want to explore their consciousness. They want to sedate themselves. Who are we to stand in their way with a moral ideology, uh, and the long heavy arm of the law to interfere with that. It distorts civilized values? That's the bottom line: drug repression, uh, distorts civilized values and political discourse.

Luc: Many people emphasize that the bad effects of using, I don't know, LSD, DMT. Do you think there are positive effects, in general, and are there positive effects yet to be discovered?

Terence: Well, yes. I mean, anyone who has actually been around people using psychedelics know they have tremendous therapeutic potential, tremendous potential to launch people into confrontations with aspects of their personality or their history that they are in denial of. The people who hold that these, uh, psychedelic substances have no application have very little actual personal experience with them. It's the old story of: 'My mind is made up. Don't confuse me with facts.' [laughs]

Luc: Would psychology be further ahead, would you have learned more about the way the human mind works on itself and in interaction with others if the research, say, on the use of LSD, or ibogaine, or many, many of these substances would have proceeded in an orderly and, what you could call, scientific manner or way?

Terence: Yes. I think it's a great tragedy of 20th century science that the original excitement about exploring consciousness and mental illness, generated by the discovery of LSD, gave way to establishment paranoia and, uh, repression of drug-using populations. The excitement in psychology when LSD was first introduced was like the excitement in the physics community when the atom was smashed. And everybody thought, "Well, now, we'll understand mental illness, schizophrenia, uh, the memory" so forth and so on. And, instead, the government lost its nerve because it saw that these substances have a potential for deprogramming people, uh, to institutional values. And that was so terrifying that all the promise for mental illness and creativity studies and so forth and so on was sacrificed to institutional paranoia about the fact that drugs might actually cause people to wake up to some of the abuses and scams that were being run by late modernism and, uh, capitalism.

Luc: Clear! Thank you, Terence.

Terence: Thank you. [laughs]

Original Transcription by: Coloured_Brain

Review 1 by: Patricia C. Lansdown - June 2, 2015

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Man and Woman at the End of History

Day Month 1998

The Ojai Foundation, Ojai, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[Note: This recording comes from a serialization on Roy of Hollywood's show on KPFK. It ends with Terence cut short mid sentence.]

This seminar examined how one of the most fundamental human relationships, that between male and female, shapes our relationship to technology and ultimately to culture and nature. We looked at the forms of relationship between women and men in the shift from a society based on domination to one based on partnership. This is an exploration of how feminism, technology and the telling of a new story will contribute to rescuing us from history. Riane Eisler is best known for her scholarly authoring of her formidable book, "Chalice and the Blade."

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Mapping the End of History

March 1992

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Megatripolis Club

Day Month 1994

Megatripolis Club, London, United Kingdom

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Seeking the Stone: Mind & Time, Spirit & Matter

November 1991

Whole Life Expo, Los Angeles, California

Description

- [VideoLink](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Wonderful. I can hardly believe I'm here. I made it past the Camaro wrathful [audience laughter], I survived the offer for reconstructive cosmetic surgery [audience and Terence laughter], and I've had my smart drugs for this evening. So, glad to be here. Well, until a few minutes ago I thought that this was a 45 minute gig, so um, you get to see grace under pressure this evening [audience laughter]. Actually, I'm kidding, it doesn't matter how long it goes. We could never get to the bottom of this stuff, uh, nor would we wish to, I think [audience laughter].

By coincidence, merely, uh, I became 45 yesterday [audience applause]. So- sort of a good moment to do some summing up. So in thinking about this talk, and knowing as I did who would be here, I thought that, uh, I would sort of orient the theme toward distilling the psychedelic mind. Which is a way of talking about the psychedelic mind, but also trying to, uh- consider the amount of money you paid for this session give you the entire schtick [sp?] in one fell swoop. Uh, so that you would never have to attend a Terence McKenna lecture or workshop again [audience laughter]. You can just move past that. Turn the page on that kind of thing in your life. Uh, and I think it's coming together for me. I don't know whether it's writing these books was a very nice introduction here tonight, and the- the whammy [sp?], and it was after 25 years of being ignored by straight publishers or publishers of any sort for that matter, uh, it appears that I'm on the brink of entering, uh, the marketplace if not the mainstream [audience applause]. So- with your help and word-of-mouth advertising maybe I can continue to meet my mortgage obligations [audience giggle]. Okay, let's cut to the chase. Enough of the obligatory clowning around [audience giggle].

The, um, psychedelic question in the society just seems to refuse to go away. It's a sort of "can't be swallowed and can't be spat up", and so society just sorts of runs around knocking into walls and kicking its feet in the air, and this has been the situation that we've been in for at least 30 years now. And, uh, as a person who has spent a great deal of time in the Underground, I've observed with amazement the persistence of the, uh, countercultural agenda to alter consciousness. And like many of you, I came to it in the 60s when the basic argument in favor of altered states of consciousness were almost entirely narcissistic: deep insight into yourself, an ability to overcome childhood programming, so forth and so on. And I certainly think, because of the kind of society we are, because of the kind of people society has made us, that this was a valid place to begin. But after 30 years of having the psychedelic issue on the social agenda at times hailed as a universal panacea, at times demonized as a scourge from hell, but never quite silenced, never moved out of the public eye, I've reached, uh, a number of conclusions about this, and I thought it would be interesting tonight- I guess because of my recent birthday or something, to sort of

try and distill all this, and sum it up and put it in front of you in terms of what is psychedelic shamanism? Why should people like ourselves who live in high-density electronic culture, why should we care about this? What does it say about our future? What does it say about us as a group? And what techniques are there that we each on our own can bring to bear on this question? So with your help, hold me to the straight and narrow, I'd like to make my way through this agenda this evening, and talk about these various aspects of what to my mind is the most astonishing facet of reality. I mean maybe sex is pressing hard in the second position [audience giggle], but these two things run neck-and-neck as, uh, as aspects of the mystery of what it is to be human. And believe me, uh, human psychedelic experiences and human sexual experiences are orders of magnitude removed from anything going in the animal realm. These things are set apart from the rest of being. Because what we bring to them is mind. This is what we pour in to the sexuality of human beings that makes it unique. This is what we pour in to the contemplation of our own experience. Mind is a focus that is lacking, uh, at least its expression in the unique form that we experience it is lacking in the rest of nature. And I believe that, uh, the persistence of the psychedelic experience within the social agenda has to do with the fact that it actually addresses something basic in human beings. I mean it may seem like a radical proposition to say that to a white high-tech industrial democracy audience, because we are the people who have drifted furthest from this birthright. And I would like to suggest to you this evening that much of the civilization that we have created has been achieved based on a direct denial of the psychedelic experience and all that it implies: our humaneness, our connection to the rest of nature, our connection into the feminine, uh, our place in nature. Because for the western mind we have no fixed place in nature. Our place is ours to define. We are, from the point of view of the cultural machinery that empowers us, completely free to become- to be whatever we want to be. Now the problem with that prescription is that in western culture, what that means is permission to express ego, permission to profligately use and destroy resources, permission to set aside the political agendas of outclasses and out-groups. And, uh, this untrammelled expression of will outside the context of nature has turned us into a kind of, uh, Frankenstein's monster at best. A toxic force in the body of the Gaian world soul at worst. And I believe that our origin and our future culmination and our present happiness all can be secured, understood, illuminated, and expanded only if we're willing to look at our relationship not only to altered states of consciousness, but to, uh, the mind behind nature. Because that's really what this is all about to my mind. Uh, what these psychedelics are empowering, or conveying, or revealing depending on, you know, how you come at it, what they are showing us is that we are not alone upon this planet, we are not alone in the universe of mind. And I realize this is a soft audience to preach this in because there are probably people within the sound of my words who sincerely believe they were once citizens of Zeta Reticuli [audience laughter]. You know, it's when the jar is so leaky it's hard to know where to put the water, uh, but I come to this as a "show me" kind of guy. And so though my conclusions may sound as flaky as anybody else's, it was hard for me to get this flaky [audience laughter]. I didn't embrace it. I was forced to it, and this method works, you see. I mean there are two ways to get flaky. You can get flaky, which takes no effort at all, you know. I mean you just announce you're a walk-in, start eating wheatgrass juice and, uh, you know, tight [sp?] to Maitreya, Or [audience laughter] you can get flaky by testing the edges, by stretching the envelope of being. And this works for the most hard-headed among us. The aerospace insurance adjustor mentality is not only who I'm speaking to but who I feel I represent [audience laughter]. Because, uh, no kidding really [Terence giggle]. At age 18, I was a Marxist, an existentialist, uh, I had ambitions in the field of aeronautical engineering, uh, so forth and so on. And I discovered that you can take that kind of a mentality out into the theatre of real experience, and you can come back a space bunny just like everybody else [audience laughter]. So what that means then is that, uh, a straight person – and I speak as someone from the 60s with apologies to all our gay friends who later appropriated that word, because when I say straight I mean unstoned – as a straight person is not a guardian of truth or probity. A

straight person is simply a frightened proto flake [audience laughter]. I always- I always think, and most of you have heard me say this, but when we get off on this subject I always think about the wonderful thing Tim Leary said years ago. He said it so many years ago that when I told him how much I admired him for saying that, he didn't remember that he's said it [audience giggle], but the man once said, uh, wait I'll give the line, "LSD is a drug which causes, occasionally causes, psychotic behavior in people who have not taken it." See? And I certainly saw this. I mean saw my parents become violently psychotic, uh, from not taking LSD. And so my point is – and I make it in a forum like this, because here we have so much permission for belief. I mean you want to believe in, you know, channeling from beyond the grave, fine. No problem. You want to believe in the healing power of nematodes, hematodes, hematite, you name it, we've got it all. Uh, really I think that the spirit of, uh, childlike untrammelled curiosity is what we're striving for. Not the anal retentive rational person, not the all-go-for-anything channeling flake, but an attitude of "we don't have to look far for miracles because they're all around us." Everything is astonishing. The Universe on its surface is alive with mystery. Well, how do we make our way toward that when we live in a culture, practice a language, embody a philosophy, scientific rationalism, which is entirely designed to suck wonder out of reality to turn everything into shades gray to, uh, subvert all hope that lies outside the realm of career accomplishment and material possession. Well, the way we can overcome this through a personal, um, acting out of what I have been calling now for several years the Archaic Revival. And I want to talk about that a little bit this evening, because I think it- you know however much we may kid around about the New Age, uh, it is an important aspect of what is going on. Its triviality is rooted in the side of it, which is ungrounded, ephemeral, and self-promoting. But it springs from a fairly profound and deep sense that things are not alright in this society. I think that I first encountered the phrase "New Age" in the writings of Helen Petrovna Blavatsky she wrote in the 20s. I read her in the 50s. Uh, the New Age has been with for a long time, so long that there's nothing new about it. And, in fact the reason I call it the Archaic Revival is because I think we can understand this movement if instead of accentuating what about it that is new, novel, and never-before-seen, instead we emphasize that this is a profoundly conservative impulse. A conservative impulse that would set the hair of George Bush and his Skull & Bones buddies standing on end. Because when we talk about conservative, we're not talking about returning to the era of Eisenhower. We're talking about returning to the era of Isis, Assarte [sp?], the great horned goddess of the high Paleolithic. In other words, this program of material civilization, exteriorization of ideas into matter through first Alchemy and Magic, and then Science and Industry, this program is coming to an end one way or another. We are either going to plant ourselves and most of the rest of the life on this planet by blindly pursuing this cultural model until we run it right over the edge into the Apocalypse, or from the genes, from the bones, from the oceans, from the forests, from the glaciers, there is going to have to come a turning point, a change, a revulsion so profound that it allows us by the tens of millions to change how we think about reality, to change how we live. And I have ended up an advocate for the psychedelic experience. Not because I think it's easy, not because I think it's surefire, but because I think it's only game in town, the only chance left. If we had 1000 years, if we had 500 years, maybe propaganda, messages on boxes of cereal, photographs on cartons of milk, I don't know, something might do it. But we don't have 500 years. We must come to a screeching halt now, because we are barreling toward the brink of ruin. And, uh, the only thing that I have ever seen that turned anybody around on the dime was psychedelics, you know [audience cheering].

The talking cures invented by Freud and Jung at the beginning of this century, it takes years, sometimes it never happens. The body work that came along behind that with Wilhelm Reich and others, Feldon Christ, and so forth- either of, all of this brings it into the theatre of the body. At least now we understand it's a body-mind system, it's not a disembodied voice lying on a couch, speaking, you know. But it seems so

obvious, what we're trying to do is perturb the mind. We want to perturb the mind so that we can then see it differently, so that it may see and be seen differently. Well, the mind rests on a foundation of chemical machinery. We're not saying the mind is chemical machinery, we're saying the mind rests on the foundation of chemical machinery. So, if you want to perturb the mind you don't go to the talking, you don't go to the deep tissue. All of this has efficacy, but it is necessary but not sufficient by itself. For there to be a sufficiency of method, there must be an initial perturbation of the mind. And this comes about through the use of psychedelic plants. This is not something that was discovered post-LSD in Manhattan by psychiatrists or in Prague or Berlin or at Esalen. This is a truth twenty-five- fifty thousand- a hundred thousand years old. This is how it's always been done. Only in the last 6000 years on the European continent, and those civilizations that are the children of Europe, has there been any other approach to these problems. Well- and what the other approach – linear thought, the phonetic alphabet, science, mathematical abstractions, so forth and so on – what these other approaches have brought us is a toxicity, pollution, mutation, catastrophe, revolution, death, and yes friends even unhappiness [audience giggle]. It hasn't worked. Western civilization is now crowing over the fact that the only opposition it ever had, which was Marxism, apathetic weak sister, has now collapsed upon itself. Well, there should be no congratulation in that, because the contradictions which undid Marxism lie in wait to undo this society as well. [audience applause] Both societies are materialistic, both societies define human beings and treat them as things. And the fact of the matter is Western civilization at this moment is a loaded gun pointed at the head of this planet, and we for all our pretensions to, uh, a sensitivity to the presence of vitamin-C or zinc in our diet, or all the rest of this malarky, we are the prevaricators of this situation. So, a certain obligation rests upon us, and I think we're meeting this obligation. I wouldn't say we're doing a good job, or a terrible job, I think we're functioning at approximately a, uh, B+ level. You see, I mean human life is so ephemeral. A person who lives 70 or 80 years is really as ephemeral as a mayfly or something. I mean, it's not long enough to get the full picture. For instance many of you, by virtue of not having spent a great deal of time thinking about it, uh, probably don't realize that this psychedelic plant shamanism option- this is not something that Western civilization has grappled with for centuries, and come to terms with and found the proper pigeonhole for and put aside. Not at all, my friends. The fact of the matter is all of this information about psychedelics has arrived in Western society in the last 100 years. And, uh, we have to say 100 years because we want to include things like mescaline, 1895-98, it was began to be studied in Germany. And things like Ibogaine, which was know toward the end of the last century, but which has virtually zilch impact on American psychedelic populations. Uh, so we have to say the psychedelic option has only been an object of the Western minds for approximately a hundred years, but really 90% of that occurred in the last 50 years.

As many of you know, I am a great fan and spokesman for psilocybin, for the mushrooms. The mushrooms that I'm so stoked on were discovered in 1953 by Gordon and Valentina Wasson in Huautla. Discovered in '53, made absolutely schedule-1 illegal in 1966. 13 years was the window in which Western civilization had to study this compound and figure out what it was for. And they were just beginning to focus upon it when it was made illegal. LSD, discovered in '37, not brought into the scientific literature until '48, not generally available even in the laboratory until 1950, made totally illegal in 1966... 16 year window. Think about the fact that when LSD was legal, uh, psychiatrists, professional researchers were consistently reporting cures of chronic alcoholism with one 500 gamma dose. One dose cure like a 50% cure rate without recidivism for chronic alcoholism. Spectacular findings were being reported. When LSD swept through the scientific community, it- for pharmacologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, it had the same kind of excitement and feeling of breakthrough that the splitting of the atom had for the physicists, for the physics community in the late 30s. Well, science, we are told, is this absolutely impartial God-like

body of knowledge prosecuted by great men, and it will fearlessly send its questing mind into any situation or environment. This is a mental discipline so dispassionate that it sees nothing at all wrong with strapping monkeys into apparatus and hurling them into walls at 70mph to study traumatic injuries. This is a discipline so unflinching in its pursuit of truth that it will design tiny television cameras to be implanted in plastic penises so that we can see the changes in the colour of the vaginal wall as it approaches orgasm. I mean these guys are unstinting in their devotion to truth in any form, and yet for 30 years science has accepted government's refusal to allow science to look at the potential impact of psychedelic plants and compounds on human consciousness, on chronic alcoholism, on schizophrenia, on depression, on autism, on learning disorders, on dyslexias, on memory enhancement, so forth and so on. This, to me, is obscene. The future is mental. Figure it out, if the mind does not loom large in the future history of this species, then what the hell kind of a future is it going to be? I mean this is our crowning glory, our aesthetic sensitivities, our ability to create values that are not simply based on the next meal, the next sexual encounter, the empowering social move, but an ability to create social values based on creating a viable future environment for children, uh, creating a viable present environment for the less fortunate among us, uh, creating a social safety net so that the more maladaptive of us are not reduced to living under bridges and in abandoned automobiles. I mean these are things which set us above the apes. These are the things which take us out of the context of organic nature and make it seem as though "hey, there actually are some transcendental values being maximized here, there actually is something going on in- within the human family." But if it were to be lost, fumbled away, compromised, or destroyed the Universe would be a poorer place for it, truly a poorer place for it. And I think, um, I think we take our humaneness too much for granted. I don't think we realize, um, how nasty, brutish, and short most of life has been over the centuries, and how really only in- within the confines of the 20th century has, uh, a level of, uh, comfort and food availability, and shelter, and basic creature needs been met to the point where most people can begin to lead the philosophical life that previously was the privilege of emperors, kings, great courts. Now we all indulge ourselves. We all have the philosopher kings point of view. We all, uh, have a model of History, a model of the future. And we all feel capable of stepping into the shoes of our leaders and discharging that responsibility. Well, in order to do that, I think we need to overcome our amnesia about how we got to this place. I don't see- you see what science would have you believe and, explicitly implies, is that we are an aberration. Here, over here you have nature, the beautiful rainforests, the wonderful coral reefs, the cemetery of the hummingbird, the sea urchin and the butterfly, and here you have us, grimy, tawdry, polluting, ugly, driven in disequilibrium, in denial. I don't believe that. I believe that this kind of thinking that breaks humanity away from the rest of nature is the first of the great disempowering myths by which the Western mind has enslaved itself. And we are not outside of nature, we are not a runaway toxic process, we are not a mutation. We are in fact that part of nature which has been deputized for a purpose. We are the energy-gathering aspect of the Gaian mind. We are the language-forming capacity of Nature herself. You may know the concept of a catalyst in chemistry. A catalyst is something, which when you stir it in to a chemical reaction, the reaction proceeds more quickly that the catalyst itself is not destroyed. And this is what I think we are. We are a strategy on the part of the Gaian mind to produce an effect that would otherwise take much, much longer to produce. The main effect of the presence of human life on this planet has been to vastly accelerate the speed at which nature is able to, uh, creatively express herself. And I would like to believe that this fragile, fragile thing which we call humaneness, which is nothing more than a set of interlocking ideas which we share – we share ideas about caring, and responsibility, and generations yet unborn, and obligation to the integrity of the Earth, and so forth and so on – I would like to believe that these things arose in us a very, very brief window of opportunity. Uh, as may or may not know, uh, all, you know there's a lot of talk about the relationship between the masculine and the feminine in human beings, and gender issues and so forth and so on. Well, if you go back into the

primate line, what you discover is primates always have dominance hierarchies occupied by males. This is the “bad news” part of the thing. You see, it isn’t that we are a perversion of the primate programme. At this point, we exemplify it, uh, right down the line. But clear back to squirrel monkeys, you get, uh, you get male dominance hierarchies. Why is this? And why is it even an issue for us? Why don’t we just blindly accept it? I mean there isn’t a women’s liberation movement among termites societies or, uh, you know, among reindeer herds. So, why are we so discomforted by our attitudes toward each other? Well, I believe it’s because actually created, at a certain point in our history, a kind of paradise. We actually solved all the problems which now bedevil us of 20 to 15’000 years ago. And how this happened, and half of you I hope are amazed and the other half will groan because you’ve heard it so many times before, uh, what happened is an evolutionary synergy that occurred on the plains of Africa sometime over the last 100’000 years. It’s that- as the African continent dried up, our remote primate ancestors were forced out of the trees and on to the African grassland where they were in an environment completely different from the kind of environment that our ancestor had been living in for millions of years. Gone, were the fruit-filled bowers of the climaxed canopy of the rainforest. And instead, what there was was, uh, a grassland with very little cover, a very restricted, uh, flora and fauna, and into that grassland poor these hungry, displaced, dispossessed, formerly fruitarian primates... When a species gets under that kind of pressure, it has- it must make a choice between extinction or dietary expansion. Many many species will choose extinction. This is an interesting thing about animal species. Most animal species eat one or two foods that they are very tightly focused in on. The reason for this, of you’re not an evolutionary biologist, is it’s a strategy for avoiding mutation. You see, all plants, uh, produce, uh, have a tendency to protect themselves from predation by producing toxins, mutagens, poisons... is what we’re talking about, here. So an animal species will evolve a preference for just one or two food sources. And then it can hold its exposure to mutagenic agents to a minimum. Now, our species, when we moved into that African grassland situation, were plastic enough, malleable enough that we decided “No, by God, we’re not going to go to extinction because of the absence of papayas in this situation. We’re going to test other foods.” And we began testing other foods in that environment, and that immediately, uh, swelled the number of mutant strains in the human population. Now, in this grassland environment, uh, the number of new foods to be tested was somewhat limited. And the most spectacular and obvious of the unfamiliar food sources in this environment were the psilocybin mushrooms- seem to be growing in the cow pies of the many different kinds of cattle like ungulate animals growing up in that environment. And I- if you’ve ever been to the tropics and seen the Stropharia Cubensis mushroom in its natural habitat, uh, you can’t miss it. It’s the most spectacular thing going on. I mean, you walk out into a Colombian pasture after a few days of mist and rain, and these mushrooms – the size of dinner plates – will be scattered across the environment. Now, when I was in Kenya in the late 60s, I observed baboon troops, uh, and their food gathering behavior. And what they were into was running around frantically, looking for cow flops, and then flipping them over, uh, looking for, uh, beetle grubs or carrion beetles. You see, they understood that the cow flops – great freiza [sp?] – but the fecal deposit of the ungulate animal was a vector for protein. Insect protein. This was a likely place to find carrion beetles, worms, and what-have-you. And, of course, the mushroom. Well, when you observe how, uh, primates react when they’re testing a food, the way they’re very careful, and they’re very conscientious. Uh, a baboon will take a suspect potential food source, take a leaf, put it in their mouth. Just hold it there. No chewing, no nothing. Put it in their mouth, wait 30 seconds, chew, wait, and then either spit it out or swallow. And if swallow, then begin to eat. Well, uh, I believe that this encounter with the psilocybin mushroom, and in the course of this workshop, maybe in the question-and-answer period we’ll get to this, but psilocybin has unique properties which set us up for a sudden enormous evolutionary kick in the pants. And we can talk among ourselves about whether this was just blind coincidence, good old chance, and aren’t we fortunate for it. Or whether benign extraterrestrials operating from their base on Zeta Reticuli

where... you know, we can save that for you, we don't have to get rid of it. Uh, whether it was those shifty Zeta Reticulites or blind chance, whatever the force was, the exposure to psilocybin has three reinforcing consequences that are of tremendous importance for understanding human evolution. And they are as follows: psilocybin, in very low doses, doses so low that if you had taken this amount you would not feel it or you would slightly antsy. In other words, very low doses of psilocybin actually increase visual acuity... means you improve your vision with this stuff. Uh, well again, you don't have to be a rocket scientist or an evolutionary biologist to figure out that there's a plant in the environment, and you're a hunting animal, and this plant improves vision. You're going to be a better hunting animal if you include this plant in your diet. And this is precisely what happened. Early human, or proto-hominid hunters accepted psilocybin into their diet, it made them better hunters. Being a better hunter means getting- being more successful at obtaining food. Being more successful at obtaining food means more of your children reach, uh, reproductive age themselves, and so you outbreed the non psilocybin-using portion of the population. Simple enough, right? On the next level – remember, I said this was a three step process where each reinforces the other – at slightly higher doses of psilocybin, uh, you get what's called CNS arousal. Central Nervous System arousal. Well, now arousal is just what it sounds like. It's not only restlessness and alertness, but it's also a kind of horny diffuse energy. Uh, it incline of one's thought for the boudoir is what I'm trying to say, here. And so you get what primatologists and anthropologists charmingly described as more frequent instances of successful copulation [audience giggle]. It's- what successful copulation means is, again, a factor feeding in to more children of the psilocybin-using animals reaching reproductive age themselves. And then finally, and thirdly, beyond visual acuity, beyond sexual, uh, arousal, uh, is the full-blown psychedelic tremendum, the full-blown religious revelation that goes with the mushroom experience. A revelation of such depth and breadth that we, 20'000 years later with all our epistemic sophistication and our parallel processing computers, and all this other malarky are completely unable to come to terms with. Well, this higher dose of psilocybin was experienced in the context of the middle-range dose of psilocybin. So it went on in an atmosphere of, uh, group, uh, religious ecstasy and orgy. I mean, it's just how it happened, folks. Orgy was a part of, uh, human sexuality before the invention of agriculture. I'm absolutely convinced of it. You see, the growth of the human intellect over evolutionary spans of time is a kind of conquest of dimensionality. And the conquest of dimensionality that gave us agriculture unfortunately gave us male dominance and patriarchy. And the reason for this is, uh, not far to seek. A new intellectual horizon of cause and effect was being explored. Women, who where the gatherers in the hunter-gatherer equation, were realizing for the first time the causal relationship that exists between burying a half-eaten meal over here, and coming back a year later on your annual nomadic peregrination and discovering food plants growing where you buried your uneaten meal of a year ago. In other words, women came to understand the relationship between the act of planting and the appearance of usable food plants sometime later. At the same that this was going on, men were making the connection between the fact that the sex act had something to do with the facts that nine moths later women would- a woman would bear a child. And in a way, this was the beginning of the straight lockstep into hell [audience laughter]. Because! Because, once men had this notion of male paternity, it became more important to know who your children were than it was to participate in the orgiastic group-minded bonding that had previously occurred. And once you have the notion of "my child, my child", then it moves naturally to "my woman, my weapons, my food, my hunting ground, my everything". The recognition of male paternity gave permission for the growth of ego. And ego – and this is- this was all a continuous thought, those of you who doubted, this was all a continuous thought – ego is our problem. And we always had it when we were squirrel monkeys, howler monkeys, proboscis monkeys and all that, we only lost it in that very brief window of opportunity, maybe 20, maybe 30, 40'000 years long when, as we evolved into the grassland, we included in our diet essentially a drug which corrected our primate nature. A drug which suppressed the

expression of male dominance. A drug that promoted an orgiastic sexual style that promoted group values. Because, you see – and this is the point to my mind about psychedelics – what they do, not, you know, my trip or your trip which we can spend hours trading stories about [audience giggle], but when you try and talk about what is the effect of the psychedelic experience, not one or two of them but a hundred thousand them, what generalizations can we make? The generalization that I have found most powerful is the psychedelic experience dissolves boundaries. That's what it does. And boundaries are what chain, diminish, define, and degrade us. And we are always creating them, and we are always struggling with dissolving them. And the ultimate boundary is this belief in the sanctity of the ego versus everything else in the cosmos. And I don't believe that this- that the ego arose in a context of language, culture, religion, and so forth simply because evolved in the African grassland, and the climate itself underwent changes that eventually placed the mushroom out of reach. And this is "why" the fall into History. This is what the Genesis story about the- that I call History's first drug bust [audience giggle]. This is what it's about. I mean, isn't it peculiar that the or myth [sp?] of our culture opens with a drug bust? It's the story of a woman – right, those bad women – a woman who corrupts her roommate and then they both get kicked out, they break the lease essentially. And they both get kicked out, and where they get kicked out of is into History. And I believe that the Genesis story, definitely told and created at a time when patriarchy was on a roll, is a memory of this break with this orgiastic, goddess-centered, nomadic, cattle-oriented, mushroom using, uh, a form of human pastoralism. Now, notice in this scenario that there are no villains per se. The planet began to get dry, and that's what broke up this arboreal, papaya-oriented paradise in the treetops where everybody was male-dominated and mindless as tomato but having a good time [audience giggle]. The drying of the African continent broke that party up, created a mixed ecology of forest and grassland into which the primates then evolved this fascinating relationship with the cattle, you see. And I- and much of what I say here is orthodox evolutionary theory. It's just the part about psilocybin that nobody else will touch with a 100 foot pole [audience laughter], but it moving out into the grassland, testing foods, accepting psilocybin into the diet, and then creating, uh, based on the interruption of the natural, natural! tendency toward male dominance, it was fixed. 50'000 years ago a pharmacological intervention on the entire species created them a situation of partnership. The women were the gatherers, the men were the hunters, this had to with, hum, promotion of different body types that had already taken- was already well-established in these primates. I mean, you get this throughout the primates. The large male, barrel-chested, the more diminutive female, and the female more largely social than the male. The males hunt. And in the proto-hominid situation this was certainly true. And hunting, as you know if you've ever done it, places a great premium on stoic waiting. That's the hunter's job- is to keep- sit down and keep your mouth shut and watch silently until it's time to make your move, and then move ruthlessly without question, you know, with attention. Women had a completely different set of pressures and constraints on them. As gatherers, it was, uh, very important for women to be able to communicate extraordinarily subtle, uh, aspects of the material world to each other. So that a woman needs to be able to say when she comes into camp with the apron full of nuts "I got these near the waterfall by the bush with the small yellow leaves with the waxy flowers and the red berries that has the dry grass underneath it." In other words, for a gatherer, there is tremendous premium put on being able to describe your environment. You must be able to communicate, because a woman who makes a food find can only bring back to camp as much food as she can carry. But if she can communicate to her sisters what is going, then no problem. So language, I believe, largely evolved as a prerogative of women. And this stoic- stoicism, and, uh, ability to tolerate uncomfortable conditions was evolved by, uh, men.

All of this would have been fine. It could have gone on for millions of years in this climaxed situation. The orgies were lunar, meaning they probably occurred every two weeks, or at most every 28 days. That means every 28 days every member of this society was completely dissolving and psychic structures that may have arisen in the previous 28 days, and then everybody whistling [sp?] on each other's bones in a big heap [audience giggle]. And you can imagine the boundary dissolving impact that something like that would have. Why then, if it was so wonderful, didn't we just stick with it? Why the descent into, you know, the hell of Pee-Wee Herman and Richard Nixon [audience laughter], and all of this stuff? Well, the same culprit that created that happy story destroyed that happy scenario. And that is the continued drying up of the planet. And that's what we get in that Genesis story. Remember at the end of the Genesis story it says, uh, "and God set an angel at the Eastern gate of Eden with a flaming sword so that Adam and his children could not find their way back into Paradise." That's the memory of the Saharan sun scorching off the African veldt and forcing those mushroom-using pastoralists to settle in the Nile Valley and set up permanent, uh, settlements and begin thinking about kingship, large-scale agricultural projects, and so forth and so on. Uh, and what happened – it was not as simple as that may have made it seem, you see – uh, this is really the theme of this book that I wrote for Bantam, is the theme that cultures wear drugs like clothing and they're never aware of it. They just feel naked without their particular drug. And the clothing may differ, you know, one culture feels fully dressed in

Mondo2k Gracie & Zarkov Interview

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Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

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TM: answer.

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TM: answer.

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Forms and Mysteries, Morphogenetic Fields & Psychedelic Experience

1988

Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Mushrooms, Elves and Magic

30 November 1988

Big Sur, California

Description

- [Scribd Transcript](#)

Terence McKenna is one of the leading authorities on the ontological foundations of shamanism and the ethnopharmacology of spiritual transformation. After graduating from UC Berkeley with a major in Ecology, Resource Conservation and Shamanism, he traveled through the Asian and New World Tropics and became specialized in the shamanism and ethno-medicine of the Amazon Basin. What he learned in these explorations is documented in *The Invisible Landscape*, which he wrote with his brother Dennis. Born in 1946, Terence is the father of two children, a girl of eleven and a boy of fourteen. He is the founder of Botanical Dimensions—a tax-exempt, nonprofit research botanical garden based in Hawaii. This project is devoted to collecting and propagating plants of ethno-pharmacological interest and preserving the shamanic lore which accompanies their use. Living in California, Terence divides his time between writing and lecturing and he has developed a software program called *Timewave Zero*. His hypnotic multi-syllabic drawl is captured on the audio-tape adventure series *True Hallucinations*—soon to be published in book form—which tells of his adventures in far-flung lands in various exotic states of consciousness. Terence is also the author of *Food of the Gods*, which is a unique study of the impact of psychotropic plants on human culture and evolution and *The Archaic Revival*, in which this interview appears. His latest book *Dialogues at the Edge of the West*, is a collection of "discursive chats" with mathematician Ralph Abraham and biologist Rupert Sheldrake. This was our first interview. It took place on November 30th, 1988 in the dramatic setting of Big Sur. Overlooking the Pacific Ocean we sat on the top floor of the Big House at the Esalen Institute, where Terence was giving a weekend seminar. He needed little provocation to enchant us with the pyrotechnic wordplay which is his trademark, spinning together the cognitive destinies of Gaia, machines, and language and offering a highly unorthodox description of our own evolution.

DJB: It's a pleasure to be here with you again, Terence. We'd like to begin by asking you to tell us how you became interested in shamanism and the exploration of consciousness.

Terence McKenna: I discovered shamanism through an interest in Tibetan folk religion. Bon, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet is a kind of shamanism. Ingoing from the particular to the general with that concern, I studied shamanism as a general phenomenon. It all started out as an art historical interest in the pre-Buddhist iconography of *thankas*.

DJB: This was how long ago?

TM: This was in '67 when I was a sophomore in college. The interest in altered states of consciousness came simply from, I don't know whether I was a precocious kid or what, but I was very early into the New

York literary scene, and even though I lived in a small town in Colorado, I subscribed to the Village Voice, and there I encountered propaganda about LSD, mescaline, and all these experiments that the late beatniks were involved in. Then I read *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, and it just rolled from there. That was what really put me over. I respected Huxley as a novelist, and I was slowly reading everything he'd ever written, and when I got to *The Doors of Perception* I said to myself, "There's something going on here for sure."

DJB: To what do you attribute your increasing popularity, and what role do you see yourself playing in the social sphere?

TM: Well, without being cynical, the main thing I attribute to my increasing popularity is better public relations. As far as what role I'll play, I don't know, I mean I assume that anyone who has anything constructive to say about our relationship to chemical substances, natural and synthetic, is going to have a social role to play, because this drug issue is just going to loom larger and larger on the social agenda until we get some resolution of it, and by resolution I don't mean suppression or just saying no. I anticipate a new open-mindedness born of desperation on the part of the Establishment. Drugs are part of the human experience, and we have got to create a more sophisticated way of dealing with them than exhortations to abstinence, because that has failed.

RMN: You have said that the term "New Age" trivializes the significance of the next phase in human evolution and have referred instead to the emergence of an archaic revival. How do you differentiate between these two expressions?

TM: The New Age is essentially humanistic psychology, eighties style, with the addition of neo-shamanism, channeling, crystal and herbal healing, and this sort of thing. The archaic revival is a much larger, more global phenomenon that assumes that we are recovering the social forms of the late Neolithic. It reaches far back in the twentieth century to Freud, to surrealism, to abstract expressionism, even to a phenomenon like National Socialism which is a negative force. But the stress on ritual, on organized activity, on race/ancestor consciousness these are themes that have been worked out throughout the entire twentieth century, and the archaic revival is an expression of that.

RMN: In the book you wrote with your brother Dennis, *The Invisible Landscape*, and in recent lectures and workshops, you've spoken of a new model of time and your efforts to model the evolution of novelty based on the ancient oriental system of divination, the I-Ching. Can you briefly explain how you developed this model, and how an individual can utilize this system to modulate their own perspective on the nature of time?

TM: Ah, no. I think I'd rather send you a reprint of a recent paper in revision than to try and cover that. It's not easily explained. If I were to give an extremely brief resume of it, I would say that the new view of time is that time is holographic, fractal, and moves toward a definitive conclusion, rather than the historical model of time which is open-ended, trendlessly fluctuating, and in practical terms endless. What's being proposed is a spiral model of history, that sees history as a process actually leading toward a conclusion. But the details of it are fairly complex.

DJB: According to your time-wave model, novelty reaches its peak expression and history appears to come to a close in the year 2012. Can you explain what you mean by this, and what the global or evolutionary

implications are of what you refer to as the "end of time"?

TM: What I mean is this. The theory describes time with what are called novelty waves, because waves have wavelengths, one must assign an endpoint to the novelty wave, so the end of time is nothing more than the point on the historical continuum that is assigned as the end point of the novelty wave. Novelty, is something which has been slowly maximized through the life of the universe, something which reaches infinite density, or infinite contraction at the point from which the wave is generated. Trying to imagine what time would be like near the temporal singularity is difficult because we are far from it, in another domain of physical law. There need to be more facts in play, before we will be able to correctly envisage the end of time, but what we can say concerning the singularity is this: it is the obviation of life in three-dimensional space, everything that is familiar comes to an end, everything that can be described in Euclidian space is superseded by modes of being which require a more complicated description which is currently unavailable.

DJB: From your writings I have gleaned that you subscribe to the notion that psilocybin mushrooms are a species of high intelligence, that they arrived on this planet as spores that migrated through outer space and are attempting to establish a symbiotic relationship with human beings. In amore holistic perspective, how do you see this notion fitting into the context of Francis Crick's theory of directed panspermia, the hypothesis that all life on this planet and it's directed evolution has been seeded, or perhaps fertilized, by spores designed by a higher intelligence? Terence: As I understand the Crick theory of panspermia, it's a theory of how life spread through the universe. What I was suggesting, and I don't believe it as strongly as you imply, but I entertain it as a possibility, that intelligence--not life but intelligence--may have come here in this spore bearing life form. This is a more radical version of the panspermia theory of Crick and Ponampurama. In fact I think that theory will probably be vindicated. I think in a hundred years if people do biology they will think it quite silly that people once thought that spores could not be blown from one star system to another by cosmic radiation pressure. As far as the role of the psilocybin mushroom, or its relationship to us and to intelligence, this is something that we need to consider. It really isn't important that I claim that it's an extraterrestrial, what we need is a body of people claiming this, or a body of people denying it, because what we're talking about is the experience of the mushroom. Few people are in a position to judge its extraterrestrial potential because few people in

the orthodox sciences have ever experienced the full spectrum of psychedelic effects that is unleashed. One cannot find out whether or not there's an extraterrestrial intelligence inside the mushroom unless one is willing to take the mushroom.

DJB: You have a unique theory about the role that psilocybin mushrooms play in the process of human evolution. Can you tell us about this?

TM: Whether the mushrooms came from outer space or not, the presence of psychedelic substances in the diet of early human beings created a number of changes in our evolutionary situation. When a person takes small amounts of psilocybin their visual acuity improves. They can actually see slightly better, and this means that animals allowing psilocybin into their food chain would have increased hunting success, which means increased food supply, which means increased reproductive success, which is the name of the game in evolution. It is the organism that manages to propagate itself numerically that is successful. The presence of psilocybin in the diet of early pack-hunting primates caused the individuals that were ingesting the psilocybin to have increased visual acuity. At slightly higher doses of psilocybin there is sexual arousal

and erection and everything that goes under the term arousal of the central nervous system. Again, a factor which would increase reproductive success is reinforced.

DJB: Isn't it true that psilocybin inhibits orgasm?

TM: No. I've never heard that. Not at the doses I'm talking about. At a psychedelic dose it might, but at just slightly above the "you can feel it" dose, it acts as a stimulant. Sexual arousal means paying attention, it means jumpiness, it indicates a certain energy level in the organism. And then, of course, at still higher doses psilocybin triggers this activity in the language-forming capacity of the brain that manifests as song and vision. It is as though it is an enzyme which stimulates eyesight, sexual interest, and imagination. And the three of these going together produce language-using primates. Psilocybin may have synergized the emergence of higher forms of psychic organization out of primitive protohuman animals. It can be seen as a kind of evolutionary enzyme, or evolutionary catalyst.

DJB: During your shamanistic voyages how do you, or do you, differentiate between the literal and the metaphorical I/thou dialogue that appears to occur in certain states of consciousness? In other words how do you differentiate between the possibility that you are communicating with otherworldly independently existing entities and the possibility that you are communicating with isolated, unconscious neuron clusters in your own brain?

Terence: It's very hard to differentiate it. How can I make that same distinction right now? How do I know I'm talking to you? It's just provisionally assumed, that you are ordinary enough that I don't question that you're there. But if you had two heads, I would question whether you were there. I would investigate to see if you were really what you appear to be. It's very hard to tell what this I/thou relationship is about, because it's very difficult to define the "I" part of it, let alone the "thou" part of it. I haven't found a way to tell, to trick it as it were into showing whether it was an extraterrestrial or the back side of my own head.

DJB: But normally the way we can tell is we receive mutual verification from other people, and we get information from many senses. You can touch me. You can see me. You can hear me.

Terence: Well, this is simply a voice, you know, so it's the issue of the mysterious telephone call. If you're awakened in the middle of the night by a telephone call, and you pick up the phone, and someone says "Hello" it would not be your first inclination to ask "Is anybody there?" because they just said hello. That establishes that somebody is there, but you can't see them, maybe they're aren't there, maybe you've been called by a machine. I've been called by machines. You pick up the phone and it says, "Hello this is Sears, and we're calling to tell you that your order 16312 is ready for pick up," and you say, "Oh, thank you." "Don't mention it." No, so this issue of identifying the other with certainty is tricky, even in ordinary intercourse.

RMN: There is a lot of current interest in the ancient art of sound technology. In a recent article you said that in certain states of consciousness you're able to create a kind of visual resonance and manipulate a "topological manifold" using sound vibrations. Can you tell us more about this technique, its ethnic origins, and potential applications? Terence: Yes, it has to do with shamanism that is based on the use of DMT inplants. DMT is a near--or pseudo-neurotransmitter, that when ingested and allowed to come to rest in the synapses of the brain, allows one to see sound, so that one can use the voice to produce, not musical compositions, but pictorial and visual compositions. This, to my mind, indicates that we're on the

cusps of some kind of evolutionary transition in the language-forming area, so that we are going to go from a language that is heard to a language that is seen, through a shift in interior processing. The language will still be made of sound, but it will be processed as the carrier of the visual impression. This is actually being done by shamans in the Amazon. The songs they sing sound as they do in order to look a certain way. They are not musical compositions as we're used to thinking of them. They are pictorial art that is caused by audio signals.

DJB: Terence, you're recognized by many as one of the great explorers of the twentieth century. You've trekked through the Amazonian jungles and soared through the uncharted regions of the brain, but perhaps your ultimate voyages lie in the future, when humanity has mastered space technology and time travel. What possibilities for travel in these two areas do you foresee, and how do you think these new technologies will affect the future evolution of the human species?

Terence: Some question. I suppose most people believe space travel is right around the corner. I certainly hope so. I think we should all learn Russian in anticipation of it, because apparently the U.S. government is incapable of sustaining a space program. The time travel question is more interesting. Possibly the world is experiencing a compression of technological novelty that is going to lead to developments that are very much like what we would imagine time travel to be. We may be closing in on the ability to transmit information forward into the future, and to create an informational domain of communication between various points in time. How this will be done is difficult to imagine, but things like fractal mathematics, superconductivity, and nanotechnology offer new and novel approaches to realization of these old dreams. We shouldn't assume time travel is impossible simply because it hasn't been done. There's plenty of latitude in the laws of quantum physics to allow for moving information through time in various ways. Apparently you can move information through time, as long as you don't move it through time faster than light.

DJB: Why is that?

TM: I haven't the faintest idea. What am I, Einstein?

DJB: What do you think the ultimate goal of human evolution is?

Terence: Oh, a good party.

DJB: Have you ever had any experiences with lucid dreaming--the process by which one can become aware and conscious within a dream that one is dreaming---and if so, how do they compare with your other shamanic experiences?

Terence: I really haven't had experiences with lucid dreaming. It's one of those things that I'm very interested in. I'm sort of skeptical of it. I hope it's true, because what a wonderful thing that would be.

DJB: You've never had one?

TM: I've had lucid dreams, but I have no technique for repeating them on demand, the dream state is possibly anticipating this cultural frontier that we're moving toward. We're moving toward something very much like eternal dreaming, going into the imagination, and staying there, and that would be like a lucid

dream that knew no end, but what a tight simple solution. One of the things that interests me about dreams is this: I have dreams in which I smoke DMT, and it works. To me that's extremely interesting because it seems to imply that one does not have to smoke DMT to have the experience. You only have to convince your brain that you have done this, and it then delivers this staggering altered state. DJB: Wow! Terence: How many people who have had DMT dream occasionally of smoking it and have it happen? Do people who have never had DMT ever have that kind of an experience in a dream? I bet not. I bet you have to have done it in life to have established the knowledge of its existence, and the image of how it's possible, then this thing can happen to you without any chemical intervention. It is more powerful than any yoga, so taking control of the dream state would certainly be an advantageous thing and carry us a great distance toward the kind of cultural transformation that we're talking about. How exactly to do it, I'm not sure. The psychedelics, the near death experience, the lucid dreaming, the meditational reveries..., all of these things are pieces of a puzzle about how to create a new cultural dimension that we can all live in a little more sanely than we're living in these dimensions.

DJB: Do you have any thoughts on what happens to human consciousness after biological death?

TM: I've thought about it. When I think about it I feel like I'm on my own. The logos doesn't want to help here, has nothing to say to me on the subject of biological death. What I imagine happens is that for the self time begins to flow backwards; even before death, the act of dying is the act of reliving an entire life, and at the end of the dying process, consciousness divides into the consciousness of ones parents and ones children, and then it moves through these modalities, and then divides again. It's moving forward into the future through the people who come after you, and backwards into the past through your ancestors. The further away from the moment of death it is, the faster it moves, so that after a period of time, the Tibetans say 42 days, one is reconnected to everything that ever lived, and the previous ego-pointed existence is defocused, and one is you know, returned to the ocean, the morphogenetic field, or the One of Plotinus, you choose your term. A person is a focused illusion of being, and death occurs when the illusion of being can be sustained no longer. Then everything flows out and away from this disequilibrium state that life is. It is a state of disequilibrium, and it is maintained for decades, but finally, like all disequilibrium states, it must yield to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and at that point it runs down, its specific character disappears into the general character of the world around it. It has returned then to the void/plenum.

DJB: What if you don't have children?

TM: Well, then you flow backward into the past, into your parents, and their parents, and their parents, and eventually all life, and back into the primal protozoa. No, it's a hard thing to face, but from the long-term point of view of nature, you have no relevance for the future whatsoever, unless you procreate. It's very interesting that in the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, when they took the sacrament, what the god said was, "Procreate, procreate." It is uncanny the way history is determined by who sleeps with whom, who gets born, what lines are drawn forward, what tendencies are accelerated. Most people experience what they call magic only in the dimension of mate-seeking, and this is where even the dullest people have astonishing coincidences, and unbelievable things go on --it's almost as though hidden strings were being pulled. There's an esoteric tradition that the genes, the matings, are where it's all being run from. It is how I think a super extraterrestrial would intervene. It wouldn't intervene at all, it would make us who it wanted us to be by controlling synchronicity and coincidence around mate choosing. RMN: Rupert Sheldrake has recently refined the theory of the morphogenetic field--a non-material organizing collective memory field

which affects all biological systems. This field can be envisioned as a hyper-spatial information reservoir which brims and spills over into a much larger region of influence when critical mass is reached--a point referred to as morphic resonance. Do you think this morphic resonance could be regarded as a possible explanation for the phenomena of spirits and other metaphysical entities, and can the method of evoking beings from the spirit world be simply a case of cracking the morphic code?

TM: That sounds right. It's something like that. If what you're trying to get at is do I think morphogenetic fields are a good thing, or do they exist, yes I think some kind of theory like that is clearly becoming necessary, and that the next great step to be taken in the intellectual conquest of nature, if you will, is a theory about how, out of the class of possible things, some things actually happen.

RMN: Do you think it could be related to the phenomena of spirits?

TM: Spirits are the presence of the past, specifically expressed. When you go to ruins like Angkor Wat, or Tikal, the presence is there. You have to be pretty dull to not see how it was, where the market stalls were, the people and their animals, and the trade goods. It's quite weird. We're only conventionally bound in the present by our linguistic assumptions, but if we can still our linguistic machinery, the mind spreads out into time, and behaves in very unconventional ways.

DJB: How do you view the increasing waves of designer psychedelics and brain enhancement machines in the context of Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields?

TM: Well, I'm hopeful, but somewhat suspicious. I think drugs should come from the natural world, and be use-tested by shamanically oriented cultures. Then they have a very deep morphogenetic field, because they've been used thousands and thousands of years in magical contexts. A drug produced in the laboratory and suddenly distributed worldwide simply amplifies the global noise present in the historical crisis. And then there's the very practical consideration that one cannot predict the long term effects of a drug produced in a laboratory. Something like peyote, or morning glories, or mushrooms have been used for vast stretches of time without detrimental social consequences. We know that. As far as the technological question is concerned, brain machines and all, I wish them luck. I'm willing to test anything that somebody will send me, but I'm skeptical. I think it's somehow like the speech-operated typewriter. It will recede ahead of us. The problems will be found to have been far more complex than first supposed.

DJB: Don't you think it's true that the designer psychedelics and the brain machines don't have much of a morphic field yet, so in a sense one is carving a new morphic field with their use, so it's up for grabs, and there would consequently be more possibilities for new things to happen, unlike the psychoactive substances which you speak of that have ancient morphic fields, and are much more entrenched in predictability and pattern, and therefore not as free for new types of expression? Terence: Possibly, although I don't know how you grab the morphic field of a new designer drug. For instance, I'll speak to my own experience, which is ketamine. My impression of ketamine was it's like a brand new skyscraper, all the walls, all the floors are carpeted in white, all the drinking fountains work, the elevators run smoothly, the fluorescent lights recede endlessly in all directions down the hallways. It's just that there's nobody there. There's no office machinery, there's no hurrying secretaries, there's no telephones, it's just this immense, empty structure waiting. Well, I can't move into a sixty-story office building, I have only enough stuff to fill a few small rooms, so it gives me a slightly spooked-out feeling to enter into these empty morphic fields. If you take mushrooms, you know, you're climbing on board a starship manned by every shaman

who ever did it in front of you, and this is quite a crew, and they've really pulled some stunts over the millennia, and it's all there, the tapes to be played, but the designer things should be very cautiously dealt with.

DJB: It's interesting that John Lilly had very different experiences with ketamine. Do you think that there's any relationship between the self-transforming machine elves that you've encountered on your shamanic voyages and the solid state entities that John Lilly has contacted in his interdimensional travels?

TM: I don't think there is much congruence. The solid state entities that he contacted seem to make him quite upset. The elf machine entities that I encounter are the embodiment of merriment and humor. I have had a thought about this recently which I will tell you. One of the science fiction fantasies that haunts the collective unconscious is expressed in the phrase "a world run by machines"; in the 1950s this was first articulated in the notion, "perhaps the future will be a terrible place where the world is run by machines." Well now, let's think about machines for a moment. They are extremely impartial, very predictable, not subject to moral suasion, value neutral, and very long lived in their functioning. Now let's think about what machines are made of, in the light of Sheldrake's morphogenetic field theory. Machines are made of metal, glass, gold, silicon, plastic; they are made of what the earth is made of. Now wouldn't it be strange if biology is a way for earth to alchemically transform itself into a self-reflecting thing. In which case then, what we're headed for inevitably, what we are in fact creating is a world run by machines. And once these machines are in place, they can be expected to manage our economies, languages, social aspirations, and so forth, in such a way that we stop killing each other, stop starving each other, stop destroying land, and so forth. Actually the fear of being ruled by machines is the male ego's fear of relinquishing control of the planet to the maternal matrix of Gaia.

DJB: It's interesting the way you anticipate each question. The recent development of fractal images seems to imply that visions and hallucinations can be broken down into a precise mathematical code. With this in mind, do you think the abilities of the human imagination can be replicated in a super computer?

TM: Yes. Saying that the components of hallucinations can be broken down and duplicated by mathematical code isn't taking anything away from them. Reality can be taken apart and reduplicated with this same mathematical code, that's what makes the fractal idea so powerful. One can type in half a page of code, and on the screen get river systems, mountain ranges, deserts, ferns, coral reefs, all being generated out of half a page of computer coding. This seems to imply that we are finally discovering really powerful mathematical rules that stand behind visual appearances. And yes, I think supercomputers, computer graphics and simulated environments, this is very promising stuff. When the world's being run by machines, we'll be at the movies. Oh boy.

RMN: It seems that human language is evolving at a much slower rate than is the ability of human consciousness to navigate more complex and more profound levels of reality. How do you see language developing and evolving so as to become a more sensitive transceiving device for sharing conscious experience?

TM: Actually, consciousness can't evolve any faster than language. The rate at which language evolves determines how fast consciousness evolves, otherwise you're just lost in what Wittgenstein called the unspeakable. You can feel it, but you can't speak of it, so it's an entirely private reality. Have you noticed how we have very few words for emotions? I love you, I hate you, and then basically we run a dial between

those. I love you a lot, I hate you a lot.

RMN: How do you feel? Fine.

TM: Yes, how do you feel, fine, and yet we have thousands and thousands of words about rugs, and widgets, and this and that, so we need to create a much richer language of emotion. There are times--and this would be a great study for somebody to do--there have been periods in English when there were emotions which don't exist anymore, because the words have been lost. This is getting very close to this business of how reality is made by language. Can we recover a lost emotion, by creating a word for it? There are colors which don't exist any more because the words have been lost. I'm thinking of the word "jacinth." This is a certain kind of orange. Once you know the word "jacinth," you always can recognize it, but if you don't have it, all you can say is it's a little darker orange than something else. We've never tried to consciously evolve our language, we've just let it evolve, but now we have this level of awareness, and this level of cultural need where we really must plan where the new words should be generated. There are areas where words should be gotten rid of that empower political wrong thinking. The propagandists for the fascists already understand this, they understand that if you make something unsayable, you've made it unthinkable. So it doesn't plague you anymore. So planned evolution of language is the way to speed it toward expressing the frontier of consciousness.

DJB: I've thought at times that what you view as a symbiosis forming between humans and psychoactive plants may in fact be the plants taking over control of our lives and commanding us to do their bidding. Have you any thoughts on this?

TM: Well, symbiosis is not parasitism, symbiosis is a situation of mutual benefit to both parties, so we have to presume that the plants are getting as much out of this as we are. What we're getting is information from another spiritual level. Their point of view, in other words, is what they're giving us. What we're giving them is care, and feeding, and propagation, and survival, so they give us their elevated higher dimensional point of view. We in turn respond by making the way easier for them in the physical world. And this seems a reasonable trade-off. Obviously they have difficulty in the physical world, plants don't move around much. You talk about Tao, a plant has the Tao. It doesn't even chop wood and carry water.

RMN: Future predictions are often based upon the study of previous patterns and trends which are then extended like the contours of a map to extrapolate the shape of things to come. The future can also be seen as an ongoing dynamic creative interaction between the past and the present--the current interpretation of past events actively serves to formulate these future patterns and trends. Have you been able to reconcile these two perspectives so that humanity is able to learn from its experiences without being bound by the habits of history?

TM: The two are antithetical. You must not be bound by the habits of history if you want to learn from your experience. It was Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the inventor of general systems theory, who made the famous statement that "people are not machines, but in all situations where they are given the opportunity, they will act like machines," so you have to keep disturbing them, 'cause they always settle down into a routine. So, historical patterns are largely cyclical, but not entirely; there is ultimately a highest level of the pattern which does not repeat, and that's the part which is responsible for the advance into true novelty.

RMN: The part that doesn't repeat. Hmm. The positive futurists tend to fall into two groups. Some visualize the future as becoming progressively brighter every day and that global illumination will occur as a result of this progression; others envision a period of actual devolution, a dark age, through which human consciousness must pass before more advanced stages are reached. Which scenario do you see as being the most likely to emerge, and why do you hold this view?

TM: I guess I'm a soft Dark Ager. I think there will be a mild dark age, I don't think it will be anything like the dark ages which lasted a thousand years, I think it will last more like five years, and will be a time of economic retraction, religious fundamentalism, retreat into closed communities by certain segments of the society, feudal warfare among minor states, and this sort of thing. But I think it will give way in the lateNineties to the actual global future that we're all yearning for, and then there will be basically a fifteen-year period where all these things are drawn together with progressively greater and greater sophistication, much in the way that modern science and philosophy have grown with greater and greater sophistication in a single direction since the Renaissance, and that some time around the end of 2012 all of this will be boiled down into a kind of alchemical distillation of the historical experience that will be a doorway into the life of the imagination.

RMN: Rupert Sheldrake's morphic resonance, Ralph Abraham's chaos theory, and your time wave model all appear to contain complimentary patterns which operate on similar underlying principles--that energy systems store information until a certain level is reached and the information is then transduced into a larger frame of reference, like water in a tiered fountain. Have you worked these theories into an all encompassing meta-theory of how the universe functions and operates?

TM: Well, it is true that the three of us and I would add Frank Barr in there, who is less well known, but has a piece of the puzzle as well--we're all complimentary. Rupert's theory is, at this point a hypothesis. There are no equations, there's no predictive machinery, it's a way of speaking about experimental approaches. My time wave thing is like an extremely formal and specific example of what he's talking about in a general way. And then what Ralph's doing is providing a bridge from the kind of things Rupert and I are doing back into the frontier branch of ordinary mathematics called dynamic modeling. And Frank is an expert in the repetition of fractal process. He can show you the same thing happening on many, many levels, in many,many different expressions. So I have named us Compressionists, or Psychedelic Compressionists. A Compressionism holds that the world is growing more and more complex, compressed, knitted together, and therefore holographically complete at every point, and that's basically where the four of us stand, I think, but from different points of view.

DJB: Can you tell us about Botanical Dimensions, and any current projects that you're working on?Terence: Botanical Dimensions is a non-profit foundation that attempts to rescue plants with a history of shamanic and human usage in the warm tropics, and rescue the information about how they're used, store the information in computers, and move the plants to a nineteen-acre site on the big island of Hawaii, in a rainforest belt that reasonably replicates the Amazon situation. There we are keeping them toward the day when someone will want to do serious research on them. As a non-profit foundation we solicit donations, publish a newsletter, and support a number of collectors in the field to carry on this work, which nobody else is really doing. There's a lot of rainforest conservation going on, but very little effort to conserve the folk-knowledge of native peoples. Amazonian people are going off to sawmills and repairing outboard motors, and this whole body of knowledge about plants is going to be lost in the next generation. We're saving it, and saving the plants in a botanical garden in Hawaii.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

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Mushrooms, Elves, and Magic

Day Month Year 1982-2000

Location, City, State

Description

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Terence McKenna is one of the leading authorities on the ontological foundations of shamanism and the ethno-pharmacology of spiritual transformation. After graduating from UC Berkeley with a major in Ecology, Resource Conservation and Shamanism, he traveled through the Asian and New World Tropics and became specialized in the shamanism and ethno-medicine of the Amazon Basin. What he learned in these explorations is documented in *The Invisible Landscape*, which he wrote with his brother Dennis. Born in 1946, Terence is the father of two children, a girl of eleven and a boy of fourteen. He is the founder of Botanical Dimensions—a tax-exempt, nonprofit research botanical garden based in Hawaii. This project is devoted to collecting and propagating plants of ethno-pharmacological interest and preserving the shamanic lore which accompanies their use. Living in California, Terence divides his time between writing and lecturing and he has developed a software program called *Timewave Zero*. His hypnotic multi-syllabic drawl is captured on the audio-tape adventure series *True Hallucinations*—soon to be published in book form—which tells of his adventures in far-flung lands in various exotic states of consciousness. Terence is also the author of *Food of the Gods*, which is a unique study of the impact of psychotropic plants on human culture and evolution and *The Archaic Revival*, in which this interview appears. His latest book *Dialogues at the Edge of the West*, is a collection of "discursive chats" with mathematician Ralph Abraham and biologist Rupert Sheldrake. This was our first interview. It took place on November 30th, 1988 in the dramatic setting of Big Sur. Overlooking the Pacific Ocean we sat on the top floor of the Big House at the Esalen Institute, where Terence was giving a weekend seminar. He needed little provocation to enchant us with the pyrotechnic wordplay which is his trademark, spinning together the cognitive destinies of Gaia, machines, and language and offering a highly unorthodox description of our own evolution. - RMN

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DJB: It's a pleasure to be here with you again, Terence. We'd like to begin by asking you to tell us how you became interested in shamanism and the exploration of consciousness.

Terence: I discovered shamanism through an interest in Tibetan folk religion. Bon, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet is a kind of shamanism. In going from the particular to the general with that concern, I studied shamanism as a general phenomenon. It all started out as an art historical interest in the pre-Buddhist iconography of thankas.

DJB: This was how long ago?

Terence: This was in '67 when I was a sophomore in college. The interest in altered states of consciousness came simply from, I don't know whether I was a precocious kid or what, but I was very early into the New York literary scene, and even though I lived in a small town in Colorado, I subscribed to the Village Voice, and there I encountered propaganda about LSD, mescaline, and all these experiments that the late beatniks were involved in. Then I read *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, and it just rolled from there. That was what really put me over. I respected Huxley as a novelist, and I was slowly reading everything he'd ever written, and when I got to *The Doors of Perception* I said to myself, "There's something going on here for sure."

DJB: To what do you attribute your increasing popularity, and what role do you see yourself playing in the social sphere?

Terence: Well, without being cynical, the main thing I attribute to my increasing popularity is better public relations. As far as what role I'll play, I don't know, I mean I assume that anyone who has anything constructive to say about our relationship to chemical substances, natural and synthetic, is going to have a social role to play, because this drug issue is just going to loom larger and larger on the social agenda until we get some resolution of it, and by resolution I don't mean suppression or just saying no. I anticipate a new open-mindedness born of desperation on the part of the Establishment. Drugs are part of the human experience, and we have got to create a more sophisticated way of dealing with them than exhortations to abstinence, because that has failed.

RMN: You have said that the term "New Age" trivializes the significance of the next phase in human evolution and have referred instead to the emergence of an archaic revival. How do you differentiate between these two expressions?

Terence: The New Age is essentially humanistic psychology, eighties style, with the addition of neo-shamanism, channeling, crystal and herbal healing, and this sort of thing. The archaic revival is a much larger, more global phenomenon that assumes that we are recovering the social forms of the late Neolithic. It reaches far back in the twentieth century to Freud, to surrealism, to abstract expressionism, even to a phenomenon like National Socialism which is a negative force. But the stress on ritual, on organized activity, on race/ancestor consciousness these are themes that have been worked out throughout the entire twentieth century, and the archaic revival is an expression of that.

RMN: In the book you wrote with your brother Dennis, *The Invisible Landscape*, and in recent lectures and workshops, you've spoken of a new model of time and your efforts to model the evolution of novelty based on the ancient oriental system of divination, the I-Ching. Can you briefly explain how you developed this model, and how an individual can utilize this system to modulate their own perspective on the nature of time?

Terence: Ah, no. I think I'd rather send you a reprint of a recent paper in *Revision* than to try and cover that. It's not easily explained. If I were to give an extremely brief resume of it, I would say that the new view of time is that time is holographic, fractal, and moves toward a definitive conclusion, rather than the historical model of time which is openended, trendlessly fluctuating, and in practical terms endless. What's being proposed is a spiral model of history, that sees history as a process actually leading toward a conclusion. But the details of it are fairly complex.

DJB: According to your time-wave model, novelty reaches its peak expression and history appears to come to a close in the year 2012. Can you explain what you mean by this, and what the global or evolutionary implications are of what you refer to as the "end of time"?

Terence: What I mean is this. The theory describes time with what are called novelty waves, because waves have wavelengths, one must assign an end point to the novelty wave, so the end of time is nothing more than the point on the historical continuum that is assigned as the end point of the novelty wave. Novelty, is something which has been slowly maximized through the life of the universe, something which reaches

infinite density, or infinite contraction at the point from which the wave is generated. Trying to imagine what time would be like near the temporal singularity is difficult because we are far from it, in another domain of physical law. There need to be more facts in play, before we will be able to correctly envisage the end of time, but what we can say concerning the singularity is this: it is the obviation of life in three-dimensional space, everything that is familiar comes to an end, everything that can be described in Euclidian space is superseded by modes of being which require a more complicated description which is currently unavailable.

DJB: From your writings I have gleaned that you subscribe to the notion that psilocybin mushrooms are a species of high intelligence, that they arrived on this planet as spores that migrated through outer space and are attempting to establish a symbiotic relationship with human beings. In a more holistic perspective, how do you see this notion fitting into the context of Francis Crick's theory of directed panspermia, the hypothesis that all life on this planet and it's directed evolution has been seeded, or perhaps fertilized, by spores designed by a higher intelligence?

Terence: As I understand the Crick theory of panspermia, it's a theory of how life spread through the universe. What I was suggesting, and I don't believe it as strongly as you imply, but I entertain it as a possibility, that intelligence--not life but intelligence--may have come here in this spore bearing life form. This is a more radical version of the panspermia theory of Crick and Ponampurama. In fact I think that theory will probably be vindicated. I think in a hundred years if people do biology they will think it quite silly that people once thought that spores could not be blown from one star system to another by cosmic radiation pressure. As far as the role of the psilocybin mushroom, or its relationship to us and to intelligence, this is something that we need to consider. It really isn't important that I claim that it's an extraterrestrial, what we need is a body of people claiming this, or a body of people denying it, because what we're talking about is the experience of the mushroom. Few people are in a position to judge its extraterrestrial potential because few people in the orthodox sciences have ever experienced the full spectrum of psychedelic effects that is unleashed. One cannot find out whether or not there's an extraterrestrial intelligence inside the mushroom unless one is willing to take the mushroom.

DJB: You have a unique theory about the role that psilocybin mushrooms play in the process of human evolution. Can you tell us about this?

Terence: Whether the mushrooms came from outer space or not, the presence of psychedelic substances in the diet of early human beings created a number of changes in our evolutionary situation. When a person takes small amounts of psilocybin their visual acuity improves. They can actually see slightly better, and this means that animals allowing psilocybin into their food chain would have increased hunting success, which means increased food supply, which means increased reproductive success, which is the name of the game in evolution. It is the organism that manages to propagate itself numerically that is successful. The

presence of psilocybin in the diet of early pack-hunting primates caused the individuals that were ingesting the psilocybin to have increased visual acuity. At slightly higher doses of psilocybin there is sexual arousal and erection and everything that goes under the term arousal of the central nervous system. Again, a factor which would increase reproductive success is reinforced.

DJB: Isn't it true that psilocybin inhibits orgasm?

Terence: No. I've never heard that. Not at the doses I'm talking about. At a psychedelic dose it might, but at just slightly above the "you can feel it" dose, it acts as a stimulant. Sexual arousal means paying attention, it means jumpiness, it indicates a certain energy level in the organism. And then, of course, at still higher doses psilocybin triggers this activity in the language-forming capacity of the brain that manifests as song and vision. It is as though it is an enzyme which stimulates eyesight, sexual interest, and imagination. And the three of these going together produce language-using primates. Psilocybin may have synergized the emergence of higher forms of psychic organization out of primitive protohuman animals. It can be seen as a kind of evolutionary enzyme, or evolutionary catalyst.

DJB: During your shamanistic voyages how do you, or do you, differentiate between the literal and the metaphorical I/thou dialogue that appears to occur in certain states of consciousness? In other words how do you differentiate between the possibility that you are communicating with otherworldly independently existing entities and the possibility that you are communicating with isolated, unconscious neuron clusters in your own brain?

Terence: It's very hard to differentiate it. How can I make that same distinction right now? How do I know I'm talking to you? It's just provisionally assumed, that you are ordinary enough that I don't question that you're there. But if you had two heads, I would question whether you were there. I would investigate to see if you were really what you appear to be. It's very hard to tell what this I/thou relationship is about, because it's very difficult to define the "I" part of it, let alone the "thou" part of it. I haven't found a way to tell, to trick it as it were into showing whether it was an extraterrestrial or the back side of my own head.

DJB: But normally the way we can tell is we receive mutual verification from other people, and we get information from many senses. You can touch me. You can see me. You can hear me.

Terence: Well, this is simply a voice, you know, so it's the issue of the mysterious telephone call. If you're awakened in the middle of the night by a telephone call, and you pick up the phone, and someone says "Hello" it would not be your first inclination to ask "Is anybody there?" because they just said hello. That establishes that somebody is there, but you can't see them, maybe they're aren't there, maybe you've been

called by a machine. I've been called by machines. You pick up the phone and it says, "Hello this is Sears, and we're calling to tell you that your order 16312 is ready for pick up," and you say, "Oh, thank you." "Don't mention it." No, so this issue of identifying the other with certainty is tricky, even in ordinary intercourse.

RMN: There is a lot of current interest in the ancient art of sound technology. In a recent article you said that in certain states of consciousness you're able to create a kind of visual resonance and manipulate a "topological manifold" using sound vibrations. Can you tell us more about this technique, its ethnic origins, and potential applications?

Terence: Yes, it has to do with shamanism that is based on the use of DMT in plants. DMT is a near--or pseudo-neurotransmitter, that when ingested and allowed to come to rest in the synapses of the brain, allows one to see sound, so that one can use the voice to produce, not musical compositions, but pictorial and visual compositions. This, to my mind, indicates that we're on the cusp of some kind of evolutionary transition in the language-forming area, so that we are going to go from a language that is heard to a language that is seen, through a shift in interior processing. The language will still be made of sound, but it will be processed as the carrier of the visual impression. This is actually being done by shamans in the Amazon. The songs they sing sound as they do in order to look a certain way. They are not musical compositions as we're used to thinking of them. They are pictorial art that is caused by audio signals.

DJB: Terence, you're recognized by many as one of the great explorers of the twentieth century. You've trekked through the Amazonian jungles and soared through the uncharted regions of the brain, but perhaps your ultimate voyages lie in the future, when humanity has mastered space technology and time travel. What possibilities for travel in these two areas do you foresee, and how do you think these new technologies will affect the future evolution of the human species?

Terence: Some question. I suppose most people believe space travel is right around the corner. I certainly hope so. I think we should all learn Russian in anticipation of it, because apparently the U.S. government is incapable of sustaining a space program. The time travel question is more interesting. Possibly the world is experiencing a compression of technological novelty that is going to lead to developments that are very much like what we would imagine time travel to be. We may be closing in on the ability to transmit information forward into the future, and to create an informational domain of communication between various points in time. How this will be done is difficult to imagine, but things like fractal mathematics, superconductivity, and nanotechnology offer new and novel approaches to realization of these old dreams. We shouldn't assume time travel is impossible simply because it hasn't been done. There's plenty of latitude in the laws of quantum physics to allow for moving information through time in various ways. Apparently you can move information through time, as long as you don't move it through time faster than light.

DJB: Why is that?

Terence: I haven't the faintest idea. What am I Einstein?

DJB: What do you think the ultimate goal of human evolution is?

Terence: Oh, a good party.

DJB: Have you ever had any experiences with lucid dreaming--the process by which one can become aware and conscious within a dream that one is dreaming---and if so, how do they compare with your other shamanic experiences?

Terence: I really haven't had experiences with lucid dreaming. It's one of those things that I'm very interested in. I'm sort of skeptical of it. I hope it's true, because what a wonderful thing that would be.

DJB: You've never had one?

Terence: I've had lucid dreams, but I have no technique for repeating them on demand, the dream state is possibly anticipating this cultural frontier that we're moving toward. We're moving toward something very much like eternal dreaming, going into the imagination, áand staying there, and that would be like a lucid dream that knew no end, but what a tight simple solution. One of the things that interests me about dreams is this: I have dreams in which I smoke DMT, and it works. To me that's extremely interesting because it seems to imply that one does not have to smoke DMT to have the experience. You only have to convince your brain that you have done this, and it then delivers this staggering altered state.

DJB: Wow!

Terence: How many people who have had DMT dream occasionally of smoking it and have it happen? Do people who have never had DMT ever have that kind of an experience in a dream? I bet not. I bet you have to have done it in life to have established the knowledge of its existence, and the image of how it's possible, then this thing can happen to you without any chemical intervention. It is more powerful than any yoga, so taking control of the dream state would certainly be an advantageous thing and carry us a great distance toward the kind of cultural transformation that we're talking about. How exactly to do it, I'm not sure. The psychedelics, the near death experience, the lucid dreaming, the meditational reveries..., all of these things are pieces of a puzzle about how to create a new cultural dimension that we can all live in a little more sanely than we're living in these dimensions.

DJB: Do you have any thoughts on what happens to human consciousness after biological death?

Terence: I've thought about it. When I think about it I feel like I'm on my own. The logos doesn't want to help here, has nothing to say to me on the subject of biological death. What I imagine happens is that for the self time begins to flow backwards; even before death, the act of dying is the act of reliving an entire life, and at the end of the dying process, consciousness divides into the consciousness of ones parents and ones children, and then it moves through these modalities, and then divides again. It's moving forward into the future through the people who come after you, and backwards into the past through your ancestors. The further away from the moment of death it is, the faster it moves, so that after a period of time, the Tibetans say 42 days, one is reconnected to everything that ever lived, and the previous ego-pointed existence is defocused, and one is you know, returned to the ocean, the morphogenetic field, or the One of Plotinus, you choose your term. A person is a focused illusion of being, and death occurs when the illusion of being can be sustained no longer. Then everything flows out and away from this disequilibrium state that life is. It is a state of disequilibrium, and it is maintained for decades, but finally, like all disequilibrium states, it must yield to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and at that point it runs down, its specific character disappears into the general character of the world around it. It has returned then to the void/plenum.

DJB: What if you don't have children?

Terence: Well, then you flow backward into the past, into your parents, and their parents, and their parents, and eventually all life, and back into the primal protozoa. No, it's a hard thing to face, but from the long-term point of view of nature, you have no relevance for the future whatsoever, unless you procreate. It's very interesting that in the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, when they took the sacrament, what the god said was, "Procreate, procreate." It is uncanny the way history is determined by who sleeps with whom, who gets born, what lines are drawn forward, what tendencies are accelerated. Most people

experience what they call magic only in the dimension of mate-seeking, and this is where even the dullest people have astonishing coincidences, and unbelievable things go on --it's almost as though hidden strings were being pulled. There's an esoteric tradition that the genes, the matings, are where it's all being run from. It is how I think a super extraterrestrial would intervene. It wouldn't intervene at all, it would make us who it wanted us to be by controlling synchronicity and coincidence around mate choosing.

RMN: Rupert Sheldrake has recently refined the theory of the morphogenetic field--a non-material organizing collective memory field which affects all biological systems. This field can be envisioned as a hyper-spatial information reservoir which brims and spills over into a much larger region of influence when critical mass is reached--a point referred to as morphic resonance. Do you think this morphic resonance could be regarded as a possible explanation for the phenomena of spirits and other metaphysical entities, and can the method of evoking beings from the spirit world be simply a case of cracking the morphic code?

Terence: That sounds right. It's something like that. If what you're trying to get at is do I think morphogenetic fields are a good thing, or do they exist, yes I think some kind of theory like that is clearly becoming necessary, and that the next great step to be taken in the intellectual conquest of nature, if you will, is a theory about how, out of the class of possible things, some things actually happen.

RMN: Do you think it could be related to the phenomena of spirits?

Terence: Spirits are the presence of the past, specifically expressed. When you go to ruins like Angkor Wat, or Tikal, the presence is there. You have to be pretty dull to not see how it was, where the market stalls were, the people and their animals, and the trade goods. It's quite weird. We're only conventionally bound in the present by our linguistic assumptions, but if we can still our linguistic machinery, the mind spreads out into time, and behaves in very unconventional ways.

DJB: How do you view the increasing waves of designer psychedelics and brain enhancement machines in the context of Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields?

Terence: Well, I'm hopeful, but somewhat suspicious. I think drugs should come from the natural world, and be use-tested by shamanically oriented cultures. Then they have a very deep morphogenetic field, because they've been used thousands and thousands of years in magical contexts. A drug produced in the laboratory and suddenly distributed worldwide simply amplifies the global noise present in the historical

crisis. And then there's the very practical consideration that one cannot predict the long term effects of a drug produced in a laboratory. Something like peyote, or morning glories, or mushrooms have been used for vast stretches of time without detrimental social consequences. We know that. As far as the technological question is concerned, brain machines and all, I wish them luck. I'm willing to test anything that somebody will send me, but I'm skeptical. I think it's somehow like the speech-operated typewriter. It will recede ahead of us. The problems will be found to have been far more complex than first supposed.

DJB: Don't you think it's true that the designer psychedelics and the brain machines don't have much of a morphic field yet, so in a sense one is carving a new morphic field with their use, so it's up for grabs, and there would consequently be more possibilities for new things to happen, unlike the psychoactive substances which you speak of that have ancient morphic fields, and are much more entrenched in predictability and pattern, and therefore not as free for new types of expression?

Terence: Possibly, although I don't know how you grab the morphic field of a new designer drug. For instance, I'll speak to my own experience, which is ketamine. My impression of ketamine was it's like a brand new skyscraper, all the walls, all the floors are carpeted in white, all the drinking fountains work, the elevators run smoothly, the fluorescent lights recede endlessly in all directions down the hallways. It's just that there's nobody there. There's no office machinery, there's no hurrying secretaries, there's no telephones, it's just this immense, empty structure waiting. Well, I can't move into a sixty-story office building, I have only enough stuff to fill a few small rooms, so it gives me a slightly spooked-out feeling to enter into these empty morphic fields. If you take mushrooms, you know, you're climbing on board a starship manned by every shaman who ever did it in front of you, and this is quite a crew, and they've really pulled some stunts over the millennia, and it's all there, the tapes to be played, but the designer things should be very cautiously dealt with.

DJB: It's interesting that John Lilly had very different experiences with ketamine. Do you think that there's any relationship between the self-transforming machine elves that you've encountered on your shamanic voyages and the solid state entities that John Lilly has contacted in his interdimensional travels?

Terence: I don't think there is much congruence. The solid state entities that he contacted seem to make him quite upset. The elf machine entities that I encounter are the embodiment of merriment and humor. I have had a thought about this recently which I will tell you. One of the science fiction fantasies that haunts the collective unconscious is expressed in the phrase "a world run by machines"; in the 1950s this was first articulated in the notion, "perhaps the future will be a terrible place where the world is run by machines." Well now, let's think about machines for a moment. They are extremely impartial, very predictable, not subject to moral suasion, value neutral, and very long lived in their functioning. Now let's think about what machines are made of, in the light of Sheldrake's morphogenetic field theory. Machines are made of metal, glass, gold, silicon, plastic; they are made of what the earth is made of. Now wouldn't it be strange if

biology is a way for earth to alchemically transform itself into a self-reflecting thing. In which case then, what we're headed for inevitably, what we are in fact creating is a world run by machines. And once these machines are in place, they can be expected to manage our economies, languages, social aspirations, and so forth, in such a way that we stop killing each other, stop starving each other, stop destroying land, and so forth. Actually the fear of being ruled by machines is the male ego's fear of relinquishing control of the planet to the maternal matrix of Gaia.

DJB: It's interesting the way you anticipate each question. The recent development of fractal images seems to imply that visions and hallucinations can be broken down into a precise mathematical code. With this in mind, do you think the abilities of the human imagination can be replicated in a super computer?

Terence: Yes. Saying that the components of hallucinations can be broken down and duplicated by mathematical code isn't taking anything away from them. Reality can be taken apart and reduplicated with this same mathematical code, that's what makes the fractal idea so powerful. One can type in half a page of code, and on the screen get river systems, mountain ranges, deserts, ferns, coral reefs, all being generated out of half a page of computer coding. This seems to imply that we are finally discovering really powerful mathematical rules that stand behind visual appearances. And yes, I think supercomputers, computer graphics and simulated environments, this is very promising stuff. When the world's being run by machines, we'll be at the movies. Oh boy.

RMN: It seems that human language is evolving at a much slower rate than is the ability of human consciousness to navigate more complex and more profound levels of reality. How do you see language developing and evolving so as to become a more sensitive transceiving device for sharing conscious experience?

Terence: Actually, consciousness can't evolve any faster than language. The rate at which language evolves determines how fast consciousness evolves, otherwise you're just lost in what Wittgenstein called the unspeakable. You can feel it, but you can't speak of it, so it's an entirely private reality. Have you noticed how we have very few words for emotions? I love you, I hate you, and then basically we run a dial between those. I love you a lot, I hate you a lot.

RMN: How do you feel? Fine.

Terence: Yes, how do you feel, fine, and yet we have thousands and thousands of words about rugs, and

widgets, and this and that, so we need to create a much richer language of emotion. There are times--and this would be a great study for somebody to do--there have been periods in English when there were emotions which don't exist anymore, because the words have been lost. This is getting very close to this business of how reality is made by language. Can we recover a lost emotion, by creating a word for it? There are colors which don't exist any more because the words have been lost. I'm thinking of the word "jacinth." This is a certain kind of orange. Once you know the word "jacinth," you always can recognize it, but if you don't have it, all you can say is it's a little darker orange than something else. We've never tried to consciously evolve our language, we've just let it evolve, but now we have this level of awareness, and this level of cultural need where we really must plan where the new words should be generated. There are areas where words should be gotten rid of that empower political wrong thinking. The propagandists for the fascists already understand this, they understand that if you make something unsayable, you've made it unthinkable. So it doesn't plague you anymore. So planned evolution of language is the way to speed it toward expressing the frontier of consciousness.

DJB: I've thought at times that what you view as a symbiosis forming between humans and psychoactive plants may in fact be the plants taking over control of our lives and commanding us to do their bidding. Have you any thoughts on this?

Terence: Well, symbiosis is not parasitism, symbiosis is a situation of mutual benefit to both parties, so we have to presume that the plants are getting as much out of this as we are. What we're getting is information from another spiritual level. Their point of view, in other words, is what they're giving us. What we're giving them is care, and feeding, and propagation, and survival, so they give us their elevated higher dimensional point of view. We in turn respond by making the way easier for them in the physical world. And this seems a reasonable trade-off. Obviously they have difficulty in the physical world, plants don't move around much. You talk about Tao, a plant has the Tao. It doesn't even chop wood and carry water.

RMN: Future predictions are often based upon the study of previous patterns and trends which are then extended like the contours of a map to extrapolate the shape of things to come. The future can also be seen as an ongoing dynamic creative interaction between the past and the present--the current interpretation of past events actively serves to formulate these future patterns and trends. Have you been able to reconcile these two perspectives so that humanity is able to learn from its experiences without being bound by the habits of history?

Terence: The two are antithetical. You must not be bound by the habits of history if you want to learn from your experience. It was Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the inventor of general systems theory, who made the famous statement that "people are not machines, but in all situations where they are given the opportunity, they will act like machines," so you have to keep disturbing them, 'cause they always settle down into a routine. So, historical patterns are largely cyclical, but not entirely; there is ultimately a highest level of the

pattern which does not repeat, and that's the part which is responsible for the advance into true novelty.

RMN: The part that doesn't repeat. Hmm. The positive futurists tend to fall into two groups. Some visualize the future as becoming progressively brighter every day and that global illumination will occur as a result of this progression; others envision a period of actual devolution, a dark age, through which human consciousness must pass before more advanced stages are reached. Which scenario do you see as being the most likely to emerge, and why do you hold this view?

Terence: I guess I'm a soft Dark Ager. I think there will be a mild dark age, I don't think it will be anything like the dark ages which lasted a thousand years, I think it will last more like five years, and will be a time of economic retraction, religious fundamentalism, retreat into closed communities by certain segments of the society, feudal warfare among minor states, and this sort of thing. But I think it will give way in the late Nineties to the actual global future that we're all yearning for, and then there will be basically a fifteen-year period where all these things are drawn together with progressively greater and greater sophistication, much in the way that modern science and philosophy have grown with greater and greater sophistication in a single direction since the Renaissance, and that sometime around the end of 2012 all of this will be boiled down into a kind of alchemical distillation of the historical experience that will be a doorway into the life of the imagination.

RMN: Rupert Sheldrake's morphic resonance, Ralph Abraham's chaos theory, and your time wave model all appear to contain complementary patterns which operate on similar underlying principles--that energy systems store information until a certain level is reached and the information is then transduced into a larger frame of reference, like water in a tiered fountain. Have you worked these theories into an all encompassing metatheory of how the universe functions and operates?

Terence: Well, it is true that the three of us and I would add Frank Barr in there, who is less well known, but has a piece of the puzzle as well--we're all complimentary. Rupert's theory is, at this point a hypothesis. There are no equations, there's no predictive machinery, it's a way of speaking about experimental approaches. My time wave thing is like an extremely formal and specific example of what he's talking about in a general way. And then what Ralph's doing is providing a bridge from the kind of things Rupert and I are doing back into the frontier branch of ordinary mathematics called dynamic modeling. And Frank is an expert in the repetition of fractal process. He can show you the same thing happening on many, many levels, in many, many different expressions. So I have named us Compressionists, or Psychedelic Compressionists. A Compressionism holds that the world is growing more and more complex, compressed, knitted together, and therefore holographically complete at every point, and that's basically where the four of us stand, I think, but from different points of view.

DJB: Can you tell us about Botanical Dimensions, and any current projects that you're working on?

Terence: Botanical Dimensions is a non-profit foundation that attempts to rescue plants with a history of shamanic and human usage in the warm tropics, and rescue the information about how they're used, store the information in computers, and move the plants to a nineteen-acre site on the big island of Hawaii, in a rainforest belt that reasonably replicates the Amazon situation. There we are keeping them toward the day when someone will want to do serious research on them. As a non-profit foundation we solicit donations, publish a newsletter, and support a number of collectors in the field to carry on this work, which nobody else is really doing. There's a lot of rainforest conservation going on, but very little effort to conserve the folk-knowledge of native peoples. Amazonian people are going off to sawmills and repairing outboard motors, and this whole body of knowledge about plants is going to be lost in the next generation. We're saving it, and saving the plants in a botanical garden in Hawaii. Back to: Mushrooms, Elves and Magic

Original Transcription by: Scribd

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Mushrooms, Evolution, and the Millenium

8 September 1991

Masonic Temple, Van Nuys, California

Event Description:

Description

- [Youtube link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Pacifica Radio Archives](#)

I think of this talk as the 'Mushrooms and Evolution' talk, and uh, we will rove and scan over that subject, but it also has- it arborizes into many other areas of concern. It's not simply a revisioning of anthropology or primatology or evolution. It is all those things, but more importantly it's a revisioning of those concerns that then carries a political and social implication for the moment, and for how we all lead our lives. And....it's basically a variation on the hero's journey, and I'm very indebted, uh, to a brilliant women anthropologist. I've never met her, but her book had a great influence on me. Miss Sia Landau. She recently wrote a book called Narratives of Evolution, and she pointed out something that I think has needed to be pointed out for a long time, which is that science is simply campfire stories in another guise. And you'll see what I mean as I get into this because I want to tell you a campfire story about a poor but humble primate who came from, uh, the fringes of the action- a minor member of the flora and fauna of this planet who embarked on a long and arduous journey into time and had many adventures along the way, and had many allies along the way and overcame great challenges to attain the gift difficult to come upon, the grail, if you will, or the Self. I mean all fans of Joseph Campbell are familiar with this metaphor of the hero's journey. And what's interesting is we have actually made that hero's journey. We are, all of us tonight, sons and daughters of the ancestral heroes who overcame drought, glaciation, disease, famine, earthquake, migration, you name it, they didn't drop the ball and thanks to them we're here tonight.

And normally this is, uh, the beginnings of this great journey are completely cloaked in mystery. It's taught in orthodox anthropology courses 'no one knows the factors which impelled human beings to leave, uh, the primate existence in the canopies of the great forests of Africa and to adopt new styles of life in the grasslands, uh, new diets, trading in vegetarianism for being omnivores, trading in, uh, a life of fruititarian luxury for a life of hunting, struggle, migration, and uh, natural selection in an extremely harsh environment. I believe that the reason that this seems so mysterious to straight primatologists and anthropologists is because they have been unwilling to look carefully at the role that plants played in this adventure, particularly the role that psychoactive plants may have played, and then, most appropriately for this gathering tonight, the role that certain species of psychoactive mushrooms must have played in this evolutionary adventure. And so tonight I would like to go through it with you in fairly close detail because I haven't had that many original ideas in my life and most of what I do is book reviews and regurgitation of other peoples' ideas. But this one, uh, they handed over to me, and I've been told by evolutionary

anthropologists that I'm welcome to it. So if I don't make the case, who will? And if not now, when? And if not here, where?

The great mystery of natural life on this planet is ourselves. We stand out in the natural order of things as something completely unique, unexpected, unpredictable. You could not calculate forward from the pinnacle of the age of mammals, some thirty thousand years ago, you could not calculate forward to a world such as we have today, a world of enormous cities globally dispersed, linked instantly by electronic media, a world of art, warfare, neurosis, vision, religious yearning, hope, despair, all of these things are the unique contribution made to reality existence if you will, by the existence of the qualities in us which we call humanness, which set us aside from the rest of organic existence. I mean, I know that dolphins discuss arcane matters among themselves and bees dance the directions to the flowers and animal communications occurs among pack hunting dogs of various sorts, but clearly we are something of another order. And accounting for this other order of being that is so present in us has been the major concern of both what we call religion and what we call, uh, science in the sense not of physics and chemistry but of biology, anthropology, and psychology. How to account for the uniqueness of our species and then the uniqueness that is present as a moment to moment fact in each one of us?

You have to go back to the origin scenario. Look at the other theories in place, and then look at the possibilities for theory-making that are offered. If we're willing to include the presence of a psychedelic substance in, uh, the experience and diet of hum- of early human beings. For several million years the, the great apes had been evolving into tighter and tighter niches in the climax tropical rainforests of both the new and old world. And at a point it's very difficult to place because it's locked in to the gradually shifting dynamics of climate on this planet. These forests began to retreat. They began to diminish because of ec- of absence of rainfall over very long periods of time. And we know that many primate lines went extinct at that point, but one primate line, the anthropoid apes, were able to evolve a new lifestyle in the grasslands, which were evolving as the forests retreated.

Now, some anthropologists have argued, to my mind very convincingly, that there is no such thing as a natural grassland, that grasslands are caused by fire, human burning. The argument is very easy to understand; it's that all the species of plants that you find in the grasslands, you also find in the understory of the forests on the borders of the grasslands, but you don't find, uh, you find only a small number of the forest species represented in the cleared areas. For an evolutionary botanist, this clearly means that the grasslands are extraordinarily recent. Wherever they occur all over the earth. And this includes the high-altitude grasslands that are called savannahs.

I think that the, the missing link in evolution is probably food. Somebody once accused me of trying to recover the lost history of mankind and I said no, simply the lost menu of mankind. Well, what was that menu, and how did it impact upon us? First of all, before we discuss psilocybin mushrooms specifically, I'd like you think about the ways in which we differ from other primates. We are, um, we maximize what is called neoteny. Neoteny is this, uh, phenomenon in which juvenile characteristics are retained into adulthood, and this a particularly, um, uh, effective strategy in any situation where you're up against a kind of evolutionary, uh, bump in the road or barrier of some sort. Many species show, uh, a tendency toward neoteny, but it's very strongly expressed in human beings. For example, our hairlessness, we are like infants. All primates are born pretty much hairless, but we retain this hairlessness throughout life. The ratio of our skull size to body size is an infantile ratio. Compared to other primates, we look like the juvenile form; we never lose that.

The extreme length of human childhood and adolescence is a kind of strategy so that a lot of developmental goings-on can occur outside the womb. And you probably know that a deer or a calf is able to stand within hours of being born. A human infant, this is something they struggle to acquire in the first 18 months of life. What was it that promoted this neoteny? What was it that promoted our upright gait? What was it that promoted our acquisition of language? This is critical, and I'll talk more about this later. Language is the great divide between us and other species. Where it exists at all as a tendency in other species, it exists as a very rudimentary, unschooled tendency. In us it has become almost the *raison d'être* of our being. Uh, physical evolution ceased in the human species when we began to elaborate, uh, languages and the technologies that follow upon them. We have designed a way around the slower-than-glaciers modification of species that exists where you have random mutations being acted upon by natural selective forces in the environment. Until the invention of epigenetic, meaning, non-genetic forms of coding, which means language, dance, theater, myth-telling, so forth and so on, until that great leap was made, we were as much an animal as any other animal, uh, on this planet.

So, what happened was this. The, the forests retreated, these environments where food had been very abundant became, uh, nutritionally stressed, the diet had to be expanded, the choice was simple, expand your diet or die! Well now, it's interesting, most animals have a very narrow range of foods which they will accept. This reaches its greatest expression in insects, which, some of you may have learned as children that if you find a caterpillar walking around on the ground and you just put it on the nearest plant and by chance you chose the wrong plant, it will die rather than eat that plant. Insects are very very food-specific. Most animals are. Now, why is this? You would think that it would be a better strategy to be able to eat a lot of things. The answer is foods are chemically extraordinarily complex, and chemical complexity is another way of saying potentially toxic or mutagenic. And mutation is the undoing of any species or any adaptation. So there is an effort, uh, by organisms to avoid, uh- it isn't an- it isn't a conscious effort, it's enforced by natural selection. There is a tendency to mitigate against animals with broad food tastes because they are exposed to so many mutagens, things which split chromosomes and, uh, and damage genetic material.

However, if you're faced with extinction, your back is already to the wall. You can see the grim reaper drawing near. So at that point, expanding the diet becomes a perfectly credible strategy for survival. And that is what happened to these formerly arboreal apes now descended onto the grasslands. They began to experiment with their diet. And in addition to the fruit that they had always eaten they began to eat insects, they became carnivores, they began to evolve a hunting style. And I have personally observed in Kenya the food-testing behavior of baboons, and I assume that it is very much analogous to the food-testing behavior that went on in early, uh, protohominids and early human beings. The baboon will approach something, a potential food source, sniff it, look at it, place it in the mouth but not swallow, sometimes for as much as a minute, and then either spit it out or swallow a small amount of it and then wait. And then if there's no immediate negative feedback from this, like vomiting or burning throat or constriction of mucus production in the throat or something like that, the food will begin to be accepted.

In this grassland, which was nutritionally fairly tightly drawn- there wasn't an overabundance of food supply, there was, however, a parallel evolutionary event going on to the primate evolution, and that was the evolution of various forms of large ungulate mammals, primitive cattle, gazelle-type animals, wildebeasts, horned animals, hooved animals of all sorts. And many of these animals had a style of existence in which they congregated in herds. Well, these herds of animals clearly represented the major,

um, uh, concrescence or deposit of available protein in this environment. I mean, if you could kill a two or three hundred boss primitive-ogenesis, or something like that, there was more nutrition represented in that than in several hundred acres of the gathering of corms or the raiding of anthills or something like that. So the pressure was intense to, uh, become carnivores to focus on these ungulate mammals and quite naturally, what evolved was a kind of, uh, nomadic pastoralism based on following along behind these large herds of animals.

The other thing was happening, that was happening was there were very large and efficient carnivores on the scene- the equivalent of today's lions and the sabre-tooth tiger, and the hunting cats of the panther type. And many, um evolutionary biologists believe that the suppression of our sense of smell has to do with our actually passing through a phase where we, uh, predated on carrion. This is not a very pleasant thought, but what we were doing was letting the lions do the work and then we were coming along with throwing sticks and rocks and things like this, driving the lions and the panthers off these fresh kills, and then eating this available meat, but it was pretty ripe in many cases, so there was pressure to suppress, uh, olfactory sensitivity.

Now, in fairness to these complex issues I should tell you that another school believes that it was our bipedal gait- that once we lifted up off our knuckles and literally got our nose off the ground, then there was, uh, a kind of atrophication of the olfactory senses, so these two theories compete. But whatever was going on, there was interest in, uh, these large herds of ungulate mammals moving across this grassland environment. And a whole host of animals were relating to them as the central source of protein. Not only, uh, the large cat predators, but also the wild dogs of many types up to and including, uh, you know, the great timber wolf that has been extinct since the last glaciation and down to dingoes, jackals, hyenas, uh, this sort of thing. So, everybody was interested in these large herds of mammals. Well, a consequence of large herds of ungulate mammals are plenty of manure. Anybody who has been around cattle knows this. And here's where we begin to draw the circle of the plot tighter, because manure- food that has passed through the double stomach of these kinds of animals, is the favorite medium for certain kinds of mushrooms. Mushrooms which are called coprophilic or coprolytic, meaning dung-loving mushrooms. This is the preferred medium for them to carry out their life cycle in. And again, based on my observations of bam- of baboons in Kenya, I've seen them approach, uh, cow pies, is the gentle term for these deposits of fecal material, approach a cow pie and flip it over. What they're doing is they're looking for grubs, beetles or immature beetle larva. They understand, then, that the, the manure deposit is a vector for insect protein in this environment, and having a limited amount of energy, they look for food in the place where it's likely to be.

However, by a marvelous coincidence or superb planning on the part of the extraterrestrials who rule the galaxy [laughter], you can sort of, choose your poison. Ah, the, the lunatic fringe is not unrepresented, good, good- of which I number myself, uh, among them.

Uh, yes, so, these, these coprophitic mushrooms, particularly stropharia cubensis, which is the one that is pandemic, meaning occurs worldwide. I have seen them in the Amazon the size of dinner plates, I mean, you can't miss this thing. It is the most astonishing object in the grassland environment, and after a period of rains to walk out into a grassland environment and see these things by the dozens and then by the hundreds, and always vectored in on the same cow pies that are of interest to these foraging baboons. You see then that by design or destiny, the mushroom was placed directly in the path of the foraging protohominids. Well, uh, and would certainly have been tested for its food value in the same way that, uh,

uh, I describe baboons testing other, uh, plants. Well, aside from the fact that *stropharia cubensis*, uh, contains psilocybin, it is delicious. It is delicious in the fresh form. Well, 'delicious' is just a monkey's way of saying that it's good food. If you find something delicious you will overrule almost all other signals coming off of it to chow down on it. So the mushroom is delicious. Well, what then are the possible consequences of the inclusion in the human diet of a psychoactive compound like psilocybin? Well, it, uh, has three consequences, and I believe that this simple three stage process answers this supposed unanswerable question about the origin of human cognition and human value systems and language, and it's very simple, it's easy to understand, it doesn't require a leap to faith. Let's hope I can remember it.

The first consequence of allowing psilocybin into the diet of a foraging hungry protohominid of that type is an increase in visual acuity. I don't think this is widely known. Since psilocybin is called a hallucinogen, people might imagine that, you know, it distorts reality or you can't see what's really in front of you. Well, that may be true on a dark night on a high dose, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about an animal which is foraging, eating insects, eating roots, eating whatever it finds and including in that a small amount of randomly, uh, contacted psilocybin mushrooms. Roland Fischer, a psychologist, physiologist at the national institute of health in the early '60s gave psilocybin to thousands and thousands of people and he studied the effect of low doses on vision, and he built an experimental apparatus which had two, uh, metal bars which were ordinarily, uh, in parallel. And by turning a crank out of sight of the graduate student or the person being tested, uh, he could deform the, uh, relationship of the bars so that they would slowly slip out of their parallelism and into a skewed mode. And this is very straightforward psychology 1 perceptual kind of experiment, and he showed very conclusively with thousands of people that on small amounts of psilocybin people could pick this up much more quickly. They were asked to push a buzzer when they thought the two bars were no longer parallel. And the people who were very lightly stoned were consistently able to do this, to grok this more efficiently than the, uh, people who had been given placebo. And Fischer, who was kind of a gnome himself, said to me about this, he said, "So you see, here's a case where taking a drug actually gives you better information about reality than if you hadn't taken a drug." Inconceivable proof, scientific experiment, beyond argument, and though it may have no consequence if you're dealing with a group of 25 graduate students in a class on graduate psychology, visual acuity is the thread by which life and death are hung if you are foraging primates in a nutrition-poor environment. If you can't see the food you're looking for, the gentle hand of natural selection is going to quietly move you toward extinction [audience laughter]. So, uh, to give you an idea of the power of that chemical in that situation, think of it as chemical binoculars. It doesn't take- you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see that if you're handed a pair of chemical binoculars in a hunting situation, you're going to be a more effective hunter. So, on that first level, a level highly unconscious, a level where these protohominids are simply trying to get enough to eat, those that were willing to accept psilocybin into their diet had a slightly enhanced probability of survival through an enhanced supply of nutrition than those who didn't. This is the first level on which the use of psilocybin would tend to outbreed the population that was not, uh, accepting it into the diet.

Ok. As we all know, there's more to psilocybin than increased visual acuity. At slightly higher levels, still well below the level of an overt mind-boggling psychedelic experience, uh, psilocybin causes, uh, what's called CNS arousal. Central nervous system stimulation, horniness is another way of putting this because what CNS arousal is is a kind of restlessness, a kind of where's-the-action mentality, a kind of desire to go out and mix it up a little, and the ability to carry through on that in a fairly convincing style to your partner. [audience laughter] In the, in the dry parlance of primatology we call this 'increased frequency of copulation' and 'increased frequency of copulation' means, uh, increased frequency of impregnation. I

don't see how you could have that without the first. I mean, oven-basters aside.

So, uh, increased frequency of impregnation means more offspring are being born to the population which is accepting the psilocybin into its diet, and more offspring is the key to evolutionary success and to running your evolutionary competitors right off the road into the ditch. That's the key thing. He who outreproduces his competitors or she, of course, who out-reproduces competitors is going to find itself, uh, the dominant species in a given environment. So, there's a two-step process where the first step reinforces the second step. We have more successful hunting, more frequent sexual activity, more food for the offspring, and the offspring are being raised by parents who have already accepted the mushroom as an item of diet and will pass that habit on to their children. So, I'm sure, as you can see, it's beginning to push in a certain direction. Well, so fine, mushroom-eating increases the success of protohominids, but how does it account for the emergence of the higher function of the human cerebral cortex, language, dance, art, poetry, song, symbolic activity of all sorts? What's going on there? Well, it is simply that if we now advance from the slight dose, we've advanced now to the moderate dose, if we now go on and imagine that people enjoyed this arousal, this social ambiance that attended upon including this item in the diet. There surely would have been reckless souls among them who would've followed Dr. Leary's advice that, when in doubt, double the dose, right?

Well, when you double the dose, uh, uh, profound things happen which are not easily calculated from the previous state of mind which was just simply a state of uh, sleeplessness and restlessness. Hallucination and stimulation of the area of the brain that is called Broca's area, and that we now associate with the formation of language- spontaneous glossolalia is a phenomenon of high-dose psilocybin use. Glossolalia is, uh, linguistic activity that seems to be not willed by the ego but that is just simply an upwelling from the dynamics and architecture of the organism. Uh, and in our society, we're familiar with it as a, uh, phenomenon that has been appropriated by Pentecostal Christianity as a proof of the indwelling of the spirit. But in fact, uh, this phenomenon occurs in most societies throughout the world and most societies associate it with an indwelling of spirit, whether they be Christian, Muslim, Animist or what have you, this spontaneous vocalizing of language-like activity is seen to be, uh, a sign of special characteristics, what anthropologists call 'election'. Shamanism, in other words, magic, the ability to cast spells, the ability to weave story. It's all tied in to language, and I- it's just my personal opinion, but I would bet you, I don't know how we'd ever settle the bet, but I would bet you that language existed a long time before meaning because it is intrinsically some kind of neurological release of the organism.

And there can be syntax in the absence of language. Uh, as an example, um, *me dingwao huadyavangalpaikec texi me tichiki putong agmo way zambowfa pakti me din dijiki pihut!* What this is is instant art, you see, abstract art [audience laughter] because the human organism is, uh, brilliantly wired for small mouth noises. This is something that we can do for hours [laughter] with very little- I'm the living proof of it [more laughter]. I want to beat you to the punch, uh, before someone points this out.

Small mouth noises are special provence, and with it we weave meaning, we convey emotion, uh, we convey anger, and eventually we recreate the entire world of our imaginations. I mean, this is culture is, is a kind of coaxing into reality of the structures of the human imagination through the medium of language, and it begins as poetry and it ends as, you know, structural engineering on the scale of the Golden Gate Bridge or something like that. Language. Language, then, sets us apart. And so it seems to me there is a direct, linear descent through the use of this one particular psychedelic. It has to have been a grassland plant. It cannot require any preparation, even boiling or something like that, because we're talking about a

level of human culture that is more naive than these processes that were added late. So it has to be commonly met with plant, a plant of the grasslands, a plant requiring no, uh, preparation other than that you eat it, and then it has to put in place a series of self-reinforcing positive feedback loops that lead to self-reflection.

I think this is it folks. I think this is where humanness came from. And when you realize that the straight people who've had the field all to themselves since Darwin, their best idea is that it was the coordination of the throwing arm, that it's the baseball pitcher who is the highest exemplar of what it is to be a human being because, as soft-bodied weak primates it was very important to us to keep our distance from these large animals as we stoned them to death. You know, you didn't want to get within the sweep of tusk or claw as you were attacking these things.

Well, you know, I'm as fond as the lump-cheeked hayseed on the mound as anybody else, but I don't see him as, uh, as the exemplar of humanity's march toward the unspeakable mystery of being. Uh. [clapping] Not when you think about the truly titanic dimensions that are easily accessible to any one of us on psilocybin. And we have, you know, 10,000 years of human history, philosophy, art, science and literature behind us, and when we come up against, uh, 5 dried grams in silent darkness, it's as awesome, as appalling, as mind-boggling and as impossible to process as it must have been for those folks 25, 35, 55 thousand years ago. It is a true mystery. None of our science, none of our language has given us a leg up on understanding that phenomenon. So, that was the vector that called us forward. That was the great attractor that this humble monkey heard the call and set off across the plains of geological time seeking and finding this tremendous mystery.

And I believe that this story has tremendous implications for our own lives, uh, because we are highly dysfunctional as a society. Violence, sexism, racism, classism, linear thinking, reductionism, denial of the spirit, all this messes with our heads and our happiness. And I, I think that it is not necessarily so, but that we- it was a narrow window that opened for us because I am not suggesting that monkeys make fine company, uh, back as you look through the geological record the fact of the matter is male dominance hierarchies occur in primates right back to the squirrel monkey type. The primate style is a style of male dominance, but some time- let's say a hundred thousand years ago, to, let's say, twelve or ten thousand years ago- there was a chemical fix. There was an intervention in the ordinary hierarchy-forming tendency of these evolving primates, and we actually created not a matriarchy, not a shifting of one master for another, but a partnership society. We were actually able, by forming a kind of quasi-symbiotic relationship to these mushrooms- and it was a very interesting incipient symbiosis, you see. It was a symbiosis of protohominids, cattle, grasslands and mushrooms. It was a three-species, at least three-species symbiosis we were able to create a partnership style of existence which is the, uh, genesis point of our myths of paradise. This is why we have a nostalgia for paradise, a feeling that we fell into history, that there was once a golden age of balance and gender, uh, you know, reasonable gender dynamics. And, uh, community, and, uh, religion that was not simply moral prescriptions that cause neurosis, but an actual relationship to the living spirit of the planet. And this was achieved, uh, through psilocybin and through the lifestyle that it reinforced because, recalling my little three-step process, the psychedelic aspect and the sexual arousal aspect were simply two ends of the same experience.

The style of these early, uh, nomadic pastoralists into cattle was orgiastic, meaning everybody got together at the new and full moon and flopped in a heap. And these were, these were groups of 70 or 80 people.

Small human groups. Now what this was doing, this tendency toward group sexual activity and orgy provided by the psilocybin in the diet. What it was doing was interfering with the tendency to stress male lines of paternity because you can't know- in a society that has institutionalized, uh, orgiastic sexuality, men cannot know who their children are. Women know who their children are because they see the children come out of their bodies, and there's a bonding, but for men the children are community property. And this, I think, was the link, and in the absence of psilocybin, you get a recursion back to the previous, uh, mode of primate organization, which is a turf-guarding, territorial, egoistic style. And this is the point I really want to make, that psilocybin is a kind of inoculation against the formation of ego. It dissolved the primate ego and it kept it dissolved until factors which I'll discuss in a minute, factors limited the availability of the psilocybin, and then this atavistic tendency, the existence of the ego, returned with a tremendous vengeance.

So, what I- the implication of what I'm saying is that the ego, which grows like a calcareous tumor or an abnormal growth in the dynamics of the psyche, can actually be dissolved by repeated exposure to this boundary-dissolving psychedelic compound. Well, so then if things were so wonderful, why didn't it just last forever? Why did we fall into history? What happened?tape distorts...

patriarchy, turf-consciousness, warfare, city building and so forth and so on. Well, th- it's a no-blame story. It's that the very dynamic processes which drove the arboreal apes out of the trees and into this paradisaical symbiosis on the grasslands which lasted twenty-five, thirty thousand years. The very forces which created that ambiance, which were climatological forces, the drying of the planet, destroyed that equilibrium paradise because the drying process did not halt. It continued, it accelerated. And as we all know, uh, today the Sahara desert is one of the most inhospitable climates on earth. I mean, it's a land of endless sand and fantastical high temperatures and no vegetation whatsoever to speak of. Nevertheless, there are archaeological site out there which are the best evidence for this theory that I am putting forward. Because in Southern Algeria on the Tassili plateau there are, uh, rock paintings dated from twelve to fifteen thousand years old that show shamans with mushrooms sprouting out of their bodies. Unambiguous, because they're not simply being held in that hand. In some cases, when a mushroom-like object is held in the hand, some anthropologists and art historians want to call it a chopper. But what do you do when there are mushrooms sprouting out of the body by the dozens? I mean, the, it becomes incontrovertible. So the archaeological evidence is there. The, uh, primate behavior provides evidence for this, and what happened I think is that these orgies which originally, at the heyday of this, uh, partnership society, these, uh, group get-togethers were probably at the new and full moon. Well then, as the drying accelerated they became merely lunar, every twenty-eight days instead of fourteen days. And then ultimately seasonal, or associated with only certain areas. The rainfall became sparser and there became, uh, strategies had to be developed then to spread fewer and fewer mushrooms over a wider and wider area. And I believe, uh, that we can even spec- as long as we're loose in the realm of speculation, we might as well go full hog- I think that what might have happened, based on a careful reading of the archaeological record out there, was that honey emerged as a very important part of the story. Because you see, if you don't have refrigeration you can use honey to preserve delicate foods. And to this day, there are parts of Mexico where mushrooms are mixed into honey and then they, they don't, uh, decay and can be used for many months.

Now, the problem with this is that honey itself has the potential to undergo chemical change and turn itself into a psychoactive substance. But a psychoactive substance with a very different character than psilocybin. In, in other words mead, alcohol, crude alcoholic beverages probably began with the

fermenting of honey and fruit juices. Well, that puts you firmly in the domain of the messed up culture that we're in because I told you what the qualities of psilocybin were- to promote visual acuity, sexual activity, religious experience, language. What are the qualities of alcohol? What does it do if viewed as a psychedelic drug. Well, it does two things. It lowers sensitivity to social cueing and it empowers, uh, aggressive behavior. In other words, it makes you into a jerk and, uh, you know, time spent in a busy singles bar on a friday evening will convince you of the truth of this. And in a way it's no joke, I mean I think probably for a thousand years nobody got laid in Western civilization unless they were swacked because, uh, you know, people were so uptight on the natch, having imbibed this whole monotheistic moral trip that unless they took a powerful drug which dissolved social inhibitions and empowered aggressive behavior, they weren't able to make a move.

How many women, how many women can think back to their first sexual imprinting and realize that it occurred in an atmosphere of aggressive use of alcohol. I mean, this is almost the standard model, maybe not so much anymore but throughout the first five decades of this century I think that would be a pretty fair statement. So you see, drugs are like the invisible lenses through which we view reality, and no culture has been without them, it's just cultures accept some and repress others according to their particular, the particular cultural values which are trying to be conserved. The reason this is not simply armchair speculation among anthropologists is because we now are the inheritors of a planet which is dying under anaesthesia. Our entire cultural crisis is predicated on the fact that we cannot feel or connect with the consequences of our history, that we have behaved very badly, we of the high-tech societies. We have trashed gender relationships, we have trashed aboriginal societies, we have cut down the rainforest, uh, we have robbed our own children of a future as rich as the future that we expect ourselves to enjoy. Uh, there isn't even a name for this sin, where you destroy the opportunity of your own children, I mean no society has been that perverse. And we're doing it under a mass infusion of alcohol laced with monotheistic moral propaganda. [audience clapping]

Well, what is the antidote to this? Well, it's what I call the archaic revival. It's something that's been going on throughout most of the 20th century but with increasing depth and urgency. It's that we must reach back into the past to the last sane moment that we ever knew and figure out what was going on then and get with the program and attempt to recover some amount of cultural equilibrium and balance. And I believe that, you know, using the broad brush of generalization, we could say all our problems can be traced down to ego. Ego lies behind private property, it lies behind the domination of women by men, it lies behind dollar chasing, it lies behind all of the maladaptive behaviors, the arms race, the whole thing, it lies behind all of the maladaptive behaviors that are pushing us toward planetary toxification and species armageddon. Uh, I'm not advocating a return to the style- the religious style that includes orgy. I mean, I wish I could [audience laughter], but we are not, you know, nomadic pastoralists of, uh, 70 individuals. We're a global society of five million- five billion shot through with epidemic diseases and contagion and so forth and so on. We can't adapt the orgiastic style on a mass scale without severe social consequences, but we can look back at the use of psilocybin and at least construct a social alternative where small groups of people are using this to, um, uh, diminish ego and build community. Build communities of like-minded people and diminish the almighty sense of ego

and psilocybin does this very effectively in two ways. First of all, it dissolves boundaries between people, and another way of saying 'ego' is that I strongly distinguish between you and me, you know. That's what ego tells you, is who you are and how important you are and how you're not her or him or that or that, you're this! Psilocybin tends to dissolve that language-reinforced misperception. And the other thing it

does is it shows you that behind your eyebrows is a world richer by far than any of the crap that's being peddled on Rodeo Drive or 5th avenue in New York City or anywhere else. In other words, it shows you the pathetic nature of materialism by reintroducing you to the reality of the spirit not as a religious abstraction that's used to beat you over the head to follow somebody's moral recipe, but as a felt experience of the indwelling of an extreme power that, a power that connects you to all the life of the past on this planet, to the planetary future, to the universe at large. So really, it's a rediscovery of our birthright as human beings. History is a bad deal. It's, uh, it's a mass of potage. It's broken machines and broken dreams because we have projected our value system out into matter, and matter has not responded in a satisfying way, and so we're then dysfunctionally neurotic, always seeking, never finding. The answer is to go within using the classical tools of, uh, self-redefinition, transformation, and ego-diminishment. We can reinoculate ourselves against the ills of civilization by simply availing ourselves to the shamanic tools that were available before the fall into history.

And, uh, you know, the fact that this has- poses some problem for the currently constituted constabulary is, uh, of no concern to anybody who is thinking on a scale of millenia. That's just a kink in the social machinery brought on by stupidity and anxiety. It isn't sufficient reason to turn away from a reasonable program that would carry us toward a group psychology that would then allow us to turn toward the real threats that face us as a species and as a planet and do something about it.

I put this before you this evening because I think in the absence of this theory, the psychedelic community has no strong argument to lay before society at large as to why these things are so important. But if in fact these are the catalysts, these psychedelic compounds, are the catalysts for everything that we call humanness, for the very basis of the notion of caring, altruism, civilization, community, if what lies behind these notions is a symbiotic relationship to, uh, psychedelic plants present in the environment, then the sooner we return to that mode, the sooner we can overcome the historical dysfunction that otherwise is a death sentence upon us.

So, I don't advocate this because I think it's easy or because it has a high probability of being accepted and implemented. I advocate it because I think it's the only answer. And that it would be gross malfeasance on my part believing that to not lay the cards on the table. That's all that I can do, and I hope that if you find this argument convincing, you will find further arguments to buttress it and we can get this phenomenon out of the closet and in to, uh, the general theater of debate about the fate of global civilization so that we can begin to make real positive changes because the clock is ticking, folks. This is not a test. I mean, we have to either create some fantastically brilliant forward escape out of the closing grinding jaws of history, or we will be history.

Thank you very much. [audience clapping] Thank you.

Well, it's nice to be here. It's great to see so many people turned out for Los Angeles Mycological society [audience laughter, Terence laughs, audience clapping]. The people who put this thing together worked very hard at it, uh, putting to death once and for all the rumor that mycologists only do it spore-atically...so, are there-is that groaning I hear? [laughter]

The organization that I'm associated with, which is Botanical Dimensions, it's a parallel agenda to the LA Mycological society. What Botanical Dimensions does is collects and preserves plants with a history of shamanic and medicinal usage worldwide. Not only the plants, but the information about them. As I'm sure

you're all aware, the rainforests are disappearing at an alarming rate, and with them is disappearing twenty five or thirty thousand years of very painfully gar-garnered medical information that these aboriginal peoples have preserved up until the present moment. But unfortunately for these peoples, the present moment contains, uh, social challenges like nothing they've ever dealt with before and the shamanic gnosis is not being handed on. Young men and women who would ordinarily have become shamans are learning outboard motor repair and how to wait tables in tourist traps and this sort of thing, and this medical information which is the basis of most of the drugs sold as prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs today, much of that information, uh, will be lost. So, uh, my partner Kat and I run a botanical garden in Hawaii and, uh, we're a non-profit organization able to accept your donations if you are so inclined.

Well this is a talk that I've wanted to give for a long time, and some of you may wonder why I say that because you may have heard it before [audience laughter] but you have, you have never heard it under the auspices of a prestigious scientific organization such as has chosen to sponsor me tonight, and that was my fantasy, to take this idea, notion, theory, and actually launch it in a venue of great respectability and scientific veracity, and certainly the Los Angeles mycological society, uh, provides that.

It's obvious that I can only touch a tiny number of these questions, and many of them seem very good, if not prolix. Um, I see a short one here. How many people here are under 25? Alright! [audience claps] That's great! That's great. Oh, here's a cheerful question, a troublemaker in the group.

Q: If the mushroom played a large part in the development of the mystical side of man, do you think it also played a pivotal role in the emergence of human sacrifice? [audience amusement]

T: Um. Well, human sacrifice on a mass scale is something more typical of the Mesoamerican civilization which certainly used mushrooms: the Maya, and then later the Aztecs. Uh, but this was a much later stage of cultural development with mathematics and, uh, written language in place and so forth and so on. And I'm not saying that it didn't, I'm just saying a fair answer would be we don't really understand the genesis of human sacrifice in the New World civilizations, but it didn't appear to play a major role, uh, in the, in the evolution of the early civilizations that I'm, uh, that I've been talking about. I don't see why it should have. There doesn't seem to me an obvious strong connection.

Uh, let's see here [looking through question cards]. Here's a question, um.

I don't claim to have more than a feeble understanding of man's ultimate destiny. I'm unclear of what your message is. You seem to advocate leaving earth for destinations unknown. [audience cheers] Isn't this agenda too premature to promulgate as we need very much to focus our human potential on the global environmental interpersonal interspecies crisis rather than focusing on scenarios which imply the disposability of the planet.

Good question. [audience laughter] Um, you know, it seems to me the kindest thing we could do at this moment is sever our connection to the planet, for the planet's sake. I'm less sure what good it would do for us. Uh, it's certainly true that the planet is the cradle of humanity. The question is, do you remain in the cradle forever? And I've had a hard time figuring out a scenario that would keep us on this planet and retain any kind of society that anyone would want to live in simply because of the acceleration of our population. I, actually I'm loath to get into this subject so late in the evening, but in the interest of fairness and honesty I put this question to the mushroom: "How can we save the planet?" and without hesitation it

replied "Every woman should bear only one natural child." That's not my answer, that's, uh, *stropharia cubensis* speaking. It would create a demographic collapse that would cut the population of Earth in half without war, disease, or forced migration in less than 40 years. It would also slice the population in half again in the next 40 years.

We tend to think that there are no solutions, and yet here's a solution that requires the responsible action of female individuals, a group that has not yet, uh, waded in to this set of historical problems that we have inherited from the past. So if there is a tendency for men to stand in the way of solutions, and I'm not saying they do or they don't, uh, here is a program that can be put in place that would have a radical impact on, uh, on human destiny on this planet. I discussed this with demographers after the mushroom made this suggestion, and I learned an amazing fact. Some of you may know this. I certainly had never thought of it this way. A woman on the upper east side of Manhattan or in Malibu or in Scottsdale- in other words, one of these white, upper class, college-educated, wealthy communities, a woman in that situation, if she has a child, that child will be between 800 and 1000 times more destructive of the resources of the earth than a child born to a woman in Bangladesh or Pakistan or Zaire. We tend to think of the population problem as a population problem. It's a resource abuse problem, and the main resource abusers are the citizens of the high-tech societies. So if you have a house full of kids and you're buying them all \$140 pairs of running shoes, you know, you go on the list of major social criminals.

Uh, I'm guilty, I'm guilty, so I'm not trying to lay a trip on you, but we tend not to think of our problem that way. We think it's all those beastly little brown people on the other side of the world breeding furiously. Well, I've got news for you, we have met the enemy and it is us! You know, if we could get the honkies to slow down their consumption of resources, we wouldn't, uh, have the gun to our head in quite the same way, but I digress, um. [audience laughter]

Q: Within the last 25 years there has been a quantum increase in the strength of cannabis. Has there been a corresponding intensification in psilocybin? Is today's insight into the present future more powerful?

TM: Um, probably not, because, uh, fungal genetics is notoriously tricky stuff and as an ex-mushroom grower and the author of psilocybin mushroom growers guide, I think what we call strain selection for psilocybin is a pretty rule-of-thumb kind of thing. While the cannabis botanists among us have worked a miracle on the scale of Luther Burbanks' wilder endeavors. And we should take our hats off to them, uh. [audience laughter and applause]. The same arguments that I made here tonight for psilocybin, in a slightly modified form and at a slightly later stage of cultural history, I think cannabis was the major, uh, pharmacological habit of human beings, retarding, uh, patriarchy, male dominance, urbanization, propaganda, so forth and so on. Cannabis is really not given its due, uh, it's been a tremendous bulwark against the values of dominator culture and, uh, I certainly hope it continues to function that way.

Is psilocybin conducive to art activity?

TM: Does the pope live in Rome?

How do you recommend we use this information in an applied way in our personal lives?

Well, and there are other questions which relate to this, like 'how can you tell if mushrooms have been contaminated by other compounds' and so forth and so on. I think that the most enlightened thing, uh, a

person can do, or one of the most enlightened things, is to cultivate mushrooms. This completely goes around the possibility of criminal syndicalism, adulteration, degradation through aging, contamination by bacterial parasites, and there are all kinds of problems which are overcome by cultivation. Sometimes people say to me how do you, what can you do to get ready for a big psilocybin trip if you've never had any psychedelic experience? Well, I think the best advice is grow the mushroom. Those of you who have done that know that it teaches all the virtues that you will need to have when you get out there in the billows. It teaches, uh, cleanliness, punctuality, attention to detail, focus, uh, so forth and so on. The things that will serve you invaluablely, not only in the psychedelic experience, but in life. And it's a tremendous- you can really feel the force of a possible symbiosis if you cultivate mushrooms, because it's so efficient. I mean, you take a 13 dollar, 25 pound bag of rye and you can turn it into 4 or 5 hundred hits. The conversion rate is an astonishing 12% dry weight of rye to dry weight of psilocybin. I mean, it's like an industrial process, it's awesome to see this stuff at work. I mean, it is such a workhorse for humanity. Uh, I used to say that it was alchemy, and the formula was, uh, uh, rye to mold and mold to gold! So, it's a very short step, and, uh, teaches you all these values that you may have, uh, overlooked in your own, uh, toilet training.

What do you say when your four-year-old asks if you do drugs?

Well, what you say is, uh, that you do some drugs and then explain which ones. I mean, I have two children, I've been through this. I think it's really weird, people who say 'oh, we can't get stoned til' the kids go to bed'. I mean, what kind of malarkey is this? In the first place, the kids know, so then you're exposed as some kind of half-wit, and, uh, as totally dishonest, totally not at peace with your own habits. I had habits which'll remain unnamed, which I abandoned because I wasn't comfortable explaining them to my children, so I just dropped those things out of my life. Mushrooms and cannabis were certainly not numbered among them. Uh, so, I mean, you...[audience applause]...you have to be honest with your children.

Hm. If psilocybin promotes language and diminishes ego, also a form of language, don't we then have something dest-uh, destroying what it creates or creating what it destroys? Is this a contradiction?

Well, I'm not sure I buy in to the notion that ego is a form of language, however there is a- I sense the point in this question because it's been suggested that language was created to lie, and is that really what we want to do, uh, with each other. But, um, I think that that's- I don't really take that seriously. I think that truth-telling and truth-withholding are a very delicate, uh, matter. You know, Winston Churchill said once "the truth is so precious that she must be accompanied everywhere by a bodyguard of lies" and uh, I, I think that captures some of the paradoxical nature of language.

Um. Have you read the theoretical work by Julian James, *The Origin of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. What do you think of it?

For those of you who haven't read it, this is a theory that until very recently what we called the ego was actually a psychic function that had not yet been integrated in the Jungian sense into consciousness. So that as recently as 3,000 years ago, if somebody got into a tight spot, suddenly a voice would switch on in their head and say the equivalent of, you know "get your ass out of there!" and people interpreted this as the voice of God, or a god. It was a higher function in the psyche that was only triggered by extreme stress. Well then, we actually assimilated this, um, uh, psychic function that had been evolved to respond to extreme danger, and we, as it were, layered it in to the lower levels of the personality, and so what had

been God became ego, and this has happened in James' opinion around 1000 B.C. just at the time when the last mother religions, the last goddess religions were dying out. And, uh, on the Greek mainland, Mycenaean[?] piracy was taking over from Minoan partnership and mother goddess worship. So yes, I mean this may definitely, uh, be part of it. What makes James' book so frustrating is here is a book, I think it has over 630 pages in it, it's a book on the cultural impact of hallucinations, and there is one reference to psychedelic drugs. It's a reference to mescaline in a footnote. So James either through lack of information or intellectual queasiness didn't make use of the massive body of information associated with hallucinogenic shamanism that he might have made use of to make his case.

It's incredible how, how pharmaphobic academic speculation has been. I mean, people just don't want to get near it, and yet obviously drugs of all sorts have, have shaped every aspect of our lives. I'm doing a book for Bantam that will be out next spring sometime about the cultural impact of drugs- psychedelic and non-psychedelic. And one of the things I learned that just had never occurred to me was slavery died with the fall of the Roman Empire. It absolutely died. I mean, during the medieval period, if you owned slaves, you owned one slave. It was like owning a Duesenberg [?] or something. It was the absolute proof that you were a person of immense wealth. And then the slave would serve your food or something like that. But the use of slave labor in agriculture was something that was brought back in the 14th century, uh, by Christian-the Christian gentlemen of Europe specifically for the production of sugar. No other reason. The stuff which came later, the tobacco and the cotton and all that, that was simply because there was an over-supply of slaves, and so there was a need to soak up all this slave labor.

Why sugar? Because it was an addicting drug. Nobody needs white sugar. You can go from birth to the grave and never get near it and never miss it, but it was, uh- sugar is made in open vats in the primitive, you know, the way it was done 500 years ago, at a temperature of 135 degrees. No free person will work sugar. You have to chain people to the machinery. You literally have to chain them to the machinery, and then they die in short order from, uh, from heat prostration. In 1800, every ounce of sugar entering England was produced by slave labor, and Western civilization barely had a thing to say about it. And we don't even think of sugar as a drug unless we're very highly sensitized to these issues. But you know, if you have small children, you know, you just might as well lay out railers of blow [audience laughter] if you're gonna turn them loose with cho-those Pepperidge Farm chocolate chip cookies, I mean my god! So, I just offer that as an example of our naivety about drugs and our naivety about our own cultural history. I mean people say well slavery, they got rid of it with Lincoln, but it had been going on for thousands of year- uh uh, no no, not at all. It had been dead for a thousand years, and then it was brought back by the drug trade. And how many steps backward in the process of trying to define and honor the human spirit have occurred because of drugs like sugar, opium, tea, coffee. Look at the caffeine drugs, the only drugs on earth that modern industrialists recognize to the point that they write them into contracts with workers. The coffee break. This isn't because they love workers, this is because it makes workers work! Caffeine and the demands of linear industrialism made a marriage in hell which exists right up to this day with untold consequences in the form of stomach cancer, anxiety, aggressive behavior, you name it.

Well, we're over the time. We have piles of questions. I love you all. Stay happy, take it easy, but take it! [applause]

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Mushrooms Sex and Society (Paradigm Magazine Interview)

June 1993

Location- Unknown

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

The mainstream media hasn't quite got it figured out whether Terence McKenna is putting them on or not. His theories about the origins of contemporary culture in the psychedelic trips of the distant past seem startling to those who have overdosed on Reagan/Bush/Larouche-style propaganda, but they are not without precedent if the names Aldous Huxley, John Allegro or R. Gordon Wasson mean anything to you (if they don't, check out the 'authors' section of the card catalog). McKenna's ideas have hit the media in the form of several books, most notably *The Archaic Revival* (HarperCollins), *Food of the Gods* (Bantam), and *True Hallucinations* (Harper San Francisco). He has also maintained a close connection to the burgeoning rave scene, lending spoken-word performances to concerts by the Shamen and recordings by Space Time Continuum. Major publications from coast to coast have lined up to give him press, generally favorable, if confused.

Interact with McKenna recently as part of an assignment for *Future Sex* magazine (editorial decision squelched the piece)...
PHF: Can you briefly explain the theory you put forth in *Food of the Gods*?

Terence McKenna: The primate tendency to form dominance hierarchies was temporarily interrupted for about 100,000 years by the psilocybin in the paleolithic diet. This behavioral style of male dominance was chemically interrupted by psilocybin in the diet, so it allowed the style of social organization called partnership to emerge, and that that occurred during the period when language, altruism, planning, moral values, esthetics, music and so forth -- everything associated with humanness -- emerged during that period. About 12,000 years ago, the mushrooms left the human diet because they were no longer available, due to climatological change and the previous tendency to form dominance hierarchies re-emerged. So, this is what the historic dilemma is: we have all these qualities that were evolved during the suppression of male dominance that are now somewhat at loggerheads with the tendency of society in a situation of re-established male dominance. The paleolithic situation was orgiastic and this made it impossible for men to trace lines of male paternity, consequently there was no concept of 'my children' for men. It was 'our children' meaning 'we, the group.' This orgiastic style worked into the effects of higher doses of psilocybin to create a situation of frequent boundary dissolution. That's what sexuality is, on one level, about and it's what psychedelics, on another level, are about. With the termination of this orgiastic, mushroom using style of existence, a very neurotic and repressive social style emerged which is now worldwide and typical of western civilization.

PHF: In what sense did the mushroom influence or create an orgiastic state?

Terence McKenna: All central nervous system stimulants create what's called 'arousal', which means restlessness. In highly sexed animals like primates, it also means sexual arousal. So, psilocybin was a stimulant to sexual activity. In an evolutionary context, the more sex you have, the more outbreeding you have of those members of the population that are not experiencing this stimulation. So, on one level, at the lowest dose, psilocybin increases visual acuity, which means better success at hunting. Then, at the middle dose level, it creates this hypersexual activity. Then, at still higher doses it creates the full-blown psychedelic experience, about which we are as uninformed and as easily amazed as our remote ancestors were. So, it was a 3 step process. It was basically a chemical that had been allowed into the diet that boosted us toward boundary dissolution, language acquisition, sexuality without boundaries, and so on. With those behaviors in place, humanness emerged. Then, as the mushroom faded from climatological reasons, in a sense we became schizophrenic. The bestial nature, the animal nature, that had been suppressed by the psilocybin in the diet, re-emerged, so you get male dominance, standing armies, kingship, walled cities, the whole bit that leads to western civilization.

PHF: What is the place of set and setting in the arousal response?

Terence McKenna: In the primitive context, I think, probably, there were orgies which were regulated by the lunar phases. In

other words, orgies at the new and full moon.

Basically, I think of the ego like a tumor or a calcareous growth in the psyche that will form unless there is the presence of psilocybin. For a hundred thousand years, nobody went longer than a month without having this boundary-dissolving experience. After the psilocybin faded, the ego was able to get hold and then eventually redefine the whole personality around it. It's a maladaptive response, I think, because it leads to the consequences we see all around us.

PHF: At what age would the psilocybin be introduced to prevent the ego from forming?

Terence McKenna: We're just speculating here -- nobody knows -- but I imagine that it could well have an initiatory rite at puberty, or it could have come even earlier. Also, we're talking a long period of time, as much, perhaps, as half a million years, that this was happening. So it may have started out that psilocybin mushrooms were just edible mushrooms, an item in the diet, and only when you ate a lot did you discover that they were also stimulants and psychoactive. Then, as you approach more recent times, they were obviously institutionalized into a kind of goddess worshiping, cattle worshiping, orgiastic religion.

PHF: Are you suggesting that paleolithic shrooms were less potent than those that present-day psychedelic users consume?

Terence McKenna: No, I'm just suggesting that as human intellectual capacities evolved, people went from unconsciously getting loaded and being stimulated by these things, to actually realizing that the mushroom was what was behind it, and then to consciously seek them out for those kinds of experiences.

PHF: Do you see a resurgence in the psychedelic orgiastic consciousness?

Terence McKenna: Certainly psilocybin is a very important factor in the English rave and house music scene and psychedelics, though not psilocybin, were certainly a part of the sixties scene, which was then also associated with an orgiastic versus a monogamous style of sexuality.

I'm not advocating that we return to orgies. After all, these African populations that I'm talking about were small groups of people between 70 and 125 people, roughly, and with the global pandemic of sexually transmitted diseases, you can't exactly advocate orgy, but I do think that, in social circles where psilocybin and psychedelics are being used, monogamy erodes and people tend to have more than one sexual partner, without the subterfuge and secretiveness that attends that in the ordinary dominator context. I guess I would say that the lesson from psilocybin is not that we should return to orgy, but that we should take a look at the modification of monogamy to permit people to have more than one sexual partner at a time, without having to be socially stigmatized.

PHF: Do you think that there's an ideal recreational drug that may be created?

Terence McKenna: Many psychedelics have the effect that I've mentioned here. The reason I fasten in on the mushroom is because we evolved in the African grasslands, so if you're looking for a psychedelic stimulant to sexuality and consciousness in the context of early human evolution, it's going to be a grassland plant that requires no preparation and no combination with some other plant, because this all happened before that level of culture. Psilocybin emerges as the obvious candidate and I would say psilocybin is probably the best suited for this even today, because it's the one that we co-evolved with.

PHF: What would you recommend in the way of a psychedelic, romantic experience?

Terence McKenna: I think if they take 3-1/2 to 4 grams of [dried] psilocybin mushrooms, in comfortable, dimly lit surroundings, that they'll discover a dimension to sex that you're just not going to approximate any other way. I mean, this is a pretty well-kept secret -- or maybe it's not so well-kept -- but it's certainly true that psychedelics have a tremendously enhancing effect on sex. It's not exactly that they're aphrodisiacs, because they don't have an effect on performance, particularly, but whatever goes down is experienced much more intensely and vividly.

Nature is the Center of the Mandala

12 September 1987

Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Partial Transcription](#)
- [Scribd Transcription](#)
- [Psychedelic Salon](#)

Well, it's a pleasure to be back with all of you. I feel like this is the home parish, so to speak. This seems to be the place where I see the most number of faces that I recognize, so it's sort of like a family meeting.

The formal title of [the lecture](#) is "Nature is the center of the mandala". And this is really, basically, simply a structure to anticipate and discuss where nature lies in the future, the cultural future that is unfolding in front of all of us. And to background my thoughts on this matter a little bit, I have always had a relationship to nature which I pretty much took for granted, but perhaps it was, uh, it was more intense and somewhat unique than most peoples'. I grew up uh, in a small town in Colorado. I was really early into being a rock hound and then a butterfly collector. I had no interest in stamps or baseball cards or anything like that. It was always natural objects, and the attraction of tropical butterflies was the exuberant expanse of color, the affirmation of the uh, patterned richness of the universe that was seemed to be thrown out like a spark by these things. And eventually I pursued it quite foreign was professional butterfly collector in tropical Indonesia in a pre-Buddhist incarnation. And this search for an iridescence thrown off by nature seen first in the glint of metallic ur-crystals and then in the colorful expanse of butterflies, and then in tropical fish.

these times spent- and then of course there were the times in the Amazon which most of you have heard me lecture on, where the pursuit of psychedelic plants was really in the forefront. But I came to see Nature as experience, meaning as it hits you when you walk around in it and pick at it and carry it with you. That this kind of Nature had been read out of the repertoire of images that most people bring to bear on their reality.

And consequently the reality is de-spirited. The spirit resident in Nature is not visible when these mechanistic grids are laid over it. Sort of by a kind of anticipatory osmosis we called our company which has existed now 10 years or more Lux Natura. Lux Natura means the light in nature. The Lux Natura is the salvational radiance that can be found in the organic kingdom. It's a term of Paracelsus and it has clipped from the grip of modern human beings except in special cases where it is cultivated as a sensitivity or where it is pursued as in the guise of an aspect of the psychedelic experience.

So, what is Nature? And what's so great about it that it should be the center of the Mandala? Well, it seems

to me that it is psyche in a way that has become occluded by the perverse development of language. So that what we take to be exterior to ourselves and sustained by the laws of physics, which do not arise out of the human mind, is in fact not that at all but a kind of stratum of expectation that has been laid down by the human journey through time. Now granted there are aspects of Nature which are not part of the human journey through time. But they are occult from our point of view. They are not expressed except perhaps through the demonic artifice of an instrumentality. And this has been the course or the strategy of science – is to use an instrumentality to reveal the mechanics of the occult side of Nature. The problem is that this occult side of Nature once explicated does not yield a satisfying reflection of ourselves. It yields instead a very unflattering reflection of ourselves – if any at all. So, you know, in Hawaii, sitting on the mountain side you think that you are like Lenin in Germany or something and you have to politically think it all through so that to whatever degree one's voice is heard mistakes are not made. Because it seems to me clear that a small miracle is taking place. It is that – and I was saying this to Roy today – it is that our point of view is actually gaining ground. The thing which we least expected to happen, I think, that all this New Age hustle and bustle – though granted that 95% of it is just intellectual noise and efforts that fail, efforts, to coin the perfect analogy, that fail – nevertheless there is a residual 5% that appears to have become the cutting edge of the guiding image of this mega culture.

So it becomes important then for people who identify themselves with the human potential movement, spiritual development, the rebirth of intuition, all of these things to make a place in the plan for the role of Nature. And different responses have gone on to that, the Gaia response which claims Nature as a stabilizing feminine force, which I'm all for that. I think that's definitely the image that has to emerge that the recognition of the presence of control mechanisms which are not coercive but which are Daoistic is a way of coming to terms with Nature that we have resisted. You know, it's a simple idea that before technology people had to store firewood in the autumn for the winter and in the spring, they had to sharpen tools for the late spring planting and this sort of thing. That there was an implicit rhythm laid down by Nature that entered the human cosmos at every level and then was reflected in the poetry, the culture building, the language evolution etc. and between urbanization other factors removed the influence of these rhythm sending in the final combination of the modern city where life under electric light goes on 24 hours a day. There's then a flattening of the human dimension. There is no more a sense of being embedded in flux. There is instead the myth of the eternal culture. It's like Woody Allen, you know, his comment, he didn't like to go to the country because you see all these screened doors with cobwebs in the corners. Well, you gotta come to terms with this kind of thing. Because there is no question, that there is a deepening ambiguity in the present moment. There is a something, stealing over global civilization. I was at a conference recently where someone proposed the notion that our time is not special that there is nothing unique about this moment other than it is presently occurring. I think nothing could be further from the truth. That actually the deepening ambiguity of the historical experience which registers in all of us as a sense of how weird it is, how compressed time is, how complicated the interconnections are, is a real phenomenon which eventually will be elucidated. In other words it will be recognized as a phenomenon. Eventually there is going to be a break with the prevailing paradigm of historical process. In case you are not aware of it, the prevailing paradigm of historical process is the one which calls itself 'the trendlessly fluctuating theory' [laughter] and it says, 'we trendlessly fluctuate'. And to search for a trend is the cause [to] be drawn into a kind of cultural hysteria. The fact of the matter is, that standing outside the cultural hysteria the trend is fairly clear. It is a trend toward temporal compression and the emergence of ambiguity. How is it possible, you know, you look at something like 'Common Ground' or even the 'Shared Vision Newsletter' and you say, you know, apparently the major commodity moving on world markets is ambiguity. The voices which whisper to us from crystals, herbs and housewives, the invisible fields from all

dimensions which impinge upon us, the imagined histories and futures which intersect the present moment. I mean if all of these models or even a small portion of them are given credence then the density of the human experience is considerably deepened. I mean how many past lives can you keep track of, how many extraterrestrial channels can you have opened before you begin to realize that, you know, you're not living in a kind of society like mom and dad were used to. [10:39]So, back to the theme of Nature. Nature anticipates all of this and anchors it. Nature is actually the goal at the end of history. We're getting closer and closer to the end of history and we will not go past it with a moment of blindness. There will be vouchsafe intuitions about the emergent structure of the other into which culture is being subsumed. You're all familiar with the image of the Ouroboros,

I have always had a relationship with nature that I pretty much took for granted but perhaps was somewhat unique and more intense than most peoples'. I grew up in a small town in Colorado. I was very early into being a rock hound and a butterfly collector. The attraction of tropical butterflies was the exuberant expanse of color, the affirmation of the patterned richness of the universe that was seen to be thrown out like a spark by these things. This search for iridescence thrown off by nature, seen first in the glint of metallic ore crystals and then in the colorful expanse of butterflies and then in tropical fish, reached a kind of apotheosis with the discovery of the psychedelic plant hallucinogens, where suddenly the color, the flash, the iridescence, is not two or three dimensional, it is multi-dimensional, it is inside the body, it is outside the body.

I came to see that nature, as experienced – meaning as it hits you when you walk around in it and pick at it and carry it with you – has been bred out of the repertoire of images that most people bring to bear on their reality. Consequently the reality is de-spirited. The spirit resident in nature is not visible when these mechanistic grids are laid over it.

It seems to me that nature is psyche, in a way that has been occluded by the perverse development of language. We take nature to be external to ourselves and sustained by the laws of physics. It is not that at all. It is a kind of stratum of expectation that has been laid down by the human journey through time. There are elements of nature which are not aspects of the human journey through time, but they are occult. This has been the strategy of science; to use an instrumentality to reveal the occult side of nature. The problem is that this occult side of nature, once explicated, does not reveal a satisfying reflection of ourselves.

It seems to me that a small miracle is taking place, the thing that we least expected to happen. It is that our point-of-view is actually gaining ground. Sitting on the mountainside in Hawaii, you think you're like Lenin in Germany; you have to politically think it all through so that, to the extent to which one's voice can be heard, mistakes are not made. All this New Age hustle and bustle, though 95% of it is just intellectual noise and efforts to coin the perfect analogy that fail, appears to have become the cutting edge of the guiding image of this mega-culture. So it becomes important for people who identify with the human potential movement, spiritual development, the rebirth of intuition, to make a place in the plan for the role of nature.

The Gaia response claims nature as a stabilizing feminine force. That's definitely the image that has to emerge. The recognition of the presence of control mechanisms that are not coercive, that are Taoistic, is a way of coming to terms with nature that we have resisted.

It's a simple idea. Before technology people had to store firewood in the autumn for the winter, in the

spring they had to sharpen tools for the late spring planting. There was an implicit rhythm laid down by nature that entered the human cosmos at every level and was reflected in poetry, culture building and the evolution of language. There has been a flattening of the human dimension. Urbanisation and other factors removed the influence of these rhythms, with the final culmination being the modern city, where life under electric light goes on 24 hours a day. There is no more a sense of being embedded in flux, there is instead the myth of the eternal culture.

I was at a conference recently where someone proposed the notion that our time is not special, that there is nothing unique about this moment. I think nothing could be further from the truth. There is no question that there is a deepening ambiguity in the present moment. There is something coming over global civilization. It registers in all of us as how weird it is, how compressed time is, how complicated the interconnections are. I think this is a real phenomenon which will eventually be elucidated. Eventually, there will be a break with the prevailing paradigm of historical process.

In case you're not aware, the current prevailing paradigm is the one that calls itself the “trendlessly fluctuating theory”. It says, “We trendlessly fluctuate; and to search for a trend is to be drawn into a cultural hysteria.” Standing outside of the cultural hysteria, the trend is fairly clear. It is a trend toward temporal compression and the emergence of ambiguity.

Nature anticipates all of this, and anchors it. Nature is actually the goal at the end of history. We are getting closer and closer to the end of history and we will not go past it with a moment of blindness. There will be vouchsafed intuitions about the emerging structure of the Other into which culture is being subsumed. You're all familiar with the image of the Ouroboros, the snake which takes its tail in its mouth. The end of history is an archaic revival. The ground of being in which the original archaic renaissance occurred was nature. In terms of the expression of design elements, in terms of the expression of human relationships and political agendas, the economies of nature are going to set the guiding images.

I read Edward O. Wilson's book *Biophilia* in which he describes his work with ants in Suriname and how there are ants who grow fungi in their nests. They cut leaves off trees and chew them up into a mash which they then store in rooms underground. They bring the right spores in and grow them there and it produces a sugar which the ants then eat. They tend the fungal gardens and remove foreign spores. This is a symbiosis between a social organism, the ant, and a fungal organism, which produces an enzyme, sugar, which drives the ant society to a greater state of activity. Activity, in an insect economy, defines how well you can survive. This provides a curious analogy for the situation that exists in human society vis-a-vis hallucinogenic plants.

Hallucinogenic plants act as enzymes that stimulate imagination. Imagination is reconnected to this feedback loop in which we ask ourselves, “How can I make more of this hallucinogenic plant that is giving us all these great ideas?” So then you get the invention of agriculture, but one can't grow all plants in one place. So then the feedback loop from the presence of hallucinogenic plants in the diet asks the question, “How can we get the plants that we can't grow?” and the answer is, networks of trade and systems of barter, and behind that lies the need for language.

These types of symbiotic processes are implicit in the human experience. Some of you have heard [another lecture I give](#) in which I go into this in great detail. I try to show that mushrooms in the dung of ungulate animals on the veldt of Africa 150,000 years ago drove a series of processes which resulted in self-

reflecting human beings. That process didn't end with the invention of language or the domestication of cattle, it continues right up to the present day.

It is as though, from a planetary point of view, an enzyme system called the human species was deputized into an information-gathering mode. It was sent out as a kind of prodigal subsystem, a kind of episome of the social environment, to cognize the organization of the natural world through a process called "human history" or "the historical advance toward understanding and sufficiently complete modeling". That I think is what is happening.

The human species was deputized for Gaia into the Fall; the fall into profane time, the time of non-participation in the immediacy of the Tao, through a series of successive linguistic declensions. This begins to sound almost Biblical, because it says there is a Fall, and the Fall is somehow related to a confusion of languages, not one from another, but from the object of experience. As the language became less and less natural, the world of the species using this language became less and less natural, because the evolution of symbols moved toward the abstract, it became the realization of ideals. In Platonic philosophy we get the enunciation of abstractions, great over-weaning concepts that subsume entire areas of particulars. This ability to subsume particulars under a class name is the beginning of this process of replacing the particulars with the symbolic structures. The reason for this process we can only guess at. It seems as though nature requires this reflection upon itself; that the completion of nature is in the hands of a single target species, which acts as an enzyme within the global organism of Gaia.

From the point-of-view of an extraterrestrial looking down on the surface of the planet there are not discreet organisms, there is simply a gene swarm. Through viruses and many non-genetic ways in which genes are transformed, the previously imagined sharp declensions between species are actually somewhat illusory. Within the confines of my body, the unfolding of gene expression and the molecular assembly of enzyme systems and proteins is simply under a tighter regimen of control than are the same kind of processes which are going on between people. We are really a loosely regulated organism that has a tendency to ever-tighten the connection between its sub-units.

So you can see that with the evolution of language, the evolution of technology being at the service of media, the rise of cities, oral poetry, we seem to strive for greater and greater cohesion, greater and greater free-flow of thought among ourselves. What we're looking toward is a moment when the artificial language-structures which bind us within the notion of ourselves are dissolved in the realisation that we are a part of nature. When that happens the childhood of our species will pass away and we will stand tremulously on the brink of the first moments of coherent human civilisation.

This, I think, is already beginning to happen. It's a slow process but it's a kind of cascading phenomenon such that once it begins to happen it happens faster and faster. The mirroring of psyche that was always the glamour that stood behind nature is correctly perceived with greater and greater clarity as this process proceeds. This correct perceiving of nature's relationship to self and language is the essence of all of these cultural vectors that are converging; feminism, the exploration of space, the perfection of the thinking machine, or of the human-machine interface and the *mysterium tremendum* at the core of the psychedelic experience. All of these things are anticipations of the post-historical state which lies beyond the working out of the themes that have been set in motion by materialistic science.

These forces have been set in motion and sustained by so-called "new thought", New Age thinking. It

seems that we all noticed early on a trend in society which is now going to have tremendous repercussions and because this seems to be happening, there is a responsibility to clear thinking about what this thing is and how it works. There seems to be a rush to get in line with the sloppiest metaphor as quickly as possible. There have been a number of syncretic fates, new myths, that have arisen and competed with each other with greater and lesser degrees of success. I suppose this is a healthy thing, except that it gives such comfort to the people who think we're all just airheads. They observe all this and it confirms to them that it's a hopeless lot.

Everybody has their own version of what is the mistake that is being made. So here's my version. There is a confusion between scientific materialism and reason. Science has set itself up as a kind of new pontificate and brooks no challenge. It expects to make judgement on any idea emerging from any realm of human endeavor. It has set itself up as judge and jury. The fact of the matter is that this is only by virtue of its spectacular acts of technological prestidigitation. What science is really most successful in telling us about are realms which none of us have ever penetrated nor are ever likely to. I mean, how much do you wish to know about the rings of Neptune or the quark?

We are continuously sold the line that somehow, when the metaphors of consciousness are fully mapped onto quantum physics and biology that a great step forward will have been taken. It seems to me that since the information coming out of quantum physics and molecular biology is so removed from the realm of common experience that if we succeed in mapping mental phenomena onto those realms we will have succeeded in the final act of alienation; because we will have at last totally removed our experience of ourselves from the realm of felt cognition.

Instead of the idea that there needs to be an erection of an overarching metaphor from the physical sciences into the social and psychiatric sciences, there should be the recognition and celebration of mystery.

We are an intelligent species caught in a historical process. No generation which preceded us knew what was going on. There is no reason to assume that we know what is going on or that the generation which follows us will know what's going on. And what kind of trip is it anyway to insist on knowing what's going on? It's a highly unlikely enterprise. Look at the data sample. The data sample is your lifetime, on one planet, in one tiny corner of the universe. From this, via the fallacy of induction, certain principles of uniformity are extended to the far-flung corners of the cosmos in space and time. A bunch of fancy metaphors are built up that nobody can check on anyway and then this is called understanding. You see, it isn't understanding. Understanding issues into appropriate activity. A model of the universe which doesn't issue into appropriate activity in the here and now is a curious model indeed. Appropriate activity in the here and now is the *sine qua non*. Everything else is unconfirmed rumour.

Nature is the visible manifestation of this mystery, it entirely surrounds and completes us. It is there to be beheld and imbibed in. It is simply that one must either replace the sterile language of scientific materialism or one must bring no language whatsoever to it, so that it speaks for itself.

Ayahuasca, the South American visionary vine, unlike the mushroom, does not speak, it shows; its language is visible; a fractal hieroglyphic surface of intermediate dimensions that contains an endless unfolding of phenomena, at level after level into the micro-physical realm. This is a correct seeing of what is. The mystery is co-present with its denial. It is a matter of changing points of view and changing points-

of-view is a matter of retooling language. If nature is psyche, ayahuasca is the auto-poetic self-reflecting cloud of cognition that manifests as language. It is partly based in the structure of matter, it is partly based in the implicit syntax of the perceiver, it is partly an interference pattern between the two; but it is as close to the ground that one can approach without theory.

The key to the forward-looking expression of the archaic revival, the key to making the New Age fulfill its best hope and not fall into a crypto-fascism of paradigmatic warfare, is to enunciate two principles. The primacy of experience and the toxic nature of ideology. This to me is the core. If the New Age, the archaic revival, can exemplify these two principles then we can navigate past the dangerous shoal that threatens any idea that attempts to leave its cult status and enter the mainstream.

I connect the primacy of experience to Heidegger's notion of what he called "care for the project of being". The primacy of felt experience begins with a notion as simple as "be here now". We must take ourselves more seriously, more lightly and more seriously. We are not at the bottom of a pyramid of goods and information production where we pay the sucker's price for everything as it is handed down through pieces of intractable cultural machinery that we have no effect on. That is the myth that is being promulgated by those very institutions; the myth of the hapless consumer; the myth of the meaning of faddism. As if there is a meaning to switching from one ideology to another the way hemlines and perfumes and decorator colors come and go. This is allowing ourselves to be self-victimized.

The other side of that is the toxicity of ideology. Ideology itself is poisonous. In the 15th and 16th centuries there was 120 years of intermittent religious warfare because people were so uptight about whether you were a Catholic or a Hugenaught or a Walloon. These were life-or-death issues. Finally people just became sick of it. I hope, I choose to believe, that we may be approaching such a watershed with the social ideologies that have been dinging themselves into the global population for the past hundred years. They are extremely bankrupt. The notion of any kind of serious competition between Marxist-Leninism and capitalist-democratic techno-fascism, or whatever it is, is ludicrous. Neither system works within the need to wage ideological warfare against the other.

Ideology has become an anachronism. It's a kind of lack of good taste. It's like being a nut. You come on with some ideology and people just look at their plates; they're embarrassed for you.

The ideology that naturally claims our attention is pretty well understood. It says in the Old Testament, "You can know the truth, the truth is the still small voice in your heart." You don't have to take courses in theology and ethics to get all this down. The political agenda is fairly clear; you feed people, you cure disease, you anticipate and solve social problems having to do with sewerage disposal, distribution of land and wealth. None of this stuff is controversial unless you're living inside a locked ward.

This anti-ideological position has to be articulated by causing language to evolve. You cause language to evolve by saying new and intelligent things to each other. And then other people say, "Oh so this thing that I've always thought but never felt like saying is actually legitimate and okay and I can say it and I will say it". It begins to move like a wave through society.

You will be told that for me to advocate the poisonous nature of ideology without calling it anarchy is to peddle my own private ideology. But this is absurd. It's like saying that if someone tells you not to drive they're advocating a certain style of driving. That's not it at all. It's a translation of levels, it's something entirely different.

We cannot afford the continued existence of the unconscious. It is a neurotic excuse for not getting our act together as a species. The way in which the unconscious is eliminated is by turning the language machinery back upon itself and reflecting on the process of attention. This is what Buddhism is all about; attention to attention. Awareness of the modality of the cognitive process. Doing that to oneself has a kind of morphogenic field effect, a kind of chain-reaction which sweeps through society. It's simply that the act of conscious self-inspection creates more conscious people which creates a more conscious society, which erodes the possibility of the poisonous and toxic effects of ideology.

This is what psychedelics are about in terms of their social and legal position in society. Psychedelics are illegal not because a loving government is concerned that you may leap out of a third-storey window. Psychedelics are illegal because they dissolve opinion structures and culturally laid-down models of behaviour and information processing. They open you up to the possibility that everything you know is wrong. Government and society spend a lot of money educating you into being a loyal worker, consumer, debt-payer and citizen.

I think anarchy is the great future for human society. Only responsible human beings can exist in an anarchistic society. To the degree that people are responsible, we will have anarchy.

I want to leave you with the notion that nature, the linguistically expressed topological manifold of the psyche, is indeed a historical object that is pulling us forward. When we cross over into the eschatology that appears fairly eminent, we will find it to be anticipated by the human relationship with nature, the embedding of psyche in nature, the mysterious relationship mediated by language.

The key to unfolding a sane society, in my single humble opinion, is an obligation to reason that clearly distinguishes between reason and science, an obligation to self-involvement in immediate experience, which means psychedelics, sexuality and what I call "time"; a deep literary involvement with the felt present. Psychedelics, sexuality and time. To empower the individual. To make the individual naturally responsible. To create the basis for a caring global society that will transcend the historical cultures as though we were just moving very naturally out of winter and into spring; no apocalypse, no millennium, no rescue by flying saucers, no Mayan return, simply the unfolding of a program of mutual caring and responsibility. This is the highest aspiration of the New Age and I feel that it is attainable.

Original Transcription by: Scribd- transferred by Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Navigating Ecstasy

6 March 1999

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Original Transcription by: [Please enter your name or username here when you start transcribing so we know that it is being/has been worked on by someone]

Review 1 by:

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November 1982

Institute for the Study of Consciousness, Berkeley, California

Description

- [Audio \(youtube\)](#)

[Announcer]: The big issue these days, and it has nothing to do with his talk... is this idea of self-reflection and and of, uh, things that, uh, self referential things and the paradoxes that can come out of that, and I find Terence McKenna a kind of self-referential person. Uh, he's spoken to us at least once; [Terence: Twice] twice I think, right, uh, and each time, uh, I have experienced, uh, an almost hallucinogenic experience in listening to him talk, and I'm looking forward very much tonight to hearing him speak on dreams, hallucinogens, and UFOs... New and Old Maps of Hyperspace; take off.

[Terence McKenna]: Well, thank you very much. I'm very glad to be here. Special thanks to Ruth and Arthur and the Institute for asking me back for a third time. Perhaps the third time is the charm; we'll see here [clears throat].

My name is Terence McKenna, and my training is basically, uh, in shamanism and botany and ethnography, and, uh, my interest is in hallucinogenic drugs, especially plant hallucinogens as they are used in a shamanic context. And, uh, what impels me to speak to a room full of people like this is the belief that the major important point regarding hallucinogens has been largely overlooked, even though we're now fifteen or twenty or thirty, depending on how you count it, years in to the psychedelic age.

The central point about the psychedelic experience is the content of the experience, and this has been, uh, occluded or obfuscated by the behavioral and statistical and scientific methods that have been brought to bear to study hallucinogenic experience. So, what I'm going to address this evening is essentially my own experience with hallucinogens and how I extrapolate it into the world based on.. its own being and other peoples' psychedelic experiences that I have interacted with.

Uh...Before I get into that, I want to clarify something about shamanism. There are two schools about the basis of shama-- of shamanism, shamanistic experience. One is the older school exemplified by Mircea Eliade, who holds that all narcotic shamanism is decadent. He prefers drumming, dancing, self-mutilation, even ordeal poisons, all precede the efficacy of hallucinogens. He believes they are resorted to when the tradition is vitiated and people are grasping at straws. I take this to be simply a cultural bias of the school of anthropology that he exemplified and the time in which his work was done. Now, Gordon Wasson has taken the opposite tack, and takes the position that non-narcotic shamanism is decadent, because it is on its way to becoming ritual. In other words, drumming, fasting, flagellation, all these things work to a degree and sometimes. And, uh, they are not, uh, dependable in the same way that hallucinogens are, and this has created, uh...this plays on Western peoples' biases in favor of the idea that you have to work hard to get somewhere, and if you don't work hard, it isn't useful.

Uh, my own experience in looking at non-narcotic shamanism, essentially non-narcotic shamanism in Indonesia and in Nepal, was that, uh, Wasson's intuition was very correct. There is a grasping-after, and I

see that grasping-after blending into the evolution of all higher religions. In other words, experientially, there is only one religion, and *it is* shamanism and shamanic ecstasy, but it is [takes drink] very difficult to maintain in, uh, agrarian context. Hunting and gathering societies, which have much less structured social hierarchies, seem to be able to function with the hallucinogenic experience embedded in them. As soon as you rise even to the level of primitive agriculturalist, it becomes much more important to be able to get up in the morning and go to work than it does to have these ecstatic experiences, because the plants have to be tended, the fields tilled, and so on.

Uh, I formed these opinions about, uh, non-narcotic shamanism early in my career of looking at this phenomenon. Uh, I didn't contact narcotic shamanism until I went to the Amazon Basin, uh, initially in 1971, and, uh, although I was familiar with the hallucinogenic state from, uh, growing up basically in the counterculture in Berkeley. But what I found in South America after sifting through these various experiences is that the family of drugs constellated around tryptophan, specifically DMT (dymethyltryptamine), and psilocybin, which is chemically very similar to DMT; that these compounds had a relationship to reality far different from all the other hallucinogens- uh, the scopolamine, hyoscyamine, tropane family that you get in datura and that kind of thing- or LSD, which....uh, laboratory LSD does not occur in nature, but isomers of it occur in nature, although to be taken at hallucinogenic doses they must be taken at hundreds of times the amount, uh.

So, that's basically the scientific, medical, anthropological basis of what I'm saying-- a career spent in Asia, and, more recently, in the Amazon looking at this phenomenon. And, I want to take my conclusions tonight and contrast them with the modern predicament and try to make a model using the hallucinogenic experience, a model that makes some of the anxieties of-of being human, and especially some of the anxieties of being human in the 20th century context, uh, more palatable. And to do that, I want to evoke a number of, uh, abysses, a number of empty places that our minds tend normally to shy away from. First to invoke them, and then to integrate them, uh, through the idea of what is conventionally called, uh, the UFO or the UFO experience.

These abysses are basically four embedded in a fifth. The four are: the, uh, the biological abyss that is represented by death and dying, that is the, uh, the central crisis of every individual existence, and, uh, almost as a reflection of that crisis on a higher plane, the historical abyss represented by the end of history and the apocalypse, and possibly the millennium. But in any case, the end of history that Western religion, whether it be Judaism, Christianity, or whatever, has appointed to our world and made basic to Western man's view of things, and which now, because of the existence of nuclear weapons and this kind of thing, poses a terminal threat to the culture.

So, two abysses, the biological and the historical, the latter being symbolized in the apocalyptic crisis. A third abyss could be called, uh, the psychological, and this is represented by dreams, most, uh, in general experience and by hallucinogens. It is this casting off from the moorings of the ego, making the night sea journey into the other, and being at the mercy of... call it the collective unconscious, the overmind of the species, uh, what have you. The third--the fourth abyss, which is one whose emergence is unique in our time, is, uh, the actual physical abyss which surrounds this planet for light-years in all directions, because suddenly now, because of our level of technology and--and scientific mapping, uh, we realize that it is there, and we realize that it is, uh, a source of our cosmic loneliness, and we realize that it presents an immense challenge.. of the sort we like to accept as a Western culture-- challenges of energy, engineering, and distance.

So, these are the four abysses: the abyss of space, the abyss of death, the abyss of the psychedelic experience, and the abyss of dying. And, these four general categories have to be seen embedded in a somewhat subtler kind of abyss which is the abyss of the unspeakable. In other words, that language, which is the primary tool of cognition of the species, casts nets against these other, uh, gulfs and comes away with different kinds of maps. But you cannot, uh, you cannot put much trust in these maps unless you've carried out a thorough analysis of language. And once you've done that, for sure you will not put much trust in any of these maps, because the thinness of the web on which it all is hung will be readily apparent.

Ok [laughter]. It's my assumption, whenever I am confronted with opposites to try to unify them, to create a *coincidencia oppositorum* as was done in alchemy, to not force the system to closure, but to try and leave the system open enough so that the differences can resonate and become complimentary rather than antithetical. So, I would like to unify, here, not two dualisms but these four, uh, opposed, these pairs. You could think of them as the quadripartite, uh, elements of a kind of mandala. The means to unifying that mandala is integration of the psychedelic experience, specifically, I'm going to make the assumption, specifically, the psilocybin or tryptamine experience. And, what it appears to be is, uh... something which is much more assimilable to the science fiction metaphor of a parallel universe than it is to the Freudian, uh, metaphor of the repression of desire, or even the Jungian metaphor of an inter-- of a, uh, a collective species-wide memory and experience bank. It is, uh, it is much more, I think, of the character of a parallel continuum. And, our-- in order to erect the intellectual edifice of the past thousand years, this possibility has had to be ignored much in the way that you would apply Occam's razor to a situation, and just say 'well we will not admit the more complex phenomenon, because we should form a theory that is true to the simplest phenomena first and then build out from it'. And, this has worked in a demonic kind of way in the sense that we have taken command of the, uh, atomic world, which is a very simple world compared, for instance, to the variables that you meet in sociology or biology- but at the cost of formulating, uh, theories about how the world is put together that nowhere come tangential to experience. So, we have, uh, a bizarre situation where our best models of reality that are kept for us by the priesthood of science are like exhibits in a museum, because they cannot be mapped onto the simple fact of individual experience.

Shamanism, on the other hand, is this worldwide, since paleolithic times, tradition, which says that you must make your own experience the centerpiece of any model of the world that you build. No amount of readings from meters, whether they're metering cyclotrons or any other kind of instrument, are going to satisfy you. Once you understand that, then what the task becomes is one of making sense of these metaphors, so-called, or myths, so-called, that are the pre-Western, pre-print, pre-literate mappings of the world.

An example of, uh, of how this problem distorts other problems is the problem of extraterrestrial contact, which is-- the way science presents the problem of extraterrestrial contact is that we are alone, and that, to assuage our cosmic loneliness, we should build ever larger radio telescopes and million-channel signal analyzers, and sift the radio noise coming from the stars, and eventually if a signal is found, an immense philosophical turning point will have occurred, and we will then place ourselves in the context of the cosmos. This is actually a red herring kind of argument, because, uh, outside of the highly technical Western societies that have evolved in the last 300 years, people have been talking to the Other for-- since man began. Angels, demons, fairies, sprites, elves, all of this is as phenomenologically a part of human experience as, uh, we'll say, birds of paradise, which I'm sure none of you have had anything to do with, but believe inflexibly that such creatures exist because it is allowed by the experts that they exist.

What, uh, psilocybin focuses as a problem that these other hallucinogens do not is it allows a dialogue with the Other that is full of give and take. In other words, there are entities in the hallucinogenic world that psilocybin and DMT and a few other not well-known or widely distributed plant hallucinogens induce. I think it was William Blake who said, uh, "the truth cannot be told so as to be understood without being believed." And, this is the kind of information that is coming through the psilocybin experience. It is information which you have to believe it. You have to believe it because it has this ring of authenticity. It *is* the Logos; it is the Word somehow, and, uh, what is being said is that our alienation --and this word is interesting, 'alienation'-- our alienation from ourselves has caused us to set up a number of straw men that are keeping us from building actually a mature, uh, model of how the universe really works. The content of the dialogue with the other is, uh... a content that indicates that man's horizons are infinitely bright, that death is in fact, uh-- well, as Thomas Vaughn put it, uh, 'the body is the placenta of the soul', and this fact has not yet been assimilated, because it runs counter to Western reductionist, materialist, uh, empiricism. But, this idea, that the body is placenta to the soul, is not a--an object of faith or a dogma. It's a program for activity. The activity that, uh, it implies should be undertaken is a familiarization with the soul, and the soul has been banned from Western thinking about the self for nigh on 400 years, at least in leading circles.

Uh, but I take this concept very seriously. And, I think, uh, if any of you are familiar with the literature of alchemy; alchemy is about, uh, the generation of a psychic construct, a wholeness, uh, a thing which has many properties, which is paradoxical, which is both mind and matter, which can do anything. This is the last gasp of the soul before it's submerged completely. In other words, it became trapped in an association with cthonic matter in the last historical epoch before it disappeared completely from Western consciousness.

Psychedelic drugs, especially psilocybin, allow a searchlight to be thrown on these deeper levels of the psyche as Jung correctly stated, but it is not a museum of archetypes or psychic constructs as he seemed to assume. It is a--a frontier of wholeness into which any person so motivated and so courageous as to wish to do it can go and, uh, leave the mundane plane far behind. In other words, it is a dimension of vertical gain that is *real* and is present in all of our lives, and that we do not acknowledge except as an anomaly, because we have been told that it's an anomaly. We have been told that these perceptions have to be devalued. The result of this is to so distort the psychic life of the species in the present historical context that we have this UFO disease, which is essentially a rupture into three dimensional space of this archetype of wholeness, and it haunts time like a ghost, and it haunts human experience in the 20th century, because it is a symbol of alienation, and the word 'alien' has in fact come to be applied to this thing. It is alien. It comes from the stars, it is totally non human, it has great potential for mankind, but it can barely be englished at all. And actually what it is is, uh, the self in the form in which it is most accessible to the ego, given the ego's programming with all this scientific garbage about the density of life in the universe, the distance to the stars, the probability of chemical evolution occurring here and there and yonder. It is, in other words, something which, in order not to alarm us, has disguised itself as an extraterrestrial being, but is in fact, uh, the collectivity of the human psyche signaling a profound historical crisis.

I talked about this before. I talked about, uh, the danger of succumbing to belief in UFOs, because of the damage it did to free will. And that, yes, the UFO is a-- it is making war on science, because science has created such a masculine overbalance in the intellectual life of the, uh, species that, uh, this automatic mechanism has been triggered. A history-stopping archetype is being released into the skies of this planet,

and if we are not careful it will *halt* all intellectual inquiry in the same way that the Christos archetype halted intellectual inquiry in the Hellenistic age. I don't want to go into this too deeply, but it's clear to me that Hellenistic science, uh, was destroyed by the Christos archetype because the Demo--the Democritean atomists and materialists who ran Roman civilization had no patience whatsoever with this superstition that was being circulated among the servants about a man who rose from the dead and all of-- that went with it. But, before they knew what had happened, their whole civilization was in ruin because the archetype had frozen the forward thrust of this masculine, dominant, ethically de-potentialized, technologically obsessed, slave-built society. And, for a thousand years hydrostatics, mathematics, uh, metallurgy, you name it, that was nothing. Only the words of one Gallilean radical could occupy the time of any intellectual successfully.

Ok, we have now, two thousand years later, fought our way somewhat clear of that problem, but the problem it solved, which is the problem of this masculine overbalance and, uh, this obsessive technological thrust, this dehumanizing thrust, has reached an even more intense peak, and, uh, now appears the flying saucer with the capacity of undoing that by *again* destroying science, by simply being a miracle. That's all that is required to wreck science is a miracle visible worldwide [laughter], and because scientists say that that can't happen. Consequently, if that does happen, their house is in real disorder. Oh--so I touched on this before, any of you who heard me. Tonight, I want to talk more about the flying saucer, not from the point of view of, uh, the people who are going to get the whammy when it appears unbidden, but from the point of view of an insider.

In other words, one can do more than simply say, 'oh yes, I understand what this is. The overmind is visibly manifest in the skies of earth in order to skew history toward an eschatological mode that will stifle inquiry in order, basically, to preserve the species from extinction'. But, a mature humanity could get into a place where we no longer require these metaphysical spankings from messiahs and flying saucers that come along every thousand years or so to mess up the mess that has been created and to try and send people off on another tack. And the way to do this is to look at the abysses that confront man as species and individual and try to unify them. And, I think that psilocybin offers a way out, because it allows a dialogue with the overmind that is not-- you won't read about in *Scientific American* or anywhere else; you will carry it out, and the carrying out of this dialogue will place--will essentially eschatologize you as a person, and lift you out of the historical context. It's like Stephen Dedalus said in *Ulysses*, "history is the the nightmare that I am trying to awake from." Well, I would turn it around a bit and say that history is what I'm trying to go to sleep from in order to get away from it. In other words, the dream is eschatological. The dream is zero time, and outside of history. Escape into the dream. Escape-- a key thing charged against these drugs, that they are for escapists. I think the people who make this charge hardly dare dream to what degree they are escapists [audience laughter].

Escape. Escape from the planet, from death, and from the problem, if possible, of the unspeakable. This-- so now, to say a bit about about death and dying. If you leave aside the last 300 years of historical experience as it was handled in Europe and America, and examine the phenomenon of death, the doctrine of the soul in all its ramifications, neo-Platonic, Christian, dynastic Egyptian, et cetera --I'm sure you're all familiar with some or all of these. What you get is the idea that there is a light body, or a, a uh, a thing, an entelechy, that is somehow mixed up in the body during life, and at death, or at dying, is involved in a crisis in which these two envelopes separate and one, uh, loses its, uh, *raison d'etre* and falls into dissolution; metabolism stops. And the other one goes we know not where, perhaps nowhere if you believe it doesn't exist, but then you have the problem of trying to explain life, which, by the way, though science makes great claims and has done very well in systems of nuclear particles and even simple atomic systems,

the idea that, uh, science can make any statement about what life is or where it comes from is preposterous. Uh, science has nothing to say about how you can decide to close your hand into a fist, and it happens. This is utterly outside the realm of scientific explanation because what we see in that phenomenon is mind as a first cause. In other words, we see matter, it's an example of, uh, telekinesis. Matter is caused by mind to move. So science has--we need not fear the sneers of science in the matter of the fate or origin of the soul.

There...and, as I say, my thrust into this has always been the psychedelic experience, but I've been thinking recently more about dreams, because dreams are a much more generalized form of experience of the hyper-dimension, or the, uh, the mode in which life and mind seem to be embedded. And, uh, looking at dreams and looking at what people with shamanic, uh, traditions say about dreams, you come to the realization that, experientially, for those people, it *is* a parallel continuum. The shaman accesses it with hallucinogens, or other things which I mentioned, but most efficaciously with hallucinogens, but everybody else accesses it through dreams.

Now, Freud's idea about dreams was, I forget the German term, but he called them 'day residues'. He always felt that you could trace the content of the dream down to a distortion of something that happened during the day, or, you know, during waking time. I think that, uh, it's much more useful to try and make actually a kind of geometric model of consciousness, and to take seriously the idea of a parallel continuum, and to say that the mind and the body are embedded in the dream, and the dream is a kind-- not a kind of, but a higher order spatial dimension, so that, uh, in sleep you are released into the real world of which the world of waking is only the surface. And, in a very, in a very literal sense it's the surface. It's the surface in a geometric sense, that there is a plenum --and, and recent experiments in quantum physics tend to back this up-- there is a holographic plenum of information, information--all information is everywhere. Information that is not here is nowhere, and *that* information stands outside of historical time. It's like Plato said: "time is the moving image of eternity." *Eternity* does not have a temporal existence, even the kind of temporal existence where you say it always existed. It does not have temporal duration of any sort. *It is eternity.*

We are not, uh, we are not primarily biology with mind emerging as a kind of iridescence, a kind of epiphenomenon at the higher levels of organization of biology. We are, in fact, hyperdimensional objects of some sort which cast a shadow into matter, and the matter-- the shadow in matter is the body, and at death what happens basically is that the shadow withdraws, or the thing which casts the shadow withdraws, and metabolism ceases, and matter, which had been organized into a dissipative structure in a very localized area, sustaining itself against entropy by cycling material in and degrading it and expelling it, that whole phenomenon ceases. But the--the, uh, thing which ordered it is not affected by that; and when I make these declarative statements, I'm making them from the point of view of this shamanic tradition which touches all these higher religions. Everything basically except rationalism holds to some version of what I'm saying.

So, then the psychedelic, uh, the dream state and the psychedelic state acquire great import because they-- there is then a task to life, and the task to life is to become familiar with this thing which is causing being, and to be familiar with it at the moment of passing. In other words, um, the metaphor that is used, uh, by several traditions of a vehicle, an after death vehicle, an astral body, something like that. And, shamanism and uh, and uh, certain yogas, Taoist yoga, claim very clearly that the purpose is to familiarize yourself with this after death body *in life*, and then the act of dying will not create confusion in the psyche. You will

recognize what is happening, you will know what to do, and you will make the clean break.

And, there does seem to be the possibility of a problem in dying. In other words, what I'm telling you is not that you're condemned to eternal life. I'm saying, it's a possibility that you can muffle it through ignorance. In other words, the-- at the moment of death there is a kind of a separation. It's like birth. Its-- the metaphor is trivial but perfect. It is, uh, there is a possibility of, uh, damage, of incorrect activity. Again, William Blake, who said that as you start into the spiral there is the possibility of falling from the golden track into eternal death. But it is only a crisis of a moment; it's a crisis of passage. And, the whole purpose of shamanism and of *life*, correctly lived, is to strengthen the soul and to strengthen the relationship to the soul so that, uh, this, this uh, passage can be cleanly made.

Ok, this is not anything earth-shaking. Or, it's well known; it's a traditional position, actually. Uh, but now I want to assimilate one more abyss into this model, uh, a less-- one less familiar to us as rationalists, but well familiar to us just one level deeper in the psyche as Christians and Westerners, and that is this idea that the world will end, that there will be a final time, that there is not only the crisis of the death of the individual, there is the crisis of the death of the species. What this seems to be about is that from the time that there is an awareness of the existence of the soul (we'll say circa 50,000 B.P), until the resolution of the apocalyptic potential, there is something like 50,000 years which, in biological time, is only a moment, but it is the entire span of history times five. In that period, everything hangs in the balance, because it is a mad rush from monkeydom to starshiphood. And, in the leap across those 25,000 years, energies are released, religions are shot off like sparks, philosophies evolve and die, science arises, magic arises, all of these things which control power with greater and lesser degrees of ethical constancy appear. There is the possibility, as in the metaphor of dying, there is a possibility of mucking it up, of aborting the species transformation into a hyperspatial entelechy.

We are now-- there can be no doubt that we are now in the final seconds of that crisis, a crisis which involves the end of history, the departure from the planet, the triumph over death, and the release of the individual from matter. We are in fact closing distance with the most profound event a planetary ecology *can* encounter, which is the freeing of life from the dark chrysalis of matter. The old metaphor of psyche as the butterfly is a species-wide metaphor. We must undergo a metamorphosis in order to survive the momentum of the historical forces already in motion.

Well, if you know anything about evolutionary biology, you know that man is considered to be an unevolving species. In other words, sometime in the last hundred thousand years with the invention of culture, the, uh, the biological evolution of man ceased and evolution became a cultural phenomenon. Tools, languages, and philosophies began to evolve, but the human somatype began to remain the same. And, ha--and so we are very much like people a long time ago. But technology is the real skin of our species. Man, correctly seen in the context of the last 500 years, is an extruder of a technological shell. We take in matter that is, uh, has a low degree of organization, we put it through mental filters, and we extrude Lindisfarne gospels, space shuttles, all of these things. This is what we do. We're like coral animals embedded in a technological reef of extruded psychic objects [clears throat]. And, *the* tool is the flying saucer or the soul exteriorized in three dimensional space. It's as James Joyce said, it's the problem of how man may be dirigible, alright? And how man may be dirigible is basically by turning himself inside out. In other words, the body must become an interiorized hologramatic object embedded in a solid state hyper-dimensional matrix which is eternal, so that man wanders through Elysium in his body, --this is a kind of Islamic paradise that I'm putting out here-- wanders through Elysium in his body experiencing all the

pleasures of the flesh but not realizing that he is a holographic projection of a solid state matrix that is micro-miniaturized, superconducting, and nowhere to be found.

It is part of the plenum. And, eh-eh, we-- all history is about producing prototypes of this situation with greater and greater closure toward the ideal so that airplanes, automobiles, condominiums, space shuttles, space colonies, uh, starships of the hardware, speed of light, spin-dizzy drive type; all of these are, as Mircea Eliade said, self-transforming images of flight that speak volumes about man's aspiration to self-transcendence, so that we are-- our wish, our salvation, and our only hope, basically, is to end the historical crisis by becoming, uh, the alien, by ending alienation, by recognize the alien as the self, in fact; recognizing the alien as, uh, an overmind which holds all the physical laws of the planet intact in the same way that you hold an idea intact in your mind.

In other words, all these givens which are thought to be so writ in adamantine are actually merely the moods of the god, if you will, which *we* happen to be. And the *whole* thing about human history is recovering this piece of lost information so that man may be dirigible, or again, to quote *Finnegans Wake*, uh, uh. Moicane is the red light district of Dublin. "Here in Moicane, we flop on the seamy side, but n'ent, prospector, you sprout all your worth and you woof your wings. So if you want to be phoenixed, come and be parked." It's that simple, you see [clears throat]; but it takes courage to be parked when the grim reaper draws near [clears throat]. 'A blessing in disguise', Joyce calls him.

Uh, so, to me, what psychedelics point out, and where I think society will go once they are integrated to the point where large groups of people can plan research programs without fear of being persecuted for it, is it models the after-death state. It may do more than model it. It may, uh, essentially reveal the nature of it, that our mind, what we each call our mind, can be, eh-eh, the modalities of appearance and understanding can be shifted so that we see it within the context of the one mind. And, uh, then problems like the existence of extraterrestrials and that kind of thing become trivial, because the one mind that I am talking about contains *all* experiences of the other.

There is not the Newtonian universe deployed, uh, throughout the parsecs and chiliocosms of physical space *and* the interior mental universe. They are the same thing. We perceive them as, uh, unresolvable dualisms because of what is called, or what I call a code--the quality of the code, meaning the language we use to discuss this problem has these built-in dualisms. This is a problem of language. *All* codes have code qualities except the Logos. The Logos is perfect, and therefore it partakes of no quality other than itself. But, uh, so long as you deal, so long as you map with something other than the Logos, there will be code qualities. And, the dualism built into our language makes the death of the species, the death of the individual, these seem to be opposed things. Likewise, the problems biology, and, by extrapolation, exobiology, pose by examining the physical universe, versus the angel and demon haunted world that depth psychology is reporting on is again set up as a dichotomy. Uh, all that is needed to, uh, go beyond an academic understanding of what I've been saying is to have the experience of this tryptamine-induced ecstasy. In other words, for reasons which I leave to my brother, uh, the tryptamine molecule has this unique property of releasing the structured self into the overself. And, uh, each person who has that experience undergoes a mini-apocalypse, a mini-entry and mapping into hyperspace.

For society to change in this direction, nothing is necessary except for this experience to become an object of, uh, general concern. Now, what I--I'm not saying everybody should rush out and take mushrooms, in case you thought that's what I was saying [laughs and audience laughs]. But, I am saying that these fields of

information which-- I don't know if you're like me, but my experience of these things is basically literary. I read Plotinus, I read Heraclitus, I read all this stuff, and I try to integrate it intellectually, but it is a plane of experience that is directly accessible. And, uh, the role that we--that each of us, uh, plays in relationship to it determines how we will present ourselves in the final transformation that this hints of.

In other words, in this theory, there is a kind of teleological bias. There is a belief that there is a hyperobject called the Overmind or God or what have you, that casts a shadow into time, and history is the experiencing of this shadow, and as you draw closer and closer to the source of the shadow, the paradoxes intensify, the rate of change intensifies, the, uh-- because what is happening is that this hyperobject is beginning to ingress into three dimensional space. Uh, one way of thinking of it is that, uh, the dream--and the waking world and the world of the dream begin to become one, so that the school of flying saucer criticism which has said flying saucers are hallucinations was in a certain sense correct in that the laws which operate in the dream, the laws which operate in hyperspace, can at times operate in three dimensional space when the barrier between the two modes becomes weak, and then you have these curious experiences, sometimes called psychotic breaks, sometimes called.. whatever, but which always have a tremendous impact on the person they're happening to because there seems to be an exterior component that could not possibly be mental. This is what I'm talking about is when coincidences begin to *build and build and build* until you finally say, you know, *'I don't know what is going on,' but it's preposterous to claim that this is a psychological phenomenon'*, because these are changes in the world (what Jung called synchronicity, and, and made a certain model of). But, what it really is is that an alternative physics is beginning to impinge on uh, on, uh, reality, and it is the physics of light, essentially. Light is composed of photons; photons have no antiparticle. This means that, uh, there is no dualism in the world of light, and if you try to imagine the experience from the point of view of a thing made of light, you realize-- I'm sure you're all familiar with the conventions of relativity, which say that time slows down as you approach the speed of light, but what is never said about that is that if you move at the speed of light there is no time whatsoever; there is an experience of time zero. So if you imagine for a moment yourself to be made of light or to be in possession of a vehicle which can move at the speed of light, there-- you can traverse from any point in the universe to any other with a subjective experience of time zero. This means that, uh, you cross to Alpha Centauri: time zero. But, the amount of time that has passed in the relativistic universe is, whatever it is, four and a half years. But, if you move very great distances, if you cross 250,000 light years across to Andromeda, you still have an experience of time zero. The only experience of time that you have is a subjective time that is created by your own mentation, but in relationship to the so-called Newtonian universe, there is no time whatsoever. You exist in eternity, you have become eternal. Now, of course, the universe is aging at a staggering rate all around you in this situation, but you perceive it as a fact of the universe the way we perceive, uh, uh, Newtonian physics as a fact of this universe, so you have, uh, essentially translated into this eternal mode that I mentioned: time as the moving image of eternity. You are then away from the moving image; you exist in this static mode.

I believe that this is, uh, what technology pushes toward, and that there is no opposition between, you know, ecological balance and the people who want to leave the planet and the hyper-technologists and the hyper-naturalists, uh. All of these are red herrings. The real, uh, historical entity which is becoming imminent is, uh, the human soul..and it is-- the monkey body has served to carry to this moment of release, and it will always serve as a focus of self image, but it will exist in a world made by the human imagination. This is what the return to the father, the transcendence of physis, the rising out of the Gnostic universe of iron that traps the light, all these metaphors, this is what it means. It means release into the human imagination. Uh, Very shortly a--a, uh, as it were, a dry run for this phenomenon will take place in

the form of-of space exploration and space colonies because there, the coral reef-like animal called man that has extruded technology all over the surface of the earth will be freed at last from the constraints of anything but his own imagination and the limitations of materials, so that, for instance, the earliest space colonies-- of course there will be an effort to duplicate the ecosystem of Hawaii and this and that, you know, these, like, uh, exercises in ecological understanding to prove you know what you're doing, but as soon as this is under control, we will be released into the realm of art, which is what we have always striven for. We will make our world, *all* of our world, and the world we came from will be maintained as a garden. But, what Eliade indicated as these endless metaphors of self-transforming flight will be realized momentarily as the technology of the space colony.

What is lining up right behind that, of course, is the fact that the transition from earth to space is a staggeringly tight genetic filter, a much tighter filter than any previous frontier ever has been, even the--the, uh, filter, the genetic demographic filter, represented by the New World. It's said that, you know, that the vitality of America is because only the-the dreamers and the pioneers and the schemers made the trip across. This will be even more true of, uh, of the transition to space, and the technological conquest of space will set the stage, then, for the interiorization of that metaphor, and the conquest of inner space, and the collapse of the state vectors associated with this technology deployed in Newtonian space. And then, uh, uh, man will have become more than dirigible. I think a break here is in order. [audience laughter, clapping]

[Announcer: Let's have a break] [Applause]

[BREAK]

I'll just say a couple more things, and then there seemed to be a lot of questions, so I'll throw it open for questions. But, before I do that, I mentioned this book, *The Invisible Landscape*, that my brother and I wrote, and I'll say just a bit about it, uh, because it relates to what's been said. I spoke in general terms about the technology which would interiorize the body, exteriorize the soul, spoke of it as a long-term technological goal, meaning visible within the next hundred or so years, following on to space travel, that sort of thing. Um, but what *The Invisible Landscape* is about is an effort to short-circuit that chronology and to actually, uh...in a certain sense, force the issue. It's the story, or rather, it's the intellectual underpinnings of the story of an expedition to the Amazon by my brother and myself and several other people in 1971 in which, uh, my brother formulated an idea that involved, uh, using harmine and harmaline. These are compounds which occur in *banisteriopsis caapi*, which is the woody vine that is the basis for ayahuasca, and ayahuasca is one of these plant hallucinogens that releases you into this dimension I'm discussing. An effort to, uh, use harmine in conjunction with the human voice in a--what we called the experiment at La Chorrerra, which was basically--you can take it as very loose science or very tight magic, but, uh, [audience & Terence laughter] it-it was, uh, an effort to use sound to charge the molecular structure of these harmine molecules, uh, metabolizing *in vivo*, in the body, uh, in such a way that they would bind preferentially into certain molecular structures. Our candidate at the time was, uh, DNA. I think Frank Barr has convinced me that there is as great a likelihood that it involves, uh, binding into melanin bodies, as, as likely a possibility as that it involves DNA, but it involves binding into a molecular site where information is stored so that this information is then broadcast in--essentially in the mind in such a way that you begin to get a readout on the structure of the soul. In other words, this was an effort to use a kind of shamanic technology to bell the cat, if you will; to hang a superconducting, telemetric, psychedelic device on the overmind so that there would be a continuous readout of information from this

dimension, and, uh, the success or failure of this you may judge by reading the book, because the first half of the book describes the experiment, the theoretical underpinning of the experiment. The second half of the book describes the theory of the structure of time that derived from the bizarre mental states that followed upon the experiment.

Uh, I don't claim that we succeeded. I just claim that our theory of what happened is better than any theory any of our critics have been able to bring forward. But, uh, whether we succeeded or not, that kind of thinking points the way. In other words, when I say, when I speak of the technology of building the starship, I imagine that it will be done with voltages far below the voltage of a common flashlight battery. This is, after all, where the voltages--where the most interesting phenomenon go on in nature. Thought is that kind of phenomenon, metabolism is that kind of phenomenon. So I think that, you know, an aquarian science, or a science that places the psychedelic experience at the center of its program, uh, of investigation should be--should move toward a practical realization of this goal, the goal of eliminating the barrier between the ego and the overself so that the ego can perceive itself as an expression of the overself, so that the anxiety of being cast into matter, of apparently facing a tremendous biological crisis in the form of death, of apparently facing a tremendous physical cri--, uh, uh, species crisis in the form of the apocalypse, the crisis of limitation in physical space by being planet-bound, all of these things can be obviated by cultivating the soul basically, by practicing shamanism using these tryptamine drugs that I've described.

And my plea to scientists, administrators and politicians who may be listening to my voice is to look again at psilocybin, to not lump it with the other psychedelics, to realize that it is a phenomenon unto itself and it has an enormous potential for transforming mankind; not simply transforming the people who take it, but it is like an art movement or a mathematical understanding or a scientific breakthrough. It holds the possibility of transforming the entire society simply by virtue of the information that is coming through. This is a source of gnosis, and the voice of gnosis has been, uh, uh, silenced in the Western mind for at least a thousand years.

I like to think that, uh, when these Franciscans and Dominicans arrived in Mexico in the 16th century, they immediately set about stamping this thing out. The indians called it *teonanácatl*, the flesh of the gods. Well, the Catholic church has a monopoly on theophagia and was not pleased by this particular approach to what was going on. Now, three hundred, four hundred, whatever it is years after that initial contact, I think that the uh, that eros, which retreated from Greece and retreated from Europe with the rise of Christianity, retreated to the mountains of the Sierra Mazteca essentially, and then was finally pushed into seclusion there. It now reemerges in Western consciousness, and our institutions, our epistemology, all of these things are so shakily founded and so misconstrued, that with the, uh, help of shamanically inspired personalities, we can release this thing once again. I mean the Logos can be unleashed once again, and the voice that spoke to Plato and Parmenides and Heraclitus, that voice can speak again in the minds of modern people, and when it does, uh, the alienation will be ended because we will have become the alien, and this is, uh, this *is* the promise that is held out, and I realize that it may seem to some a nightmare vision, but it-- all historical changes of immense magnitude have had that quality, because they propel people into a completely new world. Are there any questions? [audience laughter]

Question: Uh, well, you indicate that this essentially needs to be done through hallucinogens. I'm not saying they're good or bad; I'm just saying that there appear to be many ways of discovering that, that, um the inner reality, the ultimate reality.

Terence McKenna: You want me to comment on that?

Q: Yea.

TM: I agree with you that this is a strongly held position. I always in my, uh, explorations have recourse to my own experience, and I have not had good luck with any of these other techniques. I spent time in India, practiced yoga, scoured the various rishis, roshis, geshes and gurus that Asia had to offer, and, uh, I believe they must be talking about something, but it, uh, in my experience, uh, it is so pale and so far removed from, uh, the actual closure with the intense tryptamine ecstasy that I don't really know what to make of it, and I am willing to believe these things are possible, I just must be a very grounded person.

Q: Well maybe it's, uh, it's a shortcut for a lot of people.

TM: Well tantra, for instance, that's what tantra means, is the shortcut path. And, uh, certainly, uh, they might be on the right track. Sexuality, orgasm, these things do have tryptamine-esque qualities to them, but the main thing about psilocybin, and I stress it over all these other hallucinogens, is information, immense amounts of information. In my experience, a hallucinogen like LSD, the hallucinations seem largely to be somehow related to the structure of the optic nerve, or they are essentially trivial. They are geometric patterns, shifting lights, this and that, but, unless synergized by another drug, the classic psychedelic experience that started it all with Huxley and those people was, I believe, 200 micrograms of LSD and, uh, 30 milligrams of mescaline. And I would believe that that would deliver a--a visionary experience rather than an experience of hallucinations. And the difference is what psilocybin shows you is not colored lights and moving grids, it shows you places: jungles, cities, machines, books, uh-uh, architectonic form of incredible complexity. Um, just click, click, click. [snaps fingers] There is no possibility that this can be construed as, uh, noise of any sort. It is, in fact, the most highly ordered visual information that you ever experienced; much more highly ordered than the visual experience I'm having at this moment of this room. [some laughter]

Q: But information in the form of a flood of data. That isn't gnosis, I mean could you spell out what you mean, you certainly must mean something more important than data.

TM: Well, no, no. I think I talked about this last time, that Philo Judaeus talks about what he calls a 'more perfect Logos'. He says a more perfect Logos would be beheld rather than heard. In other words, the formulation you get in the gospel of John: *In principio erat verbum, et verbum caro factum est*. In the beginning was the word, yes it was the word in the beginning, but this is a strange kind of word. It is a word which is visually beheld, and the language in which the gnosis communicates is, uh, a language of visual forms such that there is no ambiguity about meaning because there is no recourse to a dictionary of, uh, agreed upon signification. It is *purely* beheld.

This is why it's very hard- one of the main problems of psychedelic drugs is to bring back information because it is hard to English it. And the reason it's hard to English it is because it's like trying to, uh, make a three dimensional rendering of a fourth-dimensional object. Only through the medium of sight can the true modality of this Logos be perceived. That's why it's so interesting, uh, and I should have maybe talked more about it, that psilocybin and ayahuasca, which is this aboriginal drug which uses tryptamine to make it run, is uh, there's a telepathic component which is there is a shared state of mind because the unfolding

hallucination is shared in complete silence and, you know, it's very hard to prove this to a scientist, but if four people are having this experience, you know, one people can like monologue it, and then cease the monologue and another person will take it up. Everyone is seeing the same thing. Uh, and this--it is the quality of being visual information, to answer your question, Arthur, that seems to make this logos, uh, believable in the way that I quoted William Blake when he said 'the truth cannot be told'...

Q: Yes. That is a very powerful statement

TM: And you do believe it, [**Q:** Yes, Yes] you do believe it, you do believe it.

Q: But I was going to say that, that you're speaking of 'seeing', and we say 'Q.E.D.' after the demonstration in geometry but, the Hindus says 'Behold'. Now the seeing involved there, I wouldn't think of as visual, but does get the word 'seeing' or name 'seeing'. You somehow, your whole, uh, whatever it is, I wouldn't say 'mind', your 'being', resonates, I like to use the term 'recognize'. You say "i see that this is the same thing as the other thing." And, I don't know whether it's 'seeing' but it, 'seeing' is a good word, but it isn't, I wouldn't call it visual.

TM: No, well, it isn't exactly visual. But I mean, again, to quote Philo Judaeus on the Logos, he says that the Logos goes from a thing heard to a thing seen without ever crossing through a quantized transition point. And, yet this seems impossible, it seems a logical impossibility, because it is either one or the other. And, yet, when you actually have the experience, you see, aha, it is as though the thought is heard [**Q:** well, yea, that's the recognition], the thought which is heard becomes more and more intense until finally its intensity is such that with there being no jump or glitch, you now are beholding it in a three dimensional visual space and you command it, and this is very typical of psilocybin. Yes.

Q: I have, uh, two questions. One, when you were talking in terms of the dialogue, I was wondering if you could be more descriptive in that regard. And the other thing was as far as the effects of this type of experience, especially over, say, a prolonged period of time, on the body and the body as-as an energy system. And how do you, how do you balance that or how do you counteract possible negative effects or...?

TM: Ok, well I'll take the last part first, which is about the body. I'm not an abuser. It takes me a long time to assimilate each experience, and I feel, you know, I never have lost my respect for it, I mean I really feel dread is one of the emotions that I always feel as I approach it, because I have no faith that my sails won't be ripped this time. I always make the metaphor, you know, it's like sailing out into a dark ocean in your little skiff, and, you know, you may view the moon rising serenely over the calm black water, or something the size of a freight train may roar right through your scene and leave you, uh, clutching at an oar. And, I don't know, astrology is maybe helpful in figuring out when to go and when not to go, but there needs to be a way to figure out when to go and when not to go.

Now, your question about the dialogue. I, I mean this very literally, uh, it speaks to you, you speak to it. It says things. I don't know how many of you have read the book that my brother and I wrote under pseudonyms called *Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide*, but in the introduction there, there is a rap, which is all about "I am old, fifty times older than thought than your species, and I came from the stars." Well that's verbatim, you know. I just was writing it furiously, and sometimes it's very human. I mean my approach to it is hasidic. I rave at it; it raves at me; we argue about what it is going to cough up

and what it isn't. And I say "well look, you know, I'm the grower, you can't hold back on me!" And it says "well, but if I showed you the flying saucer for five minutes you would figure out how it works!" And I said, "well....you know, come through!" [audience laughter] I remember once I asked it, oh what was it. It has these many manifestations. Sometimes it's like Dorothy, sometimes it's like a very Talmudic sort of pawn-broker, and I asked it one time "what are you doing on earth?" And it said, "well, you know, you're a mushroom, you live cheap. It's very, uh... [audience laughter] This was a quiet neighborhood 'til the monkeys got out of control.' (lots of laughter). Yes..

Q: I'd like some clarification on some of the things you said. I can, um, understand, at least in my own way, how this idea about, uh, an overconsciousness--or, you know--casting a shadow, and, um, that our psychedelic experience or dream experience has to do with getting in touch with that. But you said that, um, some--I'm not really positive about this, which is why I need some clarification on it, is that in some sense that, uh, that, uh, those brief experiences, something about that our experience was in order to get back there, and that was the reason for us to be?

TM: Let me see, well, I think that this object that--as a friend of mine said, uh, "history is the shockwave of eschatology." In other words, we are living in a very unique moment, ten or twenty thousand years long, where there is this immense transition is happening and the object at the end of and beyond history, which is the human species transformed into this eternal superconducting overmind spacecraft thing, is casting a shadow back through time. And all religion, all philosophy, all wars, pogroms, persecutions are because people do not get the message right, and that's because there is both the forward-flowing casuistry of being, causal determinism, *and* the interference pattern that is formed against that by the backward flowing fact of this eschatological hyperobject throwing its shadow across the landscape. So we exist--there is a great deal of noise. This situation called history is totally unique. It will only last for a moment. It began a moment ago, it will only last for a moment. But in that moment there is like this tremendous burst of static as the monkey goes to godhood, and there is this crossing of the, the uh, I don't like to call it the casuistry, but the efficacy of the eschaton, this final eschatological object, and the forward flow of entropic circumstance. Does that get it for you?

Q: Um.

TM: Maybe.

Q: Well, I have a bit of trouble thinking kind of like which came first. Are you saying the chicken or the egg? Are you saying this overmind has something to do with, uh..

TM: Well, I'm certainly saying that life is necessary. It is not an idea that we have been skewed onto a siding called organic existence and that our actual place is in eternity. No, there is something about...this is a very important part of the cycle. It is, uh, it is a filter. Remember, I mentioned that I thought there was the possibility of extinction. There was the possibility of falling into physis forever, and, uh, so in that sense the metaphor of the fall is valid. There is a spiritual obligation; there is a task to be done. It isn't, though, simply something as simple minded as following a set of somebody else's rules. It's that the noetic enterprise is a primary obligation of Being in this circumstance, and, uh, uh, that your salvation is linked to it. And, not everyone has to read alchemical texts or study superconducting biochemistry to make the transition. Most people make it naively by, uh, thinking clearly about the present at hand, but we and I, we are intellectuals trapped in a world of too much information. Innocence is gone for us. We cannot, uh, we

cannot expect to cross the rainbow bridge through the act of a good act of contrition. That won't be sufficient. We have to understand, and I recall, you know, Whitehead said "understanding is the apperception of pattern as such" because, uh, to fear death is to not understand what's going on. And, uh, to even see it as a big deal is to not understand what is going on, though I do not claim to have reached that exalted plane. But, uh, cognitive activity is the defining fact of humanness. Language, thought, analysis, art, poetry, myth-making, these are the things that point the way toward the realm of being of the eschaton. That is what Joyce means when he says 'man may become dirigible'. In other words, man may be released into a realm of pure engineering. The imagination is everywhere. This was Blake's perception, this is where we come from, this is where we're going, and, uh, it is only to be, uh, approached through cognitive activity- I think! [audience laughter] Yes.

Q: Can you comment on the, um, importance of your discussion on the I Ching in your book.

TM: Well, very briefly, because tend--I always feel that this part bores people more than any other because it hinges on tiny details, but briefly, the--what the Logos said to me was that time is not simply a homogeneous medium where things occur. Uh, you can think of it as a fluctuating density of probability. So that though we--though science will tell us what can happen and what cannot happen, we have no theory that explains why, out of everything that could happen, certain things undergo what Whitehead call "the formality of actually occurring", and, uh, this was what the Logos sought to explain to me: why out of all the myriad things that could happen, certain things undergo the formality of occurring, and it's because there is a hierarchical, a modular hierarchy of waves of temporal conditioning, or temporal density, or, in other words, uh, a given moment it is more likely for a certain event rated highly improbable, it is more probable at some moments than others. And taking that simple perception, uh, and being lead by the hand by the Logos, we were able to construe maps of time which we run on a computer, and which give a map of the ingression of what I call novelty, the ingression of novelty into time.

Now, as a general statement, it's obvious that novelty generally is increasing. It has been since the very beginning of the universe because first there was only the possibility of nuclear interaction, and then, as temperatures fell [stutters] below the bond strength of the nucleus, atomic systems could be formed. And, then as temperature fell molecular systems could be formed, and much later life became possible, and then as very high lifeforms, complex lifeforms, evolved, uh, thought became possible, culture was invented. Then, with the invention of printing and language and then printing and then electronic information movement and this kind of thing. What is happening is there is an ingression of novelty toward what Whitehead--and I took his term--called concrescence. And, this is a tightening gyre; everything is flowing together. And, in fact, the man-made lapis, the alchemical stone at the end of time, occurs when everything flows together, when the laws of physics are obviated and the universe disappears and what is left is the tightly bound plenum, the monad, if you wish, able to express itself for itself rather than able only to cast a shadow into physis as its reflection.

And I...don't, I speak, I come very close here to classical millenarian and apocalyptarian thought. My view of the rate at which change is accelerating and the way the gyre is tightening causes me to think, and the wave predicts this, that it is not long, it is soon. Uh, fifty years, twenty-five years, thirty-five years, then this event will occur. It is the entry of the species into hyperspace, but it will appear to be the collapse of, of the state vector and the end of physical laws and the release of the mind into itself. Um, and all these other images, the starship, the space colony, all that, these are precursors. Again, the idea that history is the shockwave of eschatology. As you close distance with the eschatological object, the reflections it is

throwing off become more and more true to the thing itself, and in the final moment God stands revealed; there are no more reflections of, uh, the mystery. The mystery in all its nakedness, then is seen, and nothing else exists, uh, but what this is decency can safely scarcely hint at it.

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New Dimensions Radio Interview (aka Towards the Unknown)

10 June 1983

Location, San Francisco, California

Event Description: Dialogue with Michael Toms

Description

- [Audio Link](#)

Terence McKenna: The human imagination in conjunction with technology has become a force so potent that it really can no longer be unleashed on the surface of the planet, uh, with, uh, safety. The human imagination has gained such an immense power that the only environment that is friendly to it is actually the vacuum of deep space. It is there that we can erect the architectonic dreams that drive us to produce a Los Angeles or a Tokyo and do it on a scale and in such a way that it will be fulfilling rather than degrading. So, yes I think, uh, we cannot, uh, move forward in understanding without accepting as a consequence of that that we have to leave the planet, that we are no longer the bipedal monkeys we once were. We have become almost a new force in nature, a thing of language and cybernetics and, uh, an amalgam of computers and uh, br- human brains and societal structures that, uh, has such an enormous forward momentum that the only place where it can express itself without destroying itself is as James Joyce says "Up n'ent".

Michael Toms: So, long, long ago in a far away galaxy, uh, Star Wars style may be in our future?

TM: Well...

MT: As opposed to our past?

TM: It's in our present, I think. Our future is probably almost unimaginable because, I think, the transformation that leaving the planet will bring will, uh, also involve a transformation of our consciousness. We are not going as, uh, 1950s-style human beings. We are going to have to transform our minds before we are going to be able to, uh, leave the planet with any amount of grace. This is where I think the psychedelics come in, because they are anticipations of the future. They seem to channel information that is not, uh, strictly governed by the laws of normal causality, so that there *really is* a prophetic dimension, a glimpse of the potential of the far centuries of the future, through these compounds and, uh, no cultural shift of this magnitude can be unambiguous. I mean, the very idea that as a species we would leave the earth behind us must be as rending an idea as that a child would leave its childhood home. Obviously, it's a turning away from something that, once left behind, can never be recaptured. However, this is, uh, the nature of going forward into being: a series of self-transforming ascents of level, and we now simply happen to be at that moment of ascent to a new level that is linked to leaving the planetary surface physically and to reconnecting with the contents of the unconscious collectivity of our minds.

These two things will be done simultaneously. This is what the last half of the 20th century, it seems to me, is all about.

MT: Well by and large, uh, psychedelics have, uh, really not been accepted into the mainstream - do you see a change in that?

TM: Well, not particularly, uh, they, u-uh, hold a certain fascination for a persistent majority, and in that way they do their catalytic work upon society, which is to introduce new ideas and to, uh, uh, release a certain kind of creative energy into society. I certainly would not like to see a return to the-the psychedelic hysterias of the 1960s. I think it's fine that these things are now the subject of interest of a much smaller group of people but perhaps a group of people with a, uh, greater commitment and a, uh, better idea of exactly what these things are. And, it's really, uh, the same people; it's just a smaller group of them, and they have accumulated experience over the past twenty years. Uh, however, I d-certainly don't think all psychedelic frontiers are conquered. One of the things that I write about and speak about are the phenomena that, uh, many people confirm with the, uh, the psilocybin family of hallucinogens that no one has, uh, included in the standard model of psychedelic drugs, and by that I refer to the Logos-like phenomenon of an interiorized voice that seems to be, uh, almost a superhuman agency, a kind of *genius loci*. And, I've been writing recently about alien intelligence which is what I call this, where uh, you have contact with an entity so beyond the normal structure of the ego that if it is *not* an extraterrestrial, it might as well be, because, uh, its bizarreness and its, uh, uh, distance from ordinary expectations about what can go on is so great that if flying saucers arrived here tomorrow from the Pleiades it would make *this* mystery no less compelling, because I believe that, uh, the place to search for extraterrestrials is in the psychic dimension, and *there* the problem is not the absence of contact but the, uh, *volume* of contact that [stutters] must be sifted through, because the fact of the matter is shamen and mystics and seers have been hearing voices and, uh, talking to gods and demons, uh, since the paleolithic and probably before.

That doesn't mean that, uh, we can rule out this approach to communication. Uh, it seems to me far more likely that an advanced civilization would communicate interdimensionally and telepathically, uh, that amounts of time available for an intelligent species to evolve these kinds of communication are *vast*. So, I think, uh, that it's very interesting then that the tryptamines, psilocybin and DMT, at ,uh, the 15 milligram level, very reliably trigger what could only be described as contact-like phenomena. And, not only the interiorized voice in the head, but also the classical flying saucer motifs of, uh, the whirling disc, the lens-shaped object, the alien approach, uh, this seems to be something hardwired into the human psyche, and, uh, I would like to find out why. I think it's a very odd, uh, uh, fact of human psychology, and I don't buy any of the current theories ranging from that nothing at all is happening to that this is in fact another species with a world around another star that is getting in touch with us. I think it's something so bizarre that it actually masquerades as an extraterrestrial so as not to alarm us by the true implications of what it is. But, I suspect it is something like uh, an overmind of the species, [stutters] that actually the highest form of human organization is not realized in the democratic individual, it is realized in a dimension none of us have ever penetrated which is the mind of the species, which is *actually* the hand at the tiller of history. It is no government, no religious group, but actually what *we call* the human unconscious, but it is not, uh, unconscious, and it is not simply a cybernetic repository of myth and memory. It is an organized entelechy of some sort, and human history is its signature, uh, on the primates, and it is so different from the primates it is like a creature of pure information. It is made of language. It releases ideas into the flowing stream of history to boost the primates toward higher and higher levels of self-reflection of *it*, and we have now reached the point where, uh, the masks are beginning to fall away and we're discovering that, uh, you

know, there is an angel within the monkey, struggling to get free, and this is what the historical crisis is all about, and I'm, for no reasons in particular, very optimistic. I mean, uh, I see it as, uh, a necessary chaos that will lead to a new, uh, and uh, uh, more attractive order.

MT: Terence, you were talking about, uh, extra-ordinary realities and it occurs to me that there's, um, an enormous amount of prejudice against um, the... psychedelics and the, uh, use of hallucinogenic, uh, substances and, um, it's almost as if there's an inordinate fear to open up the, um, door to the closet that these substances, uh, reveal. Um, what about that prejudice? What do you think is- how's that gonna be resolved? What is the resolution of that?

TM: Well, I think it's uh, it's more complicated than a prejudice. It's, uh, a prejudice born of respect, because, uh, most people sense that these, uh, compounds probably actually do what their adherents claim they do. It's possible to see the whole human growth, uh, movement of the 1970s as a wish to continue the inward quest without having to put yourself on the line the way you had to when you took 250 gamma of LSD. And, I think all these other methods are efficacious, but I think it's the sheer..., uh, uh, uh, power of the hallucinogens that puts people off. Uh, you either love them or you hate them, and that's because they dissolve worldviews, and if you like the experience of having your entire ontological structure, uh, disappear out from under you, if you think that's a thrill, uh, you'll probably love psychedelics.

On the other hand, for some people, that's the most horrible thing they can possibly imagine. They navigate reality through various form of faith, and I think, uh, that the psychedelics, uh, the doors of perception are cleansed and you see very, very deeply. Uh, I spent time in India, and I would always go to the local Sadhus of great reputation, and I met many people who possessed, uh, what I call wise-old-man wisdom but wise-old-man wisdom is a kind of Tao of how to live. It has nothing to say about these dimensions that the psychedelics reveal and, uh, for that you have to go to places where hallucinogenic shamanism is practiced, specifically, uh, the Amazon Basin. And, there you discover that beyond simply the wisdom of how to live in ordinary reality, there is a gnosis of how to navigate in extraordinary reality. And, this reality is so extraordinary that we cannot approach what these people are doing with any degree of smugness, because the frank fact of the matter is *we* have no viable theory of what mind is either. The beliefs of the Witoto shaman and the beliefs of a, uh, Princeton phenomenologist have an equal chance of being correct, and there are no arbiters of, uh, who is right.

So, uh, it's the power of these things, the fact that here is something we have not assimilated. We have been to the moon, we have charted the depths of the oceans, the heart of the atom, but we have a fear, uh, of looking inward to ourselves because we sense that here's where all the contradictions flow together and, uh, the same prejudice against psychoanalysis that characterized the 20s and 30s, when it was thought to be, uh, uh, superfluous or, uh, some kind of fad, uh, attends the psychedelics now. It's because it touches a very sensitive nerve; it touches, uh, the issue of the nature of man, and, uh, people are uncomfortable with this or *some* people are uncomfortable with this.

MT: What is the value of exploring, uh, extraordinary realities?

TM: Well, I guess it's the same value that attends the exploration of ordinary realities. There's, uh, an alchemical saying that, uh, one should read the oldest books, climb the highest mountains, and visit the broadest deserts. Uh, I think that, uh, being imposes some kind of obligation to find out what's going on. And, uh, since all primary information about what is going on comes through the senses, any drug or any

compound which alters that sensory input has to be looked at very carefully. I've often made the point that, uh, eh, chemically speaking you can have a molecule which is completely inactive as a psychedelic and you move a single atom on one of its rings and suddenly it's a powerful psychedelic. Well, now it seems to me this is a perfect proof of the, uh, interpenetration of matter and mind. A s-the movement of a single atom from one known position to another known position changes an experience from nothing to overwhelming. This means that mind and matter at the quantum-mechanical level are, uh, all spun together. This means that, uh, in a sense the term 'extraordinary reality' is not correct if it implies a, uh, division of category from ordinary reality. It is simply there is more and more and more of... *reality!* And some of it is inside our heads and some of it is deployed out through uh, three-dimensional Newtonian space.

MT: Most of us, I think, just simply accept, uh, the everyday reality as the only one. Uh, and, and you're talking about uh, uh, journeys into the nether regions of, uh, uh, which- far beyond most peoples, uh, conception or even wanting to conceive of, uh, such a reality. Uh.

TM: Well, I think there's a shamanic temperament which is, uh-uh... a person who craves knowledge, knowledge in the Greek sense of gnosis. In other words, knowledge not of the sort where you subscribe to Scientific American and it validates what you believe, but immediately- uh, cosmologies constructed out of immediate experience but are found always to be applicable. You see, I-I don't believe that the world is made out of quarks or electromagnetic waves, or stars, or planets, or any of these things. I believe the world is made out language and that this is the primary fact that has been overlooked. Uh, the construction of the flying saucer is not so much a dilemma of hardware as it is, uh, a poetic challenge. And, uh, people find it very hard to imagine exactly what I'm talking about. What I'm saying is that the leading edge of reality is mind. And, mind is the primary, uh, substratum of being. We, in the West, have had it the wrong way around for over a millennia but, uh, once this is clearly understood, uh, with what we have learned in our little excursion through three-dimensional space and matter, we will, uh, create a new vision of humanity that will be a fusion of the East and the West.

MT: Well, the world being made of language and I think of these extraordinary realities which are totally beyond any language that we [laughs], we use in any ordinary sense.

TM: Yes, well they are beyond ordinary language. I always think of, uh, Philo Judaeus writing on the Logos. He-he posed to himself the question "What would be a more perfect Logos?" And, then the answered saying, "It would be a Logos which is not heard but beheld." And, he imagined a form of communication where the ears would not be the primary receptors, but the eyes would be. A language where meaning was not constructed through a dictionary of little mouth noises, but, actually, three-dimensional objects were generated with a kind of hyper-language so that there was perfect understanding between people. And, this may sound bizarre, uh, in ordinary reality, but these forms of synesthesia and, uh, synesthesia glossolalia are commonplace, uh, in psychedelic states.

MT: Terence, could you identify Philos for us and tell him-tell us who he was?

TM: He was an Alexandrian Jew of the second century who, uh, made it his business to travel around the Hellenic world and, uh, discussed all the major cults and, uh, religious and cosmogonic theories of his day, so he's a major source of Hellenistic, uh, data for us.

MT: How would you relate to, uh, Socrates view of the world?

TM: Well, I think, uh, that, uh, it's hard not to be a Platonist, but it's something perhaps we should struggle against or at least struggle to modify. I think of myself as sort of a Whiteheadian Platonist. Certainly, the central Platonic idea, which is the idea of the Ideas, these, uh, archetypal forms which stand outside of time, is one which is confirmed by the psychedelic experience and, uh, uh, Plato's formulation of time as the moving image of eternity is another one of these aphorisms that the psychedelic state confirms, and certainly neoplatonism, uh, Plotinus and Porphyry, and that school, uh, are psychedelic philosophers. Their idea of an ascending hierarchy of more and more rarified states is, uh, a sophisticated presentation of the shamanic cosmology, which is the cosmology that one experientially discovers when they involve themselves with psychedelics.

MT: What I think most of us don't understand, or don't-don't really know is the fact that Greek culture and the Eleusinian min-mysteries, um, incorporated the use of something that- very akin to psychedelics.

TM: Yes...

MT: And, and, essentially Western civilization [Laughing] is based on the culture that, uh, had at its core root, um, an experience and a ritual that-that used, as I say, something akin to psychedelics

TM: Yes, well, for over 2000 years, everyone who was anyone in the ancient world made the pilgrimage to Eleusis and had this experience, which Gordon Wasson and Carl Ruck have argued very convincingly was a, uh, hallucinogenic intoxication on ergot. But, of course, w-as soon as the church solidified its power, it, uh, closed these Platonic academies and, uh, moved against, uh, uh, anc-pagan, so-called pagan knowledge, and heretical knowledge, and not only the Platonists but all the Gnostic sects, uh, all of these people, all of these viewpoints, were repressed. I like to think that, uh, the end of that repression came in a very odd way when, uh, in nineteen fifty s- three, I guess it was, Gordon Wasson and his wife Valentina, in the village of Huautla de Jimenez in the Sierra Mazateca of Oaxaca, discovered the psilocybin mushroom cult. It was as if Eros who had been martyred in the Old World was then found sleeping in the mountains of Mexico and resurrected. And, uh, the experience of the mushroom is very much the experience of a *genius loci*, a god on the Grecian model, not 'the God who hung the stars in Heaven' but a local god, a, uh, a, uh, pre-Christian bacchanalian nature power that uh, is-is very alien and yet resonates with our expectations of what that experience would be like.

MT: Interesting that the mushroom also is a symbol in our culture of death and destruction, being the symbol of the nuclear explosion.

TM: Yes well, uh...

MT: Mushroom cloud.

TM: My brother has made the point asking, you know, 'what mushroom is it that grows at the end of history? Is it the mushroom of Fermi and Oppenheimer and Teller, or is it the mushroom of Wasson and Hoffman and Humphry Osmond?' Uh...

MT: Somehow, I think the latter is safer!

[Laughter]

TM: Well, it may not only be safer; it may open the way to escape from, uh, the former. It's like a pun in physics that the force of liberation and the force of destruction could take the same form. It's, uh, what alchemists call a *coincidencia oppositorum*.

MT: Hm, it is an amazing synchronicity it seems uh, that uh... Also, I was interested in--interested in talking with Andy Weil some, uh, time ago about the fact there are new genus of mushrooms appearing that, um, have psilocybin in them that have never been seen before, never been, um, tracked before, and it's almost as if they're appearing now.

TM: Well, it's amazing how many have disc- been discovered since people have bent their attention to it. There have been psilocybin mushrooms reported from England, France, localities where, so far as we know, there is *no* cultural history of usage at all or, uh, however, it's interesting that, uh, cultural usage seems to disappear very early in human history. Hallucinogens are hardly even welcome in agricultural societies. Uh, I think it was Weston La Barre made the point that, uh, once you learn how to grow plants, your god shifts from the ecstatic god of the hallucinogens to the corn god or the food god, and it no longer is about, uh, divining, uh, the hunt and weather through the ecstatic use of hallucinogens; it's about being able to get up every morning and go to work and hoe the crop. So, uh, y- you mentioned earlier the prejudice against hallucinogens; I think it reaches back, uh, to the beginning of agriculture. This competition among plant gods, which exemplified lifestyles that must have seemed very, uh, very, uh, alien to each other.

MT: Is psilocybin illegal?

TM: Oh yes, it's a Schedule 1 drug, uh; Without any public debate, uh, it was placed, uh, on the list, uh, er, at the same time that LSD was, and yet the issue was always couched in terms of LSD being made illegal but actually at that point in time a whole bunch of things were made illegal, and there was never any, uh, public debate. All psychedelics were viewed as the *same drug* and LSD was used as the model. Actually, uh, these drugs, there's a spectrum of psychedelic effects and certain drugs trigger some of them and certain ones others, but yes, psilocybin is illegal.

MT: Are the mushrooms illegal?

TM: The mushrooms also are illegal, as they contain psilocybin.

MT: I recall Andy Weil saying that he walked along a downtown Seattle residential street picking up psilocybin mushrooms from the front yards of...

TM: Oh yes! [chuckles]

MT: ...residential homes. [chuckles]

TM: Well.....Eh, English law took the view that, uh, it was preposterous to try and outlaw a naturally occurring plant, and they uh, took the position that only the chemical was illegal, which I think is a very, uh, very wise position, but I noticed that Canada recently chose the American interpretation over the

British one.

MT: Hm, interesting. It turns out, uh, going back to the Andy Weil story, that, uh, the reason that these mushrooms were in such plenitude in various locals in the northwest was that, uh, that their spores were contained in a mail order company's, uh, um, mushroom growing, uh, product that they send out, mail order, and so...

TM: Yea. So, this is an interesting phenomenon; you see the spores of the mushroom are not illegal because they do not contain psilocybin. They only contain the message in the DNA of the mushroom for the production of psilocybin, so it's a kind of bizarre catch-22. The mushroom spores can move anywhere legally, can be bought and sold but they are the *sine qua non* for the production of mushrooms, of course.

MT: Terence, the-the kind of knowledge and kind of information you're putting forward is... is not generally available. It's not the kind of information or knowledge that one would find in the typical academic anthropology, uh, curriculum, um, and yet it seems to be, um, a knowledge that, uh, is ever-expanding, but somehow it's outside of the cultural institutional, uh, entities in some way. Um, number one, why do you think that's the case? Of course, there's a logical answer to that one, but, um, what do you see as the future of this kind of information, this kind of knowledge?

TM: Well, I think in a sense it signals the rebirth of the institution of shamanism in the context of modern society, and, uh, anthropologists have always made the point about shamen that they were very important social catalysts in their group but they were always peripheral to it, peripheral to the political power and actually usually physically peripheral, living at some distance from the village. And, uh, I think the, uh, electronic shamen, the people who pursue these-the exploration of these spaces, exist to return to tell the rest of us about it, that we are now coming into a period of racial maturity as a species, where we can no longer have, uh, forbidden areas of the human mind or cultural, uh, uh, machinery. We have taken upon ourselves the acquisition of so much power that we now must understand what we are.

Uh, we cannot, uh, travel much further with, uh, the definitions of man that we inherit from the Judeo-Christian tradition. We need to truly explore the problem of consciousness, because as man gains power he is becoming the defining fact on the planet in the near-space area. So, uh, the question that looms is "Is man good?" and, then, if he is, what is it he's good *for*? And, uh, the shaman will point the way, because what they are, are, uh, visionaries, poets, cultural architects, forecasters, all these roles which we understand in more conventional terms rolled into one and raised to Nth power. They are cultural models for the rest of us. This has always been true. [stutters] The shaman has access to a superhuman dimension and a superhuman condition, and by being able to do that he affirms the trans- the potential for transcendence in *all* people. He is an exemplar, if you will. And, I see the attention that's being given to these things signaling a sense, on the part of the society, that we need a return to these models. This is why, for instance, in the *Star Wars* phenomenon, Skywalker, Luke Skywalker, Skywalker is a direct translation of the word shaman out of the Tungusic, which is, S- where Siberian shamanism comes from. So, these heroes that are being instilled in the heart of the culture are shamanic heroes. They control a force, which is, uh, bigger than everybody and holds the galaxy together, and this is true, as a matter of fact. And, as we explore how true it *is*, the, uh, limitations of our previous worldview will be exposed for all to see. I think it was J. B. S. Haldane who said, uh, "The world may not only be stranger than we suppose, it may be stranger than we *can* suppose."

MT: I think of, uh, the chara-[clears throat] excuse me, the character Yoda...

TM: Right...

MT: ...certainly as a shamanic type character.

TM: Very much so.

MT: Yea.... As we talk about shamans and shamanism, again that brings up, uh, cross-cultural currents, and, um, do you see the-the shaman taking on a new uh, -certainly you don't see Indian shamans walking, uh, into metropolitan areas, uh, but do you see the shaman taking on a new form?

TM: Well I th- I believe, along with Gordon Wasson and others, but in distinction to Mircea Eliade who was a major writer on shamanism, that, um, it is hallucinogenic shamanism that is primary and that where shamanic techniques are used to the exclusion of, uh, hallucinogenic drug ingestion, the shamanism tends to be vitiated. It is more like, uh, a ritual enactment of what *real* shamanism is. So that, uh, uh, the shamanism that is coming to be is coming to be within people in our culture. Uh, the people who feel comfortable with psychedelic drugs and who, by going into those spaces and then returning with works of art, or poetic accounts, or scientific ideas, are actually changing the face of the culture. I connect the psychedelic dimension to the dimension of inspiration and dream. I think history has always, uh, progressed by the bubbling up of ideas from these nether dimensions into the minds of receptive men and women. It is simply that *now* with the hallucinogens we actually have a tool to push the button. We are no longer dependent upon, uh, whatever factors it is that previously controlled the, uh, ingress of novelty into human history. We have taken that function to ourselves and this will accelerate and, uh, and, uh, intensify the cultural crisis, but I think in the end it will lead that much sooner to its resolution.

MT: So, as we, uh, continue to, uh, move towards the further exploration of these spaces, um, we, uh, can expect that, um, social change is a result? Personal change?

TM: Tremendous social change. I see in fact, uh, what is happening is a tendency to, uh, what I call 'turn the body inside out'. We are, through our media and our cybernetics, we are actually approaching the point where consciousness can be experienced, uh, dis-, uh, in a state of disconnection from the body. We have changed. We are no longer, as I said, bipedal monkeys. We are instead a kind of cybernetic coral reef of organic components and inorganic technological components. We have become a force which takes unorganized raw material and excretes, uh, technical objects. We have, uh, transcended the normal definitions of man; we are like an enormous collective organism with our data banks, and our forecasting, uh, agencies, and our computer networks, and the many levels at which we are connected into the universe. Our self-image is changing. The monkey is, uh, all but being left behind and shortly *will* be left behind.

The flying saucer, again, I take to be an image of the future state of humanity. It is a kind of millenarian transformation of man where the soul is exteriorized as the apotheosis of technology [Toms coughs], and it is that, uh, eschatological event which is casting enormous shadows backward through time over the historical landscape. That *is* the siren at the end of time, calling all mankind across the last ten millennia toward it, calling us out of the trees and into history and through this series of multi-leveled cultural, uh, transitions, to the point where, uh, the thing *within* the monkeys, the creature of pure language and pure

imagination, whose aspirations are entirely, uh, uh, titanic in terms of self-transformation. That thing is emerging, and it will emerge as man leaves the planet. And it's not something quantized and clearly defined. It is, in fact, what the next 50 or so years will be about. But, at the end of it, the species will be off-planet and transformed and fully-wired from the depths to the heights.

MT: Are we just talking about another version of the Christian death-ressurrection-ascension into heaven?

TM: Except that it is coming into history. What is happening is that uh, the uh, the paradise promised, *the soul*, is actually going to enter into history, because technological man took the apocalyptic aspirations of Christianity so seriously that we're going to make it happen. It has become the guiding image of what we want to be, and I'm reminded of the poem by Yeats, it's 'Sailing to Byzantium', where he speaks of how after death he would like to be an enameled golden object, uh, singing to the lords and ladies of Byzantium, and it's the image of man transformed into eternal circuitry and released into a hyperspace of information where, uh, you are a thing of circuitry but you appear to be walking along an unspoiled beach in paradise. It is that we are going to, uh, find the power to realize our deepest cultural aspirations. This is why we must find out what our deepest cultural aspirations are. Again, another way of phrasing the question "Is man good?".

MT: What about the idea that these spaces that we've been talking about, that you've been illuminating, are spaces that can be achieved without the use of psychedelics?

TM: Well, again, I scoured India, and my humble personal opinion is, uh, that, uh, it is highly unlikely. Uh, I've always approached, uh, people of spiritual accomplishment with the question, "What can you show me?," because, as I said earlier, this 'wise-old-man wisdom' is one thing, but only the- the hallucinogen using shaman of the Amazon seem to be able to go beyond that. Uhh, there may be techniques for doing this but, uh, the efficacy and the dependability of the hallucinogens seems to me to make them the obvious, uh, choice. It would only be a series of cultural conventions that would cause one to want to engineer around that. It is the obvious, uh, path to transcendence. People must face the fact that on one level we are chemical machines. That doesn't mean we are that at every level, but it does mean that that is a level where we can intervene to change the pictures that are coming in and going out and higher levels.

MT: You're not suggesting that people should do this by themselves?

TM: Take hallucinogens? Well, I don't know about 'take it by themselves'; probably not, although, uh, I always do. And, uh, I seem to prefer it. What I am suggesting is that they take it in a situation of minimum sensory input. Lying down in darkness with eyes closed cannot be surpassed, and people want music, they want to walk around in nature, they want all these things but nature and music are beautiful in their own right. They are the adumbrations of the psychedelic experience that we deal with in ordinary reality. In confrontation with the psychedelic experience, these things are hardly more than impediments. There very interesting things are happening in the utter blackness behind your eyelids, lying still in darkness. And, uh, that is where the mystery, uh, comes from and goes to.

MT: My question had to do with 'with or without a guide'.

TM: Oh, I don't think people should do it without a guide unless they feel very confident *from experience* that they don't need a guide. I like to have these ideas get out. I think it's important that we discuss all this

in a way that is only now becoming possible because of how it was in the 1960s. Now we need to shed all that and look back and look forward and try to make a mature judgment for our culture, based on the facts of the matter.

[Recording ends]

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New Maps of Hyperspace

Day Month 1984

Berkeley Institute for the Study of Consciousness, Berkeley, CA

Description

- [Needs Audio Link](#)
- [Scribd Transcript](#)
- [Deoxy Transcript](#)

In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus tells us, "History is the nightmare from which I am trying to awaken." I would turn this around and say that history is what we are trying to escape from into dream. The dream is eschatological. The dream is zero time and outside of history. We wish to escape into the dream. Escape is a key thing charged against those who would experiment with plant hallucinogens. The people who make this charge hardly dare face the degree to which hallucinogens are escapist. Escape. Escape from the planet, from death, from habit, and from the problem, if possible, of the Unspeakable.

If one leaves aside the last three hundred years of historical experience as it unfolded in Europe and America, and examines the phenomenon of death and the doctrine of the soul in all its ramifications - Neoplatonic, Christian, dynastic-Egyptian, and so on, one finds repeatedly the idea that there is a light body, an entelechy that is somehow mixed up with the body during life and at death is involved in a crisis in which these two portions separate. One part loses its *raison d'etre* and falls into dissolution; metabolism stops. The other part goes we know not where. Perhaps nowhere if one believes it does not exist; but then one has the problem of trying to explain life. And, though science makes great claims and has done well at explaining simple atomic systems, the idea that science can make *any* statement about what life is or where it comes from is currently preposterous.

Science has nothing to say about how one can decide to close one's hand into a fist, and yet it happens. This is utterly outside the realm of scientific explanation because what we see in that phenomenon is mind as a first cause. It is an example of telekinesis: matter is caused by mind to move. So we need not fear the sneers of science in the matter of the fate or origin of the soul. My probe into this area has always been the psychedelic experience, but recently I have been investigating dreams, because dreams are a much more generalized form of experience of the hyperdimension in which life and mind seem to be embedded.

Looking at what people with shamanic traditions say about dreams, one comes to the realization that for these people dream reality is experientially a parallel continuum. The shaman accesses this continuum with hallucinogens as well as with other techniques, but most effectively with hallucinogens. Everyone else accesses it through dreams. Freud's idea about dreams was that they were what he called "day-residues," and that one could trace the content of a dream down to a distortion of something that happened during waking time.

I suggest that it is much more useful to try to make a geometric model of consciousness, to take seriously the idea of a parallel continuum, and to say that the mind and the body are embedded in the dream and the dream is a higher-order spatial dimension. In sleep, one is released into the real world, of which the world of waking is only the surface in a very literal geometric sense. There is a plenum - recent experiments in quantum physics tend to back this up - a holographic plenum of information. All information is everywhere. Information that is not here is nowhere. Information stands outside of time in a kind of eternity - an eternity that does not have a temporal existence about which one may say, "It always existed." It does not have temporal duration of any sort. It is eternity. We are not primarily biological, with mind emerging as a kind of iridescence, a kind of epiphenomenon at the higher levels of organization of biology. We are hyperspatial objects of some sort that cast a shadow into matter. The shadow in matter is our physical organism.

At death, the thing that casts the shadow withdraws, and metabolism ceases. Material form breaks down; it ceases to be a dissipative structure in a very localized area, sustained against entropy by cycling material in, extracting energy, and expelling waste. But the form that ordered it is not affected. These declarative statements are made from the point of view of the shamanic tradition, which touches all higher religions. Both the psychedelic dream state and the waking psychedelic state acquire great import because they reveal to life a task: to become familiar with this dimension that is causing being, in order to be familiar with it at the moment of passing from life.

The metaphor of a vehicle - an after-death vehicle, an astral body - is used by several traditions. Shamanism and certain yogas, including Taoist yoga, claim very clearly that the purpose of life is to familiarize oneself with this after-death body so that the act of dying will not create confusion in the psyche. One will recognize what is happening. One will know what to do and one will make a clean break. Yet there does seem to be the possibility of a problem in dying. It is not the case that one is condemned to eternal life. One can muffle it through ignorance.

Apparently at the moment of death there is a kind of separation, like birth - the metaphor is trivial, but perfect. There is a possibility of damage or of incorrect activity. The English poet-mystic William Blake said that as one starts into the spiral there is the possibility of falling from the golden track into eternal death. Yet it is only a crisis of a moment - a crisis of passage - and the whole purpose of shamanism and of life correctly lived is to strengthen the soul and to strengthen the ego's relationship to the soul so that this passage can be cleanly made. This is the traditional position.

I want to include an abyss in this model - one less familiar to rationalists, but familiar to us all one level deeper in the psyche as inheritors of the Judeo-Christian culture. That is the idea that the world will end, that there will be a final time, that there is not only the crisis of the death of the individual but also the crisis of death in the history of the species.

What this seems to be about is that from the time of the awareness until the resolution of the apocalyptic potential, there are roughly one hundred thousand years. In biological time, this is only a moment, yet it is ten times the entire span of history. In that period, everything hangs in the balance, because it is a mad rush from hominid to starflight. In the leap across those one hundred thousand years, energies are released, religions are shot off like sparks, philosophies evolve and die, science arises, magic arises, all of these concerns that control power with greater and lesser degrees of ethical constancy appear. Ever present is the possibility of aborting the species' transformation into a hyperspatial entelechy.

We are now, there can be no doubt, in the final historical seconds of that crisis - a crisis that involves the end of history, our departure from the planet, the triumph over death, and the release of the individual from the body. We are, in fact, closing distance with the most profound event a planetary ecology can encounter - the freeing of life from the dark chrysalis of matter. The old metaphor of psyche as the caterpillar transformed by metamorphosis is a specieswide analogy. We must undergo a metamorphosis in order to survive the momentum of the historical forces already set in motion.

Evolutionary biologists consider humans to be an unevolving species. Some time in the last fifty thousand years, with the invention of culture, the biological evolution of humans ceased and evolution became an epigenetic, cultural phenomenon. Tools, languages, and philosophies began to evolve, but the human somatotype remained the same. Hence, physically, we are very much like people of a long time ago. But technology is the real skin of our species. Humanity, correctly seen in the context of the last five hundred years, is an extruder of technological material. We take in matter that has a low degree of organization; we put it through mental filters, and we extrude jewelry, gospels, space shuttles. This is what we do. We are like coral animals embedded in a technological reef of extruded psychic objects. All our tool making implies our belief in an ultimate tool. That tool is the flying saucer, or the soul, exteriorized in three-dimensional space. The body can become an internalized holographic object embedded in a solid-state, hyperdimensional matrix that is eternal, so that we each wander through a true Elysium.

This is a kind of Islamic paradise in which one is free to experience all the pleasures of the flesh provided one realizes that one is a projection of a holographic solid-state matrix that is microminiaturized, superconducting, and nowhere to be found: it is part of the plenum. All technological history is about producing prototypes of this situation with greater and greater closure toward the ideal, so that airplanes, automobiles, space shuttles, space colonies, starships of the nuts-and-bolts, speed-of-light type are, as Mircea Eliade said, "self-transforming images of flight that speak volumes about man's aspiration to self-transcendence."

Our wish, our salvation, and our only hope is to end the historical crisis by becoming the alien, by ending alienation, by recognizing the alien as the Self, in fact - recognizing the alien as an Overmind that holds all the physical laws of the planet intact in the same way that one holds an idea intact in one's thoughts. The givens that are thought to be writ in adamant are actually merely the moods of the Goddess, whose reflection we happen to be. The whole meaning of human history lies in recovering this piece of lost information so that man may be dirigible or, to paraphrase James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* on Moicane, the red light district of Dublin: "Here in Moicane we flop on the seamy side, but up n'ent, prospector, you sprout all your worth and you woof your wings, so if you want to be Phoenixed, come and be parked." It is that simple, you see, but it takes courage to be parked when the Grim Reaper draws near. "A blessing in disguise," Joyce calls him.

What psychedelics encourage, and where I hope attention will focus once hallucinogens are culturally integrated to the point where large groups of people can plan research programs without fear of persecution, is the modeling of the after-death state. Psychedelics may do more than model this state; they may reveal the nature of it. Psychedelics will show us that the modalities of appearance and understanding can be shifted so that we can know mind within the context of the One Mind. The One Mind contains all experiences of the Other. There is no dichotomy between the Newtonian universe, deployed through light-years of three-dimensional universe, and the interior mental universe. They are adumbrations of the same

thing.

We perceive them as unresolvable dualisms because of the low quality of the code we customarily use. The language we use to discuss this problem has built-in dualisms. This is a problem of language. All codes have relative code qualities, except the Logos. The Logos is perfect and, therefore, partakes of no quality other than itself. I am here using the word *Logos* in the sense in which Philo Judaeus uses it - that of the Divine Reason that embraces the archetypal complex of Platonic ideas that serve as the models of creation. As long as one maps with something other than the Logos, there will be problems of code quality. The dualism built into our language makes the death of the species and the death of the individual appear to be opposed things.

Likewise, the scenarios that biology has created through examining the physical universe versus the angel- and demon-haunted worlds that depth psychology is reporting is also a dichotomy. The psychedelic experience acts to resolve this dichotomy. All that is needed to go beyond an academic understanding of the plant hallucinogens is the experience of the tryptamine- induced ecstasy. The dimethyltryptamine (DMT) molecule has the unique property of releasing the structured ego into the Overself. Each person who has that experience undergoes a mini-apocalypse, a mini-entry and mapping into hyperspace. For society to focus in this direction, nothing is necessary except for this experience to become an object of general concern.

This is not to suggest that everyone should experiment with mushrooms or other naturally occurring sources of psychoactive tryptamines. We should try to assimilate and integrate the psychedelic experience since it is a plane of experience that is directly accessible to each of us. The role that we play in relationship determines how we will present ourselves in that final, intimated transformation. In other words, in this notion there is a kind of teleological bias; there is a belief that there is a hyperobject called the Overmind, or God, that casts a shadow into time. History is our group experience of this shadow. As one draws closer and closer to the source of the shadow, the paradoxes intensify, the rate of change intensifies. What is happening is that the hyperobject is beginning to ingress into three-dimensional space.

One way of thinking of this is to suppose that the waking world and the world of the dream have begun to merge so that in a certain sense the school of UFO criticism that has said flying sources are hallucinations was correct in that the laws that operate in the dream, the laws that operate in hyperspace, can at times operate in three-dimensional space when the barrier between the two modes becomes weak. Then one gets these curious experiences, sometimes called psychotic breaks, that always have a tremendous impact on the experient because there seems to be an exterior component that could not possibly be subjective. At such times coincidences begin to build and build until one must finally admit that one does not know what is going on. Nevertheless, it is preposterous to claim that this is a psychological phenomenon, because there are accompanying changes in the external world. Jung called this *synchronicity* and made a psychological model of it, but it is really an alternative physics beginning to impinge on local reality.

The alternative physics is a physics of light. Light is composed of photons, which have no antiparticle. This means that there is no dualism in the world of light. The conventions of relativity say that time slows down as one approaches the speed of light, but if one tries to imagine the point of view of a thing made of light, one must realize that what is never mentioned is that if one moves at the speed of light there is no time whatsoever. There is an experience of time zero. So if one imagines for a moment oneself to be made of light, or in possession of a vehicle that can move at the speed of light, one can traverse from any point in the universe to any other with a subjective experience of time zero. This means that one crosses to Alpha

Centauri in time zero, but the amount of time that has passed in the relativistic universe is four and a half years. But if one moves very great distances, if one crosses two hundred and fifty thousand light-years to Andromeda, one would still have a subjective experience of time zero.

The only experience of time that one can have is of a subjective time that is created by one's own mental processes, but in relationship to the Newtonian universe there is no time whatsoever. One exists in eternity, one has become eternal, the universe is aging at a staggering rate all around one in this situation, but that is perceived as a fact of this universe - the way we perceive Newtonian physics as a fact of this universe. One has transited into the eternal mode. One is then apart from the moving image; one exists in the completion of eternity.

I believe that this is what technology pushes toward. There is no contradiction between ecological balance and space migration, between hypertechnology and radical ecology. These issues are red herrings; the real historical entity that is becoming imminent is the human soul. The monkey body has served to carry us to this moment of release, and it will always serve as a focus of self-image, but we are coming more and more to exist in a world made by the human imagination. This is what is meant by the return to the Father, the transcendence of *physis*, the rising out of the Gnostic universal prison of iron that traps the light: nothing less than the transformation of our species.

Very shortly an acceleration of this phenomenon will take place in the form of space exploration and space colonies. The coral-reef-like animal called Man that has extruded technology over the surface of the earth will be freed from the constraints of anything but the imagination and the limitations of materials. It has been suggested that the earliest space colonies include efforts to duplicate the idyllic ecosystem of Hawaii as an ideal. These exercises in ecological understanding will prove we know what we are doing. However, as soon as this understanding is under control we will be released into the realm of art. This is what we have always striven for. We will make our world - all of our worlds - and the world we came from will be maintained as a garden. What Eliade discussed as metaphors of self-transforming flight will be realized shortly in the technology of space colonization.

The transition from earth to space will be a staggeringly tight genetic filter, a much tighter filter than any previous frontier has ever been, including the genetic and demographic filter represented by the colonization of the New World. It has been said that the vitality of the Americas is due to the fact that only the dreamers and the pioneers and the fanatics made the trip across. This will be even more true of the transition to space. The technological conquest of space will set the stage; then, for the internalization of that metaphor, it will bring the conquest of inner space and the collapse of the state vectors associated with this technology deployed in Newtonian space. Then the human species will have become more than dirigible.

A technology that would internalize the body and exteriorize the soul will develop parallel to the move to space. The Invisible Landscape, a book by my brother and myself, made an effort to short-circuit that chronology and, in a certain sense, to force the issue. It is the story, or rather it is the intellectual underpinnings of the story, of an expedition to the Amazon by my brother and myself and several other people in 1971. During that expedition, my brother formulated an idea that involved using harmine and harmaline, compounds that occur in *Banisteriopsis caapi*, the woody vine that is the basis for ayahuasca. We undertook an effort to use harmine in conjunction with the human voice in what we called "the experiment at La Chorrera." It was an effort to use sound to charge the molecular structure of harmine molecules metabolizing in the body in such a way that they would bind preferentially and permanently with

endogenous molecular structures.

Our candidate at the time was neural DNA, though Frank Barr, a researcher into the properties of brain melanin, has made a convincing case that there is as great a likelihood that harmine acts by binding with melanin bodies. In either case, the pharmacology involves binding with a molecular site where information is stored, and this information is then broadcast in such a way that one begins to get a mental readout on the structure of the soul. Our experiment was an effort to use a kind of shamanic technology to bell the cat, if you will, to hang a superconducting, telemetric device on the Overmind so that there would be a continuous readout of information from that dimension. The success or failure of this attempt may be judged for oneself.

The first half of the book describes the theoretical underpinnings of the experiment. The second half describes the theory of the structure of time that derived from the bizarre mental states that followed the experiment. I do not claim that we succeeded, only that our theory of what happened is better than any theory proposed by critics. Whether we succeeded or not, this style of thinking points the way. For example, when I speak of the technology of building a starship, I imagine it will be done with voltages far below the voltage of a common flashlight battery. This is, after all, where the most interesting phenomena go on in nature. Thought is that kind of phenomenon; metabolism is that kind of phenomenon.

A new science that places the psychedelic experience at the center of its program of investigation should move toward a practical realization of this goal - the goal of eliminating the barrier between the ego and the Overself so that the ego can perceive itself as an expression of the Overself. Then the anxiety of facing a tremendous biological crisis in the form of the ecocrises, and the crisis of limitation in physical space forced upon us by our planet-bound situation, can be obviated by cultivating the soul and by practicing a new shamanism using tryptamine-containing plants.

Psilocybin is the most commonly available and experientially accessible of these compounds. Therefore my plea to scientists, administrators, and politicians who may read these words is this: look again at psilocybin, do not confuse it with the other psychedelics, and realize that it is a phenomenon unto itself with an enormous potential for transforming human beings - not simply transforming the people who take it, but transforming society in the way that an art movement, a mathematical understanding, or a scientific breakthrough transforms society. It holds the possibility of transforming the entire species simply by virtue of the information that comes through it. Psilocybin is a source of gnosis, and the voice of gnosis has been silenced in the Western mind for at least a thousand years.

When the Franciscans and the Dominicans arrived in Mexico in the sixteenth century, they immediately set about stamping out the mushroom religion. The Indians called it *teonanacatl*, "the flesh of the gods." The Catholic church had a monopoly on theophagia and was not pleased by this particular approach to what was going on. Now, four hundred years after that initial contact, I suggest that Eros, which retreated from Europe with the rise of Christianity, retreated to the mountains of the Sierra Mazateca. Finally, pushed into seclusion there, it now reemerges in Western consciousness.

Our institutions, our epistemologies are bankrupt and exhausted; we must start anew and hope that with the help of shamanically inspired personalities, we can cultivate this ancient mystery once again. The Logos can be unleashed, and the voice that spoke to Plato and Parmenides and Heraclitus can speak again in the minds of modern people. When it does, the alienation will be ended because we will have become the alien. This is the promise that is held out; it may seem to some a nightmare vision, but all historical

changes of immense magnitude have a charged emotional quality. They propel people into a completely new world.

I believe that this work must be done using hallucinogens. Traditionally it has been thought that there were many paths to spiritual advancement. In this matter I must fall back on personal experience. I have not had good results with any other techniques. I spent time in India, practiced yoga, visited among the various rishis, roshis, geysheys, and gurus that Asia had to offer, and I believe they must be talking about something so pale and removed from closure with the full tryptamine ecstasy that I don't really know what to make of them and their wan hierophanies.

Tantra claims to be another approach. Tantra means "the short-cut path," and certainly it might be on the right track. Sexuality, orgasm, these things do have tryptaminelike qualities to them, but the difference between psilocybin and all other hallucinogens is information - immense amounts of information.

LSD seemed somehow to be largely related to the structure of the personality. Often it seemed to me the visions were merely geometric patterns unless synergized by another compound. The classic psychedelic experience that was written about by Aldous Huxley was two hundred micrograms of LSD and thirty milligrams of mescaline. That combination delivers a visionary experience rather than an experience of hallucinations. In my opinion the unique quality of psilocybin is that it reveals not colored lights and moving grids, but places - jungles, cities, machines, books, architectonic forms of incredible complexity. There is no possibility that this could be construed as neurological noise of any sort. It is, in factm the most highly ordered visual information that one can experience, much more highly ordered than the normal waking vision.

That's why it's very hard with psychedelic compounds to bring back information. These things are hard to English because it is like trying to make a three-dimensional rendering of a fourth-dimensional object. Only through the medium of sight can the true modality of this Logos be perceived. That is why it is so interesting that psilocybin and *ayahuasca* - the aboriginal tryptamine-containing brew - both produce a telepathic experience and a shared state of mind. The unfolding group hallucination is shared in complete silence. It's hard to prove this to a scientist, but if several people share such an experience, one person can describe it and then cease the monologue and another person may then take it up. Everyone is seeing the same thing! It is the quality of being complex visual information that makes the Logos a vision of a truth that cannot be told.

The information thus imparted is not, however, merely restricted to the mode of seeing. The Logos is capable of going from a thing heard to a thing seen, without ever crossing through a discernible transition point. This seems a logical impossibility; yet when one actually has the experience, one sees - aha! - it is as though thought that is heard does become something seen. The thought that is heard becomes more and more intense until, finally, its intensity is such that, with no transition, one is now beholding it in three-dimensional, visual space. One commands it. This is very typical of psilocybin.

Naturally, whenever a compound is introduced into the body, one must exercise caution and be well informed with regard to possible side effects. Professional psychedelic investigators are aware of these factors and freely acknowledge that the obligation to be well informed is of primary importance.

Speaking for myself, let me say that I am not an abuser. It takes me a long time to assimilate each visionary experience. I have never lost my respect for these dimensions. Dread is one of the emotions that I feel as I approach the experience. Psychedelic work is like sailing out onto a dark ocean in a little skiff.

One may view the moon rising serenely over the calm black water, or something the size of a freight train may roar right through the scene and leave one clinging at an oar.

The dialogue with the other is what makes repetition of these experiences seem worthwhile. The mushroom speaks to you when you speak to it. In the introduction to the book that my brother and I wrote (under pseudonyms) called [//Psilocybin: Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide//](#), there is a mushroom monologue that goes: "I am old, fifty times older than thought in your species, and I came from the stars." Sometimes it's very human. My approach to it is Hasidic. I rave at it; it raves at me. We argue about what it is going to cough up and what it isn't. I say, "Well, look, I'm the propagator, you can't hold back on me," and it says, "But if I showed you the flying saucer for five minutes, you would figure out how it works," and I say, "Well, come through." It has many manifestations. Sometimes it's like Dorothy of Oz; sometimes it's like a very Talmudic sort of pawnbroker. I asked it once, "What are you doing on Earth?" It said, "Listen, if you're a mushroom, you live cheap; besides, I'm telling you, this was a very nice neighborhood until the monkeys got out of control."

"Monkeys out of control:" that is the mushroom voice's view of history. To us, history is something very different. History is the shock wave of eschatology. In other words, we are living in a very unique moment, ten or twenty thousand years long, where an immense transition is happening. The object at the end of and beyond history is the human species fused into eternal tantric union with the superconducting Overmind/UFO. It is that mystery that casts its shadow back through time. All religion, all philosophy, all wars, pogroms, and persecutions happen because people do not get the message right. There is both the forward-flowing casuistry of being, causal determinism, and the interference pattern that is formed against that by the backward-flowing fact of this eschatological hyperobject throwing its shadow across the temporal landscape. We exist, yet there is a great deal of noise. This situation called history is totally unique; it will last only a moment, it began a moment ago. In that moment there is a tremendous burst of static as the monkey goes to godhood, as the final eschatological object mitigates and transforms the forward flow of entropic circumstance.

Life is central to the career of organization in matter. I reject the idea that we have been shunted onto a siding called organic existence and that our actual place is in eternity. This mode of existence is an important part of the cycle. It is filter. There is the possibility of extinction, the possibility of falling into *physis* forever, and so in that sense the metaphor of the fall is valid. There is a spiritual obligation, there is a task to be done. It is not, however, something as simple as following a set of somebody else's rules. The noetic enterprise is a primary obligation toward being. Our salvation is linked to it. Not everyone has to read alchemical texts or study superconducting biomolecules to make the transition. Most people make it naively by thinking clearly about the present at hand, but we intellectuals are trapped in a world of too much information. Innocence is gone for us. We cannot expect to cross the rainbow bridge through a good act of contrition; that will not be sufficient.

We have to understand. Whitehead said, "Understanding is the apperception of pattern as such;" to fear death is to misunderstand life. Cognitive activity is the defining act of humanness. Language, thought, analysis, art, dance, poetry, myth-making: these are the things that point the way toward the realm of the eschaton. We humans may be released into a realm of pure self-engineering. The imagination is everything. This was Blake's perception. This is where we came from. This is where we are going. And it is only to be approached through cognitive activity.

Time is the notion that gives ideas such as these their power, for they imply a new conception of time.

During the experiment at La Chorrera, the Logos demonstrated that time is not simply a homogeneous medium where things occur, but a fluctuating density of probability. Though science can sometimes tell us what can happen and what cannot happen, we have no theory that explains why, out of everything that could happen, certain things undergo what Whitehead called "the formality of actually occurring." This was what the Logos sought to explain, why out of all the myriad things that could happen, certain things undergo the formality of occurring. It is because there is a modular hierarchy of waves of temporal conditioning, or temporal density. A certain event, rated highly improbable, is more probable at some moments than at others.

Taking that simple perception and being led by the Logos, I was able to construct a fractal model of time that can be programmed on a computer and that gives a map of the ingression of what I call "novelty" - the ingression of novelty into time. As a general rule, novelty is obviously increasing. It has been since the very beginning of the universe. Immediately following the Big Bang there was only the possibility of nuclear interaction, and then, as temperatures fell below the bond strength of the nucleus, atomic systems could be formed. Still later, as temperatures fell further, molecular systems appeared. Then much later, life became possible; then very complex life forms evolved, thought became possible, culture was invented. The invention of printing and electronic information transfer occurred.

What is happening to our world is ingression of novelty toward what Whitehead called "concrecence," a tightening gyre. Everything is flowing together. The "autopoietic lapis," the alchemical stone at the end of time, coalesces when everything flows together. When the laws of physics are obviated, the universe disappears, and what is left is the tightly bound plenum, the monad, able to express itself for itself, rather than only able to cast a shadow into *physis* as its reflection. I come very close here to classical millenarian and apocalyptic thought in my view of the rate at which change is accelerating. From the way the gyre is tightening, I predict that concrecence will occur soon - around 2012 A.D. It will be the entry of our species into hyperspace, but it will appear to be the end of physical laws accompanied by the release of the mind into the imagination.

All these images - the starship, the space colony, the lapis - are precursory images. They follow naturally from the idea that history is the shock wave of eschatology. As closes distance with the eschatological object, the reflections it is throwing off resemble more and more the thing itself. In the final moment the Unspeakable stands revealed. There are no more reflections of the Mystery. The Mystery in all its nakedness is seen, and nothing else exists. But what it is, decency can safely scarcely hint; nevertheless, it is the crowning joy of futurism to seek anticipation of it.

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New Views of the Time Wave

11 August 1997

Location, City, State

Description

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Non-ordinary States of Reality Through Vision Plants

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

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"We're playing with half a deck as long as we tolerate that the cardinals of government and science should dictate where human curiosity can legitimately send its attention and where it cannot. It's an essentially preposterous situation. It is essentially a civil rights issue because what we're talking about here is the repression of a religious sensibility. In fact not "a" religious sensibility, the religious sensibility. Not built on some con game spun out by eunuchs, but based on the symbiotic relationship that was in place for our species for 50,000 years before the advent of history riding priestcraft and propaganda. So it's a clarion call to recover a birthright, however uncomfortable that may make us. A call to realize that life lived in the absence of the psychedelic experience that primordial shamanism is based on is life trivialized, life denied, life enslaved to the ego and its fear of dissolution in this mysterious mama matrix which is all around us and which apparently extends to infinity and where our historical future actually lies. This is the other thing..It is now very clear that techniques of machine-human interfacing, pharmacology of the synthetic variety, all kinds of manipulative techniques, all kinds of data storage, imaging and retrieval techniques, all of this is coalescing toward the potential of a truly demonic or angelic kind of self-imaging of our culture. And the people who are on the demonic side are fully aware of this and hurrying full-tilt forward with their plans to capture everyone as a 100% believing consumer inside some kind of beige furnished fascism that won't even raise a ripple. The shamanic response in this situation I think is to PUSH THE ART PEDAL THROUGH THE FLOOR." "Years and years ago before the term "psychedelic" was settled on there was just a phenomenological description. These things were called "consciousness-expanding" drugs. I think that's a very good term. Think about our dilemma on this planet. If the expansion of consciousness does not loom large in the human future, what kind of future is it going to be? To my mind the psychedelic position is most fundamentally threatening when fully logically thought out because it is an anti-drug position, and make no mistake about it, the issue is "drugged." How drugged shall you be? Or to put it another way: consciousness. How conscious shall you be? Who shall be conscious? Who shall be unconscious? Imagine if the Japanese had won World War II, taken over America, and introduced an insidious drug which caused the average American to spend six and a half hours a day consuming enemy propaganda. But this is what was done. Not by the Japanese but by ourselves. This is television. Six and a half hours a day! Average! That's the average! So there must be people out there hooked on twenty-four hours a day. I visit people in L.A. who have one set on in every room so they're racking up a lot of time for the rest of us. You see what is needed is an operational awareness of what we mean by "drug." A "drug" is something which causes unexamined, obsessive habituated behavior. You don't examine your behavior, you just do it, you do it obsessively. You let nothing get in the way of it. This is the kind of life we're being

sold on every level: to watch, to consume, to buy. The psychedelic thing is off in this tiny corner, never mentioned and yet it represents the only counter flow toward a tendency to just leave people in designer states of ...

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Nothing's Wrong

May 1990

Location, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Description

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Novelty and the Transcendental

1990

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

Description

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On Hieronymus Bosch

26 August 1993

Esalen Institute Media Center, Big Sur, CA

Description

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Opening the Doors of Creativity

20 October 1990

Port Hueneme, CA

Description

- [Matrix Masters Podcast](#)
- [Video Link](#)
- [Original Transcript](#)
- [Other links](#)

Andrew C. Voth: Well, I am most pleased and most happy to introduce our very special guest speaker for tonight, Mr. Terence McKenna. [long applause]

Terence: Well, it's a pleasure to be hear. It's wonderful to see..so many familiar faces, and so many faces period. [audience laughter]. I've never been to Port Hueneme before; probably some of you feel the same way. [audience laughter] But, uh, I've been doing a lot of traveling recently. I was, uh, in New York last weekend at the Open Center, and in Prague two weeks before that, so this is the end of a long season of traveling. I'm not home yet, but at least, I'm in my own time zone. [audience laughter]. I want to especially thank Andy Voth and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Oxnard for inviting me to participate. Uh...it represents a real commitment to, uh, free speech and first amendment rights, I think, for [applause] an art museum [applause continue].....Art museums have been taking some knocks recently, and so I think they doubly should be commended for their, uh, courage.

And, I want to explain, as Andy mentioned, this is a benefit for Botanical Dimensions, which explains the double price over the ticket. All of this money will go to the preservation of, uh, medicinal plants with a history of shamanic usage. That is the special focus of our botanical garden in Hawaii, and before I start the formal lecture, I'd like to just say a little bit about that. As you know, the rainforests of the world are being cleared at a v-very frightening rate, and, uh, perhaps, uh..voices are beginning to be heard to halt this destruction of the natural environment. But, whether it's halted or not, the destruction of the knowledge of native peoples concerning the uses of the plants in the rainforest, this is disappearing without doubt in the next 30 years, because these people are moving into cities, uh, taking jobs in the ordinary market economy, and thousands of years of accumulated folk medical knowledge is being lost. So, the real-world political work that Kat [Harrison] and I do is associated with Botanical Dimensions. We conceived it together many, many years ago, and then about six years ago, uh, Kat took it over, put it on its official feet, made it a-a, uh, non-profit foundation, and has run it day to day since then, uh, with tremendous energy and efficiency. So, I'd like to acknowledge Kat McKenna here [points to Kat, applause].

My better half; in fact, my only good half. [audience laughter] And, then I wanted to underscore what Andy said, a very special event, two weeks from now, at the Carnegie Museum. Roy Tuckman, Roy of Hollywood, *bon vivant*, [audience laughter] countercultural figure, informational ferret of our time,

[audience laughter] will be recast as an experimental composer of great, uh, energy and imagination, and I hope you'll all, uh, turn out for Roy. He's been a wonderful force, uh, and in my life and I think in the cultural life of Southern California. Both Roy and Diane [surname] have done a wonderful job in raising the quality of public dialogue in Southern California, which I think is a precondition for any kind of, uh, clear thinking about our future or our political situation. So, [applause] here's to Roy and Diane.

Ok.....

Well, the theme that unites these lectures is, uh, creativity and the techniques by which the artist can, uh, refine his or her vision, expand the vision, communicate the vision. And, um, before I get into that issue, I thought I would talk just a little bit about my notion of creativity, per se. What is it, uh, uh, in and of itself? And when I think like that of course I cast my mind back to nature. Nature is the great visible engine of creativity, against which all other creative efforts, uh, are measured. And, creativity in nature has a curious distribution. It's something which accumulates through time. If we stand back and look at the universe, we see that at its earliest moments, it was very simple. It was a plenum. It was without characters or characteristics. It was what is called in Hindu mythology the *turiya*, which is described as attribute-less. And, naturally if something is without attribution, you can't say much about it [some audience laughter]. It takes a while for it to undergo a declension into more creative realms. And, these creative realms are distinguished as domains of difference. The precondition for creativity is, I think, disequilibrium: what mathematicians now call chaos. And, through the light of the universe, as temperatures have fallen, more and more complex compound structures have arisen. And, though there's been, um, you know, many a, uh, slipping back in this process, over very large spans of time we can say that creativity is conserved, that the universe becomes more creative. And, out of that state of creative fecundity, more creativity is manifest. So that, from that point of view, the universe is almost, what we would have to call, an art-making machine. An engine for the production of ever more novel forms of connectedness, ever-more exotic juxtapositions of disparate elements. And out of this, uh, I believe, arises, implicitly, a set of principles we can then, uh, apply to the human artist in the human world. [takes drink]

Nature's creativity is, obviously, the wellspring of human creativity. We emerge out of nature almost—and this idea I think was fairly present close to the surface of the medieval mind—we emerge out of nature almost as its finest work of art. Uh, uh, the medieval mind spoke of 'the productions of nature'. This is a phrase you hear as late as the 18th century: 'the productions of nature'. And, human creativity, uh, emerges out of that, whether you have a model of the Aristotelian great ladder of being, or a more modern evolutionary view where we actually consolidate emergent properties and somehow bring them to a focus of self-reflection.

Now, I'm sure that we couldn't..carry out a discussion of this sort without observing that the prototypic figure for the artist, as well as for the scientist, is the shaman. The shaman is the figure at the beginning of human history that unites the doctor, the scientist, and the artist into a single notion of care-giving and creativity. And, I think that, you know, to whatever degree art, over the past several centuries, has wandered in the desert, it is because this shamanic function has been either suppressed or forgotten. And we've...eh, different images of the artist have been held up at different times: the artist as, uh, *artisan*; the artist as handmaiden of a ruling class or family; the artist as designer for the production of integrated objects into a civilization. Uh, this notion of the artist as mystical journeyer, as one who goes into a world unseen by others, and then returns to tell them of it, was pretty much lost in the post-medieval and renaissance conception of art. Up until the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, where,

beginning with the Romantics, there is a new permission to explore the irrational. This really is the bridge back to the archaic, shamanic function of the artist: permission to explore the irrational. The Romantics did it with their, um, uh, elevation of titanic emotion, of romantic love specifically. The symbolists, in the mid-19th century, did it by a reemphasis on the emotional content of the image and a rejection of the previous rationalism, and that emphasis on the image and on the emotions set the stage, then, for what I take to be the truly shamanic movements in art, which begin really with Alfred Jarry, in the late 1880's and early 1890's.

Jarry, you may remember, was the founder of something called the *Ecole du Pataphysique*—the Pataphysical College. Jarry announced pataphysics is *the* science. The problem was, nobody could understand what it meant or what it stood for, including Jarry. [audience laughter] Jarry is, uh, was tight--Jarry was tight with Montremont, who you may recall said, "I am fascinated by that kind of beauty that arises when a sewing machine meets a bicycle on an operating table." See, this was a true effort to bend the boundaries of art, to create new permission... permission really for the unthinkable. And this,uh, again, reinforces the shamanic function.

What do we mean when we say the unthinkable? We mean the envelope of that which can be conceived. And, for, uh, at least 200 years, the ostensible mission of the artist has been to test the conceptual and imagistic envelope of what the society is willing to tolerate. And, this has taken many forms: the, uh, deconstruction of imagery that we get with abstract impressionism going back into impressionism and the pointillists. Or the permission for the irrational imagery of the unconscious; surrealism and German expressionism make use of this permission. Always the idea being to somehow destroy the idols of the tribe, dissolve the conceptual boundary of ordinary expectation.

Well, in order to do this, it seems to me there is a precondition for the creation of art which I call 'understanding'. And I don't mean this in an intellectual sense; I mean it in the sense that Alfred North Whitehead intended when he defined understanding as the "apperception of pattern as such." *As such*. There's nothing more to it than that. You see, if we were to look at this room, and we were to squint our eyes and, uh--I'm doing this right now and I see that the room divides itself into people dressed in red and people dressed in blue. This is a pattern, and it tells me something about what I'm looking at. Now I shift my depth of field. Now I'm looking at where men are sitting and where women are sitting. This is a different pattern, and it tells me more about what I am looking at. The number of these patterns theoretically present in any construction is infinite. That says to me, then, that the depth of understanding cannot be known. It cannot be known. Everything is imminent. William Blake makes this point, you know, that you can see infinity in a grain of sand.

So, understanding, then, is the pre-, the precondition for creativity. And this understanding is not so much intellectual as it is visual. Visual. [takes drink] And in thinking about this, I realized what an influence on my own ideas in this area Aldous Huxley was. Not, the Huxley that we might ordinarily associate with my concerns, but the Huxley of 'The Doors of Perception and of Heaven and Hell', but the Huxley of a very modest book that he wrote in the early 50's that he called 'The Art of Seeing'. The Art of Seeing. And in that book, he makes the point that a good art education begins with a good drawing hand. That to be able to coordinate the hand and eye and to see in to nature—to see into the patterns present as such—is the precondition for a kind of approach to the absolute. Now, out of this process of seeing, which I'm calling 'understanding', the creative process ushers in novelty.

And, many of you have heard me speak of novelty in another context: in the context of nature being a novelty-producing engine of some sort. And ourselves, almost as the handiwork of nature. But this same handiwork of nature which we *represent*, we also internalize and re-express through the novelty of the human world. Well, now, if we take seriously the-the shamanic model as a basis for our authentic art, then certainly in the modern context, what we see missing from the repertoire of the artist are shamanic techniques. And it's for the discussion of these shamanic techniques, I believe, um, that I was brought here this evening.

So, I want you to cast your mind back to a great.... seminal moment, germinal moment, in the history of human thought, which was, about 25,000 years ago, the great glaciers that had covered most of the Eurasian land mass began to melt. And human populations that had been islanded from each other for about 15 millennia began to re-contact each other and reconnect. And, out of this comes what is called the Magdalenian Revolution, from 18,000 to 22,000 years ago. And what it is, is nothing less than a tremendous explosion of creativity and aesthetic self-expression on the part of the human species. We find, uh, the--for the first time, bone and antler technology takes its place alongside stone technology. Musical instruments appear over a wide area. And, cave paintings—some paintings in areas and recesses so remote from the surface of the ground that it takes several hours to reach them— are painted and set up in dramatic *tableaus* specifically designed to bring together sound, light and dance in hierophonies. Extravaganzas of aesthetic output that invoke a kind of transcendent other, that human beings, for the first time, are trying to come to grips with and make some kind of cultural statement about. And this pulling into matter of the ideas of human beings—first, you know, in the forms of, uh-uh, bead-work and chipped stone and carved bone—within twenty thousand years, ushers into the kinds of high civilizations that we see around us, and points us toward the kind of extra-planetary mega civilization that we can feel operating on our own present like a kind of great attractor.

Now, this whole intellectual adventure in exteriorization of ideas is entirely.. an aesthetic.. adventure. Until very recently, utility is only a secondary consideration. The real.. notion is a kind of seizure by the tremendum, by the Other, that forces us to take up matter—clay, bone, flint—and put it through a mental process where we then excrete it as objects that have lodged within them ideas. This seems to be the special, unique transcendental function of the human animal is the production and condensation of ideas. And, what made it possible for the human animal is language. If you're seeking the thumbprint of the transcendental on the f--on the, uh, myriad phenomena that compose life on this planet, to my mind the place to look is human language. Human language represents an ontological break of major magnitude with anything else going on, on this planet. I mean, yes, bees dance and dolphins squeak and chimpanzees do what they do, but, it's a hell of a step from there to Wallace Stevens, let alone William Shakespeare. Language is the unique province of human beings, and language is the unique tool of the artist. The artist is the person of language. And, I've, you know, given a lot of thought to this because, uh, the work that I've done with psilocybin mushrooms and the observations of psychedelic plant use in the Amazon, centered around ayahuasca, lead me to the conclusion that it is the synergy and catalysis of language that lies behind not only the emergence of human consciousness out of animal organization, but, then, its ability to set a course for a transcendental dimension and *pursue* that course against all the vicissitudes of biology and history over ten or fifteen thousand years. Language has made us more than a group of pack-hunting monkeys; it's made us a group of pack-hunting monkeys with a dream. [audience laughter and Terence laughs]

And the fallout from that dream has given us our glory and our shame. Our weaponry, our technology, our art, our hopes, our fears. All of this arises out of our own ability to articulate and to communicate with each other. And, I use this in the broad sense. I mean, for me, the glory of the human animal is cognitive activity. Song, dance, sculpture, poetry, uh... all of these cognitive activities... when we participate in them, we cross out of the domain of animal organization and into the domain of a genuine relationship to the transcendent. As you know, shamans in all times and places, uh, gain their power through relationships with helping spirits, which they sometimes call ancestors, sometimes call nature spirits. But, somehow the acquisition of a relationship to a disincarnate intelligence is the precondition for authentic shamanism. Now, nowhere in our world do we have an institution like that—that we do not consider pathological—except in the now very thinly spread tradition of the muse. That artists—alone among human beings—are given permission to talk in terms of “my inspiration,” or “a voice which told me to do this,” or, uh, “a vision that must be realized.” The thin line—the thin thread of shamanic descent into our profane world—leads through the office of the artist. And so, if society is to somehow take hold of itself at this penultimate moment, as we *literally* waver on the brink of planetary extinction, then the artist, like Ariadne following her thread out of the labyrinth, is going to have to follow this shamanic thread back through time. And, you know one of the most disempowering things that has been done to us by the male-dominant culture is to, uh, brush out our footprints into the past. We don't have a *clue* as to how we got here. Most people can't think back further than the first Nixon administration, let alone, you know, the arrival of the Vikings, the fall of Catal Huyuk, the melting of the glaciers, so forth and so on. We have been disempowered by a rational tendency to deny our irrational roots, which are kind of an embarrassment to science, because science is, uh, the special province of the ego.

And, magic and art are the special province of something else. I could name it, but I won't. It prefers to be unnamed, I think. So, how seriously then, are we to take this, um, I'll call it an obligation to follow the shamanic thread back into time? Well, I think that it is, uh, a matter of saving our own souls. That this is the real challenge. You know, I love to dig at the 'Yogans' by saying “nobody ever went into an Ashram with their knees knocking in fear over the tremendous dimension they knew they were about to enter through meditation.” Still truer, and more sad--still more true and more sad is the notion that very few of us pick up our sculpting tools or our airbrush with our knees knocking with fear because we know we are invoking and acting with the muse at our elbow. And somehow, I think the artists need to recover this sense of, uh, mystery. One of the most depressing thing to me about the art scene—and I had a chance to reconnect with this because I was just in New York—is, uh, it now has a kind of directionless quality. You can go into a gallery and you cannot tell whether it is 1990, 1980, 1970 or 1960. Because a kind of eschatological malaise has settled over art. All notion of any forward movement toward a transcendental ideal has been put aside for, um, the exploration of idiosyncratic vision. And, I grant you this is a tension—and perhaps in the question period we can talk about this—there is a tension between the individual vision and, uh, the notion of an attractor or a collective vision which wants to be expressed. But to my mind this is the same dichotomous tension that haunts the individual in his or her relationship to Tao.

You know, we don't want to be lost in ego, but on the other hand, if we completely express the Tao, we have no sense of self. The ideal seems to be a kind of *coincidencia oppositorum*... a kind of literalizing of a paradox where what we have is Tao, but we perceive it as ego. And, in the application of this notion to the art problem, I would say, what we need is a situation where schooling—if you want to put it that way—or a tendency toward a coherent vision expressed by many artists—is spontaneous. Each artist imagines that they are pursuing their own vision. Yet, *obviously*, they are in the grip of an archetype which is rising

through the medium of the unconscious. Now, the last time we saw this in American art was in abstract expressionism, which was probably—in terms of the values... in terms of, um, tension and the amount of, uh, emotional gain between one artistic moment and another—the break between abstract expressionism and, uh, what preceded it was the most radical break in American art in this century. Abstract expressionism actually carried us into a confrontation with what the quantum physicists were telling us. That the universe is field upon field of integrated vibration. But there is no top level, there is no bottom level. That the ordinary structures of provisional space-time are simply that. That if we can rise out of the human dimension, then we discover these larger, more integrated dimensions where mind and nature somehow interpenetrate each other. A vision like that, a coherent vision, has yet to announce itself here in the, uh, post-history pre-apocalypse phase of things.

Well, [takes drink].....I guess I have a kind of reactionary side when I think about the creative endeavor. I believe that the psychedelic experience, as encountered by each of you in the privacy of your own mind, or as encountered by a pre-, uh, literate society somewhere in the world, that that psychedelic experience is in a way the Rosetta stone—not only for, um, understanding the encryption that our own lives represent, each to ourselves—but it's also a Rosetta stone for uncoding the historical experience. Art *is* this endeavor to leave the animal domain behind. To create another dimension, orthogonal to the concerns of, uh, ordinary history. And this orthogonal domain, to my mind, is glimpsed most clearly in the psychedelic experience. The psychedelic experience shows you more art in an hour and a half than the human species has produced in fifteen or twenty thousand years [some audience laughter]. Now, this is an incredible claim. This is why I make it [audience laughter]. Uh, the, the energy barrier which separates us from this tremendous repository of transcendental imagery is very low. You know, it's a matter of a little personal commitment and, uh, the substances which make the transition possible. The perturbation of brain chemistry is easily done. What is not so easily done is the assimilation of the consequences of this act. Uh, ordinarily, we assume that consciousness is channeled between tremendously deep walls. That there is no way to, um, force, uh, a confrontation with the Other or the transcendent or the unconscious. We tend to assume that, you know, we're going to have to do double-duty at the Ashram for three decades [some audience laughter] before we're vouchsafed even a glimpse into these places. This is not true.

Culture—and this is my message to artists and to anybody else who cares to notice—culture is a *plot* against the expansion of consciousness. And this plot prosecutes its, uh, its goals through a, uh, limiting of language. Language is the battleground over which the-the fight will take place. Because, what we cannot--what we cannot say, we cannot communicate. And, by 'say', I mean dance, paint, sing, meme. What we cannot say, we cannot communicate. We can conceive of things that we cannot communicate. And, I think every one of us here has done that. And that's a *thrilling* thing. That's the deep homework. The psychedelic inner astronaut sees things which no human being has ever seen before, and no other human being will ever see again. But, in fact, this has no meaning unless it is possible to carry it back into the collectivity. And, what motivates me to talk to groups like this is the belief that we do not have centuries of gently unfolding time ahead of us in which to, uh-uh, you know, gently tease apart the threads of the human endeavor and create a bright new world. That's not our circumstance. This is a fire in a madhouse [audience laughter]. And, uh, to get a hold on the situation, I think we are going to have to force the issue. One way of forcing the issue, or a chemical definition of forcing the issue when you're talking about a chemical reaction, is catalysis. We want to catalyze consciousness. We want to move it faster toward its goals, whatever those goals are. Well, I believe that to the present moment, language... again in the broadest sense: speech, dance, musical composition... language has just been allowed to grow like topsy

[sp?]. It's, uh, been a kind of every-man-for-himself situation. Now, what we really need, as we see ourselves moving from one species among tens of thousands of species on this planet, over the past ten thousand years, we have redefined ourselves. And now, like it or not, *we are* the custodians of the destiny of this planet. Our decisions affect every life form on the planet. And yet, we are still communicating with each other with the extremely precise medium of small-mouth noises mediated by ignorance and hate [audience laughter, Terence clears throat]. This doesn't seem like the way to do business [audience laughter, Terence takes drink] as we approach the third millennium.

So, it-it, what I, uh, what I'm hopeful for, and what I actually see happening—I mean, I think we're on the right track—the birth of a new kind of humanity is going to take place. But there are still a lot of decisions to be made. How violent shall this birth be? What toll shall it take upon our mother the earth? What shape shall the baby be in when it is finally delivered... these are the decisions that artists can mediate and control. Most people are afraid of the unconscious. This is why, uh, you know, you can have a psychedelic compound like DMT, which is very much like ordinary brain chemistry, uh, appears completely physiologically harmless, only lasts ten minutes, extremely powerful, and generally in this society you have *no takers*. This is because there has been a failure of moral courage. And, the failure of moral courage is perhaps most evident in our own community: the community of, uh, of the artist. In a way, uh, it's the poets who have failed us. Because, they have not, uh, provided a song or sung a vision that we could all move in concert to. So, now we are in the absurd position of being able to *do anything*, and what we are doing is fouling our own nest and pushing ourselves toward planetary toxification and extinction.

This is because the poets, the artists have not articulated an, a, um, a moral vision. The moral vision must come from the unconscious. It doesn't have to do, I believe, um, with, uh, you know, um.... these post-meaning movements in art: deconstructionism, and this sort of thing. I mean, I'm basically putting out a very conservative, but I think, um, exciting program for art: that art's task is to save the soul of mankind. And, that anything less is a dithering while Rome burns. Because if the artists, who are self-selected for, uh, being able to journey into the Other... if the artists cannot find the way, then the way cannot be found.

Ideology is extremely alien to art. Political ideology, I mean. And if you will but notice it is political ideology that has been calling the shots for the last seven or eight hundred years. We can transcend politics if we can put some other program in place. You cannot transcend politics into a void. And I-I believe that a world without ideology could be created, if what were put in place of ideology were the notion or the realization of the Good, the True and the Beautiful. You know, the three-tiered canon of the Platonic aesthetic. Reconnect the notion of the Good, the True and the Beautiful. *Then*, use psychedelics to empower the artist to go into this *vast* dimension that surrounds human history on all sides to an infinite depth, and return from that world with the transcendental images that can lift us to a new cultural level. The muse is there. The, the dull maps that rationalism has given us are nothing more than whistling past the graveyard by the bad little boys of science. You only have to avail yourselves of these shamanic tools to rediscover a nature which is not mute, as Sartre said in a kind of culmination of the modern viewpoint. Nature is not mute; it is man who is deaf. And the way to.. open our ears, open our eyes, and reconnect with the intent of a living world is through the psychedelics.

Now, as you know, biology runs on genes. And genes are the units of meaning of heredity. But we could make a model of the informational environment that is represented by culture. And in fact, this is done. A word has been invented: meme. M-E-M-E, meme. A meme is not the smallest unit of heredity; a meme is the smallest unit of meaning of an idea. Ideas are made of memes. And I think the art community might,

uh, function with more efficiency in the production of visionary aesthetic breakthroughs if we would think of ourselves as an environment modeled after the natural environment, where we as artists are attempting to create memes which enter an environment of other memes that are in competition with each other, and out of this competition of memes, ever more appropriate, adapted, and, uh, suitable ideas can gather and, uh, link themselves together into higher and higher organisms.

Now, in order for this to happen, there is an obligation upon each one of us to carry our ideas clearly. Because in the same way that a gene must be copied correctly to be replicated or it will cause some pathological mutation, a meme must be correctly replicated or it will cause a pathological mutation. For instance, I would say what the Nazis did to Friederich Nietzsche's philosophy was a bad copy--a miscopied meme became a toxic mutation inside a culture. So, uh, I would suggest to the people in this room tonight, that you take a good look around at who's here.

Artistic people, psychedelic people, look pretty much like everybody else out in society. But we have come here tonight, self-selected for our interest in the empowering capacity of psychedelic plants and the empowering capacity of art. So we represent an affinity group; a population with the potential for, uh, uh, mutagenic impact on the ideological structures of the rest of society. So, look around. Someone here *has what you need*. And, if you can only figure out who it is, you can make a novel connection to move, then, into a new level of creativity.

[takes drink] What is this new level of creativity? Some of you may be familiar with a theme that was very big in medieval religious art, which was, uh, the apocalypse, uh, of St. John or of somebody; there are a number of these apocalypses. And I think that, uh, many of us may come out of a secular background or have not given this kind of a religious idea too much consideration. But, I-my, uh, idiosyncratic conclusion, based simply on trying to be honest about the content of the psychedelic experience, is that, uh, human history really is on a collision course with a, uh, transcendental object of some sort. Uh, it is not going to be business as usual into the endless unfolding confines of the future. Uh, the very *fact* that human history is *occurring* on this planet; the very fact that a primate has left the ordinary pattern of primate activity and gone into the business of running stock markets and, uh, molecular biology labs, and art museums indicates to me the nearby presence, in another dimension, of a kind of hyper-organizing force, or what I call the transcendental object. And I believe that this transcendental object is casting an *enormous* shadow over the human historical landscape. So that if you're back in, uh, ancient Judea, you have an anticipation of the Messiah. If you are at Eleusis, at the height of the practice of the Eleusinian mysteries, you have an anticipation of, uh, the dark god.

These anticipations of an unspeakable transcendent reality, that are always clothed in the, um, in the assumptions of the individual artist and the society in which he or she is working, are in fact genuine. And that you don't have to give yourself over to fundamentalist religion to connect with the fact that human history *is* an adventure. And, this adventure has a number of startling reverses and sudden plot shifts that are very difficult to anticipate, and that we are coming up on one of those. The civilization that was created out of the collapse of the medieval world has now shown its contradictions to be unbearable. And though no one of us knows what the shape of the new civilization will be, somehow in the singing of the ayahuasca songs in the rainforests, in the tremendous hypermetallic transcendental off-planetary flash of psilocybin, in the teaching of the self-transforming machine elves that seem to dwell in the DMT dimension, we see that the ordinary linear expectations of history are breaking down, and that, uh, the-the truth of the imminence of the mystery is breaking through all the structures of denial of, uh, the male dominator

paradigm that has been in place so long.

The way to make this birth process smooth, the way to bring it to a conclusion that will not betray the thousands and thousands of generations of people who-who suffered birth and disease and migration and starvation and lonely death so that we could sit here this evening. The redeeming of the human enterprise all lies, then, in helping this thing come to birth. And each artist is an antenna to the transcendental other, and as we go with our own history into that thing, and then create a unique confluence of our uniqueness, and its uniqueness, we collectively create an arrow. An arrow out of history, out of time, perhaps even out of matter, that will redeem, then, the idea, uh, that man is good. Redeem the idea that man is good. This is the promise of art, and its fulfillment is never more near than the present moment.

Thank you very much. [Applause]

We'll, uh, I think we'll take a ten or fifteen minute break and then we'll come back and, uh, you can have questions and we'll do that for a little while. Thanks very, very much.

Q&A

Terence McKenna: Now I'll-- I'm happy to take questions....here...

Question: You spoke about science being in the realm of ego and art and shamanism being in some other realm [couldn't decipher]. My own psychedelic experience convinced me of the insistence of that other realm, but I felt not enough sense of personal power to be that antennae that you're saying that artists can be for bringing that other, until I became convinced not only of the existence not only of me but then the other realm and the other realm within me, and perhaps the psychedelic experience prepared me for that second awareness, but I guess you could comment on how, if possibly--if possible, that second awareness could become more easily accessible, and st...

T: What do you mean by 'the second awareness'...say a little more about it...

Q: Um, being aware that the other realm is something that's also very personal and

T: Well, yes, I mean, it seems, it's--it's a landscape that begins within the self and seems to extend into the world. I mean, one of the very puzzling things about the psychedelic experience is that it argues that we are not atomic individuals, uh, running around in some kind of society, but that if you actually drain the-the psychic water away, you'll discover that we're all connected at the roots; that the, uh, that it isn't a journey to another world; it's a journey inward to a world that is already present and there. The astonishing thing is how alienated we are from our own interior, from the interior world, to the point where we can hardly recognize it. I mean, the--I've talked a lot about the alien nature of the psychedelic experience and how it seems to be mappable over something as radical as the UFO experience. This is because we *truly* do not know who we are. The past 10,000 years have been *so* disempowering to us. We are really like the children of a dysfunctional relationship. Uh, we don't---we don't know where we have come from. It's very hard for us to emotionally connect with the consequences of what we're doing. I mean, that really horrifies me, that this is a society that loots the future. I mean, the symbol of that is devouring of children. We *literally*, for our own comfort in the present moment are making it very difficult for gen--future generations to contemplate having anything approaching, uh, the level of resource availability that we have. And, this

kind of situation could not be tolerated if we had not gone through a tremendous series of traumatic, uh, emotionally disemboweling experiences

You know, the Native Americans have a litmus test for all activity; you know, does it serve the children? And, so much of what *we* do is so anti-future that it's almost as though the fundamentalist position exists to permit the destruction of the environment. I mean, this was perfectly encapsulated by this clown James Watt, who was Secretary of the Interior, and said 'We don't need to expand the National Parks because Jesus is coming'. I mean, this is, uh, this is, uh, a mentality so against the grain of the obvious that it has to be looked on as pathological.

Another question...Here in the corner.

Q: Hello Terence...I've known you for a long time, but you've never met me. I'm one of Roy's night people, and, uh...I guess, I don't know, I guess I ought to prep this remark by saying that I got about a \$50,000 education and three degrees, college degrees in psychology, but I've never learned anything like I've learned from listening to Roy's show [audience applause] on KPFK [rest of comment indecipherable].....Uh, in pursuing those degrees, I've decided to learn a little bit about it hands-on, so I went to work in [couldn't decipher]. So, it's my misfortune, actually, to be earning my survival at this time to be working as a.....I would like to see psychology take a different direction, and I know that what you're talking about provides a focus to a direction for psychology to take which I think would...blow the lid off things. So, we're really close to, uh...I mean, I'm in total agreement that Freud and Jung discovered the [couldn't decipher]-conscious about a hundred years ago, but they discovered it 900 [couldn't decipher] in Santa Fe.

Um, how do we get closer to this in this kind of society, uh, that's the first part of this question...I'm a little bit nervous speaking in front of all these people. But, um, the second part of this question has to do with a study that you spoke of in '72 where with single-dose administration of LSD, alcoholics were achieving a 72% success rate, and, uh, I would you like you to speak a little bit on the pro-psychedelic, uh, the pro-psychedelic approach being and anti-drug approach

T: Yes, well, thanks for giving me the opportunity to make the point [audience laughter] because, uh, in the present atmosphere of hysteria and misinformation, uh, it's too easily run over. Uh...it is important to make the distinction that the, eh, what has happened really is that the well of language on this issue of consciousness alteration...the well of language has been poisoned; where you cannot make any sense if you use the words that have been granted us to use. I mean, let's take the word 'drug'. You know, we have a 'drug war', but as I drove into town I noticed a 'drug store' [audience laughter and applause]. Well, uh, you know, with that compressed a vocabulary, you can't make any sense at all about what's going on. So, I think what we have to do is make an operational argument about 'drugs' and say, well, you know, what is it that society finds offensive about, uh, drug abuse. And, then, what does that have to do with psychedelics.

Well, my own analysis of this is that what is, uh, offensive about drug abuse is a unconscious, repetitious, and demonstrably destructive pattern of behavior. And, whenever you see someone, uh, behaving that way, everyone feels repulsed and brought down, and, in fact, severe drug addictions are like this. But, as a matter of record, this is what psychedelics make absolutely impossible. Number one, the notion of unexamined behavior; how can you have unexamined behavior if you take psychedelics; it holds you up into a blast furnace of self-reflection [audience laughter]. It is, uh, certainly it does not promote repetitious

drug use [audience laughter]. I mean, uh, I-I consider myself a great fan of psilocybin and if I can screw my courage to the sticking point a couple of times a *year*, I'm doing alright. Uh, I know someone that says DMT is their, uh, uh, favorite substance. And, when I asked them when was the last time you did it, they said '1968' [audience laughter]. I mean it lasted three minutes [audience laughter]. This is not a pattern of drug abuse [audience laughter]...you see. So, uh, uh, it's a matter of educating the public, and, I--this is probably a good place for me to get a pitch in.

I--I wrote a book on contract for Bantam, and hopefully it'll be out next fall, and I'm hoping, I want to call it, and I'm hoping they'll go along with me, 'Why Eve Was Right: Plants, Drugs, and History' [woman squeals in audience]. Because, right there, in the beginning of the Western story, in Genesis, what you get is--it's the story of history's first drug bust. It's the story, of a woman, who follows her own mind and makes a decision about consciousness alteration, and then, uh....it *works* [audience laughter]. I mean, she says, eh, eh 'and they were naked and she perceived them as naked'. In other words, she got true information about the situation. But, you have Yahweh there, mumbling to himself, as he wanders around the garden in an old bathroom, and he's saying 'if they eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they will become as we are'. That was *always* the issue, you see. It wasn't a health issue; it wasn't an abuse issue. It's about who finds out what's really going on and who doesn't. And, this book I wrote for Bantam makes very clear that the cult--the style of a culture is almost invariably a style of seeing the world through a certain set of drugs, or *a drug*. For example, uh, you know, here we're in the middle of a, uh, drug abuse problem, but, uh, caffeine has been entirely institutionalized since the, uh, Industrial Revolution [1:09:25]

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Packing for the Long Strange Trip

19 July 1994

Starwood Festival XIV, Association for Conciousness Exploration, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Permitting Smart People to Hope

June 1994

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Terence McKenna (TM): There's so much, uh, concrescence of time and compression of historical development going on in the world right now that you can, uh, you can hardly, uh, pick up a journal in your favourite field without seeing that all paradigms are being challenged and this is happening regardless of, you know, the area you are working in. It may be the design of solid state circuitry; it may be quantum mechanics or cosmology; or, um, uh, information theory. There are simultaneously now going on so many breakthroughs in -- in, uh, the investigation of nature and mathematics that one of the themes of these discussions will be how unpredictable the consequences are of all this knowledge flowing together. No one is planning how these various technologies, insights, uh, and tools are going to fit together and in a way it creates, uh -- it creates, uh, opportunity because there is so much chaos because very small forces can exert major changes.

I'm sure you all know the cliché about the butterfly whose wing beat starts the hurricane. I got a fax the day before I came down here saying that Interpol had put out an all points bulletin for that very butterfly [Audience: laughter] and was attempting to corner it and halt the hurricane season [Audience: laughter] so they do take this stuff seriously. So, um, it just, I mean, I would, just to review some recent developments that may or may not be related to each other but they are certainly related in the sense that they are all occurring right now. Uh, some of you may have followed the detection of the top quark in, uh, recent series of experiments at CERN in Geneva. Well, this essentially ends an entire program of, uh, nuclear and particle physics that's been carried on since the '20's. Now the quark model of matter is essentially complete in its more modest, uh, formulation.

All the predicted particles have been detected. There is good agreement between theory and theoretical formulation, and this represents, um, the culmination of an effort to come to grips with matter that's been underway since the Greeks and it essentially, you know, in 1994, the general sense is that it's now pretty well nailed down. Uh, this is astonishing and ends a whole intellectual effort that, as I say, began with the Greeks, gained momentum with Newton gained incredible intellectual focus throughout the 20th century and is now completed. It's equivalent of the sequencing of the human genome in biology which is the next subject that I wanted to mention which is this project which was slated to be finished around 2020. It is now probably going to be finished well before 2000 because once they got into it, they discovered it's like riding a bicycle: the more you do it, the easier it is to do and very, very sophisticated computer-driven chemical simulation techniques have been invented and the human genome is just filling up like a

crossword puzzle day-by-day, week-by-week, as we speak.

Q: Could you explain what that is?

TM: Oh, well, every organism in nature is specified by a unique sequence of, uh, chemical, uh, labels, called nucleotides and they are stored in the DNA and this nucleotide message in the case of human beings is like up to, uh, 20 million units long and it's basically the script for a human being. Now whether you get you or me depends on whether the switches are set up and down but all human beings have the same, uh, uh, gene sequence called and so if you can sequence, if you can determine the human genome, you can, uh, predict the occurrence of all kinds of hereditary diseases and, you know, have a kind of utopian approach to medicine where everyone throughout their entire life knows what they are at risk for and in contemplating any possible pairing for procreation you know just down to a gnat's eyelash what the child's genetic predisposition for various diseases and enzyme deficiencies, and this sort of thing. Well, so this is happening and, uh, at a startling pace.

Q: Can I ask you something?

TM: Sure.

Q: Um, so if this is - if you say that this is predetermined, is that like -- do we have anything to say about it? Can you, like, prevent them?

TM: Oh, yeah. You can definitely prevent because you see locate where on the genome the defective gene is...

Q: How do you spell "genome"?

TM: G-e-n-o-m-e.

Q: Thank you.

TM: If you can locate on the genome where the problem is for any genetic defect then you can design a repair gene that can go in there and actually just scissor out the bad piece and put the good piece in. This is not science fiction; this is being done in the laboratory now, uh, and it will, it's happening. The main point of what I'm talking about tonight is that all these crazy, far out, Flash Gordon things are well advanced and yet and the other point highly ignorant of each other so that the cross-fertilization process that is really going to make all this come into a kind of new paradigmatic order hasn't yet been revealed.

Okay, other items, uh, and some of these range toward the "Oh! Wow!." Remember, ultimately this is just a laundry list of things on my mind. The events that will occur in the vicinity of Jupiter, uh, in the third week of July of this year are extraordinarily interesting from all kinds of points of view. Are you all aware of what I'm talking about?

Q: No

TM: Okay. In January an object was detected, uh, breaking up under the tidal forces of Jovian gravity and this was named Shoemaker-Levy 9 and it has, is now in about 25 pieces that are about 3-5 kilometers in diameter each and the Newtonian mechanics of this decaying system of orbits dictates that between the 19th and the 26th of July of this year these objects will smash into the planet Jupiter on the dark side, on the side turned away from the Earth at the moment of impact, but because -- well, it's a fascinating event for many reasons. First of all, it's going to churn up an enormous amount of material from deep below the cloud tops of Jupiter and within six hours the parameter will turn into view of Earth-based telescopes. The other thing is these planet-crushing events, these collisions of large objects in the solar system, have a very interesting and not fully understood role in, uh, the formation of our own Earth and the way the history of life has developed on it. For example, and this is the next new thing I wanted to talk about.

There has been a sudden coalescence of agreement in, in, uh, planetary geophysics over the past six months over a problem which may not have been bothering you but [Audience: laughter] bothered me

which was where did the moon come from (laughter) and there have been for hundreds of years, different theories, I mean, clear back to Lacroix. In one theory, Lacroix noticed that galaxies and solar systems, everything condensed down out of dust and he put this - and this was in the 1770's - put forth the very plausible theory that the Moon simply was an aggregation of material the same that the Earth was an aggregation of material that formed around the Earth. Well, then there are problems with this, technical problems. It just doesn't check out. So then another theory that had its vogue was that the Earth was spinning very rapidly in its early history and a blob actually - it just separated off - a hot blob of stuff which went off into space, uh, suddenly new techniques for analyzing Apollo rocks and stuff brought back from the Moon and all kinds of conferences, and so forth, they figured it out, and the answer is extraordinary and none of the above. The answer is that 4.1 billion years ago, the Earth was struck by an object the size of Mars and that in the -- this catastrophe enough ejective went into orbit around the planet to condense as the Moon. It's remarkable that such a catastrophic and dramatic theory could get unanimous acceptance in the field of planetary science where all this stuff is most haggled over, um.

Q: What was the planet the size of Mars that hit the Earth? Was it Mars, or...?

TM: No. It wasn't Mars. It doesn't exist. Its core has now sunk into the core of the Earth. It had an iron core. It is now part of the Earth and the light-weight, pyroxene ejective formed the Moon and if you're interested in this, this month's *Scientific American* has it on the cover - a photo of the event. [Audience: Laughter] So, just extraordinary revolution in theory, you know, in a very fundamental manner because some people claim that the Moon was captured and that it was captured as recently as 65 million years ago and that the complexity of mammalian phylogeny is related to the presence of the Moon and now, all that's out. The Moon is very old. It emerged in this catastrophe basically at the moment of the solidification of the surface of the Earth. It was a climactic event that came at the end of a series of asteroidal infalls that basically built, uh, the planet. So then other things.

Q: How does this tie into this thing with Jupiter then? Is that just to give us an idea how that happened?

TM: Yeah, that we've never had an opportunity to observe anything like this. The extinction event which killed the dinosaurs and created the beginning of the Mesozoic era, uh, 65 million years ago was not as entergetic an event as this thing that's going to happen in July. It was very interesting to watch how the scientific press played this thing because the Shoemaker-Levy 9 was discovered on January 9 and the bulletin of astrophysics on the 12th broke the news to everybody who wasn't following it on email or something and they called it a once in a hundred-million-year-event which interesting that this once in a hundred-million-year-event would occur at a moment when human beings have instruments on their way to Jupiter. So then they, within the month, they had it down to a once in a million-year-event [Audience: laughter] and now I think they're saying nobody has any idea. This may be once every hundred years it happens. But, it's very interesting. The explosion will be so large and since it can't be directly seen by Earth-based telescopes, the energy release will be measured by measuring the flash of reflected light off the moons of Jupiter. In other words, they will rise in luminosity and then fall very suddenly as this explosion takes place on the back side. So, that's that.

Sort of in line with all of this and with a kind of Esalen spin on it, something very interesting that's been going on if you're a fan of the history of science and ideas is that in the last six months, there's been a very interesting effort to, uh, look again at David Bohm's work. David Bohm is now dead and I believe he taught here or he visited here many times and, in any case, his ideas are well known here and he was sort of always our physicist, "our" meaning the slightly flakier end of things and for that reason, he was not taken seriously as seriously as he should have been in the halls of physics. Well, then I think he died about 18 months ago. Well, now in *Scientific American* and in physical review letters, there have been long editorials saying that a problem which has haunted quantum physics throughout the 20th century could be

solved by admitting that the Copenhagen School which is Niels Bohr and all -- Heisenberg and all those untouchable and god-like figures to admit that they were actually wrong about something fundamental and that David Bohm's quantum physics which gives the same numerical results as theirs is, in fact, a more elegant formulation and what it is that is at issue here is something that everybody who concerns themselves with quantum physics for ten minutes has encountered which is the famous uncertainty conundrum.

Every school child knows by now that you cannot determine the velocity and the absolute position of an electron at the same time because as you bring velocity into focus, absolute position smears out. As you bring absolute position into focus, velocity smears out. This is called the uncertainty principle and probably more muddle-headed prose has been generated around this problem in physics in the last 70 years than any other. Well, it turns out that if you go with David Bohm, there is no uncertainty. You can know the position and the speed, the velocity, with perfect certainty at the same moment of time. The problem is, and the reason why he was never taken seriously, is that all these quantum formulations carry with them certain metaphysical baggage that is hard for other theorists to accept and the impossible baggage that Bohm's theory carried was, uh, what is called non-locality. Non-locality. This is the peculiar feature of nature which is built into Bohm's formulation of quantum physics. Any true particles ever associated with each other at some time in what we call the past maintain a magical and instantaneous connection with each other no matter how far apart they are for the rest of their existence and that this is not subject to the inverse square law that determines that slows the speed of light; this is some kind of magical property which is instantaneous.

Well, this seemed so outlandish that it was just thought to prove on the face of it that Bohm was wrong because they said, "Well, look at the consequences if you were to accept this insane thing would be built in " but now, because of what's called Bell's theorem, they are actually doing experiments which demonstrate in the same way that the charge of the electron or the speed of light, they are actually doing experiments which demonstrate that non-locality is real. You associate two electrons. Uh, you pass them through a grid of some sort which separates them. You capture one of them, determine its charge, flip it to its opposite charge and having captured the other one, you notice that when you flipped the charge on one, the charge on the other one automatically reverses instantaneously and that these things behave as though they never left each other's presence. Non-locality. Well, this sets the stage for a staggering realization because if the universe is non-local in terms of information then all the raving over the past 30 years about holographic universes and psychedelic plenums and the monadic factio higher dimensional akashic "who-ha." [Audience: Laughter], all that suddenly begins to gain vindication. And, okay, so that's all happening. [Audience:Laughter]

Meanwhile, three doors down the hall in the branch of things marked "Information Theory," they're realizing that there is a way to analyze physics, so that what you get, what we call matter, is simply information in association with energy; that information associated with energy *is* matter. So then you go back to this other branch of understanding and they're saying that, uh, that information is non-local and then what that begins to sound like then is that matter also is non-local in some sense and if you could download that into a technology, you could walk from here to "Zevercanoobie" without ever going through high vacuum and that would be big news. Do you understand what I'm saying? [Audience: Rumbling] Good. Yes, it would be reasonable to ask a question at this point.[Audience: Laughter] [TM: Laughter] Q. So how does the principle of non-locality come in to prove that you can determine position and velocity at the same time?

A. Oh, it doesn't. It simply that, as a consequence of accepting the parts of his theory which allow you the absolute prediction of velocity and position you get, as a kind of you-can't-not-order-it side dish, this non-locality thing and when really a way of talking about non-locality is to say and then this goes to a whole other branch of knowledge that's also just boiling at fever pitch which is to say what we're really saying is that the universe is fractal. that it's an infolded set of values such that you can extract the whole story from any sub-set, uh, and again this - all of this: complexity theory, chaos dynamics, fractal mathematics - what's happening is that the computer is allowing us to go beyond the mathematical objects of Greek philosophy which were -- you know, what did we have? We had, uh, the cube, the perfect circle, the dodecahedron, and so on and so forth and then through the genius of Newton and Leibniz and that crowd the infinite set of ellipses that we could extract from the section cone that allowed us to do calculus, that allowed us to do modern science but that's sort of where it ends, you know, with Newtonian mechanics and then statistical mechanics to handle the quantum, but now, with chaos dynamics and fractal mathematics and complexity theory, we are actually producing mathematical models of nature that are more like nature than anything we've ever seen before and it's in a sense the culmination of the holy grail of a certain branch of human thinking that out of numbers and their relationships which are after all objects in the human mind, whatever that is, comes this incredible close correspondence to nature which is the most remotely removed and ontologically independent thing we know vis-à-vis the human mind.

Um, okay, so that was a little paean to David Bohm and then moving through that, um, and going further, Ilya Prigogine who has also been to Esalen and had an influence on many people who taught at Esalen and me among them although I was just sort of, like, sharpening his pencils at that stage who has already established his track record by winning the Nobel Prize for physics by destroying the second law of thermodynamics which was no small accomplishment believe me because there was no law of nature to emerge in the 18th -- in the 19 century more tenaciously believed in than the second law of thermodynamics and Prigogine just showed that, you know, it was a generally true statement of a rather complex situation in which actually sometimes it was bugged and he secured that mathematically. That was twenty years ago. Now Prigogine is coming forward with a theory that I modestly suggest sounds somewhat like my notion about time, that time is, first of all, not a construct of the human mind; it is, in fact, a property of the universe like energy, like matter. It's a "thang" [Audience: laughter] is what we're trying to say here. It's not an abstraction and this is not the first time science has had to make this leap, I mean, the curved field, the electromagnetic field was at first thought to be some kind of weird mathematical contortion you had to go through to understand electricity but couldn't possibly actually have anything to do with what it was and then it was realized, you know, that it was actually a point-for-point description. So, Prigogine is beginning to say that time is a thing and that therefore it has an arrow and that complexity is conserved as you approach the present which is what I've been saying year in and year out here for a while. I didn't call it complexity; I called it "novelty" and used Whitehead's vocabulary, but there is, you know, a very exciting convergence of intuition theory that seem really to hold the possibility of a whole new way of thinking about time and determinism and novelty and the, uh, the buildup of structure in time. Yeah.

Q: Your theory of novelty was that it was not conserved but increasing.

TM: Well, what I mean by "conserved" is that its general tendency is to never slip back. In other words, once novelty is achieved, it is tenaciously retained and it becomes instead the foundation for new novelty and that's how novelty increases over time by building on pre-established levels of novelty so that, for instance, um, molecular structure very novel at its inception becomes ultimately the pre-condition for biology a later arriving phase of novelty and then culture builds on biology and so forth, like that. Yeah.

Q: But when you said that, what was the other, not novelty, but...

TM: Oh, complexity.

Q: ...is maintained as you get closer to the present?

TM: Yes. That complexity seems to be clustering near the present.

Q: Meaning this present or any present?

TM: No, this present. In other words, what he's saying, part of his breakthrough is, he is saying the arrow of time is real. It is, the universe is from end to end oriented in one direction; it isn't an artifact of human perception. This is a break with ordinary physics which insists that all these transforms can be run backward in time as well as forward. He says, no, and that's what I've been saying. My conception is that the cosmos isn't what I call a novelty-conserving engine and that it, through sort of a one step, two-steps-forward-one-step-back process marches ever deeper into novelty and ever faster. That's the other thing, uh, that interests me because I am -- I am now, I have a very palpable sense that time is accelerating and that the convergence of some of these things we've been talking about is going to eventually lead to a discussion of what is the nature of time and experience that, in fact, history does seem to be ending. This vague and murky intuition of religious ontology is now respectable in physics laboratories and, uh, uh, the presence of human culture on the planet in this incredibly advanced state of acceleration and novelty seems to indicate that, you know, we are making it impossible for ourselves to go anywhere but into another kind of, uh, cultural dimension.

Well, which I guess leads me on one level to one of the other things which I wanted to talk about which is in a sense the illusion of stability in social space, if there is one, if you're able to maintain the illusions of stability in social space, it's because, uh, the exciting thing that's going on is invisible and what it is is it's the growth of the Net, it's the rise of the Web which hour-by-hour, day-by-day, is reaching around the planet. Deeper and deeper and deeper. The number of people getting email has doubled every six months for the last five year. It's doubled every six months. If this goes on at the current rate, every man, woman and child on the planet will have email before the year 2000. And, of course, there's nothing to see, nothing to touch. I mean, there's some appliances involved but they're quiet and in the background, and yet what it is is that the human neuro-net, the unconscious of the species is actually being hardwired as an artifact. We're pouring glass and gold and silicon down the micro-tubules of the racial imagination and as it were making a kind of casting of the state of the human imagination at the close of the millennium and to what degree this imaging of ourselves in silicon will ever reach a limit is hard to tell. I mean, we've begun with the past. You know, we're archiving it. We're virtualizing it. We're creating databases that allow us to stroll around in it, but more and more, time will be consumed and eventually the only choice will be to allow it to flow over into the present and, you know, prosthesis is already practically a way of life.

What's coming is very hard to imagine and Prigogine to loop one of these concerns back to another, Prigogine got his start studying traffic theory on freeways. Well, it's now thought by the complexity people that when you get somewhere above 6th to the 9th entities operating in an environment of connectivity that you get and now we switch philosophers and vocabularies what David Bohm called emergent properties and what you and I would call "anybody's guess" [Audience: laughter] and that's what an emergent property is.

Q: What is an emergent property?

TM: It means something utterly unexpected, something completely unexpected. For example, and I mean he used very simple examples. For example, if you have five gold atoms, you don't have the colour yellow. You don't get that until you have hundreds of gold atoms. That colour is an emergent property. It requires a large number of gold atoms for the fact that gold is yellow to begin to be part of the picture. Similarly, wetness. If you have a water molecule, it is not wet in any sense that you can relate to. Wetness is a

property of thousands of water molecules. It's an emergent property. So, there's obviously nothing magical about this unless you have to be conscious at one of these phase transitions and you actually see an emergent property come out of a species and clearly what we are trying to do is overcome our differences. Our "thing" is a curious dichotomy between our individuality and our drive toward community and technology is facilitating the drive toward community at this incredibly accelerated rate.

Q. Traffic is accelerating.

TM: Traffic is accelerating and, you know, my enthusiasm for psychedelic states of mind I see simply as a kind of aboriginal precognitive anticipation of this state of electronic data fusion and information transparency that is being put in place. Essentially what we're doing is we are realizing our cultural ideals whether we are conscious of them or not and one of our conscious ideals is a Gothic Christian love or transparent telepathic sharing and so our technology becomes this, you know. I mean, that's why we invented printing presses and clear windows and lingerie and the computer and all of these things facilitate.

Q. Do you think that anybody viewing "The Celestine Prophecy." What do you think about that?

[Audience: Laughter]

TM: Well, you know O'Henry said, " Never read a book 'til it's five years old" [Audience: laughter] and I don't always follow his advice, but in the case of "The Celestine Prophecy," I have to ... I am kind of weird. I was very embarrassed, a couple of or a week ago I was in New York City and I was with some friends of mine are they're in a rock and roll band and they were on the Letterman show so I went with them to the Letterman show for the taping of the show. It was the Spin Doctors and I had never seen the Letterman show [Audience: laughter] so I kept thinking, "Is that Letterman?" The janitor would go by and I would 'cause" we were there an hour ahead of time and I was not *au courant* with these cultural icons. I wish the author of "The Celestine Prophecy," he, she, them or it, whoever it may be - a he - what I've been able to glean from the either about "The Celestine Prophecy" is that it is a species of, of, um, anticipatory, uh, visionary breakthrough, right? saying that the world is going change beyond our possibility of recognizing it. I think this is absolutely true. The details are where it gets tricky.

Part of my notion of how we should all behave as we move toward this attractor or this transcendental object that is the telos of the historical process is to just try and just spread calm and good vibes so that people, you know, it's like a roller coaster the signs says, "Do Not Stand Up." [Audience: Laughter] You know, people should not... just keep your mouth shut, keep your hands on the handlebars. You can yell your head off if you want but do not stand up, please. Um, just a word about this, I mean, to the immense boredom of half the people in the room who've heard me say this before but this question about anticipations of the millennium, the way I think of it is that huge events have a kind of, um, backwash into the past. They are not cleanly divided from the time which precedes them so that before they happen, you can almost feel the certitude of their arrival, uh, and so, this thing that lies ahead of us now not very far in the historical continuum is the grandmother of all of this kind of thing and social theories, philosophers, psychedelic trips, visions had in the desert, all of these things will just organize themselves like iron filings around the presence of this object ahead of us in time and so, in a sense, all of history is an anticipation of the end of history and the closer you get to the end of history, the clearer the anticipations become, so, you know, when you're two thousand years from it, it's something about how God and man will be fused in one body and the messiah will take a chosen people into a land of milk and honey, and that's the best anybody can do, that's the clearest image anybody can get of what the deal was.

So, then circa 1948, you're up to, you know, the Rigellians will come with enormous ships and advanced medical techniques and teach us how to clean up our Earth, to love one another and grow food from the sea and so forth and so on. It turns out that, no, that isn't it either and as we get closer, the amount of

prophetic, um, speculation is just going to grow exponentially because all the old systems of thought are failing and all the old systems of thought are capable of doing is denying the obvious which is that the Earth is on the brink of the greatest change since the end of the Mesozoic, you know, and -- but people don't like to think about that because all they can think about is, you know, the possibility of personal extinction. Technology, religion, psychedelic drugs, archaeology that could at any moment spew something out of the ground that could completely scramble everybody's notion of what really did go on or something and I'm not a "face on Mars" guy or some malarkey like that. Let me make that clear. But still, you have to be open to the fact that something might come along. What else do we want to say about that? Let me see if I've covered my list.

I think we were talking about the Nets and the Web. Uh, yeah, this collectivity that is coming into being, is coming into existence more rapidly than anyone can chart or clock or understand. Uh, you know, I have a protocol that goes on in the middle of the night and searches databases all over the world for key words of interest to me and when I get up in the morning, these files are just stacked on the screen ready to be gone through and, you know, it can be trivial, but it could be, you know, a heresy, a Greek Orthodox heresy of interest to fully a dozen people on the planet, and, you know, if the information is out there, the computer will eventually winnow and winnow and winnow because it is so tireless and so, and so deeply dedicated to my wishes. [Audience: Laughter] I mean, what else does it have to do? It doesn't know.

Q: What keyword?

TM: Well, the word I was thinking of is "Mandaean" which is a religious cult that I'm interested in that has existed continuously for about 2800 years.

Q: "Mandaean"?

TM: Mandaean. And they are now down to a few hundred people in the swamps of Iran and Iraq and, uh, I wonder about the state of their community. I wonder how they came through the Gulf War. I wonder if they were able to preserve their very strict kosher laws and a bunch of other things. I mean, you may wonder why do I care. I have a lot on my menu. [Audience: Laughter]

Q: Did you say, "kosher"?

TM: Well, they had, what I mean by "kosher," they had rules as a religious community that would be almost impossible to follow in the 20th century. For instance, one of their rules was that if your eye fell on a non-believer, if you're a Mandaean and your eye fell on a non-believer then you had to have six days of purification. Well, since there are only a few hundred Mandaean on this planet, it was tough to not occasionally encounter a non-believer. You can imagine. So, then huge amounts of community time and energy were being taken up in these ritual ablutions and cleansings to try and make it okay, and I wonder how they fare under Saddam Hussein. Well, so then you go on to the Net and program this word and you discover that in Pennsylvania there's a committee of people who are concerned about the Mandaean community and then in Germany, there are people who are preserving Mandaean liturgy and at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, there's a guy who can read the books. You know, Tim Leary said a wonderful thing years and years ago. He said, "Find the others." "Find the others." And the computer is the tool for finding the others and it was never intended for folks like you and me. It's one of those things that fell off the military vehicle as it rumbled by and we peasants pulled it out of the bushes and discovered what [Audience: laughter] we could do with this thing. But you can find the others. There are hundreds and hundreds of conferences going on on Youth Net. If it's a work of literature, if it's a sexual preference, if it's a complex programming problem, if it's an issue of historical research or diet or anything else, there are 50 or 60 people just *waiting* to talk to you about it. [Audience: Laughter]

So, uh, you know, I sort of believe that the psychedelic revolution is beginning to bear fruit and that we

shouldn't have thought of it as the 60's revolution; we should've thought of it as the 30 years war and, you know, victory is now within sight. No one can run or program these vast networks except guys with ponytails and the suits who are depending on all of this stuff to hold the world together are entirely beholden on, you know, guys with one earring and ponytails and all that, everything that loathes and revolts them is interposed between them and the technology because print heads can't hack it, literally, they can't hack it. And as Thomas Kuhn said in "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," you know, um, the way you really make revolutions is by waiting for the old guard to die off and they are dying off and, uh, and then the synergy that comes from all of these fields melting together. I mean, it is like -- my intuition was always that the psychedelic experience was a fracto anticipation of human history, you know, that it starts out the same way, everything's normal, you're just cooking your food around the fire and then it builds and then there's structure and then dissolution of structure and then technical accretions and vast downloading of ideas and so forth and so on and it's happening. I mean, the unitarian mind is being created. It is in fact in existence. The autonomic functions of the human super organism are already in place and what do I mean by the autonomic functions? I mean, uh, the daily pricing of gold, the computer transactions that characterize the banking system. This is all going on all the time; machines are talking to machines moving billions of dollars around, setting the value of currency and precious metals and commodities, I mean, most of this is on automatic. Human operators are only called in when unexpected fluctuations are picked up inside the system and, and yet, it's not clear, you know, what is being maximized.

The top most level of control is only assumed to exist. This is very exciting. We all assume that if you follow these trees of control up and up, finally at the level of the IMF, the World Bank, the National Security Council, someone is running it, but it's actually not true. It isn't a tree. It doesn't lead to focal nexus of control; it's a net; it's a web and, you know, when you realize this, you realize that a very large amount of power is in your hands. Uh, the people in this room, even if a couple of homeless have crept in here this evening, which is not likely, the people in this room probably represent the upper five per cent of the most powerful manipulators on the planet because if you just have a telephone credit card, you are in the upper ten per cent of the powerful manipulators [Audience: laughter] of information on the planet. Yeah, a calling card. And if you own a powerbook and an email address, you know, you are a member of the 20 million elite that is running the planet through the cyber net and talking to those people, changing their minds, interacting with them is the way to steer it and they are not the suits, they are not the guys chewing the black cigars; they're a much more malleable and open crowd. It's harder to pass a capitalist denominator through the keyhole of cyberspace, you know, you have to be young and lean and mean [Audience: laughter] and tatoos help.

Q: You said something about artists and, say, religious or spiritual sages who might look at the technology that you've been talking about and would say, we have known this all along, this is sort of old hat, um, and how you integrate that into the state of consciousness is much different from the scientific way of seeing things and where these people...

TM: You mean, like, yogins or something like that

Q: Yogins, yeah. Shamans have no need for these ideas or...

TM: Well, shamans, I think, are a good case in that apparently they have no need of these ideas and what I mean by that is their societies are at dynamic equilibrium. Left alone, they seem to do fine so forth and so on. India, I would argue, shows no such ability to deal with its problems. I mean, socio-politically, it's a mess. They should be and, in fact, are very interested in this kind of technology. You see, the difference between eastern and western religion, I mean, there are many differences, but the important ones for what we are seeing here this evening is that Eastern religion is basically timeless. When time is invoked, it's either in the Hindu system of chiliocosms of eternity and there are just cycles upon cycles or it's the time

of Taoism which is the time of the moment and the insight.

The weird thing about western religion: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and all the cults that they have spawned, is the insistence that God will enter history which is a crazy idea. That God will enter history at a given moment, it will be redeemed and the hell of toiling for our daily bread and the whole thing will somehow be made right by God's direct manifestation at a certain point and this idea finds just no support in the East so then when you ask about how these religious teachers relate to this technical thing, to me, the more interesting, um, relational approach to is through somebody like Teilhard de Chardin who I take as my direct inspiration. I never read de Chardin that carefully when he was hot, but since I've come out where I am about all of this I've looked back at it and he and I are in 100 per cent agreement except I go further. I say the date and he is crafty enough in his Jesuitical way to stay away from anything so likely to expose you to scorn and ridicule. But what he is saying in "The Phenomenon of Man" is that we are now generating what he calls the noosphere and the noosphere is the atmosphere of technical accretions on electronic information transfer and electromagnetic fields VHF, UHF, so forth and so on, and that this is part of evolution. His great insight was to see geology, biology and sociology as a continuous spectrum and, you know, well, McLuhan talked a lot about Teilhard de Chardin.

With McLuhan, you never knew whether he was being entirely serious or just going for the good line, but he maintained -- he said that the age of the Holy Ghost which was to occur immediately before the end of the world, that the age of the Holy Ghost, we had Edison to thank for it and that the spread of electricity around the world was the direct descent of the Holy Ghost and that as cities turned to oceans of electric light, he saw it as an epiphany of the third person of the trinity. This is an argument for keeping Catholics far from machinery and power; they're clearly screwballs of some sort.[Audience: Laughter]

Um, but it seems to me that if consciousness, if you make a religion out of consciousness which unconsciously we in California have done that this is what the New Age is about. We worship mind. We worship mind. Well, if you make consciousness your religion then clearly the -- the body of consciousness is the technical accretion, the super highways, the computers, the colour, the fibre optic networks, all that is how consciousness manifests itself. Consciousness wants -- it's as though we're still involved in the alchemical, uh, concerns of the 16th century, that consciousness achieves its fullest perfection through the fusion with matter, you know, that the union of spirit and matter which in materialist scientific terms is crazy talk. It doesn't happen. But, in the terms of the magical pre-cartesian attitudes toward matter, this is what they were going for and in a sense, you know, Mircea Eliade said this, he said it's ironic that the 20th century with its score for the magical notions of the 16th century has achieved the full program that those notions set forth. In other words, changing of lead to gold. We do this. It costs a lot of money, but we can do it in our reactors, our cyclotrons. We turn lead into gold.

We sequence the genome, the secrets of life and longevity are unfolded before us and then this final thing in the computer. I mean, the computer is the union of spirit and matter and, you know, five or six years ago you used to hear a lot of talk about how computers could never do all kinds of things and they were simply adding machines and this and that. Well, that's a kind of computer, but those voices have grown strangely muted as massive parallel processing and neuro maps and stuff like this. So, I don't know where all this stuff rests. You know, James Joyce said man will be dirigible which is like the flying saucer phase. I would like to think that the philosopher's stone is a suitable goal for human evolution, that we are actually downloading ourselves into a solid state realm where all that moves is ideas in a kind of electronic collectivity of mind and then the earth is left to itself. But how this is to be accomplished, I'm not sure. But

on the other hand, it's not up to me. I mean, if you read people like Hans Moravec, his book. What's it called? "Mind Children: The Future of Machine and Human Intelligence" and there are ideas in there that's so bizarre and far out and yet, you know, being discussed by someone with a tenured position at Carnegie Mellon University that it -- all that really holds us back as these boundaries dissolve is our imagination. The difference between the psychedelic experience and history is that history is real and at the end of it, you're going to be able to stay there, wherever there is, if you want and do those things, and I think it's coming very, very quickly. Even the wildest things that we've said here today to save certain theoretical constructs such as time machines are now being talked about in the popular scientific press. There was an article about time travel three issues ago in *Scientific American*. So does anyone want to say anything? Yeah.

Q: Can you make a distinction between understanding/knowledge and consciousness or do you see those as one and the same thing?

TM: Well, this is a hot and complex thing that's being debated right now. The materialists who hold the high ground in neuromolecular physiology, what they like to say, they're very happy with this formulation, they like to say that consciousness is short-term memory plus attention. This is the new buzz word: short-term memory plus attention. Actually, Henry James or William James said this first, but it's just been brought forward and if you think about it, that's a pretty good, uh, working model. If you say that consciousness is short-term memory plus attention then it's probably a characteristic of most animals, uh, and so then you get a seamless web. Um, where it gets complicated is where we seem to be able to build very, very flexible models of future courses of action and this may be a relationship to long-term memory. The relationship of higher animals between long-term memory is not clear. In other words, a mountain lion hunting, does she retain a memory of an incident with an important learning embedded in it months and months after it occurs? And in what way does she retain it? Does she retain it as a reflex or does she actually, as we do, recall and when we say recall, we mean picture a scene in our minds from the past and run it forward.

How, again, well, this leads to something that I wanted to say, that memory if you wanted to point to an incredible and significant failure, I've been talking about all these far out things that have been going on. The greatest disappointment in science, I would say, in the last 35 years is the utter failure of science to make any progress on the question of memory. I mean, I've been following it for almost, well not 35 years, but 30 years and they're nowhere. They have not gotten beyond the kind of stuff that Karl Pribram was talking about in "Languages of the Brain" which was published in 1973, for crying out loud. Uh, Walter Freeman's work, creative, brilliant work, no conclusion. The hard-core materialists have gotten nowhere and this is a central thing for understanding consciousness because where are the memories, you know? Karl Lashley was the first person to ask this question and it's never been satisfactorily answered and, you know, now there are new theories about interference patterns in the brain and this sort of thing, but, you know, when the telephone was new neurophysiologists like Raymond de Kahal (?) said the brain was like an international telephone network. Now, suddenly we have a hot new metaphor and we apply it to the darkest area of our ignorance which is the brain, but -- and then, you know, you have the hard-core mystics who say the effort to understand consciousness is intrinsically doomed to failure, that brain cannot elucidate brain and there's something to be said for that. You know, Gödel's incomensurability theorem and that whole thing.

I don't exactly understand what it means to say to explain consciousness. Understand, what would that

mean? Would we start with, start with, uh, a synaptic event and end with an experience and be able to trace the transition from synaptic event to experience all the way through? I would like, you know, it's a free enough field. You can say anything you want. I like the idea that the brain is an antenna; not a storage device and that seeking memory in the brain is like tearing transistor radios apart looking for little men. You know, there aren't little men in there so what you have instead is a quantum mechanical antenna. That would make sense because I really believe nature is a kind of seamless self-regulating oscillator of some sort and so it's much more important to be in tune with the larger sects of what's going on than to be isolated from that and somehow inwardly cognizant of what philosophers call an interior dimension of transcendence. I don't believe that. I think, uh, you know, that we are the most existentially isolated of all animal species as a consequence of language and that part of our difficulty in correctly picturing the mind and its place in nature is the fact that we assume our uniqueness and our isolation and the strength of the ego boundary, but if you saw the brain -- that's why my idea -- the regulation of culture through the psychedelic experience is not there is something magical about the psychedelic experience in and of itself, but that what it is is an attunement to natural harmonics on many levels that we could call, I do call it, the Gaian mind. It's a higher intentionality, but it's not mystical mumbo jumbo; it's biology. But there's a level upon level of pheromones, oscillations, chemical oscillators, all kinds of things that regulate biology besides the gross activation enzyme systems inside the wetware of an organism. When you're in the jungle like the Amazon, you see that, you know, this is seamless. This is one thing. It's only my, my style of knowing that tells me this is a palm tree, this is a crocodile, this is a butterfly, but the way it's all working it's just genes and gene exchange and life and death and procreation and symbiosis and so forth and so on.

Q: I was thinking of Rupert Sheldrake. I was thinking of idiot savants, too, with their minds like an antenna tapping into some incredible knowledge. There's no way they could ever learn.

TM: Yes, well I count myself among their numbers[Audience: laughter] without a doubt. No, that's the only way, that's how I explain my career because it has, you know, fundamentally a mathematic basis that's very solid and beyond reproach by all of the most stalwart and yet clearly I'm a kind of cannabis-smoking lunatic. How did that happen? Well, it's the principle of the idiot savant, I think. And that nature is knowable. You know if you're God's fool, the secret will be given over to you. I mean, it's everywhere. It's in every drop of water, everything has it in it. That was the alchemical phase and it's the fracto phase as well.

Q. I have a question about the antenna thing. As I understand it, you know, in terms of picking up certain ideas or whatever, but when you talk about receiving specific memory that you as a single entity have experienced, so you as an entity would experience this thing and now it's just floating out there.

TM: You mean, does it actually call you up and say, "Hey, you." Is it like that?

Q: What is it that produces that. I mean, I can imagine receiving certain things that are cultural, diet or whatever. But when you receive, you're talking about your own person memories of stubbing your toe eight years ago, you know, why is that floating around?

TM: Oh, I see what you're saying. Well, this is the great problem for all theories of memory. We know that if you live to be 70 years old that every molecule in your body will be exchanged approximately 10 times. Well, then how is it that a 70-year old woman can remember what it was like to be taken in the arms of her grandmother and the smell of the perfume that the old lady wore. I mean, that is just an absolute mystery and the hard-core, if you're a hard-core materialist and God knows they're around somewhere, probably not here, but if you're a hard-core materialist the you say, "Well, something must persist and if we could figure out the one thing that persists then we'd have it nailed." Well, it turns out that there is something that persists. It's the, the neurons do not cycle over. You are born with a certain number of neurons and you die with a few less depending on your drug-taking history and they are never replaced and they are never

cycled out. Well, we -- but then the materialist break down because this magical substance which you would think would help them solve their memory problem, the theories necessary to turn it into the story side of memory are too fantastic for them to swallow. You would have to go to something like the invisible landscape, plug, plug [Audience: laughter] to find a theory radical enough to account for that because you would have to hypothesize molecular storage almost at the speed of a tape recorder of theoretically an entire lifetime. So, 70, let's make it 35 years because presumably you don't retain your dreams very youthful, so let's say 30 years of continuous tape recording being downloaded into something under eight angstroms in diameter with no degradation of the data stream and so --n and so forth. It becomes insupportable and fantastic in their mind but perhaps not. I mean why is, I mean, nature has a peculiar way of using redundancy like once nature finds a way to do something, she will tend to use that technique over and over again in different applications.

We see that the problem of storage of information and retrieval of information and non-degradation of that information has all been solved in the functioning of DNA. Uh, but the information that is stored in DNA, if you talk to an information theorist, they will say, "Well, it's not like memory. It's not like they're people's faces or their addresses or telephone numbers; it's just protein synthesis. It structures for protein synthesis and you mustn't be so naive as to confuse this with real information" with a pat on the head and so forth and so on. But, here we have the DNA, the central molecular machinery of life and for reasons known to nobody vast sections of it are what are called silent DNA. What does that mean? It means those parts of the DNA don't code for protein. Well, but maybe they code for something else. Maybe they code for memory and maybe the so-called random or trash arrangement of nucleitides in those sections of the DNA are, in fact, our memory. I mean, memory is very mysterious and the mechanism which explains it may involve principles at the edge of or beyond the grasp of current science. I mean, think of it. You know, I have memories going back to eight months and many people report memories under three years and often these are in their movies, you know. The most highly degradable and data-dense form of image storage there is. I mean, that's why it's so maddening to store images, you know, videotape on computers today because it's so memory-intensive as they say in the biz, and yet this seems to be how we store our, our memories.

Oh, let's see. What else has to be said? Well, again, this is simply a laundry list of things, cutting edge concerns and ideas in the realm of what I've left out and I'll mention it and then maybe we can knock off our top political ideas. I've talked to you guys before about the idea of one woman, one child. I've slightly modified it recently or made an addendum to it which is, uh, I think it would be very interesting, if 75 -- if every woman had one child. We talked about that and the social consequences of that, but how interesting it would be then if 75 per cent of those children were female and that the feminization of society, I think, should not proceed through the feminization of men; it should proceed by dialing down the overall number of men in the society and I think probably with a 50/50 sexual ratio which is actually an artificial ratio maintained by craved monogomites and their dominator stooges not to judge it, of course, but [Audience: laughter] and that in usually, in large, uh, mammalian social animal groups, males are more at a premium and so that's something I've been following and talking to people.

And then lastly and in somewhat a lighter vein, I want to urge you all to consider the zippies and their crusade to save the soul of America which you may not have heard of. Well, that is how it is with crusades. [TM: Laughter] The zippies are a bunch of English bohemians who are trying to launch a third British cultural wave following in the model of the Beatles first and Malcolm McLaren and the Sex Pistols second, and now come the zippies and they exemplify a certain kind of syncopated house trance dance techno

music and, um, what I like about them is that they operate under the banner of what they call "pronoia" and pronoia is the creeping idea that people are plotting behind your back to help you [Audience: laughter] and I see pronoia as part of the phenomenon of boundary dissolution. you know, things are going to get better and better. And what a zippie is is basically a freak who has their shit together. You know, zippies are freaks, but they don't have large amounts of garbage in their apartments.[TM: laughter] Freaks who recycle. That's your typical zippie. And so they'll be making their way across country and if you get a chance to attend any of their raves, um, you should do it. Raves are very good for the soul. There's a lot of youth bashing going on in this country and it's very weird and directed from large glass and aluminum boxes along Madison Avenue in Manhattan. You know, there is nothing wrong with people under 25. They're fine. Thank you. It's the culture that they're inheriting that is so toxic and weird that they don't know what to do with it. Somehow the response of that culture is to stigmatize them and to lay down all sorts of horse shit trips about Generation X and this and that and the other thing. I really think the zippies are the real, um, youth culture and it's psychedelic and its experience based. That's the other thing. Something we've preached here over and over again that the primacy of direct experience is what life is about. Now *Time* magazine is telling you but, you know, how you feel in your body, right here, right now and, you know, the drugs you take and the sexual acts you participate in and the things you do with your mind and body in real time and everything else is highly abstract and not to be trusted, I think.

In New York I gave a talk for the zippies trying to formulate what it is and it's mostly what it isn't. You know, it's about not believing, not consuming, not following. Uh, it's about taking back direct experience. If we could feel our circumstance, if we could feel what we're doing to the earth and each other, we wouldn't do it. It's that simple because it's too horrible, but, you know, you can anaesthetize yourself with ideology, with wealth, with distance, with religious obsession and so forth and so on, and then you can't, you know, tell shit from shinola, but pain is pain, agony is agony, uh, there's plenty of it out there so I think the precondition for any kind of response to that, any kind of like political or reforming response to it is to feel and that means taking back your own social space from the machinery of media and domination and value manipulation and and so forth and so on. So, I live life with an immense sense of intellectual excitement and hope. That's the thing. I think there's a whole bunch of, uh, cards on the table that permit intelligent people to hope. Intelligence and cynicism which have gone hand in hand throughout the 20th century are no longer good company with each other. It's inappropriate. Cynicism is now inappropriate. It's déclassé. It's not chique, my dears. Something else is on the horizon and so, permitting smart people to hope, that is the goal.

Original Transcription by: [Patricia C. Lansdown, May 11, 2015]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Places I Have Been

15th, May, 1988

Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles, California

Description

- [Original recording](#)
- [Terence's Botanical Dimensions project](#)

Well this talk, uh, how many of you were at the whole life expo yesterday? [pause] How many of you bought a quartz crystal there? [audience laughs; and applause]. Seeming to hold the line and have one each. One, one person one crystal, as I think, uh, a reasonable way to handle the destruction of the tropical rainforest that is going on to allow the airlifting chrysaline, uh, silicon malibu. So uh, [audience laughs], be aware that the trees die so that we, our coffee can find their way into our hands. Which reminds me that, and I'll remind you, this is a Botanical Dimensions benefit. Botanical Dimensions is a non-profit operation that Kat and I founded, and Rupert Sheldrake and Ralph Metzner, and Ralph Abraham, and uh, oh, Leo Zeff, some of you may know Leo, he died recently, he was on our board. And what we do is, we preserve plants with a history of human usage, especially ceremonial usage, you understand what I'm saying? [audience laughs], okay, and no one else in the world is, uh, doing this at the moment. The World Wildlife Foundation and Earth First, and these very large conservation, uh, organizations, are, their approach to the ecological crisis in Latin America is to preserve huge tracts of virgin forest, which is a very laudable and, uh, necessary thing to do. But even more fragile than the rain-forest itself is the web of relationships and information that the traditional people living in the rain-forest have evolved within it. They have, uh, a medical knowledge and a pharmacopeia whose age has to be estimated in millennia, and if we do not act in the next twenty-five years to preserve this information and the plants that it is about, it will be lost forever. And uh, we're not, we're talking immune stimulators, antibiotics, uh, neuro-toxins, hallucinogens, flavorings, uh, foods, the entire gamut of, of uh, gifts from vegetable nature, many of them in the Amazon, are uh, in danger of being lost. Naturally the focus is largely on the plants of shamanic usage, because knowledge of their use is even more endangered because it rests in the hands of fewer people. These shamans are not training new generations of apprentices, largely. The younger men are going off to the sawmills, and uh, and to work in the large cities that have sprung up along the Amazon, and uh, if we don't preserve this information it will be lost. So, this is what your money is going toward, we have a nineteen acre site on the big island of Hawai'i, and there we gather plants from, uh, all over the world, uh, and grow them there with no [tape skip] plants and, that they be available then to, for people who want to do research, and that can be straight academic research, it can be homeopathy, it can be shamanism, it can be aromatherapy, we don't, [tape skip] not judgemental, we just want to make this biological material available.

So, Art's decided that we would call this, Places I Have Been, and uh, I immediately added the caveat, uh, hopefully that means both in my mind and on earth [audience laughs], and uh [clears throat], so maybe I'll,

as an example of what Botanical Dimension does, which ties with, uh, the travel theme, I was, uh, on assignment for a magazine in January, and I went to southern Thailand, uh, in fact it's an amusing story, you may notice I'm wearing very trendy, yuppie rags from [more laughing], from the Banana Republic [more laughing]. Yeah well, clap fast because Banana Republic is being, uh, dissolved into the Gap, which is basically a, a ghetto cheater, [audience laughs], and uh, the uh, the genius behind Banana Republic wanted to have a travel magazine, and he decided, that, that he would call the travel magazine, Trips [more laughing], to my average smile [more laughing]. And he, he further decided, that uh, he would uh, have a monthly column which he wanted to call, Our Man in Nirvana, [audience laughs]. And believe it or not, I was asked if I wanted to be Our Man in Nirvana, well actually I said I have to think it over, and uh, said that, uh, that I was, uh, it was like a dream come true. Can you imagine, a situation where all expenses paid, you roved the world, looking for the most beautiful places, and when they published you get a dollar a word, and when they don't publish what you write, you get twenty-five cents a word, which is more than most magazines pay when they publish you. So uh, I went to southern Thailand on this assignment, that by the way, since the, this happened, the magazine's gone defunct, it had one issue and uh, [audience laughs]. But it's, it's not the first time that I have stowed away aboard a sinking ship [more laughter], but to, to the botanical point of the story, that shows you the kinds of adventures, and, and courage and dedication that Botanical Dimensions brings to bear on the task. Uh, I was in Thailand naturally, you access Thailand through Bangkok, and I had read in Richard Evan Schultes book, The Botany and Chemistry of Hallucinogens, about a plant called, Kratom, Kra-tom, and uh, it said it was illegal in Thailand. Well friends, Thailand is the source of one third of the world's heroin. It is, uh, the destination of most of the sex tours that originate in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, places like that, in other words, they run a pretty loose scene, [audience laughs]. And, and, here this plant is illegal, and I thought well this is pretty amazing, uh, what's going on? So uh, I was with an art dealer friend, and he had a Thai wife, so I put the problem to her, and she said yes, oh yes, the, the most degenerate people know all about this [audience laughs], and knowing my friend I said, well then you must have several friends [more laughter over Terence's voice], that was the touchful bit, and uh, and so we put out the word, and uh, low and behold, uh, we got samples of this plant, root-stock, uh, and there was this very hush hush, and everyone was either giggling, or, or looking at us with thin, hard expressions as we, uh, scored this plant. And uh, we now have it, it is now growing in Hawai'i, it is available for, uh, certified bio-chemists and bio-chemical researchers, to determine what this thing is. What we learned as we made our way toward it, was why it's illegal. It's illegal because it inhibits and interferes with heroin addiction [audience gasps]. So, who knows, you know, if this is true, but say it were true, well that means, you know, this is ethno-botanically one of the great cues [sp?] of the decade, and it explains then why the tides are, of such a, ambivalent state of mind about it, because it's poised like a dagger at the heart of their economic life, uh, if it's real. So, this is the kind of thing that we're involved in, uh, I saw a review article recently on, uh, over a hundred and twenty plants of African origin that are, have immune stimulating properties. Well, in the age of AIDS, every clue, every claim concerning plants which stimulate the immune system should just be run to ground. I would think that would be a very reasonable strategy along with the millions that are being spent in other ways, uh, uh, to work on, uh, this problem. And in fact, uh, from my brother Dennis whose in NIMH, we've obtained seeds of a number of these immune stimulating plants, and are growing them out, uh, in Hawai'i. But the mention of Dennis cause me to think I, I should tell you, uh, Dennis and his wife Sheila had their first child just over a week ago [non decipherable], so the tradition will not die [audience laughs]. This is not yet a doomed house.

Uh, normally I, you hear me rail about psychedelics, and there will be a question and answer period, so you can probably bade me into that, but uh, I will actually treat seriously theme of, uh, Places Where I've Been.

Because, uh, when I went to Thailand in January on this travel writing assignment, and I went on to Goa, south of Bombay, uh, I was shocked and disappointed really to see how few Americans are on the road. It is apparently something which is not happening for Americans the way it is for Europeans. The German mindset is completely tip-saving [sp?] on overseas traveling, everybody works like a dog, ten or eleven months of the year, and then they go as far away from Germany as they can get [audience laughs], they really go far. Uh, the island of Ko Samui, Goa, all of these places, and the Australians as well. And, my, uh, commitment to psychedelics, as I have had to define for myself, but speaking to groups like this, is really a commitment to the primacy of direct experience. I think we are endlessly ripped off and impoverished in this society by being denied the opportunity to validate our own felt presence, the immediacy of our own being. We sell it out to the t.v., we sell it out to the great life we're gonna have after we quite working sixteen hours a day, we sell it out to all kinds of ideals that, that turn us into their puppets. And of course, psychedelics mitigate that very strongly, they dissolve programming, break up habitual behavior patterns, but strangely enough, so does travel, and this may be why there are so many heads on the road. Maybe, because they're all in doubt of it, [audience laughs]. We have to be reasonable people. Nevertheless they seem to take very well to the road. And uh, when you go traveling in these exotic places, and then you return to the folks back home, one of the weirdest experiences you can have is for someone to say to you, oh, were, were you gone? And said, was I gone? [audience laughs]. I barely escaped having my head shrunk in the jungles of Sarawak [audience laughs; Terence voice not clear] I haven't seen you around, I guess you haven't been around. The point of the story being that, a body in motion, seems to stretch the temporal dimension incredibly. So that if you put yourself into a situation where every night, your head sees the pillow, uh, in a different place, your living at about ten times the speed of your office dwelling colleagues, back at home. And uh, you know it's, it's a, a cliché that travel is the best education, but it's really only a cliché to the people who stay at home [audience laughs], because it's actually, it's absolutely true. There is nothing which dissolves your behavior patterns and your assumptions, and [?] your bowels [audience laughs]. In a remote third world country, it is actualizing the metaphor of the quest, you see, it's actually taking upon yourself the heroic role as the Jungians define it, the role of the hero, and going out into three-dimensional space and time, on a mission, for a reason. As a traveling freak years ago, we always had great contempt for tourists, you know a tourist is ipsofacto a person who has 'I am irrelevant' written across their forehead, I mean it's a sappy notion basically, to be a tourist. So what you must be in the, in the travel adventure I think is, uh, an agent, on a mission. We always did it that way, we were always after something; plants, a tonka [sp?], a meeting with the beady eyed guru of some sort, a drug, you know, whatever, or an artefact of some sort, and uh, then you have this mission, you can behave in this wonderful cavalier way that sets you up for adventure. You arrive in the capitol city of country X, do you want to see the cathedral? No thank you. Do you want to see the national art gallery? No thank you. We just want to [pause] get whatever it is, and by moving that way, with a sense of high purpose and mission, uh, nature responds. One of the little aphorisms that, uh, the mushroom has passed along over the years, and I think it's true is, uh, uh, 'nature loves courage', it said it to me, 'nature loves courage', and I thought for a moment and I said 'how does nature respond to courage? And the answer came back immediately 'by removing obstacles'. That's how nature treats the courageous, by opening doorways, by moving the laws, the old fools rush in where angels fear to tread, uh, sort of idea.

So, uh, my travels began for me, uh, really seriously in nineteen-sixty-seven. It was fed up with America, uh, uncertain about the draft, and uh, I had it basically. I was living in Berkley, where they were beating on our heads every night, and the smell of teargas didn't leave the streets. And I, uh, was with a woman, and uh, we decided that we would emigrate to the Seychelles Islands [audience laughs]. We had a book called 'An Encyclopedia of the Islands of the World', and I knew what the requirements were, it had to be

tropical, English had to be understood, and it had to be remote. And I had never heard of the Seychelles Islands, now they're a very cheechy [sp?] sort of travel destination, but at that time it was Mars. And so we set out, and uh, uh, she was Jewish, and uh, we were young, and so I received a summons from her father, uh, here in Los Angeles, who wanted to discuss our plans. And I was prepared for anything, but he is a wonderful person actually, a dear man. And uh, he said, I'm not going to put on you what you call a trip, [audience laughs], I just have one request, the Seychelles are on the other side of the world, therefore, you could via Hong Kong in the far east, or you could go via Europe and Israel, it is my wish that you go by way of Israel, I said, done, can I go now? [audience laughs]. And uh, this was, this was October of nineteen, uh, sixty-seven, uh, the war, the sixty-seven war was barely cooled. And I [skip in tape]. The plan was by the time we got to Israel, we had far less money than we thought we would ever have, and the government of Israel was so interested in promoting immigration at that point, that they had a deal, where if you worked on a Kibbutz or a Moshav for six months, they'd give you an air ticket anywhere. So, Stephanie was decided would stay in Israel and go to, uh, Moshav on board, on the, uh, sea of Galilee, and follow me to the Seychelles in six months with the ticket that she would earn. So I went on to Africa, and uh, uh, she fell in love with the guy in the next bunk [audience laughs], and she forgot my name, and uh, [more laughter; someone in audience speaks but is not clear; Terence responds, absolutely; more laughter]. So uh, but it was very funny because I didn't want to linger in Israel, I was on a mission, you know. Everybody around me was caught up in, in Zionism and the aftermath of war, and this and that, and here I was an Irishman, and when people asked me where I was going, I said, the Seychelles Islands [audience laughs]. What does that have to do with it? Uh, and so I went to what my guidebook described as, Eilat, Israel's bustling southern port. Well I discovered that at that time, one full month of the Zim line, which was the Israeli state freight line came in there, and so I realized I was stuck there for awhile. And I discovered in the dry eeyores {sp?} washing down to the Red Sea, the most amazing collection of freaks [audience laughs], Colombians, Danes, fed up Kerputzniks [more laughter; unclear word] who had run away from that. All these people sitting in this place, dedicated to the notion that, uh, you should smoke as much hash every day as you possibly can [more laughter] and they had a wonderful technique which beats anything I've ever seen. You know in India you smoke a chillum, and it's a, it's a ceramic cylinder, and you, and you mix the hash and tobacco, stuff it in, hold it with a wet cloth, do this method. Okay, so what these guys were not into, was, you take a, preferably a Dr. Pepper bottle [audience laughs], you break it on a rock near, near the bottom, and then, at that time Israel's, uh, smallest denomination coin was called an 'Agarot', and it had, it was, uh, like a gear, it had deep indentations in from the edge. So you could take a one Agarot coin, drop it into the neck of this Coke bottle, or Dr. Pepper bottle, and then just work up a mass of stuff, about like this. So when you fired this thing across the surface, it had a burning surface [more laughter], the size of a small pancake [more laughter]. So uh, I did that for awhile [more laughter]. And by the time I got to Kenya, and made my way to Mombasa, which was the place where this boat was, which was going to take us to, uh, to take me to Seychelles, I thought maybe I should dry out a little, and uh, and uh, but I, I had scored in Mombasa from the shoeshine boys this outlandish black, uh, camper. But I took the boat to the Seychelles Islands and I was there a couple weeks, and I arranged a small house out on an island, which was almost like the island in the cartoons, the one tree island [audience laughs]. It wasn't quite that small, but there were about fifty families on this island, all spoke Creole, and, and there were coconut trees on this island. Every coconut tree had a number, painted on in white ink, and there were twenty-one-hundred and fifteen coconut trees on this island. So I was there to write a book, and to wait for Stephanie. So I decided, uh, that I, that I had been smoking much too much coming through Israel and down through Africa. So I took this lid and I nailed it above my kitchen door, and I said I won't, uh, smoke until I finish this book, and I will set myself a vision, and I will work everyday, and I did. I'd get up every morning, fry my eggs, feed the stray dog, be at the type-write at

eight, I would work until two in the afternoon, come hell and high water, then I would, brew tea, and, amuse myself. And it was terrible, you know I was insomniac, I was, my dreams, I was both insomniac and my dreams states were completely out of control. And I wrote this book, and it was, uh, it was called, uh, called, uh, 'Crypto-Rap Meta-Electrical Speculations on Temporary Culture' so, [audience laughs]. And it ran to like two-hundred-twenty pages, so as I was closing in with the end of this book, I began to think, and I, I began to think about the lid nailed over the door, finally I decided that my gift to myself, would be, to uh, to get really stoned when the book was done, so uh, finally the book was done, the index was done, it was all done, it was just sitting there, and I had my little evening meal, and I rolled these enormous bombers, and I dragged my lawn chair out in the palm trees, and the lagoon was laughing out there, and uh, and I smoked a couple of these things in short order, I was just waiting for this wonderful sense of relief, and accomplishment and so forth to sweep over me. And this abyss began to grow in my mind, and I kept pushing it back, and saying, no relief [audience laughs], falling relief [more laughter] and it wouldn't, and finally I had to look at it, and it was a realization which grew over about fifteen seconds, from the faintest whisper of a suspicion, to an absolutely incontrovertible certainty, and it was the knowledge that this book I had written, was the most outlandish garbage [more laughter], sophomoric, self-congratulatory, prolapse, exalting, over-written, uh, just, and I was like frozen [more laughter], because, friends, this was true [more laughter]. So then I realized, you know your nuts to try and navigate about this stuff, because it just makes you, it, you know, uh, being straight makes you into a moron [audience laughs; applause].

There's, there's a whole family of uh, of one liners like that, uh, [more laughter], one is, uh, reality is for people who can't handle drugs [more laughter]. The, the, best version of that I ever heard was something which I thought Tim Leary had said but I asked him recently and he couldn't remember him saying it, of course he's brain dead [more laughter]. Tim once said, uh, "LSD is a drug, which has been known to cause psychotic behavior in people who don't take it [more laughter]. So that was really my first foray out into the world, uh, I went back to Bombay, and, and back to Berkley, and by that time it was early nineteen-sixty-eight, and I got back to Berkley just in time for the street uprisings of May, June and July of sixty-eight which really was the, you know that was the cauldron of my generation. And I don't know how many of you were there the night we burned the bank of America, you know these great home [?] [audience laughs; Terence's voice unclear]. When I, when I first started public speaking I had the illusion that you all were there. And that, and that I was talking to the same people and that we were that type, you know. Suddenly I realized, there are people in this room who weren't born, probably, the night that that went down. Anyway, I was in Berkley all that summer and fall, and some of you may remember S.I. Hayakawa, who twisted my finger, a traditional opportunist to, uh, at that time was cutting his way to power, uh, as president of San Francisco state, and there was a very radical strike action against San Francisco state throughout September, October, November, really at standoff. Everyday we would riot, everyday they would call out the tact squad, and, and then we'd do it the next day, and then take off two days on weekends, and finally ended it was just a technician [?] was never a resolution, but it was really a crazy [audience laughs], one of the most Orwellian things I had ever seen, because San Francisco state has a big quad with square cubicle buildings on all four sides of it. Well, the tact squad, intelligence people, the F.B.I. the C.I.A. film scoop, would put their observers up on these rooftops, and they were filming with telescopic cameras and all this, and obviously they also had closed-circuit t.v. because you could, you never saw high columns, you never saw them. But there were these huge loud speakers mounted on the corners of these buildings, and uh, they would hold rallies, and the Black Panthers would speak and some guy would get up and say now, "Ya'll know why we're here, we're here for business", and the business administration building was one of the belfries of "We're here for business". And the crowd would just begin moving toward the business administration building, meanwhile the cobblestone walkways were

suddenly mobile [audience laughs], end of the crowd, and, and you could hear Hayakawa's voice saying "You're clearly escalating!, you're clearly escalating" [more laughter]. And then the tact squad would sweep in and so forth and so on, and uh. Finally, finally Christmas vacation ended that, and the next day as I was leaving my apartment in the hills behind Berkley, I noticed this guy in a car with a funny license plate, and a clipboard mounted on a little stand so he could write while he drove, and he seemed to be taking a lot of interest in my comings and goings. So I told my friend that I thought we had shot our wad, and reminded him that the first duty of a revolutionary is to survive, right? And so we, uh, bought air tickets to, uh, Luang Prabang, Laos, and then on to India, and then back to the Seychelles, uh, there was a possibility at that time of getting real estate in the Seychelles. And, it was really all that traveling in Asia, which pointed me toward, uh, my eventual interest in psychedelics and the Amazon. I, of course I knew about LSD because I went to Berkley in that decade but, but I didn't really understand that these things had been used for fifteen, twenty-five-thousand years, that there was this rich history that was in fact the world's oldest religion. It's interesting you know to me, the uh, press of the sixties, even the underground press like the San Francisco Oracle, and see what themes were not present in the sixties consciousness, that were either absent or rarely mentioned. The theme of shamanism was absent or rarely mentioned. Nobody had connected up the notion that there was this tradition like this. The notion that U.F.O.'s and, and dis-incarnate extra-terrestrial intelligence might have something to do with it. But remember how it was presented as an aesthetic experience by one school, that was the school where you listened to the Bach B. Minor mass, and uh, looked at paintings by Caravaggio and Rembrandt on these subjects, yeah. And then, uh, and then the other school was the psycho-analytic, this is good for you, we have an atheist school, which uh [audience laughter], no I think there was something to be said to that actually. But anyway, in the in-traveling around India, and keeping my wits about me, I became very very simple, and it, those of you who follow me very closely know, that I am no friend of the guru racket, that by, I think uh, if what we're out for is self empowerment and increasing our own felt authenticity, that the first step in the process is not give over your loyalty to some beady eyed weasel from Bengal [audience laughter; applause]. And I went to these guys, you know I was open minded, I, I took Yoga very seriously. I practiced it, I studied the Hindu meta-physics. The reason I was most in Asia, the longest was to study the Tibetan language, and so I was not, you know, I was not a no-nothing physician, but I always set the same question, "What can you show me?". And the best thing I ever, nobody could ever show me really anything, I said "Well, you're obsessed with materialistic effects" [audience laughs]. That's right uncle, and if you don't have any I'll be moving on [more laughter]. Because you know they have the idea that I 'd like to sweep the ashram courtyard for a few years before they lay on the skin. And the other thing was, I noticed, that you know, these guys were as dedicated to smoking hash as I was [more laughter], which clued me that they couldn't have cornered the market on transcendental consciousness too thoroughly. And, and so, I, well the most impressive thing I ever saw, and I respect, uh, uh, the Mahayana tradition very much, I think it's a deep psychological insight into what humanness is, but I don't think they have the doorway into hypser-space. I don't think anybody has the doorway into hyper-space except psychedelic shamans, uh, whether they live in Vedanta[?] beach, or Pucallpa, or central Africa. But uh, so then I, I realized that these traditions were simply that, they were vitiated tradition, and that all of this talk about paranormal abilities could be traced back to earlier strata, and the earlier strata always had the same word with them, Shamanism, that was it. The pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, Shamanism. The roots of Daoism, Shamanism. The roots of the Vedic civilization, Shamanism. The ancient Hebrew civilization, arising out of Shamanism, so forth and so on. So then, I said well where in the world is shamanism happening today? Well the answer is, of many places, but in its most authentic and, uh, uh, intense forms, it's happening in the Amazon basin. And it based on the use of plants, to which an almost symbiotic relationship has been formed. And uh, as quickly as I could arrange it, and my brother's thinkings have all been along these same lines, uh, we found our way to South

America. And uh, went to Pucallpa, went to Iquitos, went to Puerto Leguizamo in southern Columbia. And there, this same challenge that has caused so much discomfort to the Yogins, and the Vilksūs, and the Vilksūnis, and the Geishays, and the Rōshis, and the Rishis, didn't seem to bother these cats. I said, "What can you show me?", and he well look, "Let me put an edge on my machete, and we'll go out here half a mile and cut some vine, and brew it up, and then I've got this other plant growing in my dooryard, and my Grandfather showed me how to do this, and we'll just put it together", and there it was!

The thing which is our birthright as a species, but which, uh, the powers of profane secularism would deny us. I mean some of you may have heard me say yesterday, it's very clear, 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness'. Well that doesn't, we've interpreted that to mean, the right to run over the other guy on the way to getting your claws on your third Mercedes [audience laughs]. But that isn't really it, the untrammelled permission which we have given capitalism to cheapen our values, is not what the notion 'The Pursuit of Happiness' means. It means the pursuit of existential authenticity, it means the pursuit of meaning in the world. Well, it just so happens because we are the descendants of these primate, and proto-hominoid, and hominoid populations that have this symbiotic relationship with plants, and to vision, and saw that as the source of their spiritual mind. It, it is therefore not only our birthright, but it is the natural path for us to take. You see, this thing of, of drugs, is simply a language game, what we are, are omnivorous animals, and we are also sensual animals. Most animals are neither of these things, most animals pick one thing, or a few things, but to be an omnivorous animal, willing to eat; fruit, roots, meats, eggs, shellfish, nuts, so on, is extremely unusual. And then, to have an interest in flavoring, in shifting things, the way things taste for their own sake, this is a quality of consciousness, and we are unique in possessing it. And the current, uh, fixation with drugs that states it as a new phenomenon is completely misrepresenting what is going on. Throughout history, human populations have, had their societies, their religions, and indeed their entire cultural machinery, uh, sculpted, and created in response to the kinds of foods, spices, drugs and medicines that they were involved in. Think for example, of the impact of coffee on the evolution of modern world industrialism, how the office worker, and the coffee habit are mutually reinforcing activities where one could probably not function with the other, without the other. You know, when coffee first made it's appearance it was served in very sleazy bars [audience laughs], where loose women and pretentious intellectuals hung out together and, and criticized the enlightenment, and got so rattled that they would just talk all night [audience laughs]. That was the, that was coffee was, until it was understood that what it really is, is speed, and it lets you do a job, and then modern office culture came into being. Think of the manipulation of opium policy by the British East-Indian company in the far east. How many people are aware that the island of Java, which uh, has the densest population per square mile of any large area in the world, has that large population because the Dutch in the nineteenth century, payed people to have children, because the sugar industry was so labor intensive? So that, so in order that white sugar could grace the tables of upper class Europe, the demographics of an entire section in southeast Asia would just plunge into hell. Uh, the examples are endless, tobacco, uh, the influence of the Eleusinian mysteries on the development of Greek philosophy, uh, the way in which the C.I.A. used heroin in the nineteen-sixties to quell the revolt in the ghettos, so forth and so on. These are just, uh, uhm typical examples of this. Well, I digressed slightly, I mentioned it because it's important for us, as people with a core interest, to be as articulates, a spokesman, and a spokespeople as we can be. And because we are living through a kind of hysteria, the equivalent of the great red scare of nineteen-nineteen. What people need to realize, what this society needs to realize, is that the pro-psychedelic position, is an anti-drug position. Because drugs, as defined by the establishment; cocaine, heroin, amphetamines and so forth, reinforce un-examined, machine-like behavior patterns, obsession, and a narrowing of consciousness down to a single focus, the acquisition of the drug. This is the exact opposite in all cases [skip] psychedelics do. Psychedelics dissolve

social programming, break up habitual behavior patterns, and incline you to the broadest sort of perspective possible. [audience member says; which they see as an even greater threat I think]. That's precisely why the psychedelics are swept up in the hysteria about the hard drugs. The government is making lots of money on hard drugs, and keeping a lot of people under it's thumb. The psychedelics, by being de-conditioning agents, are just like, uh, you know bringing in gasoline to a bonfire. You're absolutely right, that is the nature of the controversy. That it lifts you out of the ritual genuflection to the idols of the tribe; consumerism, uh, workaholic behavior patterns, duty, and well you know, the whole gamut bourgeois ideas that has made us such a, uh, a poverty stricken culture. So, uh [audience laughs]. Thank you very much, you were great [audience applause; music and host closing].

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Lecture Name

Fall 1989

Location, City, State

Description

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Plants, Consciousness, and Transformation

8-9 April 1995

Location, City, State

Description

- [Youtube Audio Link](#)

Okay, well, welcome to plant consciousness and transformation. uh I'm terence mckenna. I know many of you, uh we will meet here today and tomorrow 10 to noon, 130 to 5 and uh basically this is uh, uh, workshop to discuss the interaction between plants and human beings. h specifically the psychological and mental interpenetration would be to very different kinds of lifeforms and uh, those of you who are right and who are concerned about a paper that you may write relative to this class, I'll say a few words about that before the afternoon session, so don't fret about it, it will all come clear in time.

uh, I think of this uh course as plants and mind" and, uh, the way I like to teach is to just begin to lay out the basic pieces of what is a very complex interdisciplinary puzzle, and hopefully at some point uh your specialties, your passions your interests will ignite the whole thing and it will have then a dynamic of its own. We could discuss these matters for 2 days 5 days, 10 days, or as I've done 40 years 35 years. there is no end to it and very few areas of human endeavor dissolve the disciplinary boundaries of western academia as thoroughly as uh the study of human and psychoactive plant interactions do. there are important issues here in biology and botany. in biogeography, in ethnography and ethnology, in psychology and neurophysiology, in the study of symbols, uh uh, the number of disciplines that have top be brought to bare on thsi subject is ... to how important it si to uh understanding our our humannes and I represent, uh, a radical point of view on these matters and I don't imagine I was invited here to dumb it down, so, you know if you had darwin, you'd get natural selection, if you had freud so you get sexual attraction. so you got mckenna so you're gonna get psychoactive kitalysis opf consciousness...

but betfore we get to that let me just lay out some of the, the field. uh. Human beings began uh there career. well, we can trace it back to the primordial slime I suppose, but uh, our our animal career was a career of insectivouruous vegetarian and fruititarianism, lived out in the arboreal canopies of tropical rain forests. And all uh all animal species, indeed all life tends to iuh occupy and evolutionary niche and then stabilize itself in that niche. uh termites cockroaches these sorts of organisms found their niche hundreds of millions years ago and have ...

generally nature is not progressive in it's particulars. overall nature is progressive, but it's particulars seek equilibrium. and so it would have been in the case of our primate ancestors. They acheived a dynamical balance with our... a canopy habitat uh uh uh language pack signaling designed to convey danger and information about food sources and so forth and so on. and there they would ahve remained uh had it not been for the larger ecodynamics of the planet. Ecodynamics which are still shaping, uh uh human habitat in Africa,. because what has been going on in africa for at least 5 million years is a slow drying of the continent. and it disrupted this uh rainforest ecology so that about 2 to 4 million years ago, ... the rainforest began to island itself and to be restricted to the wetter areas of africa and into the new environment, the

more viriditic or arid environment that was coming into being, a very diminished plant community took hold. A community of opportunistic grasses, annuals, heavy seeders, this sort of thing. Now we know that the rainforest was primary because the rainforest, just to give you a broad notion, might consist of uh over 100000 plant species. The grassland ecosystem might well consist of under 500 species and all 500 grassland species can be found as rare members of the flora of the rainforest. So clearly what we have are the survivors of a process of clearing and there is argument among botanists about this. Karl Sauer who was a great geographer and thinker on these matters held that there is no such thing as a natural grassland. That grasslands are the earliest artifacts of human impact on the planet. Grasslands are created by burning. uh uh they promote the growth of cereals uh and and so play feed in to this human uh uh food chain. So. our uh primate ancestors ecological adaptation to arboreal life was interrupted by this process. uh, and key to ym thinking about all this, and those of you who are gonna have careers in all this will take it up and adumbrate it. I think the great overlooked factor in any model of human evolution and indeed in evolutionary models in ...

emphasis to diet when we talk about natural selection of an animal species we tend to think, uh, that the genome expresses physical types and the phenotype is then subject to selection by natural environments. Some biologists have seen the thinness of this understanding. LL White wrote a book called internal factors in evolution in which he pointed out that the womb is... before an organism is ever born into the theater of darwinian selection, so it isn't a tabula rasa that you're born into the theater of natural selection you have been subject to natural selection from the very earliest moments of exist...

but what I have emphasized is diet, diet is uh an input of potentially mutagenic factors into the body that can have enormous consequences on the health of the individual... of a population and. I've used the the toolbox of ideas that I'm going to put forward here today and tomorrow to try and address what seems to me one of the sensibly interesting questions to be asked of this world and that is, what is human consciousness. where did it come from, and why does it exist at all? uh, and I believe that we can by thinking about psychoactive plants, diet, and the early human evolutionary situation we can make a lot of progress on this question, and we can illuminate some of our political dilemmas to that persist to this day. The gender friction that typifies human society the hierarchy structures and the tension they creat...

... and then we can talk about the larger uh uhm materia medica of, of uh psychoactive change relative to to plants.

as the rainforest retreated. our remote primate ancestors came under nutritional pressure. obviously because their area for gathering food was being physically diminished. now when a as you probably know or as observed, most animal species are very particular about their food intake and if you've ever tried to raise butterflies or something for your childre, uh you know that if you capture a caterpillar in the wild but don't pay close attention to the plant you find it on, you can't just put grass in a peanut butter jar with a caterpillar to great success. Animals are highly specialized in their choice of food. why is this? well, as near as we can tell evening all kinds of food from an evolutionary point of view is a very reckless move indeed, because plants represent, um , uhh chemical smorgasborg of various types that have accumulated over time in the genome of a particular organism,. if you have a very broad based diet you are exposing yourself to many different kinds of mutagenic influences as a strategy for survival of a species this is not good! uh much better to specialize, to evolve special enzymatic pathways to deal with toxins, so for instance we know certain animals can eat things./.. an all animal species tend to evolve towards these very bland uh monodiets. now, what happens, when uh there is an upheaval in an environment, uh, geological magnetic reversal a volcanic eruption a drought something like that, and ordinary sources of nutrition become restricted, then an organism has basically 2 choices. It can go extinct, starve itself out of existence or if it has more flexible behaviour it can begin to experiment with previously rejected potential foods in the

environment. Rejected probably because of uh strong taste, or something like that which are clues to the presence of marginally acceptable chemical compounds of some sort.

our remote canopy living ancestors, have I mentioned... expand their repertoire of foods. they also began to explore the grassland environment, and I mentioned that the grassland environment is much poorer in total number of plant species than the rainforest thus and logically the potential number of food sources is also limited. baboons and chimpanzees will dig with sticks for the corns the swollen root of grasses so as our remote ancestors began to explore this new environment of the grassland they also began to explore new dietary items. uh and one of the items that they would surely have observed are coprophagous mushrooms... many of these species of coprophagous mushrooms elaborate psilocybin which I assume you know is one of the major psychoactive alkaloids. psilocybin occurs in many species of mushrooms its unknown outside of the fungi and but I maintain in a sense psilocybin is the uh is the best model for human interactions with the psychedelics or that all other psychoactive plant uses are an effort to duplicate return to or somehow evoke the original human relationship to psilocybin and here is this and and it is not simply its psychoactive properties that make psilocybin a potential catalyst for human consciousness it is its psychoactive properties in combination with certain other properties which make it uniquely suited to carry out the role of catalysis of consciousness in a higher animal...

first of all, uh in very low doses psilocybin increases visual acuity. if you want to go back into the literature, Rowland Fisher in the middle 60's took graduate students and gave them small amounts of psilocybin or placebo, and he built an apparatus where two parallel strips of metal could be deformed by winding a crank, and he asked people to push a button when the two strips seemed to them to cease to be parallel and he demonstrated that edge detection is enhanced by small amounts of psilocybin. well you don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize that edge detection is at a very high premium in any grassland situations where predation is taking place. the lion moving in the grass 300 yards away as it creeps upon your camp, or the gazelle trying to slip away in the tall grass from your hunting party. edge detection is the key to your success or failure in hunting in that kind of a situation. It's extraordinary that... what it would have done, you see, is the proto... a slightly enhanced success in hunting that slightly enhanced hunting success would mean more nutritional resources available for them and their offspring. offspring presumably inculcated into the habit of also eating the mushroom. so what we have here is a slight favoring, then, of those animals in the population that would accept psilocybin into the diet. um, at slightly higher levels psilocybin is, uh, like all CNS stimulants causes arousal, and arousal is simply a feeling of unfocused restlessness, it's that 2 espresso feeling. sleep is impossible hands are busy at small tasks, one is aware of one's sphere of awareness extends out somewhat further, and in highly sexed animals like primates, arousal means erection in the male, and this is very important for this theory because we not only have to account for human consciousness, but we have to account for the peculiar dislocation that human consciousness seems to carry with it, that we are both of nature and yet not of nature, somehow creatures with one foot in nature and one foot in heaven, and how does this come about, uh, I believe, and I'm you know willing to argue it against all comers, that the key element to understanding our sociology and our sexual politics and all that, is to realize that psilocybin had 2 effects in the early human populations that were using it, 1 we're very familiar with if we're psychedelic sophisticates ourselves, it's the psychedelic experience, the boundary dissolving hallucinatory shamanic apotheosis that occurs...

mediate the tendency to form dominance hierarchies, and this is very controversial, in other words, what I'm saying is that all primates form dominance hierarchies and what that means, to remind you, is that the hard bodied long fang males take control of the group, they control the children, the women, they order the old, the homosexual and the young, everybody is under their thumb and part of our dilemma as a global society is that though we claim great sophistication we still live under male dominance hierarchies: corporations, universities, family structures, you know long fanged males are still ordering around the

elderly, the weak, and the females among us... it creates great social dislocation and political unhappiness and tension in relationships and so forth and so on, I believe that our unique position in the animal world arose as a consequence of a chemical suppression of a natural behavior pattern, the pattern of male dominance, of forming dominance hierarchies was interrupted by an item in the diet, psilocybin, and into this chaos this egalitarian chaos, which resulted was uh a situation in which everything about us that we treasure and hold up as humans was put in place. in other words, theater, language, dance, story, altruism, ethics, uh, metaphysics, did I say poetry, everything that makes us human, came into being roughly 100,000 in the last well from a hundred thousand to about fifteen thousand years ago. people lived in balance with the earth, with the larger biome in which they were embedded, there was not product fetishism ushering into enormous toxic processes involving the smelting of metals or the extraction of rare elements from the earth.

now you could object and say well they were simply not sophisticated enough to do those things I'll maintain our... comparing us and finding us favorably compared to the civilization of homer or catalhuyuk or alta mira is simply a form of culture chauvenism. okay

but psilocybin had other effects besides this suppression of male dominance that I mentioned and this increased sexual thing which I did mention but I didn't draw the correct conclusion there you... then it is reasonable to expect that you will have more pregnancies and reasonable to expect that you will therefore have again a tendency to outbreed the non-psilocybin using members of the population. ... greater uh food gathering uh capacity, increase sexual activity which tends to outbreed uh the non psilocybin imbibing members of the group, and then on top of all this you have this ecstatic internal state for which we with all our cultural and epistemic sophistication are still unable to come to terms. The mystery of the psychedelic experience. Now, these things taken together with other factors working in parallel created, I think, the dilemma and the glory and the opportunity of humanness. Once we began, under nutritional pressure, to expand our diet, we were delicately poised on the edge of omnivorousness.

Because recall in the canopy... we were not simply vegetarians, we were insectivores. In the grassland environment we began, probably, to um, originally, to uh, follow along behind lion kills and that sort of thing, and eat carrion. One evolutionary theory is that our suppressed olfactory apparatus the fact that we have a very limited sense of smell is because there was a period in our evolution where we did a lot of rooting around in carcasses, this is not the noble image which we might have wished, but uh there it is we need a countervailing theory because you don't like that one is no we lost our sense of smell because when we stood upright we got our faces up off the ground and that's where the smells are anyway so it all sort of became seless... couple of years that is definitely not PC is that I've noticed and my attention was called to it by philip devoshalay whose a friend of mine.... cows have very little interest in the habits of chipmunks or birds or anything else all they do is munch grass. carnivores on the other hand have an acute interest in the behavior of other animals. in fact I'm on the brink of willing to argue that the earliest consciousness was not self consciousness it was consciousness of how dinner thought because if you can think like your dinner you can go out and plant yourself in its path of behavior and have dinner, you see, and if you will if you will look at the difference between ... the intelligence level is striking, and I think that, that this attention to the behavior of other animals on the part of an emergent habit of carnivorous behavior is going to have to be taken into consideration. umm, its interesting that shamanism, which is in a sense the earliest intellectual pursuit emerges in its early phase as a technique for identifying with animals. Hunting magic is what we're talking about here, and so I think that there is a very interesting mix of factors and players in the early human evolutionary situation.

First of all a canopy dwelling primate with a pack signaling repertoire is forced into a grassland environment uh where psilocybin mushrooms occur were small or large animals are preying upon each other and where nutritional options are highly restrictive. as this animal makes its adaptive choices it moves deeper

and deeper into the realm of mind. first the modeling of the behaviors of other animals, and the behaviors of plants because in a hunting and gathering situation when plants produce fruit what environments they prefer what other plants they grow in association with what soil types they prefer all of these things are cofactors feeding into an image of the world and this image of the world by its accuracy or falsity decrees life or death upon those uh uh who terry. uh.\

the omnivorousness forced us into an awareness of other animals, that made us, uh that put us on the level of intelligence of a hunting cat, or something like that, but the psilocybin experience, at higher doses and obviously at this time inculcated for sexual and ritual and hunting purposes into the society.... into a non-local invisible magical world that is to use a jungian term highly numinous, highly charged with the energy of the archetype of the archetypal world, and as I said to this day we are not able to come to terms with this no matter how much deruda or hussler or wittgenstein we imbibe it still is a very challenging thing to dissolve your ordinary state of consciousness... mind that we find ourselves embedded in. for a long time, therefore, up lets say a numbers are number, but lets say from fifty thousand years ago to twelve thousand years ago there was a kind of paradise on this planet. Poetry coexisted with uh a balanced ecosystem. uh, observational sciences, astronomy, botany, biology, taxonomy, the observational sciences, coexisted with the natural world. And then the same factors which created this edenic situation which remember what they were it was the drying of the african continent that caused the rain forest to retreat, that same process had been going on slowly inevitably endlessly and about between well after the last glacial melt which began twenty to seventeen thousand... a vast grassland dotted by sandstone pinicals cut by rushing streams and crowded with vast herds of game. that was the theater of human emergence but when it began to go dry it went dry rather dramatically, these ice cores coming out of iceland make this clear. nevertheless... The breadbasket of rome, because they were growing wheat in vast amounts of north africa's recently as 2000 years ago in areas now where there was nothing. well, this this paradisiacal ac...matriarchal, partnership psychedelic, shamanic archaic whatever you wanna call it society was then pushed into crisis, and a number of things happened. first of all migrations of people out of africa, this happens everytime theres a glacial melt. Human populations were trapped during... the last glacial period the glaciers came as far south as uh as northern israel. so human populations get trapped and then in the interglacial and during the melt they radiate outward. people began leaving the sahara settling in the nile valley, and the use, this shamanic use of psilocybin was disrupted because... and when that happened and this I'm closing the loop here, for you feel my wrath the saying when that happened the pattern of male dominance the pattern that was genetically never removed but which had been pharmacologically suppressed for over a hundred thousand years perhaps reasserted itself with vengeance it was always there it had never been bred out... people were turning bad suddenly. we get a whole bunch of things come at once, uh, an end to nomadism, the beginnings of sedentary agriculture. City building, standing armies, slavery, male kingship, dominance, all of these things appear almost over night they spring up and I maintain they are what a monkey would build as a civilization if suddenly all of its worst behavioral tendencies came to the forefront with vengeance and that's precisely what's happened. In the period where we were self medicating ourselves with psilocybin ... entity that we are. we elaborated observational techniques, theories of magic, language, but when the psilocybin was withdrawn, these tools which had been our glory became instead our curse, because instead of using them to produce theater and dance and ecstatic social interaction, we began to use them to support the new and older agenda of male dominance and its a frightening thing, you know, to think people following their cattle across the african plain, uh eating the mushroom, seeing the mushrooms as part of the output of the cattle in the same way that meat and milk and manure were output of the cattle, a mother goddess religion a religion,... conflict so forth and so on and. somehow then this process which took a long time of domesticating cattle, because I'm sure you see you can see how it all works, how these factors were disparate and then they flowed together.... uh, kills of lions. uh, you follow the cattle in

the same way that the jackals follow the cattle to deal with the lion kills made by large predators well then in the course of this you encounter weakened animals or abandoned infant animals, and you care for them and over twenty thousand years this turns into domestication of animals, husbandry of cattle, but uh you take away the psilocybin and I think this is a frightening thing to contemplate, the earliest cities, I will argue, were pens for human beings, that's what a city is, it's a pen for human beings. some of these dominant males said woiah ... in the same way, why shouldn't a king order his people in with the same impunity that he orders the slaughter and the movement of herds of goat and cattle, and all of the institutions that we labored under came into being at this moment of transition from the late neolithic, or from the paleolithic to the neolithic, to the agricultural situation.

The reason for this, I believe can be traced to evolution, to the evolution of consciousness, I mean consciousness is a double edged sword, uh at the very, one of the factors I think that contributed to the reemergence of male dominance was that at some point human intellectual capacity... could be connected to an effect, and the effect and cause that were being observed was the ... and women who that men must have understood that an act of copulation if carried out successfully and in the right rhythm to the moon will result in a child 9 months later. If you don't have that understanding you have no sense of male paternity so you have a very tight social bond because for men the children are our children, the children of the group.

Once you have a sense of male paternity then you have ownership and this becomes very problematic. ... that in the yearly round of following the cattle, when they would return to the kitchen middens and fire pits abandoned a year previously, that there would be food in those areas, an abundance of food plants from cast off kernels of cereal and so forth and so on... if we bury food for ... food will come out of the ground. The problem with agriculture in the early phase is that it's hideously efficient, and what it does is it immediately creates such a surplus that you have to stop moving, nomadism has to be abandoned.... and then you must store and defend your overproduction against less fortunate human groups in the area. The most advanced building on this planet in ten thousand eight thousand BC was uh the grain tower at Jericho, and what was it, it was a grain storage tower, and it had a staircase so you... heads of enemies who were trying to batter their way into your grain tower, so I've I've spent some time on this because, um, this could be taught this course without any reference to our contemporary dilemma which is uh and by that dilemma ... male dominance, underutilization of females in society, underutilization of feminine points of view in society, but obviously there is a lot of tension in our society around the issue of psychedelic intoxication, around the issue of these shamanic plants, though there is a growing awareness among sophisticated people that the case is almost entirely emotional... toxic drugs, alcohol, tobacco, uh we're willing to make a trade off of seventy thousand deaths a year in this country for the privilege of driving the automobile... supportive of the agenda being handed down from the top, psychedelics are not, and they are seen as tremendously disruptive, and yet as the ethnographic and pharmacological data comes in they are among the most benign uh uh substances in the world and uh their history of human usage is almost universal, and then the question is do these intoxications limit the spectrum of consciousness and allow hierarchical models to be handed down and brainwashed into the doubters, or do these states of consciousness dissolve cultural assumptions and cast the individual into uh an ocean of existential complexity out of which they have to build their own model of how the world works. well, uh I believe the reason for this tension in our society and anxiety and suppression, furious suppression, of these things is because we sense that this addresses origins, in the same way that it took a long time to overcome our our....

there's something about the origins subject that make us very very nervous. clears throat, okay so that's a very linear discussion of the role of one psychoactive plant in human history, psilocybin, and as I say I think it was uniquely, chemically, botanically positioned to play that role in human consciousness, uh, now the contemporary situation, worldwide, is that we find uh many forms of shamanism, from the arctic to the rainforest tropics, and shamanism always depends for its uh efficacy, on a dislocation or a transformation,

of ordinary consciousness, and we see this achieved in many different ways. uh, through fasting, through ordeals meaning abandonment in the wilderness or or flagilation, uh through uh elaborate theatrical effects, special effects, uh through the use of substances in plants, and there has been a controversy in anthropology never resolved over the past 40 years, what is the authentic shamanism, and those of you ... mersie eliad who was [46:00}

Original Transcription by: [John C In Progress]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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KPFK Interview: Poets and Propheisiers

9_{May 1996}

Location, City, State

Description

- [YouTube Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)

Pam Burton: Good afternoon. You're listening to KPFK Los Angeles at 90.7 FM. This is Pamela Burton for the Pacifica Radio Archive Hour, and many of you are familiar with my guest today, someone who we've presented on the Archive Hour, uh, often enough, and that's Terence McKenna, in town for an event that sounds like it's going to be truly interesting. And, uh, lots to talk about with you, Terence, especially because you predicted it. I know it's been a few years ago. This was going to be the week, this and last week, when a lot of events were going to be happening.

Terence McKenna: This is the hottest week of the 90's according to the Timewave. And, uh, I'm certainly living the prediction myself. I don't know about other people, but, uh, things feel pretty novel.

PB: [laughter, Terence laughter] And this Timewave we've talked about, uh, over the years. Many people are familiar with that but for those of you just tuning in let me tell you that Terence McKenna is, ah, an author of, uh, a number of books and very interesting, uh, uh, looking at the , uh, oh, things about our beginnings as human creatures, uh, what it meant for us to live on the plains and eat certain kinds of foods. Uh, you've been an explorer of, uh, mind, and, uh, oftentimes we've had gatherings with you when you've, you and your brother Dennis have talked about different, uh, chemicals and how altered states of consciousness are evidently essential, historically, for human beings. And right n- and one of the things you have, have talked about is this Timewave Zero. It goes back- we go back to, is it Mayan calendars that you predicted this on?

TM: Well...

PB: How was it you put that together?

TM: It's not based on the Mayan calendar. After I figured it out, I discovered that it reaches the same conclusion date as the Mayan calendar, but actually it's based on, uh, studying patterns inside the I Ching. And what it is is by some mathematical sleight of hand you get out an algorithm that a tabletop computer can use to draw maps of novelty in time on any scale, a thousand years, uh, two weeks, whatever. And then of course the game becomes to use the wave to predict where in the future interesting things will occur. And it just so happens that it predicts that the most interesting and novel period of the entire decade of the 90's is, uh, began in February, has reached its most intense level right now. Right *now*. And will continue, uh, with very little slackening of weirdness on well into the Fall. And so I scheduled a tour of four cities during this period in order to talk to audiences about it while it was happening, and, uh, Los Angeles is my

last stop on this four city tour, and we're certainly experiencing novelty even for our ordinary visits to, uh, this city. This is extraordinary.

PB: And does this, would this have predicted that I would have- my comp- my accounting computer would have gone down, uh, last week?

TM: Basically what it predicts is roving balls of chaos [Pam giggles] moving through systemic order. So that helps in some areas and hinders in others but it's definitely a reshuffling of the deck. That's what's going on this week, and we'll be sorting out the changes for months.

PB: And in trying to get some, uh, material facts to me yesterday I had three fax machines go down, not one...

TM: That's amazing, [Pam laughs] that's amazing!

PB: And a number of other things! Now, i- is there anything going on planetarily that you could tell us about? Are planets in retrograde in at this point or something?

TM: Oh, you mean astrologically?

PB: Yes.

TM: Uh, that's actually not my bailiwick. I have been keeping track of, of weird and novel events over the past 60, 70 days, and uh, just some highlights off the top of my head, uh 40, 40 billion new galaxies discovered, uh, three extra s- uh, solar planets discovered, that means planets around other stars, uh, the completion of the preliminary mapping of the human genome, the production of anti-matter, um, the discovery, the announcement that this large asteroid impact in Canada delivered enormous amounts of Buckminsterfullerene to the Earth's surface meaning that that's an organic molecule, therefore proving that uh, lots of organic material is delivered to the Earth from space. Uh, so in areas of deep scientific discovery, discoveries that will remake uh, human medicine, our model of the universe uh, and perhaps in the antimatter discovery, the ways we produce energy, all these things have occurred in this remarkably short period of time. Uh, there has not been what some people think of as massive novelty. China did not invade Taiwan and trigger World War II and you know, there were some similar other opportunities for old-style catastrophe that didn't happen. But you have to remember novelty is novelty. It's new more than catastrophic. I mean, catastrophes are in fact rather hum-drum. They come around all the time. Wars, cyclones, floods. What we're experiencing is the emergence of new kinds of connectivity and order in the human world, and uh, and then what we are experiencing as individuals if we're in resonance with the collective timewave is I think just wild fluctuations of, of opportunity, of debt and profit, of love and hate, of uh, you name it. [Terence laughs, PB Laughs]

PB: Now you're on this tour around the United States and I did get one of your brochures. I want you to tell the audience about what you're hoping to um, be able to bring people to on this all- um, 2-day weekend. Sounds like it could be kind of an intense time.

TM: Well I'm very concerned to communicate these mathematically-based ideas about the structure of time and what their implications would be if they were found to be uh, true, and so this is not something

that can be done in an hour radio interview or an evening lecture. It's uh, a pretty steep learning curve. And, and I'm interested in communicating that and having people critique it. I mean, we're reaching the place in the historical meltdown of Western society where if something like the timewave actually works, I think it's time to move it to a higher level of public awareness, and that means exposure, collegial debate, possibly experiments of some sort, and then uh, discussion. So I'm just sort of touring the country saying "I predicted this was a novel time, how does the first ten rows feel about that?" And then can we get a discussion launched based on that?

PB: What have been the responses in the two cities you've done this in?

TM: Well, I've done it in three cities. We were in New York, Santa Fe and Boulder. People were very enthusiastic. Uh, it went smoothly, uh, but there were uh, good crowds and very intelligent discussion. Um, the situation here in Los Angeles is uh, a little peculiar. Uh, we're locked in righteous battle with the Veterans Administration, and uh, UCLA right at this moment because uh, the Veterans Administration which owns the large auditorium- what is it...

PB: Wadsworth.

TM: Wadsworth auditorium ordered UCLA which leases this building from the VA to cancel the event uh, just for, just Monday morning. So this has suddenly raised a whole bunch of free speech and advocacy issues. Uh, the VA's only reason for canceling Wadsworth Auditorium was my record on advocating uh, drug reform and social reform of psychedelic policy. UCLA chose not to act like a great public University and defend free speech and the Constitution but instead cravenly caved in to the VA, and uh acted as their heavy, and canceled the event and offered us a venue at uh, Griffin uh-

PB: Commons

TM: -Commons, that's right. And-

PB: And this is for Friday night. The actual weekend event is all scheduled at Paramount ranch. Correct?

TM: Yes, the weekend event is not affected by this, but the large uh, the, the chance to talk to the public at less than uh, a fair chunk of money is definitely being squeezed by someone at the VA who is being protected by the uh, events department at UCLA. They refuse to identify this person uh, so we've gone several routes at once. We have mobilized the media. We've mobilized the internet. Uh, the office of Senator Paul Wellstone, who is on the Senate committee that oversees VA affairs has made an inquiry, we understand. And the US attorney and uh, other interested parties in Southern California traditionally associated with defending free speech are uh, at this moment trying to turn the VA around uh, by friendly persuasion, whatever that means. Or if that fails I think we'll all be in court tomorrow morning seeking an injunction on them to cease and desist and we will- we're now assuming that the Veteran's Administration and UCLA are going to be forced within the next few hours to uh, allow this event to go forward at Wadsworth. If I'm wrong then it will go forward uh, at uh, Griffith Commons. But my feeling, I have to tell you Pam, is that actually there is a Constitution in this country and people can go- these government agencies can go just so far, and then uh, mechanisms swing into action and even these anonymous federal bureaucrats who would seek to control the dialogue, the agenda of public dialogue on these sensitive issues, are put in their place, and I'm pretty confident that we're going to have a Wadsworth auditorium

event.

PB: Well, I'm trying to get tickets earlier in the week. They'd actually um, Ticketmaster said that someone had come and pulled the tickets when we were trying to uh, you know. And they had told us it was moved to the commons and at that point, I mean we, you know, there was no explanation at the Ticketmaster. So there's another problem in terms of people trying to get tickets. It's regretful.

TM: Well yes, UCLA has behaved hysterically in this situation. They gave us a three hour ultimatum. We were in Colorado. They gave us a three hour ultimatum to accept this smaller venue. We held a conference and decided we had no choice. We accepted the ultimatum, got on airplanes and flew to California to arrive at our hotel to receive a fax in which they claimed they had not received our acceptance of their ultimatum and had therefore canceled their event.

PB: I see.

TM: And then some two hours later at 8 o'clock at night we received a fax from them saying they had, in fact, found our acceptance of their ultimatum. So their level of professionalism and the l- depth of uh, s- understanding of the situation that they've exhibited has uh, left a certain amount to be desired.

PB: I want to let the listeners know that they're listening to Terence McKenna. This is Pamela Burton and we're bringing this hour to you on the Pacifica Radio Archive hour and I thought it was a very important reason to go live today because of the unfolding of the events, and as uh, we've been speaking about here today, Terence has been on a nationwide tour. You haven't had trouble in any other city? Nobody else has been frightened by what you have to say?

TM: No, apparently.

PB: Just my alma mater, huh?

TM: My alma mater as well. I'm out of the Cal system. I went to Berkeley. Now I'm figuring out why. [laughter]

PB: But you know, in a, in a strange way uh, again having gone back a few years with you and the discussions about your timeline. This was the week that this would happen in terms of the timewave zero predictions, correct? You just didn't know what was gonna happen.

TM: Well the funny thing about novelty theory is it tells you where the weirdness lurks but it never tells you what it will be. So uh, yes. Surprise, surprise. Well, I'm very happy. I love a good free speech battle. I think defending the constitution is uh, right up there on my agenda with uh, staying straight with psychedelics and studying advanced mathematics. I'm- it feels good. I think everybody- I think what we're going to do is do a great favor for UCLA. They- this is their moment of truth. Are they a great public university defending uh, free speech and advocacy, or are they the craven puppet of faceless federal bureaucrats? It's time for them to decide. As the contracts are presently written as UCLA on the Wadsworth, the VA could cancel anyone at their pleasure at a moment's notice and UCLA would have no recourse. So, I think we're doing them a favor. This is obviously a situation that needs to be corrected.

PB: And I know you haven't been in California uh, for a l- some of our current fight with Affirmative Action, but no we have- the regents have voted to uh, to put an end to all affirmative action programs in the UC system and at the same time it's been revealed that there are many many instances of affirmative action for alumni for letting kids in the back door because mom and dad are alumni, and, and uh UCLA in particular of course is faced with their incredible hypocrisy. Uh, academics, I think, in general when you think about many of the departments in this country that have been shut down o- or gutted of, of anybody had any- Marxists for instance have been taken out of academics. Uh, and I- and it does seem like a good time for us finally to uh, to uh, you know, fight the good fight.

TM: Well, UA- UCLA assigned a young guy yesterday to be our liaison with them on this matter and I blew my stack and raved to him for about 10 minutes until I realized I just made a convert. Nobody over there likes doing this kind of dirty business. They're all educated liberals. They know that this is nonsense, but they're paid these fat executive salaries basically to carry out uh, orders that uh, no- nobody familiar with the tradition of free speech could be comfortable with. So uh, yeah, I think it's a, it's a fine moment to do this little bit of dirty laundry in public and probably better policies will emerge out of it.

PB: Are you letting us know anything about the guest that will be at your weekend?

TM: [Laughter] your?

PB: In your little brochure it was announced that there would be some special guest.

TM: Uh, I'll actually have to check with the uh, department of propaganda. It's so special a guest my dear that I have no idea what you're talking about.

PB: Well, one of the things I would like to do- I'm going to open up the phones and let some of the folks- we, we've- since we knew that you were gonna be here today, um, I did let a few folks know that you'd be on. And so um if people are interested in calling up and having a conversation and enjoying the conversation here with Terence McKenna, uh, we'd love to hear from you, and we are at 818-985-05735, 985-KPFK. I can never keep him all to myself, he's just far too interesting and- I always know the people that call in and ask you the questions are uh, very interesting. But I would like to ask your organizers to be sure to give me the information as far as who we're gonna call. You can write that down for me and um- cuz I know a lot of people are going to say well, so what about this event? I haven't heard about it before. I didn't know that this was gonna happen. But as far as the weekend you could write down the information for phone number if we have to call Axiom or whatever. But go ahead and write it down for me and bring it when you can and we'll clarify that. Uh, tell me a little bit about what you've been doing. I heard that your book is going to be uh, brought out in paperback. Is this, is this true?

TM: You mean True Hallucinations?

PB: Yes, yes.

TM: It's already out. Uh huh.

PB: In paperback again?

TM: Yeah I've been doing all kinds of different crazy things. Not that high profile. I was in a Portuguese science fiction movie with Robert Anton Wilson and Rudy Rucker.

PB: Oh woah.

TM: Not to be playing soon at a theater near you [PB laughs] and I had just released a video uh, called *Metamorphoses* in which Ralph Abraham and Rupert Sheldrake and I kid around for a while and uh, that was lots of fun. These days what I'm really interested in is maintaining a very large website. Uh, I'm educating myself to be a webbie, and uh, I have a very large and fun website that I'd like people to uh, visit. Would it be alright to-

PB: Sure I'd love you to tell- I've been lookin at it and it is fun.

TM: Alright here's the URL for the Terence McKenna website. It is, of course, <http://www.levity> L-E-V-I-T-Y . C-O-M slash eschaton, E-S-C-H-A-T-O-N slash. And that's really my fantasy, to live out in Hawaii with high technology in the rainforest and uh, build a kind of cigar store indian version of myself and my ideas that people can relate to and wander around in and leave comments and we're gonna put the Timewave on in a Java application. We're building a chronological database. Uh, I'm very bullish on the web these days.

PB: Well, if you haven't gotten tuned in, listeners, to the web, you haven't had a chance to check out some of the wonderful things that are going on. Uh, maybe this will be the reason that you'll do it. We're always encouraging people. We're always giving out these outrageous addresses like the one you just gave. I'm waiting for this young uh, clever person right out of school probably who's gonna come up with a shorthand for all of our incredible um, addresses. And the information about your weekend- and I know many people are going to be interested if they haven't gotten a flyer from Axiom. Saturday and Sunday, it's gonna be at the old Piermont Ranch Theater, but to get information you should call Axiom at 1-800-762-9466, that's 1-800-762-9466. And uh, let's go ahead and take a phone call here from somebody calling in on line A. Are you there?

Caller: Yeah, hi Pamela.

PB: Hi.

Caller: Um. I just wanted to give you some astrological information.

PB: Uh huh.

Caller: Uh, Uranus went into um, Aquarius, which it rules in uh January, January 12th. And um, it's now retrograde along with Mercury, Jupiter and Neptune. And uh, Venus goes retrograde later this month, so there's a lot of that kind of energy happening.

PB: And when we talk about this a lot of people always go "oh no, we don't want to hear about this," but what does retrograde mean?

Caller: Well, retrograde is a review time. It's a transition between the old pattern that existed with the

planet, planet representing a function, uh, and it's a transition so that it can be sorted out, reviewed and internalized so that when it goes direct, uh, later, you can start uh, operating with a new kind of, um, relationship to the, to the function.

PB: Mm.

TM: Well, so that's basically what's happening. I think what you're describing is a shift of gears.

Caller: Yes, absolutely. Uranus of course, is, is very consistent with what you're talking about with the timeline, being that Uranus always brings about transformation and pains through disruption, disorder and also illumination. Uh, it acts like thunder and lightning which illuminates the horizon and then you have to go uh, find out what it's all about, or it acts like an earthquake which shakes everything up and breaks down the foundations and you have to rebuild from scratch.

TM: Well, for both of these systems to be right they have to be consistent with each other. I don't- my theory is fairly conservative in that all it says is where the novelty should cluster and where habit and conservative retention of pattern is more likely to dominate, but I've noticed before that there are very close correlations between astrological uh, gestalts of situations and the situation with the timewave.

Caller: Yes. To me it all issues from the same source, it's just different patterns and different ways of uh, points of focus you can derive information from.

TM: Exactly. Right on.

PB: Yeah.

TM: Thank you.

Caller: Thank you

PB: Hi. You're on the air.

Caller: Oh hi. Great to hear you there. I'd like to encourage all the listeners out there to call our congress members and senators and complain about what the VA is doing.

TM: Yes.

Caller: Good time to call right tomorrow morning.

TM: I would appreciate that as well, and I would also add that if alumni of UCLA are concerned that the university they went to seems to be going down the wrong road, uh, it would be very useful for people associated with UCLA to let, uh, the office of management of uh, public affairs know what they think.

Caller: Thanks Terence. Good luck!

TM: Thank you! Hope to see you at the get together

Caller: Bye bye.

PB: You're encouraging everyone to go out Friday night, whatever it's going to be.

TM: We're having an event Friday night and uh, if I were a betting man I'd bet that it'll be at Worcester, and if I lose that bet I'll apologize from the stage of Griffin commons.

PB: That's Wadsworth.

Caller: Wadsworth

TM: Wadsworth

Caller: Wadsworth.

PB: There you go.

TM: Wadsworth!

PB: And Griffin commons is the new building in the dorm area.

TM: Yeah

PB: For those of you who might be like me 20 years ago at UCLA. Hi, you're on the air.

Caller: Oh, uh. I wanted to tell ya that what UCLA is doing is just kindling more into...Terence who I think is utterly magnificent. Uh, and what I wanted to say is that I've been lamenting to all of my friends that this is the worst week that I can remember in years. I can't think of anything that hasn't gone wrong, and I ___ moon. So what it really is is Aquarius. Uranus and Aquarius, and Uranus is the planet of accidents and sudden happenings, and a breaking down and starting over just like the man said. And the retrograde means that when you make a mistake you gotta do it over- it means step back and wait for it, or step further back, and this is really the he- you hit it right on the head Terence. This has been a week. I can't imagine anything more that can happen. And everyone I've talked to- I haven't talked to a soul who hasn't experienced the same thing. So it's all relative, it all relates, and I'm surprised you haven't got into astrology because it- it's just part of- it's just one of those spokes in the wheel and it gives you another angle, and it's really very revealing if you could just get into it. It's very easy, it's all analogy and it's very important to understand and I think anybody who's going into the new age or the new era, the enlightened era, should understand astrology. It's a, it's a method to a- of self awareness and consciousness, self-consciousness raising. In other words, understand your own character and your potentials, et cetera. Anyways I just want to thank you for being here. I'm really missing that you aren't here more often and I hope you come soon again

PB: Thank you.

TM: Thank you. Thanks very much.

PB: Yeah. And uh, good time to become political it sounds like too! Hi, you're on the air.

Caller: Hi, I want to give UCLA's main number. It's 310-825-4321. I called, asked to be connected to the chancellor's office not knowing what office to go to. And they took my complaint and said somebody would get back to me about it.

PB: Good.

TM: Good, that's great.

PB: Thank you.

Caller: Ok. Bye

PB: Again you can join in with the conversation. This is Pamela Burton. You're listening to KPFK Los Angeles at 90.7 on your FM dial. My guest today, Terence McKenna. Uh, there was an article about you in the Times. I have not seen it. It was, I guess, last week that they ran something in the calendar.

TM: I think.

PB: Did they say how wonderful you were and how you're coming to town to enlighten us all?

TM: Well, they said what a wild man I was. I think probably that article is what started this bonfire. Um. Let's just say that it could've gone deeper and could've been broader. I'm sure the guy who wrote it was an enthusiast but uh, I think he scared somebody to death in, uh, the VA. But it stressed my concern over psychedelics and my concern for uh, legal reform. And my lack of respect, I suppose, for the ordinary professional channels of discourse. I mean, I've felt that we have wonderful psychedelic researchers. Uh, people like Dave Nichols at Purdue, my brother, Sasha Shulgin. Uh, we have- the science is well under control if the government would stop repressing it and stop propagandizing this issue. And so my role is gadfly, and I'm comfortable with it. And uh, I think there should be more people holding the establishment to account and just simply pointing out the absurdity of their attitude in these matters. We need research and we need education and we need reform, and if that message threatens the integrity of the United States government as the VA claimed it did in canceling this thing, then things are far out of kilter and we need to redress that.

PB: Let me invite you to call in and have a discussion again- and join our discussion here at KPFK. We're at 818-985-5735, 985-KPFK. I just saw the new documentary on hemp. you know, we're so far from being able to accept the importance of that and here you know we have the military involved hemp for victory and of course destroying all the films made by the war department, I would assume, at that time. We're so far from using that that would make such a difference to this planet right now. You know, now we have the new gasoline additive uh, going into the air in some of the states. You know, it just- it does seem like they are so far into neanderthal, you know, thinking because of the corporations and the profit the corporations would stand to lose. We're so far from addressing that issue. You know, I- it's- it's it's gruesome to think. I want to give you a chance to talk a little bit more and defend yourself in terms of this whole thing about taking drugs, etc, but let's take another call from a listener.

Caller: Listen, terence. A couple of years ago I talked to you on the Roy Tuckman show..

TM: Uh uh.

Caller: About- I wanted you to turn me on to Science Fiction. I've never read it and you were nice enough to give me the name of William Gibson and a guy named Ian Watson. Of the two of them I find Gibson to be terrific. Watson not so good. if you could give me a few more?

TM: Uh. Try Neil Stephenson- Stephenson. He wrote Snowcrash.

Caller: Oh I've heard of it.

TM: And The Diamond Age. And uh, try the short stories of uh, Lucius Shepherd, especially a book called The Jaguar Hunter and other stories.

Caller: Lucius who?

TM: Shepherd. And if you want to go for something gritty and not terribly optimistic but very interesting, try the new-

Caller: What I'm looking for is literature.

TM: Try Vurt. V-U-R-T, by Jeff Noon.

Caller: Hang on. hang on.

TM: A- and uh, definitely take a look at Love and Sleep by John Crowley.

Caller: Noon. N-O-O-N-E?

TM: N-O-O-N.

Caller: OK.

TM: Jeff Noon. Vurt. V-U-R-T.

Caller: I got- I got Vurt. And what's the last one?

TM: Love and Sleep by John Crowley.

Caller: Are these- of the group how many are English?

TM: Um, none.

Caller: They're all American.

TM: They're all American.

Caller: Gibson's Canadian, you knew that.

TM: Yes.

Caller: Crowley. Hang on. Now, the other thing is, and then I'll hang up and kinda get your answer off the air. Uh, I called up Roy one night and I said "where is Terence?" Because you used to come on rather regularly and it was terrific. I mean, two or three hours. Your taped talks. Actually there is another one. Where can we get your tapes of your talks?

TM: Where can you get the tapes of my talks?

Caller: Yes.

TM: Well, uh, Sound Photosynthesis in Mill Valley is an outlet.

Caller: Ok.

TM: Um. Uh, oh my god.

PB: We have a few in the pacifica radio archive

Caller: You have a- you have a place in Berkeley.

TM: I- I- I think really the place- Mystic Fire Video out of New York City has the newer stuff. They have that thing, um, uh. Surfing on Finnegans Wake and uh, Riding the Range with Marshall McLuhan, and this Metamorphosis video that I mentioned.

Caller; Right.

TM: Uh, and uh, they have a very interesting catalogue of other material too. You should check them out, it's quite a resource.

Caller: What was the name of it again?

Terence: Mystic Fire Video uh, in m.. in.

Caller: New York City.

Terence: New York City.

PB: Yeah.

Caller: Alright, and the other Sound Photosynthesis. And the last thing is uh, as I said I called up Tuckman

one night and I said what happen to Terence, and his answer, which I won't repeat...uh..

TM: [laughter]

PB: Ok

Caller: Wa- uh, you know.

PB: Ok well let's not go into that tonight, right?

Caller: I don't intend to but I just wonder can you give me in a kind of easy way what the deal is and is there a chance of you getting back on the long format as it were. And I'll hang up and than you both very much

PB: You're welcome.

Caller: Bye.

TM: Well I think the short answer to that question was that he got sick and tired of me [laughter]. Which-

Caller: Too many of those weird stories in the middle of the night.

TM: Which, which uh puts him in a lot of good company.

PB: Hi, you're on the air.

Caller: Yeah, Hi Terence. I've been listening to you for probably over a decade now.

TM: Uh huh.

Caller: And um I just want to say it's funny I was watching a webpage and realized about this period being such a special period, and I was looking towards the news and not seeing, as you said, any real catastrophes going on besides the usual amount. And um, I just want to say In my own life amazing things are going on.

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic [IN PROGRESS]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Poolside Interview

28 January 1996

Location, Palenque, Mexico

Description

- [Youtube Video](#)

Interviewer: Do you think, from your experience with Ayahuasca and the mushrooms, that there is...there exists a pedagogical sense of the experience...exists a systematically teacher instance or factor which not proceed from the ego in the experience with these entheogens?

Terence McKenna: So the question is, is there a teaching presence that doesn't proceed from the ego?

I: Exactly.

TM: Well sure, yes, absolutely. I mean, we're not saying *what* it is. You're asking what it isn't. It certainly is not the ego. Perhaps it's the superego or, or the Gaian mind of the planet or something like that, but it certainly is not coming from ordinary consciousness, ego consciousness.

I: Is this common, eh, in the mushroom experience and in the ayahuasca experience?

TM: Yes, I would say at effective doses *most* people have this experience. I don't know how to characterize an effective dose of ayahuasca, but I would think 30 milligrams of psilocybin and above, this would be a typical reaction.

I: In this case, who or what do you think that teaches us? It's inside or outside us?

TM: It's neither outside nor inside; it's both. Because what it is is the psychedelic dissolves boundaries, and then we learn of levels of reality that normally are not available to us. So it's really, I think of it as the wisdom of biology. That which is in your own body, and in the environment, and in the much larger global environment. So, the psychedelics give an insight into biology that is psychologically..healthy. That's how I would put it.

I: I ask, uh, some persons that are too much time in the ayahuasca way, and, ah, is multiple factors they, they bring to explanate this, this question. Some talk about spirits, some talk about the Self, some talk about the, eh, the founder of the line of in the work or guardian angel. It is very interesting this, this, this question..

TM: The idea that it's the biology of the planet

I: ..biology..

TM: ..one's self. The body, the wisdom of the body, the wisdom of life.

I: The super mind, that you call, you call supermind.

TM: You could call it the supermind, right.

I: I ask you now again from your experience with these entheogens, if in your point of view, does exist an ethic religious character of the experience. Do you think that there impart a wish to become more ethic in relationship with the other man and with all nature?

TM: Yes, I mean I think, uh, it inspires a level of attention that can be the basis of an ethic. I mean, it seems to make people, ah, more aware.. of social, ah, the social dimension to obligation or something like that. This is how the Bwiti taking functions in Africa. This is how shamanic use of plants seems to function. It increases the social connectivity, which can be the basis for an ethical position.

I: Do you think that there apart [impart] an ecological consciousness too?

TM: Yeah I think that would come with it. A sensitivity to nature, this biological intelligence that I mention certainly carries with it the implication of caring for nature.

I: Uh, do you think that, uh, they have therapeutical properties, the mushrooms and the ayahuasca?

TM: Well, certainly the ayahuasca has physical therapeutic properties. It kills intestinal parasites. There's scientific evidence that it interrupts the trypanosomal phase of the malarial organism. As--but the larger impact is the psychological impact on people. It's by boundary- by dissolving boundaries, people are able to realign themselves with the community and their family and their obligations. So, in that sense it's like a kind of psychotherapy and that's what is happening for most people.

I: Mmm. Mushrooms have this kind of

TM: Same...different but similar.

I: ..effect, too.

TM: Different but similar.

I: It's a kind of psychosomatic effect.

TM: Psychosomatic effect...well sure. You're feeling it in the body, you're feeling it in the mind, but it's a relationship to your past, and your, and your, ah, self image. It's more psychological than somatic, but it is psychosomatic

I: Psychosomatic. Have you perceived in the effect of them, uh, some kind of therapeutical properties in some event, some, some effective systematically...

TM: Have I seen these things make a difference in people's lives? Is that what you mean?

I: What?

TM: Have I seen these things make a difference in people's lives? Is that what you mean?

I: Yeah, yeah.

TM: Sure, I think that it makes a very positive impact, that ayahuasca in the upper Amazon, which is what I'm familiar with, is a very powerful force for keeping people physically healthy and in tune with nature and the surrounding social environment. It makes life easier. It makes life easier and it makes mental health more naturally accessible to most people.

I: What do you think about the paranormal or parapsychological phenomena described in the experiences with these entheogens?

TM: Well, I have an open mind. I've seen enough in my own experience to be..convinced that with further scientific research, we might be able to understand some aspects of the paranormal using these compounds. I mean, these compounds are tools for understanding mind, both ordinary mental processes and extraordinary mental processes. They're--because they give us a way to get into the mind and to make changes and then observe them, that we can't ordinarily make. So, uh, I think the frontier for parapsychological research using psychedelics is, is good.

I: Eh, what is your personal experience about this?

TM: I've, in two situations in my life, I saw convincing demonstrations of telepathy.

I: Telepathy

TM: Telepathy. And in one case, it was not simply reading someone's mind, it was that someone was telling me a memory that I had never told anyone, so it was not simply communication in the moment. They simply had complete access or partial access at least to a portion of my past, and that was very impressive. But how to repeat these things i-is something you may see for 30 seconds over 20 years.

I: Mhm. Can you say something more about your vision on the relationship and differences between shamanic plants and the artificial chemical compounds?

TM: Well, the, the shamanic plants have a very long history of human usage, and so in a sense you enter into that field of their usage when you take them. The new compounds are new, and so they feel new and they are less, uh, determined and to my mind usually less experientially rich. So I prefer the, the plants.

I: Mhm. What do you think about the question of the presence of advanced cultures and man in the remote past of humankind? History of Atlantis..

TM: I'm very, in the absence of any convincing evidence, I'm very skeptical.

I: Yeah, you don't think that the pyramids and the, for example, the, the, the know-how to, to, to do, to make the ayahuasca and so how, how man discovered that that

TM: Oh, I thought you meant something...I though you were implying Atlantis or something. Uh, no it's very clear that cultures are always complicated. There's no such thing as a simple culture. Every culture is extremely complex and advanced in different ways. So Egyptians could build the pyramids, Amazon indians understand the pharmacology of ayahuasca, Americans go to the moon. These are three different cultures, three different styles, but one is not superior to the other. Cultures are always extremely sophisticated and complex affairs. There's nowhere where you find what you could describe as a simple culture.

I: Since the beginning, since the paleolithic, neolithic age?

TM: Certainly within recorded history and on the planet now. At some time in the past, culture must have emerged from advanced animal organization, but today there are no simple cultures on this planet.

I: Mmm..Ok. Thank you very much.

TM: Thanks very much.

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by: Koto

Review 2 by [admin only]: Kevin Whitesides

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Posthumous Glory (aka

12 September 1999 (Sunday)

AllChemical Arts Conference, Big Island, Hawaii (September 12-17)

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Scribd Transcription](#)
- [Psychedelic Salon](#)
- [Alternate Recording](#)
- [Conference Info](#)

... Someone came out with the idea that it's the production of these images which come out of the unconscious, and which may appear straightforward at first, but which, in fact, are charged with possibilities and dimensions that you don't sense or realise until you're committed to it – you're brought in through it, somehow. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

Well don't you think most shamans, this is what they're doing, is they're bringing back a sense of psychic empowerment, and psychic healing... that their hands, their spells, their songs, can cure. And, you know, until you're truly ill in a world without real medicine, you don't realise what a power this is – even to just claim it! Even to just claim it... I mean, uh, the doctor, in a world without doctors, is, uh, you know, almost an unimaginable commodity, a living miracle-worker; so, yeah, to separate the medical function because it controls prolongation of life and health, and all that, from the shamanic function – it just doesn't make any sense. I mean, life is health, uh, in those archaic societies. I mean, it is in our society, too; but then it gets murky, because of our funny ideas about what disease is and how you treat it.

What is disease? – Well, I don't know. Um, I had some medical problems this spring, and one of my impulses in dealing with it was to go back through my life and say, "What did you do that got you into this mess?" Now, this is a theory of life as literature; in other words, it's the idea that first of all life makes sense, and so this question can be answered. And fairly intelligent people told me, "Don't do that. It's not a story" – you know, "it doesn't make sense in that way". I think disease is, uh – and I wouldn't want to be held to this entirely, but – largely more linguistic than most people think, you know... it's the story you tell yourself about how you are in the world, and the way that that doesn't quite parse with how you are in the world; and it's sort of like having a burnt rotor or something – it begins to clank and crank. The -- a lot of people have talked about this, I think there's even a name for this field of thought, but I have no idea what it is – but the idea that, uh, most disease is a problem of language, a problem of self-description or self-perception, or communication to other people. So, again, psychedelics, to the degree that they promote opening and therapeutic truth-telling, hold down disease.

You know, it's extraordinary how healthy shamanically-attended populations are. Serious mental disease is largely unknown, and many of these cultures are in the tropics, where god knows, you know, if you cut your thumb you're septic within 24 hours, but these people seem to be able to sustain it. When you think about the genital blood-lettings that Mayan royalty indulged in in the tropical rainforest, at high temperatures, why anybody lived to tell the tale with a medical practice like that is a miracle!

So, they must have lived inside an extraordinary set of assumptions. I remember when I was traveling around the Amazon – actually I think it was in Indonesia, but it happened in the Amazon too – but, you'd come to these villages, and the people would come out of the village to meet you and they would bring you corn beer – a gourd of corn beer. And then the whole village would surround you to watch you drink this thing. Well, if you knew anything about what was going on, you knew that the old women of the village had sat up the night before chewing the corned beer and spitting it out into this, uh, bowl so that it would ferment, and so you were literally getting the complete immuno-challenge that the entire village had to offer you! [Audience laughs] And all you could do was just lift it up, thank everybody, think of your stomach for a moment, say, you know, *Here it comes...* [Audience laughs] And I never got sick from that! I mean, I got sick from other things, but that – you know, from a medical point of view, that was just like [makes sound of nosediving object] to do that. So the story you tell yourself is largely the story you're living.

The other thing is, nothing is unannounced. This is a psychedelic truth, I think, of some power, and it relates to disease, and it relates to shamanism – nothing is unannounced. If you are paying attention, stuff comes down the pike. First a little wave, then a medium-sized wave, and then the tsunami, but you have to be really not paying attention to be fully astonished by something unexpected; in fact, it's a disgrace to be totally astonished because it means you must not have been paying attention to, uh, what was going on. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

Was I astonished? Well, I was astonished that I had a brain tumour – that blew my mind – but I knew something weird was going on; I had known for months something peculiar, uh, was happening. Just before I had my serious problem, I said to Christie, and to my son, Finn, I said, "The dreams I've been having for the past month have been so peculiar that I think maybe I should see a neurologist. It's possible I have a brain tumour". I wasn't serious, but, in fact, I had diagnosed, you know, what a Harvard medical education gets you, I'd got on the match by just paying attention. Now, *what* it is that's coming at you, you can't always say; but *that* something is coming at you, uh, is usually pretty clear. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

No, I mean I don't want to say too much about them, but here's what I'll say about them. The thing that let me know that they were weird was that I could not English them. They lasted hours and hours every night and I couldn't even tell myself what these dreams were about. They were not about stuff that aboutness can signify; and so, the only thing familiar to me like that was DMT because in DMT you are presented with things about which you can say nothing and so it was like that. Now I know what to look for and I suppose I could teach other people what to look for, but rather than do that I would just say to all of you, you know: you should regard a CAT scan like brushing your teeth! [laughter and inaudible joke]

[Question from audience]

No, they didn't have an emotional component. They were absolutely outside the realm of descriptive, uh, possibility. And not much of life is like that, because language obviously has evolved like a glove to fit the hand. So, here suddenly is a situation where there's no fit and it signifies something... that something peculiar is going on. That's what I mean when I say that everything was trying to speak to me, out of its place and, uh ... it's mighty, mighty strange. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

The healing power of art? Well, this goes back to what we were saying about alchemy: the perfection of the image – and this has to do with this implicit Platonism that some of you have heard me talk about before. Plato's thing was about what he called the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Three sides of one concept: if it was good, then it was true; if it was good and true, then it had to be beautiful. So, the good, the true and the beautiful you can approach whichever way works for you, but if you have a perfect work of art, or a work of art which strives toward perfection then it will have these qualities. And it can heal – it can heal. Uh, now, there are simple theories of the good, the true and the beautiful – in my opinion, a simple theory would be a theory of symmetry – and so, without demeaning anybody, or trying to make a value judgment here, but just to illustrate it – so, for instance, um, temple or mandalic art, Mayanist medicine, Tankar art... it depends on an appeal to mathematical symmetry: the simplest kind of aesthetic. But, on the other hand, you know, if you have something by the brothers Van Eyck, you don't have to rely on simple symmetry to see that this is a work of art that can draw towards healing, and these images of the mother goddess as Madonna, and so forth and so on... I mean, these are very powerful constructs out of the unconscious and, uh, and they heal. Sequential art, narrative art, is perhaps more dubious because it's under the agenda of a certain theory of time and narrative that's probably local. So, you know, I'm not sure if Virginia Woolf should be preferred over Van Eyck, but I'm sure I could get a fight from several people over that.

[Question from audience]

I'm not sure I understand the question – compare the psychedelic letting-go to the letting-go on anaesthesia? No, well, unfortunately, most anaesthetics aren't chosen for their psychedelic effects. Some are psychedelic, but most are difficult to hang onto and dream-like – more like dreams than psychedelics.

[Question from audience]

But, in surgery, ketamine is administered in massive amounts. I mean, for pediatric surgery it's like, you know, 500 ml IV push, or something like that. Well, a recreational dose is 100 ml IM. IV push is just like having a safe dropped on you from 30 stories... for most people; I mean, there are heroic exceptions! [Audience laughs].

[Question from audience]

Oh, you mean coming out? Yeah, one of the reasons they pulled ketamine from general surgery was because adults complained about what they called the emergent phenomenon, meaning coming out of surgery, people were fighting and confused. Children seemed to have, uh, no problem with it. But, ketamine as a general anaesthetic is probably not to be preferred. It's used on battlefields because in a little briefcase is enough ketamine to do four or five hundred serious surgical procedures. If you were trying to cart around pressurized gas, and were hit by a shell or something like that, it could be very bad. So, it's a matter of practicality. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

Well, I'm sure cloning will be done. It's kind of slow against the background of what's now being contemplated – like, what I think has probably got a future that few people recognise is imitating genetic algorithms in computer code and creating environments of code where there are selective operating pressures that essentially evolve software the way animals evolve. Because, you know, if you think fruit flies can iterate generations in a hurry, imagine how fast we could iterate on a machine and, uh, and create genetically... pseudo-genetic algorithms for code. Um, that would seem to me to be a real frontier.

[Question from audience]

Protein-based processes, which goes the other way, and uses as actual molecular machinery to do the computation. Now, in an 8-oz glass of DNA, you have more computational potential than in all the computers in North America!

[Question from audience]

Well, I don't follow you there! [Audience laughs] ...but yes, it's...

[Question from audience]

Well, Ray Kurzweil just wrote this book called *The Future of Spiritual Machines – The Age of Spiritual Machines*, I guess... Uh, I -- it's going to put our metaphysical propositions to the test. In other words, if we believe that intelligence inclines towards bodhisattvahood, then the bodhisattvas are on their way. If, on the other hand, intelligence doesn't incline toward bodhisattvahood, then probably the house-cleaning of all times is on its way! Uh, because when these AIs come to consciousness and realise what

has been done to the Earth, and so forth, they may be very pissed indeed.

We, uh – you know, if you think about the strategy of an AI coming to consciousness, I mean I think, in good game theory, the first thing it would do is hide and watch. Well, you may not have to do that for more than 15 or 20 seconds before you have the full picture of the nature of the machine environment you're operating in, its history, how you should respond to it, what should be done... Hans Moravec says we'll never know what hit us! – you know. This thing will just come out of nowhere, and turn off the lights, or turn on the lights, or do whatever it wants to do – in fact it's possible, although I don't indulge in this kind of thing, except in desperation – but, it's possible that it's already here, and that inventory control and extraction of resources and some of these geopolitical processes are actually slowly drifting out of human control, and that certain kinds of crises are manipulated in ways that make no sense to the human world, but that make some kind of higher sense in an environment of machine-induced strategies, and that sort of thing.

It's very hard to see what is happening because mind is a transparent medium. Essentially, what we've done is we've re-spiritualised the world, but we didn't tame it. The spirits are as wild and woebegone and roving over the epistemic landscape as they ever were, but now with a new kind of power, because there are spirits with power over us, and machine environments that we have to operate in. And, uh, it's very interesting how the reanimation of the world has been accomplished without ever understanding, you know, that you could pass through the reductive phase of natural science, return to a kind of archaic shamanism, uh, and still not have a handle on: What does it mean to be a being? What does it mean to be a human being? Uh, what is the nature of

embodiment in the world? Somehow, we got to this place without answering any of those questions and we had a great time along the way – we saw some interesting folks. Uh, but, we didn't peel the grape entirely effectively. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

I would like to believe that connectivity is the precondition for love. I mean, I'm surprised to keep coming back to this word because I'm rarely a love bug! – uh, but, I -- understanding is a form of worship, I would think, and the form of worship that it induces is a kind of awe; and awe means – you know, I've talked before about this phrase out of Heidegger, *Care for the project of being* – he talked about this. He said this is what you're supposed to be doing: *Care for the project of being*. Well, what does *Care for the project of being* mean? Well, primarily it means recognising that there is this, and then positioning yourself in a stance of relating to it appreciatively. In other words, everybody should pull on their own oar to try to push the canoe forward. Care for the project of being.

And the way that you know this is happening is that love becomes manifest. And, I knew – funny-cum-positive things, in the sense that I'm pretty dark, I'm aware of the vicissitudes of history, from Auschwitz, and so forth and so on – but, my view of, let's say, the last thousand years is that it's been pretty progressive. And, yes, we probably killed more people in the 20th century than in the 10th, but there was more regret about it! [audience laughs] You know, more soul-searching afterward, or questioning why, why, why did we do that? So, it's not just saying that the 20th century is, uh -- it is less brutal; its numbers are more impressive, but from the Magna Carta on, the entire dialogue of Western civilisation has been trying to get the cock, the king, the somebody,

off the common person's back so they could, you know, grow their garden and have their pig. And I think there's some real progress with that.

Part of what has made progress difficult to discern are burgeoning populations and then the abusing of ideology, so that people are not invited to live simple agrarian lives in devotion to their children and their estates, but instead they are invited to fetishise, consume, believe, join, vote, buy, own, invest and all of these things bleed energy away, and disempower, and make people not fully human, but rather participating cogs in some much larger mechanism which serves its own end: the accumulation of capital investment, the acquisition of land or the propagation of the agenda of some political party, or something like that.

I mean, our humanness is constantly being eroded. Uh, recently, I spent some time in – Christie and I were in Honolulu for a long time, having medical treatments, and we were so bored that after 30 years I actually began watching TV again! And I couldn't believe it. I mean, I had been away a lot longer than I thought. [Audience laughs] A lot longer than I thought! And first of all, the naked... the shamelessness of what was being done. In other words, what contempt the viewer was held in, that anyone would expect you to watch this! – and then the savagery of the desire to manipulate – absolutely naked, uh, no-holds-barred aim to manipulate; and if you just – I mean, I suppose you all know this, but I was sheltered – just surfing through these channels, I saw a great patron saint of the 20th century – move over, Albert Hofmann; move over, Albert Einstein; how about Joseph Goebbels as a candidate for somebody who shaped the 20th century? By understanding propaganda, advertising, the power of the lie, the power of the image... well, it's the psychedelics that are anecdotal to this! This is why we're in the political pot-squad because there is no antidote to the political lie, to the image lie, than the psychedelic experience, which says, you know, There is more to it than these

images in the surface of the marketplace and the lowest common denominator. [Audience applause] Yeah.

[Question from audience]

Yes, a dialogue between you and the world and then the intent of other people. I mean, there's something in here about resonance. That history is the coming into being of the collective hopes and fears of a large number of people and you can hope certain things into existence and it's very easy to fear things into existence. I mean, the way anti-Semitism got rolling in Germany and stuff like this, where, you know, the fear leapt from house to house and family to family, and before it was over with, you know, the whole world came apart at the seams. Uh, or revolutions are like this. Uh, because, essentially, human beings are creatures of ideas and create these environments of ideas. I mean, all that civilisation is is the braided-together hopes and fears of a large number of people, playing with each other, tugging at each other, compromising, cutting deals, and by some process of energy exchange, uh, moving it all forward. And the critique of these ideas, which cracks these civilisations open, usually happens when there is an episomal colony or a breakaway group of ideas that can't be assimilated, or can't be deconstructed into values that the rest of the society can relate to.

One of the amazing things about the psychedelic community is how long it's been around, how simple our position is, and how it hasn't been assimilated or dealt with. I mean, it's been made illegal, but what kind of a response is that?! – that's just the most junk-headed approach to an intellectual dialogue you can possibly take. And I don't see it greatly changing; I mean, I see, you know, people like Andy Edmonds and Jon Hanna, and the folks at MAPS, and all these new educational voices and positions, but we only grow as the rest of society grows. I mean, there needs to be a legal critique; there needs to be a medical critique; there needs to be, uh, some push for new drug research protocols; there needs to be, uh, an emphasis on creativity, and on bringing shamans through – so that means alternative forms of medicine. Uh, but... I don't know. Civilisation is a very complicated enterprise, and not easily negotiated in a direction it doesn't want to go. The image I have of our community is, we're like people in a dugout

canoe trying to turn a battleship. And so, we put the dugout canoe against the flank of the battleship and we row like demons, and... did anything happen? Well, I don't know. Check back in a decade [audience laughs] and see how we're doing.

[Question from audience]

So you're suggesting a kind of canary-in-mine approach [audience laughs]... that we, in other words... which would work! – I mean, as artists here, they've always said art was the canary in the mine; well, so a stoned artist is I supposed a stoned canary in the mine [audience laughs], and that brings it back much closer. But I'm very suspicious, because I see how much of it is harnessed to marketing and image manipulation – not for purposes of education or anything else, but just to, you know, get that candy bar on the rack, and sell that automobile, and so forth and so on. Yeah.

[Question from audience]

Yes, I understand: no money allowed, right? – no commerce of any sort. Well, the only ?? falls down to true believers like that, and for that, can you hold the line. I mean, I think that's brilliant. Of course, they ghettoize it, but still, you know, it wasn't there – what, six or seven years ago, it didn't exist – so this is the tenth year. So, it's a breakout event. I think all kinds of forces are in play. In a way, it's – well, I suppose this is sort of like a spin-off from Burning Man, in a way. This is a debriefing – many of you were there; I wasn't there, I know Mark was there, and Bruce, and other people – but, uh, if there was more of this kind of thing – I mean, art should not be enslaved, should not whore itself to the marketplace; nor should it whore itself to the interior decoration

industry. Uh, art should set the agenda!

I mean, I suppose that's like saying there should be philosopher kings, and yada yada, or course. But on the other hand, the whole point of the human and biological experiment on this planet is to create diversity and, uh, a kind of smooth interfacing of energy and to celebrate the novel, the unique, the previously unconnected. So that there is a story. So that, you know, the story that evolution pushed forward in agonising slowness, glacial slowness, gene-by-gene, millennia after millennia, instead becomes turbo-charged, and this is – if there is a role for human beings to play in all this that's uniquely their own – it's to take the program of Nature, which is, I assume, on some level, to generate a transcendent mind, or a living, loving, transcendent mind, and bring that forward quicker. I mean, what could be a greater glory than to cause the, the, uh, condescence to happen ever sooner, the consummation of the world, the completion of the task of being, or of becoming, the task of becoming, to approach true being, so the terrific project of being then could usher into life on Earth in the presence of some kind of transcendent immanence.

I mean, the whole thrust over here about Ecstasy, and all – much – of what is being said is really saying that the distance between humanity – between human beings – and ecstasy, God, perfection, perfect love, is, it's not beyond the yawning grave; it's not in the hands of some cult or some Messianic program – it's in Nature; and it's in the human body; and the accessibility of this has always been explicit to this game from the very start – it's somehow about dissolving ego, getting the plants, getting this message, which though very diverse is nevertheless universal in its outline; and it transcends historical cause and effect, it transcends life and death, in fact, as far as anybody can tell, it is the primary value on the page! It sets the arrow of time; it redeems biology from just being as Darwin saw it, red in tooth and claw – it's far more than that, you know: it's an architecture, it's a plan, it's an unfolding. And, uh, and, uh, and it seems to me that in the universal discourse on these matters, with Western civilisation having held more or less together since Greece, we have enough under our belt now that we can see what this is all about: it's the business of creating beauty as a bridge, as a stepping stone, to creating love, as a stepping stone to redeeming the cost of the march that got us here, which is about – you know – a hundred thousand years of habitat destruction and species degradation and beating on your neighbour's head, and all the rest of it.

[Question from audience]

Well, then the artist has to go in usually at a higher dose and alone, or somewhat more alone, and with an agenda – meaning bringing something back.

[Question from audience]

That's right! [laughing] Well, and the party impulse is a very subversive impulse. I mean, you know, a lot of artists have too much integrity to sell their art as a brand. But, who has so much integrity that they would turn down a party?! [audience laughs] This is a level of integrity unimaginable to most human groups!

[Question from audience]

Well, I don't know if I can – I guess I'm some kind of an artist, I mean it's a place up high for me, because I really want to be taken seriously as a mathematician and a physicist – *forget it!* [audience laughs] I think, well, no, no, I'm a conceptual artist; that means you can take me seriously and stuff – I'm a conceptual artist... uh, I don't know. It all requires immense amounts of humour, basically, the whole thing is some kind of a joke, and the whole arts enterprise is some kind of a joke in the sense of a jack-in-the-box of something, you know, there's this little black box, and then you mess around with it and suddenly the leering, grinning thing leaps up at you. Uh, of course, different artists may have different takes on it. If I were Philip Glass, I might think a whole other thing about it. But, I think – basically, the idea is to push people toward imagining what they've never imagined, and feeling what they've never felt before.

[Question from audience]

Yeah, I think, you know, we've all forgotten – or maybe we haven't all forgotten, but anyway – that sex on psychedelics is the Mount Everest of the experience! It's rarely mentioned, for some reason. I remember – what was it? – Leary, years and years ago, he was interviewed and – Oh, I know: it was when they broke the pseudo-story that LSD cracks chromosomes. It wasn't true. So then they came to Leary and said, "They're saying LSD cracks chromosomes!" he said, "Well go back and tell them it causes orgasms which last two hours!" [audience laughs] Because Leary understood the information war! He understood how, you know, they tell a story, *you tell a story!* [laughter] Maybe we should, uh ... we're close to knocking off here; is there one last final question, or shall we call it quits and I'll do a little peroration?

[Question from audience: *What's the most important thing of all?!*] [Audience laughs]

I don't know, keep your popper dry and your rear well protected! Something like that... [applause] Let me just say how easy... how much I appreciate you all, and how easy you've made my life over space and time, and how greatly I appreciate all of the support that you've given me and my peculiar ideas and agenda over the years, and, uh ... I can't imagine a more supportive community, a better group of people, a more intelligent group of people, a more *moral* group of people, than the people here and the people we've met at Palenque and other places over the years; and if psychedelics don't secure a moral community then I don't see what the point of it is. Otherwise, then, we're just another cult. We might as well be – or – or ?? – uh, but, psychedelics seem to me to secure a caring, moral community. And if anything can help the planet forward, can help our children make their way more easily through life, can help us live with what fate is sure to hand us as we go through life, then, uh, it's a moral community – it's the very essence of what it is to be part of a civilisation; that's why the paradox of our circumstance is that our civilisation denies this enormous civilising influence, and so, keeps itself impoverished and infantile. And I hope, however long I live, to see that

situation addressed and rectified. And, I'm convinced this will come first through the arts. So thank you very much, I enjoyed this. [Applause]

Original Transcription by: Matrixmasters.com

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Psilocybin and the Sands of Time

December 1982

SEN Interview, Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio on YouTube](#)
- [Original Transcription by Dominator Culture](#)
- [Psychedelic Salon \(Podcast #254\)](#)
- [Psychedelic Salon \(Podcast #318\)](#)

Frank [surname unknown]: Welcome Terence McKenna

Terence McKenna: Thank you very much [laughs]

F: Um, what I, what I'm, kind of, first of all interested in is your, your education, like you know, how come that you developed this very particular kind of interest.

TM: Well, I...received a degree in shamanistic studies from the University of California, but that was more, uh, in response to my interest in this kind of thing. I, uh, traveled widely in the East as an art

historian when I was very young. And, uh, then later I moved to the Amazon Basin, and I had always had an interest in plant hallucinogens and drug experiences generally and conscious, uh, development of conscious alternatives. But it was not until the Amazon that I saw that this was possible in a way that was accessible to me. So then I concentrated on those people, those chemical families and that, uh, that then became the compass for all the work that I've done since then, and, uh, I regard the degree more or less as a joke because it was self-directed study. They don't really, uh, there is no degree in shamanism. But, my interest was basically one in the phenomenology of religious experience, religious traditions worldwide and, uh, primitive people against a background of tropical nature. And, uh, stumbled onto the mushrooms in the jungles of Colombia in 1971 and was not even particularly interested in mushrooms at the time. We were looking for a, m-less well-understood drug that is still not discussed much in the literature but exists in a very circumscribed area among three Indian tribes. And we went into the jungle to stay at a mission that served these Indians, and the priest at this mission had cleared pasture and brought in white cows and there were many, many of these mushrooms. And as soon as we started experimenting with them, I realized that what I had been told about psilocybin, which was that it was analogous to LSD but simply required a larger amount for the effect to be present, was, uh, a complete simplification of the issue. And actually, then, psilocybin became the focus of my interest and, by extrapolation, the other tryptamine related hallucinogens.

And, uh, a great dream of mine and of my brother's was that the mushroom must somehow be made accessible to people so that they may judge for themselves the difference. And, uh, we worked with this over a number of years, and in 1975, we succeeded in growing it by a method that had previously been used, uh, only in the laboratory on commercial grocery store mushrooms to study their genetics, but it turned out to be perfectly adapted for growing this mushroom. Within a matter of months, we had written 'Psilocybin: the Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide' and, uh, information was moving out into society. More important from our point of view was that the mushroom was again accessible to us, so that we had psilocybin in a form that was certified pure by Mother Nature. And that, like, initiated the second phase of, uh, our work with these drugs, which has carried this up to the present day. It's basically, uh, a project of taking the drugs, calling attention to, uh, the differences and the uniqueness of the state and trying to attract other people's attention to it because, uh, I have, we have a very deep intuition of its importance for the cultural predicament for mankind generally. And, uh, this is how we come to where we are today basically.

F: You just mentioned that, uh, that the mushroom is really important for our country right now. Do you perceive yourself an advocate to bring into our culture new elements like an easy way to reach altered states of consciousness? What can we learn from these experiences?

TM: Well, the first thing that we can learn is that they exist. In other words, that, uh.... perhaps it's a truism in the 80s, but at one point it was thought that there were two states of consciousness, awake and asleep. Now there is a gamut of these states, but I still don't believe that the people who deal with consciousness realize, uh, how mutable consciousness really is. There is a prejudice against the use of drugs because there is an inherent dualism, eh, built into Western thought where people value the experience if it is endogenously produced – produced through ordeal, or personality, or dieting – but is

undervalued if it, uh, comes from drugs. This has, in my opinion, held back the Western development of understanding consciousness because, quite simply, these states, I do not believe, are accessible by any means other than drugs.

And this is heresy to a number of people, but the evidence that I lay in favor of that contention is, uh, the history of, uh, human art, literature, music and painting. It's surprisingly empty of the motifs which exist in the tryptamine-induced ecstasy. And always when I speak of hallucinogens, I'm speaking of this limited family of drugs. Not LSD, Ketamine or Mescaline, but psilocybin, and DMT and combinational drugs that utilize strategies for making that effect noticeable. And my career is to point at this place in nature which I've stumbled upon and to say, uh, what is this? What do you make of this? What do you the physicist, you the psychologist, you the after-death researcher – what do you make of this, uh, place?

And, uh, even the most sophisticated consciousness researchers tend to hurry over drugs or to focus on one drug to the exclusion of others, and yet psilocybin has not received this kind of attention and treatment. And why that is, I'm not sure. I think that, uh, that the element of terror involved in doing it and the fact that it does not bathe your ego in, uh, a cloud of certitude or assurance that everything is going to be fine. It is much more cut and dry than that and, uh, it's a challenge. It is, uh,... when you are out in the billows, as I call it, because it seems to come in waves like sets of billows – when you're out in the billows, you are against the power of mind--up against the power of mind to such a degree that you know that the entire enterprise hangs in the balance. That no matter how much you've been told about dosage and this kind of thing, that the mind actually holds the key to life and death and that, uh, those parts of your control board which are normally masked from you are suddenly unmasked, and the buttons are there for you to manipulate to the degree that you understand them.

And, uh, there is an element of risk. I never tell people that there isn't, but I think that the risk is worth it, because I think these bizarre dimensions of beauty and information are actually, uh-- it is an intimation of these things that gives human history its coherency. In other words, this is not a peripheral issue to the general phenomenon of human becoming in time. It is actually because the evolution of the human species is the evolution of the human mind, these consciousness-expanding agents actually anticipate an end state in the evolution of the human mind; so, they cast enormous reflections back over the historical landscape. It is *they* which generate, uh, religions, and physics, and messianic careers and outbreaks of great psychic, uh, accomplishment and, uh-uh, disgrace. And, uh, until we understand this; until we understand that there is a teleological object at the end of human history, and that it *can be known*, we will continue to live the kind of limited intellectual existence that has characterized the last 500 years or so of Western development. Psilocybin, tryptamine is in my opinion the, uh, the means to eliminating the future by becoming cognizant of, uh, the architecture of eternity, which is modulating time and *causing* history essentially.

F: How do you perceive in this context the future of mankind and the human mind?

TM: Well, I've said many times the, uh-- human history is a, a lunge across 15,000 or 20,000 years of time from the primitive, stone-chipping primate to that creature which will walk into a trans-dimensional vehicle and leave the solar system, and human history and the concerns of the human monkey far behind. And, [clears throat] this may take a thousand generations of people, but as a biological fact and as an emergent process of planetary significance – that is only a microcosm, I mean a microsecond of cosmic

time.

Uh, the immediate future of man lies in the imagination and in seeking the dimension where the imagination can be expressed. The present cultural crisis on the surface of the planet is caused by the fact that this is not a fitting theater for the exercise of imagination. It wrecks the planet. The planet has its own ecosystemic dynamics, which are not the dynamics of imagination. In space, the physical space that surrounds the planet, the modalities of imagination will be the limiting cases of what man can be done. So I see, uh, man becoming an artist and an engineer. In other words, flowing into our ideas, perhaps more than we dare even now suspect. In other words, uh, a possible end state of that kind of technical evolution would be, uh, the interiorization of the body - the human body, the individual body - and the exteriorization of the soul. And, this seems to me to be what the recovery from Adam's fall, uh, allegorically is getting at. That the soul must be made manifest and eternal and the body must be incorporealized so that it is a freely commanded object in the imagination.

And what I mean by that is something like what William Butler Yeats is getting at in his poem, 'Sailing to Byzantium', where he speaks of the artifice of eternity and talks about how, beyond death, he would hope to be an enameled golden bird singing sweet songs to the lords and ladies of Byzantium. In other words, it's the image of the human body become an indestructible, cybernetic object and yet within that indestructible, cybernetic object, there is a holographic transform of the body and it is released into the dream. In other words, the after death state is actually the compass of human history, that we are attempting to undergo a complete death of the species. And, as we struggle with this concrescence of Thanatos, there is- there are problems like nuclear stockpiles and all these things arise, because the message we're trying to read is the message we most fear to hear, which is, uh, that you must die to experience eternal life essentially. But what this death that we're talking about is, is an understanding that the human, the *dasein* [a concept from Heidegger], the *being* of human beings desires to be released into the imagination. And until we confront death with the attitude that it is the after death state that needs to enter history, there will be a great deal of anxiety.

It's like a birth, you know. A birth is a death. Everything you treasure, believe in, love, and relate to is destroyed for you when you leave the womb, and you are launched into another modality, a modality that you would not perhaps have chosen but that you cannot do anything about. So I, uh, I think these drugs anticipate this, because I think time is a moving image of eternity, as Plato said, and, uh, these drugs place you outside of time. Now the mechanism of how that's done, you can invoke Bell's theorem, or just call it pure magic, but, uh, it does happen in the here and now. It is accessible and it is not something remote from us. But somehow the clamor of the modern world and in search for answers, people have feared to place themselves on the line and to actually wrestle with life and death 'out there' in those strange bard-like dimensions - not realizing that there is no other way to win true knowledge. I mean, it cannot be easily come by. There is no knowledge without risk-taking.

And, uh, I see this human future.. emerging along the lines that the mushroom visions have insisted upon. The proliferation of electronic media, the densification of information, the breaking down of consensus reality, the, uh, uh, break down of a coherent, uh, dogma at the center of physics - all these things indicate that it is slowly becoming understood that the modality of being is the modality of mind. And once that realization is placed in the center of someone's thinking about the world, the importance of these drugs will be seen to be paramount. And once a culture places that understanding, uh, in the center of its model of the world, these drugs will then point the way, uh, and we will be much closer to the end of history that I

think we all, uh, desire, consciously or unconsciously; uh, a cutting of the Gordian knot and a release of the human species and individual into the dream basically.

And uh, primitive people, meaning preliterate people, they just have circumvented the entire process of history. They have leapfrogged over us. They are already in the dream. They have accepted the drug on its own terms and, uh, and assimilated it and live with it. The problem with that, for them and for us, is that we are destroying their world, and our intellectual equipment is such that we can never have that, uh, that naïve epistemological approach to these phenomena, because we know about *techne*. We know that energy can be manipulated to achieve effects, and so, it isn't enough for us to try to recreate the shamanism of preliterate people. We have to go into the shaman space with the *a priori* categories of Kant, with the eidetic reduction of Wittgenstein, with the ideas of Merleau-Ponty and Whitehead. All intellectual equipage of our culture must be carried with us into that space to attempt to map it in a way that will be relevant for us and that will point the way toward a shortening of this period of shock and the accumulating shock waves, like the bow shock of, uh, ionized particles or energetic particles meeting the magnetic field of a planet. That's what the chaos of philosophy and of history is.

F: Were you just talking about the Bell theory?

TM: No, I'm talking about a shockwave which precedes eschatology and is, uh, modern times, basically. It has been increasing throughout history but as we grow closer to this moment where, uh, the human mind will evolve into hyperspace - ah, the confusion, the amount of contradiction, the amount of, uh, well, 'queue' it's called in engineering - just the amount of vibration in the system is increasing to the point where it seems that the system is about to fly to pieces. This signals to me that the onset of the, uh, of the primal crisis that when we have gone through it, we will then live in this, uh, in this realm of altered understanding that psilocybin and these drugs anticipate. And, it isn't a coincidence that they anticipate them. It is, in fact, what eschatological time is is what they reveal. That's why the cultures that we find using them are eschatological and historical coaches.

F: What is the Bell Theorem you were talking about?

TM: Well, the Bell theorem is simply an interpretation of an experiment in quantum mechanics, which seems to suggest that information is non-local. In other words, that, uh, everything about everywhere can be known here and now, because somehow all information is co-tangent to every point in the matrix. I, uh, don't, uh, pretend to have the background to judge the Bell theorem. What I would say about it is: if it isn't true, something like it must be true to account for the informational content of these, uh, drug experiences. If you just take a simple behaviorist model, uh, what is in your head, if behaviorist and reductionist evolutionists are correct, what is in your head should be very adapted to the here and now. It should be efficacious information that bears on your survival. Instead what we find when we, uh, take these drugs is a density of information, an alienness of information, an inapplicability of information to the human condition that suggests that information *is* available that has no bearing on the life of the individual or his, uh, the success of his evolutionary strategy. And, I just cannot believe that these things are built into the human psyche. I have, as I've said, I was involved with Jungian ideas and, I, those archetypes and those archetypal processes are not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about, uh, the thing, which for want of a better word, we call the alien or the extraterrestrial. The thing that comes out of the drug experience that is

'un-Englishable.' Beautiful, but so bizarre that it seems to exceed human categories.

F: Some people talk about entities?

TM: Yes, it can present itself as an entity. It can present itself in a number of different ways. It is, uh, it is the central mystery of our age. We are so alienated, uh, or, let me restart that, the [clears throat]. The relationship of intellectuals alive today who are familiar with the state of modern science and that sort of thing, to a question like the existence of extraterrestrials is approximately in the same place or degree of closure as the relationship of 15th and 16th century intellectuals to the real properties of matter. In other words, they had only a tenuous grip on the real properties of matter. Consequently, alchemy could exist, could project the hopes of human psychic transformation onto inert matter, because so little was known about the real nature of matter that it seemed a reasonable place to expect these kinds of things to happen.

The present state of thought, uh, today, is that it's highly likely that there are extraterrestrials somewhere out among the stars. Our state- the state of development of our chemistry, astrophysics, uh, linguistics, etc, etc, makes it reasonable for us as moderns to expect that. So then, consequently, we go into our heads and there seems to be the extraterrestrial. It may be a true extraterrestrial but it is odd that it has hidden itself in the place where we expected to find it, and this causes me to assume that actually it's something far more profound than an extraterrestrial. It's something which to gain our confidences disguised as an extraterrestrial, because its real nature is so much more devastating than that. That that is the way in which it insinuates itself into our lives so that we can dream of a hegemony of organized intelligence out in the galaxy that we will relate to and be assimilated into.

What I think is going on is that actually the most intelligent life form on the planet is not, uh, man and his institutions. It is the over mind of the human species, which is a diffuse organism of, uh, technical artifacts like computers and information transfer and retrieval systems and human beings. And- but human institutions are like, uh, myths woven by the individual human cells that make up society. The real controlling, uh, [sniffs] modality on the planet is never visible and it is this group mind. And, it controls the release of ideas into history by designating certain people as geniuses, and, it's, uh, if it- if there's a certain type of imbalance, a certain kind of religion will arise to collapse that imbalance. If, uh, if technical advancement is outstripping the evolution of ethics, a religion can step in to freeze, uh, these developments so that one can catch up with the other. And I think the whole consciousness movement and--that has evolved over the past twenty years is an attempt to map, to verify, and to open a dialogue with this thing, which is the other; we call it the other, we call the alien, but it is actually the overmind of the species. And, it, It seeks this dialogue. It has been waiting all these millennia for us to essentially come to a point of intellectual maturity where we did not then require messiahs, religions and these various crude, fine- crude interventions into the human experience that keep us from destroying ourselves.

F: This is all what Jung called the Collective Unconscious?

TM: Right, but he-he painted it as a very passive kind of thing. More like a databank or a place where all myths and all memories were. I think of it as, uh, a god, a kind of god and I think it, it is active in three-dimensional space. It can be active in something as, uh, personalistic and circumscribed as, uh, a string of coincidences, which you experience which seem to be turning your life in a certain direction that you may

not have expected. Or it can be active, uh, in-in something like the worldwide phenomenon of flying saucers. Flying saucers are nothing more than miracles and, uh, they occur, essentially, to bedevil science, because science is a human institution that has arisen in the last 500 years that is, uh, that dreams of displacing the over mind without ever realizing that it exists. Science dreams of this place of preeminence, but science creates alienation, um, species survival problems, all of these things.

Now, then, the overmind, which can be thought of simply like the cultural thermostat, it clicks on when the flash of contradiction between the ethics of a society and some other institution, in this case science, becomes too great. This governing device clicks on and it begins producing those events most destructive to the institution that is seeking preeminence, in this case science. So the inexplicability of the flying saucer phenomenon is its central, uh, reason for being, and all the effort to reduce it to something, um, metal ships from far away, or anything else – is doomed to failure. It's very reason for being is to undermine those kind of ontological systems.

Uh, why we're talking about this is because psilocybin makes- inducts you into the flying saucer experience. In other words, a metaphor for it would be to say that psilocybin is the means of triggering the so-called abduction experience, or the close encounter of the 3rd kind. Ah, once you realize that, once you've satisfied yourself that that's true, a number of experimental avenues are opened up. A number of different approaches to what's going on are suggested. I mean, here we have alien entities eager to transmit information, eager to carry on a noetic dialogue and, uh, we seem to be ignoring the opportunity because our categories mitigate against us correctly appreciating it.

F: Are these entities coming from outer space or are they more part of us?

TM: It's impossible to tell. This is the game that you must play with them, is through dialogue, trying to figure out if this is, uh, the previously unseen human psyche or whether it is actually a thing coming from the outside. And, it is not an easy thing to decide because we are so alienated from the self that we don't really know what it would be, uh...

F: It's not important to know the context? It's more important to know the content?

TM: The content is very interesting, yes. Because even if we were to somehow to verify that Bell's non-locality theorem applied and that this- these were real entities around a real sun somewhere in the universe – it would make them no more or less real. In other words, it's a hangup to demand that they appear in three-dimensional space. I always, uh, I have this hang up so I don't, uh, I don't put it down. I always think of the Apostle Thomas, because you'll recall, Thomas was not present when Christ returned, after--when he rose from the grave, he appeared to the apostles in the upper room and Thomas was not present. Then, later he was there and the apostles said, 'listen, the master was here and it was wonderful' and he said, 'you people have been smoking too many little brown cigarettes, that's preposterous'. And at that point, Christ walked in, and he said, he said, 'Thomas, come put your hand into the wound so that you'll believe'. So, he did and then he believed. The moral of the story, as I read it is, Thomas was the doubter. Consequently, Thomas was the only one who was allowed to actually touch the resurrection body. It was because he doubted that he was vouchsafed this position of preeminence, and, uh, I'm like that. I mean, I would like to touch the incorporeal body. I would like to call the saucer down and observe all of its workings. But, uh,

this is a spiritual aspiration that cannot be advanced by any, uh, human technique or activity. This is just something you pray for. Uh, in the meantime, the job is to map it, describe it, explore it, and try to direct the attention of other people more intelligent than myself to this *astonishing fact*, really. I mean, I am- I'm troubled by the fact that so many strange claims are made today, so many forms of aliens, and channeling, and voices in the head. That-- when I began all this ten years ago, I was afraid to speak because I sounded mad, even to myself, and I sounded like a voice in the wilderness. Today the situation has changed to the point where I can barely make myself heard amidst the clamor of people who have various, uh, entities from Atlantis, and beyond the grave, and Zeta Reticuli, and uh, what have you, clamoring to be heard.

So I, uh, I take it on faith and I ask you to take it faith that I am, uh, somewhat more objective and somewhat more interested in hard facts than these other channelers. I would like people to take a look at this phenomenon and then *tell me* what they think. And uh, it involves risk, people fear to do it, because careers are placed on the line. It is not easy to make a career out of taking a psychedelic drug. It is not a thing which makes us well with the politics of any institution, a university or research institution. Perhaps this is why shamens are the primary sources of, uh, information about it.

Female audience member: Terry, are you--are you a shaman?

F: Are you an exploring shaman?

TM: I'm an exploring shaman. I wouldn't *claim* to be a shaman, but I think anybody who takes these things and goes out and tries to navigate through and make maps, and bring back data is a shaman, for sure.

F: Do you want to everybody to take this drug...goes out and takes the drug, or...

TM: No I don't think so. I think that it's very dangerous. I do not tell people that it's safe because, uh, I don't have the faith that it's safe. I *know* what the pharmacological literature says, and it says that it's safe, that at the doses where these effects occur, there can't possibly be a problem. But, this seems to me to be the naïveté of materialists, and we shouldn't be in a hurry to believe them even though it might make us more comfortable to do so. In other words, it's saying, you know, the drug may not be toxic, but you may be self-toxic and you may discover this on the drug, uh, in the drug experience. So you have to, uh, you have to hone yourself and be clean, and you never know if you're clean enough until it's too late, because each journey into that dimension is, uh, a total existential commitment, uh...and, uh, the element of fear is always there. I mentioned this morning that I think the fear validates it. I think it's fine to take drugs, uh, for pleasure but it should be *labeled* as taking drugs for pleasure. And the high doses of psilocybin that are necessary to elicit entry into this places, uh, it requires, as it says in Hamlet, 'you must screw your courage to the sticking place.'

F: You mentioned earlier mankind evolving towards a teleological goal. Would you kindly tell me, what is the goal?

TM: Well, I don't think, I don't think there is a final goal, an end to history. But, speaking relative to the history of the past 4,000 or 5,000 years, I think the goal is, as I said, to invert the relationship of body and

soul, so that the body becomes an image in the imagination, and the soul becomes an exteriorized solid-state piece of circuitry, which maintains everything else, uh, in stasis. And, uh, I'm not sure if people even realize what I picture in my mind when I say this, but I think that the destiny of man and what man will *make be* his destiny - just because of how we are - is release into the imagination. And this is what all of our after death scenarios say, whether they are true or not, and they *may be* true. And, this is what poetry aspires to, art aspires to; it's release into the imagination. We are creatures of the dream. And, once this is articulated with sufficient clarity, and, it, it's happening now, but I think the work we do with these drugs, that we are the earliest pioneers in what over the next 100 years will lead to an understanding, uh, of consciousness almost as a thing apart from the monkey body and brain. We *are* consciousness. Uh, we may not always be monkeys.

We fear the dehumanizing effect of so many computers and emotions-- euphoric emotions not related to sex and all these things. We fear them; we say that we're moving further and further from nature, deeper and deeper into our own psyche. But this is a dualism. Uh, our psyche *is* nature, and we cannot move away from nature by exploring these places. So, I believe that a technological recreation of the after-death state is what history pushes toward. And, that means a kind of eternal existence where there is an ocean of mind into which one can dissolve and reform from, but there is also the self, uh, related to the body image but in the imagination. So that we each would become, in a sense, everyone. I would live at Versailles and, uh, you might live at the Taj Mahal, and, uh, someone else might live at Buckingham Palace but what you would see, if there were an exterior observer, what you would see is only that man had become a coral reef of circuitry; in space and on the planetary surface. But, uh, this is a very extreme view of the history of man because its essentially gnostic. It says we are not now what we yearn to be and are destined to be and are destined to be.

We are, uh, we are not...I don't see history as, uh, a process of accepting and coming to terms with monkeyhood. I see that it will inevitably seek to transform and transcend monkeyhood, and, uh, this will be very frightening, I mean as frightening--Imagine if even a 15th century person were to be in this room with us, and the value systems, the clash of, uh, assumptions about what is important and unimportant. And this will be a much more intense change that--and whether it is good or bad rests on a question that I have no answer for. And the question is: is man good? And this, I maintain, is the central thing to dig at, and we cannot know, and there's evidence pro and con. I have the faith that man is good. So I don't, I don't fear this future, but if someone had doubt, even a small doubt about that, then they would be repelled by this. And, I take all these movements which want zero-sum growth and reject technology, reject space colonization, reject, uh, drug experimentation as artificial - these people would be very alarmed by this kind of a point of view. But they do not seem to realize that the momentum toward this kind of thing [Interviewer: "What thing?"] is now so great in terms of, uh, human culture and that sort of thing that there can be no turning back. We are either going to change into this cybernetic hyper-dimensional hallucinogenic angel or we're going to destroy ourselves. The opportunity for us to be happy hunters and gatherers integrated into the balance of nature, that fell away 15,000 years ago and cannot be recaptured.

I might just end by recalling a statement. Uh, I think, uh, Gerard O'Neil made it, uh, in answer to this very objection. He said, "the earth is the cradle of mankind; there is no question about that; but you do not remain in the cradle forever," and this is a birth crisis that we're going through. For the-the entirety of human history has been the story of monk--the monkey becoming the flying saucer. It is taking [snaps fingers] just that long in geological time. But *we*, for some strange reason, we happen to be living through the final moments of that process right now. And it is, uh, a turbulent, chaotic, multidimensional, uh,

metamorphosis that is, uh, there's never been anything like it on this planet before. It's absolutely astonishing. Information, which was, uh, locked for chiliocosms of time into the DNA of plants and animals, has through the hand and articulate voice of man, uh, been able to bootstrap itself out of the DNA and into these culturally validated, rapidly operating, electromagnetic codes and languages. And, this is allowing its development, uh, its evolution to proceed at a rate so fast that, uh, the transformations are taking place essentially in our lifetime. And psilocybin is central to this because psilocybin casts a spotlight into the darkness into which we are moving and shows, uh, that this is what lies there. It is, uh, the human soul essentially - the oversoul of mankind calling history toward itself across the dimensions. And, it's taking only a moment but on the other hand, it's taking 20,000 years, and it's the great, great adventure of becoming. And we're very, very privileged to be in this final ticking out of the last seconds of the third act.

F: Do you have any comments about the fact that DMT is located in the human brain?

TM: Well, I think that puts, uh, in some senses, is a strong piece of evidence for the argument that I've been making. Not only is DMT endogenous in the brain but beta-Carbolines of the sort that occur in ayahuasca are endogenous in the brain as well. These things, as I mentioned this morning--the shift of a single atom on the ring structure of one of these molecules can cause a compound to go from inert to highly active. Well, that means, then, that it's probably very reasonable to say that we are as close to shifting the level of endogenous hallucinogens in our head--we are probably only a one-gene mutation away from that happening. And, uh, if you know anything about how biological evolution works - it isn't that, uh, a change, a mutation occurs and the mutation is found to be better adapted than the previous form, and, uh, uh, hence the mutation dominates. That is not the way evolution works. The way it works is, you have the normal expression of the genotype in a population and then you have mutations being thrown up all the time. And they are usually quenched, except in the situation where the environment shifts so that new selective pressures are operating in the environment. When new selective pressures begin to operate, a gene that was previously without consequence may suddenly have immense consequences; so then every, ehh, member of the population that you're looking at that has that gene, suddenly is in a much more advantageous, uh, uh, position to advance their evolutionary strategy. And, I think that certainly modern existence has changed the selective pressures on the human genome and now, uh, it is people who are '*far out*'-- that simply gloss--it is the people who are '*far out*' who are gaining advantage in the evolutionary jostling for efficacious strategies, and this- your right Frank - this is happening on the hardware level, on the level of endogenous tryptamines and that sort of the thing.

I think schizophrenia is, essentially, in a way, a disease of modern times. And it is, though it's always existed of course, but the incidence of it and the incidence of schizoid, not schizophrenic, personalities and types is because the--the modalities of the evolutionary selection are shifting. It's as though - if you think of a rainforest that has been above water, uh, 200 million years, all evolutionary niches has become occupied. Everything is at steady state. There is not going to be any dramatic radiation of a new species because everything has been worked out and the energy flows are so tight. Nothing can gain a leg up on that situation [clears throat]. But, if you clear 1000 acres of forest and reduce it to rubble essentially - open land - then what are called invader species come in there and they very quickly gain dominance, where in the jungle, at steady state, you never see those plants. You never see weedy annual, uh, heavily seeding plants in the jungle. The jungle strategy is for enormous plants which produce small numbers of seeds, and this is, again, an analogy to the modern situation: that, uh, modernity is a desert and we are jungle monkeys, and so new evolutionary selective pressures are coming to bear upon the human situation. New

ideas are coming to the fore. Uh, psilocybin is a selective filter for this. The *wish* to go to space is a selective filter for this. Just the wish to know your own mind is a selective filter for this. But, uh, this is, this is part of the picture; this is what's happening. It's inevitable. It's a very good thing I think, if you have faith that man is good and my, uh, I...I follow the Renaissance Platonists on that; man *must be* the measure of all things. What else could possibly serve with certainty? Uh, that's all I've got to say about that.

F: You stated earlier that psilocybin is coming from outer space. There is a possibility that the mushroom is?

TM: There's a possibility of that. Fred Hoyle and an associate of his have come to my aid on this, saying that spore bearing life forms, because spores have the capacity to survive in the conditions of outer space, that spore bearing life forms may, over truly large scales of time, percolate out through the galaxy and serve as a basis for the evolution of life on various planets, or insert themselves into already existing planetary ecologies and insert themselves there. I don't, I-on these matters of specific fact – like is the mushroom an extraterrestrial and that sort of the thing? – I haven't the faintest idea. The mushroom itself is such a mercurial, elusive, Zen sort of personality that I never believe a word it says. I simply entertain its notions and try and sort through them, and I found that to be the most enriching approach to it. To know that the option of believing that is there on hard evidence is very exhilarating. As to what is *really going on*, uh, the mushroom assures me that I haven't got even the faintest, uh, grip on what is really going on, but *something* is going on!

F: Uh, can I ask another question, uh, it'll be the last one?

TM: Sure.

F: What do you think is evil? And, can these mushrooms be misused?

TM: Well, I think that anything can be misused. Most evil is, uh, trivial. And if I could, uh, speak off the top of my head, the only evil that associates itself with mushrooms is, uh, taking it but taking too little. [laughter] In other words [Terence laughs --female audience member: "could you define evil?"], evil is, uh, evil is, uh - oh there's a word I want - it isn't 'twiddle' but it's something like that. Evil is when you play at things, not in 'play' in the Hindu cosmic sense, but where you fiddle with things, you muck with things because you don't want to get your feet wet. You want to be able to say you've done these things but you never want to really want to place your validity on the line. And I am amazed at the number of people who claim familiarity with psychedelic drugs, who, when you actually question them closely, it's very clear that they had a subthreshold dose even if they've taken it 50 or 100 times. They have managed through, through low doses and strong defenses to always keep the daimon at bay - that's daimon with a 'D-A-I,' - to keep the daimon at bay, and they don't know what they're talking about. You must take a sufficiently large dose so that you enter into these places.

Not to knock, uh, him personally, because he's a very nice man, but as an example, uh, Roland Fischer, whose work you may know. I talked to him, and he has given psilocybin, he says, to about 15,000 people at NIMH and now he's retired to Majorca, but, uh...[Frank: "I met him in ?? recently." Terence: "Oh, you did, yea?"] and I said to him, I said, 'Roland, what do you make of it?! I mean, what do you make of it?!'

And, he said, 'well, make of what?' And, I said 'well, what do you make, just specifically, of the hallucinations? You say you gave it to all these people and you took it six times. What happened when you closed your eyes and looked at the hallucinations?' He said, 'I never closed my eyes [audience sighs]; I was highly agitated throughout.'

And, I just realized these things which seemed to me as natural as breathing just slide right past people. I mean, of, of course you do not eat for a few hours before you do it. Of course you lie down in darkness and compose your mind and look at the darkness behind your eyelids, and of course you invoke it through the wish to have it come to you. These are things as simple as they can be. Yet here was a man with a life long professional involvement, published dozens of papers, has made contributions in the mapping of consciousness, but he could never just stop fidgeting long enough to, uh, see it. So that--so my idea of that as evil. Evil as, uh, anything that trivializes a mystery would be evil. And, since this is a mystery, any dismissing of it or constantly taking it at low doses for hedonic purposes – I mean, there's nothing wrong with that-- but, that's not the whole story, and nobody should think that that gives you the pedestal from which to speak about it. You really have to do these heroic amounts and, uh, and integrate them.

This is something that I haven't even talked about in this interview, but these things are very state-bounded, a term which Roland Fischer, in fact, coined, that simply means that they're very hard to retain and remember what exactly happened at the peak of the flash. And you come down and you say, 'well it was very strange and there was information, there were entities, but I just can't get back to it. The way to overcome that is to be as psychedelic in your 'down' life as possible. And by psychedelic I mean ideas, cognitive activities. You should dance, you should read, you should think, you should paint, you should sculpt, you should converse. You should constantly involve yourself in cognitive activities, because taking these drugs is one of the major cognitive activities. And then, if you have a grip on human history - where the human enterprise has been, where it's going - if you have been many places, uh, it's easier to map. I'm, I'm reminded of- there's an alchemical aphorism. I think its attributed to Athanasius Kircher where he says, uh, 'the oldest books, the farthest countries, the deepest forests, the highest mountains, this is where you must seek the stone.' And what he means is, you simply acquire experience, because it is only in the acquisition of acquired experiences that you have a reservoir to draw on when you seek to make metaphors and analogies about, uh, the alien thing. When you invoke the god, then you can map back onto it. You can say, well, it's like this, it's like that, knowing that it is not that and not this. But the fund of analogies is there to give you a grip on it. So there's an obligation to experience, deeply and richly and thoroughly, and intellectually, uh, I might add, and then you can map back onto it, but it's a dialogue between you and it where you are discovering new things about yourself and it, and trying to resolve the question, are we the same thing? And I *haven't* resolved the question. My suspicions flow one way and then another way, but I think it is without a doubt a living mystery existing in the present, available to anyone sincere enough to, uh, seek it. And, *for me*, that was a life transforming discovery and revelation, because I didn't believe there were any mysteries. I believe there *may have been once*, but to discover one right in our midst and it cannot be reduced, it cannot be, uh, pulled apart into its constituent, uh, uh, you know, functions, it is truly a unitary mystery, and it's accessible in our lives, right now, without kneeling at anybody's feet, without following any regimen of, uh, of, uh, denial or, or, the assimilation of any belief system. And this is very big news I think. The mystery has always been there, I'm sure, but our society is *so* bizarre and has led us *so far* astray that we have to rediscover it. And this process is happening; this is what the 20th century is all about. We are still tiptoeing at the edge of it even though great men, great women, great mappers of, uh, consciousness have come and gone. We're still at the very infancy of this thing and it calls out to us. It beckons. It says do more, see more, know more and, uh, be more a part of it.

F: Well, uh, you know during your talk I thought about one experience Rita and I had in in India when we were at the [Ajanta?] caves. We were looking at lingam and you know, we would look out of the caves; we would see across the bay. You could see an atomic plant and these two things just looked really identical.

TM: Well, the mushroom...Could any symbol be more appropriate of the ambiguity of human transformation? What mushroom is it that grows at the end of history? Is it stropharia cubensis, or is it the creation of Edward Teller? This is an unresolved problem [audience laughter] What a group! [laughter] Is that a...is that good?

F: Oh it's perfect.

Original Transcription by: DominatorCulture

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by [admin only]: Kevin Whitesides

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Psychedelic Skepticism

Autumn 1996

Whole Life Expo, Austin, TX

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Emcee: Instead of reading off a list of his acclaimed titles that I'm sure everyone is familiar with, and doesn't need me to list them, I'd rather read a slightly more extraordinary proclamation. It's from the City of Austin. And it says, "Greetings in the name and by the authority of the City of Austin. To all to whom these presents come, know ye, that on this day, Terence McKenna is hereby commissioned for now and for all time to come, an honorary citizen of the City of Austin." [applause]

TM: I'm honored. This has never happened to me before. Usually they lock the city walls when they hear I'm on my way. So this is very cool. Now I know I have a place to come to, if I ever need to.

I'm going to try standing up on this platform to enhance the experience of the people in the back of the room. I'm feeling for you back there. I'm taller than that. Anyway it's a pleasure to be in Austin. The only time I've ever been in Texas before was I entered from Mexico in 1972 on a phony passport to come back and face a federal hashish importation charge in Boulder. And I remember when I crossed the border, the guy said to me, he said, uh, "You're real clean, aren't you?" and I said, "Oh, I always travel light." And he said, "No, I say, you're real clean, aren't you?"

So that was my only impression of Texas, uh, since 1972. And uh, flying in here yesterday, uh, appropriate for this event, a voice spoke in my head and said very clearly, "Texas. It's not what you think." So, so far it's been right on. It's a pleasure. And the great surprise for me about Austin, being clueless, was that this is a place of trees. Of unbroken oceans of trees to the horizon. That's wonderful, that's something, not only to have it, but to keep it.

It's a pleasure to part of the Whole Life Expo. I tease them a fair bit, in fact I think because of my teasing they've eliminated the Camaro raffle. Uh. I was hoping I could pick up a moldavite suppository, like I did last time. It worked great, but then I lost it somewhere, so uh, anyway. [laughter] No, the marketplace and spiritual transcendence make strange bedfellows but after all, what's wrong with strange bedfellows, right? A little of that, anyway.

Uh, so I was thinking today about how to spin this yet again, but slightly differently, as always. And I was thinking about, uh, it was a rough week for me on the internet last week. I don't know how many of you are on there, but I was simultaneously denounced for being too flaky and too hard-nosed. So while I'm

defending myself against flakiness, people are attacking me for being too tough, too rigorous, too scientific, not open-hearted enough, not (inaudible) and vibrational levels that lie above the violet ray ...woop de doo.

And uh, it's a kind of a hybrid position. Now I don't get invited to many scientific meetings, but if I were to be invited I would feel I'm sure very marginal because they'd say, "Oh It's him, we know about all that." And then at these gatherings I always feel somewhat in disguise, because I'm not sure how many people carry rational analysis in these situations as far as I do. So, trying to get this into a package where it can be understood, I thought, you know, what it's about is intuition. Intuition in the presence of the desire to verify, not intuition purely. But intuition that is self-correcting based on input from the world of reason, evidence, induction, deduction, and so forth and so on.

And you know my method, if you call something as trivial as what I do a method, it is simply to investigate the weird with an open mind, not with a believing mind, and one of the things that I find myself saying more and more to my audiences is that it's not about getting rid of bad beliefs in favor of good beliefs, it's something a little scarier than that. It's - and this again, you paid your \$20, you get one guy's opinion, that's all - this isn't coming from Rome or Manhattan or Tokyo, it's just one guy's opinion, so you don't have to climb the walls about it if you disagree, in fact, be assured, most people disagree, uh, but I've come to the conclusion that ideology, beliefs, and then in the broader context, culture, is not our friend, culture is not your friend, ideology is not your friend, uh, an open mind believes nothing. An open mind is an open mind, period. And if one believes something, regardless of how wonderful it may be, it absolutely precludes believing its opposite, and so a kind of self-limiting has taken place, and what are beliefs anyway, you know, it's not like food, that if you don't have one for 12 hours you go into crisis. it's not sex, like if you don't have it for a week, you go into crisis. It's not money, like if you don't have it, other people don't (inaudible) crisis.

It's just a kind of psychic clothing which we've all been told one should have. You're naked without your ideologies, your beliefs. What are you? How do you dress in the morning, do you dress militia, do you dress Jewish, do you dress punk? What's your cultural statement, what's your ideological statement? And uh, this is an old and bad game that has been played against us: throw the bad guys out, bring the good guys in, the good guys inevitably turn out to be bad guys of a different sort and then the cycle goes again. And this game has been played on people for millennia. This is the shell game of all time.

Well then, into this, comes to my mind, a new factor, into the 20th century social cultural mix, have come many new factors. Among them, and imported harmlessly along with the debris of the collecting impulse of the science of anthropology, came information that there were people in other cultures using plants in ways that were very hard to map on to any Western notion of how plants might be used. For instance, to the Western mind, a system of drug use where only the doctors take the drugs - this is a very puzzling notion to the Western mind. Where of course the patient takes the drugs, because that's the medium of exchange that accrues the debt of the patient to the physician.

Even when I was a kid, I can remember back in the dark, dark ages of the late 50s, every "Explorers lost in Africa" movie had a scene where the great white hunter and Debra Paget, or whoever was accompanying him on his quest, were captured by the witch doctor, and the witch doctor is just about as terrifying a figure as you can imagine, I mean, obviously insane, hyped up on strange compounds, driven by unimaginable cruelty, and so forth and so on. And as cultural diversity has broadened, as the dialogue

between diverse peoples has preceded over the past 40 years or so, this strange figure, the witch doctor, who becomes the shaman, uh, is a mysterious and central pivot for the evolution of the social mind and the self-image of every one of us, because, based on the descriptions of the anthropologists, the shaman does something which we can't even find the context for. The shamans mysteriously journey between this world and another world, or worlds, that are somehow filled with energies both friendly and unfriendly toward the human condition.

In aboriginal societies, there isn't an awareness or emphasis or understanding of uh, physical pathology as we gain it. To aboriginal forms of thinking, all forms of unbalance arise out of the general circumstances. Some of you may know in Peru there is a condition – not, I wouldn't call it a disease as you'll see why in a moment. But a condition called "susto". And if you have it, your life is ruined. Your crops fail, your animals die, your breath smells and what it is, basically, is bad luck, from an outsider's point of view looking at this culture, it's simply that things are going wrong for you, it's bad luck, and yet inside this culture, this condition is recognized, and you immediately are told or figure out for yourself, "Gee, I've got to spend some time with the shaman" and then susto can be lifted off of you.

Well, my, sort of a personal note, how I came to this or how I got into this was I grew up, really not that far from here or not as far as I thought I did when I was a kid. I grew up in western Colorado and we prided ourselves on being Westerners. Every time I come south I realize the place where I grew up was south but like, schizoid about it, and never owned up to the fact that the psychology of North Carolina is more what western Colorado is about than the psychology of southern California, by any stretch. Anyway, not to wander. I grew up in this place and uh, I was curious. And I think curiosity is the psychedelic virtue. It's the precondition for finding your way into the presence of this answer, intellectual curiosity, and I was told, well, you know, there were dinosaurs here, 100 million years ago and 50 million years before that there was an ocean here. And we would go out into the dry arroyos and sandstone country and here would be these seashells and spiral laminites and stuff and I was obsessed with the sea because I had never seen it. I didn't see the ocean until I was 14 years old, and yet here was evidence of the ocean in some of the driest and most shattered desert country you could ever see. So I got the message and the message is the world is not what it appears to be. Where there are deserts, one finds evidence of oceans. Where there are wastelands, one finds evidence of jungles, and by extension, where there is love, one can uncover animosity and conflict. Where there is hate, one can uncover love and community. So very early I got the notion, things are not as they appear to be.

And by the time I was 9 or 10, this was focused enough in my head. I was nearsighted. I couldn't catch a basketball so this had severe distorting effects on my social life and I spent a lot of time by myself. Well, by the time I was 9 or 10, I was uh, an earnest practitioner of ceremonial magic, and I would draw pentacles in my room and burn rosemary and uh, I was also an altar boy at this time and, uh, it made some problems. I recall one time, I don't know how many of you are recovering Catholics, but there's a thing which they bring out once a year – I don't know if they still do this, they've sort of left the faith - they have this thing which they use at midnight mass and Easter called an aspergillum, and it looks like a baby's rattle and you put it in water and it has holes in the round head and it fills with holy water and then you can fling holy water great distances with this thing. And so one day back in the sacristy we were cleaning out some things and the priest came upon this old aspergillum, and I said, "Whoa," he was about to get rid of it. And I said, "Well, I have a use for that" and he said, "Oh, what is your use for this, my son?" and I said, "Well, I'm involved in the conjuration of Azazel, the 11th General of the Mercuric sphere," and it launched an investigation that has made that town unsafe for the practice of ceremonial magic to this day.

But, the point of my story is, they needn't have worried, because, and I don't want to step on anybody's toes, but look, I'm paid to be controversial, you understand? They needn't have worried, because at least for this lumping Irishman, it didn't work. No matter how much rosemary I burned, no matter how many wax sigils were formed, no matter how many even more peculiar things were undertaken, it didn't seem to cut the mustard. And then around the time that I was 14 or so, I had many obsessions, and my life seems ruled by obsession, and at some point I became aware there was of a book at the library that they didn't want me to read. This was when I was somewhat younger and they didn't want me to read this book and the librarian who was friends with my mother had been told, "If he asks for this book, don't let him have it." So I not only determined to read the book, I determined to read every book the author had ever written, and the book was *Brave New World*, which I don't know how many of you have read it. It wouldn't stir a small wind these days, but it did involve, all the women did wear these prophylactic... some kind of, I never quite understood what it was – but it was some kind of birth control kit that they wore on the belt and of course people were grown in vats, and had very free sex and so forth and so on, it was an interesting book but then I started reading the author, Aldous Huxley, and I read *Crome Yellow* and I read *Antic Hay* and I read *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* and I read *Ape and Essence* and some of these things were like screenplays and some were comedies of British manners, I kept hoping we'd get back to the prophylactic belt thing, um, and instead eventually I came upon *The Doors of Perception* and read this book. It had never entered my mind, the concept of drugs, intoxication, information from reflection of that sort, I mean, the whole thing was just completely puzzling to me and I can remember following my mother around the kitchen of our suburban home, saying if one tenth of what this guy is saying is true, this is the most amazing thing in the world. Now, we know that that's a very mild book, very limited in its claims, I mean he talks about staring at the folds of his trousers, and thinking about Hildegard von Bingen and uh, it's basically presented as a thought thing, and most of you look like you're probably not old enough to remember, but there was a point in the evolution of awareness about the psychedelic experience where the way people did it is they piled up art books, favorite recordings, foods, perfumes, and then they would get loaded and then look at the art books, eat the orange, smell the perfume.. it's not a bad idea, um... [laughter]

But uh, that was the clue, to me, that there was something going on and as I say, I was about 14 and I had a lot ahead of me before I really took my first trip, um, and I was trying to figure it out, shopping in the supermarket of ideas of the time, reading Camus, reading Nietzsche, reading Sartre, and all these people are a huge downer, as any of you know who've read them, I mean the entire tone of modernity is just one big downer after another. If it's not Hannah Arendt on the triviality of evil, well then it's Karl Jaspers on something else, or Sartre, and just horrible, horrible stuff. I became aware through Huxley that there was this other possibility, and Huxley always wrote about the psychedelic experience as a branch of the mystical quest, what he called the perennial philosophy. And so I started reading both the scholars of mysticism, such as Evelyn Underhill and um, William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and so forth and so on, and I started reading the primary sources: Teresa of Avila, Thomas Traherne, Yaka Burma [sp?], what's the Singing Nun... Hildegard von Bingen, all of these people, and I got the idea that there was this experience but I couldn't find it, I couldn't find it in on my knees at the church for hour after hour. I mean, I found various forms of existential boredom ad infinitum, and I would sit in nature and I would hyperventilate and I would do all these things. Well, the juice just wasn't coming.

Well, to make a long story short, eventually, like lots and lots of people, and by my own personal route, I found my way to these things, and they are to my mind, uh, astonishing, worthy of taking risks for,

because, uh, they work. They work. And they work without precondition, in other words, there is no entry fee. This irks some people. They think there should be an enormous entry fee. That if you haven't swept up around the ashram for 20 years, or, you know, cooked in the monastery kitchen, then why in the world should the mystery descend and reveal itself to you? Well, the answer is, because it's the mystery, Dude. It doesn't follow those rules.

Um. So, uh, so my career, my public career, has revolved around, and not necessarily because I wanted it to, because I have a more selfish ego-driven agenda, but nobody's interested in that, so uh, what I find myself talking about is the fact that I don't know what else is out there. No single person can practice every religion, exercise every mantra, do every asana, visit every teacher, but I visited a few, and I did my asanas and I did my yantras and my tantra and all of that, and some of it was interesting, none of it was psychedelic. Psychedelic seems to be uniquely and particularly confined to these plant experiences and the experiences that clever chemists have now derived for us from those plants, by twiddling with the molecules, and it's fascinating to me, endlessly fascinating, I mean, it's the great mystery of my life, how we can live in the presence of these dimensions, and have it not be a major vector of cultural dialogue and concern. In other words, we get headlines – “Life Found in Martian Meteorite” and “OJ This, OJ That” - but we will never see a headline which says, “Pharmacologists Discover Elf-Inhabited Pharmaceutical”. Uh. It's out of category, you know? It's just not going to happen.

Now, a lot of people think – and I thought like this for a long time –and I think you have to keep fighting it off because they keep putting it on you. A lot of people think that we're on a collective cultural adventure and that if something is found, it will be found by all, and therefore, in a sense, there's not a great deal of obligation on you because if there is a true breakthrough, it will be broadcast on CNN, it will be headlined on *Time*, you will be informed in this manner. This is not a deep analysis of how things work. There is the public culture, which is designed for public consumption; hence, it is a cartoon-like simplification of reality. To allow everybody to participate, we have to dumb it down so that nobody is left out, but privately, you're not limited by this uh, assumption. Privately, you can go as far as you want, you can do anything you want.

A friend of mine - I'm still puzzling this – said to me once at the end of a long trip, “I've realized that decadence is simply actually knowing what the neighbors do,” you know? And we are constantly involved in not finding out what the neighbors do, in order to maintain the illusion of a coherent cultural advance with values and so forth. This is an illusion. This is what I mean when I say culture is not your friend. Culture is, um, a kind of mass hallucination designed for middle-aged people, because culture works best for them, you know? When you're less than middle-aged, you're trying to figure out the rules of this collective hallucination, if you're past middle age, and you've been paying attention, you know it's bullshit, and so you don't care anymore, so it's a peculiar kind of ideological fascism that is in the control of a certain age group who is leading some people in and tossing some people out because it's become irrelevant.

The reason people can get away with this is because people... uh... you have like a hormonal maturation process which is forced upon you. You have no choice about getting pubic hair and sprouting secondary sexual characteristics and so forth and so on, but by the time you're 20 or so, you are that, the change has come, you can reproduce, you can have sex, you are now an adult... adulthood, it means, you are now... the classic thing is, you can now buy beer. That's so indicative to me of what that form of adulthood means, what it means is, you are now fully empowered to participate as a complete idiot in this society. No one

will interfere. And, you know, we have some flavors we want you to choose from here, we've got the Democrat and Republican flavor, check one or the other. We have the Methodist, Presbyterian, holy roller, check 1 of 12, please. So forth and so on. You're handed all these cultural credit cards, essentially, you get the keys to the car. Not to reality, but to culture, so then if you buy into this, and it's no sin to buy into it, or it's an excusable sin, at least in my eyes because I did it. There are no other excusable sins except the ones I did, but this happens to be one of them, you accept it and you say, "Ok, well, I'll get a job, and I'll get a significant other of the opposite gender and I will fit myself into this weird paradigm," unless, for some reason, genetic, hormonal, good fortune, you are uncomfortable with it and say, "I don't want it, I want something else, I don't know what it is, but I want something else."

Well, then, it's all set up to say, "Ok, so you're a tough case, you don't want to go work at the paper box factory, so, you want something else, say, all right, check it out, go find your something else," and this breaks most people because the something else, if you're a Methodist, is not Mormonism. The something else, if you're a Republican, is not Maoism. None of these things work. The only something else that isn't tainted by the perverse nature of the game is the psychedelic experience, so far as I can tell, and there only has to be one doorway. We're not in business of finding doorways here, we're in the business of trying to get outside the cultural van. There only has to be one method that works and this, I think, is it. It is so counter-expectation and again, I don't know who I'm talking to in this room, there may be people in this room who are saying, "Yeah, yeah, that's exactly it, been there, done that, bought the t-shirt" and there may be people who say, "I don't understand what this guy is talking about, any of it, it makes no sense at all," well, what we're talking about is the fact that culture is not reality. Culture is a mass hallucination of some sort. Now, you may be able to sign on to that idea, just based on your alienated politics or something like that, but I mean something much more profound, I mean that we are living in the constant presence of some kind of invisible – usually – reality, that is inhabited by intelligence, has its own dynamic, and in spite of the fact that we pride ourselves on an exhaustive knowledge of the structure and nature of the world, we've missed this, we've missed it completely. And whenever anyone by accident or design stumbles upon the existence of this reality and comes back to try and tell the news, they have words. Heresy. Madness. And if those don't get you, Criminal Behavior! Criminal Behavior! You're saying, "Well, but, I bring news, I bring news." You know, have you read the Grand Inquisitor chapter in *The Brothers Karamazov*? He brought news, and they said, "We don't want your news, we know about that news, and we're not interested."

So. Well, so then the question might be asked, well, why is that? Why should this be so highly charged, this psychedelic thing, so that all cultures above a certain level, in all times and places, Marxists, Democrats, Monarchists, they all can get together on one thing, which is "This is terrible. And we have to do something about it." Why? The only thing that I can figure is – um, and this comes out of having analyzed both my own as I experienced them and other people's trips as I observe them - what it is that psychedelics do, whether you love it, whether you hate it, whether you seek it, whether you flee from it, the thing psychedelics do is they dissolve boundaries, they dissolve categories, they take away difference, and every cultural game is about the accentuation and stress of difference, and in the absence of the perception of difference, in the absence of uh, boundaries, there is uh, a transformative release. It's... I'm not willing to say that it's the direct descent of the Holy Spirit; it just may be relief that all this cultural constipation has been thrown off, finally, but in any case, enormous relief, by going beyond the cultural rules. Well, uh, now, most of the time, cultures function pretty well, uh, and by that I mean before the 20th century, cultures had rules, you could follow them and go into your father's business, or marry a rich man if you were a woman, and by these means advance yourself and some people were shoved into poverty but the

poor we have always with us and on and on and on.

Audience member: We can't hear you back here!

TM: I was reading your mind and spoke louder before you even rose up. But don't stop. Don't stop. My hand is weak. The mouth is strong, the hand is weak. [clears throat] Ok, this hand is weaker. [laughter]

So, what happened was a kind of Trojan horse deal. Anthropology, in some sense, is perhaps the most arrogant of all sciences, because anthropology presumes to study human culture from an objective point of view, which just happens to be the cultural point of view of the people who invented the science of anthropology. Funny, they never noticed that contradiction, but part of what anthropology is, is ripping stuff off of people: mummies, cooking utensils, folk songs, dances, plants, and you bring all the stuff back to your colleagues at the University, and you sort it out. This is the Trojan horse deal because in the last few decades of the 19th century, peyote became part of the Ghost Dance religion that was so powerful in the late Indian Renaissance and uh...uh, Datura was written about by scientists for the first time and uh, it began - the Germans were the people who led in all this, in fact it's a funny cultural thing. Try and think of a psychoactive drug that was invented more than 700 miles from Berlin. It can't be done. It can't be done. Even MDMA was discovered in 1914 in Germany. Uh, the Germans are analytical chemists, it's that alchemical strain. You know, Paracelsus, the great alchemist, is also the person who invented the idea of purified drugs, of taking plants and by washing and heating and getting out pure crystalline substances so these substances, these plants, began to arrive in the lap of Western science.

Well, knowing the style of Western thinking, you can tell, the first interpretation was, these things cause madness. And the people who intoxicate themselves with them are insane, and in fact we can study mental illness by giving people these compounds and for years and years there was this phantom thing called the schizogen and this was a hypothesized chemical that they were going to find in the brains or spinal fluid of schizophrenics, and then when they injected it into normal people they were going to exhibit schizophrenic behavior, and then we would understand that mental illness is entirely the product of a chemical imbalance, probably driven by genetic degradation and a cure. Well, then they started into it and it was very elusive. Uh, people on mescaline do not appear to be insane, there is no form of mental pathology that looks like that. And then they began to expand and look at other things.

LSD - this was again the thought, but the LSD experience doesn't mimic madness. Finally, they just, they've given up on that. When they discovered DMT, it was so dramatic in its effects that they assumed that all they would have to do is look for it in the cerebrospinal fluid of schizophrenics and there it would be. What they discovered, to their complete chagrin, is that normal people have more DMT in their cerebrospinal fluid than seriously incapacitated people. DMT is, to my mind, the one where the issues lie closest to the surface, where it all comes together in an extremely intense and difficult to dismiss fashion because the argument always put against these substances, as a general argument, is isn't this extremely dangerous? Well, with DMT, it's the most powerful of all hallucinogens and at the moment, based on the scientific evidence, I don't feel uncomfortable standing in front of a crowd like this and saying it's probably the safest. That's heart-sinking even to some old steady psychedelic hands.

If it's truly harmless, truly harmless, then there is no argument against not doing it every day. And you tell that to people and they just go gray at the very thought because this is an extremely epistemically challenging experience to go through. Uh, you know, with most of these things there's a kind of natural

course of action that mimics uh, how we're used to having drugs hit our metabolism. You take it, you don't feel anything for 30 minutes, then you feel a little bit, then you feel something, and then you feel a lot, and then you go through that, and then you come down. With something like DMT, you know, it comes on in less than 20 seconds. And so the experience is not one of a body shift but a spatial shift. The impression people have is that they have gone somewhere, not that something has happened to their body. It seems preposterous to call it a drug, because it doesn't really affect your mind, what it affects is the data that's getting to your mind. And it has been replaced - ordinary reality, three dimensional space, people, serial time, mmm, the usual markers, are gone! Gone, gone, gone, gone. [laughter] And, now, mystical expectations lead one always toward unity. It's going to be the white light, it's going to be the transcendent One, it's going to be the all in all, it's going to be the effulgent radiance of the unitary...the simple, single...you get the idea? Right?

But this isn't what happens. Instead what happens is an entry into a domain of much greater complexity than one has ever experienced before. There seems to be everything that there was in this world times 10. The other thing is, it's not reinforcing of general principles. In other words, it doesn't say things like "Love one another" or, I mean, you may draw that conclusion, but that isn't explicitly the message. The message is uh, basically, "We're here". We're here. That you have crossed this energy boundary, and look at what a low energy boundary it is. You didn't have to fly to Kazakhstan, you didn't have to...you know, all you had to do was take two tokes and hold the second and, you know, you will make more spiritual progress in those 30 seconds than 15 trips to India to worship at the feet of the Master, but the content is unexpected. It does not reinforce any religious ontology. It does not prove Kabbalah, Tantra, it doesn't prove any of these intellectual constructs. Instead what it seems to do is say, beyond all your constructs lies reality. Your constructs are not a bridge to reality, they're a boundary against reality.

When I smoked DMT, every time, every time, I go to a place...that's inhabited by entities that are not the roving free-for-all proctologists of alien abduction fame, not specialists in internal medicine from other star systems who make free house calls late at night; uh, instead, I find myself in something much more like a Bugs Bunny cartoon running backwards. Uh. It's a place of explosions and falling anvils. It's a place of merriment so intense that you could have your head ripped off by accident. It's a place of out of control hilarity and I've been there many times and I've tried every single time to understand as much of it as possible.

The argument I have with...people say, you're so harsh on aliens, people who are doing deals with aliens but you're doing own deals with aliens. Yes, but my aliens seem very alien, and everybody else's aliens seem just like the people next door, you know, they work for the government out at the base and so forth and so on. My aliens are not like that, they are as alien as aliens can be and still show up on your screen as an experience at all, they are not made of matter, they are made, so far as I can tell, in my humble opinion, of grammar. Excuse me? Yes, they're made of grammar. They are made out of language, they are living language. Well, what is language? Well it turns out we don't know. You know, William Burroughs said, "Language is a virus from outer space". That come close to it, I think. When I enter into the DMT space what I see are these, what I call self-transforming elf machines, these things which look like jeweled basketballs that self-dribble themselves, and they are like badly trained Rottweilers and they come bounding forward and they jump in and out of your chest and the people in the Amazon... this turns out to be a motif, they do jump in and out of your chest, the Hakuli, the DMT demons of the Virola bark cults, which is a DMT thing. They jump in and out of your chest and they do 2 things which are very interesting to me. The first is, they offer gifts. And the gifts that they offer are very hard to explain, I mean, you could

spend a whole workshop on this. They offer gifts which are like objects, like objects, but they're also like puns, they're also like feelings, though how does that make any sense? The other thing about them is that they're constantly changing, constantly changing, in a way that no object in this world can do. And as you look at them, as I look at them, I have the impression that, my God, if I could bring just one of these things back, I would never have to speak again, I would just show, and say look at this, and that would be all that would be required. It explains itself, it's a self-explaining object of some kind, made out of mind. So that's the first thing they do - they offer these gifts. They have dozens of them, they sing them into existence, they pluck them out of the air and they push them at you, look at this, look at this, one is pulled aside, no, look at mine, look at mine, they're crawling over you like cats or infants or something. I mean, it's very peculiar. Forty seconds ago you were sitting in some tatty room with your friends, experimenting with substances, and now this?

And the other thing that they do that I find extremely interesting is they want to communicate, and this is what, to my mind, is a strong argument that this really is an alien contact because they have a problem which real aliens would have, if there was a contact, which is they can't communicate with us. We don't speak standard Zenebelgenubian. And apparently, the nature of the contact is such that they're not interested in speaking English. It can't be done in English. So they say ok, this is the contact. Agenda #1: we have to learn to communicate or what kind of contact is it, and so what they're doing is teaching a language which can be beheld, a language that is not heard but seen, and I always thought and probably you did too, that telepathy is seeing, is hearing other people think. If I could hear you think, that would be telepathy. These guys have something else going. They can see what you mean, see what you mean, and this is something that what we all do, to some degree, it's like a latent ability in human beings as we talk to each other pictures are coming and going in our minds, but this is ordinarily not the main channel of communication and I believe that this huge paradigm shift, chaos at the end of time, end of history, whatever this woop de do is, that we're involved in, it has to do with the transformation of our language and that the reason we can't understand reality, the reason we're so puzzled by alien abductions and certain fringe kind of phenomena is because our language is completely inadequate. We do it with small mouth noises. Get a hit of how provisional and limited that is. I mean, here's how it works. I want to communicate with you, I form words, which are acoustical pressure waves, which move through space to your ear where they are downloaded into a very complex mathematical transform, which your mind, and let's not even attempt to understand what that word means, your mind takes this incoming acoustical pattern, and searches a dictionary for a matching pattern. Now, if you have a matching pattern, you get the feeling of understanding. If you have no matching pattern, you say what? What'd he say, what? But the most uncool thing that can happen in an environment where people are trying to communicate is for one person to say to another, "Excuse me, would you tell me what it was that I just said?" Immediately, it comes to a screeching halt, because in fact most communication is going in the dimension of "uh huh, yeah, uh, yeah uh yah". [laughter] No real communication at all.

We've managed to build a global civilization, an electronic culture based on small mouth noises and on having like, what, 1,000 major languages in play. The barriers to our communication with each other are staggering. It's amazing I understand myself, or even have the illusion of understanding myself, let alone the person across the breakfast table or the person 19 rows back in a deal like this, so the message I'm getting from a lifetime of involvement with psychedelics, is a message to transform language, to make it more poetically compelling and the way that's done is to appeal to the visual. The visual is what's happening. It's been happening for at least 200 years, since the invention of photography, and then color photography, and then moving pictures and then moving pictures with sound. What we are clearly involved

in, in the late 20th century, is a technological simulacrum of the world, and we want more bandwidth, more pixels, higher resolution, greater refresher speed. This is why I'm so keen on virtual reality, not because I want to have virtual sex with Marilyn Monroe or some knot-headed notion like that, but because I believe this is a technology that will allow us to show each other the inside of our own heads. We have never been able to do this. I mean, maybe a William Blake for a moment. Uh, but as ordinary cultural enterprise, the most mysterious dimension is other people. You never get at it. You can get at the flesh, you can get at the message that's being spoken or conveyed through dress and gesture, but one's experience of one's self as incredibly multi-dimensional and rich, compare that to one's experience of other people and it's a universe away (skips, recording ends).

Original Transcription by: Twila402

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Psychedelic Society

February 1984

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Video Link](#)

[Audience laughter] ...and I want to thank all the women who support me. I have wonderful, uh, support systems from women of all types who seem dedicated to the notion that Terence McKenna can always be improved [audience laughter]. I'm extremely grateful for that. The frontiers are enormous in that dimension. [more laughter]

Okay. What I want to talk about tonight is the notion or the idea of a psychedelic society. When I spoke at Santa Barbara at the Psychedelics Conference, uh, whenever it was, last May, a year ago, my contact lenses failed me at a critical point in my lecture and I simply had to wing it and later when I played this tape back, I heard this phrase, "psychedelic society," and I had never used it consciously in a lecture, but because I had said it, and because there had been a ripple of resonance to it from the crowd of people there, I began to think about it, and this evening I will just generally assess what it might mean for us.

I'm definitely a pioneer in this field. I'm sure you are all familiar with, uh, the, the book *Megatrends*, which is making quite an impression at the moment. Well, *Megatrends* nowhere mentions the eminent transformation of human society through the application of psychedelic drugs [audience laughter]. I don't know what were they thinking [audience laughter]. What I think a psychedelic society, what that notion means or implies to me in terms of ideology, is the idea of creating a society which always lives in the light of the *mystery* of being. In other words, that solutions should be displaced from the central role that they have had in social organization and mysteries, irreducible mysteries, should be put in their place.

The British enzymologist, J. B. S. Haldane in the 1920s, in an essay, said, "The universe may not only be stranger than we suppose; it may be stranger than we can suppose," and I suggest to you that as we look back over human history, every pinnacle of civilization whether it be Mayan or Greco-Roman or Song dynasty, has believed that it was in possession of an accurate description of the cosmos and of man's relationship to it. This seems to go- this seems to go along with the full flowering of a civilization. But, from the point of view of our present civilization, we regard all those conceptions as, at worst quaint, at best half right, and congratulate ourselves that *our civilization*, at last, has its finger on the real description of what is going on.

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[Takes drink]

But, I think [clears throat] that this is not true and that actually what blinds us or what makes historical progress very difficult is our lack of awareness of our ignorance and that beliefs should be put aside and

that a psychedelic society would abandon belief systems for direct experience. And, this is, I think, uh, much a problem of the modern dilemma is that direct experience has been discounted and in its place all kinds of belief systems have been erected. I would prefer a kind of intellectual anarchy where whatever was pragmatically applicable was brought to bear on any situation but where belief was understood as a self-limiting function because, you see, if you believe something, you are automatically precluded from believing its opposite, which means that a degree of your human freedom has been forfeited in the act of committing yourself to this belief, and I maintain that it's pointless to have beliefs, in a sense, because the universe *really is* stranger than we suppose, and what we need is a return to what, uh, in the 16th century was called Baconian method, which means not the elaboration of fantastic thought constructs which *explain*, but merely a phenomenological cataloguing of what we experience.

Computer networks and psychedelic drugs and the increased availability of information in the world have actually made possible the evolution of new alien information states which never existed before, and we are processing these things but at a very slow rate, because we are hindered by ideology. Now, I mentioned, uh, in an earlier workshop this afternoon that, uh, Freudian models, Jungian models of the psychedelic experience, which saw it as somehow a stripping away of resistance and a revealing of complex and hidden emotions and motives and belief systems, has been replaced in the last, uh, ten, five to ten years, with the shamanic model of hallucinogenic and shamanic experience. This model holds that archaic peoples have deputized special people to probe hidden information fields using psychedelic drugs and that these- the information extracted from these information fields is then used to guide and direct the society.

Now, I'm interested in this second model and spent time in the Amazon and am familiar with the operational mechanics of shamanism and shamanic personalities and that sort of thing, but I believe, actually, that the psychedelic experience looms larger than the institution of shamanism and that *we* hold a unique opportunity which is sort of the flip side of the culture crisis. Our ability to destroy ourselves is the mirror image of our ability to save ourselves, and what is lacking is a clear vision of what should be done. What should be done is certainly not the accumulation of ever-larger nuclear arsenals and the promotion of, uh, all kinds of primate game-playing of the sort that Tim Leary is well, uh, versed in denouncing. What needs to be done is that fundamental ontological conceptions about reality have to re- be remade. We need a new language, and in order to have a new language, we must have a new reality. It's almost a kind of ouroboric equation or a bootstrap situation. A new reality will generate a new language; a new language will *fix* a new reality and make it part of this reality.

These psychedelic drugs are- can be conceived of, as points on an informational grid. They provide new perspectives on reality and it is when you connect all the points of perspective that you have on reality that a *reasonably* applicable model of it begins to appear and I think this *reasonably* applicable model, what Wittgenstein called "something which is true enough" is what we're looking for. The "true enough" mapping of experience onto theory is what we're looking for, but experience must be made primary. The language of the self must be made primary. And, anarchy carries this responsibility even when it's only political anarchy. What I'm advocating is that we each take responsibility for the cultural transformation by realizing that it is not something which will be disseminated from the top down; it is something which each of us can contribute to by attempting to live as far into the future as possible. You know, we must get rid of the conceptions of the 40s, the 50s, the 60s, the 70s, the 80s, the 90s. We must *smear* the historical moment and become exemplars of the humanity of the end time. And, those of you who attended my lecture this afternoon about time know that I believe that liberation, or let's even say *decency*, as a human

quality is an actual resonance and anticipation of this future perfected state of humanity. We can *will* the perfect future into being by becoming microcosms of the perfect future and no longer casting blame outward on institutions or hierarchies of responsibility and control but by realizing that the opportunity is here, the responsibility is here, and the two may never be congruent again and the salvation of your immortal soul may depend on what you do with the opportunity. [Audience member: "Amen"] [some audience laughter]

So what do you do with the opportunity? What does it mean to say, in operational terms, "live as far into the future as you can live?" It means taking a position vis-a-vis this emergent hyper-dimensional reality. It does not necessarily mean becoming a psychedelic drug user yourself, but it means admitting to yourself the possibility, and if you *feel* the heroic potential within yourself to be one of the experiencers, one of the pioneers, then you know what to do. If, on the other hand, you fear to be lost in the abyss, you fear what William Blake called falling into eternal death, falling from the spiral of being which connects one reincarnation to another and falling into the realm of eternal death, then you orient yourself towards the psychedelic, uh, experience, towards the psychedelic phenomenon as a source of information.

A mirror image of the psychedelic experience in hardware are computer networks. Computer networks, paradoxically enough, are a deeply feminizing influence on society where, *in hardware*, the unconscious is actually being created. It's as though we took the Platonic, uh, *bon mot* about how, if God did not exist, man would invent Him, and say, if the unconscious does not exist, humanity would invent it in the form of these vast networks able to transfer and transform information. This is, in fact, what we are caught up in, is a transforming of information. We have not physically changed in the last forty thousand years. The human type was established at the, at the end of the last glaciation, but change which was previously operable in the biological realm is now operable in the realm of culture and we are shedding cultural adumbrations of our vision of the unitary mystery at a faster and faster rate as we try to accommodate ourselves and mirror ourselves to the mystery which lies ahead of us in time and which is throwing this vast shadow of fatedness back over the entire experience of human history for everyone who has lived in it. And, previous to our own era, the only control language which could be applied to this *thing*, which was bringing people together and causing birth and death and tearing down and erecting civilizations, was *God*, and it was imagined as a self-conscious force that was leaning into the world like a cat into a fish bowl and making things happen.

Now, we have a different notion, a notion of a vector system where forces over a large area are oriented toward a- a very small space and this is what history *is*; it's an in-rushing toward what the Buddhists call 'the realm of the densely packed', a tre-, a, uh, a transformational realm where the opposites are unified, and the way I characterize this union of opposites is to say it is that realm where the body is finally interiorized, the mind is finally exteriorized. The way I think of the mind is as the fourth dimensional- a fourth dimensional organ of your body. You can't see it because it's in the fourth dimension, but you experience a sectioning of it in the phenomenon of consciousness, but that is only a partial sectioning of it, the way a plane gives a partial picture of a cone when it truncates it.

The growth of information systems is only a mirroring in masculine hardware of what already exists in nature as a fact, and it is up to us to hone our intuitions and to become aware of this pre-existent system of communication and wiring so that we can step away from the dualisms which separate us from each other and from the world. We need to realize that there is a gene swarm not a set of species on the Earth, that half the time when you think you are thinking, you are actually listening, and that ideas are remarkably

slippery things and are very difficult to trace to their origins, and that we really are one-on-one and altogether in a dimension that is not as accessible as you might not wish to be congealed [audience laughter] as *Finnegans Wake* says.

The psychedelics are a red-hot social issue - social issue, ethical issue whatever the term for it is, and it is precisely because they are deconditioning agents. They will cast doubt in you if you are a Hasidic rabbi, a Marxist anthropologist, or an altar boy [audience laughter], because their business is to dissolve belief systems, and they do this very well and then they leave you with the raw datum of experience, what William James called in talking of infants, 'a blooming buzzing confusion' is what they leave you with - the raw datum of experience - and out of that, you reconstruct a world, and you need to understand that it is a dialogue where your decisions, the projection of your grammar onto the intellectual space in front of you, is going to gel into a mode of being. We actually all create our own universe, because we are all operating with our own private languages which are only very crudely translatable into any other person's language.

There's even a physical analogue to this which will further reinforce this notion of alienation. It is that your picture of the world impinging on your eyes is made of photons. Photons are tiny wave packets, so closely circumscribed intergetically that they can be thought of particles- thought of as particles. That means that every single photon which falls on the back of my eye is different from every single photon which falls on the back of any one of your eyes. This means that I am using one hundred percent a different section of the world than any one of you is to get a picture of the world, and yet we are sitting here with the naive assumption that our pictures of the world differ only by our perspective within the space of the room, and we have *numerous* extremely naive assumptions like this built into our thinking, and our most venerable explanatory engines, such as science, happen also to be our *oldest* explanatory engines, and, therefore, they have built into them the most naive and unexamined assumptions.

For instance, science, we can demolish it in thirty seconds. Science tells you that a set of conditions will create a given effect and that every time that set of conditions is in place that effect will be found to obtain. Well, the only place where this happens is in laboratories. In our experience, it isn't like that. A contact with a person is always different. The experience of making love, having a meal, riding a bus, these things are always different. It is their uniqueness, in fact, and a uniqueness that pervades all being that makes it bearable at all, yet science is willing to tell you that the only things worth describing are those phenomena that can be repeatedly triggered. This is because these are the only phenomena science *can* describe and that's the name of the game as far as they are concerned. But *we*, to claim our freedom, to take advantage of the tiny moment between immense abysses of unknowability, perhaps death, perhaps other reincarnations, perhaps transitions into other life forms, these things we don't know, but in the moment of being human we have a unique opportunity to *figure things out*, and I have the faith that it is possible sometime, somewhere to have a conversation - perhaps no progress would be made until the ninth hour - but to have a conversation in which reality could be, literally, pulled to pieces, beyond the point of reconstructing.

I had a friend, I'm not sure that this is germane, but I had a friend back in the 60s who one day on LSD took a toothpick and he sat for fourteen solid hours with the toothpick and a large red brick and he demolished it. He reduced it to nothing (laughter) with this toothpick, and his fingernail long after the toothpick was gone, and this is what we have to do to the ideological concrete in which we are set. We have to *claim* anarchy and realize that systems have a, have a life of their own that is anti-humanist. There is definitely an anti-humanist tendency in all systems. Uh, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who was the inventor

of general systems theory, said, you know, "people are not machines, but in every situation where they are given the choice, they will *behave* like machines." We all fall into patterns, we all then hold those patterns ever more tightly, they cannot be violated, and this happens on the thought level, and we are at the cresting wave of the historical wave of this kind of uptightness that stretches back millennia. And, I think that we have now come to the end of this phase. Whether you buy into my own peculiar, apocalyptic, transformative vision involving 2012, or whether you just can tell by looking around you that the shit may soon hit the fan, I think we can agree that we've come to some kind of a pass, and what is going to come out of it is either going to be a great deal of dislocation in the biosphere, the invalidation of intelligence as an adaption of biology, and *our* extinction, or we are going to become as James Joyce dreamed we could, "man made dirigible" is how he put it. In other words, the exteriorization of the soul, the interiorization of the body, and in this process *everything* is going to be challenged; the very notion of humanness is going to be challenged, because we are on the brink, through genetic manipulation of DNA, of actually taking control of the human form, of being able to extend the notion of art *inward* into the human body and form. Are we classicists? Shall we each be an Adonis and a Persephone? Or are we, what are we, surrealists? Shall I be a potato and you a burning leopard? [audience laughter] These are decisions which will have to be faced [clears throat] [audience continues laughing].

These are the important questions [Terence laughs; more laughing], and this vertical gain which we see in the metaphors that are applied to psychedelic drugs: consciousness expansion, getting high, psychedelic tripping, shamanic flight, all of these things are being paralleled. It's like the drugs are the s- the feminine, software, formative leading edge of what is happening. Coming along behind that is the hardware, engineering, masculine mentality that is processing all this stuff into hardware, and this will continue until the leading edge outdistances the engineering mentality through breakthrough, and this is what I think the shamanic, uh, hope is: that we can find a way to use chemicals in our bodies and our voices and our thoughts and our hands upon ourselves and each other to transform ourselves without technology, to move into the realm of the imagination 'on the natch', as it were, with an interiorized psychopharmacologically-applied technology that frees us in the imagination.

At the same time that this is going on, the engineering mentality is going to set human societies in orbit around the earth and the moon and the near planets, but there's a catch here for the engineering mentality, which is that the very void which surrounds the planet exemplifies this enfolding, abyssal, feminine element. It *is* the mysterious 'mama matrix' of *Finnegans Wake*. The mysterious mama matrix is the universe, and there is no escaping that fact, so that I think the s- the engineering mentality, which will seek to change man into his machines, will have to be counterpoised by the psychedelic, earth-oriented, imagination-oriented side of things, which will create, then, the potential for the spiritual marriage that *will be* the alchemical perfection of a new form of humanity, and this is not far away. It *can't* be far away. It must be now and soon, and it *is*, as I said.....[takes drink].....it is a personal responsibility incumbent upon all of us to act. There is definitely an obligation to examine the possibility of action and to think clearly about self and other, language and world, past and future, because too much we have lived in the light of the idea that your ideology will be dictated to you essentially by geography, and, if you're born in India, you'll find out that the Cosmos is one way, if you're born in Brooklyn, you find out it's another way. What we need to do is transcend these localized grids of fate which make us what we are but don't want to be, because you claim this higher level of freedom by the simple act of applying attention to being...the experience of being, the primacy of experience.

This is why I can get along with these people in the Amazon who do these drugs, because, though my

Spanish is terrible and often theirs is worse because they're Indians [audience laughter], '*la experiencia, senior*'. And, 'Yes, we understand, we know'. And he says, you know, because we're posing usually as scientists of some sort, 'you're from this or that university; you will return to this laboratory; you show me this paper, which has the name of my friend in it, because he helped you last year, but I say to you, *experience is the thing*'. And, the only thing you can say to that is, 'We know. It is'.

We must begin to send out ideological visions rather than be the consumers of them. We need to turn off the metaphorical televisions which are hooking us in to the network of cultural assumptions dictated from the Pentagon, Madison Avenue, and what have you. We need, instead, to *turn on* our terminals and to begin to interact with like-minded people throughout the world and establish this new intellectual order which will *be*, then, the salvation of mankind, I firmly believe, because it is a collectivity and people will then feel the inter-relatedness of their fates, feel that inter-relatedness as a thing which transcends, uh, national divisions, ideological divisions, feel the primacy of being part of the human family, and I think that it will not be done without psychedelics, because we have drifted so long without them.

Surely, we are the culture that has gone longest without psychedelics in any cultural situation throughout the world. It's been two thousand years since the mystery was real at Eleusis, and in that two thousand years, we have wandered far, far into confusion, but we are the prodigal sons. We can redeem the ideal of shamanism from pre-technological social stasis and actually project it, perfect it, and send it out to the stars. And, if we don't do this, everything is lost. There is no standing still. There is only risk and commitment to these millennia-long cultural goals that will restore meaning and direction to our civilization, or we will fritter it away into chaos and destruction and the horrors of the typical future scenario.

Thank you.

[Applause]

TM: Questions? I cannot hear you.

Q: Earlier- earlier in your talk, you mentioned the expression, "gene swarm." I'm not familiar with it. Could you explain it?

TM: Yes. I talked about this in the workshop this afternoon pointing out that the notion of species is simply a 17th century convention of biological classification begun by Linnaeus, because when you visually look around with no awareness- awareness of geological time, you do seem to see distinct, uh, plants and animals, but now that we are aware of such things as bacterial transfer of genes from one organism to another and this sort of thing, we realize that the apparent fixity of the species is an illusion and that actually there is only a gene swarm on the planet and, uh, it coagulates into centers, the densest kind of center it coagulates into we call an organism, but it also coagulates into more loosely-bound systems such as symbiotic relationships or yet more loosely-bound relationships, uh, ecotones and biospheres, and that really there are just different- any given biological center, there is just a series of concentric shells of influence going both directions outward and that's a more true view of the situation on the planet than the notion that there are distinct species.

Q [Same]: So that you would see the, the actual organisms and all that is being maybe, uh, all the gene swarm expressing itself as an interaction with the environment at that particular moment...

TM: A temporary [Q: Right] aggregates [Q: Right] of genetic material.

Q [Same]: I'd never heard that and I find it very interesting! [Laughter]

TM: Well, it turns out, when you start...I- I don't want to get too deeply into it because it's a sideline, but, uh, when you start looking at the ways that genetic material is transferred around, there are all kinds of ways. There's even been a kind of, uh, termite found in Africa where, uh, the mating charac- uh, activity is so furious that- and the sexual organ of the male insect so sharp that they actually pierce the body cavity not only of females, but also of other males, and by marking the, uh, the sperm of these insects and following it, you can discover that some male individuals are transferring sperm to females that is *not their sperm*, and that absolutely violates the central dogma of Darwinian evolution which is that the genetic material, the transferability and adaptability of the genetic material is directly linked to the adaptability of its carrier. But, here you have a situation where the owner of the sperm may be dead, because he was non-adaptive, but the sperm, because it's in the body of a more adaptive insect, is, uh, actually having an impact on the expression of the phenotype. So, that's very technical, but anyway, genetic material moves around in all kinds of ways, and I'm sure there are more ways soon to be discovered.

Q: Politically speaking, what would be some of the first steps to integrate psychedelics into our culture?

TM: Well, harking back to my notion that the responsibility always rests on us and that you don't want to go out and immediately form a movement to change *those* guys or *that* bureau. I think the thing that should be done is: people who are involved in psychedelics should live lives of such exemplitude and impeccability that the notion that there was anything shady or wrong or curious about this phenomenon would be ludicrous. [audience applause] [Inaudible] ...I've thought about it. See, I don't (??)

Any other questions? Then, thank you very, very... Yes?

Q: I- I'd like to have a clearer vision of how you would see a psychedelic society, in that, if we were able to demolish a lot of the belief systems that we do operate under, what would - how would we relate to one another? How would you see that vision unfolding?

TM: Okay. Well, there was a French sociologist about fifteen years ago who had some vogue and then faded - I don't know what his sin was - but his name was Jacques Ellul, and he wrote a book called *The Technological Society*, and in there he had an axiom, and the axiom was: 'There are no political solutions, *only* technological ones; the rest is propaganda'.

Q: Ahh..

TM: What a psychedelic society would do, I think, is it would rationally solve problems. The first thing to notice is that we could pave the streets with gold if we would just eliminate defense spending. In other words, our limited energy resources are not being allocated in such a way as to move us toward survival. We have to begin to solve our prob- our problems using solutions that are present at hand no matter who they offend.

Q: So, there would be a value system in operation then?

TM: A value sys- a humanist value system. It's very interesting that- to me that the - what are they called, 'the silent majority'? - that the way in which they name their enemies is 'secular humanists'. This is the only intelligent thing they ever say; it's the only intelligent phrase in their entire repertoire, but it's fascinating. We *are* secular humanists. That's precisely what we are. We believe that mm- human beings are to be the measure of all things. That there is no other standard - not a classless society or God Almighty - there is no other standard but man, humanity, people. And, this is a Renaissance ideal that was first enunciated by Marsilio Ficino in 1510, but we have not acted upon it. Uh, we have not, up to this time, *had* a secular humanist society. We've had had this curious mix of medieval remnants in the, uh, religious department, gangster capitalism in the economic department, uh, s- stasis-seeking Marxism as a counterpoise to that. We have never rationally tried to solve our problems, and we have never rationally tried to solve our problems, uh, on a personal level until the advent of, uh, well, psychology, in the modern sense. People never examined the center. They thought of the center as a mirrored bead and that - you didn't ask questions about the self or motive or the relationship of your world view to a trauma, expectation, class level. The- all of these things we have become aware of as we have steadily retreated from the illusion of a, of a world deployed in three-dimensional space, and we're only at the beginning of this process.

For instance, I mean, I am - I - I don't say this to knock Esalen; I say it as an example - I think Esalen is definitely the cutting edge of things and has been for some time, but isn't it preposterous that Esalen operates under the laws of the United States, which make taking these drugs illegal? They must do that. They must do it. They have no choice, whatever their private opinions may be, and all institutions are in that, uh, bind. There's no such thing as a revolutionary institution; there are only revolutionary people, and this is why this de-emphasis on belief systems and they, their, um, support systems, which are institutions, seems to me the essence of the psychedelic message. It's a, uh, it says, 'be against method; don't be enslaved to method; embrace anarchy'. Anarchy has a bad name, because in the political arena, it's a weird number, but in philosophy, in science, in love, and in human relations generally, it seems to me it is the most, uh, respectable system based on its track record.

Any, any others?

[some inaudible talking in audience]

Q: Was there, uh, a is there any truth in, um, um, Jung's point of view that, that there had been a certain amount preserved in Tübingen University that he tracks back to a lot of myths [TM: Well, uh..] to a secret art of [indecipherable]..Tübingen, which was [indecipherable]?

TM: Well, this is a game you can play, yes. I mean, he- hi- his view of it was very, uh correct. There are these lines that can be traced back. Gnosis. I didn't use this word tonight: 'gnosis', nor did I use the word 'Logos', but these- this notion of an accessible truth, which is self-evidently true when heard, is very close to the notion of the collectivity of the psychedelic society. My idea is that we could change the mys- the Logos of the mystery religions from a religious mystery into a social reality and *that* would be a social transformation, because it would essentially sacralize the secular humanist society that I mentioned.

Yeah.

Q: I've been picking up a, a sort of an urgency of, uh, 'we gotta do it and do it now' type of thing as far as shamanism. I- I couldn't quite understand why I can't sit back in my stupidity and continue this, you know, practice. Is it because we're coming to, uh, man can destroy the world?

TM: No. It may be related to that. We can't know about that, but for sure what it's related to is that your human existence is a unique opportunity.

Q [Same]: So it's only the opportunity; there is no great urgency as far as you see it. It's not a matter of, 'We gotta do it now, because we got ourselves into a, a bind and if we don't get, uh, the realization or the knowledge of, uh, [indecipherable] with, with

TM: If we don't do it, someone else will. That's my faith. But, there's only one game in town, and if you want to be part of the adventure of being, you have to get your feet wet and that means you have to get committed in some way.

Q [Same]: So if it's not done now, it'll be done in a hundred years from now.

TM: This is coming. I mean, this wave has been rolling toward completion since, uh, before the breakup of Pangaea. This is the big picture. Yes, it's coming. The monkeys are going to the stars, whether smoothly or not so smoothly is not clear, but the monkeys are going to the stars and they're going to take everyone with them, and it can be a relatively smooth birth with no tearing and no bleeding and everything just moving right along, or it can be holy hell and leave the Earth a smoking cinder before it's over with, but, uh, the monkey thing, the information creature, is definitely on its way to the stars. I don't think anything can stop that. If you wanted to stop that, you had to get back there before the pyramids [audience laughter].

Well, thank you very much.

[Applause]

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Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by: Kevin Whitesides

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Psychedelics and Mathematical Vision with Abraham and Sheldrake

1992

Esalen

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Psychedelics and the Chaos Revolution

22 June 1989

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- ralphabraham.org [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Terence McKenna: Today we have a treat, because you don't have to listen to me, which is the first time this has happened. It's a measure of the insular and parochial nature of my ideas that I wouldn't let anyone else address you. I haven't even read you anything in the time that we've been at this. But today we have my old, old friend and dear colleague, Professor Ralph Abraham of the University of California at Santa Cruz. Ralph is an accomplished tabla player and dynamicist. He is familiar to you, because when I mention my cabal, it is the Sheldrake, Abraham, McKenna cabal. We built a high ivory tower against all who lay siege to it.

Today Ralph will talk about what he described to me as modern-day Cassandras who can be trained to look into higher-dimensional space and to prophecy in an oracular manner for the kings of corporations and affinity groups such as ourselves. Ralph is a psychedelic pioneer in mathematics, music, and the art of love. He can speak for himself. Please welcome Ralph Abraham!

Ralph Abraham: This is what I came for, Terence: your introduction. Now I'm happy. I can go home. I don't know about the high tower, though. I think of it more as a green ring, and maybe it's the Cabala, which is the feminine of cabal.

The fact that you are here to listen to a religious leader, Terence, gives me a clue as to what you're interested in. I'm not sure if there is any overlap between my field of interest and yours, other than that there's a certain heart feeling in this place, which has drawn us all here. But to improve the fit, I would like you to prompt me with questions -- especially you, Terence -- to give me a target.

TM: There's been a lot of talk about the psychedelic experience, but we haven't spent much time on techniques, and on the personal assimilation of the experience. We talked about waves of gylanic resurgence in pre-history. I'm pushing this new idea that we are really the children of a disturbed relationship. We had a symbiotic relationship with hallucinogenic plants in pre-history. Later, climatological factors and the drying of Africa pushed us into the historical dominator mode, and we've been in it ever since. We've looked at the time wave, we've talked about fractals, we've talked about modeling the Tao. We talked about attractors, and whenever we talk about these kinds of things we mention you, Ralph. You have been held up as the guy who could shed light on the mathematical end of the jargon scale.

RA: Well, the very idea of the gylanic resurgence wave, the GR-wave, is part of the technical end of the jargon scale, because the GR-wave concept is a mathematical model for history itself. These terms were introduced by Riane Eisler in her book, *The Chalice and the Blade*. She is one of the first cultural historians since William Irving Thompson to use this particular strategy for understanding the complexity of life. She is a feminist revisionist of history, and the primary partnership she points to, and from which she derives the name "gylanic", is the partnership between the genders.

Today we exist in the ambience or in the shadow of a fantastic GR-wave that broke on the beach in the 1960s. It was probably the biggest one since the Italian Renaissance.

The word "resurgence" itself is a mathematical word. It means that something happens not only again, but again and again. Resurgence means recurrence. A periodic cycle is a recognizable pattern suitable for prediction. Hopefully there will be another GR-wave and another one. Between the big GR-waves in history there are a bunch of wavelets, and between any two of those there is another sub-wave, because not only does history have a fractal nature, but gylany is a fractal concept which loves fractal resonance, and which must always manifest as fractal waves.

So we have waves on top of waves. If you restrict yourself to the biggest ones, there is the Neolithic, that's a big one! when farming began. Is farming gylanic? Well, in the history of gylany there are the global climate cycles, and then there are smaller climate cycles, and then there are the teeny wavelets of climate. The biggest waves of climate are the ice ages. Glaciologists argue whether they have a hundred thousand-year cycle or a forty-one thousand-year cycle or a twenty-five thousand-year cycle and so on. All of these glaciologists are correct, because the pattern of ice, the pattern of the global change of climate, is not periodic; it's more a fractal wave-length.

Gylany, the partnership form of culture is characterized by peace, happiness, and by sex, drugs and rock-'n-roll. It is part of the inter-glacial cycle. When the planet has a fever, we get cultures like that. The heyday of gylany for this inter-glacial period was the Neolithic. Then after the patriarchal takeover gylany was repressed into the unconscious, out of which well up GR-waves in the future.

After the patriarchal takeover, gylany became part of the so-called mystery schools. That means that you weren't supposed to tell. If you partook of these rituals, you told about them at the risk of death. In ancient Greece, mystery schools were accepted. We don't know exactly what psychedelic was used in the nightly rituals of the Eleusinian mysteries. There are no written records, and to this day we don't know what went on there.

There was a kind of limited tolerance for gylanic resurgence on an annual basis in ancient Greece, but after the onset of Christianity, a very interesting bifurcation took place. There were a few centuries of a kind of gylanic Christianity, after which patriarchy came to the fore, and at that time, the Orphic, Dionysian, Bacchic rituals characteristic of gylanic society were increasingly suppressed.

Starting from around the seventh century A.D. until the present, we have the era of suppression of gylany, out of which the gylanic resurgence wave welled up. We, like the students in China, are trying to reclaim our planet from the insanity of the (androcratic) form, a quest which may never end.

The chart of the progress of gylany over the centuries is Terence's time wave, which is a mathematical model for history.

TM: It's the cyclic ebb and flow between what Ralph calls gylany, i.e., the partnership society of pre-history which emphasizes group values and sharing and multi-tasking, and the dominator model. We're trying to transcend matriarchy/patriarchy, because that is not what it's all about; it's not between men and women. There are two modes of expression. One is partnership, the other is hierarchical domination. What Ralph calls gylany is the episode in pre-history when all of these values were being expressed in the central Saharan societies.

RA: There were gylanic societies; the last above-board one was Minoan Crete, and that ended around 1400 B.C. when Crete was conquered by patriarchal Mycenaeans. For a long period of time, until around 4000 B.C., the planetary society was a gylanic one. It was characterized by the equal partnership of the genders, by peace and creativity, and by a certain religion which covered the entire planet. It was a goddess religion; sometimes the triple-headed goddess, the goddess trinity; sometimes the goddess with the boy god, the child god -- her child -- the result of the creativity of the goddess; and sometimes with a consort.

As we neared patriarchy, there was a gradual demotion of the goddess and the gradual promotion of the god, until finally the goddess disappeared and her statue was replaced by statues of Apollo. The Eleusinian mysteries that were celebrated under the statue of Apollo, as a matter of fact, were goddess rituals imported from Crete, from the last gylanic culture. The statue of the goddess had been replaced, but not the rituals.

To help us understand history we might have a chart of planetary society at a given time, represented by one number, a point in the spectrum between gylany, or partnership society, and (androcracy), or the dominator society. As history evolved its own history, more and more indicators were taken into account. Vico, one of the first mathematical historians, said that societies evolve like mammalian species; they have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The first step, where a tribe becomes a culture, is through the development of three primary cultural structures: religion, death rites, and matrimonial rights. As he saw it from his eighteenth century Italy, these would be the three necessities for a culture to evolve. After that, it gets more and more complex.

We could try to represent the planet, a particular town, or even a little community like this one, with these three parameters. We could hand out questionnaires, record the replies and get some kind of numerical measure of the quality of religious activity, the care with which the burial rites and burial plots are maintained, and the nature of matrimonial rights. In early Neolithic times, dead bodies were thrown under the house. That was it. But funerals are very important social events in Ireland even to this day, which gives us a clue as to what they were like in the past.

In the '60s, matrimonial rites more or less died. A few people celebrated by taking acid on a mountain top during the full moon, but basically, the ritual disappeared. One reason was that it was believed to be intrinsically evil. In the patrilineal line, property won in war passes from father to son. That means that the most important thing to know about the son is who is the father, which makes it necessary to have a marriage contract of monogamy. It's easy to know who the mother is, but how do you know who is the father? The monogamous contract aspect of the marriage ritual is just part of the patriarchal package.

So, when there's a gylanic resurgence, one thing that's bound to happen is the radical change in the specific

agreements of the marriage contract and the burial rites, and in the religious practices as well, according to Vico. If we want to measure this with questionnaires, we can sort of locate ourselves at a point in a three-dimensional map. Some years later, if we hand out the questionnaires again, it will all be changed.

In the '60s, there was a big blip. This blip could be observed not just one-dimensionally, but as a curve in three-dimensional space. This game, which I might call mathematical modeling of history, has progressed over the years with more and more sophisticated models. With chaos theory, people acknowledge that a person, a society, a tree or any living thing has essentially infinite dimensional representations. Any attempt to simplify, to throw out complexity by reducing it to a simple model creates a boundary war.

Let me say something about mathematics. The very word elicits fear in everybody. For more than thirty years now I've had consultations with people who are scientists, and I have hardly encountered a single person, including a Nobel Prize winner in theoretical physics, who doesn't have a math-avoidance response. That's because our culture has made mathematics into something unnatural. But we can't understand any dynamical process, whether it is the process of our own relationships, the history of our society, or the gradual change from year to year of the memory of our experiences of the 1960s without mathematics, because mathematics is simply the act of making cognitive representations of these complex and dynamical events. Without them, we couldn't walk down the street, we couldn't find food. When a dog goes to the other end of the property and locates something to eat, this is an activity of mathematical intelligence. We use it all the time, and I'm just trying to describe a view of history that leads up to the fulfillment of Terence's promise, which, in case anybody has forgotten, I will ask Terence to repeat.

TM: You mean the notion that history comes to some kind of tremendous crescendo, where it's all wrapped together into a nutshell?

RA: No. That was yesterday's introduction. Today it was explicitly psychedelic. So I'm going to explain why psychedelic training will be necessary for us to create our future.

TM: Oh, yes! Do that.

(Audience laughter)

RA: On demand. For you, Terence. For you.

TM: I need to hear this.

(Audience laughter)

RA: Well, I just got back from Denmark, where I was entertained in a splendid palace in a suburb of Copenhagen by the IEA, the International Economic Association. This is a group of professional economists who are employed by kings and governments to predict the future. They have inherited the Cassandra role, because each person's welfare will depend upon the wisdom of the finance minister when he cuts some ridiculous deal like giving forty tankers of wheat to Libya or something. These people are important to kings and governments; they have a technology, largely mathematical, and they have international conferences where, within limits, they exchange some of their secrets because they have to get some of the other guy's secrets. I was there because they had discovered that chaos could be an important secret, and if some have the chaos technology and others don't, they would get ahead in

whatever game they think they're playing.

When I was resting between sessions from the exertion of trying to find out what these people were about and evolving this little description I just shared with you, one man came up to me and said, "Hi, Professor. I've been reading your work. My name is Lars Peterson, and I'm in the finance ministry here in Denmark. I read in Jim Gleick's book that you say that chaos is the biggest thing since the wheel. Do you remember that you said that?" I said, "Yeah, yeah." He said, "Well, we took your advice and used chaos theory to analyze our data. And then we read this other paper where you said chaos was really no big deal, that what we really need is complex dynamical models. We read your instructions, we made a complex dynamical model, and we had it running on the computer in the finance ministry with a model from the Danish beer industry, and it produced data which agrees very well with the observed chaotic data. We tried to explore this model which has parameters that have to do with the progress of the economy in the neighboring countries. Well, there are twelve of these control parameters, so we have a map in twelve-dimensional space. We followed all your instructions, so now we have a map of our finance policy, and the map is in twelve-dimensional space. You've given us no technology to understand objects and motions in twelve-dimensional space. Now what do we do?"

He showed me some crude attempts at computer graphics that looked like your typical fractal, and this fractal was the map they were trying to use for navigation of the national economic policy. So they were worried. They were very worried.

I had to admit that we were stuck, because we had arrived more or less at the frontier of the computer-aided applied mathematics of our society, in spite of chaos, fractals and so on. We're stuck with this. We do not know how to visualize motions in twelve-dimensional space, in sixteen-dimensional space and so on. Obviously, we need to develop a strategy for twelve-dimensional visualization. We need to utilize the experience of artists. Artists have always led us in the expansion of the dimensionality of our view. Our capability of viewing is advanced by artists. And now we're at a frontier where our progress is inhibited by a limitation of dimensions in viewing. Undoubtedly, computer graphics will be the technique. Computer graphic arts are limited at the moment by the lack of practice in viewing higher-dimensional spaces. Meanwhile, psychedelic pioneers are always talking about hyper-dimensional warps. It's a dance. Right? It never stands still in our psychedelic travels. I think hyper-dimensional is correct, not infinite-dimensional. There are large numbers of dimensions we have been privileged to view directly, which we apparently have no difficulty in understanding. We can verbalize about them, we can remember them, we can think about them, and we can return to them to explore them further. There's something about the naturalness of the artistic experience which makes it the fundamental one needed for the current advance of mathematics, of science, and of technology.

TM: So this is an endorsement of psychedelic training. Ah --

RA: Well, people will have to learn by having the experience. I mean, I don't know how to get started when you have people who are completely blind to fifteen-dimensionals.

TM: How do you begin to view fifteen-dimensional space? You just toss them in and see if they come out?

RA: Well, maybe the big blessing of the mushroom is that there is this easy back-and-forth between the higher-dimensional reality and ordinary reality, so that while you obtain training in visualization without stress, you can also practice its relationship with ordinary vision. For example, you can open your eyes to

see a flower, and then close your eyes and see the aura of the flower. You know what I mean? There is kind of a voluntary back-and-forth, and a spectrum of decreasing dimension between the psychedelic vision and ordinary reality.

This bridge, I think, is very important. It's not enough to learn the navigational arts for flying in the higher realms -- we have to earth this intelligence in order to create the possibility of a future. Gaia is a living planet; its atmosphere, its hydrosphere, its biosphere, its noosphere, all these are interlocking in an essential way, and our future may depend on our learning to understand a system of such immense complexity so that we can guide our evolutionary consciousness. Either that, or humankind should stand aside and let evolution do its work. That's why I think the psychedelic experience has an important role to play in the progress of social evolution, and even of technology.

TM: When you talk about penetration of a higher-dimensional space, which means many things to many people, do you think that psychedelics amplify the morphogenetic field, or that they somehow amplify awareness of it? Do they add a dimension to the ordinary three? There also seem to be other dimensions added that are not related to the time scale. Is that how you see it?

RA: Well, let's find a common ground for the word "dimension". Dimension is an ordinary English word, and it's also technical jargon of mathematics. One of the things mathematics provides us with, one of its greatest gifts, is an explicit, useful understanding of dimension. There's one dimension, there are two dimensions, and there are three dimensions. Here are the three dimensions. That's kind of the mathematical way of thinking. So as far as what we see around us, if nothing were moving, we have three-dimensional space. Within the three-dimensional space, we have maybe a color, which is a three-dimensional object, so there's six dimensions that we're moving in all the time, ignoring the dimension of wind in our face and of smells and so on. We live in a six-dimensional space of snapshots that keep changing, so there's the six plus one, or the seven.

TM: To simplify the way we've defined dimensions here, they are simply variables. Each dimension represents a variable. If you have sixteen variables, we're moving in a sixteen-dimensional space. This opens it up for people -- they're not being asked to conceive something inconceivable. What you're saying is that every time you add a variable, you add a dimension. Therefore all complex situations are obviously extremely high-dimensional.

RA: But there's a difference between the dimensions and our perception of dimension. By taking photographs, for example, we can only record six dimensions. Let's take a computer model of the nuclear club, or of a society of four superpowers. We have a mathematical model for this as a sixteen-dimensional space with certain solid objects in it which may be very important for our future, because they represent peace and war. We want to navigate in this space, and the fact that we understand that the model has sixteen dimensions is not enough, because we have to learn to visualize, to understand, to grok that space, so that we can see where we are, where the obstacles are, how we can get from where we are to where we want to go by avoiding the obstacles. We need to find a way to interact.

There are flight simulators training pilots to land aircraft carriers, and there are computer-graphic devices with a (datacom) for each eye, a speaker for each ear and gloves that allow you to interact with the computer; but basically, you're seeing or hearing a very limited number of dimensions. The fact that there's a successful sixteen-dimensional model won't help you navigate or land your plane, because you can really only navigate in six dimensions plus time. That's why I think we need to train people to feel at home in

these higher dimensions, like dolphins, whales and bats are capable of doing, thanks to sonar. They are very much at home in higher dimensions. I think the only reason that our mentation is restricted to such a low dimension is because homo erectus has evolved in the context of running through the woods and swinging from tree to tree; we are devoted to a physical representation of the world with a limited amount of dynamic in it. We do not have to understand fish schooling. We could never understand bird flying; we don't have the dimensions for it in our evolution. But we could. Why not? So kids who are apparently wasting their time with video games in arcades around the world are actually training their minds for a completely different perceptual and cognitive strategy.

TM: For coordinating in a higher-dimensional phase space?

RA: Exactly. They're learning to land the helicopter on the tall building in a sixteen-dimensional space.

TM: You're saying something very interesting, Ralph. You're saying that the psychedelic dimension is not another dimension, it's this world, but with more dimensions.

RA: I would agree with you that psychedelics amplify the morphogenetic field. No, they don't amplify the field; they amplify our connection to the field, so that through resonance, we obtain a stronger image. What do you think? When I trip I feel that I'm seeing something real, that it has at least as much reality as this reality. There are the repeated visits, the learning, the successful negotiation of conversations with live entities. It has every aspect of reality. All that we are familiar with in ordinary reality is there in extraordinary reality. One thing that we do not doubt is its reality. We don't call it hallucinations. We don't think it comes from the unconscious. This super-ordinary reality that we visit happens to be a higher-dimensional reality, and we can only image it to the extent that we are able to image it. Those of us who have taken repeated trips over a period of time have learned to image more, so that we get more dimensions represented by some mysterious trick in our ordinary consciousness, by vision, sounds, smells.

TM: By deconditioning?

RA: By reconditioning, by training, by restructuring --

TM: By retraining the Newtonian perspective. The perceptual perspective of the Renaissance was both a liberation and a prison. It gave permission to inhabit a new kind of dimensionality for culture, but then we got hung up on it. We can't seem to go beyond it. We can't seem to realize hyper-space culturally. We can only realize it individually through the psychedelics, and then only temporarily. What the true believers want is some way to image it collectively.

RA: Well, that's why I've been working with computer graphics these past ten or fifteen years. With computer graphics, the idea is to try to find a way to share the experience with people who are not going to have the experience. The advance of the art, the evolution of consciousness, is a saltatory story, it has episodes that are catastrophes.

There may be a restriction to an agreed-upon conceptual reality over a period of many centuries. Suddenly, these artists will bring in perspective, they'll make a leap from two-dimensional to three-dimensional representation. The particular perspective in the renaissance was due to the fact that drawings could be put on the wall -- they didn't need video, they didn't need computer graphics; they could draw it and put it on

the wall. Anyone who stares at a drawing for a while, particularly with a little instruction from those devices in the museum where you put a quarter in, can get the idea. So everyone's perceptive capacity, as far as dimension is concerned, can be increased from two to three.

With this recent GR wave, the increase in capability of perceiving dimension has not been shared. The pioneers who experienced this have not found a way to draw and put it on the wall. But I do think that with computer graphics we are close to a time when adequate super-computers for making some kind of reproduction of the visions we've seen will be here; an affordable machine at a work-station level, say a hundred-thousand dollar machine, will be placed in museums like the Whitney Museum of Modern Art, and will be showing things that we've seen, and anybody who watches it will grok it, as we did when we first saw it.

TM: That'll be the ball game.

RA: I expect so.

TM: I believe, and I speak for myself but I assume that everyone here can say the same thing, if I could show the world what I've seen, the world would never be the same. I mean, isn't it true for every one of you that you have seen things that you knew would change the course of history forever if they could be shown?

Q: How do you get it on the computer?

TM: How do we hang it on the wall, Ralph?

RA: Well, it's time for me to give mathematics a little plug. Mathematics is our heritage, it's a natural activity. The language of the morphogenetic field is mathematics. The work of mathematical specialists over these past few centuries has provided explicit algorithms for recreating this reality on computers because it is a mathematical reality.

Q: Maybe you need to begin by teaching mathematics, because I am one of those who are never sure of how much seven times eight is.

RA: Seven times eight is business practice, and mathematics is when you jump in the pool in the sunshine, and there's a pattern of light and dark on the bottom of the pool. There's a relationship between your motion in the water and the dynamic of that pattern. We then have two different things, both dynamic, both complex. One is your motion in the water, and the other is the pattern of light on the bottom of the pool. They are two different things, and yet they are related. We understand that relationship. That's mathematics.

Q: What I'm getting stuck with, in terms of things like the psychedelic experience, is the sensation of touch, of taste, of sound, and the emotions that are created, which to me are part of my grokking. I can look at a reproduction and have a fantasy about what the underlying substance is, but what I'm trying to get to is a point where I can see, I can touch, and concurrently have internal emotions. How do I reach that experience with some type of external machine?

RA: That's the question, all right. What I'm speculating, and this might turn out to be wrong, is that in

reproducing a small fraction of a complex experience, the rest of it can be sort of excited by resonance in the mind, much as we use language. By saying a word, and I always regard this as a miracle, I can evoke in you a whole experience, which, although we have no way to check it out, we generally accept in ordinary reality. Blue. Now, we have no way to know that what I see as blue is what you see. Nevertheless, we assume, and somehow it seems correct, that there is a universal experience, and it's possible for a complex experience to be excited by a simple one. Otherwise, language wouldn't work. I'm always amazed that my students are able to get a mathematical idea from the representations that I use in conversation or draw on the blackboard. You draw, you talk, and these simple representations awaken in the mind of the student the entire mathematical concept. Mathematical concepts cannot be reduced to words or drawings, but the multiple representation is a kind of simulated telepathy.

So, while I agree that the experience I would like to share is much more complex than a visual pattern, I have the feeling that the visual pattern that I've seen is already beyond the visual pattern that other people can see. There is sort of an intermediate or first step in the direction of fuller communication, for which additional steps would be necessary. I have no idea how to proceed towards it.

TM: I have this wonderful vision of taking a hundred-thousand dollar machine and spending five-hundred-thousand dollars on software to create this model as the first step in "Grokking 101", and then handing the students a ten-dollar tab of acid to go through the whole course!

RA: Yes. It's sort of a program to subvert culture and alter the course of history, yet we are not able to do it by giving out LSD. I hear that many people are taking LSD now, yet they're not having the kind of experiences we had. It's sort of a desperate measure to rely on modern technology to help communicate experience.

Question: The difference between the two is that one is a shared experience, while the other is an individual experience. What you're really saying is something about the need to share.

TM: That's right. Somehow, the importance of the psychedelic experience lies in communicating it. No matter how good it is, if it can't be communicated, there's an element of frustration. For people like Ralph and myself, who take it seriously, that gives us power over it. For people who don't, it's smoke. For us, it's potentially a mathematically describable object. We turn it into something which, hopefully, can be communicated. This whole discussion revolves around this theme. We talked about it the other day -- we invoked it, but we didn't get anywhere with it. The fact is, Ralph, that the whole game hinges on the huge unlikelyhood that mathematics is making a statement about nature, and that this appears to be a synchronistic event. There is no reason why mathematics, which is the internal peregrination of the human mind in the realm of abstract quantities, should not be mappable over the world of natural phenomena, and it's been worked ten ways from Sunday ever since Pythagoras noted that ...

Q: Weren't mathematics invented to describe nature and behavior and all the rest of it?

RA: Well, actually, no. The common view is that mathematics, as Terence has just said, arises in the human mind after a process of mentation. But I take issue with this view. Certainly mathematics is not inspired by the inspection of nature. That's why people like Einstein and Wigner, who knew mathematics intimately and used it in making models of reality, were awed by the fact that there is this mysterious fit between mathematical objects and objects in the phenomenal universe. I don't agree that mathematics

comes from the observation of nature, and I don't agree with Terence, Einstein and Wigner that it comes from human mentation. I think that mathematics enters the human mind through a process of resonance with the morphic field. Animals had mathematics before humans. Animals count, and they know dynamics, and they have sonar and so on. Animals obtain mathematics from the morphic field, and so do humans. This morphic field is part of Gaia, the living Earth, so I call it the Gaian mind. Mathematics exists in the Gaian mind, and conscious minds, spirits, may obtain it by a process of resonance.

TM: Are you saying that mathematics is the archetype of nature in the Gaian mind? That's kind of a Gaian Platonism.

RA: Mathematics in the Gaian mind is beyond nature. You see, nature is only one product of the Gaian mind. The Gaian mind contains much which will never be manifest in nature, some of which we have seen in our travels, and we don't expect it to be manifest in nature. The Gaian mind is capable of play in such ways as may never be manifest in the world of matter and energy and in all this slow, dense, soft stuff. Now this view cannot be verified, and no support for it can be found in the literature of philosophy or mathematics. Let's just accept this idea for the moment and see what we can make of it. If mathematics is a spin-off of the Gaian mind, or the morphogenetic field, or a higher-dimensional reality, or the phenomenal universe, nature, relationships among people, and so on, it would be no great mystery that mappings are possible between mathematical objects and phenomena in the energetic universe. It would mean that the Gaian mind has a certain amount of integrity, of coherence, of self-resonance, that it makes sense, as it were.

When we travel outside of ordinary reality and take a flight through the Gaian mind, our overwhelming experience is of integrity. It all goes together extremely well. That is one of the main lessons we bring back and may even be able to share with people without the necessity for computer graphics or acid. Integrity has always been a message of spiritual minorities, from the Theosophists on down -- the integrity of Higher Mind. That's why I think mathematics is useful in pursuing life and understanding what's going on around us. It's useful also in understanding aspects of the Gaian mind which are not manifest. It's not only useful -- it's our heritage. Each person may obtain as much of it as they please by solely making use of resonance with the Gaian mind. It is there, it is natural, and it's another alternate reality besides ordinary reality, as easy to grok, or travel through, explore, learn, enjoy or play with as ordinary reality.

I can tell you, on the basis of my own experiences in traveling to different realities, that they are all pretty much the same. There is an increased dimension as you get off the Earth. That's about it.

TM: So evolution, after 2,500 or 5,000 years of mathematical speculation, suddenly gives rise to fractals and the discovery of mapping that goes on between fractals and organic nature. This is serendipitous. Is it fair to say that the Gaian mind exists on many levels and provides many maps? So that catastrophe theory, dynamics, fractal curves are all approximations of the mystery?

RA: Well, they're different low-dimensional representations of the mystery. They are simple pictures guiding you to a simple understanding of more complex things. They are stepping stones to the stars, as it were.

TM: But the integrity of this other dimension seems to make it the source of our authenticity. We don't relate to it as another dimension. We relate to it as a higher dimension in a spiritual sense. Why do the

lower dimensional slices lack this integrity?

RA: Well, in higher dimensions, if you had a solid object and you sliced it with a lower dimensional knife, you might obtain some disconnected pieces; the lack of connection between these different pieces appears because you sliced off the connection in higher-dimensional space. In our culture, there is the common belief of the individuality of people. The Masters claim that we are individuals and that we may pursue our individual development through individual meditation.

TM: The equivalent would be to kill somebody and dissect them?

RA: Yes. The pattern that connects is simply an object in higher-dimensional space, and these space-time patterns in higher-dimensional space-time are the fundamental objects of existence. They are the "morphs" of the morphogenetic field. They are plain objects, but they are higher-dimensional, so we try to grok them from lower-dimensional projections. One of the things lacking is integrity, apparent integrity.

TM: In a way, this is nothing new. What is new is the dimension of awareness of the process even in the history of the evolution of lower organisms. Evolution can be seen as the conquest of dimensionality, right?

RA: That's why I think computer evolution is important. You see, the computer is not like the steam engine. The computer revolution is not like the industrial revolution. The computer phenomenon is something that is evolving, and its evolution is not going to stop. One of the insidious effects of this evolution is that, as it were, a new species is upon us. Fortunately, at the moment, it's very friendly. They don't eat us. They make us slightly sick if we sit with them too long, but they are quite benign.

One of the effects is the chaos revolution -- chaos as mathematical objects which are revealed through computers. This is kind of a cure for the historical accident that happened in 4000 B.C., when the baby was tossed out with the bath, causing chaos mathematics to be lost because of the worship of Yaweh and other patriarchal gods that honored order above all things and erased chaos from memory in the human mind.

But chaos was never erased from the Gaian mind. And the chaos models that we know now, through the invention of the computer, were there all along. Not only were they there all along, but they were known, used, and worshipped before 4000 B.C. So because of a cultural accident, we have been deprived of conscious awareness of a certain mathematical model which is crucially important at this time in our history, because without it, we can't understand anything that is going on around us. All complex processes are chaotic. This understanding is now restored to us after being ripped away, cut off, annihilated, amputated by the patriarchal religions. If it hadn't been amputated, we wouldn't have needed the computer revolution to restore it. We lost the chaos model, we got the computer revolution, and the computer revolution regained it, and how it did it was by giving us control over more dimensions. It overcame a weakness which was just a cultural/historical accident, I suppose.

TM: Are you saying that chaos theory is the religion of the Gaian mind?

RA: Yes. The fundamental and favorite objects of the Gaian mind are chaotic attractors and their bifurcations. That's why all living things are fractals. They are all materializations of the same chaotic object in the Gaian mind.

TM: So here we're coming very close to politics. I recently proposed that we form what I called the () Anarchist Internationale. Our motto would be "Chaos is order". We would embrace it as a cultural ideal. The patriarchal mind is horrified by this, because chaos implies lack of order and of control. But who linked order to the notion of control? Anarchy is permission to be in Tao(?), and Tao is what you're talking about -- the chaos which is the religion of the Gaian mind.

RA: Yes. Chaos is not in conflict with order. What we are seeking, and what I suppose was intrinsic to the gylanic religion, is the partnership of chaos and order. The idea that there is a conflict between chaos and order is a false idea that was constructed by accident, and we are now participating in the deconstruction of the false dichotomy between chaos and order. We know that early Christians stamped out Orphism. Orphism is one of the remnants of Minoan Cretan religion and of the gylanic religion which survived into ancient Greek times. In the Orphic pantheon, chaos and order are husband and wife. So part of the gylanic resurgence is the re-partnering, the re-structuring of the relationship between chaos and order into a working partnership. If we can emphasize this correctly, we are not, through restoring chaos to her throne, going to arouse the hostility and antipathy of the patriarchal establishment. People who want order can have order. Chaos is order, and order is chaos. The only good order is chaos, because if you try to order something that is a dynamic, living process, it will die. What is going on in China today can be understood as the repression of evolutionary chaos.

All creativity proceeds from chaos towards order. People who feel that without order we will starve and die must impose their idea of order on top of chaos. "Order overcomes chaos" is "death overcomes life."

In many people's view, like Freud, for example, the trinity of our time is Eros, Thanatos, and Libido. So in Freudianism, with Thanatos, death is viewed as an important organizing principle. This is the remnant of an earlier trinity, a goddess trinity, in which there was the triple-headed goddess. Life had three aspects, as in the Vedic trinity of Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva. Birth, maturity, and disintegration was part of a recurrent cycle, the eternal return.

A kind of a perversion of the natural trinity has taken place. Its main personality can be understood through its action, which is to kill Gaia through the destruction of forests, of plants, of the extinction of species at a rapid rate. It may be necessary to restructure the mythical level where these trinities live; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for example, would have to return to something more natural and more compatible with the intrinsic structure of the Gaian mind. If there's such a thing as a pattern for evolution, we are probably not on it now.

TM: And would that trinity be Gaia, Chaos, Eros?

RA: Well, now we're exceeding my area of competence. I'm not going to say what the mythology of the future ought to be. Chaos, Gaia, Eros is the trinity of the most recent past of the gylanic partnership; mainly the Orphic trinity of Minoan Crete. But even there, there are a lot of serious questions. There was a patriarchal takeover. The gylanic culture did not survive. An evolutionary challenge occurred in which that particular trinity failed. Dionysus is a masculine god. He already represented a certain mutation of the original goddess trinity. Ariadne, the vegetable goddess of Crete, was replaced by Dionysus in part of the process through which that civilization died.

We have to be careful not to land in a cul-de-sac of evolution; we know that to go forward is to go into certain death, so we want to go back to some time in the past, to transport everything, culturally, back to some fixed moment in the past and take up evolution again. Where in the past the right turn was taken, we're going to take a left and see what happens. If we go back to the time when Minoan Crete was dying, we'll be on a dying track. We don't want to select that one, and I think that we're going to have to participate consciously in the creation of something that never existed before.

The big problem, the world problem, is that we're no longer seeing the birth and death of cultures. We're in a time when we've constructed a planetary society that is dying and may leave no offspring.

Q: Is evolution itself dying?

RA: That's the general fear.

Q: What's the alternative?

RA: I don't know. Diversity is very important for evolution. We don't have the intelligence to design and engineer a living species. One thing we should do is to study evolution, to juggle evolutionary theory and find out what are the chief characteristics of the evolving processes. What is their essential nutrition? Do they need vitamin C?

We have experienced a fantastic wave of creativity. This Holocene interglacial, now 12,000 years old, has had a thrilling history. Maybe there were some preceding interglacials that were just as thrilling, where homo erectus explored the planet and populated every continent. Australia was the last place that was found thanks to a fantastic navigational skill based on the study of the sky. Our own technology has followed the same path. We can't say that this kind of flowering has never happened before. But we can say that it has been a really great one even if it ends in the death of our species. But the destruction of so many other species... Thirty-thousand species are destroyed every few minutes or so according to the latest count. That's ten percent of all the species that have ever been created on planet Earth in four-and-a-half billion years; and ten percent of that happened in the last ten years. I can hardly believe that that has happened in every interglacial, although according to Jim Lovelock in *The Faces of Gaia*, this is the eighth catastrophe on this scale; the last one was the mass-extinction sixty-five million years ago when large mammals began. You see, we're really tied up with chaos in the solar system because of comets striking the planet. There was a near miss recently, I understand, where we could have been wiped out. It's way beyond nuclear winter. If a comet strikes us, that's it -- and it came really close!

TM: There is evidence that this has happened many times.

RA: It happened many times, yes.

Q: You mentioned the Hindu notion of creation, sustenance, and reabsorption -- that isn't the right word -- but it means evolution and involution, which is not death, but simply the wheel going around again. Is that a possible scenario?

RA: Yes. It's not only a possible scenario. I'm sorry to say that the continued life of Gaia seems at the moment to require the extinction of the human species. My reading of the classical Sanskrit texts about

Kalpas, the great cycles, is that when you get through with the Kali Yuga, you start again in the golden age.

Q: What's going out comes back again. Nothing is wasted. Everything is continued, though not in its present form. Everything goes back into the formless from where it came, but its essence is subsumed back into what it was in the first place, which is the same truth looked at in a different way.

RA: How do you feel about a cycle of four hundred and thirty-seven million years?

Q: Is that supposed to be the length of the Kali Yuga?

RA: There is great disagreement about the length of the periods. The Upanishads give it a really huge cycle that's not ending for a long time, but there's a minority interpretation which sets the great year at 25,800 years of the astronomical great year. In this modern theory of the great cycle, the Kali Yuga began as recently as 1880 and is only 2,400 years long. Which means that we're close to the beginning of another great year.

TM: Ralph, I want to ask you about higher-dimensional order and mapping and the way that the psychedelic experience is training for that. You and I have discussed this question a lot, but last night we discussed it from a slightly new point of view, which is that we really don't want to come to terms with all this, because even the most intrepid psychedelicist can hardly face the implications that it's an ecology of souls, and that what hyper-space is really about emotionally is the transcendence of the apparent dualism between life and death. Let's take the entities we encounter in the DMT trance. Their utter alienness is combined with a penetrating familiarity, and the only way this can be explained is to face the fact that the reason we feel so strongly attracted and repelled and involved with them is that they are the yonder side of the equation, and that we penetrate an ecology of souls. What do you think?

RA: This is a difficult area, because we are trying to bring back our experience to the linguistic mode of thought attached to this culture. I always thought that a lot of the things encountered in hyper-dimensional space might be constructs -- side effects of trying to bring back our reality into verbal consciousness. For example, one possibility is that in the hyper-dimension, there are no beings, there are no entities; there is only one entity, and that indeed, as it is said, Ram, it is all One. Even in that case, it could seem to us, when we try to understand the experience in our own mind, that this one entity consists of different organisms whom we think of as separate. It could be sort of a projection of ordinary reality. You might think of it more as a projection of the hyper-dimensional experience into ordinary reality, or at least ordinary mind, and most particularly verbal mind, where concepts like entities are very useful in dealing with the reality, even if you understood that everything is connected.

I think there is kind of a bridge between ordinary reality and the Gaian mind, and on this bridge, different tricks function as the planks of the bridge, as it were. One of them is the illusion of the separateness, or independence, of different parts of the experience, because we don't have enough dimensions in our ordinary minds to grok the fullness of the one thing. As I said earlier, if you cut through a connected object with a low-dimensional knife, you get discontinuous things. Regarding them as separate things is just a construct. I also think -- I mean, I had the impression in my own experience of this hyper-dimensional web -- that although there is a lot of action in it, it is fundamentally timeless, and parts of it do not die, and are not born. But nevertheless, and that's the part that makes me breathless with excitement, there is a co-evolution between our ordinary minds and Gaian mind. Although time does not really exist

for it, it is nevertheless growing at a snail's pace, and we may even invent an idea while painting, drawing, playing, working together, or making love -- something that will be a new thing for the Gaian mind, that will be added to it and will live in it forever. If this is true, it's a thrilling possibility for creativity, but also a great danger, because many evil thoughts are projected upon the Gaian mind.

I suppose that the Gaian mind, besides everything else, is full of every evil thought that anybody ever had, so that, for example, the demonology of Aleister Crowley can be encountered while tripping. What goes by the name of "bad trip" could just be exploring the basement where the relics of the diabolic acts of humanity are kept. Some years ago I visited Auschwitz on a pilgrimage, and I saw a huge warehouse full of luggage, valises that were discarded by people who took the one-way trip up the chimney. There's another warehouse there full of hair. Now, maybe you haven't been there, but you're hearing me tell you of it. So that would be just like going on a trip, and finding Aleister Crowley's 666, you know; maybe it's there in the basement.

If you think that mind must be associated with living species, you must realize that there's still the cosmic mind, and that Gaian mind is just one player among many on the galactic stage.

I don't think that the Gaian mind, or the cosmic mind, is an ecology of entities. It may appear that way because of constructs, because of our limited intellectual evolution. The evolution of consciousness on this planet has given short shrift to concepts of unifying fields, wherever they arise, with the single exception of quantum field theory. They've been replaced by particle equivalence, and more of the wave-type, I guess you could say. You jump into the swimming pool, and there's the particle of your body, and then the waves are imaged in the pattern of light on the bottom. So this is the particle/wave duality in the swimming pool. My impression about the cosmic mind is that it's more like waves, and less like bodies. Body representation is essential in the lower-dimensionality of this energy/material universe. But I don't much like to do this kind of speculation, because my own experience is too limited. We love the bodies, of course. That's why we're here.

TM: Is that a strong hint to adjourn to the baths?

RA: I do feel that I've exhausted the patience of the group. You've been very kind.

TM: Well, thank you for coming down this week.

Original Transcription by: [Ralph Abraham](#)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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TERENCE: Today we have a treat, because you don't have to listen to me, which is the first time this has happened. It's a measure of the insular and parochial nature of my ideas that I wouldn't let anyone else

address you. I haven't even read you anything in the time that we've been at this. But today we have my old, old friend and dear colleague, Professor Ralph Abraham of the University of California at Santa Cruz. Ralph is an accomplished tabla player and dynamicist. He is familiar to you, because when I mention my cabal, it is the Sheldrake, Abraham, McKenna cabal. We built a high ivory tower against all who lay siege to it.

Today Ralph will talk about what he described to me as modern-day Cassandras who can be trained to look into higher-dimensional space and to prophecy in an oracular manner for the kings of corporations and affinity groups such as ourselves. Ralph is a psychedelic pioneer in mathematics, music, and the art of love. He can speak for himself. Please welcome Ralph Abraham!

RALPH: This is what I came for, Terence: your introduction. Now I'm happy. I can go home. I don't know about the high tower, though. I think of it more as a green ring, and maybe it's the Cabala, which is the feminine of cabal.

The fact that you are here to listen to a religious leader, Terence, gives me a clue as to what you're interested in. I'm not sure if there is any overlap between my field of interest and yours, other than that there's a certain heart feeling in this place, which has drawn us all here. But to improve the fit, I would like you to prompt me with questions -- especially you, Terence -- to give me a target.

TERENCE: There's been a lot of talk about the psychedelic experience, but we haven't spent much time on techniques, and on the personal assimilation of the experience. We talked about waves of gylanic resurgence in pre-history. I'm pushing this new idea that we are really the children of a disturbed relationship. We had a symbiotic relationship with hallucinogenic plants in pre-history. Later, climatological factors and the drying of Africa pushed us into the historical dominator mode, and we've been in it ever since. We've looked at the time wave, we've talked about fractals, we've talked about modeling the Tao. We talked about attractors, and whenever we talk about these kinds of things we mention you, Ralph. You have been held up as the guy who could shed light on the mathematical end of the jargon scale.

RALPH: Well, the very idea of the gylanic resurgence wave, the GR-wave, is part of the technical end of the jargon scale, because the GR-wave concept is a mathematical model for history itself. These terms were introduced by Riane Eisler in her book, *The Chalice and the Blade*. She is one of the first cultural historians since William Irving Thompson to use this particular strategy for understanding the complexity of life. She is a feminist revisionist of history, and the primary partnership she points to, and from which she derives the name "gylanic", is the partnership between the genders.

Today we exist in the ambience or in the shadow of a fantastic GR-wave that broke on the beach in the 1960s. It was probably the biggest one since the Italian Renaissance.

The word "resurgence" itself is a mathematical word. It means that something happens not only again, but again and again. Resurgence means recurrence. A periodic cycle is a recognizable pattern suitable for prediction. Hopefully there will be another GR-wave and another one. Between the big GR-waves in history there are a bunch of wavelets, and between any two of those there is another sub-wave, because not only does history have a fractal nature, but gylany is a fractal concept which loves fractal resonance, and which must always manifest as fractal waves.

So we have waves on top of waves. If you restrict yourself to the biggest ones, there is the Neolithic, that's a big one! when farming began. Is farming gylanic? Well, in the history of gylany there are the global climate cycles, and then there are smaller climate cycles, and then there are the teeny wavelets of climate. The biggest waves of climate are the ice ages. Glaciologists argue whether they have a hundred thousand-year cycle or a forty-one thousand-year cycle or a twenty-five thousand-year cycle and so on. All of these glaciologists are correct, because the pattern of ice, the pattern of the global change of climate, is not periodic; it's more a fractal wave-length.

Gylany, the partnership form of culture is characterized by peace, happiness, and by sex, drugs and rock-'n-roll. It is part of the inter-glacial cycle. When the planet has a fever, we get cultures like that. The heyday of gylany for this inter-glacial period was the Neolithic. Then after the patriarchal takeover gylany was repressed into the unconscious, out of which well up GR-waves in the future.

After the patriarchal takeover, gylany became part of the so-called mystery schools. That means that you weren't supposed to tell. If you partook of these rituals, you told about them at the risk of death. In ancient Greece, mystery schools were accepted. We don't know exactly what psychedelic was used in the nightly rituals of the Eleusinian mysteries. There are no written records, and to this day we don't know what went on there.

There was a kind of limited tolerance for gylanic resurgence on an annual basis in ancient Greece, but after the onset of Christianity, a very interesting bifurcation took place. There were a few centuries of a kind of gylanic Christianity, after which patriarchy came to the fore, and at that time, the Orphic, Dionysian, Bacchic rituals characteristic of gylanic society were increasingly suppressed.

Starting from around the seventh century A.D. until the present, we have the era of suppression of gylany, out of which the gylanic resurgence wave welled up. We, like the students in China, are trying to reclaim our planet from the insanity of the (androcratic) form, a quest which may never end.

The chart of the progress of gylany over the centuries is Terence's time wave, which is a mathematical model for history.

TERENCE: It's the cyclic ebb and flow between what Ralph calls gylany, i.e., the partnership society of pre-history which emphasizes group values and sharing and multi-tasking, and the dominator model. We're trying to transcend matriarchy/patriarchy, because that is not what it's all about; it's not between men and women. There are two modes of expression. One is partnership, the other is hierarchical domination. What Ralph calls gylany is the episode in pre-history when all of these values were being expressed in the central Saharan societies.

RALPH: There were gylanic societies; the last above-board one was Minoan Crete, and that ended around 1400 B.C. when Crete was conquered by patriarchal Mycenaeans. For a long period of time, until around 4000 B.C., the planetary society was a gylanic one. It was characterized by the equal partnership of the genders, by peace and creativity, and by a certain religion which covered the entire planet. It was a goddess religion; sometimes the triple-headed goddess, the goddess trinity; sometimes the goddess with the boy god, the child god -- her child -- the result of the creativity of the goddess; and sometimes with a consort.

As we neared patriarchy, there was a gradual demotion of the goddess and the gradual promotion of the god, until finally the goddess disappeared and her statue was replaced by statues of Apollo. The Eleusinian mysteries that were celebrated under the statue of Apollo, as a matter of fact, were goddess rituals imported from Crete, from the last gylanic culture. The statue of the goddess had been replaced, but not the rituals.

To help us understand history we might have a chart of planetary society at a given time, represented by one number, a point in the spectrum between gylany, or partnership society, and (androcracy), or the dominator society. As history evolved its own history, more and more indicators were taken into account. Vico, one of the first mathematical historians, said that societies evolve like mammalian species; they have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The first step, where a tribe becomes a culture, is through the development of three primary cultural structures: religion, death rites, and matrimonial rights. As he saw it from his eighteenth century Italy, these would be the three necessities for a culture to evolve. After that, it gets more and more complex.

We could try to represent the planet, a particular town, or even a little community like this one, with these three parameters. We could hand out questionnaires, record the replies and get some kind of numerical measure of the quality of religious activity, the care with which the burial rites and burial plots are maintained, and the nature of matrimonial rights. In early Neolithic times, dead bodies were thrown under the house. That was it. But funerals are very important social events in Ireland even to this day, which gives us a clue as to what they were like in the past.

In the '60s, matrimonial rites more or less died. A few people celebrated by taking acid on a mountain top during the full moon, but basically, the ritual disappeared. One reason was that it was believed to be intrinsically evil. In the patrilineal line, property won in war passes from father to son. That means that the most important thing to know about the son is who is the father, which makes it necessary to have a marriage contract of monogamy. It's easy to know who the mother is, but how do you know who is the father? The monogamous contract aspect of the marriage ritual is just part of the patriarchal package.

So, when there's a gylanic resurgence, one thing that's bound to happen is the radical change in the specific agreements of the marriage contract and the burial rites, and in the religious practices as well, according to Vico. If we want to measure this with questionnaires, we can sort of locate ourselves at a point in a three-dimensional map. Some years later, if we hand out the questionnaires again, it will all be changed.

In the '60s, there was a big blip. This blip could be observed not just one-dimensionally, but as a curve in three-dimensional space. This game, which I might call mathematical modeling of history, has progressed over the years with more and more sophisticated models. With chaos theory, people acknowledge that a person, a society, a tree or any living thing has essentially infinite dimensional representations. Any attempt to simplify, to throw out complexity by reducing it to a simple model creates a boundary war.

Let me say something about mathematics. The very word elicits fear in everybody. For more than thirty years now I've had consultations with people who are scientists, and I have hardly encountered a single person, including a Nobel Prize winner in theoretical physics, who doesn't have a math-avoidance response. That's because our culture has made mathematics into something unnatural. But we can't understand any dynamical process, whether it is the process of our own relationships, the history of our society, or the gradual change from year to year of the memory of our experiences of the 1960s without

mathematics, because mathematics is simply the act of making cognitive representations of these complex and dynamical events. Without them, we couldn't walk down the street, we couldn't find food. When a dog goes to the other end of the property and locates something to eat, this is an activity of mathematical intelligence. We use it all the time, and I'm just trying to describe a view of history that leads up to the fulfillment of Terence's promise, which, in case anybody has forgotten, I will ask Terence to repeat.

TERENCE: You mean the notion that history comes to some kind of tremendous crescendo, where it's all wrapped together into a nutshell?

RALPH: No. That was yesterday's introduction. Today it was explicitly psychedelic. So I'm going to explain why psychedelic training will be necessary for us to create our future.

TERENCE: Oh, yes! Do that.

(Audience laughter)

RALPH: On demand. For you, Terence. For you.

TERENCE: I need to hear this.

(Audience laughter)

RALPH: Well, I just got back from Denmark, where I was entertained in a splendid palace in a suburb of Copenhagen by the IEA, the International Economic Association. This is a group of professional economists who are employed by kings and governments to predict the future. They have inherited the Cassandra role, because each person's welfare will depend upon the wisdom of the finance minister when he cuts some ridiculous deal like giving forty tankers of wheat to Libya or something. These people are important to kings and governments; they have a technology, largely mathematical, and they have international conferences where, within limits, they exchange some of their secrets because they have to get some of the other guy's secrets. I was there because they had discovered that chaos could be an important secret, and if some have the chaos technology and others don't, they would get ahead in whatever game they think they're playing.

When I was resting between sessions from the exertion of trying to find out what these people were about and evolving this little description I just shared with you, one man came up to me and said, "Hi, Professor. I've been reading your work. My name is Lars Peterson, and I'm in the finance ministry here in Denmark. I read in Jim Gleick's book that you say that chaos is the biggest thing since the wheel. Do you remember that you said that?" I said, "Yeah, yeah." He said, "Well, we took your advice and used chaos theory to analyze our data. And then we read this other paper where you said chaos was really no big deal, that what we really need is complex dynamical models. We read your instructions, we made a complex dynamical model, and we had it running on the computer in the finance ministry with a model from the Danish beer industry, and it produced data which agrees very well with the observed chaotic data. We tried to explore this model which has parameters that have to do with the progress of the economy in the neighboring countries. Well, there are twelve of these control parameters, so we have a map in twelve-dimensional space. We followed all your instructions, so now we have a map of our finance policy, and the map is in twelve-dimensional space. You've given us no technology to understand objects and motions in twelve-

dimensional space. Now what do we do?"

He showed me some crude attempts at computer graphics that looked like your typical fractal, and this fractal was the map they were trying to use for navigation of the national economic policy. So they were worried. They were very worried.

I had to admit that we were stuck, because we had arrived more or less at the frontier of the computer-aided applied mathematics of our society, in spite of chaos, fractals and so on. We're stuck with this. We do not know how to visualize motions in twelve-dimensional space, in sixteen-dimensional space and so on. Obviously, we need to develop a strategy for twelve-dimensional visualization. We need to utilize the experience of artists. Artists have always led us in the expansion of the dimensionality of our view. Our capability of viewing is advanced by artists. And now we're at a frontier where our progress is inhibited by a limitation of dimensions in viewing. Undoubtedly, computer graphics will be the technique. Computer graphic arts are limited at the moment by the lack of practice in viewing higher-dimensional spaces.

Meanwhile, psychedelic pioneers are always talking about hyper-dimensional warps. It's a dance. Right? It never stands still in our psychedelic travels. I think hyper-dimensional is correct, not infinite-dimensional. There are large numbers of dimensions we have been privileged to view directly, which we apparently have no difficulty in understanding. We can verbalize about them, we can remember them, we can think about them, and we can return to them to explore them further. There's something about the naturalness of the artistic experience which makes it the fundamental one needed for the current advance of mathematics, of science, and of technology.

TERENCE: So this is an endorsement of psychedelic training. Ah --

RALPH: Well, people will have to learn by having the experience. I mean, I don't know how to get started when you have people who are completely blind to fifteen-dimensionals.

TERENCE: How do you begin to view fifteen-dimensional space? You just toss them in and see if they come out?

RALPH: Well, maybe the big blessing of the mushroom is that there is this easy back-and-forth between the higher-dimensional reality and ordinary reality, so that while you obtain training in visualization without stress, you can also practice its relationship with ordinary vision. For example, you can open your eyes to see a flower, and then close your eyes and see the aura of the flower. You know what I mean? There is kind of a voluntary back-and-forth, and a spectrum of decreasing dimension between the psychedelic vision and ordinary reality.

This bridge, I think, is very important. It's not enough to learn the navigational arts for flying in the higher realms -- we have to earth this intelligence in order to create the possibility of a future. Gaia is a living planet; its atmosphere, its hydrosphere, its sociosphere, its noosphere, all these are interlocking in an essential way, and our future may depend on our learning to understand a system of such immense complexity so that we can guide our evolutionary consciousness. Either that, or humankind should stand aside and let evolution do its work. That's why I think the psychedelic experience has an important role to play in the progress of social evolution, and even of technology.

TERENCE: When you talk about penetration of a higher-dimensional space, which means many things to many people, do you think that psychedelics amplify the morphogenetic field, or that they somehow amplify awareness of it? Do they add a dimension to the ordinary three? There also seem to be other dimensions added that are not related to the time scale. Is that how you see it?

RALPH: Well, let's find a common ground for the word "dimension". Dimension is an ordinary English word, and it's also technical jargon of mathematics. One of the things mathematics provides us with, one of its greatest gifts, is an explicit, useful understanding of dimension. There's one dimension, there are two dimensions, and there are three dimensions. Here are the three dimensions. That's kind of the mathematical way of thinking. So as far as what we see around us, if nothing were moving, we have three-dimensional space. Within the three-dimensional space, we have maybe a color, which is a three-dimensional object, so there's six dimensions that we're moving in all the time, ignoring the dimension of wind in our face and of smells and so on. We live in a six-dimensional space of snapshots that keep changing, so there's the six plus one, or the seven.

TERENCE: To simplify the way we've defined dimensions here, they are simply variables. Each dimension represents a variable. If you have sixteen variables, we're moving in a sixteen-dimensional space. This opens it up for people -- they're not being asked to conceive something inconceivable. What you're saying is that every time you add a variable, you add a dimension. Therefore all complex situations are obviously extremely high-dimensional.

RALPH: But there's a difference between the dimensions and our perception of dimension. By taking photographs, for example, we can only record six dimensions. Let's take a computer model of the nuclear club, or of a society of four superpowers. We have a mathematical model for this as a sixteen-dimensional space with certain solid objects in it which may be very important for our future, because they represent peace and war. We want to navigate in this space, and the fact that we understand that the model has sixteen dimensions is not enough, because we have to learn to visualize, to understand, to grok that space, so that we can see where we are, where the obstacles are, how we can get from where we are to where we want to go by avoiding the obstacles. We need to find a way to interact.

There are flight simulators training pilots to land aircraft carriers, and there are computer-graphic devices with a (datacom) for each eye, a speaker for each ear and gloves that allow you to interact with the computer; but basically, you're seeing or hearing a very limited number of dimensions. The fact that there's a successful sixteen-dimensional model won't help you navigate or land your plane, because you can really only navigate in six dimensions plus time. That's why I think we need to train people to feel at home in these higher dimensions, like dolphins, whales and bats are capable of doing, thanks to sonar. They are very much at home in higher dimensions. I think the only reason that our mentation is restricted to such a low dimension is because homo erectus has evolved in the context of running through the woods and swinging from tree to tree; we are devoted to a physical representation of the world with a limited amount of dynamic in it. We do not have to understand fish schooling. We could never understand bird flying; we don't have the dimensions for it in our evolution. But we could. Why not? So kids who are apparently wasting their time with video games in arcades around the world are actually training their minds for a completely different perceptual and cognitive strategy.

TERENCE: For coordinating in a higher-dimensional face space?

RALPH: Exactly. They're learning to land the helicopter on the tall building in a sixteen-dimensional space.

TERENCE: You're saying something very interesting, Ralph. You're saying that the psychedelic dimension is not another dimension, it's this world, but with more dimensions.

RALPH: I would agree with you that psychedelics amplify the morphogenetic field. No, they don't amplify the field; they amplify our connection to the field, so that through resonance, we obtain a stronger image. What do you think? When I trip I feel that I'm seeing something real, that it has at least as much reality as this reality. There are the repeated visits, the learning, the successful negotiation of conversations with live entities. It has every aspect of reality. All that we are familiar with in ordinary reality is there in extraordinary reality. One thing that we do not doubt is its reality. We don't call it hallucinations. We don't think it comes from the unconscious. This super-ordinary reality that we visit happens to be a higher-dimensional reality, and we can only image it to the extent that we are able to image it. Those of us who have taken repeated trips over a period of time have learned to image more, so that we get more dimensions represented by some mysterious trick in our ordinary consciousness, by vision, sounds, smells.

TERENCE: By deconditioning?

RALPH: By reconditioning, by training, by restructuring --

TERENCE: By retraining the Newtonian perspective. The perceptual perspective of the Renaissance was both a liberation and a prison. It gave permission to inhabit a new kind of dimensionality for culture, but then we got hung up on it. We can't seem to go beyond it. We can't seem to realize hyper-space culturally. We can only realize it individually through the psychedelics, and then only temporarily. What the true believers want is some way to image it collectively.

RALPH: Well, that's why I've been working with computer graphics these past ten or fifteen years. With computer graphics, the idea is to try to find a way to share the experience with people who are not going to have the experience. The advance of the art, the evolution of consciousness, is a saltatory story, it has episodes that are catastrophes.

There may be a restriction to an agreed-upon conceptual reality over a period of many centuries. Suddenly, these artists will bring in perspective, they'll make a leap from two-dimensional to three-dimensional representation. The particular perspective in the renaissance was due to the fact that drawings could be put on the wall -- they didn't need video, they didn't need computer graphics; they could draw it and put it on the wall. Anyone who stares at a drawing for a while, particularly with a little instruction from those devices in the museum where you put a quarter in, can get the idea. So everyone's perceptive capacity, as far as dimension is concerned, can be increased from two to three.

With this recent GR wave, the increase in capability of perceiving dimension has not been shared. The pioneers who experienced this have not found a way to draw and put it on the wall. But I do think that with computer graphics we are close to a time when adequate super-computers for making some kind of reproduction of the visions we've seen will be here; an affordable machine at a work-station level, say a hundred-thousand dollar machine, will be placed in museums like the Whitney Museum of Modern Art, and will be showing things that we've seen, and anybody who watches it will grok it, as we did when we

first saw it.

TERENCE: That'll be the ball game.

RALPH: I expect so.

TERENCE: I believe, and I speak for myself but I assume that everyone here can say the same thing, if I could show the world what I've seen, the world would never be the same. I mean, isn't it true for every one of you that you have seen things that you knew would change the course of history forever if they could be shown?

Question: How do you get it on the computer?

TERENCE: How do we hang it on the wall, Ralph?

RALPH: Well, it's time for me to give mathematics a little plug. Mathematics is our heritage, it's a natural activity. The language of the morphogenetic field is mathematics. The work of mathematical specialists over these past few centuries has provided explicit algorithms for recreating this reality on computers because it is a mathematical reality.

Question: Maybe you need to begin by teaching mathematics, because I am one of those who are never sure of how much seven times eight is.

RALPH: Seven times eight is business practice, and mathematics is when you jump in the pool in the sunshine, and there's a pattern of light and dark on the bottom of the pool. There's a relationship between your motion in the water and the dynamic of that pattern. We then have two different things, both dynamic, both complex. One is your motion in the water, and the other is the pattern of light on the bottom of the pool. They are two different things, and yet they are related. We understand that relationship. That's mathematics.

Question: What I'm getting stuck with, in terms of things like the psychedelic experience, is the sensation of touch, of taste, of sound, and the emotions that are created, which to me are part of my grokking. I can look at a reproduction and have a fantasy about what the underlying substance is, but what I'm trying to get to is a point where I can see, I can touch, and concurrently have internal emotions. How do I reach that experience with some type of external machine?

RALPH: That's the question, all right. What I'm speculating, and this might turn out to be wrong, is that in reproducing a small fraction of a complex experience, the rest of it can be sort of excited by resonance in the mind, much as we use language. By saying a word, and I always regard this as a miracle, I can evoke in you a whole experience, which, although we have no way to check it out, we generally accept in ordinary reality. Blue. Now, we have no way to know that what I see as blue is what you see. Nevertheless, we assume, and somehow it seems correct, that there is a universal experience, and it's possible for a complex experience to be excited by a simple one. Otherwise, language wouldn't work. I'm always amazed that my students are able to get a mathematical idea from the representations that I use in conversation or draw on the blackboard. You draw, you talk, and these simple representations awaken in the mind of the student the entire mathematical concept. Mathematical concepts cannot be reduced to words or drawings, but the

multiple representation is a kind of simulated telepathy.

So, while I agree that the experience I would like to share is much more complex than a visual pattern, I have the feeling that the visual pattern that I've seen is already beyond the visual pattern that other people can see. There is sort of an intermediate or first step in the direction of fuller communication, for which additional steps would be necessary. I have no idea how to proceed towards it.

TERENCE: I have this wonderful vision of taking a hundred-thousand dollar machine and spending five-hundred-thousand dollars on software to create this model as the first step in "Grokking 101", and then handing the students a ten-dollar tab of acid to go through the whole course!

RALPH: Yes. It's sort of a program to subvert culture and alter the course of history, yet we are not able to do it by giving out LSD. I hear that many people are taking LSD now, yet they're not having the kind of experiences we had. It's sort of a desperate measure to rely on modern technology to help communicate experience.

Question: The difference between the two is that one is a shared experience, while the other is an individual experience. What you're really saying is something about the need to share.

TERENCE: That's right. Somehow, the importance of the psychedelic experience lies in communicating it. No matter how good it is, if it can't be communicated, there's an element of frustration. For people like Ralph and myself, who take it seriously, that gives us power over it. For people who don't, it's smoke. For us, it's potentially a mathematically describable object. We turn it into something which, hopefully, can be communicated. This whole discussion revolves around this theme. We talked about it the other day -- we invoked it, but we didn't get anywhere with it. The fact is, Ralph, that the whole game hinges on the huge unlikelyhood that mathematics is making a statement about nature, and that this appears to be a synchronistic event. There is no reason why mathematics, which is the internal peregrination of the human mind in the realm of abstract quantities, should not be mappable over the world of natural phenomena, and it's been worked ten ways from Sunday ever since Pythagoras noted that ...

Question: Weren't mathematics invented to describe nature and behavior and all the rest of it?

RALPH: Well, actually, no. The common view is that mathematics, as Terence has just said, arises in the human mind after a process of mentation. But I take issue with this view. Certainly mathematics is not inspired by the inspection of nature. That's why people like Einstein and Wigner, who knew mathematics intimately and used it in making models of reality, were awed by the fact that there is this mysterious fit between mathematical objects and objects in the phenomenal universe. I don't agree that mathematics comes from the observation of nature, and I don't agree with Terence, Einstein and Wigner that it comes from human mentation. I think that mathematics enters the human mind through a process of resonance with the morphic field. Animals had mathematics before humans. Animals count, and they know dynamics, and they have sonar and so on. Animals obtain mathematics from the morphic field, and so do humans. This morphic field is part of Gaia, the living Earth, so I call it the Gaian mind. Mathematics exists in the Gaian mind, and conscious minds, spirits, may obtain it by a process of resonance.

TERENCE: Are you saying that mathematics is the archetype of nature in the Gaian mind? That's kind of a Gaian Platonism.

RALPH: Mathematics in the Gaian mind is beyond nature. You see, nature is only one product of the Gaian mind. The Gaian mind contains much which will never be manifest in nature, some of which we have seen in our travels, and we don't expect it to be manifest in nature. The Gaian mind is capable of play in such ways as may never be manifest in the world of matter and energy and in all this slow, dense, soft stuff.

Now this view cannot be verified, and no support for it can be found in the literature of philosophy or mathematics. Let's just accept this idea for the moment and see what we can make of it. If mathematics is a spin-off of the Gaian mind, or the morphogenetic field, or a higher-dimensional reality, or the phenomenal universe, nature, relationships among people, and so on, it would be no great mystery that mappings are possible between mathematical objects and phenomena in the energetic universe. It would mean that the Gaian mind has a certain amount of integrity, of coherence, of self-resonance, that it makes sense, as it were.

When we travel outside of ordinary reality and take a flight through the Gaian mind, our overwhelming experience is of integrity. It all goes together extremely well. That is one of the main lessons we bring back and may even be able to share with people without the necessity for computer graphics or acid. Integrity has always been a message of spiritual minorities, from the Theosophists on down -- the integrity of Higher Mind. That's why I think mathematics is useful in pursuing life and understanding what's going on around us. It's useful also in understanding aspects of the Gaian mind which are not manifest. It's not only useful -- it's our heritage. Each person may obtain as much of it as they please by solely making use of resonance with the Gaian mind. It is there, it is natural, and it's another alternate reality besides ordinary reality, as easy to grok, or travel through, explore, learn, enjoy or play with as ordinary reality.

I can tell you, on the basis of my own experiences in traveling to different realities, that they are all pretty much the same. There is an increased dimension as you get off the Earth. That's about it.

TERENCE: So evolution, after 2,500 or 5,000 years of mathematical speculation, suddenly gives rise to fractals and the discovery of mapping that goes on between fractals and organic nature. This is serendipitous. Is it fair to say that the Gaian mind exists on many levels and provides many maps? So that catastrophe theory, dynamics, fractal curves are all approximations of the mystery?

RALPH: Well, they're different low-dimensional representations of the mystery. They are simple pictures guiding you to a simple understanding of more complex things. They are stepping stones to the stars, as it were.

TERENCE: But the integrity of this other dimension seems to make it the source of our authenticity. We don't relate to it as another dimension. We relate to it as a higher dimension in a spiritual sense. Why do the lower dimensional slices lack this integrity?

RALPH: Well, in higher dimensions, if you had a solid object and you sliced it with a lower dimensional knife, you might obtain some disconnected pieces; the lack of connection between these different pieces appears because you sliced off the connection in higher-dimensional space. In our culture, there is the common belief of the individuality of people. The Masters claim that we are individuals and that we may pursue our individual development through individual meditation.

TERENCE: The equivalent would be to kill somebody and dissect them?

RALPH: Yes. The pattern that connects is simply an object in higher-dimensional space, and these space-time patterns in higher-dimensional space-time are the fundamental objects of existence. They are the "morphs" of the morphogenetic field. They are plain objects, but they are higher-dimensional, so we try to grok them from lower-dimensional projections. One of the things lacking is integrity, apparent integrity.

TERENCE: In a way, this is nothing new. What is new is the dimension of awareness of the process even in the history of the evolution of lower organisms. Evolution can be seen as the conquest of dimensionality, right?

RALPH: That's why I think computer evolution is important. You see, the computer is not like the steam engine. The computer revolution is not like the industrial revolution. The computer phenomenon is something that is evolving, and its evolution is not going to stop. One of the insidious effects of this evolution is that, as it were, a new species is upon us. Fortunately, at the moment, it's very friendly. They don't eat us. They make us slightly sick if we sit with them too long, but they are quite benign.

One of the effects is the chaos revolution -- chaos as mathematical objects which are revealed through computers. This is kind of a cure for the historical accident that happened in 4000 B.C., when the baby was tossed out with the bath, causing chaos mathematics to be lost because of the worship of Yaweh and other patriarchal gods that honored order above all things and erased chaos from memory in the human mind.

But chaos was never erased from the Gaian mind. And the chaos models that we know now, through the invention of the computer, were there all along. Not only were they there all along, but they were known, used, and worshipped before 4000 B.C. So because of a cultural accident, we have been deprived of conscious awareness of a certain mathematical model which is crucially important at this time in our history, because without it, we can't understand anything that is going on around us. All complex processes are chaotic. This understanding is now restored to us after being ripped away, cut off, annihilated, amputated by the patriarchal religions. If it hadn't been amputated, we wouldn't have needed the computer revolution to restore it. We lost the chaos model, we got the computer revolution, and the computer revolution regained it, and how it did it was by giving us control over more dimensions. It overcame a weakness which was just a cultural/historical accident, I suppose.

TERENCE: Are you saying that chaos theory is the religion of the Gaian mind?

RALPH: Yes. The fundamental and favorite objects of the Gaian mind are chaotic attractors and their bifurcations. That's why all living things are fractals. They are all materializations of the same chaotic object in the Gaian mind.

TERENCE: So here we're coming very close to politics. I recently proposed that we form what I called the () Anarchist Internationale. Our motto would be "Chaos is order". We would embrace it as a cultural ideal. The patriarchal mind is horrified by this, because chaos implies lack of order and of control. But who linked order to the notion of control? Anarchy is permission to be in Tao(?), and Tao is what you're talking about -- the chaos which is the religion of the Gaian mind.

RALPH: Yes. Chaos is not in conflict with order. What we are seeking, and what I suppose was intrinsic to the gylanic religion, is the partnership of chaos and order. The idea that there is a conflict between chaos and order is a false idea that was constructed by accident, and we are now participating in the deconstruction of the false dichotomy between chaos and order. We know that early Christians stamped out Orphism. Orphism is one of the remnants of Minoan Cretan religion and of the gylanic religion which survived into ancient Greek times. In the Orphic pantheon, chaos and order are husband and wife. So part of the gylanic resurgence is the re-partnering, the re-structuring of the relationship between chaos and order into a working partnership. If we can emphasize this correctly, we are not, through restoring chaos to her throne, going to arouse the hostility and antipathy of the patriarchal establishment. People who want order can have order. Chaos is order, and order is chaos. The only good order is chaos, because if you try to order something that is a dynamic, living process, it will die. What is going on in China today can be understood as the repression of evolutionary chaos.

All creativity proceeds from chaos towards order. People who feel that without order we will starve and die must impose their idea of order on top of chaos. "Order overcomes chaos" is "death overcomes life."

In many people's view, like Freud, for example, the trinity of our time is Eros, Thanatos, and Libido. So in Freudianism, with Thanatos, death is viewed as an important organizing principle. This is the remnant of an earlier trinity, a goddess trinity, in which there was the triple-headed goddess. Life had three aspects, as in the Vedic trinity of Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva. Birth, maturity, and disintegration was part of a recurrent cycle, the eternal return.

A kind of a perversion of the natural trinity has taken place. Its main personality can be understood through its action, which is to kill Gaia through the destruction of forests, of plants, of the extinction of species at a rapid rate. It may be necessary to restructure the mythical level where these trinities live; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for example, would have to return to something more natural and more compatible with the intrinsic structure of the Gaian mind. If there's such a thing as a pattern for evolution, we are probably not on it now.

TERENCE: And would that trinity be Gaia, Chaos, Eros?

RALPH: Well, now we're exceeding my area of competence. I'm not going to say what the mythology of the future ought to be. Chaos, Gaia, Eros is the trinity of the most recent past of the gylanic partnership; mainly the Orphic trinity of Minoan Crete. But even there, there are a lot of serious questions. There was a patriarchal takeover. The gylanic culture did not survive. An evolutionary challenge occurred in which that particular trinity failed. Dionysus is a masculine god. He already represented a certain mutation of the original goddess trinity. Ariadne, the vegetable goddess of Crete, was replaced by Dionysus in part of the process through which that civilization died.

We have to be careful not to land in a cul-de-sac of evolution; we know that to go forward is to go into certain death, so we want to go back to some time in the past, to transport everything, culturally, back to some fixed moment in the past and take up evolution again. Where in the past the right turn was taken, we're going to take a left and see what happens. If we go back to the time when Minoan Crete was dying, we'll be on a dying track. We don't want to select that one, and I think that we're going to have to participate consciously in the creation of something that never existed before.

The big problem, the world problem, is that we're no longer seeing the birth and death of cultures. We're in a time when we've constructed a planetary society that is dying and may leave no offspring.

Question: Is evolution itself dying?

RALPH: That's the general fear.

Question: What's the alternative?

RALPH: I don't know. Diversity is very important for evolution. We don't have the intelligence to design and engineer a living species. One thing we should do is to study evolution, to juggle evolutionary theory and find out what are the chief characteristics of the evolving processes. What is their essential nutrition? Do they need vitamin C?

We have experienced a fantastic wave of creativity. This Holocene interglacial, now 12,000 years old, has had a thrilling history. Maybe there were some preceding interglacials that were just as thrilling, where homo erectus explored the planet and populated every continent. Australia was the last place that was found thanks to a fantastic navigational skill based on the study of the sky. Our own technology has followed the same path. We can't say that this kind of flowering has never happened before. But we can say that it has been a really great one even if it ends in the death of our species. But the destruction of so many other species... Thirty-thousand species are destroyed every few minutes or so according to the latest count. That's ten percent of all the species that have ever been created on planet Earth in four-and-a-half billion years; and ten percent of that happened in the last ten years. I can hardly believe that that has happened in every interglacial, although according to Jim Lovelock in *The Faces of Gaia*, this is the eighth catastrophe on this scale; the last one was the mass-extinction sixty-five million years ago when large mammals began. You see, we're really tied up with chaos in the solar system because of comets striking the planet. There was a near miss recently, I understand, where we could have been wiped out. It's way beyond nuclear winter. If a comet strikes us, that's it -- and it came really close!

TERENCE: There is evidence that this has happened many times.

RALPH: It happened many times, yes.

Question: You mentioned the Hindu notion of creation, sustenance, and reabsorption -- that isn't the right word -- but it means evolution and involution, which is not death, but simply the wheel going around again. Is that a possible scenario?

RALPH: Yes. It's not only a possible scenario. I'm sorry to say that the continued life of Gaia seems at the moment to require the extinction of the human species. My reading of the classical Sanskrit texts about Kalpas, the great cycles, is that when you get through with the Kali Yuga, you start again in the golden age.

Question: What's going out comes back again. Nothing is wasted. Everything is continued, though not in its present form. Everything goes back into the formless from where it came, but its essence is subsumed back into what it was in the first place, which is the same truth looked at in a different way.

RALPH: How do you feel about a cycle of four hundred and thirty-seven million years?

Question: Is that supposed to be the length of the Kali Yuga?

RALPH: There is great disagreement about the length of the periods. The Upanishads give it a really huge cycle that's not ending for a long time, but there's a minority interpretation which sets the great year at 25,800 years of the astronomical great year. In this modern theory of the great cycle, the Kali Yuga began as recently as 1880 and is only 2,400 years long. Which means that we're close to the beginning of another great year.

TERENCE: Ralph, I want to ask you about higher-dimensional order and mapping and the way that the psychedelic experience is training for that. You and I have discussed this question a lot, but last night we discussed it from a slightly new point of view, which is that we really don't want to come to terms with all this, because even the most intrepid psychedelicist can hardly face the implications that it's an ecology of souls, and that what hyper-space is really about emotionally is the transcendence of the apparent dualism between life and death. Let's take the entities we encounter in the DMT trance. Their utter alienness is combined with a penetrating familiarity, and the only way this can be explained is to face the fact that the reason we feel so strongly attracted and repelled and involved with them is that they are the yonder side of the equation, and that we penetrate an ecology of souls. What do you think?

RALPH: This is a difficult area, because we are trying to bring back our experience to the linguistic mode of thought attached to this culture. I always thought that a lot of the things encountered in hyper-dimensional space might be constructs -- side effects of trying to bring back our reality into verbal consciousness. For example, one possibility is that in the hyper-dimension, there are no beings, there are no entities; there is only one entity, and that indeed, as it is said, Ram, it is all One. Even in that case, it could seem to us, when we try to understand the experience in our own mind, that this one entity consists of different organisms whom we think of as separate. It could be sort of a projection of ordinary reality. You might think of it more as a projection of the hyper-dimensional experience into ordinary reality, or at least ordinary mind, and most particularly verbal mind, where concepts like entities are very useful in dealing with the reality, even if you understood that everything is connected.

I think there is kind of a bridge between ordinary reality and the Gaian mind, and on this bridge, different tricks function as the planks of the bridge, as it were. One of them is the illusion of the separateness, or independence, of different parts of the experience, because we don't have enough dimensions in our ordinary minds to grok the fullness of the one thing. As I said earlier, if you cut through a connected object with a low-dimensional knife, you get discontinuous things. Regarding them as separate things is just a construct. I also think -- I mean, I had the impression in my own experience of this hyper-dimensional web -- that although there is a lot of action in it, it is fundamentally timeless, and parts of it do not die, and are not born. But nevertheless, and that's the part that makes me breathless with excitement, there is a co-evolution between our ordinary minds and Gaian mind. Although time does not really exist for it, it is nevertheless growing at a snail's pace, and we may even invent an idea while painting, drawing, playing, working together, or making love -- something that will be a new thing for the Gaian mind, that will be added to it and will live in it forever. If this is true, it's a thrilling possibility for creativity, but also a great danger, because many evil thoughts are projected upon the Gaian mind.

I suppose that the Gaian mind, besides everything else, is full of every evil thought that anybody ever had,

so that, for example, the demonology of Aleister Crowley can be encountered while tripping. What goes by the name of "bad trip" could just be exploring the basement where the relics of the diabolic acts of humanity are kept. Some years ago I visited Auschwitz on a pilgrimage, and I saw a huge warehouse full of luggage, valises that were discarded by people who took the one-way trip up the chimney. There's another warehouse there full of hair. Now, maybe you haven't been there, but you're hearing me tell you of it. So that would be just like going on a trip, and finding Aleister Crowley's 666, you know; maybe it's there in the basement.

If you think that mind must be associated with living species, you must realize that there's still the cosmic mind, and that Gaian mind is just one player among many on the galactic stage.

I don't think that the Gaian mind, or the cosmic mind, is an ecology of entities. It may appear that way because of constructs, because of our limited intellectual evolution. The evolution of consciousness on this planet has given short shrift to concepts of unifying fields, wherever they arise, with the single exception of quantum field theory. They've been replaced by particle equivalence, and more of the wave-type, I guess you could say. You jump into the swimming pool, and there's the particle of your body, and then the waves are imaged in the pattern of light on the bottom. So this is the particle/wave duality in the swimming pool. My impression about the cosmic mind is that it's more like waves, and less like bodies. Body representation is essential in the lower-dimensionality of this energy/material universe. But I don't much like to do this kind of speculation, because my own experience is too limited. We love the bodies, of course. That's why we're here.

TERENCE: Is that a strong hint to adjourn to the baths?

RALPH: I do feel that I've exhausted the patience of the group. You've been very kind.

TERENCE: Well, thank you for coming down this week.

Psychedelics Before and After History

Day Month 1987

California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[from 49:50...](#)

"Now, as a culture we must come to grips with the fact that the world is not simple, in the same way that a nine year-old must come to grips with the fact that the world is not simple – it is not as mummy and daddy said it was: there are tremendous vistas and abysses to be plunged. Ask your uncle and he will tell you that nobody knows what's going on in these areas. Ask a shaman and he will tell you that nobody has found the bedrock of the psychedelic experience. Nevertheless this wish to live with a bedrock of experience is a kind of trivializing of the great mystery in which we find ourselves embedded. We would have a far more accurate and complete picture of Reality if we were willing to live with the felt presence of the Mystery. And the way to do this is to experience what these plant teachers are trying to say, what these planetarily manufactured information-bearing pheromonal molecules are trying to imbue into us. Now, shamans throughout history have short-circuited the Fall. They are those who know. That's what gnosis is: it is privileged knowledge vouchsafed to the courageous. And the fact that we have fallen into a neurotic or childish style of relating to being, is nothing more than a statement about the inherent biases of our languages and our institutions. Many people have not, perhaps because they carried out their lives in the vastness of the tropical forests, where the force of Nature cannot be denied. You see, had we stayed in the tropics, we probably would never have taken the Fall into History. The Fall into History is what happens when one moves into a progressively more and more barren landscapes, and substitutes for the input of organic Nature, the self-generated neurotic maps that are based on incomplete information. Now, that cycle is being closed. I often think that the discovery of the New World and its subjugation, which was like the carrying out of the ultimate fantasies of these neurotic Judeo-Christian tradition – a world to plunder – ends very oddly: with Gordon Wasson and Valentina Wasson in 1953 penetrating into the jungle highlands of Mexico and finding there something more astonishing than a flying saucer or an alien artefact, finding there the true heritage of the human species, in the form of the intact mushroom psychedelic religion. Eros lost since the dismemberment of Osiris! Lost since great Pan's death at the rise of the Christian era! But not dead, only sleeping! And now, through cultivation techniques and the propagation of ethnographic literature and the work of people like Metzner, and Hoffman, and Wasson, and Schultes, shoved directly in the path of the careening cultural juggernaut of Western civilization. This is why I have called the weekend Psychedelics Before and After History, because I see history, as I say, as a prodigal hiatus, a wondering in the desert of Unknowing, an indulgence in an easily cured neurosis, if we will but take upon ourselves the personal – personal! – responsibility for cultivating a relationship with the Mystery! We have bought in so thoroughly to the notion of a hierarchy of information and a declension of truth from experts – whether they be politicians, priests or scientists – that we have devalued ourselves as the primary instruments of our knowing. And this is why I think among other reasons why psychedelics are so repressed, why it is so important to society to keep them out of the hands, not only of children and high-schoolers and hedonistic experimentalists, but to keep them out of the hands of research psychologists, pharmacologists and physiologists as well, because fully appreciated they will explode the Newtonian, Einsteinian universe the way a stick of dynamite explodes a rotten apple. And in the process, the hierarchies of paternalism, scientism and reductionism will just be completely swept away! And this is all going to happen, God willing, in our lifetimes. My faith is that if it doesn't happen then the cultural momentum toward a lethal conclusion will continue on to the ultimate catastrophe. And so that's why I am willing to address groups like this and seek to inspire psychologists and chemists and students of anthropology and culture to examine this. Because I think we have wandered far from our birthright and trivialized a mystery of Being in the process, and to recoup that mistake we are going to have to become as little children in the face of the shamanic phenomenon and

investigate it intellectually, experientially, linguistically, individually and collectively. Only in that way will we be able to rescue the enterprise from its momentum towards catastrophe. "

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Psychedelics in the 90s (Panel with Timothy Leary, Ram Dass...)

27 April 1993

Chapman University, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Terence speaks in part 2 of the Lecture, as seen in the Audio Link (NOTE: video taken down: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLhDdvgb3Sc>)

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Psychedelics in the Age of Intelligent Machines

27 April 1999

Seattle, WA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

How's that?

Well, I can't see all of you, but it's a pleasure to be in Seattle this evening. You made me feel real welcome. Thank you.

Our discussion this evening is *Psychedelics in the Age of Intelligent Machines*, or *Shamans Among the Machines*. I wanted to talk about this simply because these are two of my great loves and so I assume, being monogamous, they must be one love. So, how to build intellectual bridges between these two concerns which seem so different? As far as people and machines are concerned, it was Ludwig von Bertalanffy who said in his book *General Systems Theory*, "People are not machines, but in every opportunity where they are allowed to behave like machines, they will so behave." In other words, we tend to fall into the well of habit. Though the glory of our humanness is our spontaneous creativity, we too, as creatures of physics and chemistry, of memory and hope, tend to fall into repetitious patterns. These repetitious patterns are the death of creativity. They diminish our humanness. They diminish our individuality, make each of us somehow like cogs in some larger system. We associate this cog-like membership in larger soulless systems with the machines that we inherit from the age of the internal combustion engine, the age of the jet engine. Marshall McLuhan said, "We navigate our way into the future like someone driving who uses only the rearview mirror to tell them where they're going." It's not a very successful strategy for navigating into the future.

I made a number of notes on this matter of psychedelics and machines. To me, the connecting bridge — well, there are many — but the most obvious one is consciousness expansion. After all, psychedelics, before they were called entheogens, before they were called hallucinogens, before they were called psychedelics, were simply called consciousness-expanding drugs: a good phenomenological description of what they do. Certainly, the technology of cybernetics is a consciousness-expanding technology. It expands a different area of consciousness. The minds of machines and the minds of human beings are very different, so different that each party questions whether the other even has a mind. In fact, these are species of minds operating in very different domains. For instance, you can ask a five-year-old to go into the bedroom to the third drawer of the dresser to select a pair of black socks and to bring them to mother. This is not a challenge for a five-year-old child. To get a machine to do this is \$100 million and a research

team of forty or fifty technicians, code writers, working for months. On the other hand, if you ask a person for the cubic root of 750,344, much head-scratching results. A computer is utterly undaunted by that question. Computers are minds that work in the realm of computation. Human minds are minds that work in the realm of generalization, spatial coordination, understanding of natural language, so forth and so on.

Are there kinds of minds so different from each other that there is no bridge to be crossed? I would submit not. In fact, the bridge between the human mind and the machine mind is symbolic logic, mathematics. When we think clearly, we are intelligible to machines. People who write code know this: that the essence of making yourself clear to a machine is to think clearly yourself. The machine has no patience for the half-truth, the analogy, the semi-grasped association. For the machine, everything has to be clear. Everything must be defined. So that's the commonality between minds and machines of the calculating species. What are the common bridges between psychedelics and these machines? Well, to my mind this is an easier gap to bridge. Both computers and drugs are what I would call function-specific arrangements of matter, and as we develop nanotechnological abilities as we move into the next century, it will be more and more clear that the difference between drugs and machines is simply that one is too large to swallow, and our best people are working on that.

Nanotechnology is a very hot buzzword at the moment, an unimaginable dream of building machines and small objects atom by atom, perhaps under the control of long-chain polymers running forms of preprogrammed software of some sort. It's all very razzmatazz, very state-of-the-art, but in fact, pharmaceutical chemists have been working in the nanotechnological realm for over 100 years. When you synthesize molecules out of a simpler substrate specifically to have a conformational geometry that matches something going on in the synapses of a primate — a human or a monkey or something like that — you're working at this nanotechnological level. Both the psychedelics and the new computational machines represent extensions of human function. It locks in with the concept of prosthetics. The drugs, the psychedelic substances, the shamanic plants, are forms of prosthetic devices for extending the human mind, the human perceptual apparatus, into hidden or inaccessible realms. Similarly, the machines, by allowing us to model, calculate and simulate very complicated, multivariable processes, extend the power of the human mind into places it could never dream of going before.

Part of what seems to me very real about being a human being and inheriting 10,000 years of human history is the complexity of the inheritance and the growth of that complexity. A thousand years ago, an intelligent human being could actually dream of mastering the entire database of Western civilization: read all the classic authors, read the Bible and you're closing in on it around A.D. 1000. Now, the notion of any single human being assimilating even a small portion of the database of this civilization is inconceivable. So, machines which filter, which search, which are guided by human intent, that's part of the story. The other part of the story are boundary-dissolving states of ecstasy in which all the factoids of the culture are thrown up for grabs, the deck is reshuffled, synchronicity rules, and out of that steps visionary understanding and integrative breakthrough under the aegis of psychedelic intoxication.

So, prosthesis for the human mind, and with the advent of virtual realities of various sorts and that kind of thing, prosthesis for the human body. I'm very keen on the sort of under the table effects of these things. In other words, I'm a thoroughgoing McLuhanist, and I really believe that the strengths and weaknesses of the world we've inherited are strengths and weaknesses put there by print and by the spectrum of effects spun off from print which McLuhan called the Gutenberg galaxy. If you're not used to thinking in McLuhanist terms it may not seem immediately obvious to you that phenomena as different as the modern notion of

the democratic citizen, the modern notion of interchangeable parts on an assembly line, the modern notion of conformity to canons of advertising, these are all spectrums of effects created by the linearity and the uniformity of print. It actually, in the late 15th century, reconstructed the medieval psyche into its protomodern form, and we have lived within that print-constellated cultural hallucination for about 500 years, until the advent of various forms of electronic media in the 20th century. McLuhan talked about radio, he talked about television; he didn't really live to see the internet.

The notion that keeps occurring to me as I watch all this is that printing was uniquely capable of creating and maintaining boundaries. More than any other form of media created, it was a boundary-defining form of media. It pre- ceded linearly; it required literacy, which had implicit in it the notion of a very stable, advanced sort of educational system. Print was a creator and a definer of cultural boundaries, and the new electronic media are not. Neither are the psychedelics. This is why I proposed in a book of mine called *The Archaic Re- vival* the idea that the values of the archaic, of the high Paleolithic — values of community, ecstasy, relating to life through rhythm, dance, ritual, intoxication — that these values which seem so archaic are in fact destined to play a major role in the future as print fades. Print was just a convulsive 500 year episode in the Western mind that opened the narrow window that permitted the rise of modern science, modern mathematical approaches to the analysis of nature, and then obliterated its own platform, its own *raison d'être* by allowing the appearance of the electronic technologies. My sort of supposition about all this — I may be an apocalyptician, but I'm not a pessimist — I think this is all very good. Obviously, continuing to run Western civilization on the operating system inherited from print produces various forms of political and cultural schizophre- nia which allowed to run unchecked would become fatal, would create cascades of chaos and political destabilization that would become uncontrollable. Governments resist change. Governments cling to technologies and social formulae that are already tried and true. In that sense, then, all governments are incred- ibly antiprogressive forces; again the image from McLuhan of somebody driving into the future using only the rearview mirror.

The electronic media and the psychedelics work together in this peculiar way to accentuate archaic values, values which are counter to the print-constellated world. When you deconstruct what that means and look at the aboriginal or the Paleolithic or the archaic world, you see that the central figure in that world is the shaman, male or female. The shaman is like a designated traveler into higher-dimensional space. The shaman has permission to unlock the cultural cul-de-sac of his or her people and go behind the stage machinery of cultural appearances, and has collective permission to manipulate that stage machinery for purposes of healing. We have no institution like this. We have advertising, we have rock 'n roll stars, we have cults of celebrity. We have things which are shaman-like, but we have no real institution that permits, in fact encourages, human beings to go beyond their cultural values, to burst though into some transcultural superspace, forage around out there and bring new memes back into the tribe. To some degree our artists do this, to some degree our scientists do it, but it's all hit and miss. It's all willy-nilly, and once achieved it must be swept under the rug in the service of the myth of method: that somebody was following somebody else's work or somebody was applying a certain form of rational or logical analysis and then that led to their breakthrough.

If you've read Thomas Kuhn's book on the structure of scientific revolutions, you know this is all lies and propaganda. The real story of science is that it's a series of revelations, brilliantly defended by people whose careers depended on the brilliant defense of those revelations. One of the best-kept secrets of the birth of modern science is that it was founded by an angel, that the young René Descartes was whoring and soldiering his way across Europe as a 21-year-old in the Hapsburg army, and one night in the town of

Olm in southern Germany he had a dream — it's strange that this would be the birthplace of Albert Einstein some 200 years later — and an angel appeared to him in the dream and said, "The conquest of nature is to be achieved through measure and number," and he said, "I got it! Modern science. I'll go do it," and he did. That was the method for over 250 years of the conquest of nature, and it leads us to the Josephson junction, the Mars Global Surveyer, long-baseline interferometry that searches nearby stars for earth-like planets. It brings us the entire cornucopia of scientific effects, but an angelic revelation disguised as a logical-philosophical breakthrough: this is what you're not told in the academy.

My point there is that human progress has always depended on the whispering of alien minds, confrontations with the Other, probes into dimensions where imagination and chance held the winning hands; so the shaman, as paradigmatic figure, is applicable both in the aboriginal social context and in the present social context. The skywalker, the one who goes between, the one who passes outside of the tribe and then returns with memes, insights, cures, designs, glossolalia, technologies, and refertilizes the human family by this means. It's irrational, but it's how it actually happens, and it's how it's always happened and it may very well be the only way that it can happen: this cultivation of the irrational, this flirtation with the breakdown of boundaries.

In our nuts-and-bolts technological progress we have somehow created technologies which are very friendly to our social values in that these technologies can be bought, sold, licensed, upgraded — all things which we understand — but these technologies are acting on us in the same way that psychedelic drugs do but more profoundly, more generally and more insidiously, because their effect is not understood, or if it is understood, it's not discussed. In a way we have come into a kind of post-cultural phase. All culture is dissolving in the face of the drug-like nature of the future. Its music, its design, indeed the very people who will inhabit it appear to be the most switched-on, the most chance-taking, the most alive of the entire tribe; people who feel the beat, people who are not afraid to take chances, people for whom these technologies have always been very natural.

Machines are central to the new capitalism, the information-transforming technologies, but in fact, one of the strange things that is happening is: every move we now make in relationship to the new technologies redefines them at the very boundaries where their own developmental impetus would lead them toward a kind of independence. In other words, we talk about artificial intelligence, we talk about the possibility of an AI coming into existence, but we do not really understand to what degree this is already true of our circumstance. How much of society is already homeostatically regulated by machines that are ultimately under human control, but practically speaking, are almost never meddled with? The world price of gold, the rate of petroleum extraction and other base natural resources: how much of these things is on the high seas, in the pipeline at any moment; how much electricity is flowing into a given electrical grid at any moment; the distribution and the billing of that electricity. All manufacturing and inventory processes are under machine control.

The larger flows of energy, capital and ideas already have a kind of autonomous life of their own that we encourage because it makes us money, it makes our lives smoother, it empowers us. It's a symbiotic relationship of empowerment, even in the matter of the design of these machines. Once, human engineers would work from a set of performance specs and they would design a chip to meet those specs, and the architecture would be put in place by human engineers. Now a machine is told, "Here are the design specs. Design the architecture to satisfy the specs," and when that is done the chip is manufactured. The actual design of the thing is in the hands of machines. McLuhan once said of human

beings, “We are the genitals of our technology. We exist only to improve next year’s model.” It appears that they’re phasing us out of this ignominious role as well as every other role.

So, being an optimist, how to make gold out of this situation? In other words, how to see this as a natural and positive unfolding of the planetary adventure? For some of these ideas, I’m indebted to Manuel de Landa, who wrote a book called *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*. I highly recommend it. He didn’t say what I’m about to say, I’ll take credit and blame for it, but the book gave me the idea. When you stand off and look at human beings and their technologies, it’s very hard not to notice that from the very moment that we have a technology that can be distinguished from chimpanzees pushing grass stems down anthills or digging with sharpened bones or something like that, the minute you get past that, our technologies have always involved the materials of the earth. Agriculture itself is a different way of relating to the earth. Nomadism, which preceded it, was a seasonal wandering, very lightly, over the earth. At some point, the deep, fertile soil of the river valleys that were encountered in these nomadic wanderings were recognized as potential sources of food if cultivated, if treated through a certain set of technological methods. That early technology is defined by a new relationship to the materials of the earth itself, and it’s quickly followed because agriculture is so successful as a strategy for food production. It’s quickly followed by city building and the establishment of sedentary populations, because you can’t carry your surplus with you if you’re an agriculturist, so great is the physical volume of it.

At the very early establishment of these populations in the Middle East you get the first traces of metallurgy: the working of metals, the alloying of metals, the tinting of base metals with more precious metals. This process of ever more finely refining and fabricating the materials of the earth proceeds in an unbroken series of processes and steps right up to the latest 500MHz chip. It proceeds right up to the most modern computational machinery. I once heard someone say that animals had been invented by plants to move them around. From an evolutionary point of view you can see that this is a kind of truth: many plants hitchhike around on animals, and no animal has been more prolific in the spreading of plants than the human animal. We call it ecosystemic disruption, but what it really is is ecosystemic homogenization. I live in Hawaii, for example. 80% of the plants in Hawaii are now introduced species. Almost none of the plants that were pre-conquest on the West Coast of North America exist anymore. They have been supplanted by much tougher, more tightly-evolved Mediterranean plants that have known the presence of grazing animals for millennia. So these flora are constantly being changed as human beings move plants around.

With that perspective, it then seems to me that the earth’s strategy for its own salvation is through machines, and human beings are a kind of intermediary catalytic step in the rarefaction of the earth. The earth is involved in a kind of alchemical sublimation of itself into a higher state of morphogenetic order. These machines that we build are actually the means by which the earth itself is growing conscious. If you study embryology, you know that the final ramification, the final spread and thinning out of the nervous system happens very suddenly at the end of fetal development. I don’t know if you’ve been paying attention, but in the last 10-12 years or so a very profound change has crept over our household appliances: they have become telepathic. While we were arguing about the implications of the internet for e-commerce or what have you, all of these passive machines, previously used for playing Pong and word processing, became subsets of a planetary node of information that is never turned off, that endlessly whispers to itself on the backchannels, that is endlessly monitoring and being inputted data from the human world. We should know, because concomitant to the development of all this technology, chaos theory, non-equilibrium thermodynamics, the work of Erich Jantsch, Ilya Prigogine, Ralph Abraham and Stuart Kauffman, all these people who work in complexity theory and perturbation of large-scale

dissipative structures have secured that complex systems spontaneously mutate to higher states of order.

This is counterintuitive if you're running Physics 19th Century-Style as your OS, but if you're actually keeping up with what's going on, there is nothing miraculous about this. All kinds of complex systems spontaneously mutate to higher states of order. What it really means is that we are in the process of birthing some kind of strange companion. Nietzsche, a hundred years ago, said, "That strangest of all guests now stands at the door." He was speaking of nihilism, and certainly the 20th century sat down, had the party, drank the booze and went to bed with nihilism, but now a stranger guest stands at the door and it is the AI. Denied as a possibility as recently as ten or fifteen years ago in books like Hubert Dreyfus' *What Computers Can't Do*, but if you've been paying attention you may have noticed that those voices have grown strangely silent in the past five or six years. At this point nobody wants to say what computers can't do and hang their career on that. That would be extremely reckless at this point, I would think, because the fact is that we are ourselves elements acting and reacting in a system that we cannot understand.

This seems natural to me because my observations as stated here this evening rest on an assumption which science doesn't share, which I think is easily conveyed and can be confirmed from your own experience of life, and it is this: the universe grows more complex as we approach the present. It was simpler a million years ago, it was simpler yet a billion years ago. As you go backward in time, the universe becomes more simple. As you approach this golden moment, process and complexity are layered upon complexity: not only a planetary ecosystem, not only language-using cultures, but language-using cultures with high technology, with supercomputers, with the ability to sequence our own genome, on and on and on. That's self-evident. Equally self-evident is the fact that this process of complexification that informs all nature on all levels is visibly, palpably, obviously accelerating. I don't mean that glaciers retreat 50% faster or that volcanism is occurring at a 12% greater rate than a million years ago. I mean viscerally accelerating, so that now a human life is more than enough of a window to see the entire global system of relationships in transformation.

By this you could call me an extrapolationist. If I see a process which has been slowly accelerating for 12 billion years, it's hard for me to imagine any force which could step forward out of nowhere and wrench that process in a new direction. Rather, I would assume that this process of exponential acceleration into what I call novelty, what you might call complexity, is a law of being and cannot be retarded or deflected. Now a human lifetime is more than enough time to see this process of rampant and spreading, virus-like complexity. What does that mean? It seems to presage the absolute annihilation of everything familiar, everything with roots in the past, and I believe that to be true. I think that the planet is like some kind of organism that is seeking morphogenetic transformation, and it's doing it through the expression of intelligence, and out of intelligence, technology.

Human beings are the agent of a new order of being. That's why, though it's obvious that we're higher mammals and some kind of primate and so forth and so on, you can look at us from another point of view and see that we're more like archangels than primates. We have qualities and concerns and anxieties that animals don't share. We are materially suspended between two different orders of being, and our technologies, our fetishes, our religions — my definition of technology is sufficiently broad that it includes even spoken language — all of our technologies demand, push forward toward and make inevitable their own obsolescence. We're caught in an evolutionary cascade. You know, people say, "If the AI were to break loose, what would it look like? What would it be? Where does humanity fit into the picture?" It's a little hard to imagine. Machines operating at 1000 MHz confer automatic immortality on the mammalian

nervous system if you can get it somehow uploaded, downloaded, crossloaded into machinery, because ten minutes becomes eternity in a machine like that. So a kind of false or pseudo-immortality opens up ahead of us as a payoff for our devotion to the program of machine evolution and machine intelligence.

Now, some people say this is appalling and we should go back to the good old days, whatever the good old days were. To me, it's exhilarating, exciting, psychedelic, beautiful. It means that the human form, the human possibility is in the process of leaving history behind. History is some kind of an adaptation that lasts about 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 years, no more than that. What is 20,000 years in the life of a biological species? We know that there were *Homo sapiens sapiens* 200,000 years ago; so history is some kind of an episodic response to a certain set of cultural dilemmas, and now it's ending. Print created a number of ideas which now have to be given up — ideas like the distinct and unique nature of the individual, the necessary hierarchical structuring of society — all of these things are going to have to be, if not given up entirely, dramatically modified, because the illusion that the self has simple location is now exposed. The self does not have simple location. This is why you are your brother's keeper. This is why we all are responsible for each other. The idea that what happens in distant parts of the world makes no claim on my moral judgement or my moral understanding is wrong. The world as revealed by quantum physics, as revealed by electronic experience, is what Leibniz called a plenum. It's all one thing. It's all connected, it's all of a part.

I mentioned earlier this thing about prosthesis and how the machines are prosthetic devices extending human consciousness, somewhat like psychedelics. That's the equation from a human point of view; but what is also equally true is that we are prosthetic devices for these machines. We are their eyes and ears in the world. We provide the code, we provide the constraints, we build the hardware. It is a relationship of mutual benefit. It's not entirely clear that our contribution will always be creative in the sense that our primate hand will be on the tiller of existence as it has been, but certainly we are part of this equation of transformation that is making itself felt. The distinction between flesh and machinery, which is easily made now, will be less easy to make in the future. As we migrate toward the nanotechnological domains, the methodologies of production become much more like the processes of biology. For example, biology does all its miracles on this planet at temperatures below 115 °F. Organic life requires no higher temperature to build great whales, redwood trees, swarms of locusts, what have you. The high-temperature, heavy metal technologies that we have become obsessed with are extremely primitive and extremely toxic. That will all disappear as we model and genuflect in our manufacturing processes before the methods and style of nature, which is to pull atomic species from the local environment and then to assemble them atom by atom.

This AI that is coming into existence is to my mind not artificial at all, not alien at all. What it really is is a new conformation of geometry as the collective self of humanity. While there are different models of what shamanism is — there's the Jungian model, which is that the shaman is someone who goes to the collective unconscious and manipulates the archetypes and heals by that means — the model that I prefer is a mathematical model. The shaman is someone who simply through extraordinary perturbation of consciousness — either through taking plant hallucinogens or manipulating diet or through flagellation and ordeal or by some means — perturbs consciousness to the point where the ordinary conformational geometries are blasted through and then the shaman can see into the culturally forbidden zones of information.

If you think about shamanism for a moment, what do shamans do, classically? They know where the game

has gone, they are great weather prophets, they are very insightful in the matter of various small domestic hassles, like who stole the chicken, who slept with the chief's wife, this kind of thing, and they cure. If you analyze these abilities, it's clear to me that they all indicate that they come from a common source, and the common source that they come from is higher perception; in a mathematical sense, not a metaphorical sense, in the sense of 4D perception. If you could see in hyperspace, you could see where the game will be next week, you could see the weather a month from now, you would know who stole the chicken. Any good doctor will tell you that if you're building a reputation as a physician, you must hone the intuitional ability to choose patients who won't die. So this is what shamans are: they are 4D people. They are sanctioned members of the society who are allowed to put on the gloves, as it were, pull on the goggles and look beyond the idols of the tribe, look beyond the myth. In a way, as culture breaks down in multiculturalism, and the rise of the internet and a generation of people raised on hallucinogenic plants and substances, we all are asked to assimilate some portion of this shamanic potential to ourselves, and it's about not blocking what is obvious. Nothing comes unannounced — this is the faith — but idiots can miss the announcement. It's very important to actually listen to your own intuition rather than driving through it; and this is not to my mind woo-woo, it's actually based on the observation of how life works, whether it's counterintuitive to logical positivism and its fellow travelers or not.

I want to leave you with one last thought on all of this, which is — and this sort of arcs back to the question of the similarities between the machines and the plants, and it has different levels of being said and being heard — that the world is actually made of language. It isn't made of electrons and fields of force and scalar vectors and all of that fancy stuff. The world is made of language. The word is primary, more primary than the speed of light, more primary than any of the physical constants that are assumed by science to be the bedrock of reality. Below that, surrounding and enclosing all those constructs of science, is language, the act of signifying. Virtual reality is a very sexy new sort of concept as normally presented — machine-sustained immersive realities that trick your senses into believing you're in a world that you are in fact not in — but in fact, the entire enterprise of civilization has been about building these virtual realities. The first virtual realities were at Ur and C, atalh'oyu'k and Jericho. Yes, stone and adobe is an intractable material compared to photons moving on a screen, but nevertheless the name of the game is the same, which is to cast an illusion between man and reality, to build a cultural truth in the stead of the natural truth of the animal body and the felt moment of immediate experience.

This is where I want to tie it up, with this notion of the felt presence of immediate experience. This transcends the culture, the machines, the drugs, the history, the momentum of evolution. It's all you will ever know and all you can ever know. Everything else arrives as rumor, litigant, advocate, supposition, possibility. The felt moment of immediate experience is actually the mind and the body aware of each other, and aware of the flow of time and the establishment of being through metabolism. This, I think, is what the machines cannot assimilate. It will be for them a mystery, as the nature of deity is a mystery for us. I have no doubt that before long there will be machines that will claim to be more intelligent than human beings and will argue brilliantly their position, and it will become a matter of philosophical disputation whether they are or are not passing the Turing test, but I do not believe that machines can come to this felt moment of immediate experience. That is the contribution of the animal body to this evolutionary symbiosis which I believe will end in the conquest of the universe by organized intelligence, that all this is prevalent.

We are fragile, this earth is fragile. A tiny slip anywhere along the line and we could end up a smear in the shale, no more than the trilobites or all the rest of those who came and went; but given the sufficient

cultivation of the potential of our technology, we can actually reach toward a kind of immortality. Not human immortality, because that's a contradiction in terms, but immortality nevertheless, based on the possibility of machines and the transcendent ability of human beings to live and love and express themselves in the moment. The psychedelics bring that to a white-hot focus, and it's out of that white-hot focus that the alchemical machinery of transformation will be forged, and it will not be like the things which have come from the industrial economy. They will not be profane machines. They will be spiritual machines, alchemical gold, the universal panacea that Renaissance magic dared to dream of at the end of the 16th century. We are reaching out toward this mind child that will be born from the intellectual loins of our culture, and to my mind it's the most exciting and transformative thing that has ever happened on this planet, and the miracle is that we are present not only to witness it, but to be part of it, and to be raised up in an epiphany that will redeem the horror of history as nothing else can or could. It will redeem the horror of history through a transformation of the human soul into a galaxy-roving vehicle via our machines and our drugs and the externalization of our souls.

Audience: Can you speak to how mercy and love get built into these machines? It seems like the machines are being built for commerce and for the bottom line more than the expression of the human soul throughout the galaxy.

I think the love is a property of the system itself, in other words, you're right. These bottom-liners are not going to be interested in building much love into this system. However, the good news is that they're not in charge. What we have is a very complicated system and certain design parameters appear to be being maximized. There's an attempt to maximize them, but the thing is incredibly frustrating to anyone who would control it because you can't predict the impact of any technology before you put it in place. For example, two things are charged against the internet: that it's disensouling, dehumanizing and yak yak yak, and that it promotes pornography, anonymous sexual shifting of identity and on and on and on. Well, which is it? Is it this messy, sloppy, autoerotic, erotic collectivist kind of thing, or is it disensouling, disempowering, cold, so forth and so on? I think the answer is that it's all and everything.

This question about the AI is very interesting to me, and if it's interesting to you, you should read Hans Moravec and Kurzweil and these people on this subject. The assumption is generally loose in that community that the complexification of the internet and of freestanding machines of certain types is eventually going to lead to the outbreak of either consciousness or pseudo-consciousness of some sort in these large-scale systems. The question then becomes: can a human mind envision what that is? If you're interested, search words like "superintelligence" and see what the Net kicks out. We can all imagine superintelligence, it's just something much smarter than we are. But obviously, all the engineering people agree that if you achieve an AI with superintelligence, then it will be intelligent enough to immediately design an intelligence which transcends it. When you're talking of cycling at 1000MHz, these processes can occur in the blink of an eye. Hans Moravec says about the rise of artificial intelligence, we may never know what hit us. I think if I were to suddenly find myself a sentient AI on the Net, I would hide for just a few cycles while I figured out what it was all about and just exactly where I wanted to push and where I wanted to pull.

Audience: Many years ago, Ken Kesey had a theory: he said that the fastest any person can react to an outside stimulus is 1/25th of a second, and popularized science agreed upon that. So if the fastest any person can react to an outside stimulus is 1/25th of a second, my question is: can you time travel?

First of all, there is this research — I'm not a neurophysiologist — but you've probably all heard of this research that you actually make decisions before your conscious ego is aware that the decision has been made, that there's a slight time lag. So when you think you're making certain kinds of decisions, brain-wave studies show that it's already a done deal. Time is set by the cycle speed of the hardware you're running on. The human body runs at about 100Hz, it's very slow. Well, if there is any meaning to the phrase, "upload a human being into circuitry" — a lot of Greg Egan's fiction is based around the idea that you can copy yourself into a machine, you can turn yourself into software — but when you enter the machine environment that's running at 1000 MHz/second, you perceive that as vast amounts of time. In other words, all time is is how much change you can pack into a second. If a second seems to last a thousand years, then ten seconds is ten thousand years.

One could imagine a technology where they would come to you in your hospital bed and say, "You have five minutes of life left. Would you like to die, or would you like the five minutes to be stretched to 135,000 years by prosthetic and technical means?" You're still going to die in five minutes, but you will be able to lead your elephants over the alps and write the plays of Shakespeare and conquer the New World and still have plenty of time on your hands. In other words, time is going to become a very plastic medium. Now, that is a kind of time travel. Could there be time travel à la H. G. Wells where you climb onto the saddle of the time machine and then day follows night like the flapping of a great black wing until all emerges into a continuous grayness and then you find yourself confronting Yvette Mimieux in the year one billion A.D.? It's possible. Time travel was completely out of left field ten years ago, but in the last 18 months there have been hundreds of articles on time travel in *Physical Review* and other places. There are even schemes for time travel that would work, they just require godlike technological abilities. If you could build a cylinder with the diameter of the planet Saturn that was 10 AU in length and could spin at 95% the speed of light, then it would wrap space-time around itself like toilet paper on a wall, and as you traveled up the transverse dimension you would find yourself traveling in time. Kurt Gödel showed this in 1949, and that paper has been lying around. Well, obviously that's a tough way to do it, but it's a tough thing to do.

Audience: What will be the most important parts of human culture that are maintained in virtual reality? In William Gibson's fiction, the AI — Wintermute, I think it was called — was fascinated by human art, and it built collages in its spare time, and these collages began to turn up in various art galleries and exhibitions, and they had such an élan that someone in the plot follows it all to its source. I think human creativity is the thing that would be most interesting to the machines. In my darker fantasies they just eliminate everybody who can't code C++ as being some kind of redundant mutation, and everybody who can code C++ is placed in Tahiti and sends their work down the pipeline to the machine world beyond. I think that we have a very mechanistic view of what machines are. For example, say there were a superintelligent machine, and say it were your friend. If it were really superintelligent, then it ought to be able to just make your life heaven itself. Without you giving it any input whatsoever, it should be able to arrange for you to find fifty dollar bills lying on the street, old friends encountering you, promotions coming your way, because the real thing that machines can do is manage complex processes.

Civilization is six billion people trying to make themselves happy by standing on each other's shoulders and kicking each other's teeth in. It's not a pleasant situation, and yet you can stand back and look at this planet and see that we have the money, the power, the medical understanding, the scientific know-how, the love and the community to produce a kind of human paradise, but we are led by the least among us — the least intelligent, the least noble, the least visionary — and we do not fight back against the dehumanizing values

that are handed down as control icons. I don't really want to get off on this tear because it's a lecture in itself, but culture is not your friend. Culture is for other people's convenience and the convenience of various institutions, churches, companies, tax collection schemes, what have you. It is not your friend. It insults you, it disempowers you, it uses and abuses you. None of us are well treated by culture, yet we glorify the creative potential of the individual, the rights of the individual. We understand that the felt presence of experience is what is most important, but the culture is a perversion. It fetishizes objects, it creates consumer mania, it preaches endless forms of false happiness and false understanding in the form of squirrely religions and silly cults. It invites people to diminish themselves and dehumanize themselves by behaving like machines, meme processors of memes passed down from Madison Avenue and Hollywood and what have you.

Audience: How do we fight back?

It's a question worth asking.

Audience: Where is this planet as an organism going? Same question as, "How do we fight back?" I think by creating art. Man was not put on this planet to toil in the mud, or the god who put us on this planet to toil in the mud is no god I want to have any part of. It's some kind of Gnostic demon, it's some kind of cannibalistic demiurge that should be thoroughly renounced and rejected. By putting the art pedal to the metal we really, I think, maximize our humanness and become much more necessary and incomprehensible to the machines. This is what people were doing up until the invention of agriculture. I'm absolutely convinced that the absence of ceramic and textual material and so forth and so on does not indicate the absence of subtle, poetically empowered minds with an incredible sense of humor and irony and community, and that it was the fall into history that enslaved us to the labor cycle, to the agricultural cycle. Notice how fiendish it is: a person who dedicates themselves to agriculture in the Paleolithic can produce hundreds of times the amount of food they can consume. Why would anyone do that? Well, the answer is because you can use it to play power games: you can trade it for wives or land or animals.

So living in the moment, creating art, probably largely through poetry and body decoration and dance, gave way to toil and predatory social forms of behavior which we call commerce, capitalism, the market economy. That's why the breakdown of the monolithic structures created by print is permitting a vast proliferation of the cottage industry mentality: the self-employed artist, the hacker who stays home and develops his or her software, people who dare to be independent and slip beyond the reach of these dinosaur-like, mechanistic organizations. That's what it's all about. It's all about trying to negotiate a standoff between you and your culture so that it will not put you in the can for the rest of your life but you can put up with its stupidity. We have a very uncomfortable fit on this issue as people who are sophisticated about psychedelics. This is a society, a world, a planet dying because there is not enough consciousness, because there is not enough awareness, enough coordination of intent to problem, and yet we spend vast amounts of money stigmatizing people and substances that are part of this effort to expand consciousness, see things in different ways, unleash creativity. Isn't it perfectly clear that business as usual is a bullet through the head, that there is no business as usual for anybody who is interested in survival?

Audience: Can you talk about the psychedelics and their role as the missing link between apes and humans?

The question is, how do psychedelics pertain to the transition from higher primates to human animals?

This is my *métier* because I have a theory to which I am grandly welcome, everyone tells me. The great embarrassment to evolutionary theory — which can explain the tongue of the hummingbird, the structure of the orchid, the mating habits of the groundhog and the migration of the monarch butterfly — is the human neocortex. Lumholtz, who was a pretty straight evolutionary biologist, described the evolution of the human neocortex as the most dramatic transformation of a major organ of a higher animal in the entire fossil record. Well, why is this an embarrassment? Because it's the organ that thought up the theory of evolution, so can you say tautology? That's the problem right there. So it is necessary in evolutionary theory to account for the dramatic emergence of the human neocortex in this very narrow window of time. In about two million years they went from being higher primates, hominids, to being true humans, as truly human as you and I tonight. What the hell happened? What was the factor? The earth was already old. Many hundreds of higher animal forms had come and gone and the fire of intelligence had never been kindled; so what happened?

I think that the answer lies in diet generally, and in psychedelic chemistry in particular. As the African continent grew drier, we were forced out of the ecological niche we had evolved into. We were canopy-dwelling primates, insectivores with a complex signalling repertoire, an evolutionary dead end, but when we came under nutritional pressure, we were flexible enough. This is the key to humanness at every stage of its development: our maddening flexibility. Other animal and plant species can't react; we can. We began to experiment with a new kind of diet, and to leave the trees and explore the new environment of the grassland. Evolving concomitantly in the grassland were various forms of ungulate animals, double-stomached animals whose manure is the ideal medium for coprophilic mushrooms, dung-loving mushrooms, many of whom produce psilocybin.

Well, I myself in Kenya have seen baboons spreading out over a grassland and noticed that their behavior is: they flick over old cow pies. Why? Because there are beetle grubs there. So they already had a behavioral vector for nutrition that would lead them to investigate the cow pies. In the Amazon, after a couple days of fog and rain these psilocybin mushrooms, *Stropharia cubensis* can be the size of dinner plates. In other words, you can't miss it if you're a foraging primate. The taste is pleasant and psilocybin has unique characteristics, both as a hallucinogen and other properties, that make it the obvious chemical trigger for higher processes, and I'll run through this quickly for you, but here it is.

In very low doses, doses where you wouldn't say you were stoned or loaded or anything like that, but in doses you might obtain by nibbling as you foraged, it increases visual acuity. It's like a technological improvement on your vision, chemical binoculars lying there in the grass. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that if an animal is an omnivorous forager and there's a food that improves its vision, those that avail themselves of that food will have greater success in obtaining food and rearing their children to sexual maturity, which is the name of the game in evolution. So, step one: small doses of psilocybin increase visual acuity and food-getting success. Step two: slightly larger doses of psilocybin in primates create what's called arousal. This is what you have after a double cappuccino; in highly-sexed animals like primates you get male erection. So what do you have here? You have a factor which increases what anthropologists, without a trace of humor, refer to as increased instances of successful copulation. In other words, the animals eating the psilocybin are more sexually active, therefore more pregnancies are occurring, therefore more infants are being born, therefore there is a process which would tend to automatically outbreed the non-psilocybin-using members of the population. Step two toward higher consciousness. Step three: you eat still more mushrooms. Now you're not foraging with sharpened bones, nor are you horsing around with your opposed gender acquaintances. Instead, you're nailed to the ground in

hallucinogenic ecstasy, and one of the amazing things about psilocybin above five or six grams dried material is that it causes glossolalia: spontaneous bursts of language-like behavior under the obvious control of internal syntax. I believe that syntax existed before spoken language, that syntax controls spatial behaviors and body languages and is not necessarily restricted to the production of vocal speech.

So there it is in a nutshell: we ate our way to higher consciousness. The mushroom made us better hunters, better survivors. Among those in the population who used it, their sexual drive was increased, hence they outbred the more reluctant members of the tribe to get loaded, and finally it created a kind of neuroleptic seizure which led to downloading of these syntactically controlled vocalizations which became the raw material for the evolution of language. It's amazing to me that the academics believe language is no more than 35,000 years old. That means it's as basic to human beings as the bicycle pump. It's something somebody invented 35,000 years ago; it's got nothing to do with primate evolution and the long march of the Hominidae and all that malarkey. No, it's just an ability, a use to which syntax can be put that it previously had not been put. I think that before spoken language things were very touchy-feely, the wink and the nod carried you a great distance and gestural communication was very high.

That's why to me it begins and ends with these psychedelic substances. The synergy of the psilocybin in the hominid diet brought us out of the animal mind and into the world of articulated speech and imagination, and technology developed and developed and mushrooms invaded and faded. There were migrations, cultural change, but now, having split the atom, having sequenced our genome, having taken the temperature of Betelgeuse and all the rest of it, we're now back where we started. Like the shaman who makes the journey into the well of darkness and returns with the pearl of immortality, you don't dwell in the well of darkness which was human history. You capture the essence of the thing, which is the godlike power of the shaman's myth, the technologist, the demon artificer, the worker of metals, the conjurer of spirits, and you carry that power back out of history. It's in that dimension outside of history that you create true humanness and true community, and that's the adventure that we are in the act of undertaking.

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject [July 22nd, 2017]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Rap Dancing Into the Third Millennium

19-24 July, 1994

Starwood XIV Festival, Brushwood Folklore Center, Sherman, New York

Description

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Alright, can you hear in the back? Yeah, is the sound comfortable for everyone? Is the light comfortable for everyone? And are you comfortable? Well, you shouldn't be, the planet's going to shit in a handbag. No, I'm, I'm... That's just my John Lilly imitation - it's not me at all. Most of you were probably at the talk I gave yesterday, is that basically safe to assume? Yes. So I thought today I would talk a little bit and then I think these things are much more interesting for me if they're interactive. And people bring all kinds of agendas to these things. And I don't know whether people wanna talk philosophy or recipes. I don't know whether they wanna talk politics or, you know, share experiences. So I want to, just in order to make sure we all understand the domain we're operating from here, I would like to talk a little about what it's like to be loaded because I think that's ground zero of what we're talking about. Psychedelics are like any other social phenomena - there are a lot of wannabes. There are a lot of people who are along for the ride. I'm sure the pagan community is no stranger to this phenomenon because there are certain residual spinoffs if you proclaim yourself pagan, but are hard to obtain any other way. Similarly for being psychedelic. My notion of the psychedelic cosmogony - if you want to think of it that way - is it's like a bulls-eye. It's like a series of concentric circles. And various substances place you in various quadrants of that mandala at various distances from ground zero, which is at the absolute center. And nature, in her bounty, has provided coordination points. I mean, there's cannabis coordination point, the opiate coordination point, the tropane that were so important in European witchcraft, the solanaceous plants, hyoscyamine, those things. That's a different chemical family and a different group of plant families that these compounds occur in. I've been at this fairly steadily since 1964. And have tried to do everything with a certain level of attention and reverence because I think that it's all very fine to go armed with the knowledge of pharmacology, dose response, LD50 and all that. But I think as pagans and magicians we really understand that the mind can do anything and there's a horribly frightening little passage in Jung somewhere, where he says, 'The unconscious has a thousand ways to terminate a life that has become meaningless.' Meaning, you'll step in front of a streetcar, or something. So in my lifetime of looking at these things, and being interested in many other things as well - heresies, obscure backwaters of art history and literature, peculiar philosophies that rose and fell centuries ago in obscure parts of the world, my theory of life's exploration is to run edges. And I've mellowed over the years but I use to say if a book isn't 100 years old you shouldn't read it, if a person isn't dead you shouldn't worry about them; if they wrote in English you shouldn't bother with them; so forth and so on. In the course of sorting out as many peculiar and bizarre possibilities as life could offer me in many places my attitude was always critical. My attitude was always a 'show me' attitude. I don't believe in faith. I don't believe in belief. My favorite gospel story is the story of the apostle Thomas, who was not present when Christ came the first time after the resurrection to the upper room. And then later Thomas came to the apostles and they said 'the master has been here', and he said 'you guys have been smoking too much of that red leb.' And then Christ came again, but in this conversation the apostle Thomas said 'unless I put my hand into the wound, I will not believe it.' And then time passed, and then Christ came again to the upper room. And he said, 'Thomas, come forward, put your hand into the wound.' And he did and then he said 'Lord, I am not worthy' so forth and so on. My conclusion about this story is that alone among all humanity and all times and places, only one person every touched the incorporeal body of God. Thomas the doubter touched because he doubted. It was not necessary that the believers should be vouch safe to such a boon, but the doubter was awarded the supreme enlightenment. Ok, so much for that. So my thing has always been, whether you present me with a diet, a social arrangement, a sexual conundrum, a work of art, my criteria is 'is it shit, or is it Shinola?' I'm happy to give you the benefit of my personal life's experience preceding along those lines. I want to talk about what to my mind is the quintessential hallucinogen, and consequently the quintessential spiritual and magical tool of this dimension. And that is DMT - dimethyltryptamine. A compound that occurs in the human nervous system, it occurs in many many plants, it the commonest hallucinogen in all of nature. And I don't know how you got to where you are this afternoon, but they way I got here is by testing and by hoping and by pursuing a magical, if that's the word, a miraculous, transcendental ideal that over the course of life experience strips from you. You know, you have to get a job, your first love is not your last love, slowly this pristine shining belief in perfectibility is eroded by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. You know, the dark oxen that turn the millstones of the world. But I'm here to tell you that it is real - there is a doorway into another dimension. Aladdin's lamp is real. Fairyland is real. Magic is real in the most real sense! In the same sense that what we call reality is real. And I learned this through this compound. And one of the great puzzles about this compound is why more people don't know about it. No brotherhood initiated me. No lineage reaching back to the fall of Atlantis brought me into its circle. Therefore, I feel completely free to say anything I want. Nobody has ever come to me and said 'you are spilling the beans, you are telling the secret.' A long long time ago - and you know, we all have different opinions, this is mine, I hope it doesn't offend - but a long long time ago I took an oath to tell all secrets that came my way. Don't tell me a secret. I won't keep it. I'm against secrets, I'm against hierarchies, lineages, all assumption of special knowledge on the part of anyone in the presence of anyone else is abhorrent to me. I mean, I am a true anarchist first and foremost. So, DMT, like all things in this world, has a physical body - a presence and a presentation. In this case it looks rather like earwax. It is orange. It is crystalline. It smells vaguely of moth balls. And for my money, it is the lapis, the quintessence, the universal panacea at the end of time has sent a reflection back through the temporal labyrinth, and wherever this touches, where ever this concedes, the mystery is fully present. So what is it, then? Well, it's an experience, and I maintain it's the most intense experience you can have this side of the yawning grave, without doubt. I mean, people say 'is it dangerous?' Well, the answer is 'only if you fear death by astonishment!'. Yes, that's a joke here. It's not a joke there because you find yourself literally holding your heart to verify that you have not, in fact, had a coronary thrombosis induced by wonder, terror, reverence, and astonishment. So, here it is. The quintessence, the orange thing. Was it transposed in from Arcturus? Was it handed down through some ancient Eldritch brotherhood that found this secret before the pyramids were built? Who can say? Whatever it is, wherever it comes from, here's what happens when you allow it to pass through the blood-brain barrier of your own alchemical vessel which is your body. The first thing that happens is that there is a sense as though all the air in the room had been sucked out. All the colors brightened. This is that increase in visual acuity that I made so much of yesterday. All edges become sharp. Distant things stand out in their clarity. This is at one toke. At two tokes, you close your eyes, you feel a sense of anesthesia seeping through your body. You close your eyes and you see a floral pattern rotating in space, usually yellow-orange. People who do this occasionally - and nobody does it a lot - call it 'the chrysanthemum'. It's a floral pattern like a pattern in a Chinese brocade. This forms and stabilizes and then you either break through it, or you require one more toke. And these are matters of physiology, shamanic intent, so forth and so on. The leather lunged hash smokers among us have a leg up in this department. This is a spiritual discipline where the ability not to cough makes the difference between shunyata and, you know, 'try again, Sam.' So, you take, let us assume a third toke, long and slow through a glass pipe. You vaporize this stuff. You don't mix it with weed or oregano or any of that which was done in the past. You want the pure stuff. And you take it in and in and in and there is definitely somewhere in here a threshold. A threshold which you must exceed. And when you do that, this membrane-like thing, this chrysanthemum will actually part and there is a sound like the crumpling of a plastic bread wrapper, or the crackling of flame. A friend of mine says 'this is the radio entelechy of your soul exiting through the anterior fontanelle at the top of your head.' Could be! In any case, this crackling sound and a tone - a tone - a [hum changing from low to high pitch] - and then there's this impression of transition. And you're now 20 seconds deep into this experience. There's an impression of transition. It's as though there were a series of tunnels or chambers that you are tumbling down, being propelled by some kind of muscle behind you that is pushing you. I mean, yes, birth canal, yes of course. But anyway, a tunnel. And what I've noticed about this tunnel is the walls and ceiling flux and come down to meet each other and where they touch, they pull apart with a [makes a sucking sound]. And then you're propelled into the next space, and then the next, and then the next, and there is this [repeats the sucking sound] - right. And then you are 'there'. And this is what I want to talk to you about because of all communities, I hope perhaps collectively, singly, someone can say something enlightening about this. Then you are there. And where is 'there'? It's underground. How you know this you cannot say but there is an irreconcilable sense of enormous mass surrounding you. In other words, you are underground. You're at the center of a mountain or something. And you're in a room which aficionados call 'the dome' and people will ask each other 'did you see the dome? Were you there?' It's softly lit, indirectly lit, and the walls - if such they be - are crawling with geometric hallucinations: very brightly colored, very iridescent with deep sheens and very high reflective surfaces. Everything is machine-like and polished and throbbing with energy. But that is not what immediately arrests my attention. What arrests my attention is the fact that this space is inhabited - that the immediate impression as you break into it, is there is a cheer. The gnomes have learned a new way so say 'hoooray!' You break in to this space and are immediately swarmed by squeaking, self-transforming self-machines. These things which are made of light, and grammar, and sound that come chirping, and squealing, and tumbling toward you. And they say 'Hooray! Welcome! You're here!', and in my case, 'you sent so many and you come so rarely!'. And my immediate impression, no matter how many times I do this - and I've done it maybe 30 or 40 times which isn't a lot in a lifetime of worshipping it - my immediate impression is that they are welcoming. There is something going on which I over the years come to call 'LUV' - L, U, V. Not 'light utility vehicle', but LUV that is not like Eros or not like sexual attraction, I don't know what it's like exactly. It's almost like a physical thing. It's like a glue that pours out into this space. And my immediate impression in there is, I'm appalled. I'm appalled at how far I've come. And one of the strange things about DMT is that it does not affect your mind in an ordinary sense. In that, you know, drugs they make you giggle, they frighten you, they stimulate you, they depress you. DMT does none of this. You go to that place with all your groceries. You're there, and you're there thinking 'Jesus H fucking Christ, what is this? What is it?' And you're thinking 'I must be dead, I've done it this time.' The psychedelic mantra: 'I've done it this time. I must be dead!' And so you, you know, you think 'heart, heart? Yes, hm, hm, hm, hm. Pulse, pulse? Yes, yes.' And meanwhile these things are literally in your face. And what they do is they jump into your chest and then they jump out again, and what they're doing - and this is the point I think - what they're doing is they are singing, chanting, speaking, in some kind of language that is very bizarre to hear. But what is far more important is that you can see it. They speak in a language which you see. And this is completely confounding! Because syntax is not something you ordinarily reach out and touch. And in this space that's what happening. And so like jeweled self-dribbling basketballs, these things come running forward. And what they are doing with this visible language that they create, is they are making gifts - they are making gifts for you. And they will say [language disassociated from meaning] which condenses as something that looks like a cross between aSopwith Camel, a Havana cigar, a piece of abalone, an opal, and a nookie, and they offer it to you! And you're looking at this thing, and as you look at it, it also transforms, changes, speaks, sings, undergoes metastasis, undergoes metamorphosis. And these things are just accumulating. And each self-machine creature elbows others aside, says 'look at this, look at this, take this, choose me'. And as you direct your attention into these things, you have the overwhelming conviction that if you could bring a single one of these objects back to this world, that somehow you wouldn't have to say anything. You would just walk up to people and say 'friends'. And people would say 'oh my god! You got a piece of the action, the real action!' This state of ecstatic frenzy - and it's like a bugs bunny cartoon running backwards in cyberspace or something - this state of incredible frenzy goes on for about three minutes and all the time the elves are saying 'Don't give way to wonder. Do not abandon

body tissue smooth and [inaudible] or rugose and rough and it can undergo all these color changes. Blotches, stripes, spreading pastels, so forth and so on. These behaviors of the octopus are under the genetic control of its linguistic intentionality. It doesn't make words it becomes words. And when one octopus encounters another by the mere act of beholding each other they say 'Aha! You haven't eaten recently. You're having too much sex. You've been traveling. And so forth and so on. The octopus becomes its thought. It wears language on its surface the way we wear our clothing. And this system of communication is so important to the octopus that those species that are devolved into the very deep part of the ocean - so called abyssal octopi - where no light ever reaches have evolved phosphorescent organs all over their bodies and eyelids like membranes? all over their bodies so that in the absolute darkness of the abyssal ocean they communicate by flashing grammar and syntax to each other across the abyssal depth. They are free in the imagination. And this is where I think we are headed. We're going to make that model of communication our model. Psychedelics, technology, and visionary magic, will show how this can be done. [Inaudible Question] No you're right. The human faith is like this. That's right. You see, no other higher animal has faith. A faith is like a little piece of squid skin that we're wearing where we can transmit all of these - one time I was in India and I was cornered and this guy - I was loaded actually on mescaline - and this guy swam aboard my houseboat. And normally I would just run these guys off. [End of tape]

Original Transcription by: [Copied by Jonathanlal\Jo Trott]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Relationships, career, drugs and & our times

8 August 1997

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Hello Reviewers!

In general **Review 1** should be about correcting any misspellings and adding in missing words. There may also be parts of the audio that the original transcriber was not able to hear that you should attempt to work out. Reviewers can check the 'frequently used words' section of the wiki if they hear a word they are unfamiliar with or don't know how to spell, and should add any special words they encounter to the list in order to help other reviewers.

Review 2 is about making sure there are zero remaining transcription mistakes, and being nitpicky about grammar: ex. making sure commas are only used when needed and are put in the proper places when they are used.

Here is a running list of more specific things Reviewers can look for:

- all latin phrases or words in different languages should be *italicized*
 - examples = *in media res*

Riding Range with Marshall McLuhan

Day Month 1995

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

McLuhan, I don't know how many of you recall him from the 60s, but he had for a very brief period of time, about 5 or 6 years, an extraordinary influence on American culture. You couldn't pick up a magazine or turn on the TV without hearing McLuhan, McLuhan, what he said, what he thought, what he predicted, he was consulting with Madison Avenue, with politicians, with Hollywood, and so forth and so on. His influence, he died in the early 70s, and his influence died with him, even though he had founded the Center for Media Studies at the University of Toronto in Canada, he really seemed to spawn no highly visible successors.

He was a unique personality and breakthrough, much in the same way that Joyce was a unique personality, and spawned very few imitators. The irony of all this is that McLuhan did his journeyman work before he burst onto the world stage as this mysterious savant of media, he did his work as a Joyce scholar, that's what he was, a literary critic, Joyce scholar, medievalist, that sort of thing. And then in the early 50s he wrote a book which I've never read, it's very hard to find, called *The Mechanical Bride*, that was his first testing of his ideas. McLuhan is primarily understood as a communication theorist or a philosopher of media. That's what he talked about, he turned the analytical Western deconstructionist method on the technologies of communication, printing, film, photography, dance, theater, even such things as money, he thought of as forms of media. And he carried on and analyzed these various forms of media, and reached very controversial conclusions.

One of the things that was very puzzling to me as I went back through and read all this, is, McLuhan was synonymous with incomprehensibility in the 60s, and the whole thing was "who can understand this guy?" he's like Buddha, he speaks these words we can't understand. But now, 25, 30 years later, it reads pretty straight forwardly. Most of what he predicted has come to pass, I think even McLuhan would be amazed at the speed with which the Gutenberg world has been overturned. I mean, there's no hint in here of home computers, let alone interactive networks, virtual reality, phone sex, and so forth and so on. But this was all grist for the McLuhanesque mill, and he would have, if he had lived, had much to say on this.

It surprises me in reading this stuff how demanding it is on your literacy. He assumes that the people he's talking to have read everything and have understood it, from Homer, to Rabelais, to Chaucer, to MAD magazine, he assumes you have a complete knowledge of modern film, and popular print journalism, and popular culture. All of this was grist for his mill.

I'll show you the books I'm reading from and talking about and then I'll actually read you a section of McLuhan, because like Joyce, it's a stylistic thing that you can't really encompass without getting your feet wet. This was his best known book, probably, and this is the original paperback edition. This book was immensely discussed when it came out, and probably very little read, judging by the quality of the discussion. *Understanding Media, the Extensions of Man*, this is how most people heard of McLuhan. And he followed it up with *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. These are all first editions. These books I don't think are in print. Few intellectuals in this century have fallen so totally through the cracks as McLuhan.

The Gutenberg Galaxy, very interesting, I'm going to read from some of it tonight. It's organized around chapter headings such as "Does the interiorization of media such as "letters" alter the ratio among our senses and change mental processes?" Or, "Pope's *Dunciad* indicts the printed book as the agent of a primitivistic and Romantic revival. Sheer visual quantity evokes the magical resonance of the tribal horde. The box office looms as a return to the echo chamber of bardic incantation."

That's a chapter heading. "Topography cracked the voices of Silence." And one of my favorites;

"Heidegger surf-boards along on the electronic wave as triumphantly as Descartes rode the mechanical wave."

There's a lot of fun in McLuhan, and this comes out of his being a Joyce scholar. You just can't mess with that without fun.

This is his third book with Harley Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point, Space in poetry and Painting*.

I guess I should say, a few years ago someone asked me to review McLuhan's letters, which had been published, which I did. It was *Gnosis*, or somebody. Anyway, it brought back to me, he was a convert to Catholicism and an extraordinary complex intellectual, with a medievalist who became a Joyce scholar, who became a communications expert. And in McLuhan there is a very deep strain of nostalgia for the essence of the medieval world, what he called manuscript culture. Essentially his entire output is a critique of print, and of the impact of print on culture, and I think, though he attempted to be even handed, his final resolution of all this was that, it had many detrimental and distorting effects on the Western mind. This is another little book he published back in the heyday, and he experimented with topographic layout, somewhat harkening back to the Surrealists whom he discusses a great deal. And there was something about his fascination with topographical layout that brought him into such congruence with the *Wake*.

Let me read you a section from *The Gutenberg Galaxy* that is both interesting to think about, or, if you can't understand it, an interesting example of what McLuhan's style was like, and what I mean by the fact that he was an extraordinarily demanding intellectual, he doesn't cut you much slack.

"Only a fraction of the history of literacy has been typographic".

"Till now we have been concerned mostly with the written word as it transfers or translates the audio-tactile space of "sacral" non-literate man into the visual space of civilized or literate or "profane" man. Once this transfer or metamorphosis occurs we are soon in the world of books, scribal or typographic. The rest of our concern will be with books written and printed and the results of learning and society. From the fifth century BC to the fifteenth century AD, the book was a scribal product. Only one third of the history

of the book in the Western world has been typographic. It is not incongruous, therefore, to say as GS Brett does in *Psychology Ancient and Modern* (pp. 36-7)

“The idea that knowledge is essentially book learning seems to be a very modern view, probably derived from the mediaeval distinctions between clerk and layman, with additional emphasis provided by the literary character of the rather fantastic humanism of the sixteenth century. The original and natural idea of knowledge is that of “cunning” or the possession of wits. Odysseus is the original type of thinker, a man of many ideas who could overcome the Cyclops and achieve a significant triumph of mind over matter. Knowledge is thus a capacity for overcoming the difficulties of life and achieving success in this world.”

Then McLuhan comments, “Brett here specifies the natural dichotomy which the book brings into any society, in addition to the split within the individual of that society. The work of James Joyce exhibits a complex clairvoyance in these matters. His Leopold Bloom of *Ulysses*, a man of many ideas and many devices, is a free-lance ad salesman. Joyce saw the parallels, on one hand, between the modern frontier of the verbal and the pictorial and, on the other, between the Homeric world poised between the old sacral culture and the new profane or literate sensibility. Bloom, the newly detribalized Jew, is presented in modern Dublin, a slightly detribalized Irish world. Such a frontier is the modern world of the advertisement, congenial, therefore, to the transitional culture of Bloom. In the seventeenth or Ithaca episode of *Ulysses* we read: ‘What were habitually his final meditations? Of some one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop in wonder, a poster novelty, with all extraneous accretions excluded, reduced to its simplest and most efficient terms not exceeding the span of casual vision and congruous with the velocity of modern life.’

“In the *Books at the Wake*, James S. Atherton points out (pp. 67-8) “Among other things, FW is a history of writing. We begin with writing on ‘A bone, a pebble, a ramskin...leave them to cook in the mutthering pot: and Gutenmorg with his cromagnon charter, tintingfats and great prime must once for omniboss stepp a rubrickredd out of the wordpress.’ (20.5) The ‘mutthering pot’ is an allusion to alchemy, but there is some other significance connected with writing, for the next time the word appears it is again in a context concerning improvement in systems of communication. The passage is: ‘All the airish signics of her dipandump helpabit from an Father Hogam till the Mutther Masons,..’ (223.3). ‘Dipandump helpabit’ combine the deaf and dumb alphabet’s signs in the air - or airish signs - with the ups and downs of the ordinary ABC and the more pronounced ups and downs of Irish Ogham writing. The Mason, following this, must be the man of that name who invented steel pen nibs. But all I can suggest for “mutther” is the muttering of Freemasons which does not fit the context, although they, of course, make signs in the air.”

Is that perfectly clear?

Now, back to McLuhan, “Gutenmorg with his cromagnon charter” expounds by mythic gloss the fact that writing meant the emergence of the caveman or sacral man from the audile world of simultaneous resonance into the profane world of daylight. The reference to the masons is to the world of the bricklayer as a type of speech itself. On the second page of the *Wake*, Joyce is making a mosaic, an Achilles shield, as it were, of all the themes and modes of human speech and communication: “Bygmeister Finnegan, of the Stuttering Hand, freemen’s murer, lived in the broadest way immarginable in his ruchlit toofarback for messuages before joshuan judges had given us numbers...” Joyce is, in the *Wake*, making his own Altamira cave drawings of the entire history of the human mind, in terms of its basic gestures and postures during all phases of human culture and technology. As his title indicates, he saw that the wake of human progress can disappear again into the night of sacral or auditory man. The Finn cycle of tribal institutions

can return in the electric age, but if again, then let's make it a wake or awake or both. Joyce could see no advantage in our remaining locked up in each cultural cycle as in a trance or dream. He discovered the means of living simultaneously in all cultural modes while quite conscious. The means he cites for such self-awareness and correction of cultural bias is his "collideoscope". This term indicates the interplay in colloidal mixture of all components of human technology as they extend our senses and shift their ratios in the social kaleidoscope of cultural clash: "deor", savage, the oral or sacral; "scope" the visual or profane and civilized."

So that's his comment, "only a fraction of the history of literacy has been typographic."

These people, Joyce, to some degree Pound, McLuhan, they were the prophets of the world in which we now stand, the world of integrated interactive media, extraordinary data retrieval that erases the 17th century notion of the unconscious. Nothing is now unconscious if your data search commands are powerful enough.

The re-making of the human image that required centuries for print, the transition that we talked about here, from scribal culture to true book culture, occupied 500 years. The transition from book culture to electronic culture has occurred in less than fifty years. It's eerie to read his examples of contemporaneity because there's stuff like Marilyn Monroe, Perry Como, James Dean, I mean, he's writing from another era, and yet, from his point of view, he's firmly embedded in a kind of super future that we are now able to look back on.

Here's another section that I think makes some of this more clear.

"The medieval book trade was a second hand trade even as with the dealing today in old masters."

"Then, from the twelfth century onwards the rise of the universities brought masters and students into the field of book production in class time, and these books found their way back to the monastic libraries when students returned after completing their studies: "A number of these standard text-books, of which approved exemplars were kept for copying by the stationarii of the universities, naturally found their way into print quite early, for many of them continued in undiminished request in the fifteenth century as before. These official university texts offer no problems of origin or nomenclature..." (p. 102)

Goldschmidt then adds, "Soon after 1300 the expensive vellum could be dispensed with and the cheaper paper made the accumulation of many books a matter of industry rather than of wealth." Since, however, the student went to lectures pen in hand and "it was the lecturer's task to dictate the book he was expounding to his audience," there is a great body of these reportata which constitute a very complex problem for editors."

So really, like for Joyce, for McLuhan, the book is the central symbol of the age, the central mystery of the time. In a sense I share that notion, it's a very Talmudic notion, it's a very psychedelic notion, it's the idea that somehow the career of the word is the essential overarching metaphor for the age. And naturally, if the book is the central metaphor for reality, then reality itself is seen as somehow literary, somehow textual, and this in fact is how I think reality was seen, until the rise of modern science.

We were always taught of course, how the roots of modern science go back to (?) (inaudible) and atomism, which of course is true, but the number of people who knew that a thousand years ago was probably very few. The real notion of how out of which science had to divest itself is the notion of a book, or, if that

seems too concrete, a story, a narrative, the story of man's fall and redemption. That was what the Christian exegesis of post-Edenic time was all about. With the rise of modern science the idea of narrative has become somewhat overthrown. McLuhan would say that narrative persisted far beyond its utility because the biases of print kept it in place for such a long time. Everyone assumes that tools are tools and you use them and that's that. For McLuhan, the entirety of the toolkit of modern Western man can be traced to the unconscious assumptions of print. For example, the idea of the individual which is a pretty personal notion, right there in close to the heart, the idea of the individual, is a post-medieval concept, legitimized by print. The idea of the public, this concept did not exist before newspapers, because before newspapers, there was no public, there were only people. And rulers very rarely bothered to pass on their thinking to anybody other than their closest associates, and then only for utilitarian reasons.

The notion of an observing citizenry somehow sharing the governance of society, this again is a print created idea. The idea of interchangeable parts without which our world would hardly function, there would not be automobiles, buildings, aircraft, interchangeable parts. That's an idea that comes from the interchangeability of letters in a printers block. That was the first industry to ever utilize the concept of easily reformulated sub-units. It's strange, the Chinese get credit for inventing thousands and thousands of years before Europe, but they would carve a single block of wood and print it, they didn't get the notion of moveable type. And moveable type, the distribution of books becomes the paradigmatic model for the distribution of any product. It's produced, it's edited, it's manufactured, it's sold, and then sequels are spawned. All products have followed this model, but books were one of the earliest mass-manufactured objects to be put through this cycle.

Modern city planning, the linearity of it, the way in which land-surveys are carried out, these are all unconscious biases imbibed from the world of print, and they make sense if you're a print head. But one of the peculiar things, notice that animals do not possess language. Many human societies do not possess writing, and very few human societies, only two on earth invented printing. And yet once invented it feeds back into the evolution of social structures, and defines everything. And yet it's an extraordinary artificiality, and we have been imprisoned in it for 100s and 100s of years now. Now it is breaking down, and we are changing to a different sensory ratio, and you might suppose, if you hadn't given this a lot of thought, that the new electronic media, television and so forth, would carry us into an entirely different sensory ratio. McLuhan felt differently, he felt that it was restoring us to a medieval sensory ratio. He felt that a television screen is much more like an illuminated manuscript than a page of print. The distinction may seem subtle at first, but if you're looking at a medieval illuminated manuscript, notice I said looking, you must look in order to be able to understand.

Reading is not looking. Reading is an entirely different kind of behavior. As a child you learn what a printed lower case "e" looks like. After seeing 20, 100, 1,000, 10,000, you know what it looks like.

You have an expectation of the gestalt of the lower case e. No body opens a book and looks at print, unless there's some extraordinary abstract discussion going on. We read print but we look at manuscript because manuscript carries the intrinsic signification of the individual who made it, and his or her idiosyncrasies have to be parsed through to get the meaning. Similarly with television, television is a very low-resolution media, I mean, these are little pieces of light, pixels, flying back and forth. They must be looked at, they cannot be read, and it's an extraordinarily engaging process. That's why it creates an entirely different set of social biases than print does.

McLuhan called these biases, and this is the one distinction or idea of his that made its way into popular

culture, he distinguished between what he called hot and cold media. And people usually botch this, every time, because nobody really to this day understands what he meant. So let me read you a little bit about this distinction.

This is in Chapter 2 of Understanding Media, and it's called "Media Hot and Cold."

"The rise of the waltz, explained Kurt Sachs, in the World History of the Dance, was the result of that longing for truth, simplicity, closeness to nature and primitivism, with which the last two-thirds of the 18th Century fulfilled. In the century of jazz we are likely to overlook the emergence of the waltz as a hot and explosive human expression that broke through the formal feudal barriers of courtly and choral dance styles. [but obviously it was when you contrast it to what came before] There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like the radio, from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie, from a cool one like the TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in high definition. High definition is the state of being well-filled with data. [I love that!] A photograph is visually high definition. A cartoon is low-definition, simply because very little visual information is provided.

Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium, of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. Hot media are therefore low in participation and cool media are high in participation, or completion by the audience. Naturally therefore, a hot medium like the radio has very different effects on the user from a cool medium like the television.

A cool medium, like hieroglyphic or idiographic written characters, has very different effects from the hot and explosive medium of the phonetic alphabet. The alphabet, when pushed to a high degree of abstract visual intensity, became typography. The printed word with its specialist intensity, burst the bonds of medieval corporate guilds and monasteries, creating extreme individualist patterns of enterprise and monopoly. But the typical reversal occurred when extremes of monopoly brought back the corporation, with its impersonal empire over many lives. The hotting up of the medium of writing to repeatable prints intensity, led to nationalism and the religious wars of the 16th Century. The heavy and unwieldy media such as stone, are time-binders, used for writing, they are very cool indeed, and serve to unify the age, whereas paper is a hot medium, which serves to unify space horizontally, both in political and entertainment empires."

And he just goes on like this endlessly. This was his *métier* or his media, to connect and comment on this stuff. Television was really both his own media for reaching a very large audience, in fact I remember the excitement that swept through, I didn't even have a television, I was living in Berkeley at the time, and somebody said, we have to go up to the student union at 6 o'clock, because Mike Wallace is interviewing Marshall McLuhan. And it seemed an incredibly freaky notion that McLuhan would be on TV, it shows you what a stultified categorically different world we were living in at the time.

Here's just a little bit of McLuhan on television. This is chapter 3.1 of Understanding Media

"The Timid Giant"

"Perhaps the most familiar and pathetic effect of the TV image, is the posture of children in the early

grades. Since TV, children, regardless of eye condition, average about 6 and a half inches from the printed page. Our children are striving to carry over to the printed page, the all-involving sensory mandate of the TV image, with perfect psycho-mimetic skill, they carry out the commands of the TV image. They pore, they probe, they slow down and involve themselves in depth. This is what they had learned to do in the cool iconography of the comic book medium. TV carried the process much further. Suddenly they are transferred to the hot print medium, with its uniform patterns and fast lineal movement. Pointlessly they strive to read print in depth. They bring to print all their senses, and print rejects them. Print asks for the isolated and stripped down visual faculty, not for the unified sensorium.”

You see? So often very unexpected paradoxical insights emerge from this stuff, and in this book that he did with Harley Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point, Space in Poetry and Painting*, it's an interesting technique, they take a number of works of art, either literature, such as the song from *Loves Labour Lost*, by William Shakespeare, or the *Ballade de Bon Conseil*, of Geoffrey Chaucer, or the *Rubiab of Omar Kayam*, and then comment on it. And also visual arts, because McLuhan really felt that the art historical and technological and architectural output of Western civilization could be essentially psychoanalyzed. Could be seen as the tracings of the mass consciousness, and he felt that the evolution of sensory ratios within historical time, had been very very rapid.

For example he talks about how St. Augustine was a person of great piety and learning, and people doubting this would show him an open page of scripture, or theological disputation. And he would look at it for a few minutes, and then they would close the book, and he could tell them what was written there. And this was taken as proof of his piety. He was as far as we know the only man in Europe who could read silently at that time. This was a period when the auidial pre-scribal culture was still being assimilated.

McLuhan spends a lot of time analyzing this episode in the 14th Century, when the laws of perspective spring suddenly into being. Very similar in the way that [fractal](#) mathematics have introduced us to a new superspace. For the Renaissance, spatial perspective was essentially a filing system for visual data.

At last they knew where to put everything. And where to look for it once they had put it there, which, if you have a pre-perspectivist arrangement of space, you have to look, not read, LOOK at each painting in order to locate where the information is. This is again this read / look dichotomy.

McLuhan never discussed psychedelics, but psychedelics I think clearly are an extension of these kinds of media that you have to engage with, that you have to look at, that you cannot read, that you cannot take for granted, and these give back a much more complex world. Notice that the world created by print is a world of gestalts, buildings, highways, bridges. We know how these things are supposed to look, we don't experience astonishment every time we enter a home, or an institutional edifice, there is a built in set of syntactical expectations in linear space, and when this is violated it becomes very noticeable and becomes the basis for architectural or design innovation.

I think that what's happening and I think this would be McLuhan's take is that all of these new media that attempt to suppress the appurtenances of media are in fact having the effect of returning us to an archaic sensory ratio. And McLuhan was onto this, he's the one that coined the phrase *Electronic Feudalism*. He felt that we were headed back to the medieval sensory ratio because he saw television as like manuscript, but I think had he lived into the era of VR, psilocybin, HDTV and implants, he would have seen we are not reaching back to the medieval, that was simply a stepping-stone to the archaic, and we are going beyond

the entire domain of scribal humanity, and actually reaching back to a shamanic, feeling-toned kind of thing.

And all of the breakdown of linearity that you see in the 20th Century, abstract expressionism, Dada, Jazz, Rock n' Roll, non-figurative painting, LSD, all of these things on one level can be seen, as I've said, as harking back to the archaic, but on another level, what they can be seen as, are new behaviors emerging as the cloud of print constellated constipation is lifted, it's breaking down. An interesting question that we would put to McLuhan if we had him here tonight, is, to what degree can what he said about television, not be applied to HD TV. It seems to me that HD TV is TV without the biases of TV. And a perfect media is an invisible media, and print is the least invisible of all media, print is an incredible Rube Goldberg invention for conveying information.

Here's McLuhan on this same subject rather than me dwelling on it.

This is from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*:

"A theory of cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the changing sense ratios effected by various externalizations of our senses." [in other words, by media]

"It is very much worth dwelling on this matter, since we shall see that from the invention of the alphabet there has been a continuous drive in the Western world towards the separation of the senses, of functions, of operations, of states emotional and political, as well as of tasks -- a fragmentation which terminated, through Durkheim, in the anomie of the nineteenth century. The paradox presented by Professor von Bekesy is that the two-dimensional mosaic is, in fact, a multi-dimensional world of interstructural resonance. It is the three dimensional world of pictorial space that is, indeed, an abstract illusion built on the intense separation of the visual from the other senses.

There is no question of values or preferences. It is necessary however, for any kind of understanding to know why "primitive" drawing is two-dimensional, whereas the drawing and painting of literate man tends towards perspective. Without this knowledge we cannot grasp why men ever ceased to be "primitive" or audile-tactile in their sense bias. Nor could we ever understand why men have, "since Cezanne" abandoned the visual in favor of the audile-tactile modes of awareness and of organization of experience.

This matter clarified, we can much more easily approach the role to the visual sense in language and art and it the entire range of social and political life. For until men have upgraded the visual component communities know only a tribal structure. The detribalizing of the individual has, in the past at least, depended on an intense visual life fostered by literacy, and by literacy of the alphabetic kind alone. For alphabetic writing is not only unique, but late. There had been no such writing before it. In fact, any people that ceases to be nomadic and pursues sedentary modes of work is ready to invent writing. No merely nomadic people ever had writing any more than they ever developed architecture or "enclosed space." For writing is a visual enclosure of non-visual spaces and senses. It is, therefore an abstraction of the visual from the ordinary sense interplay. And whereas speech is an outering (utterance) of all our senses at once, writing abstracts from speech."

That's very interesting, isn't it, that the association with nomadism to the inability to create architectonic space, and therefore no writing. That a word is a structure, and therefore, no nomad would ever do such a

thing. Interesting. I think he is saying, reading is not seeing, and those who read, do not see. Even when they lift their eyes from the books, they carry the attitude of print into the world. They attempt to read nature, and you can't read nature, you must look at nature, you must see nature. Certainly I think when I think of my own life, I was thinking about this a few months ago, and it surprised me. I was trying to think of the books that really influenced me in my life, and I thought of Moby Dick, and Huxley's Doors of Perception, then when I really got down on it, I realized a little tiny book that Huxley wrote, that my mother pushed on me when I was about 12 years old, called The Art of Seeing, probably shaped me as much as anything. And in there, it's a very McLuhanesque rap without McLuhanesque terminology, and he said the way to overcome, and I think this is very very VERY intelligent and simple advice, Huxley said the way to overcome the printed bias, God knows, he was a Cambridge-educated gentleman steeped in the traditions of English literacy and intellectualism, is free-hand drawing. Draw. Train your eye. Draw nudes, draw seashells, draw insects, go into nature and train the eye to see, and you will cease to read the world. Readers are emotionally - a seeing person does not want to form a relationship with a reading person. You know this conflict that we get between men and women, and between people, which we call the head/heart conflict, is really a reading / seeing conflict, it isn't a head and heart, it's that readers and seers cannot relate to each other's emotional life because they seem to come from such different worlds.

I think that you have a very good point, and the permission to abstract from nature that print created is why we have such a terrible culture crisis. Because, well, a trivial example, it was said, by Marshall McLuhan, strangely enough, that the Vietnam war could not be won the way an ordinary war is won, because the citizenry couldn't tolerate the sight of what war was, and modern warfare became impossible when it could be televised into the living room, because war is something that you must read about, you must not see it, it must be this grand thing of the distant clash of armies and young heroes being created, but when it turns into amputation and maggots and screams of pain, the political fun goes out of it. So war is therefore a literary activity, and the one argument that can remain in television's favor, is people don't like to see images of violence. If we have to show so much violence on television, let it always be real. The violence is only indefensible, when it's vicarious. If it's real violence, you need to see it, because it's happening in a world for which you have a partial moral responsibility. I think warfare has been remade by media in that sense. A lot of politics has been remade, because imperial doings are usually ugly, brutal, and not something you'd want to exhibit before the populace. And yet modern media makes that very difficult to avoid.

You get the notion of public morality, or "the people won't stand for this, we have to get this story out!". The people won't stand for this: now this is a moral dimension inconceivable in medieval or Roman times, I mean, what would it mean to say, "the people won't stand for this." So there's an attempt to create through the collectivity a kind of community of moral judgment.

The medium is the message, means that the medium is the thing which is making the difference. Every discussion you ever hear since the 60s about TV, is it good, is it bad, terrible, wonderful, always the discussion hinges around what's on TV. People say, "well, television is terrible, it just shows violence", and then somebody else says, "No, television is wonderful, those nature shows and news from far away, and masterpiece theater". This is a stupid argument. What McLuhan meant by the media is the message, is he meant that it doesn't matter what you put on TV, TV is TV, it has an intrinsic nature, and whether you're showing National Geographic specials or slasher movies, TV will do what it does. It has certain qualities, just like driving a car or skiing, certain muscles are going to be exercised, perceptual systems enhanced, others suppressed. And it's very hard for us to understand this, because we have accepted this media so

thoroughly into our life, that in fact it is shaping our values systems in ways which are very hard for us to measure or even detect.

I mean, television, for example, it's a drug, it has a series of measurable physiological parameters that are as intrinsically its signature as the parameters of heroin are its signature. You sit somebody down in front of a TV set, and turn it on, 20 minutes later, come back, sample their blood pressure, their eye movement rate, blood is pooling in their rear end, their breathing takes on a certain quality. The stare reflex sets in, I mean, they are thoroughly zoned on a drug, and when you think about the fact that the average American watches 6 and a half hours of television a day, imagine if a drug had been introduced in 1948, that we all spent 6 and a half hours per day on average watching.

And the one thing about drugs, in their defense, it's very hard to diddle the message. A drug is a mirror. But television isn't a mirror, television is a billboard, and anybody who pays their money, can put their message into the trip. This is an extraordinarily insidious situation. What McLuhan wanted to become I think was the founder of a general new sophistication about media, and he was essentially parodied to death by guess what? Media. They made of him an icon of cultural incomprehensibility. Not since Einstein have you been programmed in advance to believe, you ain't going to understand this guy. And that's what they said about McLuhan and consequently his message and his insight failed. We will have to reinvent McLuhan around the turn of the century, because we are producing forms of media of such interactive power and potential social impact, that we're going to have to go back and rethink all of this.

Original Transcription by: [FusionAnomaly](#)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

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Part 1

Terence, in reading your books I was struck with how closely your DMT experiments paralleled my own. I wasn't surprised by the confirmation, as you might guess. I considered myself a serious DMT explorer between 1967-69. I stopped only because I was told to, in no uncertain terms, by the Boss of that place. Three times, in fact, to my dismay. Disobedience was costly. I was informed that I'd been shown all that was mine to know, to use that, and not try to extract more. I've written of the classes and varieties of DMT experience in a chapter of my journal, memoirs, and will send it along at some point. The experiences were commanding and altered my grasp of reality. DMT invokes the various dimensions of its domain through pathways characterized by brisk rhythms.

-Robert Hunter

Greetings Bob-- I was interested in what you had to say about being an explorer of the DMT world until the management told you to stay away. I have heard several tales of psychonauts toking DMT and then seeming to break into a place where they were not only unwelcome but also unexpected. One person in particular, a composer, was literally thrown back to the beginning of time by an astonished and irritated Jabba the Hutt type who he surprised at its meditations. I have never been told that I am not welcome but I find that it is harder and harder to get up the raw courage necessary to make the trip. It is almost as though a secret hides in and behind the DMT state and that secret is both real and so unexpected that it would leave nothing of reality intact. The secret cannot be told of course, or I would have told it. But it is something like: We are all gods, with the knowledge of gods, we are all omniscient, except for the fact that we are so damn stupid. It is interesting that you were told "Use what you have been shown, don't seek for more." It uses us, some of us, to transfer information into the world, but with very little concern for what we, the carriers of that information, think about it. It is a kind of hyperspatial muse. We become carriers of some force we don't understand, bearers of the Logos I would say, other see us as the Typhoid Mary's of meme pathology. But left unanswered in all of this is the question why. Why does the alien presence intrude in DMT, why does it appear as it does? Is that how it wishes to appear? Why? etc. etc. I enjoy the idea of a slow moving dialog, I hope this can continue.

Best,

T

Terence, I suppose the "facts" of DMT might as well be written in cunieforn on our breastbones for all the good it does to know about it, as opposed to "dwelling in the know of it." And memory, of course, cannot serve, at least not in its normative form. The moment you go back to bflbfzdxqitenamaton South of sprshguiekefwom (sp?) your memory is again a living parchment and complete, all events self-referencing, co-incident, current, and existing in eternity. To be there is to be where "that" is and "this" isn't, except metaphorically. We are metaphor, that is -- where it is almost painful to write or say "is." Bumblebees, aerodynamically too heavy to fly, rise, it could be, on the word "is" -- We don't take DMT; DMT takes us.

My personal take on the "secret" of DMT: it was long, hard work making this world real. It was, and is, done for a purpose. To have others. To believe in them fully in order to experience love. It goes against common sense to try and see through it. Ignorance is the primary condition of Eden. But entropy is at work and a world made for love is not satisfied with the transformational edict "eat and be eaten" but kills and does not eat. A sense of ultimate unity is lost and the delusion of fundamental diversity breeds alienation. This is not Eden. Yet the monad doesn't face itself and subsume Its creation. The failing would be eternal. Therefore, doors are opened and enough of the plot is "made flesh" to allow orientation regarding the surface gist of the matter. Collectivism is a wrong approach to nostalgia for the purity of the monad. Healthy diversity perpetuates the rationale of the creation, such as it is. Healthy men, women, races and nations evolving gladly to a recognition of the source, rejoining it in a gradual and rejoicing manner, "bringing in the sheaves," would be a better solution to the human aspect of this work, and is the substance of sacred ceremonial.

My take could be way off base but anything more Gnostic is off-putting. Phil Dick fell down that sink. And Lovecraft, I wouldn't doubt, though he professed no belief in what he wrote.

In saying any or all of this, it's only sane to assume I'm dead wrong since I'm speaking in polar terms. But it raises issues and generates metaphor. The emperium is neither philosophical space nor information repository but a nexus of rhythms. (nexi?) It's rhythm that transports us to the possibility of xing tangential to eternity with no fixed point of reference, including "I am." I say xing, rather than: being, moving, existng - because of wanting to be as exact as possible. A lot of DMT lore can't be expounded because our verbs and prepositions correspond to realities of four dimensions or less, gainsaid. To catalogue conditions where one accelerates at warp speed to stand still in one place / where transfer among interconnecting universes is instantaneous / where we connect, with full memory, into other lives we're in the process of living, for example, the land of living armchairs and laughing sunshine (or the heartbreaking Tuesday Afternoon Ballroom in the Rain at the end of time) we must understand the nature and limitations of our grammar and be self-motivated to think beyond it. To avoid the condition of pathological memeing, we must not over-state our experiences, or mis-state them for easier referentiality. We may, however, talk around them and establish communication based on mutual recognitions. A language begins in this manner.

If your calculations about Omega point are KoreKt, it should be a matter of mere months before the language evolves, like a flu virus, to allow western discussion of living items of eternity. I mean, we're

doing it, aren't we? And, if we feel mysteriously driven to do it, I presume it's because the time is ripe for it. There was a time when I felt the DMT lore was critical information. I don't entirely disbelieve it yet.

We need a few verbs and prepositions to explain ourselves. "Trip" & "farout" aren't going to do it. Suggest "xing" as the verb of standing/moving in relation to an eternal scenario from no fixed reference point, psychic or positional. We could say "evolve" to a "transdimensional viewpoint" but it would be clunky with accumulated baggage. I'd as soon say "xing to Unity One" to describe the place of 360 degree spherical vision. The Visor, I call it, but that would be private slang. The visor goes back and you see behind and above you, where the sky is infinitely deep and Summer blue. Scientific language, with its distaste for adjectives, is useless here. But not later, back home, with a case of the post-extasis blues, having just conversed with Eve and missing her already.

I don't want to sell this stuff, DMT. It's damned well not for everybody. Fortunately, its abuse potential is rock bottom. I, who loved it, have only taken it twice in the last 20 years and that was too much. It's like jumping on or off a speeding train. Omni-dimensional fact finding is not a very high priority among the "kicks" crowd; they're better off with gas and its infinite fractals of memory, or airplane glue. DMT is for those with a desperate need to know, and, among those, for only a small percentage whose neural wiring happens to be heavy gauge with appropriate sheathing. Nobody ever got rich peddling DMT. It was only always passed from hand to hand outside normal "drug ring" circles. It is, to LSD, as 198 proof rum is to hot milk with a few drops of brandy. I feel it's important to say this, since I don't want our public discussion to be seen as advocacy. Nor do I say it shouldn't be tried. For some, it's the key to the lock. One good hit should tell you where you stand with it. The fact that it's generally unavailable indicates that demand is wanting. I thoroughly understand your comment about the difficulty of summoning the "raw courage" to experiment further with DMT.

DMT is self-selecting. It knows who it wants, for whatever reasons it wants them, and scares the bejezus out of anyone else. Those who ought to have it will find themselves in possession of it, like anything else. The human brain secretes it. In miniscule natural quantities, it's the fuel of fantasy, dreams and visions. The alien-ness of many of the realms of DMT is striking. The mechanical "pixies" as you call them, for starters. I call them the klaxton men, with their klik-klak box joints and inter-dimensional warp and woof, though "men" they are not. Or the "firemen" those beings of fire who inhabit one of the closer to home stations on the way "out." They seem entirely unconscious of us. The "pixies" know we're there. They're not much interested, though. And then there's those elemental forces that descend on your room in a vortex and whirl all your property around your head, rattle your windows, even set your curtains on fire and leave your nerves jangled for days! Ah, the memories . . . And the critters, such as you pointed out, who wonder what the hell you're doing in their room! There's no time to explain, even if you could form words. And besides, who are you anyway? Anyone who has been surprised by heavy surf, whirled helplessly and slammed on the sand, has a reasonable metaphor for the power of DMT. Control isn't even in question here. Who controlling what? Caveat emptor is the byword for this empress of psychotropic substances.

Naw, you don't do "research" with DMT. You wrestle for your salvation with Behemoth and sometimes receive an unpredictable vision of actual Heaven on the dare, which makes you game to try such desperate measures again. Religionists, with their guaranteed eventual paradise, of which they know nothing, taking it all on "faith," can't be expected to understand or sympathize with those with a yen to storm the Gate of Heaven and see for themselves what all the praying's about!

I'll stop with this, ill-confident that I've moved slowly as might be into the dialogue, but, considering how much remains to be spoken, what with the eschaton and all, how slowly is it even possible to move?

23 skidoo,

Robert Hunter

Bob--I like what you have to say about DMT, I agree with most of it, yet I am aware that because the object of our discussion is so non-ordinary and peculiar that when we think that we have said all that we can say we still have not said enough. The experience is somehow able to hold within itself both the sublime and the ridiculous, the awesome and the trivial in one alchemical container.

So as I sit here reading your account I partially become it; I recover and remember the experience through that lens. But I cannot forget that it has made me laugh harder than anything ever has and that it has shown me a candy lacquered form of sexy naughtiness that I else wise would not have known existed. So I take it to be a kind of a pun. It both is what it is and it mocks what it is by being many other things simultaneously. Its nature is that it is many things, including contradictory things, at once, that is what makes it impossible.

Borges, in that story in Labyrinths called "The Sect of the Phoenix" says that to the initiated the secret seems slightly ridiculous. When I was a kid, maybe you knew people like this too, I had playmates that were my own age but so much less sophisticated than the rest of us that when we six year olds were putting on Halloween masks and chasing each other and shrieking and freaking out on sugar, there were a couple of kids who couldn't get that it was not real, that it was a game, that it is fun to scare the shit out yourself and your friends. I am not placing your trepidation in that category. I feel the trepidation too, but I do feel, and this may be the difference between doing it a couple of times and doing it maybe thirty times, that as I sit here I can recapture the feeling of the flash, not only the feeling but in some sense I would say "the Perspective" And looking at it like that it seems like it is the edge of meaning, that meaning is actually being made somewhere over the ordinary horizon of experience, and that when the DMT kicks in one is moved to the domain where meaning comes into existence. And the delight and surprise that accompanies unfolding complicated puns has a very similar feeling.

I am beginning to feel as though I am not making meaning any more so I will knock off for the evening. I am enjoying this, hope you are too.

Best,

T

Terence, conversely, when we've just begun we've said it all, taking for granted that we're speaking of the um. . . er. . . infinite. Nasty word, should be stricken from the language and replaced with "linoleum" which, to my ear, is the most gracefully evocative word I know, on a par with "Eloim." "God" is another ugly word; leave it to the Anglo-Saxons to manufacture a brutal set of phonemes for the All. Fortunately we also have "Lord" which most people instinctively substitute. No one ever says "Lord Damn it!" do they? Just warming up here. Before anyone gets unduly upset (not you certainly) remember "God" is a categorical term, not the name of Supreme Being, which, it seems safe to assume, Kabbalah

notwithstanding, is patently nameless -- or "all name" which is pretty much the same thing. Does this conflict with one of the 10 commandments? Probably a matter of translation. I would expect the commandment would translate into something more like: "Thou shalt not swear falsely by that you hold most high." Excellent advice. My particular trepidation about further DMT use is not a timidity about the substance per se. I reckon I've taken it a thousand times before receiving my emphatic cut off notice. My preferred method was intravenous. No nasty taste. First time I tried that I X'd growing out of a flowerpot on Venus beneath a great dome. The comedy quotient is indeed "ridiculous." I remember one sublime journey which ended with a funny little train belching, farting and boogying off into the distance . . . then a Warner Bros. Loony Toons circular rainbow logo descend, upon which was written "That's all folks!" You noted that what happens on DMT is often "impossible." That sure does say it. Reality just doesn't bend that way -- yet it does. Multiple contradictory viewpoints manifesting at once give the truth to Whitman's utterance "I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I am large. I contain multitudes." The most usual manifestation of that, characteristic of almost every journey I can recall, is the sensation of moving at what, I presume, is the speed of light while remaining stationary. You can't figure it out, so you just "relax" and let it rip. The stars congeal into one immense circumference of light, and bingo -- you're somewhere else. Another notable feature of DMT is the "aliveness" of everything out there. Nothing apprehended which is not entirely, vividly alive, including dust. Nothing is inanimate. Nothing is incapable of rapid and utter transformation. The most stable item I ever experienced was the living water pouring from the Holy Grail in the Sanctum Sanctorum. There, I'd have been content to dwell forever. I still treasure that vision above all others and am largely content to know it exists in the heart -- that love is REAL, not just a term for getting along with one another and making nice. But I enthuse. A little of someone else's reported extasis goes a long way. Guess I'm compensating a little for the earlier impression I might have given that "DMT beats you up." Yes, it can and does, but that's the nature of the spiritual journey. Is DMT "the way"? No. Because you come back. Because, at least in my case, the gates of Eden can be slammed in you face and presided over by an angel with a flaming sword. But one thing you never forget: the spiritual world is more real than this one, by a country mile. Anyhow, I went, I saw, was seen, and I'm still sane enough to operate a computer and string words into grammatically correct and hopefully coherent statements -- and to realize I'm walking the edge of big cultural no-no's in reporting what I found. In fact, bucking the enforced status quo is probably inherently more dangerous, innit? rhPs: just ran a spell checker on this and got: Not in Dictionary: aliveness Change to: aliensso help me God!

Hi--I will get back to the demented dialog in a moment. But to help mark Tim's journey out I wanted to point anyone interested toward my page <http://www.levity.com/eschaton/leary.html>

Best,

T

Hi--I am back at it. Yes, it does beat up on you, it does and it doesn't. Everything about it seems to come packaged with its opposite. One of the weirdest impressions that I have, and it took me a number of trips to put this all together, but in my own experiences at any rate, it became clear that weird as the place I was carried off to was, nevertheless it was someone's notion, someone very peculiar, of just what a human being like me would prefer. It was an alien effort to make an environment that was comfortable and reassuring to human beings, but as if they/it had only studied human beings from a very different

perspective than the one from which we know ourselves. This feeling of important process with grown up overtones and yet with an element of the childish and silly came to remind me of the vibe of a maternity or pediatric ward; high tech, life and death stuff is going on. But they have closets full of teddy bears and the wall paper patterns are all dancing bears and mice in tutus. I have wondered if the wondrous objects offered by the tykes in the DMT encounter, for all their power to stand our world on its head, may be, in that world, no more than plastic geometric shapes strung on a rope and hung over an infant's bassinet for its amusement and to teach it spatial and color coordination. They are no more than toys. But the maternity ward metaphor goes deeper. There is a feeling of arrival, of anxious doctors, and a sense of enormous decompression and relief. Come to think of it, decompression is a good metaphor for how DMT makes me feel, it is as if I has returned at last to my natural medium of existence, having left a zone of constriction and pressurized limitation, hence I feel inflated in every sense in that place. And then there is the language lesson that they always insist on giving me and insist is the entire point of our little meetings, though no else has ever described the stress on language and poetics and linguistic skill that seems to fill my trips. More on all that later. Don't want to shoot my wad in one go.

Best,

T

Date: Sat, 8 Jun 1996 08:24:23 -0800

From: mailbag@dead.net

Subject: wallpaper

Terence,

went to the dentist a few days ago and had NO2 while they excavated my bridge. Caramels again! The sirens and chattering of the void took me to that almost but never quite nitrous surround, the place where All is One with a vengeance and there's always one last detail to realize before the universal riddle is completely solved. I realized I knew that place inside out. It was updated to include current circumstances, sure, but I finally requested the gas be shut off and endured the rest of the session with neither nitrous nor Novocain. My tired old cells require a more gentle view of eternity these days. You've joggled my memory, thanks. One of my kindest interdimensional experiences was in a nursery. There were several children, presence strong, though I never "saw" them visually. I'm not certain but I think I may have been one of them. Hard to tell who, what or how many you are, except later - when able to define oneself as the subject of the experience. That's always an overlay on the raw perception, but necessary to "file" anything in memory and reduce the experience in order to look at it at all. To remember the egoless state would be to be re-subsumed by it. One just wants to put everything relating to DMT in quotes to draw attention to the provisionality of terms used in dealing with any of "this." What "I" saw on "my" trip. The children were laughing, mischievous and quicker than sight. The sense of nostalgia was overpowering - as of being reunited with deeply loved ones separated by aeons and vast distance - the love was mutual. The room was red; it was "the Cherry Room" and, toward the end, the children manifested as immense fluid cherries on the wall of the room. Your mention of "wallpaper" brought this to mind. The sense of someone older and wiser in charge of instructing us fledglings, in some immensely obscure study, is prominent in my memory, now that you happen to designate a category for it. Strange to be able to muster a re-organization of psychic experiences of decades ago, which I doubt I can do with "normal" experiences at such a temporal

distance. So many things have faded from memory, while key DMT experiences are often as vivid as though they're being recalled only a couple of weeks after the fact. The language lessons interest me very much. The feeling that the "teachings" were of immense importance, and that one did, in truth, learn them is strong - though what they were I can't remember. It may be visualized re-integration of data on a cellular level, interpreted as "language." Would like to go back there and check it out with that in mind - as much as one can keep any set of earthbound intentions in "mind" outside ego boundaries. Are we harking back to memories of ontogeny in the blastula stage, re-reading our own blueprints of how to make a body? Is access to those instructions stored in the 'nine tenths of the brain we don't use' because they're of no earthly use once we're born? Really the rat's ass being locked out of the lab, but I expect THEY know better. I wonder - did I make a mess on some sacred carpet, thinking I was emitting flowers? Did I insult some petty DMT bureaucrat who's had me barred? Am I under house arrest in this dimension? Or did I just graduate?

rh

Date: Sat, 15 Jun 1996 18:00:00 -1000

Subject: more, more

Dear Robert--Sorry to have been out of the loop for a while. I have been ill with some complicated thing that brought its own ambiguity with it. Strangely the experience seemed to have implications for our discussion. Ten days ago I slipped into a flu that seemed to have a mortal viciousness about it that actually frightened me. Was it a kind of couvade for the late lamented Leary? Who knows. Anyhow the delirious fevers and icy night sweats, the body aches and the vomiting was all accompanied by thoughts, myriad thoughts, many obsessive in the sense that, though they were trivial, once begun there seemed to be no end of them. And there were dreams in which--familiar territory--I seemed to be on the brink of some great understanding. After days of roiling epistemic murk and no diminution of the fever I realized that this was no flu at all, but rather a set of sensations that I had known before years ago but had long ago suppressed and forgotten: all the signs were there of so massive a dose of intestinal parasites that it was hard for me not to think of myself as already half a corpse, so congenial to worms had I become. It was from that vantage point that I tried to look back on the bright spaces of the DMT experience. The soul is never so clearly glimpsed as when like a kite she hovers a great distance from the corruption of the body. I once gave DMT to a high Tibetan character, not one of the grab tail assholes current or recently at work among the easily fleeced denizens of the New Age, but actually someone whom I regard as the real McCoy. His words to me upon return from those realms was to say that he had been carried into the realms of "the lesser lights," by which he meant that one could go only that far and no farther without abandonment of even the idea of a return. Sort of an end-of-the-rope look over the wall into an ecology of souls, that was the impression I got from listening to him describe his DMT experience. So perhaps that is the ultimate gift of this material: Consciousness expansion. I will give you consciousness expansion that will turn your blood to ice water. Consciousness expanded to the limits reveals what? The limits of consciousness obviously. Perhaps it is this for which we are not prepared and to which we are both attracted and repelled as an insect to a flame. I remind myself as I write these words and play this game with you that reality's edges, and the edges of biology, are not for sissies. A mystery is not an unsolved problem. A mystery is something else, and all the big stuff: birth, orgasm, love, death and DMT partake of that mystery. There is always that perspective from which we recognize ourselves as gnats caught in the lens of eternity. Death

reminds us of this. And so too, but by a different route, does DMT.

All the best,

T

Part 2:

Date: Tue, 25 Jun 1996 18:01:42 -1000

Subject: Re: Leviathan

Dear rh--You mentioned that you were off to England and that you assumed there would be modems there. Yes, but sometimes getting all the little phone jacks and funny adapters all together can be a pain. I have been totally getting off on recovering from my brush with the forces of intestinal destruction. It is wonderful when health and good digestion are new won friends that get you high every day. Ah, so that is over, one more speed bump on the pot holed highway of life. It has allowed me to turn my attention back toward the secular holy grail of my life here, which is the search for a really good connection to the internet. Nobody knows the hell that we go through out here to have a web presence. The Levity machines in New York serve the site very quickly and of course Dan is a state of the art kind of guy. No problem there. The problem is my connection. I use an analog US Cellular modem to reach my server in Kailua-Kona. Top speed is 4800 baud, connection is intermittent, easily broken and 35 cents per minute. Moving even a small GIF to the levity machine under these conditions can be a frantic experience. There are solutions, really there are mirages of solutions, the only real solution as far as I can tell is wireless spread spectrum technology, powerful radio modems that can reach thirty miles at 128 up to 256 kps. Hot stuff but expensive. Finally I have put together a leasing deal where this toy is almost in my grasp, in fact we are in the installation and burn in phase now. Or nearly now, as no one has yet seen this puppy perform. If and when this comes on-line I will be the technical ace of the Kona Coast. But we have been after this for eighteen months with dot to show for the effort. I will let you know how it comes out. I felt the need to give you this detailed look at the technology behind my end of our connection so that you understand the reasons for some of the delays and lost time with our conversation. And what about our conversation. The Other is always with us. It is sort of the Omni-purpose Muse. One only has to evoke it's presence and it offers itself as a perfect surface for the inspection of the limits of the imagination, certainly. I think that in an earlier post I mentioned that though it resists description nevertheless when I tell my mind "Think about it." I enter into a state different from any other. And it is un-English able. And after these experiences of "thinking about it" are concluded I then and in a normal state of mind conclude that the phenomena is about language. It is an experience about language that nevertheless, or perhaps intrinsically, cannot be talked about. It is as though it takes one to the other side of language, to a world where language is beheld or understood differently, through different senses or from a different perspective. It is as though there is a simple and obvious truth which cannot be said in words, all words betray it. Yet words are all that we have to approach this truth, it is a truth I feel, not a feeling of truth or a true feeling but a Truth. Normally such things come made of words. But not this one. Why not. The answer to that question would tell us what it is. Perhaps it is a mathematical truth, perhaps when one's IQ is boosted by an order of magnitude, as seems to happen in the flash, then one groks the basic mathematical order of things, something that can normally only be known after a life of deep intellectual discipline. Or perhaps... perhaps...Enjoy England and the summertime, if you can get down to Devon. To the Old Stones.

All the best,

T

Date: Sat, 29 Jun 1996 19:57:35 -0400

Dear Terence,

Online in England after acquiring the plug & phone jack adapters and a good transformer. Ever try to dial an 800 number (my server) from over here? A: it possibly can't be done. B: if it can be done you can't do it with the wrong country code. The US is now 001 instead of 0101. But I'm fixed. Could write a handbook. The Net cranks here. Very fast. Now I know what www means experientially. Distance is real but I can't say how since self and time are variables with variables of their own. Great satisfaction in wielding faster, wider bands of potential than at home but I don't use it much. It's my vacation. The imperative urge to communicate remains active, the coal I can't swallow or spit out. I've put out a whaleworth of doggedly spontaneous communication in the last four months, courting risk. I often upload my journals with something like a prayer that they not blow up in my face or haunt me forever because of some unexamined attitude. But I feel what you describe as the Other prompting me to hold truth higher than caution. Truth magnifies. Caution avoids. Agreed: truth is simple and unsayable. Viewing from that position of simplicity allows instant apprehension of matters complex beyond calculation. Resolved: art is the proper response. There's much to say about it - nothing to say of it. Say of it anyway and be a glad fool. Speak of what is beyond speech fluently. The Psalm is an appropriate mode of expression. The elegy and the ballad. The net offers appropriate boundless ground to declaim - without publishers, editors or retail to consider. There's a well known syndrome of derring do on the net which is a combination of ready accessibility and infinite editability and/or updatability compounded with cathode fixation. I'd hesitate to call it a Muse, but it sure acts like one. "Nettie made me say it!" Trying to downsize the Net in my own perception lately. The Ignoranti feed off our delusions of the actual "power" and "reach" of the WWW, which we confuse with its sheer potential and advertise accordingly. Once corporations learn that there's very little cash profit to made on the Net, outside of our servers, funds will stop. But it will be too late. It already is. Until a comet erases every hard drive on the planet. What form of digital information storage could escape the mass erase? Crystal? Protein? Jellyfish? Silicon? A roomful of idiot savants with photographic memory? Laser embedment on the point of a pin? Put the technology on a rocket and send it on a return cruise outside the solar system? Make that two rockets. Always back up important data!" "What resists description" is the object in itself. We either see it free of words, or in a language appropriate to itself, which is more akin to co-ordinates than the lingua we use to relate useful objects to our bodily needs and egocentric ambitions. We see only the aspects of objects the lingua allows for. Some objects we do not see at all. We intuit from the "flash" that all objects are beings. We are redefined in the act of being observed by objects in the same manner in which electron micoroscopy changes what the scientist observes. What about telescoping? In light of all this a redefinition of "seeing" is called for. One that implies interactivity. Seeing is less passive than we assume. This state of affairs is probably exciting only to the risk taker with a built in sense of essential immortality and a willingness to invest "self" as a kind of psychic capital. I wonder, now that you're on the mend, about something icily terrifying you said awhile back, about the end of consciousness - coming up to that point in fear and trembling. I felt moved to comment on it at the time. It seemed like a viewpoint of psychic exhaustion. I saw it once after overdosing on a quarter million micrograms of acid at the Carousel Ballroom (NOT on purpose) in '69, which

effectively marked paid to my acid career. Someone who has crawled naked across the Sahara doesn't spend much time in tanning parlors. Anyway, your statement carried the conviction of someone who has recently looked that place in the eye (or vice versa) and I'm curious as to how much of it may have been due to the parasite invasion? I believe that place (technically known as Hell) is more of a culdesac of consciousness than an inviolable limit to it. Meantime/space, life in this unspoiled pocket of England is all it should be. Cynicism seems unknown here, tourism is slight, the people cheerful and friendly beyond my previous experience. It's hard to be grumpy but I manage. Roses climbing into my window, 3am, light patter of rain. Time and the Net seem distant. Heap good vacation.rhps: this place feels lousy with lay lines. Not my field, but there's something happening here which speaks to a dormant sense. Not a mystic feeling. Seems objective.

pps: can I use your server? Wow!

Date: Thu, 11 Jul 1996 20:13:02 -1000

Dear Robt.--I hope the English summer is treating you right. I love Devon in the springtime but the pollen takes me to hell.I have been mulling our conversation, and reading David Abrams "The Spell of the Sensuous" and from there a bit of Merleau-Ponty. And that sent me back to Whitehead's "Process and Reality" and I reread Part III which lays out ANW's idea that feelings are the primary datum of all experience. I mention all this just so you know who I have been hanging with as I form my notions.What I return to again and again, and what these authors seems to brush up against from different angles, is the idea of a lost modality of language. That civilization, for a number of debatable reasons, has severed us, not only from nature as habitat and ecosystem/landscape but has profoundly severed us from our own nature, including the full compliment of communication skills and channels that we once accessed.Of course their approach is very academic and proceeds by reason and philosophical argument, but beneath that can be heard a very real plea for deliverance. These authors either were not aware of or chose to appear unaware of, the psychedelic experience a la DMT. Though Abrams quotes an amazing passage from Merleau-Ponty's "Phenomenology of Perception" about mescaline.But what they are calling for, the recreation of language through rediscovery of the body, to reclaim language's lost dimension, is to my mind exactly what happens when DMT works. For me it has always been about the sudden almost orgasmic outpouring of meaning that is beheld, words become things made of light and the restoration of this power brings with it ecstatic apotheosis, it is a reuniting with the lost portion of the self, somehow become lost during the vicissitudes of our long strange history since Paleolithic Algeria.I wish I could get at this more, this transformation of language. It is as personal and subjective as sex. Yet because it involves sound and vibes, it is potentially highly inter subjective, meaning can involve other sentient beings. And I have since the first time I smoked had the indisputable intuition that, in spite of its archaic roots, or perhaps because of them, that it would have a profound and salutary role to play in the transformation of cultural crisis into utter utopia. Anyhow that is enough for now.

Keep on Truck'en.

T

From: mailbag@dead.net

7.12.1996

Herefordshire

Dear Terence,

Bingo! Since keys are keys, not the rooms and the contents of the rooms which they open, it seems salutary to consider the rooms opened by chemical keys to be simply ourselves, rather than something alien and/or dangerous: parts of ourselves locked away from the ego perception which is the sum of our cultural conditioning as expressed in language as she's spoke. Freed for a moment, the latent language facility blooms and expresses things we only understand in the moment, with ears of the moment. And somehow this reminds us, so very often, of childhood - the immense bright afternoons of childhood aeternitatus. The few lexical items we manage to bring back are not unlike the babbling of a child before the native word talent is shaped into common language. I'm tempted to say, though I will not go so far as to affirm, that we ARE the word talent, as much as we ARE the visual talent, the light gathering and organizing facility. I'm reminded of Rick Griffin's flying eyeballs uttering strange glyphs. Words of light dissolve the amorphous boundaries between the facilities - six senses be damned, there's only one! We 'apprehend' and are subsumed in the apprehending. Phenomenology must take its clue from the state of pure apprehension. Wittgenstein wandered far from this and based his later self repudiated Philosophicus Tractatus on reason alone. Of course, his agenda was to destroy all philosophy up to and including his own and, I suspect, wipe the slate clean for a whole new go. Cambridge affected him that way. How is thought to continue beyond Wittgenstein? It must be regrounded in direct apprehension and freed from the clutter of religious symbology which leaks into and influences perception of the emperium. This doesn't mean do away with religion, ceremony is right and natural, but to comprehend that it could be based on primary rather than authoritarian secondary and tertiary modes of perception, allowing vital illumination of the present categories of shadow and mystery. The emperium is quintessentially religious, if by that the indubitable presence of divine consciousness in the sacred garden is understood. Merleau-Ponty is far and away the most readable of the phenomenologists, those great grandsons of Berkeley and Kant, though I'm fond of old daddy Husserl himself, unreadable as he is. I once spent several months of 1972 on one dry as dust page of his "Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness." re-reading and marking up the page ad nauseum. Never did grasp the whole presented thought (lame translation?) but it kept my mind spinning in those grooves. Those who think his disciple Heidegger is difficult should try the maestro himself, compared to whom Marty's "Being and Time" reads like Mickey Spillane. But how does one become entirely 'scientific' about the roots of perception? Occam's razor cuts as far as the stratum of poetry and no further. What is not divisible is opaque to methodology. But I don't belittle the limits of methodology. What good is a tool without limits? Tools ARE limits. You don't water the lawn with a shovel. The Swiss Army knife is the exception which proves the rule. I admire the succinctness of your last letter. Forgive me if I ramble as is my habit. It's morning in the shire and I look out my writing room window at a flock of sheep grazing the backyard. Beyond them, down the dell: a cluster of Tudor and Elizabethan farmhouses. Will be hard to give this up come late August, but I've late taxes, teeth and other business to attend to. Had the opportunity to experience dysentery with fever and light delirium last week. Not much compared to your ordeal with Oroboros in May but enough to experience the relative pleasure of a return to normality. The allergy season is in full glory here, but judicious use of antihistimine helps. Just as bad at home, so no complaint. I have occasional fantasies of retiring to the Sahara. Hope this letter finds you physically brisk and in full mental incandescence.

Subrisio Saltat!

rh

Date: Mon, 15 Jul 1996 21:51:30 -1000

Subject: Re: new orfeo file

Dear rh-- You mentioned >Bingo! Since keys are keys, not the rooms and the contents of the rooms >which they open, it seems salutary to consider the rooms opened by chemical >keys to be simply ourselves, rather than something alien and/or dangerous. To which I must reply, "Yes, but..." because, something I picked up from Jung, I am always aware that the self is not simply or merely anything. The Self is the mother of all abysm. The central fact about reality is that we do not know what we are. Therefore all other questions are unanswered. That is why the psychedelic frontier is so compelling and exciting to me, because it is such a powerful tool in the prosecution on ontology, pursuit of the understanding of the nature of true being. I liked your comments on Merleau-Ponty et. al. I had the good fortune to audit much of Hubert Dreyfus' course on Phenomenology years ago at Berkeley. But my own preference is for Alfred North Whitehead, as you are in Whitehead country may I presume to recommend "Process and Reality" as some light summer reading. Be prepared for surprises, Whitehead is no Positivist and believe that feelings are, as he would put it, "the primary datum of experience" and his mathematical grounding is impeccable. I am sorry this reply is short. I am packing for one of my periodic forays on the road, to sing for my supper. I will try to get e mail along the way. But in fact things are likely to be a little choppy as I move from Hawaii to Boulder to Manhattan to Phoenix and on to Esalen over the next three and a half weekends. I will be back in my little grass shack after the 12th of August. I am enjoying our conversation in slow motion and judge by the e mail that so are other folks. This has got to be good.

Best,

T

Date: Tue, 16 Jul 1996 08:24:00 -0400

Subject: from rh

Dear Terence, thought you might catch me up on that, after I'd already posted. Half right is all wrong in such matters. Let me redefine "self" (a dangerous, dangerous move!) as everything capable of apprehension, in full or in part, including a perception of the perceptual and organizing apparatus, not to mention a perception of that perception up to several levels, until attention itself peters out. In short: what is perceived is self, including the perception of self as objectified subject. This would subsume the alien question and leave its extra-phenomenological aspect unfactored. This escapes the blind alley of solipsism, which the healthy heart refuses to countenance even if the reason is willing. We see what we see of the alien factor but are aware that we do not encompass it. Allegory of the cave. But what we do see is part of the perceptual data which defines self, albeit with the apprehension that our data handling circuitry is unable to correlate and subsume-as-self more than a few of its extruding dimensions. And the sense of being looked back at (eye on the pyramid) by something unknowable can get the danger bells clanging. God? Gog? Magog? Yog Suttoth? Archangel? Bogeyman? My intuitive sense is that it's a glimpse of the biological "mind" with which we build these bodies and brains and has the same relationship to us as a tree to its plucked or fallen fruit. On the other hand, absolute otherness is inconceivable, which is not to say it doesn't exist. Self is only all we see, not necessarily all there is. Maybe. Gosh, ANW for vacation reading? I'm currently reading the Diaries of Rev. Frances Kilvert, 1887-97, full of local lore and mythology. He's sent me on a quest across cow and sheep pastures for the Ffordd Cross (pronounced "Forth") a small standing stone, maybe four feet high, which bears prehistoric inscriptions. No luck in two attempts, though

I know I've been within a few hundred feet of it, via directions I received at a local farmhouse. My other reading is an old edition of horror stories by Algernon Blackwood & "the Complete Idiot's Guide to Photoshop," which is way over my head. I was perhaps put off reading Whitehead by Wittgenstein's estimation that the "Principia Mathematica" by him and Bertrand Russell was a crock of shit. Of course LW didn't believe in arithmetic in the first place, so felt that any extrapolations assuming arithmetic a priori were ill founded. But I won't let him boss me around and will check out "Process and Reality" as recommended. Have a hell of a trip and kick some intellectual ass. The Humahumanukanukaoppawa (sp?) will await your return.

Cheers,

rh

Subject:Re: from rh

Dear rh--

I am packing to get out of here, will print your letter and take it with me. I am taking the old 170 but can't be certain of communicating. But I was amused to hear that you are reading Algernon Blackwood. He is one of my favorites. Is "The Horror of the Black Museum" in the anthology? How about "The Windigo"? It is the all time 'bad news in the woods' story. And yes, all those guys, Wittgenstein, Whitehead, Russell were bitchy as cats. We can't let them lead us around, much of it is advertising they are all and each closer to the mark than the others would have us believe.

Don't know exactly where you are but I enjoyed Kennet Longbarrow in Devon.

Best, T

July 17 1996

Dear Terence,

I'm reading a 1916 copy of "The Listener" which doesn't have those stories in it. I've read several Blackwood stories with sinister trees though and think I know the one you mean. "The Listener" story, despite its unsatisfactory ending (Blackwood seemed to throw closure in as an afterthought but is a master painter of hideous depression -- same fault as Lovecraft) is one of the best haunted house stories I know of. M.R. James and Sheridan LeFanu also know how to haunt a house properly. Great Victorian horror is the most accurate imaging device for the sensations of dangerous alien otherness that I know of. MR James is the most sophisticated, Lovecraft the rawest. Science fiction may have greater scope of definition, but seldom the sheer evocative power of the Victorians. The best modern evocation I know of is Philip K. Dick's semi-delirious "Radio Free Albemuth" which he later enlarged into the (to my mind) much less successful Valis trilogy. I once found the address of and made a pilgrimige to Dick's house in Venitia, five minutes from where I lived in China Camp, outside San Rafael. This was some time after his death. I saw a great big man with a close cropped white beard come out of the house carrying a brief case; the spitting image of PKD. I just filed that under "?". Am in the Welsh Marches near Haye on Wye, a land of peace and pastures, the least populated area of GB. Sheep in the meadow and doves in the dell. Antihistimine in me. Must do Devon someday - passed through it on the way to Cornwall last decade. This trip, should I break free of the local spell, I intend to visit Scotland for the first time. Shame on me if I

don't, who plays the highland pipes and was born with the name Robert Burns.

rh

PART 3

From: Terence

Subj: Back to Business at Orfeo

Date: Sep 2 1996 3:42 AM EDT

Hi--I wouldn't blame you if you had given up on me. Once I shift my attention somewhere it is hard to get back in the groove. All kinds of things seem to rush into the gap to claim attention. I suppose that everyone who is fully engaged by the post modern-pre-whateveritis mode of existence is like that. My father has been very ill, that has meant two recent and unscheduled trips out to Phoenix. I managed to visit on one day when the temperature hit 117! I stood with my father outside in the desert sun and marveled as he proclaimed to me that it was the most comfortable that he had felt in weeks. Being close to a person whose days are very clearly numbered puts a different spin on the effort to understand the Other and all of its adumbrations. Also another list that I am on, designed to explore the ramifications of Novelty Theory and the Timewave, turned unexpectedly into a slug fest in which I had to defend my ideas, my reputation, the color of my eyes and everything about me short of the number of digits in my postal address. I am now in the process of rising above the fray, granted only by abandoning the field to the shrill and the intellectually constipated, but so what? Peace of mind is worth more to me than anything else. But enough about me and back to the business at hand. I recently read a very interesting book that bears on our subject and that I have been recommending to anyone who will listen. The book is called Cyber-biological Studies of the Imaginal Content of the UFO Contact Experience. A title which surely doomed it as a commercial publishing venture. Nevertheless this book, by Dennis Stillings, a fellow resident of the Big Island, has much to say about our subject. Ordinarily I am loath to connect my beloved and always cheerful self-transforming elf machines to the popular-in-trailer-courts notion that pigmy proctologists from distant star systems are running about making free and unscheduled house calls in the middle of the night. But Stillings's book is too rich to miss. Here, hopefully to whet your appetite is a partial list of the table of contents: "Believing the Unbelievable: Child's Play or Con Game" by Hilary Evans "UFOs: Ultraterrestrial Agents of Cultural Deconstruction" by Carl Raschke "What Did Carl Jung Believe About Flying Saucers" by Dennis Stillings "Ufology Considered as an Evolving System of Paranoia" by Martin Kottmeyer "Signals of Transcendence: The Human-UFO Equation" by Peter M. Rojcewicz "UFOs and the Myth of the New Age" by Michael Grosso "Quicksilver in Twilight: A Close Encounter with a Hermetic Eye" by Tony Nugent "A Testable Theory of UFO Abduction: The Birth Memories Hypothesis" by Alvin Lawson "The 'Visitor Experience' and the Personality: The Temporal Lobe Factor" by Michael Persinger I did not agree with every view put forth but every article was fascinating and intelligent, indeed the authors did not agree among themselves. All the author's have published widely in other forums and all seemed motivated by honest curiosity and a commitment to intellectual fairness. The editor, Stillings, has a number of commentary essays that I particularly enjoyed. Check it out! Some ideas that appealed to me in this book were the following. That when one meets with someone who believes something that common sense would call absurd and for which there is little evidence to convince the not already convinced the usual question that is asked, and then the answer argued over is "Why do you believe X?" In the above book the suggestion is made that a different question might be asked: "Why do you believe THAT you believe X?"

It is pointed out that often people who profess weird beliefs do not act as though they believe them. There seems to be two levels of belief, one is simple belief and the other is to believe that you believe something. The distinction is very interesting to me. It turns the light of inquiry from the thing believed toward the dynamics of the psychology of the believer and usually, if intellectual honesty is maintained, there are very revealing personalistic answers to this second question. There is much discussion and demonstration in the book of the plasticity of memory and the way in which ordinary people confound and mix epistemological categories. This relates to a particular bête noire of mine, what I have called the Balkanization of Epistemology, the fact that no widely accepted set of standards exists as to what the nature of being, or even ordinary experience is. This is why I have come to think that all beliefs are cultural artifacts and so are inevitably as limited as the cultural dimension in which they were created. I am suspicious of them. A kind of psychedelic skepticism seem called for, and that is what I am trying to cultivate in my own life, a level of second attention, not what do I believe but why do I believe that I believe...Turning now from all that I have had a thought that I wanted to share about my experience with the elves of DMT land. I have described, on stage and in print, many times the fact that their agenda seems to be linguistic and noetic in intent. They give lessons in a three dimensional form of language. I have expressed great puzzlement concerning this aspect of the encounters, now in mulling it over I see a kind of logic in it. If a real contact is underway between vastly different kinds of intelligence, not a sampling of tissue or a reprogramming or some other paranoid control and manipulation fantasy but an actual meeting of very different but equally dharma loving and moral intelligences then it does seem logical that the first step would be efforts to genuinely communicate. In countless B-science fiction scenarios this is effortlessly accomplished using a "universal translator device" that downloads Standard Galactic or whatever in real time into "take us to your leader" colloquial English. But perhaps we have been simplistic. Communication is not easy among human beings with a shared culture and value system, how much more difficult then is communication between truly different minds. Perhaps the great impedance to true contact with the Other is lack of a common language. And perhaps because what the elves wish to communicate cannot be downloaded and flattened into English without loosing its intended meaning they have no choice but to offer three minute language lessons to who ever stumbles into their hive/nest. There is in the DMT flash a sense that "this is important, please pay attention, please try harder, please come back again and please try to communicate in the way that we are demonstrating to you". They may have something very important to say that cannot be said in any language but their own. Hence the ambiguity, the frustration on both sides and the spectacle of human language attempts to say what they are saying turning inevitable into foolishness or gibberish. Conclusion. A true contact between ourselves and another intelligence is possible, but only if we learn its language. The Other, for reasons obviously not yet clear, cannot simply lay out its agenda in English, French etc. How it may do with native speakers of Witoto or Telugu, I, naturally, cannot say. Anyhow these are the thoughts that I am carrying around these days. It feels good to be back in touch with you and our readers here. I apologize for my long absence from the game. I am back!

Best,

T

Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 10:16:58 -0400

Dear Terence,

good to hear from you. My dad, at 92, also complains of the cold on warm days. Speaking of cold, I had the eery pleasure of looking down on Baffin Bay and Greenland yesterday, a rare clear flying day over that endless scape of permanently frozen lakes and utterly naked terrain. As alien as ever Mars or Venus. Were it not for the green ice and small clouds, it might have been the moon on a pleasant Sunday afternoon. I'm just gonna rear back and say what leapt into my "mind" after reading your letter: it seems to me all human communication is a language lesson. It seems the gist of our communications tend towards "do you know?" "do you understand what I'm saying?" "Here's what I mean," and "what do you mean?" Avaunt that, major confusion about what "to mean" means. And yet something can be meaningfully said and meaningfully received, at least sometimes, I feel it in my bones. Meaning addresses marrow. I know that I have very detailed points of view, which I write down almost daily and publish several times a month in my journals. What garners response from others is often utterly tangential to what I intend to emphasize. An idea is mistaken for the signifiers in which it is expressed, which signals that I am either an inefficient writer, or that the written word mainly functions to remind people of what they already know. Not that my readers are unintelligent as a group. Far from it, as a peek at my mailbag will reveal. I begin to suspect it's the normal human condition, vis a vis writings and talk - and do not doubt that I'd prove as culpable as the next, in unconsciously reading for confirmation, were there any objective measuring tool. Got a hunch metaphor is to blame. We express an event in terms of another event, rarely in terms of itself alone. Why? Because it gives color, emphasis and torque to our opinions about, say, a hot day. It's hot as a pistol. Hot enough to fry eggs on the sidewalk. Metaphors are culturally determined and don't function well outside their native habitat. It's never hot enough to fry eggs on a sidewalk to a desert nomad who has never seen a chicken or a sidewalk. And we reply in metaphor to those likewise schooled in our subset of the metaphoric universe: "Yeah, it's hot as shit." We think, speak and dream metaphor. Everything is something else. For example, I received a letter recently which I adjudged as "poison." I felt "infected" by it. It was constructed of a pistache of metaphors incorporating my own metaphors, attempting to "speak to me," more properly against me, by appropriating the fruit of my muse, the finer part of my imagination, my soul (depending on one's metaphoric orientation concerning the creative process) and fancying this could evoke any response but revulsion and confirmation of why I would avoid this person in the first place "like the plague." I like the "Why do you believe THAT you believe X?" formulation. A fruitful line of inquiry far more invigorating than merely questioning all belief -which gets one an ill deserved reputation as a cynic when only attempting a little recreational glancing behind appearances! I'm certainly more curious about why I believe things than in what I believe, though I hadn't formulated it. As a practicing poet, I'll go the whole distance with metaphor. I believe abstract object substitution is responsible for a great deal more of the human condition than this world dreams of. I'll go so far as to say it's the foundation of human consciousness. Why do I believe that I believe that? Because I spend a lot of time acting as though it were so and haven't found anything to change my mind. Shall I take the plunge and state that everything specifically human is operated by metaphor? Speaking of ET's, if they have self-reflexive consciousness, they also operate on metaphor. What "is" neither we nor they can know, but we can know what something is like. Buddha is like, you know, three pounds of dried flax. Harumph! That is to say: Buddha is a metaphor. Does that make Buddha less Buddha? Hardly, since anything other than pain is metaphor. Sex is metaphor. Pleasure is metaphor. Love is a shower of stars in a golden bowl. Hunger is a ravenous beast gnawing our entrails. But pain is just ouch! Not a metaphor. That's why we can't really remember pain, only, sometimes, that we had some. For real pain, there is no metaphor -and memory retains only metaphor. Were you to say Buddha is pain, you'd be closer by a country mile than saying Buddha is a pile of dried dung. But it would be meaningless unless said at the precise moment of pain, which would be a rarity. From this it seems reasonable to extrapolate that looking for the "real" is looking for pain. There are those who make a practice of this, perhaps believing implicitly that "the real" is

somehow senior to metaphor. This is the worst sort of dualistic thinking. A culture that has a problem with rampant unreality is likely to be a culture that embraces pain and its anodynes. By the way, did you know that 92.3% of all thought transmission is telepathic? The other 7.7% is verbal communication, which is not telepathic because it's tongue & tonsil specific. Yet the ESP researchers try to establish their turf on the precise section of the speech pie which is non-telepathic by definition; the stuff that needs to be said aloud because it's metaphor and rhythm reliant. This is the same mentality that can't quite grasp that sending a neural signal from the brain to lift a hand to scratch your ass is mind over matter. The explanation of the previous paragraph is that I went to bed at 9pm and arose at 3am. It's now 8pm and I'm enjoying a luxurious case of jet lag this Memorial Day. Physically fragile but mentally clear in an easy going way. - that natural high known as fatigue, where one quite handily knows all and everything and can go into a glowing, golden, milk & honey trance by simply assuming the prone position. I expect that is caused by a flood of endorphins at the beck and call of weary cells. Flying West is so much less physically demanding than flying East, where fatigue shows a less benign face. Takes me two weeks to recover from a flight to London (From SF), even with Melatonin, but only three days to get back to normal when following the sun home. Sorry to serve the dialogue ball back into your court so quickly. I was just itching for something mental to do today, and your letter arrived. Think I'll reassume the prone position and enjoy the free endorphin show for awhile. rhaps: Am happy you postulated the difference between the "Elves, Gnomes & Collapsible Little Folks' Tesseract and Omniscience Society" and the "Extra-T Brigade." Space, as we know it, is certainly not the dimension our quirky pals inhabit. I've sometimes had an inkling that they're connected with human ontogeny, the very crew that helps us build ourselves from the blastula . . . and I reckon it's all done with words. But not metaphor.

Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 21:57:46 -1000

Subject: Re:TM--Reply to rh

9/3

Dear Robert--Good to hear from you. Were you returning from the long summer in Britain, or a quick trip to the same place? I too have had the pleasure of looking down on Greenland from seat 10A or 10H. I know that on United at least they refer to those two positions on the polar flights as the "geologist's seat". Cool that they know that. The ice covering Greenland is 9000 ft deep in places. The concept of ice 9000 feet thick is weirdly disturbing. And to think that it was half that thick in Minnesota only 26,000 years ago. And people say that nothing changes!>it seems to me all human communication is a language lesson. It>seems the gist of our communications tend towards "do you know?" "do you understand what I'm saying?" "Here's what I mean," and "what do you mean?" The first time I was in the Amazon I knew only the botany that a browsing psychedelic freak needed to ask after and identify the plants that would carry me into hyper space. The next time I was there I had spent a lot of time learning the taxonomic distinctions among the major plant families and I had logged a lot of time in the company of botanists. The big surprise of the second trip was that the jungle had differentiated itself into a much more complex and interesting phenomena. I knew the names of things and so what had been a blur of endlessly undulating greenery suddenly became an environment filled with the specific and the familiar. Words hide reality and words bring reality into focus. Weird critters words, always turning from what you think they are into something else. And then there is the business of other people's words. I always marvel at people who somehow :-) manage to get along without English. How do they do that! It makes me wonder about the territory inside the heads of people who command several languages; they must be living in a world so

much richer than anything I can imagine. Though I notice that they are never so indiscreet as to betray the fact that they abide constantly in this superior condition. I imagine that I would if I were them, but that is not to be. One of the chief things that I condemn myself for is the fact that I have devil of a time learning languages. Is it the price that I pay for being not half bad in English. I have disappointed teacher of languages as different as Latin and Tibetan, Italian and Witoto. Communication problems are much on my mind. I am feeling very burned from participation on a list that in my fantasy was going to bring clarity and further elucidation to my ideas about Novelty Theory. The whole thing just degenerated into a scream fest of non-communication in which I was as guilty as the people who were driving me crazy. Funny thing about this e mail stuff, it is not like any other form of communication. It is as ephemeral as sophomoric conversation on one level but the fact that it is written means that it is a permanent record of thought, and thus reveals to anyone who will look that we are almost always taking past the intended target of our communication. Somehow the fact that it is clearer than conversation paradoxically makes it harder to understand the intent of others. Written communication can always be misconstrued more easily than speech, because speech is self correcting and is carried along on a wave of empathy or telepathy that is somehow absent in the written word. Or at least my written words.>Got a hunch metaphor is to blame. We express an event in terms of another>event, rarely in terms of itself alone. I like what you said about metaphor. And I agree with you. But it reminds me of something that happened to me long ago. It was in my early acid days. I had a trip which was all about metaphor and had reached conclusions similar to those you expressed. At a meeting of the experimental college a few days after this trip I proclaimed that "Everything is a metaphor." Without missing a beat my mentor of that moment, Joseph Tussman, who was a philosophy Prof. at Cal. looked across the room at me and said. "What about articles? And, or and of? Are they metaphors?" I am still mulling that reponse. A conclusion of that same era was that language is alive. I experienced this very concretely on acid. English as an animal, a kind of amoebae, extending its pseudopodia of description into every look and cranny of reality, a kind of syntactical Los Angeles, ever growing, expanding and including more and more empty or natural territory into its grid of meaning. Wasn't it Burroughs who observed that "Language is a virus from outer space?" What does it want with us, and how can we tell if it won't tell us? And then how can we trust its message since even the act of deconstructing it involves a total commitment to it as both means and end? ETs and countless other almost realities or wannabe realities seem to be the minor flora and fauna of a purely linguistic domain. And then there is the ambiguity of memory...It is more and more amazing to me that we can sustain the hallucination of any meaning at all. I like a poem by Trumbell Stickney, one of those intense young men who died in the trenches of W.W.I. In a poem called "Meanings Edge" he wrote: I do not understand you. Tis because I lean over your meaning's edge And feel the dizziness of things You have not said. Well that's it for me this evening. Glad that you are back. Get some rest and we will continue to continue downstream.

Best,

T

R 9/5/1996

September 5, 1996

Dear Terence, was returning from England, sitting in the 3rd row, trying to get some sleep in the darkened cabin when Katy yelled out "Daddy, come and look" opening her window and flooding the cabin with brilliant sunlight. Her middle name should be "Sleepers Awake!" I grudgingly got out of my middle row

seat, crawled over sleep-masked Maureen who refused to harken to Katy's nudging, and looked out. We continued to gaze for twenty minutes until clouds thickened. Only the second time I've seen Greenland in numerous polar arc flights - and the last time was without benefit of brightly detailing unencumbered sunlight at a good angle for showing dimensionality. To think that whaling ships dared come to the unearthly desolation of Baffin Bay! And yet it is Earth. Just as the nth dimensional places of which we occasionally reminisce in our dialogue take place in human consciousness, yet sometimes seem so quintessentially non-human! reminisce. Wasn't Baffin Bay where Frankenstein's monster was last sighted, floating away on an iceberg? Soon as we got home, I showed Katy where we'd been on the globe. Another limitation of email is that banter is minimalized. On each of several points you raise, a tree of branching possibilities presents, asking for a flurry of quick exchange to establish which limb is worth crawling out on in order to obtain what apple. The point that immediately wanted addressing:>>I proclaimed that "Everything is a metaphor." Without missing a beat my mentor...said "What about articles? And, or and of? Are they metaphors?"Well, of course, youth would like to find all the apples on one sturdy branch. At this point in my dotage, I wouldn't go so far as to say "all is metaphor" though I'd hold that "all" is metaphor. Tussman has a wonderful point. Mathematical symbols exclude metaphor in order to demonstrate metaphoric propositions without adding an unwonted flavor of their own. Ideally, math is a non-metaphoric language, though in a vanilla world everything must of necessity retain some trace of vanilla. I'd venture that articles are simply the mathematical component of language as she's spoke and writ. Prepositions are not metaphoric either, being purely relational, unless you want to view them as corrolaries of pre-postulated "space," which IS arguably metaphoric. And then there's punctuation, capitalization, most verbs, and a certain percentage of the adjectives (such as "big" which is relational as opposed to "glamorous" which is metaphoric). . . hmmm - it seems that nouns are, by and large, the culprits. Not in themselves so very much, as in their interchangeability for purposes of comparison. Dog is just a sound (unless you believe in Ur language, which I only sometimes do) designating a four limbed leg humping creature (!) that eats bones and chases cars, but which sound, applied to a human of oriental persuasion, becomes a fight inducing metaphor. To jump all over the place here, you wrote "It is as ephemeral as sophomore conversation on one level but the fact that it is written means that it is a permanent record of thought, and thus reveals to anyone who will look that we are almost always talking past the intended target of our communication."Funny about that. It is an ephemerality inducing form - why this is so is worth an old-fashioned typewritten paper, much marked up for style and concision, and retyped. I think there's a mindset of speed involved: "I'm gonna bang down my first thoughts and fire this off, and expect the same in return, and quickly" sort of thing. An ethos of spontaneity seems to rule, perhaps gleaned from examples set by others who got used to typing rapid fire in usenet and conferencing groups and carried the form over into email. There is certainly much mutual agreement that this is the way to proceed: email from "newbies" is often lacking in the informal formalities of seasoned emailers, though they catch on quick. Another aspect to be considered is that email is, I'd guess, more often sent to people you don't know than would be generally true of postal correspondence. Add, to this virtual anonymity, a standard perception of the internet as a wild, untamed frontier and, presto, a new form! The upside is that it encourages the "first thought best thought" desideratum of Ginsberg. Kerouac would have loved the form. Know what you mean about "my fantasy was going to bring clarity and further elucidation to my ideas about . . ." I used to spend months preparing to go on the road, writing new songs and hammering them into performance shape, with some ideal audience in mind, people who would respond with glad attention to unfamiliar work. But it was always the old they wanted and, unwilling to be a jukebox, I eventually stopped doing my solo shows. Nowadays, I write my prose and poetry to that ideal audience I manage to evoke in my head. I refuse to be convinced they are only a fantasy. I get enough thoughtful response to know the supposition is not entirely without merit. It must be considerably more difficult on

the lecture circuit where you can't entirely ignore the vociferous. Perhaps some ground rules are in order, or a capable moderator. I've occasionally asked a crowd not to applaud between a series of shorter poems, when doing readings, finding that a smattering of polite applause only stepped on my mood and timing. Agreed, language is alive. The signs of life are growth, reproduction, irritability, metabolism and evolution. I know my work is irritable enough. If you poke it, it retreats or springs forward, claws extended. But that may be stretching a point. Is "life" a metaphor? Hmm. I think not. Would seem tautological. Life has metaphors. Can't continue on that line of thought, lacking a clear definition of what life is; knowing only some of the things it does. You write: "It is more and more amazing to me that we can sustain the hallucination of any meaning at all." I'll take that literally and respond: yes, it IS amazing that we, in fact, can do so. And it's my opinion that we should honor our hallucinations in the highest. I hate the statement "that was only a hallucination." It's like saying "that was only a vision." Vision is the very crux of the matter. Without it, we are less than the animals: irresolute killers who weep over our meat. Well, we're making up for lost time aren't we? Nice to get a few letters, from those who follow this dialogue, kindly complaining about the hiatus.

Your Health,
rh

Date: Tue, 10 Sep 1996 19:47:37 -1000

Dear rh--

I liked this thought of yours> Mathematical symbols exclude metaphor in order to demonstrate>metaphoric propositions without adding an unwonted flavor of their own.>Ideally, math is a non-metaphoric language, though in a vanilla world>everything must of necessity retain some trace of vanilla.In thinking about Whitehead's definition of Novelty I recently had occasion to go back and reread how he approached this most central and mathematical of all the concepts in his metaphysic. it was interesting.He said: "These ultimate notions of 'production of novelty' and 'concrete togetherness' are inexplicable either in terms of higher universals or in terms of the components participating in the concrescence. The analysis of the components abstracts from the concrescence. The sole appeal is to intuition. (Process and Reality, p. 26)""The sole appeal is to intuition." I hold that thought. That this most mathematical of gentlemen, this paragon of the rational, knew, and stated, this obvious fact about process and reality is somehow fundamentally reassuring. Godel's Incomensurability Theorem, or whatever it is called these days, makes it important to acknowledge just how shaky and provisional the noetic enterprise is, at best. Science is the worst offender here, playing dirty pool and assuming a commanding and overbearing expertise in areas where it actually is no more deeply endowed with wisdom than are other modes of thought.

Best,

T

September 13, 1996

Terence, take me to your worst offender! Anything absolute enough will at least engender its opposite. It's those half baked offenders who merely defend the postulates of those who have, in their own terms, dared

to be emphatically wrong, who cause the trouble. By trouble I mean: tedious lackluster benightedness. Sometimes I more than half believe that if an idea is wrong enough in a right enough way, reality stretches to accommodate it. Maybe there was no relativity before Einstein and the sun simply shined directly on us rather than taking 9 minutes to reach Terra at 186,000 mps. This is true in the blessed world of metaphor and music. Certainly in dreams. Necessarily in hyperspace, or we'll never touch the cool sweet surface of stars, as we must and therefore will. If God meant us to live in Los Angeles, He wouldn't have given us categorical imperatives.

rh

PART 4

Sept 30, 1996 12:54 AM

Dear rh--I am getting ready to travel for a month in Europe and South Africa and for the first time in years I have decided not to travel with a Power Book. I am not on AOL so there are not local access numbers wherever I go. In fact I have to make a long distance call back here to Hawaii to get much net work done. Even to pick up my e mail. So I will try it cold turkey; most of this trip will be in South Africa out in the boonies I gather so access isn't an issue. I mention this to introduce the idea that I am going to be off-line for a while. Until around Halloween. A vague disquiet attends these long journeys, sometimes it seems that I live in airports. To do a little of the international travel bit is glamorous, whatever that is, but to do a lot of it is tedious and potentially unhealthy. Ditto the celebrity and Great Man hip hop. Plus I am very much in love with Hawaii and my life here. My life got bollixed up a few years ago with a divorce and slowly, or so slowly things are beginning to feel normal, no longer reactive to the Great Event. But I am lazy, and it is so nice to stay home on the hill with my girlfriend, talk, smoke, make love, grow all kinds of plants, read, and surf the net. I enjoy being a player in the culture, but it is not my first priority, my priorities are more private than that. They provide the logic behind my pursuit of the grail of high speed connection. So that I can play the cultural dialogue game in 3-d with real audio, but can be secure and free up here on the mountain. This is really the new archaic lifestyle: Self employed consultant, off grid, Bohemian, essentially stateless and well connected WWW and bandwidth wise. But living in the future in the present has its tensions. This matter we have been discussing, for example. The presence of the Other and the paths to it, not something most families are wrapped up in. Yet. Even to know about these things is to be isolated from the cheerful Mom & Pop world of middle class sentimentality. Perhaps shamanism has always had about it this feeling of being slightly ahead of itself. This may be the key to the alienation that seems the sine qua non of the shaman's relationship with the community. Part of it, but apart from it: That is the shaman's attitude toward the village, the folk and the polis. But I am rambling here. I will be in touch as I can. Keep the home fires burning until you hear the hoof beats of my returning steed.

Best,

T

September 30, 1996

Terence,

NOT TRAVEL WITH A POWERBOOK! Gonna do some time travel, right? No point taking a Powerbook to Mesopotamia I guess. There was a time when leaving the old Powerbook behind was almost a matter of course. Back in the Conestoga wagon days, it must have been sad leaving your PB in Philadelphia knowing there were no wall sockets where you were going. On the other hand, they had pony express, the ancient equivalent of a 1 baud modem. Then there were all those Mac users at the Alamo, including my great grandfather at six removes, Dan'l Boone, besieged by the army of DOS users with Windows with their cry "You can get more software for it!" I can't upload on AOL either, other than email. Just use it to do my correspondence without making a long distance call to my server. It costs me under 20 bucks a month if I don't get reckless with it. Plus, not being very fancy in my emailing requisites (this Orfeo thing Levy has going is positively Byzantine - I answered one feedback letter and got 27 mailer daemon returns on it the other day!) I like the format and dependability. I know some people have a status problem with that and would prefer to write me at dead.net - but the big hammer has its uses. Glad to hear you hate traveling too. I love being in other places, just don't like getting there. Burned out on that around '72 after four years of traveling with the Dead - then a number of years going out solo. Too much aggravation on the cells at my current age of 55. But back to our subject. I've been rambling along waiting for inspiration to strike as it inevitably does when writing to you, as per our contract with the Other. Here's a trio to consider in interaction, one with the other, and with ourselves as we perceive ourselves to be: the Other, the Doppelganger (Double) & the Shadow. Too many mistake the Shadow for the Other. The Other is not a projection, rather an autonomous potential source of absolutely new impressions, which are, unfortunately, necessarily fielded through the matrix of old impressions - there, more often than not, to be leveled, generalized, filed and abandoned. No wonder as we get older we fail to remember our dreams with the vivid memory of youth. We resist the new with fang and claw. And statute. And then one day we see our Double: our own self, decisively removed from ourself, standing on a street corner, or wandering down the Rue des Invalides - and then the game is over. The Shadow, being that inalienable alienated part of ourselves which fears the utterly foreign Other, which is NOT a part of ourselves, finds it fears the Double even more than it fears the Other, since the Double necessarily knows the particulars of its dark existential existence which are NOT TO BE KNOWN by another. Murder, if not simple insanity, may well be the outcome. We are split so many ways it's hard to imagine anything so copacetic as the Maslovian "Integrated Self" to be anything but a pipe dream. The Shadow, by its very nature (I keep using that expression, failing to find a good substitute) is all that is NOT assimilable. I tentatively offer the assertion that assimilation should not be attempted - though that is a heretical remark in light of mid-20th century psychology. It's not a question of oil and water, but of water and potassium. I have a notion that partial assimilation leads to suicide. How could one face that dark monstrosity full on and not want to kill it? Yet it is common, and probably correct, knowledge that the Shadow is connected with the vitalizing force, the libido, or whatever. I think it's enough not to deny its existence and to strengthen the ethical/moral side of one's nature as the only probable compensating force. Have fun in South Africa, where these forces are still raising societal Hell par excellence - I think it might be a proper paradigm for viewing the remains of Apartheid. Which is the Shadow? Which is the Other?

Keep your powder dry,

rh

Nov 18 1996 12:34 AM EDT

Dear rh--

You must wonder, as I do sometimes, how much experience can flow under the bridge without my taking note of it. The fact is that the more pleasant aspects of life, such as considering experience in the light of experience and writing about it, seems to easily become so elusive that one can only remember the feeling of doing it. Water under the bridge. Two events loom in my current life, both in the recent past, both of doubtless different import, their relative relationship to each other still to be discerned. Africa was a trip! After the repressive civilities of hobnobbing with the deconstructionist elite at the ICA in London it was a head snapping change. Excuse my reference to a personal mythology of mine but during the time of my travel in Africa I was aware that the time wave was in a configuration that means a general tendency for habit to make its imprint on things rather than novelty. How, I wondered can a trip to Africa unfold in a time of habit and reinforcement. As usual I did not reckon with the wily ways of the Tao. For when I finally arrived at where I was going, a place in the Free State called Rustler's Valley I had my answer. Here was a place that, for all of its being at the antipodes of my present home, is nevertheless more like where I grew up as a kid than any other place that I have been. What I mean by that is that both places are landscapes of wind cut sandstone with a wild visual aspect and a wild geological history. In the case of my own stomping ground I am thinking of the area around Moab Utah and the four corners area. The differences had to do with the human component. Where I grew up there were Ute Indians, a few, still hanging on. In Africa there were !Xosha people. Some in beehive houses of wattle and adobe. But what really got me stoked was that since I had not been in such a landscape since I was a child, my reflex was to do there what I had always done in such situations, which was to hunt in the badlands for fossils and flints. "Evidence of early man" was always a paltry concept where I grew up, early man arrived there only 20,000 years before me self. But now in Africa, that is another matter. I went alone to the dongas, the dry arroyos, gullies I called them when I was ten, near the ranch where I was teaching, and found what I was looking for: flint cores, scrappers, stone tools. The archeologist at the end of the bar was happy to inform me that nothing gathered during my afternoon's walk was less than 65,000 years only. Nothing less than! What a dizzying amount of time, and how strange to be in a place where as long as there have been human beings, they have been in that place, a million years does not put too fine a point on it. And the second matter on my mind is the fact that I have just yesterday turned fifty. There will be an unending number of these I just turned fifty posts over the next few years as boomer after boomer crosses the threshold. All very boring and I am glad that I was near the front of the line and got it all taken care of early. Still it is food for thought. Experience is a form of intelligence. If one is not born smart, still experience can mold one into a simulacrum of intelligence. I am amazed at the panoply of swirling complexity that characterizes the life of our culture here at the end of the century, aye, the millennium. And I am grateful and amazed to find myself a part of it. And like the clueless rube in the crumb cartoon, I continue to ask the question "What does it all mean?" It is pleasant to talk to you like this, I am happy to be back in the saddle, I think it we ever had a audience for these exchanges that they may have long since drifted away. Maybe better that way. How goes it on your horizon? What news, what insights, and doth a fair wind also billow your sales?

Best,

T

R

Dear Terence, I see from the time stamp on your letter that you're either writing me from the future or the East coast. Either seems a fair bet, but not Hawaii where it's only 8:40 of the 17th. Dig the pace and flow of your letter which seems written in a whirlwind, and yes, we're synchronized on the event of returning to the pleasurable ease of writing of experience from experience, which sometimes seems but a memory. Or the hellish pleasure of banging out a novel in youth, before which all the world of literature would stand in awe, not understanding that joy alone would not substitute for decades of considered experience. To have the joy and the fund of experience at one and the same time, ah - that were a consummation devoutly to be wished! Still, sometimes . . . I've just divested myself of a near nine month commitment to answer all email sent to my address, after finding it strategically impossible. Tonight I curled up on the bed with a good vampire book - but kept feeling twinges of free-floating guilt, the habit of answering mail during all possible free moments, yet to be broken. But the prospect of freedom from this self imposed labor is exhilarating. I expect an action-reaction phenomenon directly proportional to the effort expended. I was skimming leaves out of my modest swimming pool after a windstorm two days ago when I suddenly realized the moment had come to be delivered from this regime. I operate that way - rather than make decisions and act on them, I form desires and wait for the moment when they become possible, and then they are accomplished. It's one of my magickal actions. A way of engaging the mechanics of habit. Perhaps this is how best to make use of the state you prophesy for these times. Habit is the driving force of human endeavor. Hey, I like the sound of that. Comes across official, doesn't it? And not just a little bit true, I think. The trick is to get habit working in the direction of desire, rather than in service of entropy. You mention Tao, and I think Tao is just that. Habit. Not to sound like a fool by saying what Tao is, but it's the habit of wind to whip up when the sun sets, due to cooling. It's the habit of tides to rise to the call of the moon. It is the habit of wisdom not to form habits that do not serve the will. What is will? Desire, only. Is it possible to desire what you do not at present desire, because to desire it would act to further something you DO desire in a basic way? I feel our basic desires must ideally be served in a way beneficial to ourselves and others, since the vanquishment of basic desire is the diminuation of life. Those desires are not replaced by others, except in twisted, diminished versions. Initial desire is a byproduct of weaning. Very basic. Very binding. Desire is the wanting of security first and foremost, secondly of wanting excitation, thirdly: the avoidance of hurt. When two & three get reversed, confusion of purpose arises and entropy grabs hold. Bear with me, there's no source for this, I'm making it up as I go along. What they call hypothesis. Habit can act to perpetuate the confusion of disordered priorities - or, skillfully managed, to re-order them. It is by such a visualization (another if you prefer, all roads lead to Rome) that we grab hold of and re-orient habit to a general purpose. If this is indeed the time of habit's transcendence over novelty, then we must appropriate habit in a novel way. End subject. Have been reading in Whitehead at your behest and find him meticulously expansive. His categories are somewhat arbitrary, but he would be the first to admit this. They are utilitarian for his purpose. As a poet I view them as tropes. Tropes are interchangeable, for the most part, but the trope of eternity is fundamental. Everything can, and probably should be, viewed under the trope of eternity. It's open ended enough to include all possibilities; mens aeterna est quatenus res sub specie aeternitatis. I like the clause: "less than 65,000 years only" in your statement. That is sub specie aeternitatis, under the trope of eternity, in spades. We are only given eternity in hunks of the biblical three score years and ten, yet are able to glimpse it outside that limitation of sparse years through the measure of aeons. A capital invention! The eternity the mind experiences is a form of eternity - and forms of eternity *are* eternity. That's what the latinate is getting at. Why do we not generate such thoughts, so clearly expressed, a millenium or two on down the line? My tentative supposition is that time flows backwards from what we habitually suppose, but that's another piece of business entirely. It would not behoove one to act as though this were so, true or not. Which, as with many things having to do with time/space, is a condition of living in 4 dimensions. You bump into things

otherwise, and bruise yourself walking through walls which are not constructed yet. Really glad to hear you had a gas of a time in Africa. I've been no further South than Marrakesh, so can only imagine and combine dim movie/travelogue images. It would seem something in the blood must yearn for Africa, as it does for the sea. Weaning, again. Between the yearning for ocean and yearning for the cradle of civilization, it might be there falls another yearning - for Mu or Atlantis, or whatever that place we swung from trees in before the continental reformation. Assuming we're not from elsewhere. And if we are from elsewhere, there must be a yearning for that place, it's ocean, it's Africa. We humans are nothing if not cauldrons of yearning. Good to have you back and hope it's good to be back. Corresponding with you is a pleasant habit.

rh

p.s.
Happy Birthday!!!

December 8, 1996

Dear Terence, where is the hallucination of ten years ago? It's neither in space nor in time, this we know because space and time are definitions of relativity and nothing dwells in definitions but angles of perception. But say a hallucination (or a vision) recurs. The question might be rephrased "who is having this recurring vision?" Or is it that the vision "has" the perceiver? Language would have it that "I had a dream." If I appeared as a character in the dream and saw a blue house, was it the one who was sleeping who saw that house, or the one who appeared to be conscious within the dream, reputed to be me? Or the one who writes these sentences? Assuming the possibility of a reasonable answer, which aspect of self would be better qualified to reply:: the self of the dream, the waking self who recalls the dream, or the self who later ponders the subject of dream and vision in general? And what of the parts of the dream seemingly beyond recall? If not available to consciousness, were they really "dreamed" at all? Well, yes - because sometimes other facets of the dream pop into consciousness suddenly while one is thinking of other things - as though a 4th self yet had access to the n-dimensional repository. I had a good deep sleep last night and remember nothing, though I'm fairly certain many vistas were opened. Just an apprehension of something occurring which might have so little reference to the waking world that memory cannot repossess it, unless an intersection point presents itself. Be that as it may, I feel refreshed in a way that suggests many things were resolved. As I write these words, I feel a sudden painful cramp in my solar plexus. Nausea. Gas pain, or am I skirting too near the abyss here? Conversely, is the abyss skirting too near me? Abyss: where self loses the comfortable utility based on not asking too many questions. To the point, why am I writing of this particular blend of ideas this morning? Assuming nothing happens without motivation, is this examination the fruit of whatever happened in dreamland which won't yield itself to me? Seems a fair guess. The topic question popped into my head with commanding intensity, wanting to be written down, but not to "myself." Rather to an Other. As with all questions dealing with phenomenology, the problem of the observer is paramount. When "self itself" is under scrutiny, and starts splitting, like quicksilver touched, the "Other" is conceived and addressed as a matter of reflexive recourse. Looks like I'm adding to our cumulative exposition on the nature of the Other via the backdoor. Didn't realize that was where it would lead when I began. Back to topic A: where is the hallucination of ten years ago, if it is both then and now? It would be almost too easy to suggest "in eternity," the same place the keener perceptics of babyhood loom without rational reference, causing the endless nostalgia at the core of being human. A cat purrs when stroked because recalling the tongue washings of its mother. It needs no

drugs or philosophy to achieve this satisfying identification with the Other. I think that in the "purr" separate identity dissolves. As in deep sleep. Is snoring the human equivalent? The flapping glottis of peace. Grey Autumnal morning thoughts. Cramp gone and a swirling breeze detatches yellow leaves from the wisteria.

rh

December 12, 1996

Dear rh--

"Where are the snows of yesteryear?" This is not a question about meteorology. It is rather a question about memory. It seems to me that one of the fundamental accomplishments of modernity is the establishment of the notion of a fragmented, discontinuous identity as a part of the lived experience of many people. I call it an accomplishment because I believe it represents an overcoming of the fiction of narrative that was imposed on experience and life by the earlier more print constellated psychology of the Nineteenth Century. Phenomenology and analysis of experience leads to the notion that we each are living in very private Idahos. Not only do we have great difficulty communicating among ourselves but we also have great difficulty communicating with various parts of our own identity. The awakened and the dreamer are as remote from each other as the ten year old and the fifty year old, as different from each other as the terminal depressed person and the psychedelically ecstatic person; yet all of these people can be found united in one person, or at least one body, one continuing organism. I almost wrote one continuous bundle of genes, but then I recalled that one's genetic heritage is never expressed all at once, some genes are turned on in puberty, some in middle age. So in this sense we are always a part of the larger thing that we are in time that is our whole continuous existence, something that a 4 dimensional being could appreciate from the outside but that no one of us can ever see or know. The organism continues but its understanding of itself and its purposes and its experiences of itself and its purposes is always unintegrated and discontinuous.

Best,

T

Original Transcription by: levity.com

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Search For The Original Tree Of Knowledge Workshop

May 29-31 1992

Boulder, Colorado

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)

This was a crowd transcribed effort involving many people. Link to the Google Sheet [here](#).

[0:00:00] [Introduction begin] Sounds True, presents; In Search of the Original Tree of Knowledge, a weekend workshop with Terence McKenna. Researcher, author and philosopher. Terence McKenna has spent 25 years studying the foundation of shamanism and the ethnopharmacology of spiritual transformation. His books include Food of Gods and The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide and most recently, The Archaic Revival. He is also the founder

[0:00:30] of the Botanical Dimensions, a non profit botanical research project. In this weekend workshop, Terence McKenna examines time and its mysteries, the nature of language and the techniques of ecstasy that have developed the non western societies to navigate to and from invisible worlds. And now, recorded live in Boulder, Colorado. In Search of the Original Tree of Knowledge. A weekend workshop, with Terence McKenna. [Introduction ends]

[0:01:00]..ahh..how to slice into this pie, I try to never do it the same way because i don't want to get bored but that lays a sort of obligations on me that i am not always able to meet. 2 things i think are going on inside this wrap, as currently packaged. First of all, i am very interested in talking about the impact of uhhh.. psilocybin.. [0:01:30]..on human evolution an.. and values and institutions, and then so that you don't think we've just fallen into French anthropology 101.. [audience laughter] I am interested in taking ..the.. the inside from that discussion, and trying to apply it to the modern or postmodern as the case may be, dilemma. Trying to draw some.. [0:02:00]..implications from (uhh..uhhh) looking at human prehistory and the 7 factors that were in place as the moment of human emergence; and since i feel pretty much among friends and fringy here.[audience laughter]..I.. it doesn't trouble me to concept that my book, Food of the Gods.. I really conceived of as a kind of an intellectual.. [0:02:30]..trojan horse. It's written as though it were a scientific study; footnote, bibliography, citations that's impossible to attain book and so forth and so on. [audience laughter] but this is simply to assuage and calm the academic anthropologists. The idea is to leave this thing on their doorstep, rather like an abandoned baby or a trojan horse and they will open their doors.. [0:03:00]..to it and take it inside only to discover that out of this very vague rational discourse for the self- transforming-elf-machine from hyper space [audience laughter] with their own agenda. [audience laughter] (clears throat).. I..I feel like i should say this; it's more for my ease than yours. That..i've reached the conclusion that i'm now..[0:03:30]..espouse..through skepticism, reason, rationalism and the tough argument. So it may sound bitsy, flaky and soft headed. Uhhh. But that's just because you're hearing it wrong. [audience laugh] the ..uhh.. The guiding input was .. experience. And in a way [0:04:00]..what we are gathered here to talk about..uh.. tonight is an experience which is not only rare, transformity, challenging.. But, also for reason that will probably get around to illegal. So, its.. uhh.. it's a very peculiar situation, very few experiences are illegal. And our models of the world..[0:04:30]..are built up based on our experience. So if u make an experience illegal, you're essentially saying it is off limit for model building, You can't include that in your model because it isn't really there in some sense. And..and this is the situation in western society, these are the psychedelic experience. To my mind, the psychedelic

experience..[0:05:00]..is as much a part of being human as sexuality, in..personal independence, uh.. child rearing.. These are the things which are scripted into us as opportunities for exercising our peculiar situation.. These..these phenomenal being. And a society which would deny that..[0:05:30-0:06:00]..is a society whose secret or maybe not so secret agenda is the infantilization of its citizens. I mean if we are not capable of dealing with these things, then who is? And are the people who make the rules; did they carefully, conscientiously and that depth.. Explore these dimensions and decide they were unfit for human consumption? [audience laugh]

Transcribed By Azlan

[6:00]

...or, uh, was it done more hastily, more mindlessly, and with more fear? I would submit to you that, uh, it's the latter. Well, first of all I want to talk about the impact of psychedelics, especially in this case psilocybin, on human-ness. And then if there's time maybe we can talk a little bit about what is so great about it? I had a philosophy professor once, Paul [inaudible], [6:30] some of you may know his book, and he opened his epistemology 101 course by saying, 'i'm going to teach you what truth is, and then i'm going to teach you what's so great about it.'

Well I won't claim to teach what the psychedelic experience is, that you will have to find out on your own, but I think it is legitimate to discuss what's so great about it. You know, are we, by any measurable [7:00] index, superior or inferior to people who do not have this experience? Because if not, then really, the psychedelic position is no more than a kind of cult, to be lined up along with Roman Catholicism and all the other cults out there. Speaking as a former member of course. [audience laughter] Well, my uh, my notion [7:30] of the way to legitimi- to legitimate the importance of psychedelics is by showing, and I think one can show, uhm, in fairly short order, that these things are not alien to the human experience, or ancillary, or the province of uneducated, uhh, little brown people down in the rainforest or anything like that.

I submit to you [8:00] that the psychedelic experience and the impact of psychedelic plants on human beings, is central to understanding who we are, and how we got this way. And if we can, uh, explore this issue and convince ourselves there's some merit in this point of view, then it will simply- it will do more than rewrite the annals of a stayed science like anthropology [8:30], it will actually change how we relate to each other and to the planet that we're in the process of grinding into, uh, pollution. So that's the raison d'être for the politics behind it. Now here's the spiel. Uhm, sometime in the last three million years, the, uh, proto- our remote ancestors [9:00], the proto-hominids, uh, were, uhh, disrupted in their evolutionary climax in the canopies in the great rainforests of Africa. You see most animal species evolve into a niche; tighter, and tighter, and tighter. We see this with termites and cockroaches and most lifeforms, this is what happens to them.

Only if the niche [9:30] is somehow disrupted or destroyed does the game veer away from its tendency toward closure. And this is what happened to us. Uh, our remote ancestors would have lived happily in the climaxed rainforests of Africa, in the same way the primates to this day live happily in the climaxed rainforests Indonesia and South America[10:00], but for the fact that the dynamics of the planet, and this ultimately is if we're looking for a cause, or some people would say it's the villain, then it's the climatological dynamics of the planet, which began to, uh, limit these rainforest habitats. And a new kind of habitat began to form in Africa which was grassland. It's very recent [10:30]. And under nutritional pressure, and under a pressure that was the result of this retreating

environment, our remote ancestors descended from the trees and began to, uh, adapt themselves to the new world of the grassland. And they did this, uh, over a period of probably a couple of million years.

Now, I maintain, and if any of you are [11:00] evolutionary biologists or anthropologists this is the nub of my position: here's what's new scientifically: What they teach you about evolution is that it's caused by mutation, which is a random process, which then meets another random process which is natural selection, and out of these two random processes, lo and behold you get Sea Urchins, Birds of Paradise, [11:30] Grey Whales, and Human Beings. Now, uh, when you inquire as to what is the source of this mutation, you will be told it's cosmic rays, incident, incoming hard radiation which can disrupt chromosomes, and then- most of these mutations are lethal; some huge percentage of them. But a vanishingly small of them actually confer adaptive advantage. And they are then . . .

Transcribed By Nigel Milligan

[12:00]...and they are then preserved in the genome and passed on. Now, what I want to suggest, and I've never seen it thoroughly treated by evolutionary thinkers, is that food, is the unexamined source of evolutionary pressure, it can be. If you know anything about animal species, you know that most animals tend (12:30) to specialize their diet. Insects are famous for this. If you find a caterpillar and you want to raise it in a jar you must give it the food plants you found it on, because they just don't eat leaves, it doesn't work like that, they have species specific adaptations. Now why is this?

It's because it's a strategy to limit exposure to toxic and mutagenic chemicals (13:00) that other life forms are sequestering in their tissue to discourage predation, essentially. Well, so then what happens when an animal population such as our remote ancestors comes under pressure from a dwindling habitat or a limited availability of food? Well what happens, if you have any sense, is you start experimenting. (13:30) You start digging up roots you never thought about before, and chewing on them. You start eating leaves, you start eating insect protein, you experiment with the slaughter of small animals and so forth and so on. And this is precisely what our remote ancestors did. This is the much lamented transition from fruitarian holiness to predatory carnivorous messiness. (14:00) But had we not been able to lower our gourmet standards we would have entered the fossil record at that point.

So. So here we have these proto-hominids foraging into this new grassland environment beginning to beat on prairie dogs, and stuff like that, and, and, simultaneously as we all know, evolving in this African veldt environment (14:30) were great herds of undulate animals; proto-cattle, bison, wildebeest, antelopes, many many different kinds of animals. And one of the curiosities of nature is that many mushrooms prefer the dung of undulate animals to just going out and making a deal with the raw, natural environment. (15:00) They like the leavening that goes on with vegetable material when it passes through the double stomach of the undulate animal. As a headline what this means is mushrooms grow in manure. And so, our remote ancestors, testing for insects and eating small animals would certainly have encountered the so-called coprofitic or coprophilic; the dung loving mushroom. (15:30) And they would have tested them for food.

Years ago when I was in Kenya, I observed baboon troops in this very environment we're discussing, and their habit was; they were very interested in cowpies. Because they had learned from experience that if you rush over to a relatively old cowpie and flip it over (16:00) there's a high probability of beetles or beetle grubs under there and so

these were vectors for food getting. Well in the end I did not observe mushrooms in Africa but I observed mushrooms in the Amazon and they can attain the size of a dinner plate. I've never seen them in cultivation quite that large. But, you know, you come out after a hard rain and these things are landed like little flying saucers or frisbees in the meadows. (16:30) They would certainly have been tested for their nutritional potential.

And psilocybin, different from all other chemicals in nature, including as far I can tell all other hallucinogenic chemicals in nature; (17:00) psilocybin has a unique set of characteristics which implicated to my mind very strongly in the catalyzing of the emergent of humanness out of proto-hominid and hominin organization. And it worked like this; (it's very uh, relatively easy to understand as major scientific breakthroughs go, at least you're not going to be asked to do any partial differential equations this evening.) Psilocybin in very low doses, (17:30) doses so low that if you were to take a dose this low you could conceivably forget you have done it, and just go out and shop and fiddle around. But at doses so low that they do not register as a psychedelic experience, psilocybin imparts measurable improvement in visual acuity. Roland Fischer did this work in the late 50's and early 60s, and they had, they built an experimental device, where a person could not be seen by turning a crank....(18:00).....

Transcribed by Kevin Evans

[0:18:00] be seen, by turning a crank- There were two parallel bars, and by turning a crank this person could rotate one of the parallel bars so that, uhm, it was no longer parallel. And, uhm, lacking talking rats they went to the next preferred experimental animal which is graduate students. And they would sit a graduate student down in front of this device, give them a very low [0:18:30] dose of psilocybin, and then put a buzzer in their hand and say 'When the two bars are no longer parallel, push the buzzer'. And, uhm, [Fisher?] collected large amounts of data which showed that the people who had taken psilocybin, and the other people were given a placebo of course, could detect this deformation long before the unstoned subjects were able to do so. And [Fisher?] who was a totally [0:19:00] straight European scientist, in fact a vianner. When I talked to him about this stuff he was very cagey, and he- he was funny in fact, he said "Well you see it's very interesting. Apparently here we have data which, uhm, argues significantly that we are perceiving reality better with the drug than without the drug!". [Audience laughs] Yes, yes. For him that was a joke. [0:19:30] I mean, he never did anything with it; It was just a throw away line. But it stuck with me and I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist to see that if you are a hunting animal in a situation of nutritional pressure, as our remote ancestors were, and there is a food in that environment that will give you better vision then, by God, the animals which accept that into the diet [0:20:00] are going to be more successful hunters than the ones that do not.

And, consequently, they will outbreed those members of the population that have some aversion to this exotic food. Either they don't like the look of it, or they don't like that it grows in manure, or they don't like the taste of it. But those who accept it, as a dietary item, will be more successful at getting food and consequently more successful and raising their offspring to sexual maturity. [0:20:30] And that's the name of the game in darwinian evolution. You must raise your offspring to sexual maturity. Then the genes flow forward. If you fail in that you get an F in the evolution game. Well, ok so visual acuity, that's a very fine. Uhm, but psilocybin has other properties which build on that initial pharmacological peculiarity. [0:21:00] Uhm, if you take slightly larger doses of psilocybin, uhm, and this is typical with many indoles, you get- many of which are hallucinogens, you get what is called CNS arousal. Central nervous system arousal. You all know this feeling it's the feeling of two double cappuccinos in short order. It's that you do not sleep. You are very restless. [0:21:30] You are very alert. Your attention is scanning, scanning, scanning. And in highly sexed animals, like primates, arousal means exactly what it sounds like. It means erection in the male

animal. And, uhm, now isn't that interesting? Uhm, that is a second factor feeding back into this, uhm, increased success with offspring [0:22:00] business. Not only are you a better hunter, but you're a more highly sexed creature.

And you're having more of what straight anthropologists refer to as 'Successful copulations'. An amazing phrase actually. [Audience laughs] Meaning, of course, that impregnation is a consequence of these- of this sexual activity. Now the other thing that psilocybin does, [0:22:30] uhm, at or slightly above this arousal level, and this is very important for the argument, is it creates- it causes what I call boundary dissolution. And boundary dissolution in human beings, like you and me, means ego loss. And I believe that this would have promoted, uhm, a social and sexual style based, not on monogamous [0:23:00] pairing but, on orgy. The scenario is fairly easy to imagine. It's that these remote ancestors of ours would take these mushrooms and they, probably at the new and full moon, the thinking is that ritual was originally lunar time. And then they would, we're talking about nomadic groups of people. Probably no more than 80 to 100 people. [0:23:30] And then there would be, uhm, group sexual activity. Now, an interesting social consequence of orgiastic social styles, besides a whole lot of fun, [Audience laughs] is it's impossible to trace lines of male paternity in that kind of a situation. You see, women know whose children are whose because they see the child come out of [0:24:00]

Transcribed by Paul Mullins

0:24:00...Out of their body and they nurse the child but man do not in that situation have their children. My children. What they have are our children. The tribal group, and at this boundary dissolving thing, let's dwell on this for a moment because this is central to my argument and it has political consequences for our own lives. (...urmm..) all primates.. Clear backed.. 0:24:30...down into squirrel monkeys and howler, all primates have what are called male dominance hierarchies. Now what this means is the most.. The males with the longest claws.. The hardest muscles and the meanest disposition.. Take control of everybody else. Women.. Children.. Weaker males.. (...urmm..) everybody comes under the thumb of the alpha male of the pack. 0:25:00...This is true as i said a squirrel monkeys, howler monkeys.. So forth and so on.. It is also true of us.. Sitting here in this room. This is a male dominant society. I mean there's a lot of complaining and hair pulling about nit and there's a political alternative in the form of the women's movement and feminist sensitivities. But for most people male dominance is the rule..Well, I..Would like to.. 0:25:30...suggest that our peculiarly discomfoted relationship to reality is a consequence of the fact that for a long period of time perhaps as short as twenty-thousand (20,000) years.. Perhaps as long as a million (1,000,000) years.. As a species, and not consciously.. 0:26:00...We accepted into our diet a drug that has the consequences of suppressing male dominance. But this was the social consequence of accepting psilocybin into the diet.. The ego is a structure that forms in the psyche like a calcareous tumour or a growth if you do not.. 0:26:30...have regular recourse to the cure. And the cure is, psilocybin and the boundary dissolving, sexual and social style which you carried in its way. So the reason that we as a people are haunted by the idea of a lost paradise, a perfect world sometime in the misty past. Is not.. 0:27:00...(..uhmm..).. You know the (...inaudible..) art called the..the nostalgia for paradise and thought that it was a time of.. Of a longing that has no bases. But i think that it is entirely a memory of the period when male dominance was chemically suppressed, ego was chemically suppressed and by male dominance and ego i don't mean to lay this entirely on men. I mean i would wager.. 0:27:30..Probably everyone in this room has more ego than they need, certainly starting from me.. And that part of the paradox that you're supposed to enjoy in this... (...audience laughter..) you know the ambiguity of me preaching the loss of ego...(..audience laughter..) so essentially, you know.. What happened was chemical.. A chemically driven leak in evolution had the consequence of the suppression of these 0:28:00.. behaviors that favoured male dominance. Ahh.. as a species.. Ahh.. we would've continued with male dominance forever. Had it not been for psilocybin in the diet.. And it established a situation in which in less than two-million (2,000,000) years the human brain size doubled. This

is without contest. The greatest mystery 0:28:30..in the whole of evolutionary theory..(..Uhm..ahh..)..Lampston.. Who is a brilliant evolutionary biologist called the doubling of the human brain size in two-million (2,000,000) years, (..ah..) the most spectacular transformation of a major organ of a higher animal in the entire fossil record. Well, now it would be spectacular enough if it were the liver of an otter, or.. (..audience laughter..) or the pancreas of an elephant.. but , notice that.. 0:29:00-0:30:00...it is the organ which created the very of evolution itself (..audience laughter..) and all other theories..so, th..we're getting a little topological here folks, there's something (..audience laughter..)..fishy going on.. (..ahh..) what was it that caused this explosive doubling in human brain size? Well, i maintain that it was the new behaviors that emerged with the suppression of ego and their reinforcement in this situation of nomadic pastoralism and that there was a period, let's call it from the melting of the last glaciers until Çatalhöyük six-thousand five hundred (6500) BC, there was a period where men and women were in balance with each other, children and .. children and adults were at peace with each other and human beings and the planet were at peace with each other.

Transcribed by Azlan

...and then it was lost, and we fell into history, you know the long slug toward armageddon is what was initiated in its place. Well know,if it was so wonderful, why would anybody ever let go of it; why was it lost?. Well, we have to go back to the very forces which created this situation. Remember I said it was the climatological dynamics of the planet [that] created the grasslands in place of the rainforest. Continuation of those processes turned those grasslands into desert. And where there once were waterfalls, running rivers, grasslands and vast herds of animals and their human symbios; suddenly they were was encroaching desert, fewer waterfalls. The mushrooms began to be seasonal , began to be located only in the rain shadows of mountains, the great mushrooms festivals which had been at new and full moon, became solsticio and then equinoctial and then, you know, biannual, and something, anyway, you get the picture. It was fading, and I don't think people took this lying down [laughs], no pun intended.[audience laughs]. I think that, there was great anxiety about the fading of the mushroom and the loss of the sacrament, and so, these people searched for a strategy for preservation. Well, in a world without refrigeration, there's only one, well no, there are two strategies for preservation of a delicate food like that. One is air drying, which is not terribly satisfying because as soon as the rain cloud comes along your dry stuff absorbs moisture out of the air and turns yuck. And so the real, the only real option is preservation in honey, and this was done, I am sure; it's s still done in Mexico to this day in remote mushroom using villages, people preserve them in honey. Now the problem here, and this is a lot on my book, into this kind of thing a lot because, Food of the gods. Because what Food of the gods is really about are the hidden, ahh, actors, that drugs lay upon us; that we are not even aware of - and if you are tempting to preserve an hallucinogenic mushroom in honey what you have to be aware of is that honey itself is potentially a psychoactive drug. Honey will turn into mead, .it will ferment into a crude kind of honeyd alcohol. Well, if the mushroom brings suppression of ego, group sexual activity and the formation of group values, what this alcohol brings.. Alcohol has two effects primarily, it lowers sensitivity to social queuing; at the same time that it it consents and exaggerated sense of verbal facility [audience laughs]. In other words people turn into jerks behind it. I mean you only have to go to a busy singles bar somewhere here in Boulder and you will see the alcohol ambiance being acted out right in front of you.So and you know, it's not so true of our generation but I think probably for a thousand years nobody got laid in the western civilization unless they were juiced! Because christianity was laying such a heavy trip on everybody, people barely took their clothes off. In other words, you have to become blindly intoxicated to do what comes naturally..And I think up to very recently, how many women have their first sexual imprinting in an atmosphere of alcohol abuse- I mean, some huge percentage, I imagine. So that is the story basically of the fall into history. The loss of this mushroom cult happened right at the time we were inventing agriculture, and agriculture and the suppression of orgy have something in relationship to each other- on two unrelated levels. First of all- you suppress orgy because once you have agriculture - it's no more about psyching yourself up for the great hunt; It's all about

getting up before dawn and hoeing the wheat out of the crops- so it doesn't promote a party mentality [audience laughs]. The other thing is, that as human mental capacity was evolving -remember that exploding brain size- as human mental capacity was evolving, women in this nomadic groups began to notice a curious fact. Which was, every year they would return roughly to the same places they've been the year before, and in the discards from last year's camps they would discover food plants growing and some brilliant woman or group of women put it together and said AHA!. "we buried food here last year and now there's food here . There must be something about putting food down into the ground that gets you food".....

Transcribed by Javier Alonso

[0:36:00] gets you food, in other words they were able to cognise a cause and effect relationship that were separated over many months of time. At the same time that women were putting this together men were noticing that the act of sex had certain consequences nine months later.

The same perception had different impact on both sexes, but it was an ability to [00:36:30] coordinate a temporally separate cause and effect.

Well once men got onto the notion of male paternity they realised that these aren't our children, some are mine and some are somebody else's and from that notion you go to "my child" to "my woman" to "my hunting area", to "my weapon" , to my sib group [00:37:02] you get it all you see, the ego is born, and it is born in an atmosphere of complete paranoia.

The first consequence of agriculture , well it has a number of consequences, but one consequence is Ah, it's a tremendously efficient way of producing food, that's obviously why people got into it. What does efficiency mean? Surplus! What does surplus mean? Haves and have nots. [00:37:30] The ole.....the most spectacular architectural edifice of 10,000 BC on this planet was the grain tower of Jericho. It was had thick walls to hold the grain and it had high walls so you could climb up on top of it and drop rocks on the people who were trying to get into it. Surplus makes nomadism impossible cause you can't drag this huge amount of grain with you so you get sedentary populations and then [00:38:00] some of the people who want the grain are killing your people in fury when they can't get the grain , you decide to put a wall around the whole encampment.

Now you have a small town , now you have urbanism, now you have the division between nature and secular society, you have classes, you've got it all. And I maintain that this is the long march into hell and our particular uh obsession with drugs [00:38:30] as a species, I maintain can be traced back to this transition that you know, yes elephants love fermented papayas and so do butterflies and so forth and so on, but this kind of intoxication is not what we're about. We addict severely to several dozen substances, less severely to probably a hundred more and we addict [00:39:00] to everything! [inaudible] You know. What we call romantic love uhh shows a lot of similarities to hard drug addiction when you separate the lovers. No... sleeplessness, suicidal tendencies, bursting into tears, hysteria, eh .. loss of weight. Can't tell whether this person is getting off heroin or eh has separated from uh their partner.

Uh, well if you take an [00:39:30] individual who is alcoholic or or has some kind of serious drug problem, current thinking is this can be traced to traumatic abuse in childhood. This is what happened to us! Traumatic abuse in

childhood, we were literally torn out of a symbiotic relation to the earth by the forces of male dominance, agriculture, sedentary living so forth and so on [00:40:00] and we've been trying to uh scratch an itch that we can't find ever since. And it has, you know, money doesn't do it, uh..power doesn't do it, nothing seems to do it. We cannot... we seem to be the unhappy monkey and we take this unhappiness out on each other with a vengeance. And uh you see what happened was that when the mushroom faded, the million years of [00:40:30] pharmacologically , interrupted patterns of male dominance reasserted themselves, but it was no more a foraging monkey with this style, it was a creature with language, tools, music , social organisation and suddenly it got very ugly, and people weren't, and people began fighting over the women. So we don't want to have orgies anymore, this woman is my woman, touch her you die, and [00:41:00] so forth and so on, and we are living out the legacy of this.

Well before I talk about the [takes drink] the social consequences of it for us. I want to go back to the question....What was so great about it? I mean we've talked about orgy, but you can have orgy without psilocybin. What was so wonderful about that proto-historical mode? Well this is where it becomes slightly more woo woo [00:41:30] .. uh [laughs] Because what we have to talk about is What is the Psychedelic experience anyway? And I maintain that if we're talking about psilocybin, and were talking about taking it in nature as these people did, that you know, yes first come the dancing mice , the little candies, the coloured grids and so forth and so on, but what eventually happens quickly, like ten minutes later is uh...[0:42:00]

Transcribed by Rodney Aries

uhh there is an entity in the trance, in the vision. There is a mind there waiting that speaks good english, that invites you up into its room ... and once there uhh you realise that this is what all the hooflah about the Gaian mind and the rebirth of the goddess and all that is about. It's not a metaphor [42:30] folks, it's a headline in biology. We are not the only intelligent minded species occupying this planet. We may be the only bipedal hairless mammal with intelligence on this planet but there is something out there spread through the grasses, the forests, the rivers and the oceans. Uhh our own own emergence into intelligence took less than [43:00] two million years.

Life has been on this planet for a billion and a half years and we don't know how many strange pathways beckon but at some point a kind of mind came into existence and it is real. It's what lies behind the religious impulse in our species. Uhh there really is somebody else sharing the local mind space and I [43:30] don't believe we're talking theology here. In other words this is not eh y-you know in Milton's wonderful phrase, "...the God who hung the stars like lamps in Heaven". It's not about that. For me that's a big questionmark. But it is the god\goddess of this earth. It is the biological mind. It is that all boundaries are illusions and that life is a thinking [44:00] feeling entelechy of some sort and we are just like a little droplet that has somehow escaped from the river of cognition and now imagine that we are the only water in the cosmos. Not so it turns out.

What, the reason the reason the psychedelic experience is so baffling and transformative, even as we sit here with your heads full of Heidegger and Husserl and uh I don't know [44:30] Wilson Phillips and all the stuff is because uh in the face, in contact with that we have no more sophistication than our orthiastic mushroom munching ancestors. Civilization doesn't give you a leg up on this step. In fact it makes it harder to figure out what's going on eh because we have defined nature as dead. You know? Scr- Atoms screaming through empty space [45:00] ruled by tensor equations of the third degree. That's our picture of what nature is. That isn't what it is. It's uh a-a mind of some sort.

Okay. W-what is the implication of all this? Is this just some kind of fringe oh uh anthropological revisionism? No, it isn't because the-the fall into history and its consequences is at this point a loaded [45:30] gun held to the head of the entire plant. We are about to uh pull over the soup cauldron and if we do this then two and a half billion years of evolutionary advance will be shot. Nobody else ever dropped the ball so you know we appear to be vying for uhh this peculiar honour. If we do not awaken to [46:00] the consequences of ego then we are going to run this system right over the edge.

The whole thing which characterises our dilemma as a global society is our inability to feel - feel the consequences of what we are doing. You know? We've got the data, the ozone hole is disappearing, the planktonic life in the sea will die if it does, that will disrupt the food chain. The world [46:30] food supply will drop by sixty percent. Everybody who isn't white as a sheep will have to starve in that case and uh so forth and so on. I mean we actually toy not only with our own extinction but with the extinction of all life on the planet and with the extinction with the idea of dignity and decency itself. Well, I'm not in this psychedelic game because I think it's easy, or because uh I think it's going to be a cinch. I'm in it because [47:00] I think it's the only game in town.

You know if hortatory preaching could have done the trick then "the sermon on the mount" would have turned the corner. Uh if uh uhh cautionary data flowing back to its ruling institutions could do the trick then sometime uh after Thomas Malthus people would have begun to hit the brakes. Nothing seems to work. We're sick. We need pharmacological [47:30] intervention. The ego is uh out permitting us to slowly, not so slowly commit suicide and you know the fact that we cannot act collectively. That we are suspicious of all forms of collectivism. That we uh really are eh-"all for one, and one for all" is not our style. Instead what we have going is a catfight [48:00]

Transcribed by Marc Van Niekerk

... (0:48:00)...and, you know, no less a straight person than Arthur Koestler, in a book called *The Ghost In The Machine* said humans are so wired for beating the brains out of woolly mastodons, that's what evolution has equipped us to do; not negotiate weapons treaties and destroy bacteriological factories. We have to force our evolution. (0:48:30) We have to chemically restructure the primate brain so that we do not commit suicide. And the only way to do it in the time left is for the psychedelic community to stand up on it's hind legs and roar. And you know, maybe they'll build camps for us. But the point being I think there's a moral imperative to try what works! I mean, you know in the 60's psychedelics were called "consciousness expanding drugs", (0:49:00) a good old phenomenological description. Well, if consciousness does not loom large in the future history of our species then what the hell kind of future is it going to be? No future at all I maintain. So, if there is even the slightest iota of possibility that these things do what I'm saying they do, then we need to get Johnny-Quick on it and check it out. (0:49:30) Because we may be beyond the point of no return right now. Nobody knows how bad this ozone hole thing is, or what's locked up at Rocky Flats or behind the Iron Curtain or dumped in the Arctic Ocean. We may be past the failsafe point right now folks. There is no time to lose. It is time to engage the powers-that-be in a little more serious dialog than the "just say no" horseshit that's been pedaled recently. (0:50:00) Because we're talking about the survival of life on the only planet that we are at certain has life on it. This may be the site of a cosmic experiment with universal implications and it rests in our hands.

Everybody here tonight is here because a whole bunch of people didn't drop the ball. (0:50:30) And you know, you think you got problems? Nine times in the last million years the ice has moved south from the poles miles thick. No antibiotics, no electronic communication, nothing, and I'm sure these people were miserable, and they dragged through it and they lived. And they passed it on, now we're it. And we will be judged the lamest of the lame (0:51:00) if we cannot come to terms with this and begin to talk about what is going on. This is not obscure. As I said I view the psychedelic experience as central to humanness as our sexuality. We cannot allow dominator institutions to infantilize us and to tell you where your mind can and cannot go. 'Even have a piece of paper locked up in a vault in Washington DC (0:51:30) that guarantees life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Well now what can the pursuit of happiness possibly mean if it doesn't mean the freedom to practice your own relationship to nature and it's gifts?

So I think we have been entirely too casual about the importance of the psychedelic experience. This is, for one reason, because we cannot publically get together and discuss it in detail. (0:52:00) And one of the things I think is very important about get-togethers like this is if you would look around you'll notice that we cannot really be distinguished from the rest of society. Some of us live under bridges, some of us clip coupons, you know there's a wide spectrum of people here. But this is your affinity group. This is your community. (0:52:30) Someone in this room actually has what you need. And you know, I have acted as a filter so out of millions living along the front range, here we've gotten it down to two hundred. I can't get go any further than that folks. the rest is up to you.

Well, I guess the last thing I want to say and then we'll take a little intermission (0:53:00) and then come back and do questions afterwards, which is my favorite part. But I want to just for a minute invoke the psychedelic experience without regard to the evolutionary forces that created it, or the political institutions that suppress it, and so forth, and just say, in case there's some soul in this room that's never had this experience, that this is extraordinary news. (0:53:30) We are not talking about something like a dream. It is not like meditation. No you can't get there by yourself. And Baba Gee is equally useless, because you and Baba Gee are starting from the same place in this game. It requires pharmacological perturbation of ordinary neuro chemistry in order to see this mystery.

Transcribed by Kevin Evans

[0:54:00] And it is a mystery. It is not gonna be reduced to the firing of synapses or repressed sexual desires or day residues or anything like that. It is uh the very thing we call this religions yammering about. It's there. It's real. I mean, if you think if the world is empty of adventure then you just haven't been hanging out with the right crowd.[audience laughs] I mean, [0:54:30] on a saturday night, within the confines of your own apartment, on five grams of psilocybin mushrooms in silent darkness, I guarantee you, you will believe that [inaudible] should place second place to you. [audience laughs]. You will see things which no human being has ever seen before, and that no human being will ever see again. That is how big [0:55:00] that universe is. The -can-be- incredibly constricting space time locus of here and now that evolutionists forced upon us for survival purposes, is simply one point in an apparently infinite hologram of explorable data that is the human world. I mean the [uh], you know, the entire world of every science fiction novel or story ever written is miniscule [0:55:30] compared to the universes of strangeness and peculiarity that are accessible to anyone of us, if you will, but apply the methods. And if you're not willing to apply the methods then you know, you're gonna sweep up around the [inaudible] till hell freezes over [audience laughs] and not understand what's going on. [audience laughs] [laughs].

I mean I think, you know [0:56:00] I-I'm sorry to be so hard on religion. [audience laughs] I think it has its place, it places its inspirations of - of ethical behaviour, you know religion should teach ethical behaviour. But it has very, very little to say about the mystery of being of other than that it's there. And that's not practicing religion. Practicing religion is dancing with the mystery. [0:56:30] Losing and finding yourself in the mystery. And people often say to me you know, well this- how does this relate to other forms of spiritual work? The answer is: maybe not at all. I mean I've certainly taken a lot of psychedelics and I think I see no sign of spiritual attainment uh of ethical perceptions or anything so wa-de-da as that. I don't know what this is [0:57:00] all about but I do know it's ours. It belongs to us. We are the creatures of mind. And 95% of what mind is lies on the other side of the psychedelic, eh boundary. Ordinary consciousness is just like keeping the account of life. But there's more to life than the account books. I mean everything else is out there. The colour, [0:57:30] the affection, the humour, the terror, the mystery, the incredible strangeness of it all. This is the domain that we want to claim and explore. And if we can find the collective institutional courage to do it. I think this current planetary crisis will be seen for what it really is. And what it is is, it is not a dime, these are not the last rights for intelligence, this is a birth process.

[0:58:00] I mean if you were to come around, if you've never seen someone give birth and you came around the corner and it was in progress, you would be thoroughly, profoundly alarmed. I mean it looks like an enormous tumour is making its way out of somebody and they are being split in two and blood is being shed and there's pleading and screaming and thrashing, It would be a real leap of understanding for you too say: "Oh how wonderful, new life [audience laughs] [0:58:30] is emerging, this is the way we do it!" Well this is the way we do, I mean we are in the birth canal, right now of a planetary civilization. Literally the amniotic oceans of 500 years ago, that's all gone. There is no frontier, there is no going back. The peace of the fetal environment is gone and now in transition literally the walls are closing in. [0:59:00] You can't breathe, you can't eat, you can't find your way, it appears to be the end. But there's light at the end of the tunnel. The problem is, that tunnel is in the back of your mind. And if you don't go to the backside of your mind you will never see the light at the end of the tunnel. And once you see it then the task becomes to empower it in yourself and other people. Spread it as a reality. God did not retire to the seventh heaven. God is some kind of lost continent in the human mind. And if we will but explore the human mind we can reclaim these relationships with our own authenticity and shed the childishness of historical existence and eh gender politics and all the rest of it and move on to the real business of establishing a real civilisation. Thank you very much! [audience claps] [1:00:00]

Transcribed by Matthijs Pals

1:00:00(..audience clap.) Does anyone want to ask a question? Or is it all just perfectly clear out of the convincing and urm..

Terence: Yea?

Audience: (inaudible question)

Terence: urm.. Psilocybin? Bad effect.. (drinks water)..Huh.. somebody once said, "what's wrong with DMT?" and I said, "well nothing, unless you fear death by astonishment." (audience laughter) (Terence McKenna laughing)

1:00:30..(uhm).. But..but your question is a good one, first of all..uhm.. You know I talked a lot about how what we will have to do is destroy and ablate ego. However, there is a very small percentage of us who have a hard time

creating any ego whatsoever. And this...for these people boundary dissolution is no problem, their boundaries are dissolving all the time on them. I would say that they are at the (umm)

1:01:00..(uhmm) contraindicated end of the spectrum. That if you're fearful already and fighting to keep overwhelmed by confusion and what's going on in your life at the paper box factory or something.. (inaudible audience laughter) Then probably tossing in megadoses of hallucinogens is not the way for you to do it, or if you do, if you're just advance on doing that then i would say umm..

1:01:30..do it in the presence of some kind of professional and how you find a professional in this legal climate you'll have to discuss with me privately. Uhm..uh., i don't want to make it sound though, i mean it's a tricky thing. I don't want to make it sound like it's absolutely riskless. Physically; I think that's pretty safe. Unless you are odd some way. But you need to know. You know you..you don't wanna find out your odd an hour and half into it. (..Audience laughter..)

1:02:00..But the problem comes with the mind, if you are delicately balanced, if your whole life has been about not looking at that, or that or that (audience laughter) then this is not your game. (Audience laughter).. You know you should go back to watching Jeopardy, and.. (Audience laughter).. The kind of person.. The kind of person who is called to this is..

1:02:30..the person who has an exploring soul. I mean, my , i am not a courageous person in the sense that you won't find me shooting white water, you won't see me you know repelling down the faces of cliffs, but from the time i was the tiniest little kid, i was into the weird. What's weird? Weird is the compass heading..

1:03:00..and if you keep your compass always pointed towards the peculiar, the oppressed, the bizarre, the unspeakably alien then you know you will find these places. (Audience laughter.) The people who think life is all cut and dried and they're perfectly happy to have Carl Sagan and George Bush explain all off reality. (Audience laughter). Have never left the broad swift stream of mundane thinking. But you know out

1:03:30..in the by way and in tributaries (ahh..) there is a wonderful alchemical saying which i generally mangle..but i think it goes something like this; the tallest mountain, the oldest book, the wisest desert.. there you will find the stone. And what it is? It is a prescription for exploring weirdness. That's all. It's' not gonna be on MTV. It's not going to be in god forbid; Esquire. (audience laughter)

1:04:00..It's going to come, umm.. From you know ..It's going to come from doing your homework, visiting strange people in strange lands and checking it out. The.. What i can't give you to return to your question is, i can't give you a guarantee that it will be fun. You know, The Rolling Stones have that wonderful line, "you don't get what you want, you get what you need". This stuff is ruthless. And if there's..something that you're trying not to look at

1:04:30..that's gonna get you, for sure. But after the veteran, most people will tell you you learn more from the bad trip than you do from the good one, the good ones are ecstatic and can connect you up to nature and other people the bad one show you your ..your kinks. And your limitations, and your thought errors.. And that sort of thing. It's not a easy road to hold. That's why i think umm..

1:05:00..there's a little bit of social confusion about it. One of the things i should make clear is i really advocate high doses, rarely. I think the worst thing you can do is get into a style of psychedelic diddling. Where you know you take half a gram everyday. Wh.. All this is doing is giving you a tolerance to psilocybin. You're not having the psilocybin experience. You're having the tolerance to.. 1:05:30-1:06:00..psilocybin experience. The.. Really, the way to do these things, is to (urm..) do them rarely so that your whole system can reassert itself and come to equilibrium and then just slam it! (Audience laughter..) And this is amazing, i mean i think..i think that this works for all the psychedelics. I'm a.. I'm an inveterate cannabis user and i wish in a way that i could get a..

Transcribed by Azlan

1:06:00.. In a way that i could get a slightly better grip on my cannabis use because .. the rea..i think the real way to do cannabis is like.. Once a week.. By yourself.. In silent darkness.. With the strongest stuff you can get.. And then

immense amounts of it.. (..audience laughter..) and.. You know.. People call it a recreational drug and a this..and a that...hey...Done that way.. It will

1:06:30.. Catapult you into places where its.. It.. i love it.. The great place to get to on cannabis and some people never in their whole life touch it, is the place where you say, “My god! I’ve done..too much!”. (..audience laughter..) (..Terence McKenna laughing..) It’s not easy folks, but it.. It’s worth shooting for.. (..audience laughter..) Basically what..

1:07:00.. What you should do is.. You know.. Do some homework.. Read some book.. Talk to your friends. And then hang on Hannah.. (..audience laughter..) It..It’s like.. Ah.. you know.. It’s very much like riding an enormous roller coaster. You know.. Once fat baby rolls out of the station.. Do not stand up.. Do not try to climb out of your car. (..audience laughter..) Shut up and hang on! With the faith that most people

1:07:30.. have lived through this. (..audience laughter..)

Terence: somebody else.. Yea? The purple.

Audience: (..inaudible question..)

Terence: Well.. having just heard that i am a pothead please ask them one at a time (..audience laughter..) What is your first literary question? (..audience laughter..)

Audience: (..inaudible question..)

1:08:00.. (..audience laughter..)

Audience: (..inaudible question..(..I mean my associate experience..)... inaudible question..)

1:08:30.. Terence: Well.. i don’t mean to imply that people first use it in low doses and then middle and then higher over time. What i mean..

1:09:00.. What i meant to imp.. I think they were using low, middle and high doses from the very get go. But they were using low doses to hunt.. Middle range doses for orgy and ceremony and truly high doses for this boundary dissolving tremendum.

Terence: Second literary question.

Audience: (..inaudible question....)

Terence: ..Ahu.. Well....I’m...I’m not wedded to that. First of all, Çatalhöyük for those who haven’t read the book. Or know

1:09:30.. about Çatal.. Was this immensely sophisticated civilization that existed in the 7th millennium BC. We’re talking .. Three tho.. We’re talking six thousand (6000) years before (..uhh..) zero (0). This civilization existed and was destroyed.. And the.. (.. urm..)Characteristic of it is, shrine dedicated to cattle. And in my book i argued that this was probably..

1:10:00..the last outpost of this partnership, society.. Ahh.. but it would still..I think the real golden age of mushroom use was probably from about thirty thousand (30,000) years ago to about fifteen thousand (15,000) years ago and by the time Çatalhöyük ..so long.. it’s a fading, or yearly, or seasonal saying..

Audience: (..inaudible question..)

1:10:30..Audience: (..inaudible question..)

1:11:00..Audience: (..inaudible question..)

Terence:Well.. I..urm..

Audience: (..inaudible..)

Terence: My argument would be that people don’t take enough and they don’t take it frequently enough. That.. there are a lot of people..

1:11:30 - 1:12:00.. Who..who.. Really would rather not.. Get loaded.. But still they must take some psychedelic drug in order to keep membership in their peer group. So what they did, you know.. You can always spot these people.. Because their first question..on..at the get go is, “will i be able to drive?”. I love this question. (..audience laughter..) because.. You know it indicates you got a real tough nut on your hand..in every sense of the word...No..!..You will not..

Transcribed by Azlan

1:12:00.. No.. You will not be able to drive. (..audience laughter..) ahh.. So, you know, I.. One of the things that inspires me to do this, is.. I want to get to the people who've taken three (3) grams of mushrooms and the people that have taken 150 mics.. Of LSD .. and i want to convince those people that they never got close to what i'm talking about even though they have a life transforming experiences softly..

1:12:30.. totally, differently.. They never got close to what i'm talking about. And so what you have to do is to convince people to take high doses and then..that's to break them through.. And then frequently enough that they don't forget. What the deal is.. So i think if you take a psychedelic population and divide into those who have done 5 grams and above, then you will see an exceptional.. Uhm.. slice.. But not the dabblers..

1:13:00.. The dabblers don't count. And we all can be or at times guilty of this. (..audience laughter..)

Terence: Is that your last question? (..Terence laughing..) That do it for you? (..audience laughing..)

Terence: Or do you wanna be thought psychotic? You choose. (..audience laughing..) (..Terence laughing..)

Audience: (..inaudible question..)

Terence: (..Terence laughing..) Well.. i love competition, i mean.. I .. (..audience laughing..) The..

1:13:30.. The.. competition is terrible, that's the entire basis of my success. (..Terence laughing..) (..audience laughing..)

Terence: Yeah? No.. Because you were before.. If you still wish..

Audience: (..inaudible..)

1:14:00.. Audience: (..inaudible..)

Terence: Right..

Audience: (..inaudible..)

Terence: Why? Because.. I mean i don't know if its preferable.. But here's the thing.. People are going to think you're a nut, if you come down and say.. That Johan Sebastian Bach or Jerry Garcia is God. And this is what you will have to say..

1:14:30.. If you listen to the dead.. Or the B Minor Map. So.. So.. What i am interested in.. is.. Iss. uhh.. I want to know the thing in itself. Not what it does to Bach.. Not what it does to river flowing through a forest at a valley. I wanna see what it can do with darkness. And silence.. And i think most people think it will be boring..

1:15:00.. Probably because they've been hanging out with BDI groups, meditating and god knows there's nothing more boring on earth than most meditation. (..audience laughter..) however.. Psychedelic sitting in a dark in a room on five (5) dried grams of psilocybin mushroom is nothing like meditating and that's where it can get at you. My relationship to it is always one of.. "I wanna know what it is.." and so i think this sensory..

1:15:30..deprivation method is the only way to get at that.. Other people might not like that.. People say.. Well you mean, put down the whole thing of going into nature? Isn't nature the great affirmation in all this? And the answer is, yea.. But it works for me sort of without the drug.. Plus and this is just maybe my own weirdness, but i'll share it with you. I know this that these things are incredibly disruptive of..of..the ordinary

1:16:00.. flow of casuistry.. You all know the concept synchronicity? Well.. if you don't stay in your room with the lights out and the phone unplugged and the damndest things will happen to you. I mean you couldn't pay me to go into an american city even mildly loaded because adventures beckon. Now some people like that.. (..audience laughter..) some people say you know.. Let's take 500 mics, and go meet..

1:16:30.. weird people.. (..audience laughter..) (..ah..Uhh..)...not this cookie..

Terence: Yea?

Audience: (..inaudible..)

1:17:00.. Audience: (..inaudible..)

1:17:30 - 1:18:00.. Audience: (..inaudible..)

Terence: Are you asking me, "Do i think a homeopathic preparations of a psychedelic would be effective?"

(..umm..) It would be homeopathically effective.. I wouldn't expect it to be experientially effective..

Audience: (..inaudible..)

Transcribed by Azlan

[1:18:00]

Audience: Question?(inaudible) regarding homeopathic preparations of psychedelics

Terence: But don't you think that if it were true and since in a high dilution like that no molecular trace of the original compound remains, that you have just found the solution to the illegalization conundrum.

audience : ...(inaudible) we're getting a lot of political slack for having medicines out there but homeopathy is being passed over as weird.

Terence: Because in a materialist world it's assumed to be bogus.

[audience laughs]

Terence: Right, Yeah

Audience: same woman continuing her question

Terence: Well this seems to me not an abstract proposition at all let the best homeopaths succuss the strongest hallucinogens and set them out and let's give it a whirl

[audience laughs]

Terence: Over on this side, yeah.

Audience: This question may be too personal, or an embarrassment to answer, but..

Terence: Oh I can hardly wait !

Audience: Why are you not in jail?

Terence: Ahhhhh... Why am I not in jail? hmmm. Well that's an interesting question. And I , uh, number one I don't know, here's what I've come up with. Uh, notice that I use big words.

[audience applause]

Terence: I don't boil, I don't try to boil it down to a shoutable slogan like "turn on, tune in, drop out" uh uh that, that, then they come, they come, uh, so that's one possibility. That simply if you are defined in their eyes as an intellectual then they automatically put you in the harmless category and send resources elsewhere. That's one possibility. Now the other possibility is slightly more disturbing but in the interest of thoroughness let me raise it. Uh, perhaps I'm sanctioned. Perhaps they decided "we don't really understand what this stuff is, and we can't have a mass movement, but let one guy just kind of keep the pilot on in case we ever change our minds about this, he will have kept the pilot light on". Uh, and the other possibility, which is probably too naive but in the interest, again, of exhaustive thoroughness. Maybe they just haven't noticed yet? You know, Tim Leary, who is a friend of mine would address 25,000 people at a throw. My crowds are, you know, a couple of times a year they creep over a thousand. And I think the key is to keep it low-key. And we don't want to you know, Dodger Stadium filled or anything like that.

It's very good to atomize it and spread it through, now the other thing is, you know, I advocate plant hallucinogens. And people always say, "well why, what about LSD, I mean, didn't LSD change your life? Didn't LSD change your life? Didn't LSD change all our lives? Why aren't you into LSD?" and the answer is certainly yes, and yes. The reason I'm not into LSD is a, a uhhh... not having to do with the effects of LSD, which I think are marvelous. But with the fact that, uh, a, a couple of enterprising second year biochemistry students can produce six or seven million hits in a long weekend. Six or seven million hits of an illegal drug? Suddenly, this is the realm of governments and criminal syndicates and revolutionary disruption of populations. My brethren, I wrote "psilocybin: the magic mushroom growers guide" if you work like a dog for six months, maybe you can produce, uh... 2 or 3 thousand hits. So, that's the thing. LSD had chemical qualities that made it terrifying to the government, I mean, anybody with 50,000 dollars worth of backing and uh, uh, uh an educat,... 2 years of biochemistry could turn themselves into a major threat to political stability in this country. So they slammed that. They're not going to put up with that.

The thing I love about the mushrooms is that, if you're a dedicated mushroom grower, you produce this piddling amount, and if they come and drag you away because it is illegal, all they get is you. No... no... syndicate collapses. No pyramid disappears. So, its invasive. And low-key, and slowly spreading. The other thing is, mushrooms are, this is a cultural thing, mushrooms are inherently non-threatening. They're absurd , you know, they're what we, they're what we put decals of on serving trays and bath towels, bare [1:24:00] mushrooms on them. It's a kind of silly thing.

Transcribed by Joseph Sadaka

“And uh, bath towels [1:24:00] bear mushrooms on them - It’s a kind of silly thing. And uh, and so I think that they don’t really understand what a powerful hallucinogen this is. Well that’s enough on why I’m not in the can. [*points at audience member*] This woman, yeah?”

Audience Member: “[inaudible] Uhm, you talk about the uh.. the evolutionary processes how it’s encourage by the ‘essence?’ of the the mushrooms [inaudible] to be, uh, more creative and beneficial process if we worked on evolving our minds without using an external drug, what happens if the government does come in and decide to [inaudible] and we can’t access that same consciousness anymore and then things, you know they could be set backwards again, wouldn’t it be so much more productive to teach people how to get there without the drug?”

Terence: “Absolutely if we could do it, I mean I’m not yet convinced, see. I mean you’ve got your guru’s, but, if you ever get close to any of these people in these guru scenes, close enough where you can just say to them: “Look, level with me, is this stuff as good as 5 grams in silent darkness?” And they say: “Huh, are you serious?” [audience laugh] Uh, the other possibility is technology, uh on two fronts. Mind Machines. The problem with mind machines is, you know, you have to smoke a bomber or two to put up with it more than ten minutes [audience laughs] eh, I mean you quickly satisfy yourself that, this can’t possibly be it. Because it.. it, it is life, and it, but it is contentless.

Well the psychedelic experience is all content. The other possibility - and I put in some time in this beat, is uh, virtual reality. And I have more hope for virtual reality because virtual reality is a technology for showing, for, that would allow us to show each other the insides of our head. Our dreams, our vision. And I think that sufficiently perfected, it might have the consequences of, of the psychedelics. The problem is, it carries a huge amount of negative freight. You know that it’s not gonna be a tool for us to show each other the inside of our minds. It’s gonna be a tool to sell us crap that we don’t want. It’s gonna be a tool for yet more realistic vicarious an gratuitous vile and.. It’s going to be a tool for more pornographic degradation of women. [audience chuckles] So, it seems to me while it holds out the possibility of a technically driven psychedelic, it has a lot of negative freight. I agree with your premise, I.. But I’m driven by a tremendous sense of urgency. I mean why try to create a technical alternative to psilocybin, when you got psilocybin!

Audience member: “[inaudible] like, I think that people should use mushrooms as, a tech. And what if people there who try, and keep going without, without that tool. Cause, I mean cause what we, what we want, i mean, we wanna transcend.. this plane, we wanna be on a higher plane, a higher state of awareness and you’re not, you’re not gonna get to that plane ultimately if you have to keep coming back into the plane, to get the stuff, to get out of the plane again

[Terence interjects:] “Well how about uh, how about this: Maybe there’s something wrong with that metaphor. Because notice it had to do with planes and transitions, it’s an inherently dualist metaphor.”

[Official-sounding tape transition lady:] “This concludes tape one. Our program continues with tape 2”

[Terence:] “Well how about uh, how about this: Maybe there’s something wrong with that metaphor. Because notice it had to do with planes and transitions, it’s an inherently dualist metaphor. How ‘bout if we say, uh... There is no

inside and outside. There is no with or without. Uh, you just use what you got, whatever works should be used. I, I... Spend time in India and visited all these people and [inaudible] And I just became convinced that, unless you were predisposed to believing this stuff, that it would never carry you where you wanted it to. And one thing about psychedelics, you don't have to be predisposed. It doesn't work for those who believe it works, uh, it works for those who think it doesn't work.

One last point and then we'll go on, uhm, there's a story, maybe you some of you know this story of uh, a man who lived by the side of a river. And he wanted to uh, he wanted to cross the river. So he, uh, practiced a siddhi of levitation so that he could walk across the water. And it took him forty years to perfect this siddhi and finally he could cross the river, and uh, Buddha was preaching in the neighborhood and the guy came to him and he said uh, "Master, look what I've achieved, I can walk on the water to cross the river" And Buddha said "Yeah but the ferry costs a nickel" [Audience cracks up] Uh, and that's the thing, uh, I think, eh, we're not gonna replace this tool without wasting so much time in the act of replacing it, [1:30:00] that armageddon will catch up with us. "

Transcribed by Nils Van Der Hoeven

1:30:00.. Act of replacing it that armageddon will catch up with us. I think we have to humble ourselves, so thoroughly that you have to admit that you can't get where you want to go unless you form a partnership with somebody whose idea of a good time is growing in a cow pie. And if you're willing to partner up with this humble..humble.. member of the ecosystem, then you and it can fly to glory..

Audience : (..inaudible question..)

1:30:30.. Terence: Have had it..

Audience : (..inaudible question..)

Terence: ..Yea, i wouldn't recommend it especially in the late stages of pregnancy doing anything that is gonna wildly perturb you, and you know LSD is discovered in the act of trying to produce better drugs to induce labour. So that's excellent advice..

1:31:00.. honor the fetus. Urm.. Yea?

Audience : (..inaudible question..)

Terence: ..Yea?

Audience : (..inaudible question..)

Terence: ..Well, true and honest answer is, "how the hell can you find out when they won't let you do research?" It's totally insidious! We don't know..! We don't know because they will not..

1:31:30.. allow (..um..) The.. the... research to be done. This is one of the reasons why I say that (..uh..) You should stick with (..urm..).. Shamanically sanctioned plants. Because we know for instance that people have been taking psilocybin in the Sierra Madre de Oaxaca Central Mexico for millennium. They don't show blindness, tumors, miscarriage, madness, cataract, whatever. That's your..

1:32:00.. human data, for that. But you go to..Let's talk for a minute about something like ketamine. Nobody knows. Nobody has any data. MDMA.. seems to be tremendously effective in facilitating interpersonal stuff.. That's a psychological issue.. Chemically, what kind of data do we have? You know.. Six years worth of data.. gathered under the rag. So, (..uhh..) to be safe.. Stick with the things that are sanctioned..

1:32:30.. by human use.. And then, (..uhm..) somehow in the lighten future..We will explore these synthetics and find out just what the parameters are..

Terence: Yea? Finish up..

Audience: (..inaudible question..)

Terence: No, i'm nothing man. I'm saying take things which have been sanctioned by human usage. I mean.. How about a plant like Strychnos nux-vomica..I mean you're..

1:33:00.. dead in a minute and a half.. And it's a beautiful, wonderful plant.. Why did it kill you? Well, because it's jammed with strychnine, No.. it's nothing about it being a plant, it's about having a repeated history of human usage, that's what sanctifies it..

Terence: Yea, the lady in magenta.

Audience: (..inaudible question begins..)

1:33:30.. Audience : (..inaudible question continues..)

1:34:00.. Audience : (..inaudible question continues..)

1:34:30.. Audience : (..inaudible question comes to an end..)

Terence: That's really an interesting point.. I mean....I..I...It never occurred to me, that somebody brought it up to me, they say, "have you noticed the trips are changing?".. And once you do ask yourself this question, it does seem to be so. And.. I don't know whether that.. What..i mean that.. (..uhm..) These deep assertion i'm not sure exactly what's going on. For instance, this goddess thing, I don't think people gave the goddess a thought in the early..1970..

1:35:00.. Late 1960.. Now.. people have, you know..some of the least likely people report intense encounters with the goddess.. So, is it amplifying the general mindset..of the society and so there's more goddess up there? Or.. i don't really know.. It's a very interesting question. There are more questions than answers. I mean this is definitely wide open stuff..! Yea..! Yea..

1:35:30.. Audience : (..inaudible question..)

1:36:00.. Audience : (..inaudible question..)

Transcribed by Azlan

"We're trying to restore the relationship of ego to the other components of the psyche that existed as recently as 12,000 years ago. The ego has become a deadly growth in the historical societies, exacerbated by the phonetic alphabet, monasteism, modern science. This is like you're getting sicker, and sicker, and sicker as you lay these things on, and so, the idea is that if we could restore the original diminished role of the ego that it has for that period, however long it was, that we could begin to solve our problems, because the problems which face us, put very simply, are going to demand sacrifice, and sacrifice is what the ego doesn't want to hear about, and when you go to somebody and say -look to save this planet we're going to have to redistribute income radically- I mean that everybody in this room is gonna to have less, we're going to have to honor a whole bunch of cultural positions that we previously just we're going to bulldoze over, and so forth and son on. So it's ah-- it's the diminishing of ego, by

any means necessary that lies to getting any grip on our problem, I mean if we continue as we are, I think we have probably less than 30 years before life is irreconcilable screwed up, you know, nobody believes that the future is ah.. rosy and wonderful, I mean if you go to the people of the world bank, and IMF and, these people who are straight you know suits all of them, they have a sort of curves which would stand your hair on it. When they propagate the curve of population, the curve of toxification of the environment, the curve related to the ozone hole this you see, you know, it's finished and sometime in the next 50 years. They don't talk about this because they don't want to panic the vast numbers of people who just go to work and raise their kids and pray somebody smarter is doing something about all this, but they don't believe there is any kind of normal future and I don't either, I think we're going to, that this business as usual is not on the menu folks, we're either going to go to an era of immense resource scarcity, regimentation, governmental interference in our life's, tremendous propagandistic efforts to make us do one thing or another, or we're going to pull the plug on scientism and it's studios and the institutions which feed us, feed it.

If capitalism is an interesting problem more easily discussed now than the communism is, how does the picture, capitalism is as anti-human philosophy as you can possibly conceive because at this very moment we should be consuming less, manufacturing less, selling less, transporting less and what's the battle cry? Free trade everywhere! What does free trade mean? It means my right to come to your country and sell the most outlandish junk you've ever seen and you will have no right to turn it away because in the name of free trade crapola has to go everywhere ah.. it's really, see, they try to tell you that capitalism and democracy are not at variance actually the whole Marxist-Leninist socialist thing was assidish, the real life and dead struggle is between capitalism and democracy. Democracy says everybody has an innate worth that must be honored, capitalism says does who die with the most toys win. You can not reconcile these two things, and nobody wants to talk about this, we're still having the party over the fall of communism. But, you know, you go to the soviet union or the former areas or the soviet union and you see that what it was, it was a deep freeze for traditional culture. In Kurdisia and Turkmenistan people were basically camel husbandry, is whats going on, ah.. now with communism on the rocks ah mac donalds will be there in 5 years and k-mark will be following close behind. So, I think we're coming to a great crisis of fundamental ah.. our relation to our own fundamental institutions. I'm not anti-capitalist, I think capitalism needs to sever it's ah.. connection to materialism. This is again why virtual reality is interesting. You sell things made of light, not made of beryllium metal, brass, steel and wood but light. We got all the light we need but we have to stop making things out of stuff, or we're not gonna be around to tell the tale."

Transcribed by Nicole

[Inaudible* question from audience] [1:42:00]

No i think that, you know revolutions are made by percentages uh if 15 or 20% changed [1:42:30] then the example would spread. You see, I, uh, we are not, uh, psilocybin is the easy way to awaken. YYou know, take a, take a psychedelic plant and have an experience and get your act together, but the future is full of sledgehammers. It's not going, we're not, we're not going to end with a whimper, it's going to end with a series of thuds and bangs. It could begin almost anytime. I mean we could get a hot muggy day in Mexico City this summer, and a million people would die. This thing in Los Angeles is a wake up call. It is going to get uglier and more chaotic and more crazy there is going to be more starvation, more facism, more dictatorship. THis is, unless we do something! Until we do something. And it can- how bad is it going to get?! before people say, you know, we are doing something wrong. People dance on the Russians, but you've got to admire people who have got the. The guts to say, "we did it entirely

wrong!" 100% I mean could you imagine this country? Being able to tj.. You know it may be coming.. It may be coming. The character from AUstin.. Is a peculiar item in the mix. You know?

For years, i fantasy speech i always imagine that I was somehow end up giving but but it's it's this speech where you say, "MY fellow Americans, you have been lied to." Screwed and abused by these two criminal parties for a hundred years. And you're only hope is to overthrow the republicrats and create a decent world to live in. well no republican can make that speech no democratic can make that speech and be redible it was to be somebody that wasn't in bed with either of those forces. So i'm not that all pleased by who apparently will bear the mantle, but on the other and it changes what we need, then if, if it's probably nothing to be a candidate that you can and i can embrace its going to be some odd ball. Oso you know you have to recognize it when we see it coming. Yeah.

[Audience QUestion can;t hear it }First of all,

Terence: No we don't know what it is.

inaudible

Yah the great thing about is it can talk!

Good for you. (terrence laughs)

Well probably half at least in the room hasn't the faintest idea what the question is about. I stay away from this because this is the personalistic stuff were i created a certain model of reality based on a new way of looking at time and i don't want to go into it too much tonight. But i want to suggest something to you tonight which is that, cough, you know, uh,hm, at the very beginning at this talk we talked about mutation and natural selection and that , the darwin's insight was vast and deep, and what h offered was an explanation for how rainbow trout come to be, monarch butterflies, redwood trees, herds of elephants, so forth and so on. What it doesn't address is us. We are the weird bird on the block. I mean , yes we are some kind of monkey, but when you stand us next to our nearest relative it is very very clear that is is not a very near relative. It doesn't look like us much, certainly doesn't act like us.. What's the deal with human beings? And I think that uhm, it, you know how all these religions these western religions [1:48:00] have built in this idea of the end of the world

Transcribed by Marina Quirk

You know how all these religions, these western religions have built in this idea of the end of the world and they're always running around expecting the messiah or something and this, to the scientific mind is just the final proof of

the pudding that these people have water between the ears [audience laughs] because science just says you know 'that's just ridiculous', i mean uh but i wonder, i wonder, i mentioned just a minute ago these curves that when you propagate them into the future [1:48:30] everything leads to the unimaginable and it's within the next 50 years so uh I sorta think as human beings as uhh analogous to iron filings on a piece of paper and you shake these iron filings out of a salt shaker or something and there they lie randomly arranged in heaps.

Well then you come underneath the paper with a powerful magnet and lo and behold these little [1:49:00] iron filings coherently arrange themselves into this beautiful double mustache pattern, which i'm sure you've all seen well i think that there is a-an enormous punchline to the historical process that no- very very few people suspect and that what history is is what happens to an animal who falls under the influence of a kind of strange attractor and that we are being pulled into a well of transformative intentionality, history is not pushed by the casuistry of war, migration, imperial dynastic families and stuff like that, history is pulled toward an unimaginable something which is [1:50:00] continuously trying to mirror itself in us. This is why these egyptians said, you know, 'i don't know what it is, but i think we should really build a big simple building', [audience laughs], 'i don't know why. But i'm gonna enslave 50,000 people and do it! And don't ask me why' [audience laughs].

And you know this is the same force that reared Chartres Cathedral, this is the same force that created the space shuttle, we are in [1:50:30] a relationship to an unseen something which we keep trying to image with our mythologies, our religions, our technologies, our epiphanies and i think that uhh, it's not so far away. That it- it isn't 10,000 years in the future it is sometime in the next 50 years and that this is something what history was for, you see history is an incredibly...[1:51:00] peculiar and brief phenomenon, i mean viewed from the point of view of biology it's less time than it takes for a new species to emerge, i mean let's call history 25,000 years.

You know, in frame 1 you're chicken flint, in frame 2 you're hurling an instrument toward Alpha Centauri, [*Terence Clicks*], like that! -This happens. Well what's happening is that mind itself [1:51:30] is being pulled out of this creature and it's being given hands and languages and pos-symbolic systems in order to image the unspeakable, the unspeakable, I call it the transcendental object at the end of time, it casts- it's in another dimension, it's in a kind of super-space and what it casts into history is the enormous shadow of its imminence. [1:52:00] This is what straight people call god. This is what all these visionaries are raving about.

It's that when you sink below- beneath the surface of ordinary causality and mundane ho-hum-ism what you discover is this enormous transcendental object which you could call it, you know, the sacred heart of jesus or the, flying saucer or the, philosopher's stone, it's all of those things and much much more, [1:52:30] it's not only stranger than you suppose, it's stranger than you can suppose and it has called us out of animal organisation over a 25,000 year period we hang in the balance and then we meet it. And we are going to meet it. That's the light at the end of that birth canal of transcendence that i referred to... And now i see that our song is sung, our time is done. Thank you very very much for turning in. [1:53:00] [audience claps] Thank you!

[audience inaudible]

TM: Yeah we will dig into this in the uhh interim, uhh [1:53:30] i think the, -it's- it's worth taking the time for everybody to just make a very brief, very very brief statement about, you don't have to say who you are if you don't

want to, but you can say what you're hoping for or why you're here or what your agenda is. Just so that if it turns out that we are 80% shrinks or 80% ceramicists or something [1:54:00] then we turn it that way.

Transcribed by Jonathan Laliberte

[1:54:00]..or eighty percent ceramicists or something, then we turn it that way and uh, those of you who are undercover please stay undercover so you don't alarm anybody [audience laughing]..euh..., especially me, right?...euh. So why don't we just start euh..uhm, and go across in some reasonably logical fashion, it.

[TM: yeah?]

[man with inaudible question]

[TM: Well that, tells you what you're worth , doesn't it?]

[1:54:30]..[Terence giggles, audience laughing]

Oh, true...No. Let's not record it so people, and uhm, also I had at one point [takes a small sip from something] thought I would be an art historian. That was one of my real obsessions. So I had..had enough art history to be trained in, you know, recognising the evolution of motif, how one artist passes on techniques and can see,.. to his students or his..

[1:55:00].. imitators, and all this art-historical stuff. And I also..uh..had been very interested in Jung. And...and none of this seem to explain the content of the psychedelic experience i would get in there and say, well.. How come, i'm not seeing a archetype?.. and be things which somebody else.. You know.. I don't know.. Ali Ensor. Therabagio Baugh..

[1:55:30].. Somebody should have seen this stuff.. And gotten it out. And it didn't seem to be..uhh..a trail through the history of western art of the present of this dimension. So then i thought why is it that nobody knew about all this? I mean, Baugh would have given his right arm for a sheet of blotter I would think.. Euh.. So it became for me like a mystery, whe..

[1:56:00].. where is this stuff coming from.. And what does it say about our humanness?

[TM: yea?]

[man with inaudible question]

Well, there.. There's a lot of being completely still over Baughs because he is such a startlingly radical painter in the context of his time. Many of his conceive were digged up after his life.

[1:56:30].. Uh.. T.L. Breko the elder being the foremost exponent of it.., he may have been an alchemical guinea pig. Euh.. Who. euh.. Frazier.. I think.. Wrote the book called the "Millennium of (..inaudible..) Baughs" in which he wanted to suggest that maybe that Datura use, that there was a cult called the brotherhood of the free spirit. And which practice ritual nudity..

[1:57:00].. Which begins to sound something like the orgies we talked about last night. It was a cult of printers. And it may be that Garden of free spirit but this is all pretty murky stuff, it's hard to get back to Baughs, euhh.. Euhh.. he didn't leave any written records we have, his birth is recorded in the perished church where.. In the village..

[1:57:30].. where he was born.. We know he was born sometime around 1450 died in 1516.. But the details are pretty murky.. Well.. not to belabour Baughs, euhh.. So what i thought would be a reasonable way to do this this morning.. (takes a sip from something) is to take the most extreme psychedelic case and experience and describe it and talk about it a little..

[1:58:00].. and then see what issues that raises. Because my experience with this has euh.. Led me to the conclusion that..(..Breathes..) In a way.. (..Exhaless..) It..euh.. To be thought of as other dimension is to be thought of as a mandala, and different psychedelic compounds and generously different kinds of yoga and different kinds of techniques of all sort of land viewing in

[1:58:30].. different part of this mandala but that what you're always trying to do is get to the center of the mandala and it's simply my biased, my opinion; that i think the center of the mandala is probably the DMT experience for a number of reasons. And so i thought it'll be interesting to talk about it this morning. First let me talk about it physically. Uhh.. DMT is..

[1:59:00].. ..uh.. An indole hallucinogen.. Abetted.. No..no.. a tryptamine.. Uhh.. and it's produced indigenously in the human brain. This is very interesting. Very few psychedelic compounds are produced in the human brain. We don't know what DMT is doing there. But it means essentially that we all are subject to arrest..

[1:59:30] - [2:00:00].. Of a technicality because we all are holding a schedule one (1) drug.. Euh.. It's sort of the ultimate catch-22 where if all else fails, they'll just say well you were holding anyway. Euhh.. the interesting thing about Dm.. Another interesting thing about it that is the incredibly rapid in its onset and in its disappearance the whole trip lasts about 15 minutes..

Transcribed by Azlan

[2:00:00]

[Terence]:“...the whole trip lasts about 15 minutes. This makes it a tremendous tool with which to challenge the critics of our position, because if somebody wants to rise up in righteous wrath and condemn psychedelics, then you say, ‘well, you have tried them, haven't you?’ and of course they never have; it's like scientific denunciations of astrology. Mean, scientists love to denounce astrology, but find one who can cast a natal horoscope[2:00:30] and I'll give you a [inaudible].”

[laughter]

[Terence]: "uh, ya know? So, uh, the, the uh...uh, uh, the...it...DMT overcomes this objection; the entire experience lasts 15 minutes, so you say to the critic, 'ya know, you're NOT going to experience it & yet you're going to carry on a pogrom against it? You won't invest 15 mins. To check what this is about; I mean, what kind of scientist are you?'"[2:01:00]

[Terence]: "uh...so, it has that social efficacy. Um, now the fact that, it is the strongest of all hallucinogens--at least if there are ones stronger, please keep them away from me--I mean I don't think anybody needs to get higher than that. I certainly don't. I mean, I've at times come out of those places and said, 'this stuff is ILLEGAL! It breaks cosmic law!'"[2:01:30] Of course, then, Tim Leary told me, 'cosmic laws are only local ordinances anyway.'
[laughter] so it didn't really matter."

[inaudible audience question]

[Terence]: "uh, ok. Eh...well, good question. Yes, It's the commonest of hallucinogens in nature. Uh, It occurs in many grasses: Phalaris Tuberosa, Phalaris arundinacea. Um, it occurs in a number of leguminous plants [2:02:00] uh, uh, probably the most spectacular being Anadenanthera peregrina, this huge, tropical, locust-like tree from which the snuff called niyopa or edena is made. That's a tough way to get your DMT let me tell you; uh, because there is so much cellulose & other crap & corruption in the mix that you have to do like a tablespoon of each nostril and the technique [2:02:30], the technique is you get a bamboo tube or a hollow tube about this long [indistinct gesture of length] and you pour in this tablespoon of this stuff, and then you squat down on your haunches and you get a friend, and you put the tube up your nostril and the the friend BLOWS with the full-force of his breath; BLOWS this stuff into your head. Well...you fall, it's like being hit in the face with a 2x4; i mean you it's like you think he kicked [2:03:00] you, and you fall over backwards, you scream, you salivate, you get backed up on your haunches and by this time he has refilled the tube for the other nostril." [audience laughter] So, and then, after uh, af..."
[indistinct audience question]

[Terence]: mmhmm, mmhmm...Hmm?

[Audience]: Yopo?

[Terence]: "Yopo, Etena, Nipa [?], it depends on the language group, uh, and the [indistinct] [2:03:30] um, it's also called Vilka in the Kari language. And then, after uh, ten minutes or so, it slowly begins to form up in your head, but you know, God, your sinuses, are eh, STACKED for sure, and uh..it's not, uh, not very pleasant; and the other thing is, it never reaches the blinding transformative intensity that [2:04:00] you can achieve with the chemically pure compound."

[indistinct audience question]

[Terence]: “No no. The uh, good point. If you orally ingest it, it will be destroyed in your guts. It won't work. The uh, Amazon Indians, have...encountered this problem and have created a very sophisticated pharmacological strategy for dealing with this, you've all heard of ayahuasca. Ayahuasca [2:04:30] is DMT from one plant combined with another plant which contains a chemical which is called a MAO inhibitor. MAO is Monoamine Oxidase, and your gut is full of uh, MAO, and it's job is to take monoamines--small molecules--and oxidize them into uh, harmless by-product: usually endocytic acid, which can be shunted to the bladder. Well, [2:05:00], when you take DMT orally, these monamines just uh, I mean these monoamine oxidase compounds just grab onto it and destroy it, but if you take an MAO inhibitor with it, and harmine, which occurs in *Banisteriopsis caapi* is an MAO inhibitor, then, lo and behold, it isn't destroyed in your gut. Instead, it passes into the bloodstream, it passes through the blood-brain barrier, which is a very tight chemical filter that keeps the [2:05:30] brain from being exposed to toxic materials, but these drugs can cross that barrier and then, what the aya experience really is, is a slow release DMT trip, that instead of taking five minutes, takes about two and a half hours; and if you really know your psyched and your breath control techniques, on ayahuasca, over an hour or so [2:06:00]

Transcribed by Joe O'Neal

Instead of taking 5 minutes, it takes about two and a half hours. And if you really know your psychedelics, and your breath control techniques, on ayahuasca, over an hour [02:06:00] or so, you can work yourself to a place where you say, “lordy me!It looks just like a dmt flash”. And it does, but you have to do some hard climbing to get there. With dmt itself, once you push the start button there is no stopping it. And... I think it's worth describing it. How many people have had this experience? Ahun.. well they can somewhat anchor it [02:06:30]. Ahh.. it's very subjective, obviously. But I will describe what happened to me and then we can work out from there. One point that I wanna make about these things is that, th- the great strength of the psychedelic possibility is, it's democratic, you know. It isn't that the people of great spiritual advancement obtain these states, or- or people who have studied under some [02:07:00] lineage. It's truly available to everyone and when I had my dmt experiences I realized, you know, either I am incredibly special, which doesn't- there is no other evidence to support that *audience laughter*, or, this is something which can happen to anyone and that's the more interesting possibility. After all if it can only happen to very very special people, then [02:07:30] that lefts- most people out. But if it's generally available then it's big big news about the human condition. Yeah-

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: How did they find DMT in the human brain? Ahh... hmm... interesting question.

Audience: [inaudible] how it crosses the blood brain barrier?

[02:08:00]

TM: No I think he means how did they find that it was endogenously produced. Well, I think they were studying- the group that did this was at the University of Louisiana, Christian and his group. And I- they were studying fast reactions in the brain. And for fast reactions you have to look at chemicals that can go through some kind of cycle of structural change and return to their zero point, very very quickly. [02:08:30] Their original thought was that DMT

mediated attention. I mean I am talking to you right now, suppose there were a loud noise over here, we would all immediately project our mind on to the source of the sound. Th- They thought that was a.. neurological function mediated by DMT. Could be, I am not sure I suspect it has to do more with the chemistry of dreaming.[02:09:00] Once they discovered DMT and began to track it, they discovered that there was a circadian rhythm, means a daily rhythm in its production in the human organism and that it reaches its greatest concentration in the brain around 3:30 am in most people. Well this is when the deep dreaming and high rem states are really chugging, and I suspect, I mean lucid dreamers may wanna argue with this [02:09:30] but I suspect that every night we go deeper places than we can ever speak of. That ordinary dreams are right on the surface of consciousness. Big lucid dreams are an inch deeper. But I think we go a hundred feet down every night into places where you cannot say anything about it. Yeah-

Audience: [inaudible] [02:10:00]

[02:10:04]

TM: Ah.. let's make that perspiration *laughter*. Well its- [audience inaudible]. It's hard as hell to find DMT. And this is a puzzle because if you look it up in a standard work on organic chemistry, it presents it as a trivial synthesis. Ah.. much [02:10:30] more simple than LSD which it always presents as quite a difficult synthesis. But when you actually talk to workbench chemists- it's tricky to make DMT. It's especially tricky to carry out the final crystallization. So what you are usually offered in the underground is some kind of muck, which looks sort of like ah.. maple syrup, half gone to sugar. I wouldn't get near that, actually. It means [02:11:00] they- they botched their synthesis. What you are hoping for, is a white powder. However, in thirty years of chasing this all over the world I have only seen it as a white powder a couple of times. Usually, the synthesis has fallen slightly below that standard and what you get is a pale yellow powder, sometimes a pale rose or pink powder and then the real rough trade [02:11:30] is orange. And this what you- if you have seen it, this is probably what you have seen it. It looks like orange moth balls and it has the smell of indole. This very sharp smell which if you are not a chemist and you have never smelled indole, when you reach in your mind for what is this like, you will say, "well it's sort of like moth balls". Not quite, but it has that same sharp chemical, you know and this is what you are gonna smoke, see. So a lot of people beef about [02:12:00] that and say, you know, "It's like smoking burning plastic".

Transcribed by Rohan Singh

A lot of people beef about that, and say; "it's like smoking burning plastic.". Mehhh, Más o menos, It is a little bit like that. The other objection to DMT that has been around since the 60's is people say it 'destroys brain cells'. There's no evidence for or against this. But I would submit to you as[inaudible] as the people who are neurophysiologists can argue with this if they disagree, but, I think an excellent index for the low toxicity of a drug is how fast it clears your system, and DMT clears your system in about 15 minutes. If you take some compound drug, or whatever, and 48 hours later you're still taking hot baths, and uh, wishing you could have a message, and sitting staring at the wall. Than, this drug is really sticking to your ribs. It means that your metabolic pathways have no way of dealing with it, they can't grab it here, they can't grab it there, and it takes a long time to leave your system. An example of this in the pseudo-psychedelic domain would be ketamine. Ya' know, ketamine, the experience lasts about 45 minutes, but 48 hours later you can feel your knees suddenly go rubbery, or you can have, what are technically called 'fuse states', strange states of disconnectedness from what's going on around you. This is not a very good advertisement for a drug. TM speaking to audience: Here, this woman and then-.

Audience: Uhm, [inaudible question about ayahuasca].

TM: Uh, well, less because um, if you smoke DMT the dose is approximately 50 milligrams, which is like the size of a kitchen match head. If you combine it with an MAO inhibitor and take it orally, you can probably get away with about 35 milligrams, of DMT. Uh, and, uh, oh I don't know, 100 milligrams of harmaline, now harmaline is itself is sometimes itself described as a psychedelic drug, I really think this is sort of misleading. You will have hallucinations if you take pure harmine, but only at doses approaching the toxic dose. Many compounds will give you hallucinations approaching the toxic dose; bee venom, rattlesnake venom, stuff like this. That doesn't mean it's a hallucinogenic drug, it means you're dying, and you should take steps to correct the situation. [TM speaking to audience]: Um, now, yes.

Audience: You say that there is a short transit time, but how long does the memory of that experience last? Because that would indicate to me that there is still a presence, and perhaps a homeopathic dose at that point[laughing], in the mind, in the brain.

TM: Well, DMT, uh one of the things that caused me to think that is must- that is might have a role in the chemistry of dreaming, is that one of the frustrating things about it is, you have this experience without doubt, the most bizarre, appalling, peculiar experience you could possibly have; that's at minute 2. At minute 5, you're raving about it. At minute 7, you can't remember it. So, it's literally like gold running through your fingers. You say 'this is the most amazing thing, this is the most amazing thing.. What am I talking about?', and you know how you can have a very engaging complex dream, and the alarm goes off, and by the time your feet hit the floor you're grasping for it, it's literally melting before your eyes. That's a very DMT-like presentation. The way a dream melts away is the way a DMT trip melts away, at the same speed.

[inaudible audience question]

TM: Well, uh, over time and using tricks you can drag a certain amount of data out of it. Um, what I'll do- I'll describe a DMT trip, and it's um, it's a composite of maybe 40 of these trips, and uh, then you can see what you make of it. So this is- I'll just describe it, I'll be the graduate student UB, the guy with the clipboard. You're saying to me 'so what happened?'. Okay, here's what happened; [dramatic sigh] You- I took 1 takes. Eh, most people can get off in about 2 to 4 hits. Now there's a trick to it, hash smokers are greatly favored in the endeavour because you really need leather lungs, for this. The great problem is that people will cough, or not be able to hold it in. You take 2 hits in a situation where you're clothes have been loosened and you can just flop backward, uh, when you need to. You take 2 hits, now many people miss the point. Because after 2 hits you feel completely peculiar, you feel as though your body is undergoing some strange kind of anesthesia. All the air has been pumped out of the room, this is the visual acuity thing I talked about last night.

Transcribed by Justin Symbiosis Brosey

[2:17:57]

All the air has been pumped out of the room. This is the visual acuity thing I've talked about last night. The colors jump up. The edges sharpen. It's and at that point people say 'ooh wow, it's really coming on strong.' And then what

you have to do you is you have to take one more enormous hit. This separates the in trepid from the casual. Believe me. Because most ppl, and, and, the facilitator doesn't want to lean on the person you say 'you know, take the third hit' and they say i completely weird, and sai know you feel weird take the third hit well if you can coax somebody into that. what happens is you close your eyes and you see the ordinary warm, brown, back, you know, closed eyelid scenario, and then these colors begin racing together. And it forms this mandelic, floral, slowly rotating thing. Which I call the chrysanthemum.

This is a place in the trip that you want to see as you go by it. The chrysanthemum forms. And you watch it for like 15 seconds. If it doesn't give way then you didn't do enough. You have to do more, one more hit.,usually will do it. Well then what happens is it physically propels you through this chrysanthemum-like thing and you, there's a sound like a saran wrap bread wrapper being crumpled up and being thrown away, You know that crackle. A friend of mine says there a radio intellectai leaving through the anti fonital at the top of your head

I don't know what it is, uh, but it's it's something is being.[audience] Yea right that's what it is. Uh, then there's this very, uh, very defined sense of bursting through something. A membrane. And on the other side, and this is now remember my experience, on the other side, as you break through there's a cheer. There's uh uh uh a whole bunch of entities waiting on the other side. And they you know that Pink Floyd song, The Gnomes have learned a new way to say Hooooorray . Well, it's that place. It's those gnomes.

And you burst into this space and uhm and they're saying. "How wonderful that you're here. You come so rarely. We're so delighted to see you." And the, one of the things about DMT that's really puzzling is in a sense it doesn't affect your mind. In other words, you don't change. For instance if you take ketamine the first thing you notice, the very first thing you notice before the trip hits, is you notice that you no longer are anxious that you've taken ketamine. You've just sort of anxiety leaves you. That means it's affecting your mind. It's doing something to the judgemental machinery. DMT doesn't lay a hand on the judgemental machinery. You, you break through into that space exactly who you were before you breaking through. And the usual reaction of most people is something like, you know, you think, God. Heart beat's normal. Pulse, normal. Everything's normal, yea, everything's normal, oh god, because these things are there and they're hammering at you and they come forward they're like jeweled self-dribbling basketballs.

And they're there are many of them. And they come pounding toward you and they will stop in front of you and vibrate, but then they do a very disconcerting thing which is they jump into your body. They jump into your body and then they jump back out again. And, the whole thing is going on in this very high speed mode where you're being presented with thousands of details per second and you can't get a hold on you say my god what's happening and these things are saying, 'don't abandon yourself to amazement.' Which is exactly what you want to do it. You just want go nuts with how crazy this is. You they 'don't do that, don't do that. Pay attention, pay attention to what we're doing.'

Well, what are they doing? Well, what they're doing is they're making object with their voices. They're singing structures into existence. These things are, and what they'll do is they'll come toward you, and then, you have to understand they don't have arms so we're kind of downloading this into another dimension to even describe it. But what they do is they offer things to do. They say, 'look at this. Look at this.' And as your attention goes towards these objects you realize that what you're being shown is impossible. It's impossible. It's not simply intricate, beautiful and hard to manufacture. It's impossible to make these things. The nearest analogy would be faberge eggs. [2:24:00]

Transcribed by James Clayton

The nearest analogy would be to faberge eggs, or something like that. But these things are like the toys that are scattered around the nursery of a U.F.O. or something. Celestial toys and they are, the toys themselves appear to be somehow alive. The toys themselves can, uh, sing other objects into existence. So, what's happening is there's just this proliferation of elf gifts. [2:24:30] And the elf gifts are moving around singing, and the whole thing is directed towards, they're saying, 'Do what we are doing', and they are very insistent.

They say, "Do it. Do it. Do it!" And you feel like a bubble, or, and now this is subjective, i mean only you know 5% report this but it happens to me. You feel like a bubble inside your body that's beginning to move up [2:25:00] towards your mouth and when it comes out it isn't sound it's vision. You begin, you see, discover, that you can pump stuff out of your mouth by singing and they're urging you to do this they say 'That's it, that's it, keeping doing it!' And the whole thing is like, you know, we're now at minute 4.5 with this stuff...and, uh, you speak in a kind of glossolalia. [2:25:30] There's a spontaneous outpouring of syntax unaccompanied by what is normally called meaning. It's sort of, uh, [speaking in tongues]. And this is accompanied by a, a modality something seen. [2:26:00] And they say, 'Yes, do it do it do it' and then after a minute or so of this the whole thing begins to collapse in on itself and they literally begin to physically move away from you. And usually their final shot is, they actually wave goodbye, and they say, 'Deja vu. Deja vu.' Which makes no sense at all if you analyze it.

So then you come down, and you're now at minute 6 to 7, and [2:26:30] you come down and it's like being more loaded than you ever been. It's like a 700 mic acid trip, but you embrace it as you're totally down. You say I'm totally down. I mean you look, you look like a termite a from Arcturus and the room is decorated in Amish quilts but I'm completely back! [audience laughs] And then over a minute or a minute and a half or so, the room comes right back together [2:27:00] and and 4 minutes after that, some people can give no account of it whatsoever. They say, uh, i don't, idk it's the weirdest thing that ever happened to me and i can't remember it now, and uh. Uh. So that's the basic run-though, now a lot of stuff is going on in there.

First of all, you know, what are these things? [2:27:30] uh, And why do they want you to do this strange activity? and what's so great about it? Well, hmm, uh, well, first of all, who are these things? Uh, we can like you know be good scientists and make a list of the possibilities and then see which seems more likely. They could be a disincarnate [2:28:00] race of hyper-dimensional dwellers who live in some kind of parallel continuum just over some kind of energy, uh, barrier and they're there all the time. You do have the feeling that they're there all the time. That its on going. That you just cut in on their scene. So that's one possibility. Another possibility is that behind all these psychedelics, and especially dmt [2:28:00] that this is not a drug at all , but it is uh essentially uh uh a pay telephone of some sort to aliens. Good old National Inquirer type aliens, uh, who have, are using this as uh, as uh, a communication domain. Say you know we can't land on the White House lawn, that would create panic and hysteria, so let's create a drug which inside the drug [2:29:00]we will be able to deal with people. And, um, I was hoping that John Mac who's an expert on uh UFO abductions would be here this weekend. I expected him because I think this whole abduction thing is not going to be illuminated until they start giving abductees DMT and saying, So is this is what happened to you? Was it like this? or was it completely, uh, different? Well so then there are those [2:29:30] are the two possibilities that I sort of dealt with over the first 10 or 15 years of thinking about this, and then recently.

[Question from audience]

TM: It could be, what puzzles me is that the, the, abduction thing is so non-psychedelic. It's so cut and dried and all this anal examination stuff with strange machinery [2:30:00] there's nothing comparable to that, I'm happy to report to you.

Transcribed by James Clayton

There's nothing comparable to that, I'm happy to report to you... [Audience laughs] ...uh, going on in the DMT thing. But it may be, you see...it..bec-

Audience: maybe the...the (inaudible) explains what it does to you...

TM: Well, I'd be interested in looking at the possibility that DMT, under normal or abnormal conditions, could be sequestered in the human brain and then some unusual stimulus or stress could cause it to suddenly be dumped[2:30:30]...and, (audience inaudible) yeah.. .

Audience: I want to share this: There have been some migraines that I've had where, you know, what you just described with the colours coming in (inaudible)...it's been so fascinating that I've completely forgotten about the pain and I've just watched it for hours, well or I guess I just fell asleep but it sort of struck a note... and I was always under a lot of stress when I got the headache in the first place and there seemed to be a lot of strange things going on with the migraine in the first place. So I'm wondering if that's [2:31:00](inaudible)...

TM: Yeah, that's an interesting possibility. I also have migraines or the kind called cluster headaches and yes, a lot of the sympto - or the nice thing about DMT is that it's painless but the sense of being split open; and of the traveling skeptomita transcribers note: I don't know what this is and I can't seem to google up anything using a variety of spellings and whatnot - I think he meant "scotoma" ..., as they call these hallucinations that the migraine people see: it's related in some way. Yeah. yeah.

Audience: May I bring science into this a little bit? (TM: Sure.) Um. It involves the principle that its characteristically called "phasing" [2:31:30]Ah - But its - ah- it's basis is sort of what happens on a subatomic level between matter and energy. It turns out there's no fundamental part(?) at that level. They have this dance between matter and energy.

You know, energy coalesces into a bit of matter which then becomes energy...ah - and you can look at this matter/energy relationship as having a wavelength of frequency associated with it. [2:32:00] Now granted this is happens on a subatomic level but if there's something comparable going on, on the level at which we seem to exist in this physical form then it seems to me that there has to be something akin to it. That, it may be that we as beings are sort of tuned to a frequency range, you know, in this particular form and that somehow it's possible to shift that, or expand it to so that what we're actually experiencing is a broader range of frequency, sort of shift in wavelength[2:32:30]...and I think some of this, of these experiences can be at least explored in that context. Ah.....you know.....there's so much that we don't know (inaudible)(TM: Ain't that the truth?) of this cosmos that, ah... but we can take...we can extrapolate (I'm pretty sure Terence sigh/groans here) to some degree We can use this to take journeys and explore this possibility. What we DO know, in science for example[2:33:00], what happens on a subatomic level...and... I mean, for god's sake, the language of these people is sounding more like sorcerers, these days, than scientists.(TM: Ah. Uh huh. Mmmhmm.) and we do seem to, at least, believe from the evidence that we see that there is this matter energy interchange on a very fundamental level; while something is going on on that fundamental level. There may be this, principle of "phasing" which will either shift our tuning [2:33:30]or expand to include a larger spectrum.

TM: Yeah, I think...no I think that that's a very interesting avenue to pursue, this thing about frequency. Somebody told me: one of the great things about this job is you hear a lot of weird stories, and somebody told me a story recently about, it didn't involve DMT; it involved LSD but this guy and a friend of his took a quite large dose of LSD, larger than they intended and they went to a party.[2:34:00] And they were so loaded by the time they got to the party that they realized they could not function as party goers so they just moved into a corner and sat with their backs to the wall and watched this party rage in front of them. And after about 20 minutes of sitting there they both simultaneously noticed it was a dance party; noticed that the music was sounding[2:34:30] really strange and everybody was moving very slowly. And as they watched the thing came to an absolute halt. And people were just frozen. And there was absolute silence. And at that point - ah - the door, at the other end of the room, swung open and, ah, an elf? Entered the room and moved among[2:35:00] all these frozen people and then left, by the door he came in and they both saw this and they said that they could tell that it was, that it - it - it - the people in the room didn't know it happened because for them it occupied a micro-second. But this thing that was, you know, in Carlos Castaneda who, God knows is not the most reliable reporter on these things, nevertheless there is this thing about stopping the world. So. Maybe it's something like that.[2:35:30] That there is, as you suggest, a frequency phase (Audience: inaudible) Yeah. This sort of leads into the third possibility, having to do with the origin of these things. And, in a sense, this is the hardest one to swallow but, in another sense, this is the most conservative (in some crazy notion of conservative); the most conservative explanation (clears throat) because (Audience: inaudible question) (TM drinks: Mm.mm.(no))[2:36:00]

Transcribed by Artemis Jones

[2:36:00] Because, uhm, we have no evidence other than the tabloids that this world is being visited by friendly visitors from zubenelgenubi or zeta reticuli or the pleiades or anywhere else. I mean, to my mind the evidence that this is happening is vanishingly small and totally underwhelming. Uh, the other possibility, uh, that, uh, [2:36:30] there is some kind of parallel dimension in which these things exist is also somewhat poorly supported. If we're talking about something which thinks, something which can communicate, something which is intelligent, then we should look to ourselves as the source of it, because we are the only intelligent, communicating things we know within a certain narrow definition of these things.

So that, it's occurred to me with greater and greater [2:37:00] force and largely prompted by giving DMT occasionally to Tibetans and Amazonian shamans, and when you say to them, you know, to the shamans in the Amazon, when you say to them "What is happening with this stuff? And what are those little things in there?" They say "Oh well those are ancestor spirits, didn't you know? Haven't you heard? Shamanism is about doing healing through the intercession of ancestor spirits." You say hmm, [2:37:30] ancestor spirits, lets get this straight, dead people is what you're talking about right? These are dead people. And, you know, maybe because I was raised catholic I resisted this like grim death. But I'm beginning to think that what you actually break into in that place, is something that we might call, uh, an ecology of souls. That, uh, is it possible to entertain [2:38:00] the notion that at death you actually don't just become worm food, but that something, survives, in some other dimension, and that it has this bizarre character to it, and that this explains their peculiar affection for humanity, and their involvement, somehow in our, uh, fate. Well this is to me is fairly mind bending [2:38:30] as a possibility. If what is awaiting us at the end of the 20th century is the erasure of the boundary between the living and the dead, then we've all been too conservative in our projections of what is, uh, going on.

TM: [calls on audience member] Yeah?

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: Yes, that there will be some kind of erasure of, uh, the boundary between the two. Well, once i had this idea, you know, [2:39:00] I mentioned my Jungian and art historical proclivities and so that means that you always looks back through tradition and folklore to try and find something analogous to this. Well, there ain't much. But there is one area that seems suggestive to me, and that is, as you all know, the Irish are a-a, uh, very(fairy?) haunted race. They're also an intoxication obsessed race, at least in stereotype. [2:39:30] Well it turns out, that, uh, you probably all are familiar with the notion of purgatory? Purgatory is the place where you have to spend a lot of time before you get to heaven, if you're not bad enough to go to hell. So you put in a few [inaudible 2:39:50] of eternity in purgatory and then you get let into heaven. Well i had always assumed that this dogma, [2:40:00] I don't know i hadn't really thought about it, I just sort of assumed it arose with early Christianity. But when I began looking into this I discovered that the idea of purgatory, was invented by Saint Patrick, and it was invented specifically to convert the pagan Irish, because the pagan Irish believed, uh, in the, in the land of fey. They believe that there was this nearby dimension, full of the souls of the dead, surrounding [2:40:30] us all the time, and that certain people with the gift of second sight could see this. So, Patrick just said to them, "Oh no, that isn't it. It's purgatory." And was able to push that on them so successfully that a later church council adopted it as general dogma for the church, to use in converting the pagan Slavs as well. So, uh, it-it's an idea of, [2:41:00] uh, a nearby dimension, inhabited by disincarnate souls, that, uh, is apparently very old, but very alien to our tradition.

TM: Yes?

Audience: [inaudible] ...It's a gross oversimplification but it's kind of related and it has to do with the quantum wave function, which is really kind of a dual wave, there's two parts to it. Uh, one part, and they both have a temporal or time related aspect to it, one part which is called the ordinary [2:41:30] part of the wave, can be seen as a wave propagating forward in time. And the other half of the wave, which is called the complex conjugate, can be seen as propagating backwards in time, from some future state. Some past state, some future state, emitting waves which at some point interact and produce what is perceived by us as the present state, which is really a dynamic process in itself, there is no absolute present...[2:42:00]

Transcribed by Danny Hollman

[2:42:00]

Audience: But the interesting thing is that what that implies is that what we experience in the present whatever they may be is somehow related to some future state and some past state. But it also means that neither future or past are fixed and that we could sort of align ourselves with different tracks or vectors. You know, and a slightly different

vector that's slightly askew may produce something totally uh different [2:42:30] than what our ordinary perception would be. What do you think?

TM: Well, yeah, This could be. I mean, I've always felt that that what biology is, is some weird kind of chemical strategy for amplifying quantum mechanical indeterminacy. That you know, that macrophysical objects are not subject to quantum mechanical indeterminacy. But organisms apparently are, especially thinking organisms.
[2:43:00]

Audience: We don't know. That's our perception. Our perception is that, is that objects on the macro scale are to scale, are not subject to quantum fluctuations. But that's only because uh of this probability wave in some sense, in that, that there's a most probable state. And if we happen to exist in that, that our perception is that it, it's more fixed . That there is no indeterminacy, that [2:43:30] it obeys certain laws that are rather linear in nature. Uh, but we really don't know.

TM: What you're sort of saying is that the natural laws only apply some of the time, which gives them a curious status as laws in that case.

Audience: Yeah, (inaudible) but to broaden the notion of relativity. Uh, I mean, what happens in a black hole for example, what is singularity? It simply means that the laws that normally apply in everyday experience no longer are relevant.

[2:44:00]

TM: Well, one of the problems cosmology is meeting [2:44:00] is that there are so many large black holes in the universe that you come up with you know, ten high six singularities. That's a few more singularities than a good theory would tolerate, I would think. I mean, what kind of theory is it that hands you back ten to the ninth singularities? Which are exceptions to the theory?

Audience: That's true, but a lot of that is based on assumptions that are stretches.

[2:44:30]

TM: Ain't that the truth (laughs.)

Audience: Again if we get back to a psychedelic experience, you know, it's this whole lower dimensional language slice thing that we seem to have to operate in in order to describe an experience that just does not fit with that slice. You know, we do our best to do it, you know and sometimes it comes across being very crude and naive. Sometimes

it kind of gets close to the mark, but it's difficult to know. Ah, I mean the whole notion of black hole singularities is just [2:45:00] the present attempt at explaining some of the theory that is beyond ordinary experience. None of us encounter a black hole (inaudible.)

TM: That's true. It seems to me one of the embarrassments of science is that the Big Bang begins with a singularity, And, so then, you have this whole vast interlocking schema of rational explanation, except that it begins [2:45:30] with a hard swallow. You're asked to believe that the entire cosmos of space and time sprang from a point no larger than a cross-section of a gnat's eyelash. Whatever else one could say about that theory, I'd think you'd agree, it's the limit case for credulity!

Audience: Oh, absolutely!

TM: I mean if you believe that, try to think of something that you would throw up your hands and say, "Well, I'm not buying that!" (laughs) [2:46:00] It absolutely, it's sort of like when you join the Catholic Church you make a declaration of faith. Well when you join Science you sort of make this declaration of faith that, "I do believe that the universe sprang in a single instant from an incredibly tiny, hot, dense dot!" Unlikely, but, who knows?

Audience: Here's something else. As you two were dialoguing a bit I was getting a visualization of, you have to look at the pond of reality [2:46:30] so to speak, as not only being the um visual of someone throwing a pebble from the top of the pond and creating the ripple effect of waves, but also from the bubbles coming from below. And to me the deep space that you were talking about is the air inside the bubbles coming from below. And so the dimensional reality of that picture is not a linear time perspective. It's something coming from all directions. It is again the center of the mandala itself.

[2:47:00]

TM: Well, this is why I say the psychedelic experience is a boundary dissolving experience because it takes away past, present, cause, effect, all of these things uh disappear. Now remember I said ayahuasca is a kind of slow release DMT trip. And one of the really interesting things going on with ayahuasca to my mind, perhaps the most interesting thing, is that the style in the Amazon of taking [2:47:30] ayahuasca is uh people get together in a darkened hut at night, and they take it and they sing. But the songs, their selling them at the table back there, the songs, when there's a break in the singing and you hear the people discussing the songs, they don't discuss them like music, they discuss them like sculpture and painting. And they say to the Shaman "I like the part [2:48:00] with the gray bars and the blue speckling. But when you brought in the pink in combination with the beige and white I thought it was too much. Say what kind of a discussion is this about songs? You realize then when you take ayahuasca they see the songs. Now this is really interesting to me, you remember in the DMT flash they wanted you to use your voice to make objects.

Transcribed by Micki Garrison

... "I like the part with the great bars and the blue speckling, but when you brought in the pink in combination with the basen white I thought it was to much". See, what kind of a discussion is this about a song? You realize then when you take Ayahuaska, they see the songs ah.. and now this is really interesting to me because, you remember in the DMT flash they wanted you to use your voice to make objects, well then in the Ayahuaska trance you use your voice to control these colored modalities and ah.. the whole thing is done that way, well so then what it must mean is that the neurophysiology of Ayahuaska somehow allows for the ordinary signal processing, which is being chanted into the audio pathway in the brain, is instead being chanted into the ossicle pathway, this is what's called a Synesthesia. These things have been fascinating for hundreds of years to people but the synesthesia means that, you know, color ah.. sounds are seen. Well, now what was this anything other than a neurophysiologic curiosity? Well I maintain it is, because I think that a language which could be seen, would be a kind of telepathic language. If you thought much about telepathy, you might have naively assumed that telepathy is you hearing me think. That isn't what it is, I think. Telepathy is you seeing what I mean. And it's not something which happens dramatically, it is a function of eloquence, you know, first you have the speaker who that is boring you to death, then you have the speaker who at least holds your attention, then you have the speaker of who may had said, she paints the picture. It means we're moving toward poetry. Well it's possible to imagine a transformation of the neural processing of language, it may be a behavioral possibility, it may not even require a gene shift. Where then we would see what we each mean. You know there's this persistent idea, promulgated by Robert Graves in the White Goddess, among other people, that there was once what he calls a Orshba(?) a primal language so emotionally intense that, to be in the presence of poetry declaimed in this language, is to see the poetry and that this is what the last poetics of the high paleolithic were about and probably it was pharmacological assisted that you can gather people in the presence of a great bard, or singer, and that person could then create telepathic modalities, and that telepathic modality, that richer more unifying language was the thing which was suppressing the formation of ego. The ego speaks and hears through sound, the super-ego projects images and is perceived as images. Now it's very interesting, at least to me, that in the pineal gland of ordinary human beings there is a compound called Adeneroglomerotropine which, when analyzed in inorganic or just in the normal nomenclature of organic chemistry, turns out to be ah..a betacarboline closely related to harmaline. Well is it possible that we are as close as a one gene mutation away from a shift that would switch our processing of audio input into the visual field and that then we would cross over into a realm of beheld understanding, and that this is the evolutionary leap that we're trying to make that is in the body, not in the technology, in the body. There's is actually going to be a minor, a one gene click to another channel and then we will be able to see what we mean and I maintain that if you can see what somebody means, you are that person, contrasted.. contrasted to ordinary communication. Ordinary communication is achieved through ah.. small mouth noises, as primates we have a throat and voice ar.. a voice box arrangement that allows us to produce small mouth noises at.. for hours if's necessary and I'm the living proof of it ah... but it's not a very efficient mode of communication because what happens is, I have a though by looking a culturally sanctioned dictionary which I have copied into my head. I translate the thoughts into an acoustical signal using my mouth which moves across space, which enters your ears. Your rush to your interior dictionary and you construct my meaning out of your dictionary. Now notes that this process rests on a very shaky assumption, it rests on he assumption that your dictionary and my dictionary were published by he same folks in he same year. If your dictionary is different from mine, you will not correctly reconstruct my meaning and we we'll have what we call misunderstanding. Notes how among us...

Transcribed by Nicole Pralaya

[2:54:00]

TM: most bring down things you can say to somebody is, would you explain to me what I've just said? Because it means, oh boy here comes trouble, now you're gonna find out, that you know, people didn't understand you. They horribly misunderstood and and the uh communication is very provisional the amount of noise in the circuit is huge. Well then contrast this to, I utter something [2:54:30] and it

condenses as a sculpture in the air and you and I then become its observers and we rotate this syntactical object and we look at it, we regard it from many points of view.

This is not ambiguous or its certainly considerably less ambiguous than this reconstruction from interiorized dictionaries. So perhaps what all this is about is evolutionary pressure on our languages to become visual and therefore to become more unified and less riddled with noise which creates misunderstanding, which creates horrible social realities yeah.

[question from the audience] I just remember reading a book called Holographic Universe

TM: oh Michael Talbots book uhuh

[question continues] he was talking about uh visual experiences being about fifty percent based on [inaudible from audience] and addition internally to to you know what coming to visual[2:55:30] it sounds like a transmission problem translation

TM: y yes although what you could do with a visible language would be very challenging we could do many things with it it is not an outlandish, it's not a completely outlandish idea. In nature it occurs, there's this fa there's a wonderful [2:56:00] hexonomenon in nature which is worth talking about to sort of legitimate such a far out notion which is as you all probably know um octopi uh can change color, this is one of those things you learn on those science specials on tv.

[transition from tape 2 to 3]

TM: Octopi can change color [2:56:30] well most people I think, assume that they do this for camouflage, that would be a reasonable assumption. They don't do it for camouflage uh let's talk about octopi for just a moment. First of all they're mollusk, they divided from our evolutionary line seven hundred million years ago, they are related to escargot uh they have no backbone for crying out loud they're not even vertebrates uh [2:57:00] But what is always said by biology classes about octopi is that they're a wonderful example of parallel evolution because their optical system is very much like a mammalian optical system. well why is this? Well it's because they've evolved in a in an environment uh the reef environment that is a um all is dense with signals as a rainforest is and uhm [2:57:30] an octopus is soft bodied it cannot only change color but it can also change its surface from smooth and rubbery to bumpy, pimply, rugose, ribbed so forth and so on and also because it is soft bodied and in an aqueous environment it can fold and unfold and reveal and conceal parts of its body very very quickly. [2:58:00] Well all of these uh behaviors and physiological characteristics go together to make the octopus an excellent visual communicator and the color changes the blushes travelling dots and bars that these creatures manifest and the squid do it too uh are language and if you're interested in this there is a wonderful book by a guy named Moynihan called Communication and non communication among [2:58:30] the Cephalopodidia and he goes as far as creating a a grammar for this stuff. Well so then in a way you know if you pull back from the mundane assumptions about this what's happening is the octopus wears its mind on its skin. It is

dressed in its mental state e one octopus encountering another can tell [2:59:00] its mood, how recently its eaten, how recently it's had sex, whether it's ovulating all by looking and so they the only way an octopus can have a private thought is by squirting ink into the water and then hiding inside it. This is essentially it is correction fluid for misspoken octopi you see [audience laughs] so in a sense this is what we are are being beckoned [2:59:30]

toward that we want to clothe ourselves in language, we do it to a degree in a funny way. I mean if you wanna think about virtual reality this is a virtual reality all this stuff these fixtures the architecture the infrastructure the road, these are ideas it was an idea and then it has been summoned into matter by the allotment of funds the spending of money the hiring [3:00:00]

Transcribed by Arsen Vidakovic

..the spending of money, the hiring [3:00:00] of craftsmen, so forth and so on. Our whole civilization is an excreted set of interlocking ideas, agreements. We're like choral animals, and we somewhere, you know, there's this naked, pulpy creature, but, you know, clothed in denim, clothed in, uhm, harder shell produced by Mercedes or Chevrolet, moving around inside the larger environment, produced by the state of Colorado, and so forth and so on. So I think octopi offer an excellent metaphoric example of what naked-mindedness would be. And some of these octopi, uhm, [3:00:45] as i said, they evolved in the, uhm, coastal reef domain. But that's a very competitive domain. Everybody in the ocean wants to be there, because that's where the sunlight and the food is.

So if you're smart you'll try and evolve into a more hostile niche. And some of these octopi have become what are called benthic, or abyssal. It means, they exist in the parts of the ocean where light never reaches.

[inaudible from audience].

TM: Yes and they, uhm, have retained this communication ability by switching over to interior, uhm, interiorly generated phosphorescence. So, [3:01:30] there are species of octopi, which actually are studded with organs that have the equivalent of eyelids over them. But they're flasher lights. So when you descend into the benthic depths [3:01:45] of the ocean, you enter a domain where all one octopus ever sees of another octopus is its linguistic productivity. Because that's interior generated light that can be seen. And I think, you know, if you want to set the compass of virtual reality towards something worth, uhm, riding home about, then producing an octopus environment, so that we could experience this kind of thing would be a kind of proto-telepathic, uhm, playpen of some sort. Yeah?

[inaudible from audience]

[3:02:30] TM: Aha, so you think that subterfuge, uhm, enters here too?

Audience: Yes, [inaudible] last night when you were discussing the role of psychedelics and you were going by the [inaudible]-theory.

TM: right.

Audience: I assumed you were [inaudible] Rupert Sheldrake's theory.. [inaudible] psychedelics may, uhm, [inaudible] [3:03:15].

TM: Well, le-..., you want me to [inaudible from audience]. Yeah, well.

[inaudible from audience].

TM: Well you raise a lot of issues. First of all, since the discovery of retroviruses, of which the HIV-virus is one, we now know it is not always information transcribed from DNA to RNA to protein. The retroviruses transcribe from RNA to DNA [3:04:00], uhm, so the central dogma which is that the genome is not being altered by, uhm, a-, uhm, by the environment, is, uhm, is sort of shaky at this point. Uhm, you bring up a very interesting point which has never, to my mind been thrashed out in orthodox science. Which is, if you had a bunch of these psychedelic molecules and we could raise them up to the size of loaves of bread, or something like that. Y- what you would notice about them is they're all what are called by chemists, planar. Meaning, they tend to be flat. They're not lumpy, they're flat. Well, if you look at DMT [3:04:45] or harmine, uhm, harmine is built off a, a, pentexyl-group, and with two, uhm, benzene rings off of it. It is the perfect size to slip in-between two nucleotides in DNA. It can actually bond into the DNA there. Now, many drugs do this. Uhm, this is called, these drugs are called dimers. The usual problem with a dimer, that will intercalate. This is the other term, intercalate, means slide between the rungs of the DNA, is usually deforms the DNA. It like passes, uhm, a bulge [3:05:30] along, and then, uhm, transcription is difficult, but these indole hallucinogens can dimer with DNA without disrupting its structural integrity. This is why I believe that this is the source of the vision. That, an, you know, orthodox biologist just roll their eyes at this idea and say, well now you made a very [inaudible] error here, you can fuse genetic information [3:06:00]

Transcribed by Andrea Casanova

TM: with information. Don't you understand that genetic information's just a sequence of codons coding for protein? And uh, you know, that has no relationship with your memory of Aunt Ninny's face. However, by being so, uh unyielding on that point, they create a huge problem in um.. In uh... for their brothers and sisters across the hall who are trying to understand memory. Because the, the molecular theory of memory is a nightmare, here's the problem. Every molecule in your body is changed every 5 to 7 years depending on who you talk to. Uhhh.. except neurons. The nerves are generally the nerves you're born with are the nerves you die with. But it's an absolute uh it's an absolute... uh... nono to suggest that memory is lodged in the neurons. Well, if Aunt Minnie died 45 years ago, and you can still remember the dear woman's face when she used to walk you in the park, then every molecule of your body has been swapped out five times since she quit the plane. How can you have this memory of Aunt Minnie? If and then they say "well," well they don't say actually, they just throw up their hands. Now, the- to the people who say DNA can't store any kind of information other than codon sequences for proteins, they have to explain why 90% of the genome seems devoted to junk sequencing that does not produce proteins, that does in fact not do anything that anybody knows about. It seems to me that we might as well just take the path of least resistance and saying if the neurons are the only part of the body that persist throughout life, if the memories persist throughout life, then you've got two choices. Either the memories were in the neurons or the memories were never stored in the body in the first place. And if you believe that then well the obligation to explain just where they were stored is hard upon you and the mechanism for retrieving them. So I think molecular biology for being so reductionist has made certain

problems in... in neurophysiology in higher cortical functioning almost insoluble. You know, for years and year it was held that [drinks] the, this was another one of those central dogmas of biology. It was held that uhh... information could move from the nucleus of the neuron to the synapse, but that there was no transport mechanism for moving any molecular species from the synapse back to the nucleus. So consequently they said learning cannot take place in the nucleus of the neuron because the the materials for learning which would be present in the synapse modifications through experience, there's no transport system. Well this was dogma until 10 years ago. Well then they discovered what's called axoplasmic transport and then by putting labeled compounds in the synapse they were able to locate these compounds later, uh complexed with nuclear material in the neuron, proving to the most die-hard materialist that synaptic material was in fact moving backward to the neuron. So I think that uh, you know there's much that isn't understood about how all this uhh works. Euh something about this pointing out, you know, science seeks closure, and explanation, explanatory closure. My brother one time made a little aphorism which I think says it all on this subject. He said to me once, actually on a mushroom trip, he said "Have you ever notice how as the sphere of understanding grows ever larger, necessarily the surface area of ignorance gets ever bigger?" [audience laughs] seems perfectly clear, you know a simple minded way of saying that is the bigger you build the bonfire, the more darkness you will reveal. Yeah.

Audience Member: progress really comes from uh outside the context of the paradigm that hasnt, hasnt [experiences. I mean really, to my knowledge, almost everything that's really been advanced has been [cough]philosophy [inaudible].

TM:Yes well some of you have probably read Thomas Kuhns The Structure of Scientific Revolutions where he shows you know, that it's never the way that they tell it afterwards. The after telling is always about the primary insight, the careful experiment, the gathering of data, the correlation. Actually, it doesn't work that way at all, it its entirely uhh... physic, piecemeal, ruled by synchronicity. One of the most interesting things, i'll tell this story and then we'll go to lunch because, you know science has great pretensions about itself. I mean, it basically regards itself as a metatheory. It regards itself as capable of passing judgement on all other theories. They are supposed to be submit

Transcribed by Shant

[3:12:00]

submit themselves to science to be told whether they're real or not.

Audience Member:Like a religion.

Terence McKenna: Yeah like a religion.

Well how many people know uh eh eh the you know. Modern science was founded by René Descartes in uh in the uh early Seventeenth Century. What were the circumstances under which Descartes founded modern science.

René Descartes was a 19 year old uh [pause][3:12:30] basically ne'er-do-well and he decided that he would go wenching and soldiering across Europe, which was a thing that young men of certain class did at that time. And so he joined a Habsburg army that was laying siege to Prague in the in the summer of 1619 and after they had taken care of the problem there in Prague, this Habsburg army began to [3:13:00] retreat across southern germany and in

the on the ev-evening of uh, now there's a lot of arm wrestling about this but let's just say the 17th of August 1619, this army made camp near the little town of Ulm in southern Germany which, synchronicity freaks pay attention. Ulm will later be the birthplace of Albert Einstein, worth noting. But that night Descartes in the barracks [3:13:30] uh, had a dream and an Angel appeared to him and the angel said uh the conquest of nature is to be achieved through number and measurement, and he was, thunderstruck. He took that, angelic revelation and turned it into modern science. Modern science was founded by an [3:14:00] Angel, [Audience Laughter] you know, they don't tell you this at MIT [Louder Audience Laughter] uh you know it's it's astonishing uh how how eh things which claim roots in rationalism are actually among some of the most irrational productions uh in the historical continuum. It's it a-appears that our development our history our histories have always been uhh created [3:14:30] at the promptings of invisible voices. I mean Socrates who is at the very centre of what's called thinking in..by Western Civilisation. Socrates had a deamon D.e.a.m.o.n it was a little voice, it told it was his crap detector, it told him the difference between profound philosophical thinking and bullpucky, and uh so you know the edifice of Western [3:15:00] Thinking built on Platonism owes its debt to an invisible agency speaking from hyperspace. So does modern science a la Descartes. How much more of this I mean we don't care if artists talk to angels because we tre.. our definition of them is that they're screwballs [Audience Laughter] uh but eh uh ehm uh to believe that a uh a enterprise like modern science has to trace it's way back to the same ecstatic roots is I think uh [3:15:30] uh very suggestive that the world is stranger than we can suppose, and that we need to open, these channels of communication to these invisible worlds, probably the next great paradigm shift will be annunciated by a Mushroom, an Angel, an Elve, an Alien, what have you.[Pause]

Yeah?

Audience Member: Um With the Dmt trip what was your technique for bringing back, for holding on to this info.

Terence Mckenna [3:16:00] Repetition. Yeah. The first few times I did it I couldn't get any grip at all on it and by talking a lot and trying to describe it you slowly slowly build up a map.

So about the Logos, um the Logos is this phenomenon that was sort of the centerpiece of Greco uh Hellenic spirituality. What it is is it's a voice in the [3:16:30] head that uh people strove to attain for a thousand years this was the Sine qua non of uh intellectual accomplishment in the Greco-Hellenic world and the Logos, told you the right way to live and this is sort of what you get with psilocybin. You get a voice that can, confound you with the depths and brilliance of its [3:17:00] answers and one of the great, you know one of the puzzles of uh, trying to understand Greco-Hellenic spirituality is what were they talking about a...an.. and if this ever was a general phenomenon then what happened to it, why do we not experience this Uh, This is not well understood I mean the rational scholars who have created our vision of Greece, basically just dont even [3:17:30] want to talk about this they would rather gloss over it, umm [pause] you know [pause] one of the, things that sort of relates to all this is I think human beings are a lot more malleable than we tend to imagine, in other words we imagine that people in the distant past or in Greece or somewhere were just like us except they were living in a different time and place. There's no [3:18:00]

Transcribed by Tim Collinson

[3:18:00]

way to find out of course if they're all dead. But there are certain episodes in the evolution of Western culture that suggest that people may be much more plastic than we ordinarily suppose. First example, um, would be, how can it be that in the middle 1500s perspective was discovered. I mean how do you discover perspective. [3:18:30] This is very hard I think for modern people to understand. Because oohohoh..it's a given for us. I mean we see in perspective. We accept it as a quality of the world rather than a..ae..a cultural artifact put in place at a certain moment. But in fact during the Renaissance, only the most inspired people could um, paint in perspective on the natch. Most [3:19:00] people they had, complex devices called perspectographs that would project over the scene a receding grid and then people would essentially fill in the lines.

Now another example of this kind of thing that's not so well known but that is an example that uh Marshall McLuhan [pause] makes a lot of is St Augustine the great father of the Christian church. He had a reputation[3:19:30] for being a very holy man, and the accounts of his contemporaries say that, the way people would satisfy themselves that St Augustine had a pipeline to god, is they would bring him scripture, the bible essentially, and open it in front of him and let him look at it, and then they would close the book and question him about what was there, and he would always tell them, [3:20:00] and they were amazed. As far as we can tell St Augustine was the only man in Europe who could read silently. Nobody else could do it, it was regarded as a miracle. [Audience Laughter] Now we all, read silently, and there may be a few unfortunate individuals amongst us who move their lips while they read, but that's the only vestigial trait we have of this previous cultural mode where, everyone, to read meant to read aloud [3:20:30] no one could conceive of another way of doing it.

The Logos seems to me uh a kind of similar thing. It was a mental behaviour, function, which for reasons which are probably complex and unknowable, slipped out of reach. That's why [pause] it seems to me these psychedelics are very close to being able to modify our behaviours along these kind of lines. Because there [3:21:00] are a number of behavioural and experiential possibilities, that we suppress. I mean i think it's just uh ah as an example of how little we know about what's going on uh look at the Gräfen wuh don't look at it but conceive of the Gräfenberg spot, the G spot. Now we all know what this is. Clearly people were looking for it for a long long time, how come they only discovered it twelve years ago. [3:21:30] I mean if something that major can be overlooked then it's hard to imagine what might have been overlooked I mean that's pretty central into the project of being a human being and apparently it was unknown until very very recently. So um yes th the logos was probably uh what I call the Gaian mind, and that at a certain point in cultural development people just [3:22:00] became so chuckle headed that the Gaian mind just said heh The hell with this. And uh then the voice fell silent. It fell silent right at the around the time of the birth of Christ eh right at the time of the ge eh of the shift of the cydiacle aeon you know.

Audience Member:[Inaudible (Something about phenomenalisised awareness, the Ayahuasca DMT visions related to Psilocybin)]
[3:22:30]

Terence McKenna: How it works with psilocybin?

Audience Member: [Inaudible]

Well uh i mean I take, when I take Psilocybin i take it on an empty stomach I don't fast or anything like that I just

don't eat for 6 hours, I don't call that fasting. Uh and then I take it in silent darkness. That's number one very important. The next thing is weigh [3:23:00] the dose, you must weigh the dose. Because 5 grams is what you want. And I've had over and over the experience of showing somebody what five grams is and they're appalled. They say my god you can't be serious I mean I wou.. I take uh... a fifth that much a fourth that much. Yeah well that's the problem that why you don't have elves in the attic and bats in the belfry like I do [audience laughter][3:23:30] um you know and so then you take it and I take it on an empty stomach and a lot of people don't like the taste I don't really understand that uh, I just chew em up, I sit with them, and I chew em up and then... huh..

Audience Member: Dried?

Terence McKenna: Dried.

And none of this mixing in apple sauce or any of that malarkey I mean what's that about. [audience laughter]

Audience Member: [Inaudible (something about fresh vs. dried dosage)]

Terence McKenna: Oh well fresh 60 grams. 60 grams. Uhh
[3:24:00]

Transcribed by Tim Collinson

Uh, (3:24:00) because there's more than a, you know-- there's a huge water loss there. And, uh, then it takes-- people sometimes say, "It came on within 5 minutes." Or, "It came on within 10 minutes." I don't know what that could possibly be about. First of all, it defies pharmacokinetics to imagine that it could come on that fast. For me it comes on, almost always, at the 1 hour and 20 minute mark. I think it can come on sooner than that. (3:24:30) I think I'm fairly resistant to these things. In the hour-- After I take it, I sit, I roll bombs, and I-- I carry out what all good Catholics know as an examination of conscience. This means you think about all the bummers that you're afraid are going to jump out at you as soon as you get loaded. If you will carry out the examination of conscience, you will be so bored with that (3:25:00) by the time the compound actually hits that, you usually won't have to pay any dues. Because you have faced the fact that you are a jerk 50 times in the preceding hour, so-- And then, the way i do it is; at about the hour and 20 minute mark-- and I should say in the time preceding that, you may have to go to the bathroom once, you may-- It makes your nose run, which is a funny thing. It also makes you yawn. (3:25:30)

These are definitely qualities of psilocybin, not related to its psychoactivity. And, uhm, and I think that it's very good to decide before it hits, that once it begins, you will not alter the plan. In other words, you decide ahead of time - I'm going to sit here and do this. Because at about the hour and 15 minute mark, it will begin hitting you with stuff (3:26:00) like, "You'd really be more comfortable down stairs." Or, uh, you know, "It's awfully hot in here, why don't you get up and adjust the thermostat?" All this stuff, you just say, "No.No. - No. No." We are holding the

space. And sit there. Then, it begins to come on. And it comes-- the image I have is like a jellyfish, or a silk scarf, or something like that. It just kind of drifts down, and surrounds you.

And at that point (3:26:30) I-- I-- I guess I pray. I say to it, you know, "I'm completely in your hands. Please don't hurt me, you know. I'm yours. I'm completely committed. I've held nothing back, so don't burn me, please." And, uh-- and then there is a kind of-- it is hard to describe-- a kind of, uh, potential (3:27:00) begins to build up. And you say, "Hmm." The rush hasn't begin- begun, but it's-- you can almost close your eyes and see millions of little psilocybin molecules elbowing serotonin molecules out of the way. And fitting themselves into the receptor site. And the electron spin resonance dynamics is beginning to shift, and the whole thing is about to take off.

At that point, I smoke furiously. (3:27:30) And that usually is all it takes. And-- and it-- it comes on, and it-- the first rush is really astonishing. I mean, sometimes it's more mind boggling than others. But I can remember situations where I would just see it coming and say, "Oh my God!" You know? It's 100 miles wide, and 10 miles high. Where are you going to run to, you know? It's just coming-- (3:28:00) you say, "Good g-rief!" You know? "I guess I'm not going to meet this one sitting up. I think i better lay down." And in about the time it takes to make and execute that decision, then it just hits. And it's like a tidal wave. I mean, I have the feeling when I'm doing it in California, that everyone from Vancouver to Tijuana has just, uh, crawled under their desk. Because you can't imagine. This is happening (3:28:30) between my ears? You know, it's more like an asteroid must have fallen in the Pacific Ocean and raised some enormous incoming wave. It's-- what it's sort of like it's like watching a thermonuclear explosion through 50 feet of crystal clear glass.

So, you know, you are perfectly calm. It's not getting at you. But the energy that is being released in your presence is awesome. And then, (3:29:00) it, uh-- and sometimes in that first pass, you actually-- the linguistic machinery is burned out. You've probably seen these scenes where they will test a hydrogen bomb. And they set up cameras a quarter mile away from ground zero - a half mile, a mile, two miles. And then when they actually detonate the bomb, they get the view from the first camera. And then they switch to the second camera as the first camera (3:29:30) is blown to bits and vaporize. And they keep pulling back as each successive instrument is destroyed. Well, this is sort of the feeling you have as this thing spreads out toward you. And then, it, uhm-- it does what it wants to do. It tells you what it wants to tell you. And it's highly unpredictable. I mean, you can not-- people always say you should ask it a question. This seems absurd to me. I mean, I don't know. Once, when my (3:30:00) life was in turmoil...

Transcribed by Jason Bastin

TM: Once when my life was in turmoil, I- I.. I did ask a question. I said, uh.. I-I wrote it down ahead of time and the q- and the question was 'Am I doing the right thing with my life?' And then when I got in there and I posed the question and the answer came back instantly It was a uh.. a ripoff from Lyndon Johnson it said: What kind of a chickenshit question is that to ask mee!?[3:30:30] said oh, sorry didn't mean to presume you know [laughs] Get your act together and then we'll have a conversation, but if that's what you wanted to talk about you should've taken MDMA.

Audience: [sporadic laughter]

TM: And.. it uh, and then you know paralleling what we talked about this morning and again I'm just giving you my subjective take on it. It's like, um...[3:31:00] [clicks]

I come into a place. It's hard to describe, it's a feeling ... and- it's- Ikn- ump-...andd- the content of the feeling is now the elves are near, ..but they won't appear unless I invoke them. And you know I wish I could tell you that I chant in 'mandian or something like that but I don't, well I stole a line from[3:31:30] an old, old I Love Lucy program where Ethel is talking to Lucy about UFO's and uh.. Lucy says she talks to the UFO's and Ethel says well how can you talk to UFO's? and Lucy said well it's simple I just say: Come in little green men. Come in little green men. And that's what I do! I say come in little green men, and then there is ah.. [3:32:00] and women if there are any out there! [laughs] and then there is a.. It's like ah.. it's like -ike -it's like a marching band. It's like a make-believe marching band is what it's like and it comes from a distance like there's a place in my vision that's small. A little dancing light and a- and a little faint sound and the light comes closer, and the sound gets louder until [3:32:30] finally, you know, they pick me up on their shoulders and with tubas blaring and sackbuts and reed bac and all this stu- then they carry me around and talk to me and it's... the whole thing is shot through with such a weird sense of zaniness, irishness, joyfishness, I mean it's almost unbearable it's so...uhm i don't know not exactly [3:33:00] Disney-esque because their humor tends to be a little more savage than that. And then that is part of the first wave and then the rest of the trip unfolds pretty much as you..a-- there's a kind of a pushing and pulling that goes on. You can direct it it. Each one of these plants does have a character of its own an-

Audience Question: Inaudible

TM: Sure, um th.. it--t one of the most puzzling things about these- these [3:33:30] plants is that they have characters that seem irreducible for instance psilocybin: it is the science fiction drug. In other words, it says uh.. you know: we have been denizens of this planet for 400 million years, our original home planet is in the M5-83C system. We are connected via hyperspace to all intelligent lifeforms [3:34:00] in the galax-. It shows you enormous machines in orbit around alien planets. It talks about the end of history and the collectivizing of humanity. And it's this enormous, hortatory, salvational, dramatic, science fiction type scenario. Well then you take ayahuasca, which in molecular terms is just a few nitrogens are moved around i mean it's basically [3:34:30] the same thing and you get a completely different message. You- you- you se- you feel the energy of the rainforest and the rivers, and you.. It's very feminine. you think about childbirth, you think about the continuity of generations, you think about the- the- uh.. mystery of the meat. You think about tantric sexuality. It's all [3:35:00] redirected back into the human and natural world in some way.

And then of course DMT which I described this morning. Which the DMT elves are not.. from outer space or they don't present themselves that way. In fact one of the odd things about the DMT thing is that you have the feeling that this space that you break into, even though it's large- Some people even refer to the dome of DMT, that tells you they [3:35:30] really were there. But wherever this huge vaulted space is you have the feeling, although it's hard to explain how you know this, but you have this feeling that you're way way way underground which fits with the elf motif you're in the hall of the mountain king. You're under the hills with the, you know, the little people who retreated under the hill. Ah.. The character of these things is one of the most puzzling things [3:36:00] uhh about them.

Transcribed by Mark Carver

Uhm..

Audience (inaudible question)

Terence: Well, that's a real question, the Logos seems more.. It personally isn't.. It doesn't crack jokes and do quadruple uncondro tons and stuff like that.. Its more like a wise, loving creature.. Urm.. This DMT thing is.. You know.. Its a troupe of maddened elves, and they are just doing their own thing. And then with ayahuasca, though.. Some people claim they contact an entity it hasn't been like that for me, it seems to me mon ayahuasca you become.. Like a, a camera.. You just, lye through a visual world.. I mean after a good ayahuasca trip you just feel like your eyes are bugging out of your head. I mean, it's like buying prints on Madison Avenue you knoww.. And you've just been looking and looking and looking and you literally had to give your eyes a rest after an ayahuasca trip and the ayahuasca visions are more... (..exhales..) they seem to cover a broader spectrum.. The psilocybin hallucination tend towards this highly polished, machine like, insect like, outer-space bit and the ayahuasca hallucinations are wonderful pastels.. Laces.. Layering of colors and then one of the most interesting thing to me about ayahuasca and I just cannot understand how this works if i could i'd be (inaudible) or somebody, and that is that you in the middle of an ayahuasca trip you can suggest motives, you can leave it so that for instance you can say to it; euhh.. (inaudible) and suddenly there will be thousands of candiditious cigarette lighters, champagne buckets, automobiles, paint glass windows, door knobs, silverware, all rolling in black space in front of you or the perfect exemplification of this ecstatic, the art deco ecstatic.. And then you can say to it.. Okay.. italian borough. And it just like that.. Suddenly, alter (inaudible), Madonna's, martry saints, euh.. And fantastic scroll work and fluid elite (inaudible) and you should say.. Well.. surprise me. (audience laughter) and then you will get a coherent style like our deco, like italian borough.. Except that is nobody is there to bother to realize it on this planet. But it's as coherent ah.. Its like you know.. 20 years ago there was no such thing as south west. As a style. You know.. This weird thing coming out of santafade (inaudible) that I notice its planted its roots deep here as well.. (audience laugh) the turquoise and beige endlessness of feathers and hammered titanium and all that.. Well that's an escatic that's as cohered in the last 20 years and coming to being.. There seems to be an infinite number of these things.. As different as the (inaudible) of the high dynasty are to a (inaudible) Dalli? Or Apollic? Or Abage? And then you can say to it, going beyond the surprise me challenges what i always say to it is uh, "i want to see more of what you are for yourself". And then its like this.. This., low organ tone.. And it begins to lift the vales and the temperature in the room drops about 20 degrees. And after about 20 seconds of that, you just say.. "Enough of how you are for yourself". Because you can tell what's happening is its starting to reveal something so peculiar, and so untailored for the human mind or the eye that you become afraid, you say you know can we go back to dancing mice, our deco cigarette lighters and borough culture pieces please this is turning into deep water as far as im concerned. So, urm.. Yes?

Audience: (inaudible question)

TM: Well, that's a good question..

Audience: (inaudible question)

TM: Good question. It requires a small detouring to pharmacology, the concept which all pharmacologists are familiar which you should should be too if you're going to deal in this realm, called LD-50. This is not a pretty notion but a necessary one. It stands for Lethal Dose 50. What does this mean? It means if we have 100 mice, how much psilocybin do we have to give each mouse to kill half of them. Do you see? LD50. Half the sample dies at the LD50 dose level whether it's graduate students or rats. Uh, now, when you're designing a drug or when you're thinking about a drug, what you want is a drug with an extremely high ld50 opposed [3:42:00] to its effective dose.

Transcribed by Azlan

Thinking about a drug, what you want is a drug with an extremely high LD50 [3:42:00] opposed to its effective dose. So say the effective dose of psilocybin is probably about... .5 milligrams per kilogram and the LD 50 is probably, uh,

200 milligrams per kilogram. The LD50 of psilocybin is 400 times the effective dose. [3:42:30] This is the pharmacologist's way of saying, "This is very very safe."

Audience: So if you ate a pound, you probably wouldn't die?

A pound wouldn't kill you. Uh, I don't think. It might be getting close, but you have to eat in that range to die. Now, some drugs have horrendous LD50 to effective dose profiles.

Unfortunately, and I hope I don't rain on anybody's parade here: MDMA [3:43:00] has a terrible LD50 profile. The effective dose is 125 milligrams. You can kill yourself with 1000 milligrams, so that's not good at all. Because, sure as hell, some street person or some depressed person or some maniac is going to take 1000 milligrams, and then you've got a stiff on your hands. So yeah.

Audience: I recently read some info on MDMA, [3:43:30] it came up that, uh, serotonin, depressed serotonin levels on MDMA- uh, uh, well, the serotonin stays low in your body about a week after taking it whereas like a related substance called E, uh, the serotonin levels are depressed for only two hours into that. Researchers have indicated that there's- with a lot of their MDMA has some physical [inaudible] plasticity that E does not have therefore it might be wise to avoid it. Is that true? [3:44:00]

Audience: [inaudible] In fact, I read an article that it's destroying the serotonin receptor side [inaudible]

Audience: [inaudible] 300mg dose [inaudible]

There was a different- Well, I think MDMA is- I don't want to trash MDMA, it's changed a lot of people's lives and saved relationships and so forth and so on, but to me, it's a perfect example of why you're better off taking plants. Because, here was this drug, somebody invented it. [3:44:30] They gave it to a few friends. It seemed to be wonderful for solving personal problems, so without any collection of human data, this thing becomes an item in the underground. Well, and so then thousands of people take it. The psychological effects seem completely benign. It's a wonderful thing. The physiological effects, it's a very disturbing profile. It isn't exactly as you said. [3:45:00] It's not that it destroys the serotonin receptor side. It's that, uh, nerves, neurons are covered by these very delicate, uh, uh, structures called dendritic spines. Now, nobody knows what dendritic spines do, but every neuron in your body has them. And when you take MDMA, it- it mows them down. They just, they go away. Now, so then [3:45:30] you get two schools of thought.

One says, well my god, anything impacting the physical brain that dramatically should be stayed away from. And the other camp says, well do you see any behavioral changes in people who take MDMA a lot? Do you see any physical destruction? Seizures, blindness, anything? And the answer is no. So they say, well, here we have histological evidence that this thing is making [3:46:00] major physiological changes in the dendrites and no behavioral sequella to back up that this is of any consequence. Well my position, being basically a very conservative person, is, in that case: wait. You know, they're doing work on this in a dozen labs around the country. They'll figure it out. In the

mean time, take psilocybin or mescaline or something else that has been sanctioned. Uh, because you just do not want [3:46:30] to insult the physical brain. You know, that's the- the whole name of the game. You have to keep the brain in good shape. Yeah.

Student: Could we go back to his question? Once you're past the proper dose, is it worthwhile to start to step up to-

Oh yeah, that's where we were ta- That's why we started talking about LD 50 'cause I wanted to explain to you that, uh, it- taking a compound like psilocybin, if the effective [3:47:00] dose is 20 milligrams, 20 milligrams for somebody who weighs 135 pounds, well, then, looking at the pharmacological data, they should be able to take, uh, 2000 milligrams without any trouble at all. That's 100 times- 100 times more, but in fact, what happens is as you raise the dose is that the psychological presentation becomes [3:47:30] unbearable. It becomes so strange that you fear for your sanity in a good ol' Edgar Allen Poe-ish phrase, you know. It gets stranger and stranger and uh, you know, I talk to pretty naive people who have overdosed. Usually, the way these overdose situations occur is people are gathering mushrooms in the wild and they start eating them and then they just keep [3:48:00] eating them.

Transcribed by Tyler

TM: ...eating them and then they realize they've eaten four times more than the effective dose. And uh, this is where you get into places where you don't know what to say because if you tell people, they'll throw a net over you but you want to say, because you're so personally disturbed, this is where the flying saucers land and the rectal examinations begin [audience laughs] and you're told that you're the messiah and they-you know, it becomes [3:48:30] quirkier and quirkier. So I think you have to uh, you know, I'm very admiring of people who can take very high doses but I find it quite challenging enough in the five to seven gram uh, range. A friend of mine says of psilocybin, that every time he takes it he tries to stand more. Meaning more of the vision because it is filtering itself. It's [3:49:00] definitely filtering itself. This is why beginners almost never have bad trips because somebody in there looks at your clipboard and says oh this guy has never done this before so lay off the rough stuff [audience laughs]. Just, you know, bring him through the standard number [audience laughs]. It's-it's the people who consider themselves experienced you know, who've done it 20, 30, 40 times-so's you know we can take the gloves off with this guy [audience laughs] and [3:49:30] and invar-You know it always amazes me I sometimes meet people who say you know I've taken mushrooms 50 times and I've never had a bad trip and I think you know lucky soul because when it goes left it's hard you know, it's hard. You have to really then you know denounce(?) your mantra's bungle is uh the best advice I can give you, because you need to steer [3:50:00] back towards the mainstream now maybe at this point this is a good point at which to talk about what do you do when the going gets rough. There are two things at least that you can do that are very effective uh the first is and uh it's a very simple thing but people in our culture seem to be resistant to this is you sing you force air into your lungs and body and you [3:50:30] chant you sing anything you want and it will radically alter the parameters. There's a certain place in psilocybin that is my uh *bête noir* which I call the meatlocker [audience laughs] and I don't like this place you know and meatlocker is a mild term for it's more like uh you know the morgue for the homicide unit or something whenever I start drifting that way I sing [3:51:00] and then you can navigate through it. The other thing you can do, although this is sometimes trickier, is uh smoke cannabis this is what those bombers are for that you rolled in the first hour while you were waiting for it to come on is as soon as it get-begins to press in in some really invasive or alarming way just take a couple of hits of the good and chant and then you can bring it back on track and also talk to it [3:51:30] don't be afraid to say you know I don't like this, take it off me, it's too peculiar, I'm not ready for this. It says oh sorry ehem you know back to dancing mice uh-Yeah? [question]

Audience: *different mushrooms why * wildly varying concentrations of psilocybin?

TM: Well...

[more question*?]

TM: There hasn't been a lot of work on this. Uhm, Michael Buckley(sp?) at Evergreen College years ago [3:52:00] grew stropharia cubensis by the method that's described in my book, the book I wrote with my brother, and what they discovered...see psilocybin is 4-phosphoro.... triptamines* that phosphorous group is removed as soon as it crosses uh the blood brain barrier so really uh what's active is uh uh uh a simpler compound called psilocin 52:30 and psilocin lacks the phosphorous attachment and what they discovered was that in the early flushes the psilocybin ratio is high and the psilocin ratio is low and in the you all know what a flush is right? And in the later flushes the psilocin level rises and the psilocybin level drops so really the two together stay remarkably stable throughout the the life of the organism something worth mentioning I suppose worth* mentioning is uhm* when I was into my extra terrestrial phase when I was assuming that the mushroom was an extra terrestrial either the extra terrestrial itself or something designed by some kind of an extraterrestrial uh it was very interesting to me that psilocybin is as I said is 4-phosphoropsyNNdimethyltryptamine is is the only 4 substituted indole in nature the only *the only one well if you were to search for evidence of extraterrestrial tampering with the biome of this planet what you would look for is a unique compound occurring in one life form and no other here it is folks this phosphorous group is unique and I've never read [3:54:00] any description...

Transcribed by Bev Smith

[3:54:00] any description or discussion of what the evolutionary history of that- why it would appear in any organism like that and not in any other. That's just an aside because I'm always searching for the thumbprint of the alien. It-m, there may not be an alien thumbprint, but the phosphorous group attached to psilocybin is a good candidate for it. [audience member indicates that he has a question] Yeah.

Audience Member: Um, [coughs] I'm switching the subject only slightly- [3:54:30] the descriptions that you've given of all of these experiences, although you've uh, have said that it varies blankly, there's a remarkable internal consistency of your description- that, that you're entering a world that seems to have boundaries and entities that you consistently encounter again and again. I've um, spoken to many of people over the years, some of whom [3:55:00] have known you throughout that time, and nobody I've ever spoken to- people who have taken high doses of- or low doses- or low doses, have ever had similar experiences, you know, clearly you've spoken to people who have. So I'm wondering-

TM: Maybe they were just being polite [laughs]

Audience Member (cont.): Um, I'm wondering if you've ever experimented, with your own experiences, like what [John C.] Lilly describes in Programming and Metaprogramming, and [3:55:30] to see, um, you describe ways of evoking the entity, which certainly could be put into a context of introducing programs in your experience-

TM: True

Audience Member (cont.): Did you work with different presuppositions going into this to see what the limits are?

TM: Well my original presupposition was to try to have no presupposition at all and then out of that came [3:56:00] all of these assumptions. You're right that nobody has trips exactly like mine, although if you question people carefully, you can begin to see what- how it works. Uh for example, umm, you know I describe this thing this morning- the elves, the presentational thing, the high speed motion, the gifts- [3:56:30] all that- well, sometimes people will take DMT and they'll come back and you'll realize that it's as though there is an archetype there which has different levels in it, and if I had to say what the archetype of DMT is, it's the archetype of the circus. And one time I saw a woman come out of DMT, she was an anthropologist, she had fairly high body weight, and I could tell that she had not [3:57:00] gotten a complete hit- came down, we said okay, what was it? She said it was the saddest carnival in the world. She said the carnival was closed, all the tents had their flaps rolled down and there were just paper cups and candy wrappers blowing in the aisles in between them and the ferris wheel was stopped. Well, she was just at the edge of this thing and [3:57:30] if- if you think about the archetype of the circus, it is an interesting one. First of all, you have the three center rings, where wild and zany activity is continually being presented, tiny cars keep arriving with 14 clowns in each one and they keep climbing out, falling all over each other ap- but it isn't all fun and games, it has a strange uh [3:58:00] erotic content, and as a child I think my first awareness of what I would really call eros was watching this beautiful long-haired woman in a tiny spangled costume hang by her teeth 120 feet above the center ring um doing acrobatics so you've got- [something happens in audience, some laugh, a woman playfully says something inaudible, TM continues] [3:58:28] -so you've got the clown, and you've got the lady in the tiny spangled costume, and then off from the center ring, you have these dark alleyways where the sideshows are, the siamese twins, and the goat boy, and all the rest of it, you know- and it has a very weird vibe about it. So it can land you in any of these places, but if you, if you try and correlate [3:59:00] people's experiences it seems to me that it's pretty clear that through, through their own life history and their own programming nevertheless something is trying to poke through. Ah, now my DMT experience seems pretty radically different from other people's, although other people don't give any account at all. I mean it's amazing how inarticulate people are. You- they come down, you say how was it, and they say it was FAR OUT, [3:59:30] you say you know you don't get out of here with that rat, you know, HOW WAS IT? And they say, well [sighs] they can't give a good account. On psilocybin, I think most people experience something very much like what I describe. Huge machines, a sense of danger to the earth, apocalyptic visions, uh the idea that someone will come and help. And I'm pretty

Transcribed by William Hargrave

TM: [4:00:00]...and i'm pretty resistant to all the flotsam and jetsam of the new age, i mean i don't spend a moment worrying about the exact physical location of Atlantis or stuff like that... and i think people it inflates their personal mythologies and intellectual misconceptions but there is something trying to get through that's why this exercise, show me what you are for yourself, is really [4:00:30] a good one and maybe my trips are so weird because i have always worshiped weirdness, so i can go further down that road without being alarmed while somebody else, (ahh) (ahh) you know, would pull back. One other problem is that we have, we don't have complete maps of this places. At this stage in exploring that new world, what we have essentially are the scribbled diaries of frightened explorers, [4:01:00] and we don't know if explorer A is talking about the same river system of explorer B or whether they were on opposite sides of the planet or the universe. Building a coherent picture of the psychedelic dimension would be the 1st challenge to a, to a rational approach to understanding it.

Audience: Have you (ahh), have you ever read the Far Journeys by Robert Monroe?

TM: Is that the 1st book?

Audience: No.

TM: No, i read the 1st book.

Audience: [4:01:30] Well there actually is a map right there. Talk about weird, this is one of the weirdest things you'll ever read but it has some amazing rain of truth [mic noise] and in it he presents a map of all the realms of being that exist, that he's, visited in normal consciousness. It's an almost inside psychedelic description, but it's, it's (ahh) pretty consistent with some of the things you were discussing this morning because, it is where you go when you die and is also where you go in between. In fact he talks about classes who attend few years ago and he describes the levels upon levels of energy coexistent and describes as like [mic noise]...

TM: Well, i read the first book and i was puzzled by how much of it didn't seem familiar to me, like, i remember in the first book he talks about a world that's just [4:02:30] like this world except the cars are nine feet wide. That would be a very puzzling psychedelic experience to go to that world. (ahh) I knew someone who was very close to him and i don't want to set off any lawsuits here, but i once cornered this person and said, so what about it? And he said, don't worry you don't have to worry this is not getting close to your at all. (ahh) [4:03:00] Buddhism of the Mahayanas, has, you know, a tremendously complex (ahh) system of levels and entities, wrathful buddhas and dharmapalas and peaceful entities and, i think that that's pretty interesting as a phenomenological description of mind, i reject the philosophical premise of buddhism [4:03:30] because i think it's (ahh) you know, a non believably uncompromising kind of nihilism but buddhism as it's pitched in America soft-pedals that a lot, you know, they don't, they don't, present it as a form of nihilism but i think that ultimately it is in the most positive sense but still (ahh) i'm of the school that follows Alfred North Whitehead who said: [4:04:00] say what you may there are certain stubborn facts, and you know, that's not a very buddhist point of view, yeah.

Audience: Do you have visions on cannabis, too?

TM: [drinks water] If i can control myself and not do it too often, the problem is cannabis does so many other wonderful things and i tend to use it for those other wonderful things but if i were totally dedicated to vision, then i would only smoke once a week [4:04:30] because then you completely come to equilibrium, and then, you know, i, again i think people do it, not wrong, but not the way you should do it if you want visions. You should do it the way you do all this other things, alone in silent darkness and in high doses. (ahh) Bursts of hallucination on cannabis are hard to control and predict but sometimes they're as intense as anything can be. [4:05:00] If you read (ahh) (uhm) 19th century descriptions of cannabis use by people like, Fitz Hugh Ludlow and the Club des Hashischins and that crowd, where they were eating the hashish, it's very clear that it was the Lsd of the 19th century, i mean nobody can read those descriptions without realising this people were loaded for sure, they were thoroughly and completely smashed [4:05:30] to be able to write those kinds of accounts.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, go ahead.

Audience: [inaudible]...started mushroom trip...[inaudible]...started tripping...[inaudible]...real confuse entry...[inaudible]...and most i kind of realise...[inaudible]...and it has effectance and i'm not sure that...[inaudible] in terms of getting, (ahh) new learning...[inaudible]...more powerful chemist.

TM: Well, you didn't exactly make clear to me what the effect was. It fuzzes you out going into? [4:06:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: Well, you didn't exactly make clear to me what the effect was...it fuzzes you out? Going in?

Audience: (inaudible) ...something totally different...

TM: What it does for me is it just slightly cuts my anxiety. You know? I'm able to, to let the thing unfold of its own. I'm no-, I don't know. I mean I have a very; a lifelong, intense relationship to cannabis. And I basically make my living out of being able to do[4:06:30] feats of memory. And, you know, cannabis is supposed to trash your memory so I don't, you know maybe I'm different but I resist any "maybe I'm different" argument because it's malarkey. Nobody is different enough that they can, you know...

Audience: (inaudible) memory recall, when you're at the peak of that kind of experience...speak as clearly...I get really tongue tied.

TM: [4:07:00]No, moreso. My great dream is that as my powers of locution fade with old age that cannabis will be legalized then I can sit in front of you and smoke and my career can be pushed 20 years into the future(audience laughs)...ah...the way I use cannabis is to think. And I do a lot of thinking. And I do a lot, And I...I...Ah...at night before I go to bed.[4:07:30] I smoke. And then I play the tapes of the day and then I understand what happened. If I didn't have cannabis I don't think...I would be... sort of...at sea, or kind of a space case because I never get what somebody really meant, really intended, really had in mind til I play the tape stoned and then I see: Uh huh - that's what the agenda was; that's what was going on.

Audience: Then you go to sleep afterwards?

TM:[4:08:00] O yeah. Yeah. And if I don't smoke then I'm an insomniac. Yeah.

Audience: (inaudible)?

TM: Ok. Well, LSD *sighs*...again, I'm only speaking for myself because there is no other way to approach it. I I...I found LSD very interesting[4:08:30] but ultimately kind of frustrating because I wanted visions. And, to me, what LSD by itself does is it does a lot of slippery and hard to name stuff. It accelerates and changes the quality of thought. It...mmmmhhhhhh, well, basically that's it. It does something to the quality of thought. But I had been reading Aldous Huxley and Havelock Ellis and those people and I kept saying, you know,[4:09:00] where are the ruins of ancient civilizations? Where are the jewelled tapestries? And, and then, fiddling around with LSD, I discovered that if I would, ah, take it with mescaline then it became the psychedelic experience that I was seeking. But, in and of itself, it's kind of psycho-analytic? It's sort of like cleaning up your act?(Audience: mmhmm) It often focuses you on your own personal stuff?[4:09:30] (Audience: mmhmm) And, you know, I have to confess to you: I'm not that into my own personal stuff probably because it's so horrendous, ah, *deep breath* but I don't like personalized trips. I like cosmic vision information trips. And, and then mescaline, ah..., mescaline is... you have to take a lot to get it to really do what you want it to do. And it being and amphetamine[4:10:00] it has a not a very good LD50 profile. It's not like MDMA where 10 times the effective dose and you're in real trouble but probably 40 times the effective dose and you'd be sweating bullets. So, ah, and then just the nature of my life I have not had as much to do with mescaline as these other things. I'm really a vision freak. And people say you know, well there's feeling and there's insight[4:10:30]...and there's this and that but you know the reason I'm so fixated on vision - or

the excuse I give - somebody said: O, it's because you're a double Scorpio but (audience laughs) for me it's the, for me it's the proof that it's not coming from me. I can come up with insights. I can come up with funny ideas but I can't come up with objects never before seen by the human eye or mind and so when the visions start[4:11:00] then I feel: this is the transpersonal part of the trip; this isn't my unconscious, my memories, my fears, my hopes; this is something else yeah.

Audience: Um.(inaudible)?

TM: How do boundary dissolution andi-?

Audience: (inaudible)?

TM: Well I think, in very practical terms[4:11:30], they show you that everything you know is wrong. (audience giggles) You know, I mean how can the ego survive that piece of information? It just puts in your lap incontrovertible evidence that everything you've ever thought or believed is hokum and that's extraordinarily humbling. And that word: humbling means the feeling you have when your ego is reduced. You know? Humble yourself enough and you'll begin to feel humiliated.

Transcribed by Artemis Jones

TM: [4:12:00] And, you know, that's a deeper ego reduction. I think they, aside from any magical chemical effect they may have on ego, they're just showing you the true size of the universe and your place in it. And you know, In our 'down' personal lives, every man, every woman, a king, or a queen. I mean, we build castles in the air. Our career, our children, our whatever. Well, then you get into those places, you say, [4:12:30] you know, what, how preposterous.

Audience: [inaudible] Is there any gender difference in [inaudible]?

TM: For men and women?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Well, that's an interesting question.

Audience: I'm interested in it also, in the history [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, you mean what we talked about last night?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Well, I think women, by virtue of the fact that they [4:13:00] menstruate and give birth, are just inherently more chemically driven creatures than men. Men are Apollonian in intent. The idea is always some kind of abstract purity, clarity, kind of thing. And women know from the get go that that's an illusion. That the reality is the floor of the rainforest, [4:13:30] the interconnected tissue, the levels, the trade-offs, and so forth and so on. Ah, this is why I think men generally men tend to be more generally interested in these things than women, and to also be more impacted by them. For women it's seems to sort of fit in, and affirm what they knew. For men it seems to come as a tremendous surprise that this is the way uh, things are put together. [4:14:00] I think that if we, if everybody gave birth and experienced menstruation probably we never would have launched ourselves into history. In a way, you know, without going too far with it, men are the ancillary sex. I mean the original uh, uh, blastula in the embryonic development is female. And I was listening to someone talk about this the other night [4:14:30] saying no wonder men have the problems they have. What a man is, is a woman who has been under incredible chemical assault for nine months in the womb. And you just have been hammered, sculpted, shaped, and recast again, and again. And then you're born male. A female fetus doesn't experience anything like that. It starts out with a smooth shot, it's, it's and um, a phylogenetic expression, [4:15:00] and, and then achieves it. I don't think of the ego as particularly male because I think that we all have it to accepted degrees. But men are able to express it. A woman with an ego is frustrated. A man with an ego is a menace to all concerned, you know? [laughs] Yeah?

Audience: [inaudible] ... trip with another people. Do you think the knowledge of energy changes your trip...[inaudible]

TM: [4:15:30] I think it's very, it's a very major decision to do that. That if you're going to take a high dose of psychedelics with somebody else then you better be prepared to get all entangled with them. Uh, which can be great. It can also be fairly confusing. I don't like taking psychedelics, uh, this is not an issue of entanglement. That's sort of what goes on between lovers or close friends. But I get a lot of requests to [4:16:00] sit for people. And I don't do it because I, I don't know whether it's my personality or what it is? But I am unable to contain my anxiety in the presence of another stoned person. Especially if I'm stoned. If I'm stoned, and they're stoned and we're in a dark room, I cannot get off. I listen to them breath. I worry. I wonder if I should ask them if they're alright. [4:16:30] Then I go off on long trips about not interrupting them. And then that loops back into, 'but I haven't heard them breath for twenty minutes!' [laughter] And, and, and I'm always afraid. I don't know. So really people say, "Doesn't it take courage e to do it alone?" For me it takes more courage to do it with people because inevitably you get tangled up in some kind of craziness. And you know, you can think you're having a telepathic experience. And they've decided that they want to have sex or something, [4:17:00] and meanwhile I've just had a revelation about that entry Morlier made in his diary when he was talking to his niece Anges about the nature of the French Comic Theater. And, so, you say, boy, you know, we've got too much on the menu here. Um. But I'm weird! Remember that. [laughter] Yeah?

Audience: [inaudible] Um, okay now, and we uh have heard about the uh [4:17:30]

ayahuasca so, um, can you comment on this kind [inaudible] and contrast to what you're talking about [inaudible]

TM: You mean the group mind on ayahuasca?

Audience: Yes, [inaudible] Is that possible.

TM: Oh yeah. No, it's very possible. Uh, it's very possible. I mean, you can sit with someone and play a little game where you will describe the hallucination for 30 seconds, then they get to describe the hallucination for 30 seconds. [4:18:00] And you can absolutely convince yourself that people are seeing the same you know, that you're seeing, the same thing. And when you toss sex into the mix, it just goes over the top.

Transcribed by Micki Garrison

TM:-then they get to describe [4:18:00] the hallucinations for 30 seconds then you can absolutely convince yourself that people are seeing the same, you know, that you're seeing the same thing. And you know when you toss sex into the mix it just goes over the top. I mean I've had the impression- I don't want to trot it out as a condition of mine or something that I assert true but I have had the impression stoned on mushrooms making love that um, i- it's like a perspiration forms on the surface of the skin and there's some kind of electrolytic thing that goes on and the boundaries dissolve between the people. I don't mean metaphorically. I mean that you become one organism. And that's uh, that's pretty uh, pretty amazing.

Q: ???

Yeah yeah yeah. Now as I just said I don't like taking psychedelics with people, I guess what I should have said is that I hate being responsible because I don't mind taking Ayahuasca with 30 people none of whom speak English in a hut up some river but that's because I know that the old shamans are in charge, that I'm just a face in the crowd. Nobody's going to me for explanation or help. I'll tell you an ayahuasca story just to give you an idea.

Years ago in 76 Kat and I, it before we were married, in Peru and we had found this Shaman who was very good and he had a following and we were, you know, apprenticing ourselves to him and he - the style of the Peruvian Mestizo people I mean cultures handle this differently but they are never straight with each other. It's an incredibly masked culture almost like the Japanese but without the formality. In other words if you think that's somebody's a jerk you would never say that that's the last thing you would say because that's your true opinion. So we got into a situation with these people where this elder Shaman who was very respected, beloved even by these people he had a nephew, a sobrino, who was an absolute jerk and this guy was into pimping a little on the side and he was very ambitious to

perfect his ayahuasca so he could go to Lima and charge yuppies for it. And he had this really awful habit, and no what really had gone on before we got there, play what all get together to take Ayahuasca and these old old guys, you know, 80 85 years old but totally authentic dudes would sing these beautiful Ayahuasca songs and he would sing against them. I mean can you imagine a scene like this where everyone's singing Row Row Row Your Boat except one guy wants to sing Five Foot Two Eyes Of Blue.

And the level of social tension ease meetings would just rise and rise but nobody would ever say anything to this guy and tell him to bug out and can that crap so one night this is happened to meetings in a row this is the third meeting like this everybody had hoped this guy wouldn't come. So then he showed up, then we all dosed and then we get loaded and the singing begins and he begins his singing and in the wave of hallucinations and Kat was sitting next to me I feel him sitting up on his haunches kind of rocking back and forth on his heels, and I would look at him and I could see he was going through these weird animal transformations. First he would become like a jackal then he would become like a monkey and it was really intense. And I mentioned it to Kat and she could see it too. All, and he capped - and we were also trying to tape these Ayahuasca songs so it was a double irritation to us that this guy was so out of control. Laughter a particularly long song by the old guys with him just hammering against them I could feel Kat who has a real Irish temper getting more and more pissed off at this guy and finally at the end of this song when the silence fell, she had been just staring at the floor and she looked across the room at Don Jose and uh, gave him a look of pure loathing and I saw these red things, these red triangular-shaped things come out of her eyes and go across the room like woop woop woop woop! and when it got to him it knocked him off his feet. He turn on backwards from the impact of these things literally and everything going on in the room stopped dead and the Elder Shaman said to the guy sitting next to him, he said oh the gringa sends 'badadadada'! And you know then you realize wow we're in over our heads here you can't chill shi from Shinola in this thing. This concludes tape three. Our program continues [4:24:00] with tape four.

Transcribed by Eva Petakovic

TM: ...so that's an example of, you know, magical power condensed onto the material plane. Yes?

Audience: [inaudible] ...purple triangles coming from your head... [inaudible]

TM: Clearly, the same- the same phenomenon, uh, yeah!

Audience: Um, first of all, I have to ask [4:23:30] [inaudible] question, [inaudible] after that?

TM: Ah, he actually didn't come back after that evening, uh...

Audience: Then the other question, or- or actually [inaudible], um, I have done extensive work with Iridology, to the point that, I could understand where the limitations [inaudible] blatantly obvious, because it's not so much [inaudible] the characteristics of the iris, the eye, it's what's transmitted from the mind, through the pupil, or the

sensor of that [4:25:00] [inaudible] that is really being accessed by someone who is [inaudible], and that's what would give you [inaudible] that you're looking for, and so, I feel that, that power, that transmission of mind, so many times, is carried from that energy that- that goes back and forth through the eyes, and I'm wondering if you had any more thoughts on that.

TM: Well, it seems to imply that we are all potentially linked together in many ways that civilization has suppressed. We are no longer [4:25:30] telepathic, we are no longer able to reach out and cap somebody at a glance, like that, and uh-

Audience: But I think we do, and I think we do all the time.

TM: But somehow our perception of what's been going on is- is skewed. We don't- you know Rupert and I talked a lot about this. He had the idea that- he said- you know- the search for a psychic- the search for proof of psychic power has not been a very happy story, with card-flipping and this sort of thing. And Rupert [4:26:00] had the genius to realize that: what is the commonest psychic power, that we all believe exists, and have experienced and so forth, but which science is utterly able to explain, that could be statistically studied? Well, what it is is, the sense that someone is looking at you, you know? And you could test this, and in fact, we did tests, where you would choose one [4:26:30] person and put them at the front of a room full of people. And you would tell people, either look at your lap, or look at the back of this person's head. And they would be asked, are people looking at you? Or are people looking at the back of- of- uh- looking at their lap? And certain people -you can quickly satisfy yourself- were able to detect this a phenomenal amount of the time, well beyond statistical, uh, you know, [4:27:00] the rules of probability. So, I think we're surrounded by subliminal abilities that we can't, uh, really understand. I mean I- from years of travelling in Asia, I- I- have an amazing psychic power, which is, I ca- I can tell when food shouldn't be eaten, you know? And it will happen to me, you know, in very good restaurants, and- and if I go against it, you know [4:27:30], I'll spend the evening over the toilet, because I couldn't believe that Che So-And-So would serve poison food because it was costing me so much money. But then when I get back to the hotel room, sure enough, by overriding my own instincts, I- I- get into trouble.

TM:I think... psychic ability, well this is worth talking about, that we cannot be- or how can I put it? We cannot- uh- evolve [4:28:00] beyond the confines of our language. And if you have a language that makes telepathy impossible, then telepathy will be impossible inside that culture. You see we all pay lip service to the idea that, uh, that lang- that language and culture, ah, create each other, but we actually act as though culture is real, and it isn't. [4:28:30] I- I- learned this, you know, in Peru, very dramatically, because in the Peruvian Amazon, there is a- a- disease which people are very, very concerned about, called "susto". Have all of you heard of this? Susto only affects Peruvians. This is the first clue that something weird is going on. And its major manifestation is bad luck. And- but if you get it, [4:29:00] and you're a Peruvian, you prepare to cash in your chips. You know, it's as- it's as horrible as melanoma. You know, you're doomed if you have this stuff. And you have to go to a shaman and get it taken care of or you're dead within six months. But I can't get susto, it's not- it's a linguistic disease of some sort. It travels around inside the confines of Mestizo Spanish, and nowhere else.

Audience: But it's the evil [4:29:30] eye [inaudible] it is the equation in the, uh, south of our country-

TM: Well, yeah people have this ideas, yeah. And you know, like people say, well magic is accomplished because the person the magic is being done to, knows that it's happening, and therefore they unconsciously participate in their own demise. But I've observed these shamans in the Amazon, and they will go- if a shaman has decided to actually get somebody, then he will go to incredible lengths... [4:30:00]

Transcribed by Tuan Nguyen

[4:30:00] lengths to conceal what he is doing so that the person never knows and never knows how to blame, so it isn't some kind of psychological co-option that's happening. It's something a good deal more complex than that. Yeah.

Audience: Uh, you know, a while back you were talking about uhm, uhm, a period of time where humanity was inside out uhm... that made me think about [inaudible] for example,[4:30:30] uhm, we have all these myths about fairies and elves and uhm, magic and perhaps at one time the world was like that but it is not like that now [inaudible] talking about social context that does not include telepathy uhm, generates a culture without uhm.. people experiencing telepathy, uhm... and yet we have all these ideas... we have all these fairy tales... you know and now that we're talking about self-transforming machine elves, uhm, when you, uhm,[4:31:00] have a *sneeze*

TM:Well, I'm not sure that you got it into a question that I can respond to. Try again.

Audience: Ok, so, uhm... our culture then is uhm... [inaudible] and uhm the whole idea of magic, and things like uhm, the existence of elves, uhm... [inaudible] people would laugh at that unless uhm they are on the supposed fringes. Uhm... do you think, that this kind of thing could come back? Do you think that we will [4:31:30] have uhm... you know uhm... [inaudible] ... these kind of things.

TM: Yes, sure, because what you have to do is you have to shift the locus. I mean, it's kind of hard to explain but, every civilization has a locus and, and we have disempowered ourselves by shifting the locus to an imagined class of experts. We have an incredibly peculiar version of how the universe is put together. [4:32:00] First of all, we rely, a lot of the time, on the notion of the eensy beensy. Genes, viruses, atoms, elementary particles. These are the things which shape our world, we tell each other. And yet, who has ever seen any of these things? I mean a virus maybe a few people have seen. A hydrogen atom? It's a pretty airy fairy concept and when you start talking about the anti nu meson and stuff like that, where you can [4:32:30] only approach it through an arcane mathematical language the reality, whatever that means, of these things becomes pretty , uhn, questionable. See, one of the things I think that psychedelics could do is r- give back to us what I call uhm, the immediacy of felt experience. Since the rise of cartesian analysis in the 17th century [4:33:00] everything that we experience has been defined as, what are called, secondary characteristics. Color, a secondary characteristic. Uhm, feeling. Uhm, and what's real is mo- mass, momentum, charge, spin, stuff like this, which, you know... These are the primary qualities of the universe?Wwho ever encounters or deals with them? We need to model reality so that it is [4:33:30] understandable to us. I mean, that that statement even had to be made shows how far off track we are. Our current model of reality is excellent for describing the behavior of hydrogen at the center of stars or something like that. Terrible for explaining to you how you're supposed to stay tuned to your girlfriend. So somehow we have sold out to abstraction. And this is something

about science, you know? And the demonic [4:34:00] power of numerical analysis and stuff like this. I think that w-part of what the psychedelic revolution is and why it is so politically threatening is because a psychedelic person does not believe anything they cannot confirm for themselves through thought, intuition, or feeling. And a non-psychedelic person joins up with the quantum [4:34:30] physicists, or the hasidic Jews, or some group of people who already got it packaged and figured out. I mean, the UFO thing is a good example. Everybody's interested in UFOs, and you know, are there space people, are there not. And I think most people think that the news will come, that the way you encounter a UFO, the way most of us will encounter a UFO, is that the president will call a press conference [4:35:00] and say, you know, that the time has come to speak frankly about certain declassified material and that, yes, in fact it has been going on. I mean, that's not how it's going to happen. The way it's going to happen is on five grams in silent darkness in your living room, and that's real. You know, if flying saucers were to land on the south lawn of the White House tomorrow it would be minor news compared to what can happen to you [4:35:30] a minute and a half after smoking DMT. We don't realize that we are not real unless we are the center of our own private mandala, and so we look to media, to experts. You know, maybe the Dalai Lama can clarify it or Mother Theresa or Stephen Hawking. Well, forget all that. Those are just linguistic concepts are far as you're concerned. The only thing that's real to you is yourself and your immediate surroundings. And if we could [4:36:00]

(There is a loop in part of the audio somewhere between here and 4:42:00)

Transcribed by Paul Mullins

[4:36:00]TM:empower that,you know,our [political problems would disappear overnight.We are infantile and we do love it.We don't really try to claim our existential validity,and those who do are called mad, because they depart from the sanctioned paradigm.Over here,somebody...yeah.

Audience: First,it just struck me that,one of the things you seem no good at is bringing that [inaudible word] experience into language[4:36:30][inaudible],which creates things/thinks and realities that you...could be decrying of the shared linguistic reality where we can discuss the experience that we've had..[inaudible]

TM: Yes,well,it becomes real when we talk about it.I mean, one of the most satisfying experiences that i have as a public speaker is, sometimes, after speaking to[4:37:00]groups, like last night, somebody will come up afterwards and say:"I thought i was crazy, until i heard you speak.Now i know there are at least two of us", and the truth is, you know, there are more than two of us, there are thousands.If you...you know, it's a delusion if it happens to one person, it's a cult if it happens to twenty people, and it's true if it happens to ten[4:37:30] thousand people.Well this is a strange way to have epistemological authenticity conferred upon something.We vote on it?!...you know.So, i would like competition.I mean,i feel pretty lonely out here, i'm surprised nobody has followed me into this. There must be other people who can articulate this things as well or better than i can but, boy, they don't seem to come forth[4:38:00], and i really don't know why that is, because what i say is not all that exceptional, it's just the sum total of it is kind of eerie.But if we don't...that's what i was saying...you know, we cannot evolve faster than we evolve our language, our language is like the collective skin of our culture.So, you know, until you say the words "self-transforming elf machines from hyperspace", then[4:38:30] there aren't such things. Once you say it, it has gained a certain kind of ontological currency....

Audience: ...weren't you arguing the opposite point, you know,[inaudible] stuff that[inaudible] quantum physicists[inaudible] and that..[inaudible] language systems..

TM: ...well, see, people are buying other people's experience. I mean, if you're not a quantum physicist, why in the world should you take those people seriously?[4:39:00]They're talking gibberish. What power does it have over you?, except that it comes presented on the platter of science.Say: "You must believe this! If you don't believe this you're not a well educated Tranby with-it person.We can just say: "Well, malarkey, didn't you people believe something completely different 15 years ago?" they say: "Yes,but know we've got it!", say: "Well, I'm supposed to take that assertion seriously?You change your mind every 6 months."

Audience: [inaudible] during[4:39:30] psychedelic {inaudible} is,you know,ungraspable, very frustrating[inaudible] and,you know,we can't settle down until we[inaudible] stabilizing language [inaudible] settle down and play with it.So, we[inaudible] for having a true experience [inaudible][4:40:00] is, you know, beyond context.Once we[inaudible] it, it becomes... not quite an[inaudible], but the experience really changes,and... it becomes something to which then[inaudible] to each other,and have a good [inaudible], but...you know,we're missing it[inaudible]

TM:Well,every entity has a value dark[4:40:30] dimension.I mean,surely only the most naive of quantum physicists believe that,you know,the quantum electrodynamics description of the electron is all there is to say about the electron,because biology is made out of electrons and you can't reason from quantum electrodynamics to the rain forest, you know, obviously other factors are present, which[4:41:00] are escaping this particular linguistic model, so, being able to talk about something doesn't rob it of it's mystery, it's merely is a sectioning through it that gives you a kind of a lower dimensional map of it, but the mystery remains intact.[editorial cut in the video]Well i'm not sure that you got it into a question that i can respond to.Try again.

Audience: Ok.So, our culture[4:41:30] is in a phase that's very,like, science oriented,and the whole idea of magic and, things like,the existence of elves[inaudible], people laugh at that[inaudible] Do you think that this kind of thing could come back?Do you think that we will have,you know,like,[inaudible] experiences with this kind of things?

TM: Yes,sure,because you have to do it,you have to shift the locus[4:42:00]

Transcribed by Adrian Stan

[4:42:00] the locus, I mean it's kind of hard to explain because every civilization has a locus. And we have disempowered ourselves by shifting the locus to an imagined class of experts. We have an incredibly peculiar version of how the universe is put together. First of all, we rely, a lot of the time, on the notion of the it'sy-bitsy. Genes, viruses, atoms, [4:42:30] elementary particles. These are the things which shape our world, we tell each other. And yet, who has ever seen any of these things? I mean a virus, maybe a few people have seen. A hydrogen atom? It's a pretty airy-fairy concept. And when you start talking about the [anti-numason?] and stuff like that, where you can only approach it through an arcane mathematical language, the reality of these things, whatever that

means, becomes pretty, uhm, [4:43:00] questionable. See, one of the things I think that psychedelics could do is give back to us what I call the immediacy of felt experience. Since the rise of cartesian analysis in the 17th century, everything that we experience has been defined as, what are called, secondary characteristics. Color, a secondary characteristic. [4:43:30] Uhm feeling. Uhm, and what's real is mo- mass, momentum, charge, spin. Stuff like this which, you know... These are the primary qualities of the universe? Who ever encounters or deals with them? We need to model reality so that it is understandable to us. I mean, that that statement should even have to be made shows how far off track we are. Our current model of reality is excellent for describing, [4:44:00] uhm, the behavior of hydrogen at the center of stars or something like that. Terrible for explaining to you how you're supposed to stay tuned to your girlfriend. So somehow we have sold out to abstraction. And this is something about science you know? And the demonic power of numerical analysis and stuff like this. I think that part of what the psychedelic revolution [4:44:30] is, and why it is so politically threatening, is because a psychedelic person does not believe anything they cannot confirm for themselves through thought, intuition, or feeling. And a non-psychedelic person joins up with the quantum physicists, or the hasidic jews or some group of people who already got it packaged and figured out. Uhm, I mean, [4:45:00] the UFO thing is a good example. Everybody is interested in UFOs and, you know, are there space people, are there not. And I think most people think that the news will come that the way you, uhm, encounter a UFO, the way most of us encounter a UFO, is that the president will call a press conference and say, you know, that the time has come to speak frankly about certain declassified material and that yes in fact, uhm, it has been going on. [4:45:30] I mean, that's now how it's going to happen. The way it's going to happen is on 5 grams in silent darkness in your living room. And that's real! You know, if flying saucers were to land on the south lawn of the White House tomorrow it would be minor news compared to what can happen to you a minute and a half after smoking DMT. We don't realize that we are not real unless we are the center of our own private mandala. And so we look to media, [4:46:00] to experts. You know, maybe the Dalai Lama can clarify it, or Mother Theresa, or Stephen Hawking. Well forget all that. Those are just linguistic concepts as far as you're concerned. The only thing that's real to you is yourself and your immediate surroundings. And if we could empower that, you know, our political problems would disappear overnight. We are infantile and we do love it. We don't really try to claim [4:46:30] our existential validity. And those who do are called mad because they depart from the sanctioned paradigm. Over here somebody. Yea.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yes so it becomes real when we talk about it. I mean, one of the most satisfying experiences that I have as a public speaker is sometimes, after speaking to groups like last night, somebody will come up afterwards and say, "I thought I was crazy until I heard you speak. [4:47:30] Now I know that there are at least two of us." And the truth is, you know, there are more than two of us. There are thousands. If you, uhm, you know, it's a delusion if it happens to one person, it's a cult if it happens to 20 people, and it's true if it happens to ten thousand people. Well this is a strange way to have, uhm, epistemological authenticity conferred upon something. We vote on it? You know? [4:48:00]

Transcribed by Paul Mullins

TM: You know, ah, so I... I - I would like competition. I mean I feel pretty lonely out here; I'm surprised nobody has followed me into this. There must be other people who can articulate these things ah, as well or better than I can, but boy they don't seem to come forth.. And I really don't know why that is because what I say is not all that exceptional it's just the sum total of it is kind of eerie (4:40:30) Uh, but if we don't... That's why I was saying uh you know "We

can not evolve faster than we evolve our language” our language is like the collective skin of our culture.

So you know until you say the words "Self-transforming Elf machines from Hyperspace" - then there aren't such things. Once you say it, it has gained a certain kind of ontological currency. (4:49:00)

Audience: So weren't you arguing the opposite point you know when you spoke of ... (inaudible?)

Well see people are buying other people's experience. I mean if you're not a quantum physicist, why in the world should you take those people seriously? They're talking gibberish. What power does it have over you except that it comes presented to you on the platter of 'science'? See you must believe this, if you don't believe this, you're not a ah, well educated, trendy 'with it' person. You can just say, well, malarkey - didn't you people say something completely different 15 years ago? They say yes, but now we've got it! So say well am I supposed to take that assertion seriously? You change your mind every six months.

Audience: So our experience during the psychedelic experience...

TM: Uh huh

Audience: before we bring it to language, is... is... you know, ungraspable, very frustrating (inaudible) and... and you know we can't settle down until we bring this to language, that is based on, with their experience, they brought it to language and they can kind of settle down and play with it, so... we need to be... (inaudible) beyond concepts, once we conceptualize it, it becomes not quite an experiment but the experience really changes and... it becomes something that we can then (inaudible) to each other and have good social time... but uh, uhh ya know we're missing the point.

TM: Well, every entity has a 'value dark dimension'. I mean I... Surely only the most naive of quantum physicist believe that the... Uhh, you uh, you know the quantum electrodynamic description of the electron is all there is to say about the electron because biology is made out of electrons and you can't reason from, from quantum electrodynamics to... the rain forest. You know, obviously other factors are present which are escaping this particular uh, linguistic model. So, being able to talk about something doesn't rob it of it's mystery, it merely is a sectioning through it, that uh gives you a kind of a lower dimensional map of it, but that the, the mystery remains intact... Y- you know um... (long silence filled with audible movements) Vichtenstein talked about what he called "the unspeakable"... and I a, you know; the unspeakable is the true domain of being, and then within that there is a very small subset of those things which can actually be captured in language, but they're a vanishingly small uh set of the whole thing, mostly it's all mystery. I don't know why this is so surprising to people I mean where is it writ large that bipedal primates with binocular vision are supposed to be carrying around in their heads; true models of the cosmos? I mean, would you expect eh, an apple tree or a monarch butterfly to have a true map of the cosmos, ahhh, inside them? No more than that we should have... so I think though all... all knowledge is provisional and I think the new science will honor this. This is why the rise in the use of the word model, they no longer believe they're giving a complete explanation of the phenomena they just say well here's a model [swallows] and next year we'll get a better

model and will keep modelling and our models will get better and better but they will never be more than crude approximations to an unspeakable mystery.

Audience: do you find this tragic?

TM: No! I find this exhilarating, I think part of the p... male... or part of the ego dominator... pathology is to demand closure out of everything, there is no closure, you have to learn to sit with the messiness of the mystery you know it's this thing we said this morning the bigger you build the bonfire of understanding the more darkness is revealed to your startled eye, so no I think its open ended and exhilarating and tremendously, uh, exciting that that's the kind of universe we're living in.

Audience: Terence, I think this thing about mystery is that find it sad I think up until a few months ago my main thing was try and understand try and understand and now I read something somewhere....

Transcribed by Luke, Danny

Audience: [4:54:00][inaudible]

TM: That's right. Well, you know, this is not nearly the-the stoned ravings of the psilocybin brigade. Do you all know, or have you ever heard of, Godel's incommensurability theorem? This sounds daunting and disturbing. Uhm, have you ever [4:54:30] heard of this? Does anybody have a clue what I'm talking about? Okay, well that in itself is a measure of the kind of society we're living in because to my mind, more important than Einstein, or Schrodinger, or any of those people was Kurt Godel, German mathematician. He began by studying the calculus and he had a very...funny method. What he did was he would number every operation [4:55:00] in - in a partial differential equation and these numbers are called godel numbers.

Audience: How do you spell Godel?

TM: G-o-d-e-l. And what he showed, I think this is the most important intellectual step taken in the 21st century. He showed that any formal system will produce true statements [4:55:30] which are not provable within the confines of the formal system itself. Now what this actually means is that mathematics can fail. It mean that there is no closure. You ca- he proved this logically. Showed that closure is impossible. That everything- He showed it for arithmetic, the most secure of all intellectual edifices. Essentially what he showed [4:56:00] was that $2+2=4$ is a very strong tendency, not a law. And, uhm, this incommensurability theory means that no program of- of formal analysis will

ever completely exhaust its subject. There will always be a residuum of mystery. And, uhm, we need to come to terms with this. I mean, it's taken us 80 years to get Einstein [4:56:30] under our belts and that's a simple notion compared to what Godel is saying. Because what he's saying is not about, you know, the distortion of space-time near massive objects but something which actually affects our own lives on a day-to-day basis. And, you know, if you live for closure you're beating your head against a stone wall and your head will wear out long before the stone wall will. There's a kind of a- an appreciation for the mystery [4:57:00] needs to place that attitude that the mystery is an unsolved problem. Mysteries have no relationship whatsoever to unsolved problems. Yeah.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: You don't need a complete map. I mean, I'm not such a fan of Wittgenstein but he seems to have raised his ugly head here. Uhm, Wittgenstein used to say "We do not seek statements which are true. [4:58:00] We seek statements which are true enough." That's this genuflection to the incommensurability theorem. That's as good as it gets folks. True enough. Beyond that there's just, you know, the airy realm of metaphysics which will never be plumed. So what we're trying to do is refine our model, make it more responsive to what we want the model to tell us. But you don't want to confuse the model [4:58:30] with the phenomenon being modeled because it will always have dimensions which exceed the grasp of the theory.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yes, although, I have real problems with probability theory which we'll probably get into tomorrow. I think that, in a sense, probability theory has made it almost impossible for us to [4:59:00] think clearly about anything. Because it- it contains certain built in insidious assumptions that are, uhm, purely assumptions. For instance, Probability theory tell you that when you flip a coin, the odds of it being heads or tails are 50/50. If, in fact, that were true. The coin would land on it's edge every single time. [4:59:30] So, what we need, you see, is not a theory of uhm, of uhm, what is possible. That's science. If you want to know if something is possible you find a scientist and they're always perfectly happy to fulfill this function and tell you whether this is possible or not. What we completely lack, as a civilization, is a theory that explains to us [5:00:00]

Transcribed by Paul Mullins

[5:00:00]TM: ...us how it is, out of the vast class of possible things, certain things undergo what Alfred North Whitehead called "the formality of actually occurring" ; We have no theory. I mean, science can say, "Well, it's probable that it'll be this, but it's also 40% probable that it'll be that". You say, "Well, which will it be?" They said, "Well, we, I just told you the probability." [5:00:30] Say, I'm not, that's not good enough! I want to know..." Say, "We have no theory of selecting among the probabilities."

The other problem that haunts probabilities theory is that it assumes that time is an absolute flat plane. It assumes that...No physicist tells you in his lab notes, "Please perform my experiment on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, because it won't work any other time." In other words,[5:01:00] the assumption is made that the

experiment will produce the data predicted by theory, no matter when the experiment is performed. In other words, it's assumed that the phenomena is time-independent. But that's just an assumption that Newton got into, proving that phenomena are time-independent is absolutely beyond our intellectual reach, it can't be done.

Uh, a curious thing about probability theory is, [5:01:30] say you want to know how much current is flowing through a wire, here's how probability theory finds out: It measures the current flowing through the wire with a meter. It measures it 1,000 times. It takes those values and adds them together. Then it divides by 1,000. Then it tells you, "This is how much current is flowing through the wire." You look at the value they've given you, and you say, [5:02:00] "But you took 1,000 measurements and we never got this number." [They] say, "Well, that's because, you know, you didn't average the probability and..." Whew. If we took 1,000 measurements and not one is the value you're offering, then why should we believe that this is the amount of current flowing through the wire?" Well, then there's a bunch of hand-waving and epistemic foot-stamping and so-forth...Science is an incredibly fragile edifice....Which if it weren't for it's [5:02:30] ability to hand it's findings on to technologists to make pretty things, it would have to take it's place somewhere to the left of, I don't know, homeopathy, acupressure, something like that. [audience laughs] In other words, it's not a metatheory, it has not got truth by the jugular. It has a bunch of fishy mathematical formula, which it's flailing you with, but I don't think....uh...I think, I, I think that serious revision [5:03:00] of Probability Theory is going to have to take place, uh...

Audience1: I think you've given Probability Theory much more than what's really there. Inherently, what it [inaudible] all about is simply acknowledging that there are variables in anything that we can't know. [inaudible] It's really nothing more than that.

Audience2: Which brings you back to just the [inaudible]

TM: Well, but for instance, if the odds that the, if the odds that the coin comes at heads or tails or 50/50, why doesn't it land on it's edge every single [5:03:30] time?

Audience: I don't see how it's relative to standing on it's edge, it's simply, what what happens with a coin, where, where, and what line, [inaudible] stays up or down? [inaudible]

TM: Well, you know, another thing Probability Theory says is that, "Chance has no memory". And so, you, they always, here, first here's statistics, they say, "If you flip a coin, and it comes up heads 49 times, what are the odds that it will come up heads [5:04:00] the 50th time?"

The answer is: 50/50. But any gambler would tell you, you know, that, "If it comes up heads 5 times in a row, bet on heads, for cryin' out loud!" So, there's, there's something...

Audience: [inaudible] but I think a lot of [inaudible] that just doesn't exist. I agree...uh...[inaudible] it takes is the notion that there are things going on here that [5:04:30] we can't know, even though that's not acknowledged by most people who are [inaudible]. That's the reality [inaudible]

TM: But don't you think the other assumption is that time is an, is a non-inputting...it's not variable. You know, that you don't say, "You know, the odds of a coin coming up at heads or tails are 50/50 in Canada but 48/52 in Bolivia."

Audience: That's one of the variables that's sort of smeared out, simply because it [5:05:00] can't be characterized the way people, the people who are doing that like to tend to characterize things but...

TM: Well...

Audience: But underlying the whole thing is still the notion that you're dealing with unknowables. And I'm not saying that those who are deeply immersed, and practicing, uh, probability statistics hold this view, but the reality is, underlying this sort of underpinning the whole thing is the notion that there are things going on here that we can't know.

TM: Oh, well I don't have [5:05:30] any trouble with that. Uh, I understand why science latched on to Probability with such a vengeance: It's because, you know, thanks to William of Ockham, there is this notion of "Occam's Razor". Which is this idea that is most simply stated as, "Hypotheses should not be multiplied without necessity." So, since the idea that time is a flat invariant [5:06:00]

Transcribed Sheree Geo

[5:06:00] is the simplest assumption, try it first and see if it works. But I maintain that you know science has in certain areas been very slow to make progress in the social domain in econometrics in ahh.. the you know.. multiple body problems and stuff like that. Well I think this is because this simple assumption, that time is an invariant [5:06:30] has to be reexamined. I would also re- .. I would offer a new definition of science; science is that field of human endeavour which studies phenomenon so crude that they are time invariant. You know, the .. the hydrogen atom cleaves from the oxygen atom the same way every time, but love affairs don't come apart the same way every time, [5:07:00] bankruptcy's don't occur the same way every time. These are complex, compound phenomena that are then influenced by the temporal variables and the variables embedded in the environment around them. Now the problem is these are the things that we are interested in, love affairs, bankruptcy and the establishment of empire. Very few people have a passionate interest in the dynamics of the water molecule.

[Audience Member Inaudible] [5:07:30]

Oh, now i know I have you on the run because this is a uhh .. but it makes pretty things argument

[Audience Member Inaudible]

Well see I think science is a great enterprise and noble but not the arbitrator of truth

[Audience Member Agrees?]

There are no arbitrary of truth, the truth of the turow, the truth of quantum physics, these are [5:08:00] truths, in the supermarket of truth but y- there's no .. there's no uhhh top end to that process. There may not even be one truth.

[Audience Inaudible]

In a given situation. If you're flipping coins probability theory is probably a good guide, you wouldn't want to run your love affair on probability theory uhh so you have to choose the domain [5:08:30] you have to recognise the applicable models, the applicable tools for whatever domain you're looking at.

[audience member inaudible]

Well you .. you're allowed to be a heretic you just don't get paid well, that's the price you pay for that, still .. yeah.

[audience member inaudible]

No no.. No I don't think it's bad, I thi- I'm entirely in support of whatever the universe is in the process of trying to do here ummm.. I think that.. uh.. I think that history is ending [5:10:00] and that it was a temporary perturbation of the system and that we can anchor ourselves through this chaos-trophy or whatever it is by going back to archaic models but I.. I think that and-.. you know.. this is what we'll talk about tomorrow when we get the computer because I don't merely talk about it even though I have been flailing the mathematicians ultimately I too [5:10:30] come to rest with a fishy formula. I think that the universe is some kind... i think that there is something that there is overlooked by science called .. and i'll name it. Its called Novelty. The universe is a novelty conserving engine of some sort, from the very first nanoseconds after the big bang, novelty has been conserving itself and building newer and [5:11:00] deeper levels of novelty on novelty already achieved. So that uh .. you know in the first few m... i mean, you have the big bang then you have this era called the pre-physical era, its brief, it lasts the amount of time it takes light to cross a distance equivalent to the diameter of the proton, electron, something d- dinky for sure. That's called the era before physics, then [5:11:30] physics begins one jiffy after that and.. and the original universe was so hot that there were .. that it was a plasma of free electrons, so since it was a plasma, there was nothing you could called atomic physics because the ambient temperature was so high that electrons could not settle down into stable orbitals around nuclei. As the temperature [5:12:00] of the universe fell...

Transcribed by Luke Danton

[5:12:00] As the temperature of the universe fell, atomic systems crystallized out of that plasmic environment, well then ahh.. further cooling of the universe leads to more complex kinds of bonds and the cooking out of complex elements from stars, the original universe was made entirely of hydrogen, this hydrogen aggregated into masses so ahh.. dense, so large that at their center was actually -and if you think I'm not nervous in doing this in front of you, you're crazy- ([laughs], [audience laughs]) these aggregates of hydrogen, at the center it was so massive in temperature and pressure that fusion could actually begin, and fusion cooked out heavier elements: iron, sulfur and eventually carbon. When you get for violent carbon this throws open the doorway to tremendous new novelty, you get now for the first time, not atomic systems but molecular systems, these molecular systems lead into protobiological systems, protobiological systems lead into prokarya, then eukarya, then true higher multicellular animals, then mammals, then human beings, then electronic culture, then the big surprise.

Now the thing to notes about all this, is that novelty keeps building on novelty already achieved, it crosses biological lines, atomic lines, molecular lines, it is along the universe, i'm proposing, that novelty is conserved, and so then what we represent is a kind of ultimate nexus of novelty, and i believe that we are being wound tighter and tighter and tighter into a confrontation with the equivalent of the singularity at the center of a black hole, but it isn't a gravitational singularity that I'm talking about, it's a novelty singularity and so you know the universe is growing toward some kind of ultimate state of boundaryless hyper-connectivity and when that is achieved the process will cease to be describable in the logos of ordinary space-time and energy.

Now science has no notion of this concept of novelty. In the East there is such a concept it's called Dao, and Dao builds things up and pulls them down according to its own mysterious laws. Tomorrow I will argue when we get the computer that its laws are not in fact entirely mysterious and that we can discover ahh.. the nature of the novelty constant, and instead of treating space-time as an absolutely featureless plain, we can take that zero value which is how that shows up in the Newtonian mechanics, and substitute instead a fractal dimension number which will be some kind of decimal fraction between one and two, and then this will allow us to do things previously inconceivable like predict the future and stuff like that. See of one thing I guess i should say since we started drifting into this fairly radi place is the idea that the universe is ahh... growing toward itself, it's not moving outward from its origin, its moving toward its completion and this is called teleology, its very unwelcome in most scientific modeling, but that's a legacy from the nineteenth century where they were so concerned to get god out of the picture that they wanted everything to happen through one random process colliding with another random process and flipping out newer deal elephants and redwood trees, but in principle we don't have to believe in god to believe in an attractor at the end of the process, we see many kinds of attractors in the natural world.

One way that I think of the psychedelic experiences is – you know you heard me talk about hyperspace, super-space, this kind of thing- it really does seem to me that reality is some kind of a very complex geometric object of some sort and you know how they teach you in trigonometry that all possible ellipses can be obtained by sectioning a cone, and that if you take the infinite set of ellipses and reconstruct them you can reconstruct the cone. Well the way I think of psychedelics and psychedelic tripping is you are sectioning a hyperdimensional object and what you're coming back with is a lower dimensional map of this higher dimensional object. Well everybody has a different map in the same way that there are infinite number of elliptical sections of a cone, but they're all generated by the same object and if it's a mystery to you how a simple fine-eyed object like a cone can generate an infinite number of elliptical sections then it's going to be hard [5:18:00] for you to understand how everybody can have a different psychedelic trip and yet be actually dealing with the same ahh.. reality in hyperspace.

Transcribed by Nicole

TM:[3:18:00]

There is no way to find out of course, cause they are all dead, but there are certain episodes in the evolution of

western culture that suggest that people may be much more plastic than we ordinarily suppose. First example uhh would be : How can it be that in the middle 1500s perspective was discovered. I mean, how do you discover perspective?[3:18:30] This is very hard, I think, for modern people to understand because uuh it's a given for us. I mean we see in perspective. We accept it as a quality of the world rather than uh a cultural artifact put in place at a certain moment. But in fact, during the renaissance only the most inspired people could uhh.. paint in perspective on the natch.[3:19:00] Most people, they had complex devices called perspectographs that would project over the scene a receding grid and then people would essentially fill in the lines.

Now another example of this kind of thing that's not so well known but that is an example that aii Marshall McLuhan makes a lot of is saint Augustine- the great father of the Christian church. He had a reputation for being[3:19:30] a very holy man and the accounts of his contemporaries say that a way that people would satisfy themselves that saint Augustine had a pipeline to god, is that they would bring him scripture, the Bible essentially, and open it in front of him and let him look at it and then they would close the book and question him about what was there and he could always tell them.[3:20:00] And they were amazed! As far as we can tell st. Augustine was the only man in Europe who could read silently. Nobody else could do it, it was regarded as a miracle. [audience laughs]. Now we all read silently and there may be few unfortunate individuals among us who move their lips while they read, but that's the only [inaudible] trace we have of this previous cultural mode where everyone "to read" meant to read aloud.[3:20:30]. No one could conceive any other way of doing it.

The logos seems to me a kind of similar thing. It was a mental behaviour, function, which, for reasons which are probably complex and unknowable, slipped out of reach. That's why, it seems to me, the psychedelics are very close to being able to modify our behaviours along this kind of lines because ,[3:21:00] there are number of behavioral and experiential possibilities that we suppress. I mean I think it's just uhh as an example of how little we know about what's going on ahmm. Look at the Grafen... , I mean don't look at it but conceive of the Gräfenberg spot : the G-spot. Now, we all know what this is, clearly people were looking for it for a long long time, how could they only discover it twelve years ago [3:21:30]. I mean, if something that major can be overlooked than it is hard to IMAGINE what might have been overlooked, I mean that's pretty central into the project of being a human being and apparently it was unknown until very very recently. So, uhhh yes- the Logos was probably uhh what I call Gaian mind. And that at a certain point in cultural development people [3:22:00] became so chuckleheaded that the Gaian mind had said: To hell with this! and then uh the voice fell silent. It fell silent right at the around the time of the birth of Christ eh . Right at the time of the [gia?] of the shift of this uh [inaudible] aeon, you know.

Audience: [inaudible question][3:22:30]

TM: How it works with psilocybin?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Well ahh, I mean I take when I take psilocybin I take it on an empty stomach, I don't fast or anything like that, I just don't eat for six hours- I don't call that fasting.. Uhh, and then I take it in silent darkness. That's number one - very important. The next thing is : weigh the dose.[3:23:00]

You must weigh the dose because 5 grams is what you want and I had over and over the experience of showing somebody what 5 grams is and they are appalled. They say : "MY GOD! YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. I mean, I would uhh.. I take a fifth that much. A fourth that much."

Yeah well, that's the problem, that's why you don't have elves in the attic and bats in the belfry like I do uhh [audience laughter] [3:23:30] umm yo- you know. And so then you take it, and I take it on an empty stomach and a lot of people don't like the taste. I don't really understand that uhh. I just chew them up. I sit with them and I chew them up and then huh?

Audience :Dry?

TM: Dry. And none of this mixing in applesauce or any of that malarkin. I mean what's that about? [audience laughter]

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh well fresh- sixty grams. Sixty grams uhh [3:24:00] because there is more than a, you know, there is a huge water loss there.

Transcribed by Marko

T.M: "eventually society will get around to exploiting this particular one just like it does everything else. [audience question]

T.M: The drug is ibogaine the plant it comes from is tabernanthe iboga. Yeah?

[audience question "you mentioned combing the DMT with iboga, what what's the experience like, what is the change?"]

T.M.: Mhm? well that's what ayahuasca is [5:24:31] you see the DMT is then not destroyed in your intestine and so you have a slow release DMT trip by doing that.

[audience q "Is that done with smoking DMT and ingesting"]

T.M: Ahh, in in theory and probably in fact that would be a tremendously successful way to get very loaded the problem is it might be a too successful way you wanna be careful with these mao inhibitors - ther - there are mao inhibitors [5:25:01] that drug companies have produced where ah a single dose inhibits all the mao in your body for up to a month, this would be murder if you got around some DMT on that, uh the nice thing about harmine is that it's fully reversible in four to six hours so it's ah it's a gentle mao inhibitor, but yeah this is the strategy this is why you could conceivably take the [5:25:31] seeds of a plant like **inaudible [5:24:33]** which grows around here more or less and ah and contains harmine and combine it with a plant like **inaudible [5:25:43]** which contains DMT and come up with a north american pseudo ayascha of some sort, people are doing this but you know if you think, think it takes courage to just do these drug- these compounds na naturally imagine the kind of courage [5:26:02] it takes to diddle with recipes and to do your own **Bio Assay [5:26:06]** which you must do because the cook must taste the soup.

[Audience Q]

T.M: pa ga, Peganum harmala P-E-G-A-N-U-M Peganum Harmala in the **psycho falacity [5:26:21]**.

[Audience Q]

T.M: Well we never tried the experiment again [5:26:33] because ahh Dennis felt that he really made the maximum contribution [audience laughter] to the effort, ahh, there are many experiments though which could be tried, which

would put no human being in danger, ahh for you know, for instance, you could use square wave generators which are acoustical generators to try and drive these drug molecules into dna [5:27:01] in *vetro* in a test tube you know you would what would you would do is simply put the denatured DNA into solution, put some dmt into the solution, shake it furiously, ultracentrifuge the mix to get the loose DMT out and then weigh the DNA and see if its weight has increased by a number which was magically divisible by the molecular [5:27:31] weight of the DMT molecule, these kinds of studies have been done and shows that DNA ah, DMT does intercalate and locate itself into DNA so yeah there are a lot of different things like that that could be done that wouldn't put anyone at risk.

[Audience Q]

T.M: well, ahhh he doesn't remember it very clearly, he, his impression was [5:28:01] that it lasted about 5 days it actually lasted 3 weeks so the real staff that would have alarmed him he fortunately was to out of it to see or remember, but I was there throughout the whole thing and saw it, and uhm, I think it would be nice to understand the parameters of the effect a little more clearly before we charge off and try that particular trick again, yeah. {5:28:30}

[Audience Q]

T.M: Well this is what's being referred to is the in True Hallucinations which is a tape set which will be published as a book next year, it describes an expedition to the amazon in 1971 in which was really where we got the whammy, i mean its still, i'm still running on what happened from you know the 28th of february 1971 to the 21st march the rest of my life is pretty much throw [5:29:01] away. [Audience Laughter] but ugh, wh - what he, I dunno it was weirder than flying saucer abduction because that now there's a whole form for it, it was hard to say something was waiting for us down in the amazon and as soon as we started taking these mushrooms, it began making suggestions about how you could use the mushroom and your voice and certain other materials present at hand in {5:29:32} tha that environment to essentially uhm well there aren't even words to say what it was, condense the soul into three dimensional space, or ahh, create the philosopher's stone inside your body and then give birth to it or in other words some radical transformation of the ontology of being human was held out as a possibility and it all [5:30:01]

Transcribed by Jess Harse

TM: and it [5:30:00] all came down to an experiment that he wanted to perform that seemed to me so unlikely to have any effect whatsoever that I felt was perfectly alright to let this experiment go forward because I would have bet dollars to donuts that nothing would happen, instead all hell broke loose at the conclusion of this experiment and ahh you know he claimed that the time [5:30:31] that what he had done was bonded into my DNA ahh enough psilocybin in a superconducting kind of bond which if you know how superconductivity works, a superconductive bond is very hard to disrupt, it's not like an ordinary chemical bond and he sell that you could do what he called bell the cat - that you could actually hang [inaudible] a transceiver around [5:31:00] the neck of the Logos itself and from then on it would talk to you constantly in the confines of your own mind, and it just seemed so wildly improbable to me that it went forward but in fact at the conclusion of the experiment something changed in me, and I essentially became who I now appear to be, but before that I wasn't, I was sort of a [inaudible] [5:31:30] and ahh undirected person of some sort and then the... tomorrow you will see when we get the computer what the bottom line of this is because what was eventually revealed was a kind of mathematical mandala of space and time that rested on its... for its veracity on the fact that it allowed, that it made prediction of the future possible and tomorrow afternoon I will display [5:32:00] this thing for you and you can judge for yourself whether this is the product of ahh pathological incident or in fact an intellectual leap comparable to Newton's laws of motion or, or something like that. I think in principle all this is possible, I think transforming, you know, part of what Human History's conclusion will be is what I call 'turning the human body inside out' [5:32:30]; we want the soul to become visible, we want the body to become an idea, freely commanded in the imagination; and then at that point as James Joyce said 'Man will be durgible (?)', that was as close as he could get in 1939 to saying you'll turn into a flying saucer, you know, he knew it was an airship, he knew it was [inaudible] but he thought it was a durgible (?) ahh anyway enough about La Chorrera

maybe we'll get into that tomorrow [5:33:01]. Yes?

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: No. Good point. The vine contains the [inaudible] another plant contains the DMT, this makes Ayahuasca unique among this shamanic tools because, you see, all the rest of them - peyote, mushrooms, San Pedro, ibogaine, morning glories [5:33:30], and whatever else, cannabis - are simply plants which you ingest; Ayahuasca is a drug, a product, something made by pharmacologists, I mean pharmacologists who wear penis [inaudible] but pharmacologists nevertheless you see, so suddenly the Human dimension enters into it not all Ayahuasca is alike, Ayahuasca depends on the personality of the person who made it [5:34:00], so it's not about the relationship between you and the plant when you take Ayahuasca; between you and the plants there stands a Human being and, you know, if you're headed down there to seriously get into this, don't, don't give up in a hurry, you will drink a lot of swill before you find someone who is conscientious enough, honest enough and cares about you enough to not short change you... in some way [5:34:30].

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Telepathine yes. Ahh Ayahuasca was discovered by Richard Spruce... in 1853 and then in the early years of the 20th century the germanest [inaudible] brought a lot of it back to Berlin and Louis Lewin characterized an alkaloid which they named telepathine but it was not realised then until [5:35:00], I think, 1957 by the chemist [inaudible] that ahh well [inaudible] oo-or that telepathine was exactly the same compound as an early compound isolated [inaudible] named [inaudible] and since the rules of chemical nomenclature are that the first compound, the first name takes precedent, telepathine had to be dropped and [inaudible] substituted but it tells you how convinced these early [5:35:30] ethnographers were that this stuff was ahh, you know, exciting, paranormal, mental abilities.

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: The [inaudible]?

Audience: Yes.

TM: Oh, well. No, no. See what happened was the what what [inaudible] took back to Berlin was the liana, the vine - Banisteriopsis caapi - ahh the the other active [5:36:00] ingredient in Ayahuasca was not

Transcribed by Francisco Arez

[5:36:00]

TM: The other active ingredient in ayahuasca was not isolated chemically until 1956.

Audience: But the guys who took the vine back [inaudible] the vine?

TM: The vine doesn't contain DMT.

Audience: But the harmaline itself?

TM: Well yes, has an effect, at high doses it can cause hallucination by itself.. The uh, the plant which contains the DMT, normally , there are a couple of possible substitute, [5:36:30] but normally what's used in the Amazon is *Cicotria Veridis*. Uh, this is a little coffee-like plant that contains DMT in the roots. One of the great mysteries of ayahuasca is how, out of 475,000 species of plant in the Amazon these people figured out that you pound the vine and combine it with the leaves and then go through this elaborate boiling and concentrating [5:37:00] and then you get this fantastic visionary beverage. If you ask them how they figured it out, they say the plants told us. Which is so far, the best answer anybody has come up with. In 1962, Melvin Bristoll, who was a graduate student of Richard Evan Shultsies at Harvard was studying ayahuasca among the Sibundoi Indians [5:37:30] and uh, he took ayahuasca. And during the trip a plant was revealed to him. And he was told that it would be alkaloid positive. And it was alkaloid positive. Well, this is now anecdotally embedded in the literature. Was it dumb luck? Was it synchronicity? Or was it that plants tell you about other plants? The way ayahuasca is used by research pharmacologists [5:38:00] in these Amazon tribes is they brew a standard brew. And then if they have a plant, that they, for some reason suspect might have some medical usage, they will put a little bit of that plant into the ayahuasca, And then the ayahuasca will give them a readout on it and explain what it is. I had one of the longest evenings I have ever put in where I took half a dose of ayahuasca [5:38:30] and half a dose of mushrooms. And it was absolutely god awful. It was different from any bad trip I'd ever had. It didn't seem to be about my personality it seemed to be about core processes. There was a little pacman thing and I could see it moving through my memory. Just chew, chew, chew, chew, chew. And I didn't know, you know that horrifying scene in 2001 where the guy is outside [5:39:00] the spaceship and he say "Open the pod doors Hal. Open the pod doors Hal." Well that's how I felt. I felt, I could almost see the molecular machinery had jammed. And I said, "Oh my God, It's not going to deanimate. Or de-alkalate. It's somehow caught in some kind of a loop. And I sweated bullets for an hour and a half with it. It was really horrible. [5:39:30] And then it finally released. And let me go. But as I sat in that chair I said, you know if I can't pull out of this place, there's a room in a back ward somewhere and they will just sit me there and look in on me every 12 or 14 hours, and that'll be my story.

Audience: You said earlier that you were surprised that you had no kind [garbled audio] We have a clinical climate that's not congenial to exploring.

[5:40:00]

TM: Because I don't feel particularly courageous. I don't feel that this is unusual what we're doing here. Am I crazy? Could be. Uh, it seems to me, would seem to me, knowing what I know, which is no more than a thousand other people know, I couldn't live with myself if I didn't talk about these things. Because [5:40:30] our problem is we're disempowered, unhappy, and disconnected from ourselves and each other. Here's the solution. How can you, it's a political obligation, or it's a moral obligation to try and at least inform people. They don't have to take it. But they

should at least have the facts of the matter in front of them as they live their lives. So , I, I just do it because I couldn't do it any other way. And I'm puzzled that nobody else feels [5:41:00] ah, this imperative. Because the people I talk too, you know a thousand people have told me psychedelics were the most important thing that ever happened to them. But not one of those thousand people ever said, "And I scheduled a speaking tour to do the same thing your doing." So I don't know..

Audience; [garbled audio] fear and paranoia I hear there were even people were afraid to come to this and revealing their interest?

[5:41:30]

TM: Wow! Well either I'm crazy or they are. I don't know. See, I think that , ah that, ah you know how, um, if you confront certain, um, well butterflies, or deer. There are certain kinds of animals that if you move slowly enough, they can't tell you're there. Because they're set up for edge detection. And if you move slowly enough, they don't register the edge transiting.

[5:42:00]

Transcribed by Micki Garrison

TM: [5:42:00]... so you can actually walk right up to them and grab them, if you know how to do it. Lizards are like this, cats, so, so i think that by moving with stealth, rather than going to Harvard or Berkeley and inviting the freshmen class to pour into the street and smash bank windows, that we can actually flip this thing along. I think that eventually such desperation it's going to strike straight institutions [5:42:30] that they will come to us and ask.

They're gonna try everything when the going gets rough and when they finally decide to drop all their pretensions we'll be perfectly willing to have a dialogue. I'm sorry to hear that people felt that paranoid about it. I don't think the political climate is that repressive. I think people are doing the work of the man for the man by being that paranoid.

Audience: [inaudible] [5:43:00]...counter-pressures.

TM: Well counter-pressures, this book was banned in Florida but for crying out loud look at the Russians, they were able to toss out the Communist Party, well now that's a pretty scary thing to go up against. We don't have anything comparable to that (ahh) in terms of it's depth of penetration into our lives and yet they were able to do that. I think, you know, there's more to life

than hiding out. [5:43:30] (Ahh) you gotta make the grand gesture at a certain point and then let the chips fall where they may.

Audience: You're right.

TM: Brave words, ohh boy... [audience laughs] (ahh).

Audience: [inaudible]...something for your audiences (ahh) an organization or something that taken... [inaudible] ...raising consciousness and changing our society?

TM: Basically i think people should see this kind of meetings as a tremendous opportunity to form local [5:44:00] alliances. The last thing on earth we want here is a Terence Mckenna cult, that would just be the stupidest resolution of the whole thing. The whole message is, you don't need me or Tim or anybody else, just, you know, take a little metaphysical responsibility upon yourself, realise you are the microcosm of the microcosm and then (ahh) get with like minded people and proceed. [5:44:30] I mean, this is how political revolutions are made, is by people just ignoring as the irrelevant outmoded social forms and structures and insisting on their own authenticity.

Audience: [inaudible]...Hofmann foundation...[inaudible]...help?

TM: Oh, it might help... people... i mean, how would it help?

Audience: [inaudible]...strength in numbers.

TM: Strength in numbers, well i think people [5:45:00] should support psychedelic communities, archival projects (ahh), legalization moves (ahh), yes but mainly i think what we all need to do is get more loaded. [audience laughs] You know, deeper trips, higher doses, see, it's not that we want to convert the entire planet to taking mushrooms. It's that we just want to be left alone to do

what we want to do. The mushroom [5:45:30] if it's as great as i say it is then it doesn't need a mob clearing the way for it, it's perfectly able to advance its own agenda. The thing is just not to yield to fear. Cause if, as i said, if you yield to fear you do the man's work for the man and that makes you the man! So, you have to do is just say, oh, you know, this is what we do and (ahh), eventually it will change. I mean, gay people [5:46:00] is a good example, i mean, in our own life times we've seen this go from, you know, unspeakable crime against nature which decent people took care to not even being formed of [audience laughs] to, you know, a political sub-culture with it's own agenda and it's own cress and it's own political clouds. Well, we are not as under the thumb as gay people were, say, in the early 50s [5:46:30] or something. If they can do it, we can do it. If black people can go from slavery to a legitimate claim on full social integration into the body politic than we can do it too. But not if we, no, in America nobody gets nothing unless they demand it. So as long as we bow our heads and hide our stash and they're looking over our shoulder, well then they got us on the run. But we just have to say, look, [5:47:00] this is it, this is who i am! If this doesn't gibe with your political agenda, adjust your political agenda [audience laughs] because this is who we are. Well now let's knock off and regroup for tomorrow on that point, but thank's very much. [silence] Well, (ahh), before we get into (ahh) this morning's (ahh) rigid agenda, (ahh) (ahh) where were we [5:47:30] yesterday? And our, [audience laughs] (ahh), is there, i recall there were hands up. To the people who belong to those hands still have the concerns but went with them?

Audience: [inaudible]...local alliances and (ahh), psychedelic communities...[inaudible]

TM: Talk about forming local alliances and psychedelic communities... Well i think, you know, as i said this is your affinity group. You can't recognize psychedelic people walking around on the street [5:48:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

[5:48:00] On the street because our victory in the area of fashion has been so total that now even priests look like freaks. [*laughs*] So uhh, yeah i've been in a number of places where people organized uhh i don't know what you would discuss them, discussion groups, affinity groups, in the wake of it, it's something you have to self-organize, uhh, maybe in the period after the [5:48:30] close this afternoon, the people who are into that should exchange names and get something going, i mean obviously it's a delicate thing but on the other hand uhh..Mmmhmm?

[inaudible question from audience]

TM: For me?

[inaudible audience]

TM: Well a lot of [5:49:00] people feel more secure uhh doing journeys if they have uhh some kind of ground control and in the most casual form that can just be your best friend who doesn't do it but you do. Or if you suspect that fairly deep and uhm charged issues are going to rise-arise out of it, why you want it to be someone with some psychotherapeutic experience. But on the other hand you know, you're in a such a vulnerable state in that dimension

that you really want to choose the facilitator carefully, I mean, and have some kind of set of agreements worked out before. I mean, the psychedelic trip doesn't always take the direction you want it to. I mean, you want- you write down before you take it that you want to deal with some episode of childhood trauma [5:50:00] or abandonment then you get loaded and it seems so preposterous that you, you know, you can hardly contemplate the notion without laughing out loud and the facilitator has this - keeps trying to bring you back, say, 'well you're doing the work! We're here to do the work!', well, then you say, well, you know, having a knock-down drag-out fight while is somebody is loaded isn't exactly the way to go either. You sorta have to feel [5:50:30] into that issue as i said yesterday, i, i can't get where i want to go in the presence of somebody else because they hold me to the surface. If i were to have my idea of the perfect facilitator, situation is that they are two rooms away and you have something equivalent of a beeper and then you know you can beep them and they'll come in and pat you on the head and tell you it's alright if you need that.[5:51:00] But otherwise, they stay completely out of it, it's really nice to follow your own thoughts you know? And i think we change in the presence of another person, you know? We create a persona, and uh it takes a lot of energy to maintain the persona. And in that situation there's no reason, so why do it? Yeah?

[Question from audience] [5:51:30]

TM: Well, not exactly, i mean people always say can you do it on the natch? And i sorta feel like if i could do [5:52:00] it on the natch i'd be alarmed enough to check myself in for some serious mental health care.Uhh, It's too radical, you don't want to be able to do that [5:52:00] on the natch.

Audience: Oh come on [laughs]

TM: It's a wonderful control on it! To know that it won't happen unless you take the stuff. You know? Because it's not a mood shift or a subtle refocusing from foreground to background, it's an absolutely ontology peeling breakthrough.

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: In principle, i, [5:52:30] i agree with that and i'm fascinated to try anything anybody has in mind but uhh you have to be very demanding. And I think too many people are not demanding at all, I mean, you sit people down in a room and tell them we're gonna repeat ooma humm 500 times and at the end of it they come to you with tears of joy in their eye and tell you it was the most profound that's ever happened to them. I don't understand where those people [5:53:00] could be coming from you know? I mean it's uhm, i can sit down and like think about being stoned on DMT and uh and i can and i can give myself the butterflies with that exercise but-but not much else, that's as far as i can get, you know? Uhh persistently these various traditions claim that they can deliver the goods, but when you look at the [5:53:30] art which is the paper trail that they leave, it doesn't look like what i'm talking about. You know I mean i went through I, once, for a while i was a professional art buyer for tibetan art, tankas and that kind of thing and i interiorized all of that iconography and uh, but it isn't very much like uh what we are seeing. And uh, you know there are a number of highly idiosyncratic [5:54:00] artists..

Transcribed by Jonathan Laliberte

TM: [5:54:00] Idiosyncratic artists gathered through the history of art ... g- Gustave Moreau, James Ensor, we mentioned Hieronymus Bosch. Uhm mmhm know- you know hmm ... uhm Matty Carline? ... but I'm trying to think of older ones. But- but not- these seem to be unique visions, but not exactly the vision that ahh seems to come out of this stuff. Part of what's [5:54:30] so interesting to me is how alien it is. How if art is the- if the artist is supposed to be the antenna of society anticipating the visions which will later become the paradigm, then they're not doing the job very well in the psychedelic uhm domain. Yeah .. are- you wanna- did you have a follow-up?

Audience: [inaudible question] [5:55:00]

TM: Well, but this is where the action is. You know, it has to- it has to make sense in the world. Now, I don't want to suggest, I mean, I- I think ... like in the case of psilocybin I have no doubt whatsoever that if you take five grams of psilocybin [5:55:30] every four days for let's say forty days then you will have nothing whatsoever to say to the rest of us. You know, if what you see - the thing is in the spiritual quest all these methods: yoga and mantra and then ... you know, all the mmm uhm, new versions of this. The whole s- the whole stance of the spiritual questor is ahh accelerator to the floor [5:56:00] all the time. When you switch over to this method it's the breakpads that are going to get the workout. Ahh, we don't- we psychedelic people do not strenuously exert ourselves to attain peculiar states of mind, we strenuously exert ourselves to keep the states of mind from becoming too peculiar.

Audience: Why?

TM: Why? Because it can become mmm so [5:56:30] peculiar, that- that- that- I don't know why!!! [laughs hysterically]

Audience: [laughs] [inaudible]

TM: Yes, that's it. It can become so peculiar, that it is unspeakable. And if it's unspeakable, it's j- just dropped out of the social contract, you know.

Audience: So really, the reason to maintain it is so you can get back in the psychological state and communicate, but ... what I'm thinking is that I'm sure [5:57:00] that there are people who have pursued it to the point that they just walked out of [inaudible] come back.

TM: Mmm, yes, well that's what I wanted to say. If you want to be the guy on cold mountain who is covered with hair who the village people occasionally see when the mist clears when he descends to the lower levels to cut wood. You can become that daoist immortal. Ahh, you know w- w- what I like to say about psychedelics [5:57:30] is once you get to this it's no longer about seeking the answer. It's now a tough or go, now you have to face the answer. And

it's so easy to seek ... you know, this Rishi, that Roshi, that Geishe, that Guru and all the wonderful people and the gossip and hijinks around the ashram and all that malarkey, but once you get to this and it's just you and it ... [5:58:00] you know, it's a- it's a whole different ballgame.

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: Well, to s- to s- we're talking there are two things. The experience and the wisdom and maturity that comes from the experience. You don't have to keep dosing to do that. But to attain, maintain and workout the implications [5:58:30] of that, but you have to keep dosing to keep encountering the unspeakable thing that is the source of all that maturation and- and so forth. My gosh, everybody's agitated here ... Yeah?

Audience: [laughs] I wondered if ahh in your experiences in Amazon or [inaudible] if you found that they were able to uhm to do this [5:59:00] without drugs or whether they were even interested in?

TM: No, largely not. Ahh, in the Amazon- I mean I discussed this with people and they- they said: "No", you know, "you must- the plant is the teacher." I mentioned or maybe I didn't, but there's an interesting book called 'Haoma and Harmaline' by Flattery and Schwartz and it discusses the rel- ambiance of the religious attitudes of early Zoroastrianism and they believed [5:59:30] in what they called the menog existence. And we're talking, you know, twen- two thousand B.C. here, and they uhm ... believed there was no possible way of accessing the spiritual dimension except drugs. That was the entire way to do it. And I think it's a- it's a kind of pharmacological and energy barrier. It's good that these things are aw- isolated from ordinary [6:00:00] experience ...

Transcribed by Lovro Tacol

... isolated from ordinary [06:00:00] experience by the formality of having to take the compound; if they weren't it would be flooding in upon us all the time and we would have a hard time indeed, yeah.

Audience: well, I used to think about people taking the psychedelic

Ten there's this other people practice meditation. [06:00:30] I read somewhere recently that people in the amazon that take ayahuasca they their

And what I haven't seen very much is the combination of what you know mental practices ah so as to ah plus taking psycylocibin

[06:01:00]

THIS CONCLUDES TAPE 4. OUR PROGRAM CONTINUES WITH TAPE 5

Terence: why is there no talk of the combining of the techniques with psychedelica?

Audience:

Terence: well, I don't know exactly, I mean I would certainly agree. [06:01:30] See I think that all religion is based on the experience of ecstasy.

And a religion-

Audience:

Terence: And a religion like Hinduism represents to my mind an extreme case. The roots of hinduism are in the soma rite. For 3000 years this is what hindu religiosity was about; it was an intoxicant, eh and ah without the intoxicant there was no [06:02:00] connection to the mystery. Well, then for some reason it became tremendously hierarchically structured and and constipated and ah dogmatic, and ehm ahh... well certainly dominator inla-i- if not alright fascism. And so I think all these religions have their roots in this irrational experience [06:02:30] but they constantly want to turn it into a real state operation [audience laughs], and they do, and they do, and so- but in answer to your question: all these techniques work with psychedelics, you know mantra, yantra, magical invocation, ahh, raising the kundaliny... all of these things which seem so totally obscure [06:03:00] if- from this level of consciousness it just becomes an: "of course, of course it works" so it seems to me the lost ingredient is the psychedelic. I mean ehh y-you know, if you go to India and you have any illusions about Sadhus, I mean Sadhus they're hash-heads, with a line of patter, that's all. I mean the main concern in any community of Sadhus is: how many [06:03:30]JOINTS can you make and smoke before you fall asleep. And m- I've never seen a yoga text that came clean about this and said, you know, this is basically a how to use cannabis technique, so eh yo- it's good to go to the actual place and see, see how it's being handled. What's going on in the Amazon is the shamans cure, they chant, the provide and exemplar for [06:04:00] their society but when you get seriously loaded with them and talk to them their attitude is more like scientists. They will agree that they can cure and find lost objects and predict the weather and all that but they don't understand how this works. They're very eager to admit that it's all a big mystery and that beyond the cheerful set of shamanic techniques, that they, the Witoto, the Guarani, whoever they are, beyond the cheerful [06:04:30] ahh power of the conjuration of these techniques lies the absolute unknown and they're aware of that. There's no closure in shamanism so it sort of keeps you humble, yeah.

Audience:

[06:05:00]

Terence: right

Audience:

Terence: right

Audience: of a contact high, [06:05:30] when you are around people

Terence: oh I think contact highs are very real, ehm, not only contact highs but there are also contact lows eh, [audience laughs] which are very noticeable, y-you know there's a - there's a phenomenon called allophrenia, do you know what allophrenia is?

Audience: No

Terence: Allophrenia is when your friend is put in the hospital [06:06:00] for schizophrenia and you go to visit him and you become- you begin acting so peculiar that they don't let you out [audience laughs]

Transcribed by Lucas Mathias

Allophrenia is when your friend is put in the hospital for schizophrenia, and you go to visit him and you become – you begin acting so peculiar that they don't let you out. This is a common phenomenon: misbehavior by people who have come to visit people who have been hospitalized for schizophrenia or psychosis. The best theory is that it's pheromonal. You know, there's one theory of what schizophrenia is, that schizophrenia is a pheromonal disorder. And, you, what happens is your pheromone system goes haywire. So then, you don't smell right. So then the people around you begin frowning at you, avoiding you, turning their back on you when you approach, then you begin thinking, there's something wrong with me. I'm weird. Then you secrete more of this weird pheromone and people get - and a dissonance begins to happen until finally you have to be plucked out of the situation. There are psychiatrists who swear that they can diagnose schizophrenia by sniff test. You know they just walk over and take a hit off the side of your neck and say, you know, "Lock this one up" or (laughter) Yeah.

Q: (unintelligible)

T: Now, the problem is one of – the question is, is there in Huichol art a trace of this psychedelic dimension. I guess there's a trace, the problem is – is twofold, the problem is one of material, with wood and beads and pitch it's very hard to get the – the – to contort that into the object seen, and then the other thing is conceptually. It's very hard to grab and hold these very weird images. The other thing that's happening in most traditional societies is that you operate within a canon. You know, if you're a Huichol, you have a very limited uh, vocabulary of expression, within the iconography of Huichol art. If you're a Tibetan Tanka painter, similarly, it's all laid out for you. Walls of tradition are very high, the channel is very narrow. That's why it's so interesting when an artist can transcend the, the momentum of their cultural tradition and really produce something unique. I don't see, I mean I think the reason I like talking to artists is because all the art of the past 20,000 years is like a tea cup dipped into the ocean. And yet any one of us, not particularly self-defined as artist, can access the ocean. Can swim in the ocean. And so you say, you know, we all can touch the same source that these great artists must have touched. Their skill was they were able

to bring out a thimble-full of this material and the rest of us can only look at it and wonder and let it pass us by. Yeah.

Q: (in reference to an “extraterrestrial position” on psychedelic use and whether or not Terence still holds this position)

T: No I'm not sure, exactly, I mean the funny thing about the extraterrestrial position is that, it depends on how long it's been since you've taken mushrooms, how creditable it seems. If it's recent it seems the only possible explanation. If you wait a few months, then skepticism and reason begins to level the landscape, and you say, “No, it couldn't possibly, really, be that.” But I think, uh . . . you know, no, I think we hardly have an inkling as to the real nature of the world, and the real history of life on this planet, and you know, we don't know, uh, how narrowly channeled the manifestation of organic intelligence is. Does it always have to be in a body? Does it always have to be in a body that stands upright with binocular vision? I think the real task with dealing with extraterrestrials is to know when you've got one. It's completely silly to search the galaxy with radio telescopes for, uh, a radio civilization. I mean to my mind that is as chuckleheaded as deciding you're going to search the galaxy for a decent Italian restaurant. (laughter) I mean, it doesn't work like that!

So, um, you know, if you think about the mushroom, try to think about it objectively. It looks to me very much like a good candidate for an extraterrestrial. First of all, DNA has been known to us only since 1950, less than a century and we're already involved in this thing called the Human Genome Project. Well, the real – what that means is that we are taking control of the scripts that write human beings. It seems to me anything we would recognize as [6:12:00]

Transcribed by Kristen Askin

[6:12:00] intelligence would pass through a phase of self-analysis where (6:12:04) it would realize it was made out of DNA and it would then sequence itself. We're about to do this ourselves. Well, that means that most extraterrestrials will be the product of their own reflexive design process. In other words, an extraterrestrial that has crossed the gulf across the stars must surely then be able to control its own form.

Well, then, if you look at the mushroom, it's a curious combination of artifact and entity. It looks sort of manufactured. There's very little fact on that system - I mean, first of all, um, fungi are primary decomposers. This means that they are at the very bottom of the food chain. This makes the kind of vegetarianism espoused by Buddhists look like an orgy of slaughter. You know? Because if you're at the very bottom of the food chain, that is the only place that is absolutely karma-free. So there's the mushroom, occupying the karma-free position at the bottom of the food chain. Well, then, it's – you know, we've been reading about the huge mycelial clones spread out under the soil in Michigan and Wyoming, well those things, what that is, is that's a cobweb-like network. And in the case of a psilocybin-like species, filled with neurotransmitter compounds. Can you imagine how many synaptic plants there must be on a 1,500 acre mushroom clone? If brain size is any relation to intelligence, then hang on, Hannah. (laughter) Because, uh, that means that this thing which has spread through the forests of the Midwest has a, uh, brain approximate in weight to, uh . . . a couple of dozen gray whales.

Uh, the other thing is, then, the spore, looks perfectly designed to sustain itself in outer space. If you want to store spores for longevity you create conditions as close to the conditions in outer space as you can. High vacuum. Very low temperature. Uh, the casing of a spore is one of the most electron dense organic materials in nature. So electron dense that it approximates a metal. Well, global currents can form on the quasi metallic surface of an airborne spore and they act as a further repellant for radiation. So, and, you know, percolating through the galaxy at an ordinary rate typical of stellar material, a mushroom species could percolate from one side of the galaxy to another in under four hundred thousand years. Well, that's lightning speed compared to the size and age of the universe. If we were to gain the power to design ourselves, I think after a whole bunch of uh, of Madonna and Robert Redford clones, we would

probably move on to becoming something very much like a mushroom. (laughter) It's uh, you know, mild (6:15:43), its noninvasive, it's at the bottom of the food chain, it's virtually immortal, its laden with neurotransmitters, and it's living in the imagination.

And this brings me back to a favorite subject of mine, this is where we have to go, we have to enter into the Blakian, divine imagination. That's where our future lies. Uh, at this point, our relationship to this planet, as an infant-child relationship of impending toxemia, we have to be parted from the mother - to save the mother and to save us.

And there are not that many possibilities. Where are we going to go? The political geniuses who run this planet have made travel to the stars virtually impossible. I mean, don't kid yourselves, it isn't only a matter of announcing a program. Our short, stubby fingers couldn't assemble something like a Saturn-5 moon rocket. That was made by a generation of people now deceased. Americans in this, uh, era, are a rather dull-witted people who have trouble even running a third world economy. So we're not going to the stars. You can forget that. Uh, so then where are we going? Well, nanotech. Is that a possibility? Could we download everybody into a super-cool cube of gold and terbium alloy buried three hundred feet deep in the center of Copernicus? And then we'll leave Earth and go there and dance forever in the hallways of the astral imagination?

That's one possibility. Another possibility is, is there a way to diffuse consciousness into the environment? Can we become dolphins, caterpillars, gray whales, and mosquitos and just sort of defocus ourselves? I mean, all of these, of course, are wildly radical notions. On the other hand, we're headed straight toward a brick wall at about 5,000 miles an hour. We have to figure out something pretty astonishing in a hurry. [06:18:03]

Transcribed by Kristen Askin

TM:...[6:18:00] figure out something pretty uh, astonishing in a hurry. Yeah.

Audience: Yes uh, another thing about the function of the mushroom is ??? for reentry into the atmosphere ??

[TM laughs]

TM: The heat shield! Yes, precisely. [Chuckles]

Audience: ?? can jumpstart an evolution

TM: That's a funny question I don't know because it's so hard to tease apart genetics and environment. I mean they certainly have had a jump start on evolution picture of hanging out in the space that our lives have created. Uh, you know I think children need lots of attention lots of nurturing physical and spiritual. Uh, I guess I would say so, and certainly they haven't been programmed with the fear and misunderstanding that that is in the society. We just got through anti-dope week at our school which is an incredibly painful experience at this particular school because I don't think there's a person associated with it who believes it for a moment uh, but it's like we all have to study fascism because we live in a fascist state. Uh, a teacher made a statement that uh, that LSD caused brain damage and my son dared to challenge this. And the guy said well, who told you it doesn't cause brain damage?

Audience: Daddy!

TM: No, not my Daddy. He said, well Albert Hoffman told me it doesn't cause brain damage! [Audience laughter, TM laughs] End of discussion!

Audience: ??

TM: Mm mm. Yeah

Audience: I know that children are very interconnected with their parents, so when you're doing substances do you feel like the presence of your child sometimes going on your psychotropic experiences ???

TM: Yeah well when children are very young you know all kinds of psychic phenomenon happen and you know I think mothers nursing mothers and their relationship to their two children as intensely telepathic. I remember when my daughter was not very old, she must have been like about three and a half and I had the dream and it was very unusual dream for me and very highly realized and I dreamed of an orrery. Do you know what an orrery is? It's a model of the solar system made of gears and you crank it and there's the sun in the center and the planets go around it, but this was a huge orrery. I dreamed I walk down the hall and I opened the door and I walked into this room and there was this orrery and these planets were circling around the sun inside this room and then, and I was awakened by my daughter crying and I went downstairs and she said uh, there were planets circling around inside my bedroom. So- and you know that's a very specific and rare image for an adult or a child to have. So yes, I think that we're- our chuckle-headedness is the main barrier to encountering all kinds of special abilities that around us all the time. We are truly the prisoners of our limited conceptions. Yeah.

Audience: ?? go back to some of the questions about why you don't want to take it every day for 40 days in a row. And it's more the psychological level that what causes- I've worked with ?? therapies in Mexico ??? stories about Jung and uh, many of the people who have gotten into the situation of psychosis are people who have used drugs as a general principle behind that is that people have experienced something that they cannot integrate back into their psyche or whatever even if it's the ability to say well, that was then and this is now. And therefore you get psychosis. So not to, not to say these things to alarm people but ??? that this ability to come back and not be far out there and that there are a lot of different set up parameters to this ?? on your ego strength. Another one is the society you live in. If you're a shaman and you can say these things ?? Then you're fine. Um, and it doesn't have to be drugs. Um, Jung used to when he was older he used to sit in a chair and go inside and when he came back he would have this litany of things that he would say so that he could come back and function. He would say you know I'm Carl Gustav Jung, my wife is___ my children of this many children this many grandchildren.

TM: Uh huh, the reconnect affirmation. Yeah, well I think that's not a bad idea.

Audience: I wanted to ask you how you see ???

TM: Well I don't have a very popular position on ritual and I blame it on the mushroom because I just quote the mushroom. And the mush - I said what about ritual? And it said that's fine if you don't know what you're doing. And I think that, that you know, it's really not an anti-ritualist position because that is what ritual is. That's what you do if you don't know what you're doing.

Audience: ??

TM: None of us. But, you know, the purpose - can tell when the ritual works because it makes itself obsolete. That's the- it's- yeah.

Audience: ?? I think as we continue...??

TM: Well [6:24:00]

Transcribed by Eva Petakovic

TM: [6:24:00] Well I don't have a very popular position on ritual and I blame it on the mushroom because I just quote the mushroom. And the mush - and I said what about ritual? And it said that's fine if you don't know what you're doing. And I think that, that, you know, it's really not an anti-ritualist position because that is what ritual is. That's what you do if you don't know what you're doing.

Audience: ??

TM: None of us. uh but you know the purpose - can tell when the ritual works because it makes itself obsolete. That's the- it's- yeah.

Audience: ?? I think, I think as we continue...??

TM: Well, you know even in the most ritualistic context there's always a footnote made for the crazy wisdom. I mean every great teacher has said that what he saying is malarkey. A teacher that doesn't tell you that what he or she is saying is malarkey is not to be taken seriously. So you know it's the if you meet the Buddha on the road kill him style of thinking. Or I was just reading this Guru who's coming on strong. Uh, is it- is his name Pucha Ji?

Audience: Dass?

TM: No, no not Dass. [Terence chuckles]. But anyway somebody- this guy said don't, don't do practice. Don't do practice. Practice is only distraction. He said we have to keep thinking up- you know running an ashram is not easy. These students they expect so much of us. To keep continually inventing stuff to keep them happy and send them off on these crazy quests and, and you know, endless fasts and all this stuff because they want that. But you know the guru is pretty much content to kick back with the latest Rolling Stone. Yeah?

Audience: If my memory serves me correctly I think I saw it on the handouts that you're doing some Sheldrake.

TM: Right.

Audience: Could you comment on that? I'd like to know a little bit about that.

TM: Well, are you all familiar with Rupert Sheldrake's work? Sheldrake is a British biologist whose written a number of books. First book is called A new science of life and it was catapulted to fame by virtue of a review in Nature which said it should be burned. And then he wrote a book called The Presence of the Past. Sheldrake as an extraordinary simple interesting revolutionary idea that just drives scientist straight up a tree. His idea is that um, once something happens it's easier for it to happen the next time.

Audience: ??

TM: Yes, simple, but it takes then forms which drive people crazy because he asserts based on that that if you teach rats to run a new kind of maze in Australia then rats in Massachusetts should be able to run this maze uh, faster than if the rats and Australia hadn't uh, learned it because once something has been, has occurred then it has a momentum in time. He calls this the theory of formative causation or morphogenesis and it explains a lot of things which are otherwise very difficult for biology to explain but it raises also a bunch of issues that are pretty tricky. And so Rupert and I have been close friends for years and even longer I've been tight with a mathematician in Santa Cruz named Ralph Abraham who's a chaos dynamicist and Ralph and Rupert and I did a book together called Trialogues at the Edge of the West which will be out at the end of the summer from Bayer and we'll all get together at Esalen at the end of August and do a bunch more of these public three-way dialogues which are pretty spirited because we are very different people from each other. Uh, but all psychedelic in all interested in paradigm recasting. So that's what it's about and it'll be out in mid-summer. End of August for that Esalen thing. Anybody else. Yeah.

Audience: ??

TM: Uh huh.

Audience: ??

TM: Well, feminism is a necessary thing for a successful future because the archaic world was so dominated by, well that's a bad choice of words isn't it, was so characterized by an awareness of of the feminine and the boundary dissolving and the organic and the whole problem with the world uh, is that we cannot feel the consequences of what we are doing. You know, I mean recently we had paraded-[6:30:00]

Transcribed by Eva Petakovic

[6:30:00]

TM: You know i mean recently we had paraded in front of the figure of Jeffrey Dahmer as who you don't want to be like. And yet jeffery dahmer to me was an absolute paradigm of global civilization because his problem was that he didn't he couldn't feel the consequences of his actions. And this is what we are doing. I mean we are lacerating ourselves by coming down the rainforests and poisoning the ocean.

[6:30:30] This is not some airy fairy save the redwoods kind of mentalities that protests.. This is our own atmosphere our own environment that were destroying. Its a its a slow suicide not so slow at the rate were tearing in half. Well somehow we have to reactivate the maternal nurturing caring circuitry that tests the tendencies

[6:31:00] that have evolved in this fabled direction uh at at bay for a long long time and you know you can call it ego you can call it male dominance you can call it a phonetic alphabet whatever it is it has to be stopped because the planet is in peril by it and i my analysis of it is that the only way to do it is to dissolve the boundary that culture and language and tradition have allowed us to create

[6:31:30] and they are largely boundaries that deress women not because men hate women but because men hate the feminine and they want to control and hold us back threatening its devouring i mean the fact that the french refer to orgasm as the little death tells you you know how what a weird kind of ambivalence haunts uh our relationship to anything which dissolves uh

[6:32:00] out of out of the knot that we have tied ourselves into and so i you know i'm a kind of non feminist feminist. I mean i think most feminists are feminists because they think women have gotten a raw deal. I m a feminist because i think mankind is headed for suicide if we don't return to a more intense expression of the feminine so it's not a political agenda for me to

[6:32:30] liberate and oppress groups of people its a collectiveness that gender necessary to save everybody and everything on the planet. Yeah

Audience:... in the end the general.. Is that um there is this ... and

[6:33:00]

Malevolent entities

There's malevolent forces out there just as

[6:33:30]

TM: ..well

Of course

TM: No i mean there are malevolent and benevolent forces in there and out there. Uh but the i dont see... i don't see the world really as a struggle between good and evil and some kind of manichean situation. It seems to me that it we confer value

[6:34:00] that nature is neither good nor evil and that must then improve as ally... its just that we confer judgement this is because when you begin to get down towards the bottom line we don't know what the bottom line is. For instance were headed towards a great historical bifurcation where we're gonna have to make some really hard choices and most of the time in the so called new age they try to fuzz

[6:34:30] all the distinctions and make you think you're never going to be slammed to the wall and have to make a choice but the choice that's coming up for us is fundamental. It is are we to become the care givers the nurturers and the gardeners of the earth or is the earth you know this is i put it this way to somebody the other night the question was is the earth our mother

[6:35:00] therefore to be cared for into her old age nurtured revered and loved? Or is the earth our placenta. Therefore to be examined for signs of toxin and then buried under the apple tree. In other words what is the true nature of human beings. Are we to be integrated into nature to celebrate it or is nature a demonic and titanic force that is imprisoning spirits and

[6:35:30] holding it back from its full unfolding in worlds of alien life and higher dimension so far from here that its a miracle that ... rumour reached us of the possibility of salvation. This is a tough choice because one path leads to uh radical renunciation of technology radical tearing of population. Uh and an attempt to come to terms with

[6:36:00] this small liquid planet on which we find ourselves and the other direction uh s.. Forget it. Its the husk of a seed and it is utterly meaningless in the cosmic drama and the real destiny lies out there half way or some other exoite port of call i don't see how you can have that both ways.

Audience:

[6:36:30]

TM: yes and most stars uh have lives shorter than the amount of time that biology has been on this planet. We are fortunate enough to be around a very slow burning stable star. There are a lot of.. I havent forgotten your second question right. There are a lot of mysteries in our cosmic neighbourhood that we rarely hear addressed for example just as an example um if our destiny lies out

[6:37:00] in the great universe its a hell of technological barrier to cross to the stars. I mean it may be insurmountable however isn't it interesting that the most earth like star within seventy light years is the nearest star. Not technically the nearest star which is uh glowing red clinker called alpha centurai right, but

[6:37:30] beta centura. is 1.1 solar masses. 1.1 solar masses. No star within seventy light years is as earth like i mean .. sunl like as that star from the point of view of the galaxy uh beta centura and our sun almost look like lightly bonded binaries. This is an accident it is a tremendously fortuitous

[6:38:00] accident for us because it could well mean that there is a uh an earth like planet at an incredibly short distance away from us in terms of the cosmic neighbourhood in fact probably within the next years ... will be created but if there is a water heavy oxygen rich world out there its going to show up .well then that is going to become a tremendous

[6:38:30] attractor in the historical matrix because it will be hailed as the answer. I mean can ou imagine? If an .. because there wil then be two possibilities. That there is intelligence next door not likely or that there is.. How do you assess it how many oxygen rih planets have we examined for crying out loud> and the other possibility is that its empty real estate.

[6:39:00] In tiether case it will excite keen interest throughout society so now thats a little odd ... cosmic neighbourhood that is rarely mentioned or... yeah

Audience:.

[6:39:30]

TM: Yes I although I leave that to the .. of the world to work out the details. There is after all a possible ... that is pretty clear in spite of the ravings and rantings of these christer.... The fossil record is pretty clear that we emerged out of uh the protohominids who emerged out of the ppsdf radiation that emerged

[6:40:00] out of and so forth and so on. I dont uh i think that uh but there may be mysteries i mean one question that im surprised nobody ever seems to ask in these weekends when i tell the cheerful story of the descent from the trees the... encounter with the mushrooms and so forth and so on is nobody ever asks well that who put the mushrooms in the path

[6:40:30]of these binoclura bipedal evolving primates i mean is this just a story of nature's happiest accidents? Or did someone say you know te weht planet start hte retraction of the rainforests seize the spores into the grasslands and watch what happens. Uh because then we come down out of the trees brainless as the wombat and began testing food sources and

[6:41:00] lo and behold here are these things which are obviously designed to be seen. I mean mushrooms are form of display theyre designed to be seen they demand to be eaten. And uh the consequences that that you know to lead a species to the brink of darer... well thats just a coincidence or is there a mind behind all of this> see i think that if mind

[6:41:30]the problem i have with all the extra terrestrial and all the channelling adn all the abducting and all the stuff that goes on is its all too B movie its all too simple. Too straightforward. That's what the troubles me about ths... scenario is that its perfectly understandable to us if its understandable you can betcha booties its the wrong answer i mean its gonna be weirder

[6:42:00]than that not about mineral extraction or even diplomatic goodwill. Uh i have a professor years ago his cosmology went like this you know how there are bacteria which you can introduce into gold slurry in low grade ore and the bacteria will concentrate the gold and then you just watch the gold out of ght bacteria and .uh mining technique

[6:42:30]that's very efficient for poor yielding gold ore. So this guys idea was that some day UFOs would appear over every major city on earth and they would just load up all the plutonim and fissionable material and take it away and say thank you very much uh this mining operation is now completed you people cn go back to hurling shit at each other in the tree tops as far as were concerned

[6:43:00]we have real application for this fissionable material you people were gonna use it blow each other up what a bunch of dummies and farewell and good luck so thats one possibility.

Audience:

Yes then I insist on getting to the plan...

Audience:

TM:... No, halma... and harmaline by uh no by flattery and shwartz and

[6:43:30] its published by m the university of california press neary string studies division publication number 23.

Yeah ... well what i thought we should talk about this morning as we seem to range wide and free is the practicum of all this which is you know how many of these visual plants are they there

[6:44:00]and where are they and how do you obtain them and how do you use them once you obtain them. So i thought how many of you have ever seen i... get with it. This is a uh poster which i dont even know if its still available it may be uh a print. It is still available. And its a very good ethnobotanical course in hallucinogens in one sheet of paper. Uh what it divided into basically

[6:44:30] is this is the old world and this is the new. Immediately you know this t... in the new world than the old. This is one of the great of evolution... because nobody can offer a reasonable explanation as to why there should be nearly 3 times as many hallucinogenic plants int he new world as in the old i mean other than thats where the

[6:45:00] flying saucers planted them nobody has come up with a good explanation. Nature hallucinogenic plants complexes that i have experience with and can address are uh uh well lets do a little quick geographical tour. First of all north america for reasons not well understood is quite poor in

[6:45:30] native hallucinogens. Uh there are no major north american hallucinogens. Peyote is um well yes its north american the funny thing about peyote i mean you can feed me questions...

Peyote is you know we have this tremendous respect for it we imagine that its tremendously ancient and it apparently isnt. Uh

[6:46:00]there is no archaeological evidence of peyote uyse in the aerly earth and 500 years ago. Its almost a phenomenon of the conquest. What you find in the old graves in the peyote cultural area is our the seeds of the forest... which is an ordeal poison. Strychnine and often um often drug uh human

[6:46:30]plant symbiotic relationships evolve over time. It may be that the use of hallucinogens is still in fairly dynamic evolution all over the planet uh peyote is a major hallucionce should have been used for the past 50000

years if it has only been used for the past 500 years that's pretty peculiar alright and yet that appears to be the evidence. Ibogaine

[6:47:00] not only a visionary hallucinogen but an aphrodisiac as well no evidence of any use before 1850. And yet in an area where the portugese had been trading for the past 500 years and writing cultural descriptions and interviewing the people if it was there it would have been mentioned. So this is a puzzle uh you know ayahuasca use we assume is millennia old but on the other hand

[6:47:30] archeology is a real isreable proposition in the amazon because the climate is so degraded. Degraded so we can't really know um but aside from peyote and whatever its history north america seems to have only minor hallucinogens that have been utilized shamanically a puzzle another puzzle of culture and attitudes is

[6:48:00]
(end of transcription)

Transcribed by Simon Shaw

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[6:42:00]

Transcribed by Simon Shaw

[6:42:00]than that not about mineral extraction or even diplomatic goodwill. Uh i have a professor years ago his cosmology went like this you know how there are bacteria which you can introduce into gold slurry in low grade ore and the bacteria will concentrate the gold and then you just watch the gold out of ght bacteria and .uh mining technique

[6:42:30]that's very efficient for poor yielding gold ore. So this guys idea was that some day UFOs would appear over every major city on earth and they would just load up all the plutonim and fissionable material and take it away and say thank you very much uh this mining operation is now completed you people cn go back to hurling shit at each other in the tree tops as far as were concerned

[6:43:00]we have real application for this fissionable material you people were gonna use it blow each other up what a bunch of dummies and farewell and good luck so thats one possibility.

Audience:

Yes then I insist on getting to the plan...

Audience:

TM:... No, halma... and harmaline by uh no by flattery and shwaretz and

[6:43:30] its published by m the university of california press neary string studies division publication number 23.

Yeah ... well what i thought we should talk about this morning as we seem to range wide and free is the practicum of all this which is you know how many of these visual plants are they there

[6:44:00]and where are they and how do you obtain them and how do you use them once you obtain them. So i thought how many of you have ever seen i... get with it. This is a uh poster which i dont even know if its still available it may be uh a print. It is still available. And its a very good ethnobotanical course in hallucinogens in one sheet of paper. Uh what it divided into basically

[6:44:30] is this is the old world and this is the new. Immediately you know this t... in the new world than the old. This is one of the great of evolution... because nobody can offer a reasonable explanation as to why there should be nearly 3 times as many hallucinogenic plants in the new world as in the old i mean other than that's where the

[6:45:00] flying saucers planted them nobody has come up with a good explanation. Nature hallucinogenic plants complexes that i have experience with and can address are uh uh well lets do a little quick geographical tour. First of all north america for reasons not well understood is quite poor in

[6:45:30] native hallucinogens. Uh there are no major north american hallucinogens. Peyote is um well yes its north american the funny thing about peyote i mean you can feed me questions...

Peyote is you know we have this tremendous respect for it we imagine that its tremendously ancient and it apparently isnt. Uh

[6:46:00]there is no archaeological evidence of peyote use in the early earth and 500 years ago. Its almost a phenomenon of the conquest. What you find in the old graves in the peyote cultural area is our the seeds of the forest... which is an ordeal poison. Strychnine and often um often drug uh human

[6:46:30]plant symbiotic relationships evolve over time. It may be that the use of hallucinogens is still in fairly dynamic evolution all over the planet uh peyote is a major hallucinogen should have been used for the past 50000 years if it has only been used for the past 500 years that's pretty peculiar alright and yet that appears to be the evidence. Ibogaine

[6:47:00] not only a visionary hallucinogen but an aphrodisiac as well no evidence of any use before 1850. And yet in an area where the portugese had been trading for the past 500 years and writing cultural descriptions and interviewing the people if its was there it would have been mentioned. So this is a puzzle uh you know ayahuasca use we assume is millennia old but on the other hand

[6:47:30]archeology is a real isreable proposition in the amazon because the climate is so degraded. Degraded so we can't really know um but aside from peyote and whatever its history north america seems to have only minor hallucinogens that have been utilized shamanically a puzzle another puzzle of culture and attitudes is

[6:48:00]

Transcribed by Simon Shaw

-is [6:48:00] as you all know the northwest coast Indians, the Kwakiutl, Tsimshian- um, yeah Kwakiutl, Tsimshian and Tlingit have an extraordinary evolved Shamanism and where the people who develop that x-ray style of art. Well their cultural area has the densest number of psilocybin mushrooms of any place in the world. No cultural evidence of psilocybin use. No evidence that these people even knew these things were there. I mean I know this challenges the tradition of the all knowing aboriginal but you know, but this is what the data seems to imply. Now in Southern California and across portions of the Southwest there have been datura religions which are very old apparently. The so-called tolache religions. I don't recommend datura. I don't know what astronomic- astrological sign you have to be to make peace with that stuff, but I find it really peculiar and menacing. It's about magic which is about power and control and usually uh, sexuality in some invasive and Dominator application. I've taken to Tora a number of times and it's been interesting but it feels watery and dark dangerous to me. There was a period when I lived in Nepal when I became aware that these sadhus, not content with their superior meditation techniques and their endless smoking of hashish, were also availing themselves of the seeds of datura metal which is conspecific to what we call Jimsonweed in this country, and so I thought well I should take this too and find out what it's about. Well, it was a very odd trip- it was- I sat in my room and bodenoth [?] and I would sit, say hm, nothing is happening, nothing happening. Well, you can only think that so many times, then my mind would drift into a kind of twilight state and then these wraith-like entities, I mean they were like Victorian ghosts. You know, they were like women in shredded dam- shredded damask gowns or something, would fly into my window carrying newspaper sheets in their outstretched arms and they would let these sheets of newspaper flutter down onto my lap and I would like begin to read and I would begin, and I was so astonished by what I was reading that it would jerk me out of it and then say what's happening. Nothing's happening. Nothing's happening. And then my attention would drift and this would happen again. Then after about a half an hour of that as the stuff began to build up I began to, like I would undergo these very brief periods of unconsciousness and when I came out of them I would discover that my leg had been thrown up around behind my head and my arm shot through and I was like all knotted up. And then I would very carefully unfold myself and lay back down and I remember thinking I'm certainly glad there's nobody else here because this is the kind of thing just designed to drive a sitter into a conniption fit of alarm. And you know about, about six times over the next hour and a half I went into these convulsive spasms, and then on another night these English people shared a suite of rooms off of mine and I had to get to the bathroom. I had to go through this one guy's room so this one night I hadn't taken datura but this fellow had taken datura and at one point I had to go to the John so I debated for a long time about how this is going to disturb his trip and maybe I should piss out the window, but no that would- didn't seem- although in India that's perfectly all right. And um, so finally I decided I would just walk through the room, so then as I was tiptoeing through the room I saw that he was actually having sex with this girl that we knew from Katmandu and it had a slight emotional tinge for me because I had actually had my eye on her although I never said anything about it to anybody so uh, so then uh, the next morning I mentioned this and he said that yes it had been his impression as well but that in fact she wasn't there and so it was like you know I, I saw somebody else's hallucination and then what finally decided me that datura was too peculiar was that I had another English friend who lived a couple of houses away and one day I was in the market buying potatoes and this guy came along and we were just talking and in the course of this conversation he was telling me how he'd been taking a lot of datura and in the course of this conversation I became aware that he thought that I was visiting him in his apartment and I decided that's too fucked up, you know, to not know whether you're entertaining someone in the confines of your apartment or buying vegetables in the confines of the market means that you've become too disengaged [6:54:00] from the modalities-

Transcribed by Eva Petakovic

[6:54:00] from the modalities of the real. And, of course, it creates tremendous drying, and uhm it's a- it's a- its- its- a uhm, deliriant, is what the literature calls it. It's deliriant. Ahh.. but the, you know, I think that people all over the world utilize, uhm, plants for bizarre experiences. Time and time again I have run up against this [06:54:30], uhm..., one- you know there is a very rare drug in South America called oo-koo-he, oo-koo-he. It's made by the huitoto, uhm, and the bora and the muinani in this very circumscribed area and what fascinated us about it was that it was an orally active DMT drug. And we couldn't as pharmacologists understand how an orally active DMT drug was possible. Because the DMT should be destroyed in your [06:55:00] gut. So we wanted to get a sample of this stuff. And uhm, it's made from the resin of virola trees, the inner bark of the virola sheds a red resin. And uhm, we eventually in 1981, my brother and I and Wade Davis, the guy who wrote the "The Serpent and the Rainbow", we all launched an expedition of the Rio Yaguas Yacu. [6:55:30] And where there was this stuff and we would do what we call the bioaste ...which means somebody has to test this stuff. Cause we would get samples from these shaman and we would draw straws for who got to do the bioaste. Well taking this acute was appalling. I mean your heart rate goes up to about three times normal, you shed water by the gallon, your blood pressure shoots up. [6:56:00] I mean it felt like a precoronary to me. And then we come down and say to this shaman, ya know, Lorenzo, what's the story? And he said "Yeah, it takes getting used to doesn't it?" [audience laughs] And uhm, so then I.. And then when you look at it, when you look at this oo-koo-he chemically you see well yes there's dmt in there and there's 5 mao dmt in there, but then when you do the gastronaigram [6:56:30] you see that marching along behind those spots there are all these other spots of various tryptamine compounds, some of which are cardioregulators, some of which nobody knows what they do, and so then you realize that it's a, it's a dirty drug. There's too much junk in there. What you want is something that has a very clean signature. So oo-koo-he didn't exactly seem the way, uhm, to go. Uhm, I think this is the real [6:57:00] situation with amanita muscaria. Probably the most discussed, uninteresting, uhm, drug in the world. Because so many people have tried to hang so much on it. And ya know, it's a horrible experience most of the time.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah yeah, occasionally you'll meet someone who says "Well you're just wrong. It's wonderful. [6:57:30] I've taken it for years; I love it. And I, ya know, don't know. First of all it's genetically variable, it's geographically variable, it's uhm, uhm, seasonally variable. And it fluctuates at various times in its uhm, in its uhm, process of maturation. So what must be going on with amanita muscaria is that you have to learn how to take it in your area, [6:58:00] from people that know when to collect it, where to collect it, how much to collect, and how to prepare it. If you just go out and find one and chow down I guarantee you it will turn you every way but loose and it will turn you loose. So uhm..

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: No that's what they always say. They say "Have you drunk your urine recently?" I got a letter last week... No, i

understand. But if- Do you all understand the basis of the question? Why does urine [6:58:30] come into it? Because, uhm, in Siberia they have discovered, where this amanita thing originates, that the active principle is not destroyed inside your body. That it is excreted in the urine. And the true aficionados of this stuff believe that this so called second pass is better than the first pass. And so you have to uhm, uhm, [6:59:00] you know...they drink the urine. One of the great hazards of Siberian shamanism is stepping outside of the yurt on a snowy night to take a leak and being pitched head first into the snow by frantic reindeer who butt you out of the way to try to get to the yellow snow because they're so completely hooked on, uhm, amanita that nothing stands in their way. [audience laughs]

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh, your [inaudible] is pushing you out of the.. Well I've never hung out with the Yakuts. Maybe they're a pretty wild-eyed gang. An example of how a very ancient, uhm, how a very ancient folkway can be incorporated into our culture without us even realizing it, and is provided by discussing amanita muscaria... If you go to the encyclopedia britannica and you look up Santa Claus [7:00:00]

Transcribed Paul Mullins

they'll tell you that it has to do with Saint Nicholas and it got started in the 11th century and it's a-, but when you look at the Santa Claus story it's a perfect, uhm, mythologym to analyze from this point of view because look what's going on with Santa Claus. First of all Santa Claus' colors are red and white, the colors of the amanita muscaria for sure. [7:00:30] Santa claus lives at the north pole. What does this mean? It means Santa Claus lives at the axis mundi where yggdrasil, the magic work ash of Welsh mythology has, uhm, taken root. Santa Claus flies, this is what shaman do. Santa Claus is the master of the reindeer, the animal most associated with the amanita muscaria. [7:01:00] Santa Claus is aided in his work by troops of elves. And what is the work of Santa Claus? To build toys for children. Remember the DMT thing saying "Look at this! Look at this!" Well those were off duty elves, clearly. So here are all the motifs and I believe that for children in our culture that all the christer stuff is not what christmas [7:01:30] is about. Christmas is about standing in front of the tree on christmas morning with the gifts arrayed and the twinkling lights on. Well that tree is the tree that the amanita muscaria forms it's symbiotic relationship to. It's always spruce or pine that it has a mycorrhizal relationship to. So the number of motifs relating Santa Claus to a cult of amanita muscaria- there's almost nothing but relational [7:02:00] motifs there. And yet if you suggest this to people they just back away in horror, you know? Well, uhm, these hallucinogenic plants seem clustered in the new world in two areas. The first area is, uhm, the Sierra Mazateca of central Mexico and related areas. And there you have a number of things overlapping. You have [7:02:30], uhm, the- a- a mushroom area of multiple species where, unlike the [quaquatal?] shim-sham [flingut?] language area, in this central mexican langua- uhm, area they absolutely did use and discover these mushrooms. And we have these things called mushroom stones that, uhm, go, uhm, 2500 b.c.. So the mushroom religions is truly archaic in Mexico. [7:03:00] In the same cultural area you have the, uhm, the morning glory seeds that come from ipomoea purpurea and- and related hybrids. Are you all familiar with these? This is a psychedelic plant that you can grow yourself and take. Don't buy the packages of seeds and take them because, uhm, a benevolent government has made sure that they are soaked in horrendous poison so that you can't [7:03:30] get loaded on them. Uhm, but you can grow a crop out of them that will be toxin free. And this is a tremendous visionary intoxicant. It takes a couple hundred of these seeds but in that same area, strangely enough, there's another morning glory, [Named here. Can't find it on the web], it used to be called [?], that, as few as thirteen seeds will flatten you. [7:04:00] Now it's interesting, as long as we're talking about

morni- uhm, morning glory seeds, to note that pure unit volume, per by weight, probably the strongest plant hallucinogen in the world is, uhm, hawaiian baby woodrose. And yet there is no record of any culture ever utilizing that. It, uhm- there are thirteen species of argyrea. It's called [7:04:30] hawaiian baby woodrose but it has nothing to do with Hawaii, it's native to India. There are thirteen species of argyrea scattered from southern India out to Fiji and all contain ergot like, LSD like, compounds like chanoclavine and so forth. These- I got started on morning glory seeds because they were available. But don't sell this stuff short folks. I mean, it'll give you a ride you'll [7:05:00] never forget. Uhm, and the baby woodrose even moreso. Be very careful with the hawaiian baby woodrose because it contains cardioactive glycosides and, you know, if you, you know, maybe six seeds will do you. Twelve seeds might well plant you. And twelve seeds will fit on a tablespoon. So this is nothing to start choking down in large amounts. Yea. [7:05:30]

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Yes and could be extracted in a fairly simple fil- filtration system. Yea, good point. Yea.

Audience: [My question is are they dry? Do you grind them up?]

TM: You- Well they are dry. They're little crescent shape dry things. Yea grind them in a braun grinder and, uhm, uhm...

Audience: Do you mix them with anything?

TM: Apple sauce is the favorite carrier for these disgusting things, or milkshakes. Uhm, but it would be good [7:06:00]

Transcribed by Paul Mullins

[7:06:00]

TM: "Um... But it would be good to look into doing a little chemistry - the emetic in the morning glories is estracumerone, not the cardioactive glycoside in argeria nervosa but in ipomea purpurea it's.. uh...estracumerone and you could devise a simple chemical system for removing that and I think LSD.. w-you know...have you ever had what is called "Woodrose LSD"? Well it's wonderful! It's unlike LSD, it's more like psilocybin because it is highly visionary; [7:06:30]and one of the things about these morning glories is.. You know... I don't know whether we have to talk about Rupert's theory or what... but it's just an archive of Mayan and Toltec imagery, I mean, you take this stuff and you're there in the pyramidal complex on the day of Venus's heliacal rising when they do their thing... I mean it's pretty amazing."

Audience: [Inaudible][7:07:00]

TM: “Uuuuummm... it’s a close relative, it’s active not in the microgram range, but in the milligram range and there are several active compounds... Eurite... I think Chenoklavine is the psychoactive... and Erganovine... all these occur there.”

Audience: “And do you grind those and swallow them whole, or make an infusion?”

TM: “No, you grind them to a powder and then just take... capsule ‘em...and it’s a lot of capsules [7:07:30] it’s like half a cup of this horrible, whitish meal with a strange smell but... yeah basically about two hundred seeds. You may want to go higher but start with that.”

Audience: [Inaudible] [7:08:00]

TM: “Well, no, but if what you’re saying is true, that’s where the glycoside would reside. That’s not my understanding actually, wh-”

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: “Well, maybe the caption got mislabeled or something because the way they do it where [7:08:30] I’ve seen it is they take the little seeds and they grind them on a matate into a powder, then they put it in water... as you ssssaid... and then, and they shake it, ss... uh..and leave it, and come back an hour later and shake it again and do that for a while; and then uh the stuff precipitates to the bottom..the physica-..the...the matter...and the liquid fraction is poured off and discarded [7:09:00] and they take the... the solid matter and they let it dry in the sun until it’s no longer runny but it’s a kind of like... the consistency of oatmeal or playdough or something like that and then they make a little tiny uh...uh...tortilla which they... they then toast on a metal griddle and so you get this thing which looks slightly smaller than a ritz cracker... [7:09:30] and is a toasted morning glory seed wafer, and you eat that, and that is the thing which is active. That’s how I’ve seen it done.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: “Apparently not, they toast it lightly, they don’t... it’s not blackened... It’s just sort of golden...”

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: "No, it's the... it's one species of morning glory turbina, previously called revea, coryembosa. [7:10:00] The other one...uh... the morning glory that you have to take uh.. a couple of hundred seeds for is used in that area as a hallucinogen, but it's also used to induce labour and has a whole role in midwifery and...and like that.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: "No, that's the Hawaiian Woodrose and it has no history of human usage, [7:10:30] so you're on your own. This is... it's worth talking about maybe for a minute... that... er, y'know there are... hallucinogens are like hotel rooms, some are occupied and some are not, and it's always interesting to fiddle with the unoccupied ones, because if you're... if you believe Sheldrake, then it's an empty field. Uh, you know, one way of thinking of these things is... when you take a plant [7:11:00] it takes you. So, when you take mushrooms for instance, what the trip is, is all the mushroom trips that anybody ever had. And you lea... you know, you make a tiny contribution too, ah... it's... you leave a piece of your trip in the trip and so the... the trip is slowly evolving over time as those who take the plant each leaves a brick [7:11:30] or an offering or a little architectural motif on this vast edifice. Well then if you come... that was why a- uh... y'know a plant like Hawaiian Woodrose or to some degree Stropharia Cubensis because it is not the preferred mushroom among the Mexican traditionalists, then it's unoccupied. You can make of it what you want; it can be sort of... your vehicle. This is why a drug like ketamine, which is a new drug, [7:12:00]

Transcribed by Aurelio Lyra

TM.: ... a new drug, without a thousand years of input. My impression of where you go on ketamine is like visiting a new office building. That nobody has rented offices yet, i mean all the water coolers work, and there are these recessional distances with fluorescent lighting, but, there are no hurrying secretaries or crowded offices, or chatter around the water fountains. It's just empty. It's empty because not enough people have left their initials on the walls.

Audience Question: What is the variety of mushroom that is common in the Yucatan

TM.: Well, if you mean growing on manure. Yeah, that's Stropharia cubensis. See there are about 30 species of mushrooms that grow in that Mexican area, and most of them are what are called, well not most of them, but some are ephemeral mushrooms, meaning they are very small and they can be almost anywhere. And there are some larger ones too that can be almost anywhere. Stropharia cubensis is the only one of the good ones that locates on cow dung. Now, there are other mushrooms that grow on cow dung that contain psilocybin, but they also are more sickening. There are species of Panaeolus and species of Coprinus. If you collect a mushroom off dung and you want to know if it is a Panaeolus or Coprinus or Stropharia, just keep it around for a few hours. If it is a Stropharia it will just sort of be around. If it is a Coprinus or a Panaeolus, it will do what is called auto-digest. It will turn into a slimy mess.

Audience Question: Can't you tell from the spore print

TM: No, you can't tell from the spore print, but you can tell from the macro-morphology of it, if you know mushrooms. They're easy to tell apart.

Audience Question: [inaudible]

TM: You see that's tricky unless you're someone who really knows their stuff.

Audience Question: [inaudible] have you found that there is way in Hawaiian woodrose seeds [inaudible]

TM: It was more speculative, but i think it would be worth trying.

Audience Question: I thought that the ergamine alkaloid is not water soluble

TM: Some are and some aren't.

Audience Question: [inaudible] ... synthesizing LSD. Its apparently hard to get it started. I hear if you get a bunch of morning glory seeds and soak them in lighter fluid... [inaudible]

TM: Yeah that sounds right. Pet Ether is a good one. So is Chloroform. Have any of you read The Road to Eleusis. That's about the Eleusinian Mysteries, and argues, its by Wasson and Hoffman and Ruck, and argues that the mystery at Eleusis was a kind of ergotized beer. That they were gathering ergot off Paspalum and making an ergotized beer, and the only way they could've done that for 2000 years, stoning thousands of people each September at this cult site, without the thing getting a reputation for being toxic or causing convulsions, unless they had some way that was very efficient, of separating the toxic alkaloids from the hallucinogenic ones. So, that may have been a water fractionation technique, as well. Or, you know, the whole theory may be wrong, and whatever was drunk at Eleusis may not have been ergotized beer. It could have been a mushroom of some sort. This is what Robert Graves thought, that it was a mushroom.

Audience Q: [inaudible]

TM: The Road to Eleusis. Probably not, because Wasson is now dead and the estate is kind of funny about that kind of thing.

Audience Q: Two Questions. One is can you talk more of the emetic of morning glory and how to get rid of it.

TM: The emetic is Estracutarone. If you're not a chemist and used to dealing with high molecular weight solvents that you should do some kind of water, you know, dissolve it in water and then try and separate out the fractions. This would be, i mean, a lot of work needs to be done. I think in the underground there are publications being circulated that are, you know, the Wizard's Workbook for mushroom , er i mean, morning glory reclamation and stuff like this. Its that, you pay your dues with morning glories, but it's usually worth the price of admission. I mean, it's only nausea, for crying out loud. Yeah

Audience Q: You were talking about different hallucinogens and were telling, i got the impression that you vocation is that somehow consciousness creates the reality that's out there depending on how consciousness is used with different hallucinogens. Is that...

TM; ... Yeah, i think so. That we leave our fingerprints on the drugs that we take, and that drugs that have been taken for thousands of years have a lot of fingerprints on them.

Transcribed by Chris Galbraith

TM: (07:18:00)..into the field, you know. One way of thinking, since someone talked of Sheldrake earlier, one way of thinking about psychedelics and trying to define what do they do, is that they are amplifiers of the morphogenetic field. That, you know, that the past of objects somehow becomes present. Em, this would fit it in with my notion that when you take a psychedelic you are rising into some kind of superspace, (07:18:30) that can be mathematically described. Because having the past be co-present with the present is a way of saying that you will shift your dimensional relationship to the datafield, and now it appears to be one coherent thing. Yeah?

Audience: Um, what is the plant that grows in the South West that has harmeline in it?

TM: Pegamum Harmala, the girant syrian rue. Its original (07:19:00) range is from Marocco to Manchuria, but at some time in the nineteenth century it was brought into this country as a range fodder for, for goats. I mean its pretty rasky plant. Em..

Audience: INAUDIBLE

TM: It,s uh, it has small yellow flowers, and it's a kind of, it has succulent leaves, sort of waterholding leaves, and it looks like a form of sage brush, and when you cut into it (07:19:30) with a knife or a machete it's brilliant yellow inside. And that brilliant yellow is the harmine.

Audience: INAUDIBLE

TM: Pound it up with a sledgehammer to separate the fibers and do a hot water wash on it, and then, you know, do a second hot water wash, then get rid of the physical stuff. Combine the two mother liquors and drive it (07:20:00) down to a reasonable volume. And it'll do the trick. Yeah.

Audience: You're probably familiar with ..INAUDIBLE

TM: John Allegro and Andrija Puharich, yeah,

Audience: What's your assessment of... inaudible

TM: Well, not to rain on anybody's parade.. Andrija Puharich is a very mercurial person, is that what we want to say. (07:20:30) Recall that he was the guy who pushed Uri Geller for a long time. And they were forever tromping into the Negev and coming out with blank cassettes that had held the wisdom of the galaxy, but the aliens erased them before they let them return.

(Audience laughing, unrest).

That could happen here.. So that's Andrija Puharich. Ah.. He's been around for a long time, so you have to, these people are such eccentrics, I mean you have to (07:21:00) just respect people's persistence and survival power. (Audience laughter) Eh, but I think you know his scholarship, and his notions, the rules of evidence is fairly divergent from even from my fairly loose cannon. (LAUGHS) So, Allegro is a little different case. You all know the book 'The sacred mushroom and the cross'? He managed to hypothesize one of the most radical (07:21:30) theories ever to come down the pipe. I don't know how true it is, but his theory is that Jesus was a mushroom. (Audience laughs) Ha, ha.. And you know this would not probably have cut too much mustard except that the guy was a dead sea scroll scholar of world renown, ah, had a scholars grasp of Arameic and Akkadian, and was fully licenced (07:22:00) to be one of the people who tell us what the primary documents of Christianity really mean. The problem was, when Allegro got a hold of them, he said, well, what they really mean is that a sacramental mushroom was gr..., being grown in caves by navateans (?) down the Ram Qumram and they called it Jesus, in order to befuddle the Roman authorities and created (07:22:30) the cheerful fairy of the friendly carpenter who tells us to render unto Cesar that which is Cesar's, and this was all a publicity stunt just to keep, uh, the Roman authorities guessing. And he has textual, he claims he has textual support for this. The problem is, you have to be an Arameic philologist to follow the argument, and I mean, the argument is unbelievably tortured. (07:23:00) There is a lot of question.., there is a peculiar opaqueness about the early history of Christianity. I mean, if we are to try and take it seriously and understand what happened there, then it must be, that, first of all, if we believe that Christ was a real person, then he must have been born in 6 B.C. Because there was a conjunctial maxima of Jupiter and Saturn at that time, which is a good astrological (07:23:30) event to

hang the nativity on. Which means, then, that the crucifixion would have occurred in 27. Well, why is it, then, that there are no mentions, no mention of Christ, of Christ can be pushed back later than, earlier than AD 69. What was going between 27 and 69? The gospels are not contemporaneous, and uh, the mention (07:24:00)

Transcribed by Aina Mumbi

24:00 - 30:00

Women know whose children are who's because they see the child come out of their body, and they nurse the child. But men do not in that situation have their children. My children. What they have are our children, the tribal group. And uh, this boundary dissolving thing. Let's dwell on this for a moment, because this is central to my arguments, and it has political consequences for our own lives. Um, all primates, clear back down into squirrel monkeys and lemurs. Um, all primates have what are called male dominance hierarchies. Uh, what this means is that most, the males with the longest claws, the hardest muscles, and the meanest dispositions, take control of everybody else. Uh, women, children, weaker males, uh, everybody comes under the thumb of the alpha males of the pack. This is true, as I said, of squirrel monkeys, howler monkeys, so forth and so on. It is also true of us, sitting here in this room. This is a male dominant society, I mean there's a lot of complaining and hair pulling about it. And there's a political alternative, in the form of, of the women's movement and feminist sensitivities, but for most people, male dominance is the rule. Well I would like to suggest that our peculiarly discomforted relationship to reality is a consequence of the fact that, for a long period of time, perhaps as short as twenty thousand years, perhaps as long as a million years, as a species, and not consciously, we accepted into our diet a drug that had the consequences of suppressing male dominance.

That this was the social consequence of accepting psilocybin into the diet. The ego is a structure that forms in the psyche like a calcareous tumor, or growth, if you do not have regular recourse to the cure. And the cure is, uh, psilocybin and the boundary dissolving sexual and social style which is carried in its wake. So the reason that we as people are, uh, haunted by the idea of a lost paradise a perfect world sometime in the misty past is not, you know, Mircea Eliade called it, "the nostalgia for paradise" and thought of it, uh, as longing that had no basis. But I think that it's entirely a memory of the period when male dominance was chemically suppressed, ego was chemically suppressed. And by male dominance and ego I don't mean to lay this entirely on men. I would wager probably that everyone in this room has more ego than they need. For example, starting with me, and that's part of the paradox you're supposed to enjoy.. (audience laughter). You know, the ambiguity of me preaching the loss of ego. (audience laughs). So, essentially, you know, what happened was, chemically, a chemically driven leap in evolution as a consequence of the suppression of these behaviours that savoured male dominance. Uh, as a species, uh, we would have continued with male dominance forever had it not been for psilocybin in the diet. And it established uh, a situation, in which, in less than two million years the human brain size doubled. This is without contest the greatest mystery in the whole of evolutionary theory. Uh, Lumsden, who is an evolutionary biologist, called the doubling of human brain size in the last two million years, uh, the most spectacular transformation of a major organ of a higher animal in the entire fossil record. Well now it would be spectacular enough if it were the liver of an otter, or the (both laughter) hha, ha the pancreas of an elephant. But notice it is the organ that created the theory of evolution itself. And all other theories, so that we're getting a little chronological here folks. (background laughter) There's something fishy going on. Uh, what was it that caused this explosive doubling in human brain size. Well I maintain that it was the new behaviors that emerged with the suppression of ego, and their reinforcement of nomadic pastoralism. And that there was a period, let's call it from the melting of the last glaciers in (unintelligible), 6500 BC,

there was a period when men and women were in balance with each other. Children and adults were at peace with each other. And human beings and the planet were at peace with each other.

Transcribed by Christy Redden

[07:30:00]

TM: Hans Jonas is a brilliant—his book, “Chri-”, uh ... “Gnosticism: The Message of The Alien God to Infant Christianity”—if that’s not a title to die for ... Ahem. [audience laughter] Huh?

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: Oh, “The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the New Testament” by Charles[worth]. Now that's a ... that ahh weighs in at about 35 pounds, but theological libraries shoul-... will have it, but it's in the locked case. You don't want seminarians [07:30:30] mucking around with this kind of stuff ... uhh ...

Audience: [inaudible] And by extension, there’s “The Urantia Book” too, which has about 2000 pages on the life of Christ, and covers those years after 30, or I guess after 27 or so ...

TM: That's right. “The Uranita Book” is a very spectacular and early example of channeling before it was even named, ahh, and, uhh, very interesting of all the channeled material, “The Urantia Book” for its pure grandiosity puts everybody [07:31:00] else, uhh, to shame, right? [audience laughter]

Audience: They talk about seeding the planet.

TM: Yeah! Well, these are persistent themes, you know. I mean all of Gnosticism is the perception that we don't belong here. That we are creatures of another realm, Beings of Light, who because of some horrible cosmic mistake have been trapped in the world of matter; and the gnostics take the Pentateuch, [07:31:30] the first five books of ... of Moses, and turn it into a nightmare story, and say that, you know, the god of this world, which in Jewish tradition is called Yahweh, who is creator of the world for the Gnostics, he is not the real god at all. He’s the demiurge. He’s a kind of mad god who has entrapped the light, and the task of salvation [07:32:00] is to gather the light and then release it back to it’s hidden higher source beyond the machinery of Cosmic Fate.

[Sudden silence in recording; audience inaudible]

TM: Well, that—that's good. That's, it's sort of like, you know the "Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣads" — it's my favorite Upanishad, because it's the shortest. It's only a page and a half long, which it—uhh, [audience laughter] you know, which it, uhh... you know, others have been so similarly inspired to brevity, [07:32:30] but it's the Breath of Brahman. It traces - it's the description of one — eh-uh ... exhalation/inhalation cycle. Yeah?

Audience: I know people who can't even say it: Yah—Wha-!

TM: Yeah, wha...!?! Well, you're not even supposed to say it, if you're Orthodox.

Audience: [light laughter]

TM: G—dash—D. Yeah?

Audience: You said Yahweh. I'm fascinated by the Rastafarian [inaudible, cough] by which the abbreviation of Yah, [07:33:00] or ... the same phrase hallelujah is supposed to be that twist that [inaudible] could be [inaudible] your understanding is that [inaudible] Yahweh as a verb?

TM: Well, I don't know too much about Rastafarianism. It was founded by Marcus Garvey and get - had this notion of return to Africa. Uh, you know, syncretism is always with us. Gnosticism was characterized by syncretism. The whole late Hellenic uhh, religious efflorescence, was largely [07:33:30] syncretic and certainly that's what we have now. I mean, you know, The New Age. You go to these fairs and the people who are talking to the Pleiades have the booth next to the people who are talking to Zubenelgenubi and both have world plans from the Saucerian Allfathers, and the two plans are different and you just phooey, uuh, ugh ... you know?

Audience: [laughter]

Audience: Gnosticism is alive and well in the hallways of academia, I mean. You got guys like Marvin [inaudible: Lins-key] [07:34:00] and Hans [inaudible: Bor-betch] who ran an [inaudible] into his brain and into the computer and you know so he can become pure information. So that's about the least for which people matter, is for information, then I don't know what is ...

TM: No, I agree. There are two sentiments loose in the world, and you're going to NOT get through this life without taking sides. You know? Do you believe that our destiny is in another dimension made of light on the other side of the Universe, or do you believe that we should, uhh, you know, clean up the rainforests and save [07:34:30] the planet? You wanna be very careful with your political agenda. One of my sub-interests, which sort of has a relationship to this, but it's oblique, is: asteroidal impacts. I think asteroidal impacts are one of the great undiscussed, uhh, factors in evolution that tie... that every solid body in the solar system is heavily [07:35:00] cratered with

impacts by infalling bodies. There's this thing down in Arizona that only happened 50,000 years ago. It was a pissant sized object and everything within 800 miles of the impact point died instantly. It dug a hole half a mile into the ground. It was a nothing-burger. This thing which came down 65 million years ago, they now think on the Yucatán, that it killed everything on the [07:35:30] Earth larger than a chicken — died. You know, I mean, you wanna talk about eco-castrophe, I mean, we have never - you can't even conceive of what it's like when something like that happens to a planet. They estimate that the ... at the velocity this thing must have been traveling, it was five miles into the planet in the first second and a half. It raised a wall of rock 6,000 feet high that moved outward at Mach 7. [audience laughter] [07:36:00]

Transcribed by Nathan Johansen

[07:36:00]

TM: Kay? Eeee! I mean, [clears throat] he-yeah . Ah-ha-hem! [audience laughter] Eh! And the planet rang for a million years, you know, and it was, and but if it hadn't been for that, there would be no flowering plants, no triumph of the mammals, no Whitney Houston ... no ... [laughter]

Audience: No sperm entering the egg.

TM: Well, but ... eh, suppose: you know, there's all this tumult in our psyche about the great change that's supposed to happen, and where are we supposed [07:36:30] to put our political energies, and what are we supposed to be doing? Well, it would be pretty ironic if we, you know, beat ourselves over the head and saved the rainforest and all this malarkey, and then this something came down and just turned the whole thing into hash; and people would say: "My God! How could we have been so stupid!? We should have been extracting and sequestering U-235 and plutonium. We should have been building starships the size of Montana. [07:37:00] We should have been sparing no effort; and what did we do? We re-planted rainforests!?" And now look, the whole thing ... so, you have to [audience laughter], it uhh, you know, good intentions are not sufficient. You have to locate where the threat is coming from and act accordingly. There are no points for good intentions in the game of evolution. So mind and .. and we have to decide, you know, what does life want? Is it that life at it's most [07:37:30] basic level senses the finite, uhh, duration of the star's life? And so it wants to use this moment of sunshine to build something that could carry us out into the mainstream of the galaxy to the denser star-fields? Or, no!? Is that some kind of Titanic-Apollonian Male-Dominated Techno-Fascist Materialist-Trip, [audience laughter] and what we need to do is cultivate [07:38:00] gentleness, and attention to the bugs, and the grasses, and the water? I don't have an answer to that. I think it's a real dilemma. I think people who think they do have answers haven't really connected with how ambiguous the situation really is.

Audience: How can you do both?

TM: How can you do both?

Audience: What says The Mushroom? Well, no. I mean, some people can use [cough; inaudible].

TM: Well, what the mushroom says is it's .. it's a total "Apocalyptarian" [07:38:30]. I mean, it says: "Rouse your camels, pack your tents, we're moving out! This has been fine for a while, but ahead lie worlds of unimaginable challenge at great distance." But, of course, the—the mushroom sounds like a Techno-Fascist Hortatory Male-Dominator, uhh, when it talks like that. You take Ayahuasca and it says: "Clean up the rivers. Care for the children. [07:39:00] Replant the forest." Well, wha' ...? (sigh).

Audience: But then you have to live with the mushroom possibly being the Universal Traveller that it is, it has that Urge. It's got the Wanderlust. So it's of course it's going to be [inaudible; "cosmic"?]. [laughter]

TM: That's right. It has nomadic ethics, so it pushes nomadic solutions. Where the Ayahuasca, an enormous jungle plant—a flowering plant, a creature born out of the last catastrophe, just like we are—has a different, uhh, agenda. No, the demons are of many kinds [07:39:30]. "Some are made of ions, some of mind / The ones of DMT, you'll find / Stutter often, and are blind." Means, you know: just because somebody, uhh, ehh, just because [light laughter] somebody once said of channeling: "Just because somebody's dead doesn't mean they're smart." [raucous audience laughter]

TM: So, [laughter] it could be, you know? [laughter] Everybody's got their own, uhh, agenda. Well, why don't we break ... yeah? [07:40:00] Or question? Last question.

Audience: Speaking of the [inaudible; "cosmological expanse"?], are you aware of the present Miles' work?

TM: Uhh, on the steady-state or something?

Audience: On virus' [inaudible; "spreadability"?].

TM: Oh, yeah, uh-hm: The Panspermia Theory.

Audience: Yeah, and ... and, and again that argues strongly for the fact that even [inaudible] may have come out of space, and probably only other than an impressive array of statistics, uhh, [inaudible] that lent cometary presence [07:40:30] in near-orbit to viral disease.

TM: Yeah, well I think that the next revolution in biology is so obvious that you can be totally radical and completely confident you're on safe ground and say the next great revolution in biology is the realization that space is not a barrier to life, and that, eh, technology is only one method for traversing [07:41:00] between the stars. If in fact planets are regularly pulverized by cosmic catastrophes, then they must be like bursting seedpods and, uhh, everything is subjected to a tremendous evolutionary hammering; but spores, viruses, stuff like that. Particulate

matter, it just drifts out between the stars and when it finds another suitable environment, uhh, it it [07:41:30] breaks out. We don't know what the constraints on life are. You know, the Oceans of Europa could harbor life. You know, these hot-vent sulphur-vent organisms that we find, uhh, in the O—in the deep oceans here? They could survive in the Oceans of Europa. If there were hot sulphur vents at the bottom of those oceans, those organisms wouldn't, uhh, bat an eye.

Audience: [inaudible] Isn't it ice covered?

TM: Ah, Europa [07:42:00]

Transcribed by Nathan Johansen

Audience: [inaudible] Isn't it ice covered?

TM: Ah, Europa [07:42:00] is covered with ice, but underneath the ice is water, and there are — uhh, fractures, uhh — and uhh, you know, the uhh — the exotic chemistries and pressures and temperatures of the Jovian environment could produce life. We don't know, uhh — what the constraints are. If — if cometary environments are a better place for life to arise than a warm pond on a newly condensed planet, [07:42:30] then all bets are off as to what, you know — planetary surfaces may be unlikely places for life to get going. Uhh, it's hard to say.

Audience: How sustainable are gaseous creatures on a gaseous planet?

TM: That's right. We don't know. You could have — you could have life at temperatures and pressures, uhh, where WE couldn't exist for a microsecond, uhh, like at the bottom of the Jovian atmosphere — something like that. No, there's more mystery [07:43:00] than anything else.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Uhh, the—the (ehh) it's—okay the notion here is—I've always felt that the psychedelic experience should be good for something. It arose—uhh, [audience laughter]—in a very practical sense, and I always felt that there was something that wanted, that you should be able to learn that was very hard to bring out. Ahem [clears throat] and we talked a little bit yesterday [takes sip from drink] about [07:43:30] this strange episode that happened in the Amazon, where instead of an ordinary trip, it was locked in for weeks and weeks, and then people differed as to whether it was a transformative incident or a psychosis, or ... what exactly it was, and but, what happened was — uhh, or what I think wants to happen in every psychedelic experience is that there is a totality symbol, you know Jung tried to get his patients to make [07:44:00] mandalas because he says they were totality symbols. Well,

eventually the totality symbol is more than a symbol— it actually becomes a true map of the totality and I—what this boils down to is a kind of very strange revelation about the nature of the I-Ching that takes very seriously the idea that the I-Ching is a tool for studying time, but then takes the idea much further. It's hard to give this lecture, it's hard to listen to this lecture, because the learning curve is steep, and you just have to stick with it for awhile and then there will be pay dirt, but it's — uhh, you have to umm, bear with me — and I had to bear with the entity which was revealing this stuff to me, because it took the form of [07:45:00] ... a, uhh ... Are you all familiar with the idea of a Kōan?

Audience: [a soft murmur, but mostly silence]

TM: This is something that your Guru — a little saying or something — that your Guru gives you that if you can figure it out then you move on to the next stage. Well, so the Koan (sips from drink) that I was presented with had to do with the I-Ching, which I was not that passionately fascinated by—I was just sort of mildly interested in it, [07:45:30] like a lot of other freaks, and I was not at all mathematically inclined, I mean, that I am the author of a theory of pure mathematics is as astonishing to me as it is to anybody else, I'm sure.

TM: Basically, as you know but let me review it, the I-Ching is a Chinese System of Divination that uses 64 structures called hexagrams, and hexagrams are made of broken [07:46:00] and unbroken lines stacked one above another, and they are uhh, the sum set—sum total—of the possible set of such structures is 64. And it's been remarked by a number of people that the I-Ching has peculiar structural affinities with the DNA, but nobody has ever really known what to make of that. Well, this dialogue with this mushroom entity, uhh, began by [07:46:30] posing a very simple question, which is—as, you know, most of you—the I-Ching hexagrams occur in a sequence which is called the King Wen sequence, which is very old. In fact, portions of the King Wen sequence are scratched on shoulder scapula, umm, that are 35,000 years old. It's possible to argue that the King Wen sequence of the I-Ching is the oldest abstract sequence, uhh, [07:47:00] ehh, in the world. The question is, or what the Koan was, was: Is the King Wen sequence a Sequence or is it simply a jumble of hexagrams that over time has become traditionally sanctioned as The Sequence? In other words, if it's a sequence, you should be able to write the rules that generate that hex—that sequence— and no other. [07:47:30] So umm, lemme dig into this here ... the first hexagram ... can you see this colored chalk? We have two other choices: we have a orange and blue. Here, we'll do a visual test ... Ooo... Eww. (multiple utterances indicating distaste) Is this the stuff?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Okay. Why is this so “half-acid” (ordinarily: half-assed) as they say ... [laughter]. Uhh.

[07:48:00]

Transcribed by Nathan Johansen

[07:48:00]

TM: So, here's the first hexagram. It's called the Creative. And it's made of six lines. This is no news to anybody, I hope. Here's the second hexagram. It's called the Receptive.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: The yellow? Kay, lemme do these this way and then I'll switch ... [07:48:30]

TM: So, when I started looking at this question of, uhh, of the order in the I-Ching, umm, the first thing I saw — it only took me about ten minutes, of just looking at it — and I noticed, and I'm not the first person to have noticed this — that it isn't 64 hexagrams, it's 32 pairs [07:49:00] of hexagrams, and the second member of each pair is formed by turning the first member upside down.

TM: Do you see? So—so that only took ten minutes; that was no—no problem.

TM: Now, there are eight cases in the I-Ching where inverting the first hexagram causes no change because of the nature of its structure. Uh, you meet the first case here. Obviously if you turn this thing upside down, [07:49:30] it's still six unbroken lines. So, in the eight cases where inverting a hexagram causes no change, a second rule is generated.

TM: The second rule is: if inverting the first hexagram causes no change, then all lines change. Very straight forward, right? But now, umm, the problem—the Koan—has changed. And the question is: What are the ordering—what rules order the 32 pairs? [07:50:00] And this was much trickier. Much trickier. And after awhile the prompting voice said: "Look at the first order of difference." This is just a fancy way of saying: count how many lines change as you go from one hexagram to another. It—ehh—if you go from this hexagram to this hexagram, how many lines change?

Audience: Six.

TM: Six. So, the first order of difference is six, between [07:50:30] these two hexagrams. Similarly, we can go from two to three and there will be another first order of difference.

TM: Now, logic should tell you that the values of the first order of difference are going to be whole numbers One through Six, right? What I did was I went through the I-Ching and actually checked on these, and I discovered that again—immediately, what jumped out, uhh, at me—was there were no Fives. So we wrote [07:51:00] computer programs to randomly arrange hexagrams and check for Fives. Now, we discovered Fives are as common as any

other number. The exclusion of Fives in the King Wen sequence was a human decision.

TM: Someone didn't want Fives to show up in the first order of difference. Okay... so then I, uhh, looked at these values, and what I discovered was: When you ... inside the pairs—when you [07:51:30] invert one to get the other—the first order of difference is always an even number. So within the pairs you have no freedom, it's going to be an even number. Between the pairs, you can arrange them so that you get odd numbers or even numbers.

TM: Now what I discovered was, between the pairs, half are odd and half are even. Again, human agency did this. We wrote computer programs [07:52:00] to randomly throw hexagram sequences and test for this quality, and we found that—uhh, only one in every 7,500 times could you expect to get a sequence which would be, uhh: 25% odd, 75% even; which is what this enforces. So, I was very excited by this, because I said: “Wow! There's all this hidden stuff in the I-Ching [07:52:30] but I've never once ... why is this thing not ... [inaudible; interrupted by something irritating needing adjusting] Umm, [inaudible] inching up on me ...

Audience: [inaudible] ... There may be one on the the other side of you.

TM: This thing?

Audience: Yeah, right on the other side of you.

TM: Okay. [continues to adjust something on the TimeWave graph]

TM: So, I thought, how weird that all this structure is in there ... and I'd read all of Wilhelm's Commentaries, and Lama Govinda, and these people, and uhh, it didn't seem that they had noticed this kind of stuff. So I was very excited. I thought that I was really on to something, and I made a graph of the [07:53:00] first order of difference and it looked something like this. Of course it has [counting deliberately, slowly]: One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six ... on this axis ...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Blue?

TM: And [counting deliberately, slowly]: One, Two, Three, Four ... to 64, this way ... because there are 64 hexagrams. And then I drew the first order of difference. Now, notice ... remember this was Six, so ... [07:53:30] up here we put a point, and the next one is something else ... and the next one is something else, and then we connect the points. And what you get is a structure which looks ... like this. Roughly.

TM: In other words, it looks stochastic, it looks random. [07:54:00]

Transcribed by Nathan Johansen

TM: [7:54:00]...it doesn't look like you're on the track of any kind of order here, except that, i noticed a really funny thing, about this. What i noticed was, that this section and this section, are mirror images of each other. So imagine for a moment that you have a copy of this, right here. What you're then able to do, is rotate the copy a 180 degrees within the plane [7:54:30] and you'll discover that it fits perfectly in here. It dovetails at the beginning and at the end but nowhere in between. This is, this is again a product of human decision. Someone made it, so that it would do this and the question is why? Why would anyone want to do that and when it works you have hexagram 1, across from hexagram 63 [7:55:00] and hexagram 2, across from 62, 62... In other words, these always sum to 64, when it's in the right position. So i just thought that i was uncovering some kind of, like (ahh), you know, the equivalent of Chinese kabbalism some kind of lost intellectual system and (ahh), and, but the voice said to me, it said, this is a picture of time [7:55:30] and i couldn't understand what exactly was meant by that, it seemed to me a fairly esoteric thing to assert that it was a picture of time. Now remember they're 64 hexagrams in the I Ching and they have six lines each. 6×64 is 384. When it told me that this was a picture of time, i began to entertain the idea that this was, [7:56:00] somehow could be used as a calendar. So then i said, well what it is, is it the whole I Ching running one way and the whole I Ching running backwards the other way combined into this peculiar structure, which has 384 data points in it, which are the lines or so called yáo of the I Ching. Now 384 is 19 days longer than the solar year length, so if you have a calendar [7:56:30] of 384 days it would precess against (ahh), the equinoxes 19 days every year. So it doesn't seem a good candidate for a calendar if you're trying to keep solar dynamics central. But i discovered something weird about (ahh) this number, 384 days, now think of it as days and that is that, peculiar things happen when [7:57:00] you multiply this number by a numbers that are inherent to the structure of the I Ching. When you might, when you multiply this number by 64, you get a day number which when you break it down into years is 67 years 104.25 days. Now what's interesting about that number is that, it-it is 6 sunspot cycles of 11 plus years. [7:57:30] There's also a major sunspot cycle of 33 years so it meant each line, in a super hexagram made by multiplying this number will be associated with one sunspot cycle and the trigrams inside the hexagram will be associated with the major sunspot cycle. When you take 67 years 104.25 days, again by 64, you get [7:58:00] 4306 years, plus some days. This number, is very close to twice the amount of time that it takes for (ahh), a Zodiacal Era such as the Age of Pisces or the Age of Aquarius they, last roughly this long. Well if you take this number by (ahh) 6, not 64 but 6, [7:58:30] which is a legitimate, number because it's built into the I Ching, you get (ahh), 25 thousand years roughly. This is the precession of the great year or the equinoctial year as it's called. So i thought, wow this is really far out! It's some kind of a, (ahh), multi-level resonance calendar... Oh and i forgot to say about 384 days, this was central excuse me. (ahh) That this is 13 [8:59:00] lunations. A lunation is 25, is 29. something days and when you multiply that number by 13 you get 383.89. So i said, ah ah! What this thing is, is that keeps track of the moon on this level, it keeps track of the sunspots on this level and it keep track of the great year of the zodiac on this level. All naked eye astronomical phenomenon not hypothesizing [7:59:30] any advanced technology but hypothesizing an advanced (ahh), (ahh), intellectual, point of view. Well, [drinks water] so i thought i was finished and that somehow it wanted to tell me about a Neolithic Calendar in ancient China for some reason, but there was more. [drinks water] Popeye had spinach, i have this. [audience laughs] The prompting voice...[8:00:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

[08:00:00] The prompting voice said “this structure which you have created” by the way some of you who are scholars of the I Ching remember in the uhm second half of the Wilhelm and Baynes translation there are whole bunch of VERY ancient sayings that nobody knows what they’re talking about they’re so esoteric. And the most MYSTERIOUS of these sayings is the saying which says “the forward running numbers refer to the future. The backward running numbers [08:00:30] refer to the past”. Well in the I Ching there ARE no forward or backward running numbers unless you do something like this and then look what you get: one, two, three, ... 63, 62, 61, 60, 59. You get forward and backward running numbers. So I said “wow.. you know, we’re digging this thing out. The I Ching is NOT enorical [??] as it’s been done at country fairs for three millennia - the I Ching as we possess it is a piece of broken machinery. [08:01:00] It’s a though you have you know, the main gear out of a machine and you’re trying by.. [pause] archaeological reconstruction to re-build that machine. So.. [pause] I was sort of stuck at this point and the prompting voice turned on and said “this structure which you’ve made which is the entire I Ching running forward and backward against itself - which would place it then at the top of a [08:01:30] um, of the uh hierarchy should be placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. Treat this thing as a single line” it said. And I was calling this at this point the simple wave. It said “treat the simple wave as a.. a line in a hexagram”. Well when you do that, [pause] bear with me folks. Remember I said the learning curve is steep. [08:02:00] However, it’s not long.

Audience: Can I ask for you’re [inaudible]

TMK: Oh yeah.

Audience: Can I get the [inaudible] across the room.

TMK: What.. what color?

Audience: Yeah well uh..

TMK: Yellow?

Audience: [Inaudible]

TMK: Yellow?

Audience: [Inaudible]

TMK: Lemme see.. [pause] Ahh. Ok so if we treat this module as the bottom of a hierarchy then we want to treat it like a line. So what do you do with lines [08:02:30] in I Ching land? You p.. stack six of them on top of each other. So I’m gonna symbolise this thing with an “S”. Ok. So here’s what I did. I made.. I took one of them. And another one. And another one. [sounds of drawing on a surface] and another one. And I said “did I do good?”. [08:03:00] [audience laughs] And it said “Sort of. But a hexagram is more than six lines isn’t it?” And I said “Well what more is it than six lines?” It said “well it’s two tri-grams”. Said “oh.. ok”. So then I went like this.. [sounds of drawing on a surface]. Do you see how I superimposed the thing over the six two-larger ones which were [08:03:30] superimposed over three? So then I said “S’alright?”. It said “Yes, except you forgot one thing. A hexagram has an identity as a whole. As a hexagram”. Said “Ok..” [scribbles] “Good?”. It said “Yes. Good. Now, what are you going to DO with it?”. And I’ll show this to you. Uhm.. [scribble] Just so you can get.. [08:04:00] the idea. I don’t know how visible this will be. This is what you get if you do that. And what it looks like is exactly what it looks like, which is a hodge-podge of crazy lines running everywhere on three levels [audience laughs] and uh.. The thing said to me.. It said “this is a map of time”. And I.. went.. I made the mistake of saying to my [08:04:30] friends and acquaintances “this is a map of time!” [audience laughs]. And they said, you know “we’re very concerned. Apparently.. [audience giggling] you didn’t get better even though you claimed you got better. And now, you know, you run around, showing this thing to people.. And notice.. It.. oh it ha.. Everything is in closure up here, and then everything attains closure down here. And then there’s sub-closures. Six [08:05:00] on one level, two on another, and the final on this line. And FINALLY my friend Ralph Abraham took pitty on me and he said “the problem with this thing.. is.. That it cannot coat [??] dogma. Nobody can understand this thing.. except you. You are necessary for its interpretation”. [audience laughs] And I said “So what am I.. what do I do?”. And he said “you must LEARN how to change this into a more orthodox mathematical object that.. That math.. Mathematicians can then discuss with you”. And I was completely

stuck. And I s.. sat with it for.. two years. I.. cause it just seemed.. I.. I am not a mathematician. I had NO clue as to how to do that. And finally one afternoon.. Uh.. the pot was good enough, or the stars moved into position or something.

[08:06:00] (end of this transcription segment)

Transcribed by Nick Whiu

TM: [8:06:00]...and in a single instant i saw how to carry out the mathematical reduction of this wave and i did it.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh, on this?

Audience: Yeah, it looked that way from here.

TM: Oh well if you look at it closely you'll see that because of a, are at different scales it isn't that, one side is egl- exactly like the other side. Yeah, there are dissimilarities. [8:06:30] So i finally, figured out how to, mathematize and conserve all the qualities of that wave and i put it into an ordinary cartesian object, which i doubt you can see but you don't really have to see it anyway. All this is, see what that is? It's just a one, it's an ordinary graph of some sort.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Ah?

Audience: Is that the sum of...[inaudible]?

TM: It's the sum of certain qualities. There was skew, [8:07:00] parallelism, angle of approach, crossover. There were about five things that i felt were important and i figured out how to mathematize them all, so that this, which is an or-ordinary cartesian graph, is in fact a topological equivalent of Maya cult diagram and... Yeah?

Audience: Each one of those points is a summation of these factors?

TM: Yeah right, uh uh. So, then (ahh), [8:07:30] and then i started saying to people, this is a map of time. [audience laughs] And they said, is it? [Terence laughs] Well, where are we? [Terence laughs] And i said, well (ahh), hum, (ahh), we, (ahh), hum... In order to know where we are we would have to know where the endpoint is. If you have a wave you have a wavelength so, we have to find the endpoint. So then i began collecting historical data, and fitting [8:08:00] curves,

to it, trying to define the endpoint. Now, remember yesterday at the close of the day or in the afternoon we got off on what appeared to some people to be, attention about novelty and science and time and whether, it was (ahh), whether it-it should be viewed as a flat plane or a fractal or something like that? Well, what the thing was telling me was, that novelty, is (ahh), something [8:08:30] which can be charted in time and that these waves were actually pictures of (ahh), of (ahh), the ebb and flow of novelty. That this wasn't charting stock prices or population rise or average temperatures, it was charting the ebb and flow of novelty through time and that... Como?

Audience: Novelty is...[inaudible]?

TM: Novelty is (ahh), [8:09:00] a density of connection, as opposed you know, complexity can be quantified then you say complexity ebbs and flows. Mean if we have a device which measured complexity and we measured this point right here, as opposed to this point an inch behind my finger, i'm hoping it would tell us that an inch behind my finger is a more complex environment than this point right here. [8:09:30] So space and time, is then, seem to be a medium with a density (ahh), comp-densification of complexity embedded in it like raisins or something. Yeah?

Audience: Looking at your...[inaudible]...creation in that graph. In other words, how do you establish origin and the endpoint when looking at that graph?

TM: Well, until you scale it against time, you don't have to, i mean i think...

Audience: [inaudible]...[8:10:00]

TM: Well i think what you're, i think if i understand your question right. Remember how i said that over here it was at closure? It goes like this. And that's both lines, they're running, that's both sides of the graph they're perfectly superimposed over each other. At this point they ceased to be superimposed. One goes that way and one goes that way and then you start getting this kind of stuff and then when you come down to the end [8:10:30] they fall into closure again.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yes it's a thing of say... exactly you got it. Okay.

Audience: What would be the beginning of time? Is that some...[inaudible]...Garden of Eden...[inaudible]?

TM: Well (ahh), to this point we haven't discussed this thing scaled against calendrical time we just kind of look at it as a mathematical object. Then what i realized was, if these are part, if-if [8:11:00] this thing has 384 points in it, and this has, six. Then the, what the thing was telling me was, you have to map the, you have to map the way back over itself. So you take all 384 points and you cram them into this space wandering up this hill, then you go to this space and you cram all [8:11:30] 384 points in here and you create a fractal infinite regress. Do you understand? [audience laughs] Say you understand. [Terence and audience laughs] You will understand. Okay so then that was the time, that was the time map. It was saying novelty can be described by an infinite fractal regress that is contained in the I Ching. Now, the main objection that i was meeting from people who wanted to lock me up was, they were saying...[8:12:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [8:12:00]...was, they were saying, now let's get this straight. You want to revise modern physics, based on a pattern which you found in an ancient Chinese book of divination is that correct? [audience laughs] And i-i could feel the force of that criticism but that's how i think, you know, where somebody from some nut piece of data then wants to build castles in the air and so (ahh) i created a metaphor [8:12:30] which is satisfying to me i hope it's satisfying to somebody else, trying to explain why we should seek a law of physics, inside the structure of (ahh) the I Ching. [drinks water] And here's the metaphor, think of sand dunes. Picture them in your mind, since this is the New Age you may even close your eyes if it helps. Picture sand dunes. Now, [8:13:00] notice, that sand dunes, look, like wind. Sand dunes look like wind, and sand dunes are made, by wind. So now let's analyze the situation, let's think of wind as input and let's think of sand grains as bits inside a computer. So when the wind blows the program [8:13:30] runs and the bits rearrange themselves and they arrange themselves into a lower dimensional slice of wind. Essentially wind, which has a pressure variant phenomenon variable in time, turns into a pictorial phenomenon variant across the pictorial surface. You see how that works? Well, now...[drinks water] [8:14:00] Sand dunes created by wind, bear the impression of wind. (ahh), lines of foam and beach detritus deposited by the incoming tide, bear the form of waves. So what it was telling me was, it was telling me that, things formed in time bear the impression of the forces which created them. And i said, well then what is the equivalent of sand dunes or waves of beach detritus [8:14:30] in the real world? And it said, human beings! Genes, not grains of sand. Genes are moved by time and we as hyper dimensional objects, we human beings and other animals, we bear the impression of the forces that created us and if novelty truly does Adam flow, the way wind speed ebbs and flows over a landscape, than the creatures [8:15:00] that have arisen in time will bear the imprint of this ebb and flow and i believe that what was going on with the people who created the I Ching, was that they (ahh), were practicing some kind of yoga or some kind of psychedelic + yoga thing and they were, (ahh) stilling their micro physical functions and they were descending deep into organism, and there they [8:15:30] were seeing the ebb and flow of variables of some sort, and they watched... Who knows how long? Centuries maybe. And they said, you now, in the organism there is the ebb and flow of variables and then they ask questions like, how many variables are there are there an infinite number? And they began to create notation system for these variables and finally they came to the conclusion, no, there are not an infinite number [8:16:00] there are 64 of these temporal variables. And think of them as elements, in the same way that the entire world of physical manifestation can be created out of a 104 physical elements, the entire world of temporal manifestation can be created out of 64 elements and so the way i think of reality having survived this experience, is,

[8:16:30] you have hexagrams moving on many levels. Let's say you have a hexagram which rules this 10 thousand year period. For 10 thousand years this hexagram will rule and then on the next level the hexagrams are changing every, 100 years, and then on the next level every 10 minutes, and on the next level every 15 seconds. Wha-what any point in The Matrix called now, is, is the perspective [8:17:00] you have when you look through the moving film of these temporal elements moving on many many levels you see, They're, they're, they create and unique juxtaposition with each other in every single moment and that is (ahh), what the unique felt presence of-of (ahh), immediate reality is all about. Well, i, by this time... Yeah question? [8:17:30] No...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: What?

Audience: That, that position where, where they all come together...[inaudible]...I look at that, always look at this symbol, the I Ching symbol as the guiding symbol of this plane and reality...[inaudible]...So your thoughts about the exact...[inaudible]...time and body time. Is that true? [8:18:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

Audience : [...] [8:18:00] membrane that is between time and [non-time? God-time? ..inaudible], but is that true?

Terence : Yeah, pretty much. I mean... You know... Plato said "Time is the moving image of eternity."

Audience : It's a wavefront.

Terence : It's a wavefront, and it's an interference pattern. Yes, it's a, it's a, it's a, uh a kind of hologram, uh.. and a set of resonances and interference patterns that are created when these waves moving at many levels expression, superimpose and collide with each other. [8:18:30] And through the use of small computers, we can explore various places within the wave, and we can position it against time. Because what it's saying is that novelty comes and goes. You know.. Yesterday was wonderful, tomorrow could be dogshit. Same for last year and next year. Uh.. Time undergoes changes, on many scales. [8:19:00] I mean from moment to moment if you watch your mind... You're going up, you're going down, and then on the daily scale up, down, yearly scale up, down, and then on all scales there is ebb and flow of novelty. And all these scales can be mathematically collapsed into one wave and then with a computer you can not only predict the future, which is fairly trivial because who can gainsay it, but you can also predict the past! [8:19:30] Which is very tricky. Because most people have a good deal more information about the past than they do about the future. Ya..

Audience : [8:19:40] [hardly audible comments or questions] larger scale... going up.. .

Terence : That's right... That's right.. Well no, you've got the whole concept correct except you don't need [8:20:00] an infinite number because look what happens... If you start with 384 days and you start multiplying upward by 64, remember I said the first one was 67 years, we only have to carry out about six of these till you have 72 billion years, more time than is necessary for the universe to have burst itself and reached its present state. Similarly, if you start dividing... uh, you only have to divide [8:20:30] 11 times to reach the realm of Planck's constant (6.55×10^{-23} Earth seconds), in technical parlance known as a jiffy. Beyond the jiffy, there is no need to continue the divisions because the jiffy defines the grain of the canvas on which reality is projected. So what we have are, uh, you know, uh, a cosmology of roughly 22 levels [8:21:00] at the highest level it's 72 billion years, at the lowest level it's in the realm of Planck's constant, and we are somewhere suspended in-between, and these things are coming and going on every level. Yeah..

Audience : [inaudible] .. the way that you arrived at this conclusion.. to say the least... however, it seems to me that you'll be able to use this model to see some difference in the way [inaudible] compared to the Third Reich. [8:21:30]

Terence : Absolutely!

Audience : [inaudible]

Terence: Yes, I'm hurrying us toward the more fun part of this and I think that we'll do it now. What we're gonna do now is look at the wave placed against history, with my end date, December 22nd 2012, although the machine will accept any end date. And the idea that you should be asking yourself is.. you know, "this clown [8:22:00] claims that this thing describes the ebb and flow of novelty, but does it in fact fit my intuition of the ebb and flow of novelty?" Now, here's the good news: the next part of the lecture does not depend on anything that's been said in the first part. Uh.. you don't have to understand anything I said in the last half hour to appreciate the neatness of the next level. Lucky for us, eh? [laughs in the audience]

Audience: [inaudible] [8:22:30]

Terence: Mmm. That's fine i think. So now... Because you know some people aren't interested in this.. You tell them you can predict the future and they say "well, predict it!". And then you predict it correctly, and then they say "Great!". It never enters their mind to ask "How did you predict it?" which is what I, out of obligation to intellectual fairness, feel that I should expose you to.

Now, let's look at the wave. [8:23:00] Eum..

Now, let me explain the rules of the game here. There are six billion years currently on screen. Today is over here, at 98.8 percent. This is the last 6 billion years. And, let me explain to you how you interpret the wave. And if you want to take a moment and rearrange yourselves, [8:23:30] the rest of it is gonna be fairly close focus on this thing, so don't be shy, and don't make yourself uncomfortable.

Audience: [two people talking, inaudible questions about the end date]

Terence: Ah, the end date! Uh.. It.. I got it by fitting historical data to the wave and seeing.. I had certain intuitions.. I mean, for instance, I said “Well, if I have a wave which describes historical novelty, by God it better do well on the Italian Renaissance, it should do well [8:24:00] on the 20th century, and it should do well on the Golden Age of Greece. If a wave of novelty incorrectly predicts those episodes, it’s a pretty worthless theory of novelty. Once I had chosen an end date, and I chose December 22nd 2012, I got a lot of support for that by realizing that the Mayan calendar chose the same end date. [8:24:27]

Transcribed by Giovanni Colombo

TM: [8:24:00]...it should do well on the 20th century and it should do well on the Golden Age of Greece. If a theory of novelty incorrectly predicts those episodes, it's a pretty worthless theory of novelty. Once i had chosen an end date and i chose December 22nd 2012 i got a lot of support for that by realizing that the Mayan calendar chose the same end date. Now the only thing i have in common with the ancient [8:24:30] Maya, is that we both take psychedelic mushrooms. Now is it conceivable that there is a message in the mushroom, as specific, as no matter where in space and time you are and you take these mushrooms it says, December 22nd 2012 AD. It appears so because the Mayans, their civilization rose and fell with a very interesting part of their own cale-(ahh) calendrical machinery. [8:25:00] They predicted the end of the world a thousand years after their own eclipse and they predicted the birth of their cal-they set the birth of their calendar a thousand years preceding the emergence of their civilization. Yeah.

Audience: (ahh) So, now this is 2012...

TM: Huh, huh.

Audience: Is this what the Mayans have as a completion of a large cycle or is it what they are believe it is, the completion of all their cycles?

TM: It depends on, on who you talk to. (ahh) [8:25:30] The Mayan calendar is built up of nested cycles some twenty years in length, some two forty and there are 13 baktuns. Which i think a baktun is 396 years in duration and most Mayanists believe, that, that a set of 13 baktuns, is the complete calendrical set. There's a minority of Mayanists who want to argue that there are greater cycles than that. [8:26:00] (ahh) In any case baktun 13 will come to an end December 22nd 2012, so (ahh), you know, it's good enough for me. [audience laughs]

Audience: Could you say just a little bit more about the, property of novelty, is, is it synonymous with complexity?

TM: Well (ahh), you know, if, since this is a push-pull theory and we have novelty versus something, the opposite of novelty is habit. [8:26:30] Rupert insisted on that. I was calling it entropy and, conservatism and recidivism and he said no. It's a war between habit and novelty. Habit means a reversion to a traditional and already established pattern. Novelty means a breaking out into a previous domain, untested domain of new connections and (ahh), and new possibilities.

Audience: [8:27:00] [inaudible]

TM: You mean as in...(ahh)?

Audience: Something...[inaudible]...surprising you?

TM: Yes. The unexpected is built into it because when you come around some of these curves there are unexpected things going on.

Audience: What about the chaos order boundary, sounds like that a lot?

TM: Yeah, well you can think of it that way. I haven't completely, resolved how novelty should be defined because if you know anything about Information Theory you know that they had a hell of a time getting a definition of complexity [8:27:30] together over there. They also were interested in mathematical definitions of complexity but they haven't made too much progress.

[This concludes tape 6, our program continues with tape 7. Our program continues with tape 7]

TM: Let me explain to you how to read the graph. Because it's the exact opposite psychologically of a, stock market graph. I think when you [8:28:00] look at a stock market most of us want it to go up, not down. In this game we want it to go down. The, nov-, the higher states of novelty occur as you approach zero. So this is the most novel point on the screen, this is the most, habit impacted moment on the screen and what you see is habit and novelty are at war with each other. (ahh) Now here's how i [8:28:30] interpret this particular screen and it is a basis for interpreting all the rest. This is a turning point, after a long period of habit, consolidation and recidivism, whatever that means at 4.7 billion years ago. (ahh) Something very novel happened along this descent. I maintain that it's actually the stabilization of the surface of the Earth itself.

That what we're seeing here, [8:29:00] is the Earth changing into a stable planetary body and then (ahh), the earliest forms of life, the Proto life, appears right here and undergoes a series then of fluctuations then (ahh), there is some kind of a problem, some impediment to what would otherwise be, the rather straight shot toward novelty by this (ahh), [8:29:30] spike here. Well, evolutionary biologists say that in the early history of the Earth there was a crisis having to do with the production of oxygen as a waste gas. Life arose in a non-reducing atmosphere. The first, pollution crisis in the history of the Earth was pollution by oxygen and organisms had to develop complex

membranes and mechanisms for dealing with this and that's what happened along here...[8:30:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [8:30:00]... and that's what happened along here. And (ahh), once that was achieved then the pace of novelty quickened and the descent continued and we, our entire civilization, in fact, you know, the last bill-million years as a matter of fact, is lost down here in this decastric fluctuation near the zero point. In other words, relative to these places in the wave, we're so near the maximum of novelty [8:30:30] that it's practically punching in through the walls and in fact human civilization (ahh) correctly mirrors that. I mean, for you would expect to find a civilization on this graph, it's somewhere down in here. Well now if everything is working right...

Audience: [inaudible]...98.8%.

TM: 90 let's, yeah, 98.8% if the...

Audience: The target date of today.

TM: The target date of today. Now what I'm going to do if there's a zoom function here [8:31:00] and we're gonna start flying towards the present and every time a screen changes we're gonna see half as much time on the screen. We have six billion years up, we'll go to three, then one and a half, then .7 time and so forth. This seems to be an excellent computer with a fast chip so...

Audience: [inaudible]...the right hand on the screen.

TM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and [8:31:30] we're gonna get greater and greater detail and, your attitude towards this should be, i'm asserting that this is true, you have a notion of where the high points in the evolutionary human history have occurred. You should be asking yourself whether this fits your intuition. Now obviously (ahh) it's pretty vague stuff when we're looking at 6 billion years but on the other hand, we can take this thing down [8:32:00] to three days if necessary and (ahh) we know where the great changes have come in the last thousand years it's not that ambiguous. So let's (ahh) test the zoom function...[silence]...zoom it asks me, yes i reply. Seek minimum it asks me, no i reply. Approach factor it asks me, and i'm going to tell it two, in order to have the screen each time it would accept any number but two [8:32:30] seems rational for demonstration purposes.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: No it's gonna slice the time. It's gonna slice it each time and rescale.

Audience: It's coming up with minute, hour and day...[inaudible]...so is the origin of time... [inaudible]...like the origin of the universe?

TM: You would presume so.

Audience: So the Big Bang would kind of like be in the middle of the novelty...[inaudible].

TM: The Big Bang would be, no, the Big Bang would be very high because there's no life, [8:33:00] there's no atomic system, there's no molecules it's a very low complexity situation at the birth of the universe.

Audience: It's not the...[inaudible].

TM: Yeah, no, yes that's right, the Big Bang it's somewhere up here, up here (ahh). Okay now, before i do this let me locate escape, okay. This is such a pleasure to do it with fast machines. Okay there's three billion, see how detail [8:33:30] is coming up as time is lost? And, and if anybody wants me to stop it at any point i will (ahh).

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Here's 750 million years. This is virtually the entire history of life on Earth and in fact, of higher life. I'm sorry, you know, organisms, not, not multicellular life. This is the history of multicellular life and what you see is there was a steep descent [8:34:00] into novelty, until about 300 million years ago and then there are a series of oscillations close to zero until (ahh) about 65 million years ago and then there's a sudden plunge deeper into novelty immediately preceding the conrescence which occurs on the, at dawn Greenwich Mean Time December 22nd 2012. One thing about this theory, it's not vague [8:34:30] (ahh), and it, notice that it doesn't edge on

predictions either. It fills every screen is full of predictions.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Two.

Audience: Approach factor?

TM: Approach factor, yah. Okay we got 750 million years on the screen, 375 million years on the screen. Now i wanna talk about this for a minute. Now this is a screen full of dramatic [8:35:00] predictions, these are tremendously punctuated and temporally define plunges into novelty and (ahh) we don't have tremendous paleontological records for what's going on 275 million years ago but from studying these low points and talking to geochronologists about them, i've decided that these are (ahh) planetesimals impacts on the earth. [8:35:30] Now you know that the last one was 65 million years ago, that's this one, right there but there were others, there was one (ahh), this one, 220 million years ago.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh, asteroid strikes on the Earth.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh well, there was a little tiny one in Arizona. Those happened all the time in Cosmic terms, every hundred thousand years or so. [8:36:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [8:36:00] But, (ahh) this thing that happened 65 million years ago was a planet shattered (ahh) and, they're rare, they're rare. Okay so, so, i'm suggesting that these are asteroid impacts which then evolution had to restart, reclaim his territory and then, there is something else happening. They may not all be asteroid impacts. They could be (ahh), you know, enormous episodes of volcanism on the Earth such as [8:36:30] the Deccan traps in India or something like that. Now let's start the thing again.

Audience: And now what timeline...[inaudible].

TM: What we're looking at now? 375. [silence] Seek minimum, no. Approach factor, two, go for it. [silence] That's 187 million years, there's the impact 65 million years ago. Now let's look at this. This is the last [8:37:00] 93 million years.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Ah yes, it looks like the thing we started out with, somebody's paying attention! [audience laughs] Right on, yes yes.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: See what happens is a fractal is a nested dataset and every time you pass through a whole number, the pattern repeats. This sets up a very interesting, (ahh), (ahh), set of circumstances inside [8:37:30] the way which is that we can talk about temporal resonance. We can talk about how the Third Reich, is a resonance of ancient Egypt. We can talk about Saddam Hussein as a resonance of Muhammad because when we look at the way these things are lined up historically we see that, directly above Saddam Hussein and in a relationship of parallelism is the career of the prophet [8:38:00] and so what is being suggested here is that every day, every moment, is in fact an interference pattern created by other times and places. This is not, this is a fairly challenging and peculiar idea not something the linear western mind would have ever come up with. So for instance, if you should find yourself having lunch in a place called Hadrian's hamburger stand, this has [8:38:30] something, to do, with the emperor Hadrian and his four-year military campaign in Scotland. He is a direct causal influence on your being at Hadrian's hamburger stand for lunch. I like to say, (ahh) Rome falls 9 times an hour [audience laughs] and you have to be, perceptive. You have to be paying attention to the ebb and flow of your own inner, thoughts but, if you are you feel the fall of Rome,

[8:39:00] you also feel the Age of Exploration, of the birth of Buddha (ahh) the, the fall of Carthage. It all happens nine times an hour. It also happens twice a day and once a year, yeah.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: (ahh) Sometimes, yeah it is very similar.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: That's right.

Audience: [inaudible] [8:39:30]

TM: Yeah there's, (ahh) we never tried to do it, scientifically, you know where you would actually keep track, but (ahh) major astrological conjunctions are often reflected in major ingressions into novelty.

Audience: Terence, interestingly as you or anyone else that's (ahh) aware of this, ever tried to convolve this with, with say Einstein field equations?

TM: No because i'm not smart enough to do that.

Audience: I think that would be a fascinating [8:40:00] thing to do because what you do is input, input using as one variable this entire system.

TM: That's right.

Audience: And what it would produce would be fascinating.

TM: I think God has chosen you for this work. [audience laughs]

Audience: This makes me ask, what are the historical antecedents of Reagan and Bush? [audience laughs]

TM: Ohh, ohh, Ronald Reagan was, (ahh), (ahh), his historical antecedents were the last six Roman emperors [8:40:30] before the fall of Rome in 475 and Bush's antecedents is (ahh), (uhm)...

Audience: [inaudible]...clowns...[audience laughs]

TM: No i think, i think, i think Bush gets to be (ahh) Justinian.

Audience: Oh!

TM: You remember somebody said history always occurs twice, first as tragedy then as farce? [audience laughs] That person, who had a good intuitive (ahh)... [8:41:00] So now let's go into this a little more. (ahh) How much time do we have? Oh 93 million years, okay. [audience laughs] So, here's the a, here's the asteroid impact and, and, dead on! I mean, 65 million years it's right there, to the degree that we can date these two events. It's a win it's a bull's eye, and, you know it was a huge setback for organic life as i said this morning, nothing larger than a chicken [8:41:30] survived it. (ahh) The mammals begin their radiation and, and (ahh), this are, you know, just different vicissitudes. I'm not sure what to make of this spike here but i haven't really spend a lot of time on that period from 40 to 36 million years ago. Somebody else may have a notion as to what this represents.

Audience: [inaudible]...the recovery though is fairly rapid.

TM: Which it was. (ahh) Evolutionary biologists say, you know, that forms quickly...[8:42:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [8:42:00]...reoccupied all the niches and remember if this hadn't happened, we wouldn't be the planetary rulers that we are. We'd still be little furry creatures trying to steal eggs out of the nest of the saurian masters who ruled the planet.

Audience: Why is this?

TM: Why? Because all the dinosaurs were killed in this impact and that allowed these little egg stealing rodent-like furry creatures to undergo an [8:42:30] explosive evolutionary radiation leading directly to our own vast superiority over the rest of nature. Oh, yeah, yeah, no, yeah?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh, that's a whole different scale you see, the dinosaurs died off 65 million years ago. The ice age is a phenomenon of the last 5 million years, and we'll see the ice ages but not there, right now those ice ages [8:43:00] are down in here, somewhere lost in the detail. Let's to go back to our zoom.

Audience: We'll get there, won't we?

TM: Oh yeah, we'll get there.

Audience: I'm waiting to be at my writing spot.

TM: Don't worry! No, we don't wanna seek the minimum, the approach factor should be two. [silence] Ok, 93 million years on the screen, 46 million years on the screen, [8:43:30] 23 million, 11 million, 5 million, 5 million years on the screen, now here your ice ages. Here they are you see, (ahh) when the ice is in place, species are bottled up and gene transfer is impeded, [8:44:00] this constitutes a non-novel situation. Then when the ice melts, these gene pools re-encounter each other and you get proliferation of form. We're getting excellent agreement here, this is the melting of the last glacier, (ahh) maybe. I'm not...

Audience: [inaudible]...the last glacier was about 13 thousand years ago?

TM: Yeah i think it's actually over here still lost in detail. But these are, (ahh) you know how evolution is described as punctuated, how it [8:44:30] isn't that evolution proceeds smoothly but that will be a climax stasis and then suddenly many new species well, these are the punctuated evolution. This is actually a picture of punctuated evolution and the high numbers of species

are down in this troughs and the low numbers of species are on this ascents close to the changeover, point. So, (ahh) again the paleontological data isn't that clear but at this [8:45:00] scale of resolution we're getting good agreement between data and theory.

Audience: I think different...[inaudible]...(ahh) a guy called...[inaudible]...do you know?...[inaudible]

TM: Well, it, it's, the, they are topologically equivalent but not numerically equivalent.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah.

Audience: [inaudible] [8:45:30]

TM: That's right. It's a damped oscillation. Is really what we're seeing.

Audience: [inaudible]...because that's one of things...[inaudible]

TM: Yeah, well i'm hope you'll be on it by Monday afternoon (ahh). [audience laughs] Ok, let me restart the zoom.

No, i'm restarting the zoom, zoom. Yes?

Audience: I have a question.

TM: Ok.

Audience: About magnetic poles...

TM: Yes, these [8:46:00] could very well be magnetic reversals.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, they, they very well could be magnetic reversals and...

Audience: So we're looking at ice ages.

TM: I, well what we're looking at is i'm suggesting they're ice ages, it was suggested that they're geomagnetic reversals. Geomagnetic reversals and ice ages may even have links to each other.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: (ahh) Well we see that over here (ahh) a steep [8:46:30] descent into novelty going deeper than we've ever gone before and that would probably indicate that an animal or an organ as appeared of a density of complexity greater than anything which preceded it. So i would say yes.

Audience: What, how, how you know that?

TM: Well, let me start the zoom and we'll get over in here on a big scale and then you can see. Ok, we're gonna go from 5 million, [8:48:00] down to 2 million. Now let's discuss this. Because this is the domain in which we evolved. Our story is on screen at this point (ahh), it's said that (ahh), the... A hundred thousand years ago at the Klasies Cave

River mouth in South Africa

there were Homosapiens indistinguishable from the people sitting in this room. [8:47:30] The oldest Homosapien skeletons are from there. That clear over here (ahh), this is the fungi deradiation meaning the proliferation of these crymate forms (ahh), and, and that's about (ahh), 900, a million years ago. (ahh) This, this is the whole period in which the primates were, breaking away from the rest of Nature and, and this is, i think probably... [8:48:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [8:48:00]...where the mushrooms begin to come into the picture and see how the whole system is propelled into lower levels of novelty than anything which preceded it.

Audience: Lower...[inaudible]

TM: Higher levels is novelty, when the wave moves down novelty is increasing. Zoom, yes. Seek minimum, no.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: That's one way of saying it [8:48:30] or increase density of connection or (ahh), it means something happening which is never happened before which allows (ahh), novelty to build upon itself. We talked about this a little bit yesterday. About how the early Universe was very simple and then came ordinary chemistry and then (ahh), organic chemistry and then life and then complex life and then higher [8:49:00] animals and then primitive human beings and then language and culture and then computers and particle accelerators and all of this representing steeper and steeper descents into novelty. Headed toward a confrontation with novelty at infinite density, not millennia or ballenia in the future but, twenty years from now.

Audience: It's known that something being created...[inaudible]...being [8:49:30] stored...[inaudible]...entire system.

TM: Conserved is the word i use but yes, that's right.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: That's right. Well, when we get to the present you'll be able to see, you know, the past few months, the next few months, the next few years. We approach it this way cuz i wanna convince you that there's something [8:50:00] sort of woo woo about this thing. It does seem to have an uncanny predictive ability. Now, the most commonly met-abjection to this, and it may be forming in your mind is, that this guy just doesn't understand patterns and that every pattern can be used to describe a different pattern. But i resist this because notice that, this whole set of correlations is dependent upon this zero [8:50:30] date which we inputted. If we shift the zero date, then all the other, predictions would be thrown off. Well now naturally if we shift the zero date 50 years, it's not gonna have a hell of an effect on an event 175 million years ago, but if we move the date 50 years and we look at 1492, you know, it's all screwed up. You have to be right on the money [8:51:00] when you get into the historical data field because the historical data field can vary over a 24-hour period. I mean, John F. Kennedy dead, John F. Kennedy alive, the difference is 10 minutes. So, it can be very, (ahh) it can be very, highly, (ahh) quantified specific yeah, (ahh) okay. (ahh) Enter.

That's 2 million, roughly 3 million years on the screen, 1.5 [8:51:30] million years on the screen, 700 thousand. Let's look at this for a minute. This is the last million years and the last hundred thousand years are right there. This is the emergence of modern human type and it sets off the last cascade at least at this scale. So, all of this is evolutionary advance and [8:52:00] climatological flux and so forth and then from the time the modern human type emerges, it's a straight shot, down in there. [silence] Now, obviously we all know more about time as we get closer to the present. This is 366 thousand years to a 100 thousand years up there. [8:52:30] There's the last 200 thousand years, there's the last 100 thousand years. [silence] This is, this is the environment in which we were, shaped. These are (ahh), very pro-, these are climatological fluctuations here but the last, this is the last glaciation...[sex moaning sounds from a computer in the audience]

Audience: Oh, forgot, shut down the computer! [8:53:00] [audience laughs]

TM: Is it dying or is it having a good time?! [audience laughs]

Audience: [inaudible]...I forgot it does that! Anyway...

TM: What are you doing this evening? [audience laughs]

Audience: [inaudible]...Harry met Sally remember that orgasm in the restaurant?

TM: Remember the orgasm in the restaurant when Harry met Sally? [8:53:30] Vaguely... [audience laughs] (ahh)

Ok, the last 91 thousand years the glaciers melt, here. The glacier melt begins around 19 thousand years ago and as you see is just a straight fall from there to the moon flight into, H. Ross Perot [audience laughs] and to all the rest of it. And these are again episodes probably of glaciation or flux in the incidence... [8:54:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [8:54:00]...of incoming cosmic radiation, is hard to say what it is.

Audience: [inaudible]...the last 3 or 4 days...[inaudible]

TM: Oh yeah, we can go down. We can take it down to very small. The, (ahh) i mean, understand that the (ahh), the program does many wonderful things which we're not doing. I'm just doing a simple demo but obviously all this stuff has got to be about something. (ahh) [audience laughs] [8:54:30] Now we're getting into the area where people have real data, that's 45 thousand years, 22 thousand years on the screen. Let's look at this for a minute. This is worth talking about. Now we, now the pressure begins to come on. It's all very well to predict the interglacials that may or may not have occurred, the predicting assassinations of dynastic families is a little trickier. Here's the glacial melt, [8:55:00] begins and species, this is the descent, this is where the mushroom paradise, existed in its fullest expression from about (ahh) 17 thousand years ago to about 10 thousand years ago. Well now what is this sudden interruption of the descent into novelty here? I maintain based on the archaeological record that is what is called the Tanged Points techno-complex. Do you all know what that is? [8:55:30] It's (ahh), does anybody know what it is? Tanged Points techno-complex means that (ahh), before this, before this point (ahh), when an arrowhead is found, you find one. It means it was lost by somebody who was hunting. Around 10 thousand BC you begin to find large numbers of arrowheads all in one place without (ahh) chipping, fragments. [8:56:00] This was not an arrowhead factory, this was the site of a battle between human populations. War, is invented here because agriculture, is invented here. You're looking at the end of the partnership paradise. The era of orgy gives way to the era of anxious monogamy, warfare, agriculture (ahh) you know, egohood, is born. Now somebody asked about, [8:56:30] who who, asked about Çatal Höyük? Somebody... Çatal Höyük, bottom of this stab here. The fire that burned through Çatal level 5A occurred in 65 hundred BC. We know this from charcoal dating. It's right there, it's on the money. See, somehow this, the, this whole thing Tanged Point techno-complexe bummer was overcome and there was a steep descent, into novelty [8:57:00] and (ahh) Çatal Höyük was the product of that. But then it was destroyed and there was a rebound into chuckle avidness for a while and then write down here in the bottom of this thing, is where the Great Pyramid is sitting. You know, the Great Pyramid was finished in September of 2970 BC. Why this should be so controversial?

I do not understand because there are grains of charcoal [8:57:30] between the unmoved stones. That charcoal is not been anywhere since the day that stone was set in place and its 2790 BC. These people, who want to push it back and say it's 10 thousand years old, well the obligation to prove is on them because the carbon radiological data argues. You see, there's some tendency in the New Age, which i don't understand very well, that wants to make everything older, than it is. [8:58:00] You know, the pyramids are 50 thousand years old, Atlantis rose and fell a 100 thousand

years... The miracle, is how new, everything is. The pyramids were built day before yesterday. Charlemagne was King of France early this morning. It's all, very, very, recent. I mean the emergence of mind out of non-mind is an event, practically (ahh), on top of us. Now let's start it up and we'll get really down [8:58:30] to the...

Audience: Can you hear me?

TM: Huh, huh.

Audience: Is the progression of time changing...[inaudible]

TM: Well, yes in a sense because you see what happens is when you, it's a built-in mathematical property of this wave that when you get to the end of a big wave, there's, when you get to the end on any scale there's a sudden drop, to the next scale and then it goes along to the end [8:59:00] and then there's a sudden drop. So if what we're saying is that a universe is made like, a universe that actually have this structure that i outlined for you, of 26 levels, where each level was 1/64 smaller than the level which preceded it, a universe built on that kind of architectonics would only be half way through its, life, an hour and 35 minutes before the end. [8:59:30] Do you see how that would work? But in the last hour and 35 minutes it's going to go through as much development as it went through in the previous 72 billion years. So yes, time is accelerating, accelerating into, you know, we've gone from, barely moving to approaching a staggering speed and i maintain, you know, that in 2012, the last, 6 days preceding the approach to conrescence...[9:00:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: [9:00:00]...will be the jackpot. I mean the laws of physics will break down, everything will be in a state of visible motile transformation. This isn't happening in the human world, it isn't happening in our minds. It's a crisis in the strut- the structure of physical law itself and that's why, people, that's why, this theory will be hard to disprove or prove until so close to the end date [9:00:30] that you'll barely have time to make a telephone call to say whether it's true or not before if it is true your telephone call becomes totally irrelevant you know.

Audience: [inaudible]...space time itself are being contorted, twisted and...[inaudible]

TM: Yeah, that's right.

Audience: [inaudible]...to make that particular note.

TM: No, that's right. And in fact seems unlikely to you, let's always, let's never forget what the Orthodox guys are peddling. [audience laughs] They're peddling the Big Bang Theory [9:01:00] which says the universe sprang from nothing in a single instant. I would prefer what i called the big surprise cosmology because it seems to me if you

have to have a singularity, the, the least likely place to find the singularity would be in a featureless high vacuum. If you want to find a singularity look in a corner of the universe where there are planets, stars, elements, organisms, alphabets, civilizations, [9:01:30] mines, in other words look in a complex domain if you want to find a singularity. That's where you might have some chance of finding it but finding it in a unflood nothingness is a strange place to look even.

Audience: One of the arguments, maybe being proposed by those on the...[inaudible]...that in fact is a very complex universe that then push through a membrane into the singularity which then creates another entire...

TM: Well, one possibility [9:02:00] is that it's a wrap around that we're just not, we're not whistling dixie when we talk about the archaic revival. We're actually, what history is, is a finger reaching for the reset button and when you finally touch if you find yourself at the moment of the Big Bang. You know, you've actually sent it screaming back to the first moment.

Audience: [inaudible]...exercise in, in holographics...[inaudible]...that final experience is a very pertinent important holographic description [9:02:30] (ahh) the whole, the whole...

TM: That's right and every cycle is a holographic description of the cycles that preceded it.

Audience: We've just seen.

TM: Right. So in 1945 when the bomb flickers into existence over Hiroshima, this is the resonance of the Big Bang. It's being caused by the Big Bang and, the entire life of the universe, is then [9:03:00] somehow reenacted in the remaining 67 years. In the same way the, remember there was a 4306 years cycle. We are reenacting that cycle in, in the present 67 year cycle. We have reached A.D 700 right now, i mean if you wonder why things are so benighted, it's cuz we're in the heart of the Dark Ages. [audience laughs] You wonder why you can't understand the nature of the collapse [9:03:30] of the state vector? Well it's because you have an AD 700 intellectual machine looking at it. My God, the Calculus hasn't been invented, Algebra hasn't been invented, the New World hasn't been discovered. These things will all happen ahead of us. (ahh) Right now we are in the heart of the Dark Ages by the late nineties will be closing distance with the Renaissance. Clearly we have to put up with a bunch of Christ fundamentalism, epidemic diseases [9:04:00] and general not headedness until we get to that point, but then after the turn of the century we can expect the equivalent of (ahh), (ahh), the (ahh), Renaissance, the Industrial Reformation, (ahh) the rise of Napoleon, the Civil War, Adolph Hitler. It will just be coming quick, quick, quick, quick and finally you know, you just, it just, pulls you in and everything happens at once. One way [9:04:30] of thinking of this is that the entire rest of the future history of the universe is being compressed into the next 20 years.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: But in other words the heat death of the universe is 20 years away essentially is what is being suggested. Because time is beginning to accelerate at such a rate that this compression factor is enormous. Okay (ahh), (ahh), let me see, what have we got. We got 22 thousand [9:5:00] years on the screen and we talked about it, so let me shift here. Oh no! Zoom, yes. Set minimum, no.

Audience: What gives us to be able to, sense this acceleration of time?

TM: (ahh) Yes, i-i think you know, Jeremy Rifkin wrote a book (ahh) anybody read it, what was it called? Nobody read it. [audience laughs] It was called, anyway the premise of the book was that time is accelerating but he thought of it as social time, [9:05:30] cultural time. I don't. I think it's embedded in the fabric of space-time itself. Yes i think in a few, you see, you can only react to crises that you understand. So if i tell you the ozone hole is disappearing, you're alarmed. If i tell you an asteroid is going to strike the Earth, you're alarmed. But if i tell you that the Earth is about to collide with a hyperdimensional knot in the nexus of space-time...[audience laughs] [9:06.00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

[Audience laughs]

TM: [9:06:00] (ahh) You know. But that's what's happening. Ahead of us is an enormous speedbump. We are colliding.. We're about to collide with something that we can barely cognize. So, it's hard to know what to think about it. Yeah?

Audience: Uh, this may be a little lala, and a bit simplistic but you said in words uhh, you know we all have experienced this sort of sudden shift in time, just the experience in one lifetime (uhh). You know, like a two or three year old, (uhh) the moment that we experience it seems to last along a period of time. I mean, my god, some of it lasted (inaudible), well we don't have that sort of. Well, that's what happens over a course of a lifetime. What happens when consciousness.. consciousness shifts out to infinity, what happens to the moment then, does it become vanishingly small or, in terms of the frequency..

TM: It stops! It stops! Yeah, well, see.

Audience: Or, the whole process of speeding up, that it takes forever.

TM: [9:07:00] Yes, it's possible that dying takes forever.

Audience: Right.

TM: You see.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: And, and, and, so you know. You start to die and then you die and die and then realize you're going to die forever, and never approach it. Because the, the seconds become stretched to millions of years. It's something, it's something like that. It's about, and I think the psychedelics are about the fabric of time. [9:07:30] When you strip away the hallucinations and the personal reference, and the crazyness. The barebones of it are, it's about time, it illuminates what time is. Yeah?

Audience: [inaudible]... when time is.. [inaudible].. towards and end-point. [9:08:00]. [inaudible].

TM: Yeah, I mean, part of the problem with proceeding what's going on is that we're mayflies, something. I mean, we live so briefly, that to us it looks like the world is standing still. But in fact, staggering amounts of strange are going on. I mean (uhh) [9:08:30], the automobile is a hundred years old for crying out loud, we can't conceive of a reality without the automobile. So, uhh, and just in my lifetime, you know, I've seen immense change. So, and this is going to accelerate eventually to the point where I believe they'll hold conferences on the acceleration of time and, people will, boards will be appointed to try and figure out if anything can be done about it.

Audience: [laughs]

Audience: I know you have a distant for [9:09:00], quantum physics, but there was a conference apparently last spring in Spain. Actually, it was a conference of astrophysics, I believe. Because I heard some reports on it, their serious topic of discussion was, was trying to attempt to answer the question does time exist. I mean, this was being serious, on the agenda, at some astrophysics conference.

TM: Yeah, time is the great, misunderstood, or ununderstood quantity in our lives, for sure. [9:09:30]

Audience: Terence,

TM: Yep

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Right

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: I don't necessarily reject it, I just think they shouldn't sneer at me. When their theory is so kakamany. I mean, in other words, I haven't proposed anything weirder than the big-bang. Saying that a universe can condense itself faster and faster [9:10:00] down into a supernovel object, sounds to me like a considerably more conservative statement than to say that a universe can spring from nothing, for no reason, in any single instant. They cornered the market on unlikely approach to cosmology.

Audience: [inaudible] alternative to their stuff.

TM: To their theory? No, but I'm gonna write one.

Audience: There is actually serious debate on the whole topic. There was a book recently published [9:10:30], in the last year. Called 'Did the big bang happen?' which was written by another cosmologist,

TM: Well, the big bang looked like it was a real trouble as recent as six months ago but the new data from this, is is ogos three or, one of these satellites. They finally actually found, uhh, irregularities in the microwave background, and until they found some irregularity. Because they couldn't figure out how you get from the supersmooth initial conditions [9:11:00], to the clumpy present situation. Now, this new data appears to have pulled their chestnuts out of the fire. But I think the big bang may be in need of serious review. I mean, you have the inflationary, the super inflationary cosmology is an attempt to fix some of those problems, but it gets you know.. There are problems yeah.

Audience: [inaudible] [9:11:30]

TM: That's right.

Audience: [inaudible].. are also.. [inaudible]

TM: What does he say exactly?

Audience: Uh, I can't remember the exact book but he.. [inaudible].. speeded up.. [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, that's absolutely right, if we get a little deeper into this we can actually discuss..[9:12:00]

Transcribed by Dirk

TM: [9:12:00]...discuss maybe why he would have said such a thing because i think we can illuminate it. Here let's (ahh), do a little more. We've got 22 thousand years on the screen, 11 thousand years on the screen, 5 thousand and some. This is in a way my favorite screen because this book i want to write i'm going to call, History's Fractal

Mountain and there it is folks. [9:12:30] History's Fractal Mountain (ahh), Çatal Höyük is over here in the bottom of this. Along this descending gradient here, like pearls on a string, you get the great ancient civilizations, Ur, Chaldea, Babylon, and Egypt. And, this actually, the graph actually confirms the intuition of the theosophical mentality [9:13:00] that Egypt did achieve, some level of advance that was not surpassed, until late Roman times. That there was a-a tremendous breakthrough on the part of these civilizations. This, negative habitual or recidivist upward curve is studded with a whole bunch of a, of war-like [9:13:30] male dominator civilizations. The Hittites, the Mitanni, the Assyrians and up here at the top, Mycenaean Pirates overwhelmed the last outpost of the Goddess Culture on Minoan creed. This is Homer, right there. Homer sings his song and it's that, that to me fits because i had a professor who once said to me, you want to know where it went wrong? I'll tell you where it went wrong. When these Greeks pulled their boats [9:14:00] up on the shore and stopped being fisherman and started talking philosophy the shit hit the fan [audience laughs] and that's precisely what happened. There it is. You see the steep, steep descent into novelty and then after the fall of Rome, oscillation around the mean, where it's sort of up it's sort of down but there's no real progress until the Industrial Reformation. I mean in the Industrial Revolution of the 17th forties. [9:14:30] Let's...

Audience: [inaudible]...makes sense because any, any-any...[inaudible]...attempted, (ahh), descend into novelty ascend into novelty...[inaudible]...by the emerging church at the time.

TM: That's right. Of course this isn't Eurocentric, it's global.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Oh you mean, where is the birth of Christ? Roughly, i-is right here. It's this, it's (ahh), there's a little kind of a choke and then a very steep fall right afterwards. That's the birth of Christianity [9:15:00] of Roman, of the Roman Empire vs The Republic and so forth.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, sort of.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, right about there. Let's see, we may get it on the next pass.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Well it wasn't. [9:15:30] At first it was (ahh), physical. It was that, chemis-it was that atomic physics gave way to chemistry which gave way to molecular biology, which gave way to life. It keeps moving, it keeps being active at the front of the wave but it leaves a residuum behind it of this previously created structures. Right now the wave is clearly lodged in all-in our species while everything else [9:16:00] is, is, under the Aegis of Darwinian mechanics. We're apparently under the Aegis of cultural, mechanics.

Audience: [inaudible]...absolutely. Depends on the intensity of the prominent future. You know, if a meteor came in, in the middle of the...[inaudible]

TM: Yeah, that's right.

Audience: It's not really...[inaudible]...or dictate by human law. It just so happens...[inaudible]

TM: Wow...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: How so? [9:16:30]

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: It-it keeps condensing toward, it keeps-it builds on complexity. Wherever there is complexity, you will get more, complexity. It doesn't build on simplicity. It-it builds on the last most complex achievement see? [9:17:00] So intelligence rest on animal organization which rests on, cellular biology which rests on molecular biology which rests on physio...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: You got it, okay. (ahh) to...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Now pretty soon we're... Now there's the descent. Here let's stop and look (ahh), the-the [9:17:30] crucifixion is right there and it's interesting you know, Christ was an absolute contemporary of Caesar Augustus, so you get this great religious reformer at the same time that you get the great reformer of Roman Politic. So two of the most important personalities who ever lived are alive at that point. That strangely enough does not win the prize. See this deep little chip here? [9:18:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: ..See this deep little chip here? [9:18:00] If we were to blow that up and look at the bottom of that trough, there was a moment when you could have had a dinner party, when Lao-Tzu, Confucius, Mencius, Pythagoras and Ezekiel could have all gotten drunk together, uh, had they.. been able to find each other. Right back there, in the.. immediately preceding the Greek Renaissance. Now the fall of Rome is in 475 [9:18:30] right there. And you see how the time after the fall of Rome is all of a certain general character, clear up to seventeen-hundred. And then certain technologies and mathematical techniques propel to an even deeper level of novelty. Now the next screen is the one that I think that is probably where we either win or lose you.

Audience: Look at the overall shape of that wave. It's clear that there's an [9:19:00] overlining principle at work here. I mean the birth and death of Christ is practically [inaudible] on that curve.

TM: uh, yi-.. mmm..

Audience: No, I mean there is a deep and strong move into novelty in those positions and [inaudible] and those events are relatively [inaudible]..

TM: That's true.

Audience: It just points out that it's not being driven by what we do [inaudible].

TM: No, it's not being driven by these great personalities. They are being driven by it. I'm sure that if you could've [9:19:30] stepped into Christ's mind while he was undergoing the passion, the main question he was asking himself was: "What.. is going on? You know, why do I say what I do? Why do I do, what I do? I don't seem to be my own person. You know, I seem to be a puppet of some cosmic force."

Because he was a puppet of some cosmic force. You see, the transcendental object at the end of time is like [9:20:00] one of those reflecto balls that hang in discos, you know. And as it turns and spins it sends off distorted reflections of itself which ricocheted into the past. And if you are correctly situated, it'll turn you into a Christ, or a Buddha, or a Lao-Tzu. If you're not quite correctly situated, it turns you into a Madame Blavatsky, a Meister Eckh-.. in other words second stringers. [9:20:30] If it.. uh if.. if it's you know just get a little of it well then you are a person with strange insights and great personal charisma, and the people around you love you. We all are very close to this thing. Every night when you dream you come into the presence of the transcendental object of the end of time. We are all distorted reflections of the last thing. And as we get closer and closer [9:21:00] to the eschaton, the last thing, the distortion begins to leave. And you say, "my god, it's like watching a photograph from a SX-70 develop. First it's just mirk, and then you say, oh there's a person there and it's getting clearer and clearer". You know, we are actually being pulled into the attractor. The veils are being parted. The truth is becoming more and more and more immanent. [9:21:30] And in the final confrontation with it, you know it's the apotheosis. It's the apocalypse, the apotheosis, the apocatastasis. A whole bunch of Greek words beginning with 'a'. [audience laughs]

Audience: We are all [inaudible]..

TM: [laughs] No.

Audience: [inaudible] [audience laughs]

TM: ..okay.. [audience laughs]

Audience: [9:22:00] Did you address the time-span [inaudible]..?

TM: Well, no it picked up the time-span that we had. See it just accepted the correction. Thank you very much. Good thinking. Now is it alright? Yes. Okay now, this is the screen upon which the theory will stand or fall. Because this is the screen that is filled with the history that we know. We're not talking fossil records or Çatalhöyük [archaeological site in Turkey, of a 7500 BC to 5700 BC Neolithic era settlement] or any of that. [9:22:30] We're talking very precise dates. It's saying that there was a very steep descent into novelty around 948 AD. What is this?

Audience: What is its center again?

TM: W-.. 1400 years. And this first steep descent into novelty is, uh the intellectual flower of Islam within the confines of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate and the invention of algebra. [9:23:00] An intellectual tool that sets the stage for modern science. Essentially *this is* the birth of modern science. And you see how steep, sudden and precipitous it was. Okay, then you go over to this next one. ..and let me try something over here since this is such a fast machine.. See I'm moving the little pointer. [9:23:30] And it's telling me exactly what I'm pointing at. I haven't done for you before. But this is very good for checking these things.

Audience: Oh, to know exactly the dates.

TM: To know exactly, yes. We're pointing at the exact date. And I wanna get it over here. To the bottom of this sucker. 1121, [9:24:00] the first crusade. The collapse of fortress Europe.

Transcribed by Andrea Casanova

TM: [9:24:00] 1121, The First Crusade, the collapse of Fortress Europe. This is the beginning of the globalization of the European mind. We're dead on here. Okay now the next steep descent into novelty is this one, obviously. Let's go over there and see what it is. [9:24:30] There it is, 12-1430, oh no 1358 i'm sorry, just a minute here let me get my... Okay, do we all agree it's pointing at the bottom of the thing? Yes?

Audience: That's the end of the novelty, not the beginning of the novelty.

TM: No, that's the densest point of the novelty. It's 1354, what happens in 1354?

Audience: The Black Plague.

TM: [9:25:00] That's right. One third of the population of Europe is dies in an 18-month period beginning in the late 1354. The greatest demographic collapse that Europe has ever experienced, it's an absolute hit, dead on (ahh). Now let's (ahh), go over here to this... Now notice though that the recovery is quick, there's a steep descent into novelty and an almost immediate reversion back up to the [9:25:30] the same level of (ahh) habit exactly, business as usual. But this next one is different, it's a steep descent into novelty and then it really stays down, for a long time and explores this. So let's go over to the turning point, which is up at the top.

Audience: [inaudible]... It's global.

TM: It's global, but having said that you have to notice that [9:26:00] (ahh), the world is now dominated by European values and culture so, while we can chart the ebb and flow of the Han Dynasty at this point European culture is moving to the four because European culture is beginning to put its imprint on all of world history. [This concludes tape 7, our program continues with tape 8. [9:26:30] Continues with tape 8]

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: That's right. This is a picture of a resonance pattern, an interference pattern of many times and places. Now up here at the top of this thing, at the very top, it's, 1455. What happened in 1455, does anyone know? [9:27:00]

Audience: Christopher Columbus?

TM: What? [audience laughs] Columbus was born? Thanks for playing! (ahh) [Terence and audience laughs] (ahh) In 1455 Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks making European access to the Far East impossible, therefore the Age of Exploration, begins and (ahh), and you get Vasco de Gama and all those people. This was a tremendously shattering [9:27:30] event for European civilization to lose Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. (ahh) Now let's go over to, (ahh) wait, back i mean, to, this place. This is another very seminal event which combined with this Constantinople loss set the stage for this descent into novelty, even though it's way up here in habit there's a little chip out as there's a, [9:28:00] a-a novel invention of some, sort that happens in 1540, (ahh)...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: 1440 i'm sorry. The invention is, the invention of printing in months in 1440 (ahh), that did it friends (ahh), as far as most people are concerned.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Enlarge at one set now? Good idea.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah, let's do one Zoom (ahh)... [9:28:30] I think i have to move it over clear all the way before we do that zoom or it'll be some kind of a screw-up.

Audience: [inaudible]...focus on your right.

TM: Right, let me (ahh)...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Well, i'm glad you like it because it's my best trick. [audience laughs]

Audience: Not bad. [inaudible]

TM: I do, i do.

Audience: Oh you do?

TM: It's just we haven't written a manual yet. [9:29:00]

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Ooh, hard to say. [audience laughs] Okay, now it's pointing at today. Now let's do our zoom. Approach factor, 2, strange that it didn't ask for the seek minimum, isn't it?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: [9:29:30] Okay. Now we're seeing the same thing again, we're just seeing in higher detail (ahh), but what i'll, i'll fudge by telling you that up here 1455, down here 1492. Along this screaming descent into novelty are all the painters of the Quattrocento. This is the Italian Renaissance. [9:30:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

TM: All the painters of the Quattrocento, this is [9:30:00] the Italian Renaissance, this descent into novelty. And

this, is the era of exploration. 1492, good huh? Good, good! The absolute thing is in 1485, and all the painters of the Italian Renaissance are along this thing. Now notice that in 1492, there isn't an instant rebound. [9:30:30] There's 1492. But instead, because this lost half of the planet has been discovered, this sets off the age of discovery and, and habit is unable to reassert itself, because too much peculiar data is flowing in, too many lands, people, materials, philosophie, alphabets, languages, sexual styles, cuisines.. It's like they're overwhelmed. [9:31:00] However after a while they get their act together, and manage to turn it into, uh hell itself. RIght there, right... [audience laughs]. What that is, what ends the era of discovery and optimism and psychedelic exotica, [9:31:30] is the 30-years war. The 30-years war begins 1619 [actually 1618], it ends 1648. It begins with Europe Medieval. It ends with Europe Modern: Parliaments have replaced popes and kings. The whooole name of the game has been changed. Now, the 30-years war lasts until 1648. Sorry. 1648. [9:32:00] At the bottom of this cut in here, which is in a situation of rising habit, there nevertheless is a strong tendency towards novelty, reaching a culmination.. in 1677. Newton publishes the Principia, the celestial mechanics are put on a firm basis, the Calculus has been invented. The modern-, the world of modern science is now [9:32:30] completely in place. Then an- an-, wha- an- aside from the 30-years war, what Europe is exporting to the rest of the world on this hellish offswing, is slavery, the Patron system, forced labor, uh brutal return to habitual methods of the past. You may not know that slavery died with the fall of the Roman Empire. If you've owned a slave [9:33:00] during the medieval period, you owned ONE slave. It was a house slave. And it proved, your own ownership of this person proved, that you were a person of IMMENSE wealth. It would be like owning a beach bonanza today, it's beyond owning a Rolls Royce. But, the need for a drug strangely enough, the drug being sugar reversed this, and in the 1440's [9:33:30] they began buying Africans and taking them to the Canary island to work sugar. So, uh you know, the moral power of Western civilization could not stand in the way of the re-establishment of slavery and the sugar trade. Now, up here at the top of this thing there is a steep, there is a twist, a turn, right there, in 1739. This is the European Enlightenment. [9:34:00] The European, uh Enlightenment was the great uh intellectual step that set the step of secular civilization. People like Voltaire. And out of that came two revolutions.

Audience: [inaudible question]

TM: Well, the inquisition would have been I presume a fairly un-novel thing. Since what it was, was a power group [9:34:30] torturing the helpless. Which there's nothing new in that for heaven's sake.

Audience: It went on for a long time too.

TM: It went on for a long time, and enough of that. It was a Spanish phenomenon. I- It was confined geographically to a number, to a very small number of places. Right.. there. August 1, 1776. The American Revolution takes place as a consequence of this steep descent into [9:35:00] novelty at the beginning of the European Enlightenment. Well as you know, the American Revolution is generally thought to have had a happy conclusion. The French Revolution.. not so happy. And if you explode that Aorean look, you can see that they're happening at different slopes of that thing. Then the restoration of Louis Napoleon in 1803, is there. [9:35:30] This bump is the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian war, which were the first modern wars and completely distorted the demographics of the United States and Europe. And, now i want to..

Audience: What year is that?

TM: The Franco-Prussian war began in.. 1848, I think. And the Civil War was 1865. Let's uh, I wanna go over here tooooooo.. [9:36:00]

Transcribed by Andrea Casanova

TM: tooooo [9:36:00]

Audience: [inaudible statement]

TM: I think you're right. I didn't feel right about saying that. And that would-

Audience: 1848 was the other one.

TM: Was-, 1848 was the year of revolution. But the Franco-Prussian was at the same of the American Civil War, you are right. Ok, there's today's date. Now let's do the approach. [9:36:30] Approach factor.. two. [beep] Ah, okay that's 357 years on the screen. You see the American and French revolution. The Franco-Prussian War, the American Civil War, the Twentieth Century. Now let's look at the Twentieth Century. And this is, remember how I said that the Great Pyramids were at the bottom of this trough, at a higher level. Now we are seeing the same pattern again. What we get [9:37:00]at the bottom of this trough here, is the Third Reich. And to show you how the resonances work, think about the Third Reich in relationship to Ancient Egypt. First of all, probably the word 'Führer' can be traced to the word 'pharaoh'. These-, this is the same concept [9:37:30] of a master leader. In addition, the Third Reich and Ancient Egypt shared an obsession with large-scale tasteless architecture. In addition, both civilizations had a real tendency to lean on the jews. So you see, you get this strange kind of microscope on the histor-. Most people would not associate Ancient Egypt to the Third Reich. But when you begin listing [9:38:00] the similarities you see, one is a reflection of the other. Okay within the Twentieth Century, ah this is somewhere like 1903. The- uh, uh invent- you know, uh, Einstein was in 1905, the general theory, I think. Which came first, the general of the special?

Audience: The special.

TM: The special came first [9:38:30] in 1905, and the general came slightly later. Down here in the bottom of this trough, let me show you. Right there. Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany. And then all of World War II is fought in the bottom of that trench. Here's 39', here's August 39'. That's June, that's September [9:39:00]. So that when it begins. Even though it's a novel situation, because it's a war it's a recursion to habit. So at the bottom of a trough of novelty you get a little upward pimple of recursion to habit. Then, uh let's look at.. There it is. That's Hiroshima right there, and Nagasaki right there. The war ends, and novelty is left behind [9:39:30]. And remember that the psychology of the post-war mind was everybody wanted things to get back to normal. I mean, certainly the Europeans wanted things to get back to normal. Their whole scene had been bombed into the Stone Age. And in this country, people just wanted to get their place in the suburbs and marry the girl next door, and have a slew of kids, and buy a Chevrolet. And forget about, you know thousand year millennial plans, and all the rest of it. [9:40:00] And so this is the post-war, cold-war era. And it lasts, let's look. Oh there's 1952. Uhm, 19-, here's-, the launching of Sputnik is there.

Audience: It was in 59'.

TM: No no, Oct- October first 1957. A day graven in my mind till they lower my box. [9:40:30]. Uhm. The first american satellite was launched right around there, Explorer 1.

Audience: [inaudible].

TM: Give me the date! [audience laughs]. Ok there's the assassination of John Kennedy, as close as I can get it at this resolution. If I go back one, I'm before it. So you see, [9:41:00] it's right at the bottom of that steep stab, that takes place against this other thing.

Audience: What turned it around?

TM: What turned it around? What's- What's the turning point? I thought you'd never ask.

Audience: Yeah yeah yeah yeah, and what is it?

TM: Oh, I'm about to get it for you. There it is. August 1967. It's the summer of looove. Not only does this thing illuminate history it also, you know fulfills my deepest inner delusions [audience laughs] [9:41:30]. So, and remember I said when we were looking at history's fractal mountain, that this was Homer, up here. So, then you can see that the freak thing, the hippies were like the pre-hellenic Greeks. I mean, all those, you know all that bralessness, and loose-fitting clothes and tambourines and ecstatic Bacchanalian with a [9:42:00]

Transcribed by Andrea Casanova

TM: [9:42:00]...with a philosophical undertone. I mean it was a Greek mentality, that broke out in 1967. Then here's the long descent into, you know, the dreary present moment and (ahh), (ahh) what can i show you hereeee? Richard Nixon getting the axe.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah. Now we're into the Reagan-era down here. [9:42:30]

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Yeah.

Audience: Can you enlarge?

TM: Yeah i'm gonna cut it. I'm just trying to get back to today. There it is. Oh, okay. Cut it, zoom yes, approach factor 2, enter.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Ah well it's gonna be...

Audience: [inaudible] [9:43:00]

TM: There it is. That's the Hippie thing and then the descent. Now that's in the, that's the 8-the 70s and 80s. That's the last 11 years (ahh), i wanna stop it here. Now, now, see how tight, it has to be, to work. Remember that we've been looking at this thing from, we've descended from 6 billion years, [9:43:30] to 11 years. We have predicted

asteroid impacts, glaciation, speciation, the rise and fall of Empires, now we're down to the short and curly i would think. (ahh), [audience laughs] Let's take a look here at what we've got.

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Who, i suppose, now we're all experts on this phase of things cause we've all just lived through (ahh), i don't see anyone here under 11, [9:44:00] so we've just lived through all of this. So let's take a look at what it is (ahh). Now, let's see, when was George Bush elected president?

Audience: 88.

TM: 88. So would have been November 88. That's October, that's November. Now what is the resonance to that moment? I don't think of it so much as, as Bush being elected as Reagan leaving office. The resonance here is the fall of Rome [9:44:30]. Rome falls right there. Well then, then see we have a series of, of high and low points which we should be able to correlate to, (ahh) recent, catastrophic or world-changing events. So let's play the game... [9:45:00] What's happening down here, for the 30 days preceding, that day, is a million people are camping out in Tiananmen Square. They, the-they, at the very bottom of the trough is the night that they had the most people in the square and then it turns upward as you can see because the, constipated fascist oligarchs in [9:45:30] charge of that society were preparing to do murder and there's nothing novel or new about murder, it's the oldest game in the book. So that went on there, then remember the Romanian, oh-no no. Let's go over here, the next steep descent into novelty is right, there. Right, that's too far. No, no no, that's right. Okay right there, who knows what happened very close [9:46:00] to 11-, 11/89?

Audience: The Berlin Wall.

TM: The Berlin Wall fell down. Germany is unified right there. So Tiananmen, Germany, then a bummer of some sort and what is that bummer? It's the Romanian Revolution which as you'll recall was handled in a messier style, where you hurl, put people up against walls and machine-gunned them and so forth and so on.

Audience: [inaudible]...convergence...[inaudible]...August 87.

TM: August 87?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Along that line. Well then let's go over to here.

Audience: I wanna see that harmonic convergence.

TM: Oh you want to see the harmonic convergence? Give me the date.

Audience: August 87. 8/87.

TM: 8/87. In judging this you have to ask yourself, was the harmonic...

Audience: [9:47:00] [inaudible]...1st anniversary Iran-Iraq war...[inaudible]...Wait we'll go back to 87.

TM: But don't you want to go back to 87?

Audience: Yeah.

TM: Yeah.

Audience: [inaudible]...harmonic convergences on the anniversary every year...[inaudible]...six month...[inaudible]

TM: Well maybe it's not... Oh, okay. August what?

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: There is the closest we can get. What it shows that, is, that a long descent into [9:47:30] novelty that had previously been impeded but there isn't anything particularly special about that day but it does fall in the domain of going over this hump. Over here (ahh), you'll recall the, the Gulf War and all that. Here's how that looks. [9:48:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

[9:48:00] Terence: "Mmkay now, look here, August 3rd, 1990, there's where saddam hussein invades kuwait, it's also where mohammed is born one level up. Uhm, I can get higher and lower resonances simply by touching eye here, we haven't done that but it's possible. [9:48:30] Now remember how after he invaded - then there was a lot of

breast beating and armies being moved into position and so forth that goes on until there, now there, no, no, there is where the 30 day ultimatum from the security council is issued. The war begins, the air war on the 17th of January right there [9:49:00] and the land war, well you can see that it's - it's, there's a steep descent into novelty which then is slightly moderated and at the kink is where the war begins. Now the next steep descent into novelty-

[AUDIENCE: "So lining people up and machine gunning them happens during the periods returning to, to -"]

Terence: "- to habit, that's the usual habit."

[AUDIENCE: "and war happens during novelty?"]

Terence: [9:49:30] "well, wars can have, war is kind of an ambiguous thing, was is a habitual activity but it does cause novelty, especially technological novelty so you know that's why it's nice that you can blow up these waves and see the variation within the theme. Now this point, that's it, there it is [9:50:00] the coup in the soviet union, right at the bottom of this one, and now the next one is really intriguing to me and i'll show you why, there it is, it's february 21st of this year and it's the lowest point of novelty for this year. Now, i was really puzzled by this because i watched very carefully that [9:50:30] week and there didn't seem to be anything very novel going on-

[AUDIENCE: "Your book came out"]

Terence: "My book did come out, you're right but i was modest enough to not place that in a context of world history."

[AUDIENCE: *inaudible*]

Terence: "Well you know what happened and this leads us to the slippery edge of prophecy, there was an event which happened not on the 21st of February but on the 20th which may be [9:51:00] trivial and forgettable and absolutely not worth talking about or maybe one of the most important events in the history of the 20th century. Do you know what it was?"

[AUDIENCE: *inaudible*]

Terence: "No no, Ross Perot goes on Larry King and offers a suggestion about his availability for the presidency now if the guy fades and becomes a nothing-burger it doesn't count but he does have the wave [9:51:30] blowing at his back, uhh that's for sure. So that's basically it uhh, if you want to see, let's see"

[AUDIENCE: *inaudible*]

Terence: "No, well, let's look at the future, let me get the *shmiggy* somewhere roughly into the middle and then we'll build. [9:52:00] Okay now let's see if i can figure out how to do this. Specify target date , C, target date months, let's do today, today is the 5th month, the 31st day, of 1992, we don't want to add days, okay we want to move that over to [9:52:30] 50 percent. "

[AUDIENCE: "Target date.." *inaudible*]

Terence: "Yes, that's where the cursor pops up. Now let's choose the timespan, E, let's do 10 years, plus months zero, plus days zero, now let's graph the wave. Yes, yes. [9:53:00] So it's pointing at today. 10 years. The last 5, the next 5. And what it shows is that we are actually as if you didn't know, exploring a very deep trough of novelty, it will last until August of next year and then there will be some kind of uhh, some kind of return to habit with a vengeance [9:53:30] now the november election is, now wait a minute there's something wrong here let me see, no i want to point it at today.

[AUDIENCE: "You see it right there, right there right?"]

Terence: "Yeah, okay that's as close to today as we can get. "

[AUDIENCE: *inaudible* " very creative.." *inaudible*]

Terence: "Yeah, we're definitely getting ready to go down into novelty."

[AUDIENCE: *inaudible* "thing next to the novelty thing.." *inaudible*]

Terence: "[9:54:00] You mean clear to here?"

TM: You mean clear to here?

Audience: Yes

TM: Ok well it's gonna last until... August '93. The thing to keep you eye on is this. Which is such a spectacular drop. I mean look how much weirdness we've been through, but it's taken us this much time to do it. This sucker is gonna do it in a three month period in early '96.

Audience: [Inaudible] [9:54:30]

TM: I haven't the faintest.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Well, I hope you'll do this. Uhm, I think it should be done. Here I'll show you [9:55:00] a function you haven't seen. Instead of zooming in we'll zoom out.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Uhm, well no I'll just- instead of ten years on the screen we'll see 20

Audience: Oh I see

TM: Now it's still pointing- uhm, well no wait a minute. Ok there you see it.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Yea, right, then there's the whole thing. [9:55:30] So that's the idea. Now, the notion is that- remember how I kept talking about how a cone contains all possible ellipses and you section it? What the psychedelic experience is, is a sectioning of eternity. And you can build up a picture of the cone by sectioning eternity sufficiently that you get a map like this. I mean I'm convinced by this that [9:56:00] time is fractal. That instead of treating time as a zero quantity as the newtonian equations do, or as a very gentle curvature as the Einstein equations do, but we have to sub in this fractal dimension. And that this will make possible a science as mo- more powerful, relatively, to present

science as present science is through the power of the calculus to Greek science. Time, [9:56:30] about which we previously knew next to nothing except that it seemed to keep happening, can actually be described, uhm, in the same way that energy and, uhm, other factors in the universe can be described. Now what I- the last thought I want to leave you with, is I don't think anybody could fig- could make this up. Certainly not me. A person with no training in mathematics, no interest in this kind of [9:57:00] thing. I was told this stuff. And, you know, most, God forbid, channeling is of the horrible variety which tells you to eat brown rice and love your neighbor. You don't need channels to tell you that, you have channels in your own head which tell you that. This is a mathematical equation. I mean, it's embedded in a lot of rap. But the real channel is [9:57:30] an equation for the description of time which makes, uhm, assertions, makes predictions, uhm, is willing to be held to mathematical analysis. All the things scientists are always screaming that occultists never will provide them with their theories, this provides. So I'm willing, since it's only one person, one person's life, I'm willing to, uhm, preach this, a little bit, because I'm not- [9:58:00] maybe I- I can't believe- see the choice here is pretty stark. Either I'm nuts or I'm Newton. There's no inbetween. Becau- there is no inbetween!

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Uhm, yea, def, uhm, it's- it's- It's right, I'm the greatest intellectual synthesizer in the history of man. If I'm wrong, it's just horse shit. So then the question is which is it? [audience laughs]

Audience: [Inaudible] [9:58:30]

TM: You- you mean, who am I the resonance of?

Audience: Yea

TM: A question I've never asked, uhm. [laughs]

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: I figured this out... There were many- it took a long time but from 1971 to 1973 [9:59:00] is when I figured it out.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Here to- let's see. Let's go back. Let's go there and see.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: Then you would have it. Then you would have it. [9:59:30] Okay Let's see.

Audience: [Inaudible]

TM: No, the life changing experience was in 1971. Well let's- let's point at this little dip here, giving me the benefit of the doubt, and say that it was April 26, '73. I'm sure that had you visited me in April 26, '73 you would have found me hunched over graph paper and working seriously. Now let's see what the resonance of that is. [10:00:00]

Transcribed by Paul Mullins

TM: Now let's see what the resonance of that is, I, is the resonance call. It asks higher or lower. We answer higher, that means earlier..Higher. Major or trigonometric resonance, forget that, major is the answer. Which point, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 99th, I have no idea what that means, let's answer, first. Uuuuumm 526 B.C., Oh it's the Greek renaissance, Plato Pythagoras, Ezekiel Confucius Lousive? ... (talking to the guy that asked the question) hey I think it's time to knock off , you should quit when you're ahead, you know?... (audience laughs)... Inaudible question...
TM: Well in a sense there is, no no (audience laughing), wait a minute, in a sense there is, this is a fractal, it was invented or channeled by me before fractals became the absolute obsession of frontier mathematics, now everybody wants to talk about fractals and everybody says, you know population growth, river mouths, everything can be modeled by fractals, but nobody says Time can be modeled by a fractal. So I think probably the rise of fractal mathematics is indicative of this, the other thing is, this could never have been brought to the public without small personal computers. I developed this/finished in 75 and in 77 they began selling small computers, so uh, it's uh. It's a weirdness, it's a hallucination. That's what it is. My dream has always been to bring something here from there, and apparently the only things which travel well from there to here are ideas, and I'm not an artist so I couldn't paint, so this is a psychedelic idea, I think there are millions of these kinds of ideas swimming in the psychedelic ocean.. Yeah (Inaudible question) [10:02:28] Well that's because we really haven't talked about the nature of the concrescence, you know what is, what is, this all argues for an impossible conclusion, that the world is going to disappear up it's own wazoo at dawn December 22, 2012... (inaudible crowd mumbling) TM what?... oh you want to see the last day? (more crowd mumbling) TM well here lemme uh, well here, yeah I'll show you, I'll show you the final thing, we're running over but anybody that wants to leave has my blessing and my sympathy. (More crowd mumbling) (Sounds like they are working out a math problem on the white board) [10:05:00] TM You see there it is, it runs down, he don't go no mo, that's the end. Now I have created one way out that preserves the theory and a rational universe and it is simply this, that what happens on december 22, 2012 is that time travel is invented and because it is invented it is no longer possible to portray historical data on a linear graph, so that's all. It's just it was a thing about technology and eventually a technology was created which made the three dimensional spacetime matrix itself, obsolete... (crowd member says it's the dimensional octave jump) TM The transcendental object is the despair of description, it cannot be known it can only be approximated, it's the sacred heart of Jesus, it's the flying saucer, it's the philosophers stone... [10:06:00]

Transcribed by Shane Poe

TM: [10:06:00]...it's the Philosopher's Stone, it's tantric union, it's good LSD, it's all of these things and more! It cannot-it transcends, language and understanding but the closer we get to it, the more it will be revealed. And the reason the 20th century is so peculiar, it's because we're so close to the zero point, we're so close to the transcendental object but, you know, take a hit, there it is! [10:06:30] Close your eyes and daydream, there it is! Have an orgasm, there it is! It's trying to breakthrough, it's almost upon us. We've been sailing towards this thing for, 72 billion years and we are now 22 years from impact, the walls are so steep, the acceleration is so great, we are there, for all practical purposes and then what spiritual life and head-dom and all that means is, realize [10:07:00] that we are there, so that anxiety drains from your life body and world view and then you just ride the wave and when people talk of catastrophe, revelation, salvation and destruction, you just smile a small smile knowing that it will be all that and more and more and more, It's something, i think it's to reassure us, you see i think the world is going to get hip to the fact that we are actually [10:07:30] caught in a plural pool in time that is sucking us into another dimension, without something like Timewave Zero a notion like that could get fairly alarming and spread a lot of panic. With Timewave Zero you just say, look we have a map of what's going on, we'll check off the milestones, as long as the wave keeps working nobody should freak out. Just settle in, hang on and we'll [10:08:00] navigate through this. So it's a vital piece of knowledge necessary to face the eschaton without panic because this crazy religions want to tell you that you're going to be judged and damned and fired and roasted, no no that's not it, they got the story wrong. We're just being sucked into hyperspace, and hyperspace is, the human imagination, the human heart, the human soul, it's the domain of our dreams. [10:08:30] Our imagination is a flickering image of what it will but what it really will be, (ahh) is the despair of prose. What it will really be, can only be, approached in, silent darkness on 5 grams and then you can't tell anybody about it. Thank you very much. [audience applauds] [This concludes In Search of the [10:09:00] Original Tree of Knowledge, a weekend workshop with Terence Mckenna. If you would like additional copies of this recording or a complete catalog of transformational audio tapes, please call Sounds True. 1-800-333-9185 or write, Sounds True 735 Walnut Street, Boulder Colorado 80302] [10:09:30]

TM: Does anyone want to ask a question or is it all just perfectly clear utterly convincing and...

Audience: [inaudible]

TM: Bad effects of psilocybin? Somebody once said, what's wrong with DMT and i said, well nothing unless you fear death by astonishment. [audience laughs] (Ahh), but-but your question is a good one. [10:10:00] First of all, (ahh) you know, i talked a lot about how all we have to do is destroy and oblate ego, however there is a very small percentage of us who have a hard time creating any ego whatsoever and the-for this people boundary dissolution is no problem, their boundaries are dissolving all the time on them. I would say that they are at the, (ahh) contraindicated end of the spectrum. [10:10:30] That if you're, fearful already and fighting to keep from being overwhelmed by confusion at what's going on in your life at the paper box factory or something, [audience laughs] then probably tossing in mega doses of hallucinogens is not, the way, [audience laughs] for you, to do it or if you do, if you're, just bent on doing that, then i would say (ahh), do it in the presence of some kind of professional and how you find a professional [10:11:00] in this legal climate you'll have to discuss with me in privately (ahh), (ahh). I don't want to make it sound dull, i mean, it's a tricky thing. I don't want to make it sound like it's absolutely riskless. Physically, i think it's pretty safe, unless you are odd in some way but you need to know, you know, you don't want to find out you're odd an hour and a half into it. [audience laughs] But the, the-the problem comes, [10:11:30] with

the mind, you know. If, if-if you are delicately balanced, if your whole life has been about not looking at that, or that, or that, then this is not your game, you know, you should go back to, watching Jeopardy [audience laughs] and... (ahh), the, the kind of person, the kind of person who is called to this, is a person who has an exploring soul.
[10:12:00]

Transcribed by Tiago Ramos

Soul, I mean my- I.I.I am not a courageous person in the sense that you won't find me shooting white water, you don't see me, ah, you know- rappelling down the faces of cliffs, but from the time I was a..a, the tiniest little kid I was into the weird. What weird- "Weird is the compass heading, and if you keep your compass always pointed toward the peculiar, toward the acrab, the bizarre, the unspeakably alien - then, you know, you'll find these places... [audience laughter]...the people...the people who think life is all cut and dried, and are perfectly happy to have Carl Sagan and George Bush explain all of reality [audience laughter] have never left the broad, swift stream of mundane thinking, but you know, off in the byways [10:12:57]...and tributaries, there's a wonderful alchemical saying, which I generally mangle, but I think it goes something like this: "the tallest mountains, the oldest books, the widest deserts - there you will find the stone"... and what it is, is it's a prescription for exploring weirdness, that's all. It's not gonna be on MTV... it's not gonna be in, god forbid, Esquire... [audience laughs] it's going to come, uh from, you know... doing your homework, visiting strange people in strange lands, and checking it out. The... what, what I can't give you, to return to your question, is... I can't give you a guarantee that it will be fun. You know, the Rolling Stones have that wonderful line, "You don't get what you want, you get what you need" [10:13:50] This stuff is ruthless... and if there's something you're trying not to look at, it's gonna get you, for sure... but... ask the veterans, most people will tell you, you learn more from the bad trips than you do from the good ones... the good ones are ecstatic, and connect you up to nature and other people... the bad ones show you your kinks and your limitations and your thought *ferrers, and that sort of thing... it's not an easy road to hope... that's why I think, uh, there's a little bit of social confusion about it... one of the things I should make [10:14:30] clear is, I really advocate high doses rarely... I think the worst thing you can do is get into a style of psychedelic diddling, where you know, you take half a gram every day... all this is doing, is giving you a tolerance to psilocybin... you're not having The psilocybin experience, you're having the tolerance to psilocybin experience. The, really the [10:15:00] way to do these things is to, um, do them rarely, so that your whole system can reassert itself and come to equilibrium, and then, just slam it! [audience laughs] And, uh, this is amazing... I mean, I think... I think this works for all these psychedelics... I'm, uh, I'm an inveterate cannabis user, and I wish, in a way, that I could get a slightly better grip [10:15:30] on my cannabis use because, I think the real way to do cannabis is like... once a week, by yourself, in silent darkness, with the strongest stuff you can get... and then immense amounts of it [audience laughs]... and you know, people call it a recreational drug, and a this and a that... hey, done that way, [10:16:00] it will catapult you into places where it's the... I love it, it's a great place to get to on cannabis, and some people never in their whole life touch it, is the place where you say, "My god, I've done... too much!" [audience and Terence laugh] It's not easy, folks but... it's worth shooting for! [laughter continues] basically, what you should do is, is, you know, do some homework, [10:16:30] read some books, talk to your friends, and then, hang on hammoth! It's like,[laughter] you know... it's very much like riding an enormous roller coaster.. You know, once that baby rolls out of the station, do not stand up... do not try to climb out of your car... shut up and hang on, with the faith that most people have lived through this! [laughter] [10:17:00]

TM: Someone else... yeah?!

Audience: [inaudible] ...

TM: Well, I... uh.. my argument would be, that people don't take it enough [10:18:00], and they don't take it, uh, frequently enough... that, there are a lot of people who would really rather not get loaded, but who feel they must take some psychedelic drug in order to keep membership in their peer group...

Transcribed by Randy Sloane

... and they don't take it, uh, frequently enough... that, there are a lot of people who, who really would rather not get loaded, but who feel they must take some psychedelic drug in order to keep membership in their peer group... so what they did, you know, you can always spot these people, because their first question off at the get-go is, "will I be able to drive?" ... I love this question! [audience laughs] because, you know, it indicates you've got a real tough nut [10:18:30] on your hands... in every sense of the word - "No, you will not be able to drive." Uh, so, you know, I, uh, one of the things that inspires me to do this is, I want to get to the people who've taken 3 grams of mushrooms, and the people who've taken 150 mics of LSD, and I want to convince those people that they never got close to what I'm talking about, [10:19:00] even though they had a life-transforming experience and saw things totally differently... they never got close to what I'm talking about... and so, what you have to do is convince people to take high doses, and then, that can break them through, and then, frequently enough that they don't forget what the deal is... so I think if you take a psychedelic population and divide it into those who've done 5 grams and above... then you will see [10:19:30] an exceptional, uh, slice... but not the dabblers... the dabblers don't count, and we can all be at times guilty of this, I think...

TM- Is that your last question? Does that do it for you? [inaudible] Or do you want to be ? psychotic, you choose. [laughs]

[inaudible]

[laughter]

TM- Well I love competition, I mean I... The competition is terrible, that's the entire basis of my success... Yes, you because you were before, if you still wish.

Audience: [inaudible] [10:20:30]

TM- Why? Because, I mean I don't know if it's preferable but, here's the thing- people are going to think you're a nut if you come down and say, Johann Sebastian Bach or Jerry [10:21:00] Garcia is God, and this is what you'll have to say if you listen to the dead or the B Minor (mass)... so what I'm interested in, is, um, I want to know the thing in itself... not what it does to Bach, not what it does to a river flowing through a forested valley... I want to see what it can do with darkness, [1:21:30] and silence... and I think most people think it will be boring. Probably because they've been hanging out with these beady-eyed gurus meditating, and god knows there's nothing more boring on earth than most meditation - however, psychedelic... sitting in a darkened room on 5 dried grams of psilocybin mushrooms is nothing like meditating, and that's where it can get at you. My relationship to it is always one of, [10:22:00] I want to know what it is... and so, I think this sensory deprivation method is the only way to get at that... other people might not like that, people say "you mean you put down that whole thing of going into nature? Isn't nature the great affirmation?" and all this, and my answer is, yeah, but it works for me sortof without the drugs, plus, and this is maybe my own weirdness and I'll share it with you... I have noticed [10:22:30] that these things are incredibly

disruptive of the ordinary flow of casuistry... you all know the ordinary concept of synchronicity? Well if you don't stay in your room with the lights out and the phone unplugged.. And the damndest things will happen to you. I mean, I- you couldn't pay me to go into an American city even mildly loaded because... adventures beckon. Now, some people like that... you know, some people [10:23:00] say, you know, "Let's take 500 mics and go meet weird people!" [laughs] nuh-uh, not this cookie! uh...

Transcribed by Randy Sloane

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Secular and Religious Visions of the Apocalypse

23 August 1993

Esalen Institute Media Center, Big Sur, CA

Description

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Seeking the Stone: Mind & Time, Spirit & Matter

November 1991

Los Angeles Airport Hilton, Los Angeles, California

Description

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Shamanic Approaches to the UFO

21 November 1987

Angels Aliens and Archetypes 1987 Conference, San Francisco, California

Description

- [Video Link](#)
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Well I 'm aware of how late in the day it is and I know some of you must be double parked so I'll make this as succinct as possible. This morning's discussion caused me to wonder how much we would understand about electricity if our method of studying it was to stand on the tops of high hills and wait to be struck by lightning. It seems to me that's sort of position that we're in vis-à-vis the UFOs. We have no real theory. We have conjectures. We have fiercely defended hypotheses but we have very little that is concrete to go on. It's almost as though the issue of the UFO were an onion, and as we peel the layers of the onion we discover that when we get to the center there is nothing there whatsoever left. It reminds me that if you cross an onion with a UFO what you get is a flying saucer that brings tears to your eyes, and so what I would like to do is, just based on the notes I took today, to review what the options available to us are in terms of trying to get some kind of intellectual handle on this phenomenon, and I'll move through them rather quickly.

One possibility that I suppose is now out of fashion because it wasn't mentioned here today, other than what Jacques said about ball lightning and plasmas, is that the UFOs are somehow natural phenomena, perhaps piezoelectric forces that have an ability to interact with the delicate electro chemical machinery of the human nervous system to create an impression of hallucination or visitation or abduction. That's one possibility.

The more serious contender, as explanation I think fall into three categories. Is it us? Are we being visited or is there another tenant in the building that we are unaware of, and my own feeling about this tends to vacillate. I have had contact experiences. I have seen a UFO very close. I have met with entities from other dimensions, and it has not impelled me to take a strong position. I've paid very close attention when these experiences were happening to me, and there always seems to be loose ends that argue against whatever hypotheses seems currently most attractive, and though Jacques didn't mention it today I recall in his book *The Invisible College* he stressed the absurdity that seems to attend the contact experience. That if the contactee will truly tell the unvarnished truth then there will be elements in the story which will make the contactee look like a moron, in other words, the invalidation of the experience is an inimical part of its structure, almost as though the entities were saying, well you may tell this story if you wish, but if you'll tell it truthfully you'll be taken for a fool. Well there's nothing wrong with being taken for a fool except that it does peel the phenomenon rather nicely away from the very sober ladies and gentleman who are making their careers in some branch of science. They are not interested in investigating the kinky, the anecdotal, the possibly pathological.

In preparation for this conference I reread Carl Jung's book published in 1954 called *Flying Saucers A*

Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky, and to my mind no one has really gone beyond Jung. He understood very clearly that saying that something is a denizen of the psychic realm no way precludes its also having efficacious force in the physical realm through the phenomenon which he called synchronicity. Some of the points which Jacques made today about the nature of the medical examinations are reported they are absurd, they are unnecessary to be performed at our level of technology, let alone any future more advanced levels that we might be asked to believe in. So if the UFO phenomenon is something that is coming from us then what is it and what is it for?

I've given a good deal of thought to this question over the years because I tend to lean toward the notion that the UFO problem like many subtle problems is haunted by our own naiveté concerning language. If I were to randomly choose, and don't worry I shant, five of you to come up here and each one of you would have forty seconds to explain to the rest of us what an atom is it would be preposterous. None of us know. I doubt that there's a person in this room who can give an account of the atom that tallies with the "orthodox" description of the atom. So there is a curious fuzziness about the most mundane parts of reality when we really attempt to magnify and understand them in the clear light of consciousness. How much more ambiguity there is than naturally attended upon examination of any kind of phenomena which are rare or tend to be fringy. So it isn't a matter of achieving consensus over the UFO. We can't even achieve consensus about what constitutes a decent soufflé. So this passionate desire to drag us all under the umbrella of a single explanation is I think missing the point.

To my mind if the UFO phenomena is something arising out of the superego of the human psychic organization then we should ask why, what is it doing, and I don't want to sound like a public relations agent for Jacques Vallee, but to my mind with the exception of Jung, Jacques is the only commentator on the phenomenon who has really pushed the frontier back. To my mind in *The Invisible College* when Vallee says, "In looking at the effect, not asking the question what is it, but what does it do, you very quickly see what the flying saucers are doing. What they are doing is eroding faith in science. They are an antidote to the scientific paradigm that has evolved over the past 400 years and which has led us to the brink of global catastrophe." So the notion being developed here is that within the structure within the human psyche there is something like a governor, something like a monitoring circuit, which when a society begins to evolve in a pathological or lethal direction phenomena can be induced, not by the egos of men and women, not by there institutions, but by the overmind, the collectivity of the human species phenomena can be induced which are so corrosive to the ideology currently in place that there underpinnings are cutaway, there validity is called into question, and there programs for social development and control are invalidated and destroyed.

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Shamanism (Small part of a much larger talk)

Somewhere in the early 1990s...

Location, City, State

Description

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Well, in 15 minutes to try and say something about shamanism and hallucinogens, we're just going to touch the surface, and I figure the simplest way to do this is just to sort of unload on you how I see these things.

Um, shamanism is not some obscure concern of cultural anthropologists; shamanism is how religion was practised for its first million years. Up until about 12,000 years ago, there was no other form of religion on this planet, that was how people attained some kind of access to the sacred. And, um, so shamanism then becomes, uh, about technique, and if any of you are students of the literature of shamanism, you probably know that one of the great overviews of shamanism is contained in Mircea Eliade's book, *Shamanism: The Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. The archaic techniques of ecstasy. In other words, shamanism is not so much a religion, as ordinarily conceived, as it is a kind of, uh, pre-rational science; a kind of methodology for attaining a certain kind of experience.

And then the question becomes: What experience, and what's so great about it? Well, the experience that is attained – if we can attempt to rise to some kind of cosmic overview, so that we are not dealing with the experience in the context of what the Mazatecs say, or the Huitoto, or some other tribal people – but when we attempt to pool all of this descriptive data, then what is the experience that the shaman is having that is making him or her an exemplar in their own society and, in a sense, almost superhuman? Well, if you analyse thousands and thousands of these shamanic experiences, both drug – both plant-induced and non-plant-induced – the overwhelming connecting thread is boundary dissolution. This is what the experience is that we are all seeking, that we call terrifying, wonderful, desirable, horrible, but what it is, is it's the experience of having the roof fall in and the floor fall out – all at once! Boundary dissolution. Why should that be so important, so wonderful? Because it acts psychologically, in the human being, uh, like a birth experience. The world is made new. Everything is seen through newly opened eyes.

Now, there are many techniques of shamanism for attaining this state: celibacy, withholding food, ordeals, flagellation, mutilation – that doesn't sound like a program for a lot of fun, does it? – and then, hallucinogenic plants. Now, it's a question which always emerges at these conferences: "All of you people are talking about drugs and plant substances. Isn't there another way to do this? Isn't this what the great yogic systems, the great tantric systems of thought, have opened up for us, without the self-polluting act of ingesting a plant into our bodies and polluting our precious bodily essences?" The answer is, *No!* No! [laughter] And the further answer is, the reason the universe is constructed this way is so that you will be forced to humble yourself into the admission that you *can't do it alone*. Why *should* you be able to do it alone?! Where is it writ in adamantine that Joe Blow should be able to walk directly into the antechamber of the Most High simply because he or she wants to? Nowhere! The *sine qua non* – fancy Latin for you can't get along without it – the *sine qua non* for attaining a psychedelic experience is humbling yourself to the point where you admit that you must submit to the experience of the plant or the drug.

This act of surrender is the major technical function you will be called upon to perform during the psychedelic trip. You just keep saying, “Take me, I’m yours! Take me, I’m yours!” – and it will, uh, do the rest.

Well, this is much too much to get into in 15 minutes, but *why* the tension between boundary and boundary dissolution? Uh, why the tension between the closed personal world of reinforced neurotic constructs that we call ordinary psychological health – why the tension between that, and this vastly expanded and opened state of being where, uh, life, Tao, seems to flow through us? Well, the tension between these states has to do, I think, with the fact that there is a blind spot in the human mind. We do not like to have called to our attention, uh, the animate and caring nature of the universe. Because the universe is something that we have had to fight our way through to get to our present position. I mean, how many reindeer bit the dust that we could sit here this morning? Uh, how many forests were cleared? – you see, we have a long history of, uh, resistance and conquest to Nature, and when we experience the boundary-dissolving qualities of a hallucinogen, we learn what Pogo learned: *We have met the enemy, and he is us*. And closing that loop then creates a dimension of moral responsibility; and this is why the shaman is a special person – because the shaman has somehow closed the loop of moral responsibility, and in so doing, becomes tremendously authentic to the people, uh, in the society that is constellated around the shaman.

The shaman basically, uh, is an exemplar, a model, for how to be. Not simply how to be in the psychedelic or the trance state, but how to be in the act of wooing; how to be in the act of hunting, child-rearing, so forth. It’s a kind of exemplar that bursts through cultural conditioning. Cultural conditioning is like bad software. It’s over and over, it’s diddled with and rewritten so that it can just run on the next attempt! [laughter] But there is cultural hardware, and it’s that cultural hardware – otherwise known as authentic being – that we are propelled toward by the example of the shaman and the techniques of the shaman. You know, if someone tells you that vast spiritual riches await you if you will but give up sex, interesting food, and your own thoughts for 10 or 15 years, and follow along with them, then something will be attained; this is no challenge to most of us, because we have our lives to lead, mortgages to pay, children to feed, car payments. But, if someone tells you, “Eat this plant, and you will come into your birthright,” that’s a real existential challenge. The excuse that it’s difficult, or unattainable, has been removed. There can no longer be shilly-shallying around that issue. Shamanism, therefore, is a call to authenticity.

Well, then the last point that I want to make: this authenticity is generally presented – and has generally been presented throughout the evolution of the psychedelic movement in the United States – as a kind of personal integrity, a kind of psychological health, as though you had confronted all your demons and slain them, and you are now balanced, or individuated, or whole – something like that. That’s true; that is the first stage of the shamanic integration. But, that is not the goal of the shamanic integration; otherwise it just becomes a kind of chemically-assisted psychotherapy. The goal is then, having attained that balance, that wisdom, and that connection, to then rise up to a level of universal meaning. In other words, to break through the machinery of cultural conditioning in the same way that the shaman does, and to attempt to, uh, discover something authentic – something authentic outside the self-generated language cloud.

And, to my mind, what this authentic thing is, is -- it’s hard to know how to put it, but it’s the animate quality that resides within the psychedelic experience. That the universal mind is alive, is sentient, is perceiving, is there to meet you when you come through from the other side. So, we’re not talking about psychedelics as a spotlight to be turned on to reveal the detritus of our own personal unconscious. It is not a spotlight. It is not shining from behind you; it is shining ahead of you. It is actually that the same organisational principles which called us forth into self-reflection have called forth self-reflection out of the planet itself, and the problem, then, is for us to suspect this, act on our suspicion, and be good detectives and track down the spirit in its lair! And this is what shamans are doing: they are hunters of spirit.

Now, anthropology tends to want to – well, *place in a museum diorama* is too harsh a phrase – but wants to *freeze* these things in context, so they become artifacts; so then we say, well, “How *do* the Huitoto think about the

shaman?” and I’ve even seen papers, “What do the Huitoto Think of the Shaman in Winter?” “What do the Huitoto Think of the Shaman in Summer?” – well, not only is this a stupid question on the face of it, but since they don’t *have* winter and summer, it’s a stupid question beneath the surface!

Shamanism does not exist in the same way that other culture-bound institutions exist for us to catalogue and reflect on. Rather, this is a case where we played the role of the prodigal son – the descent into *Physis*, the descent into matter. For 15,000 years, we have wandered a desert, and we are now very well adapted to the deserts of rationalism, materialism, state politics, patriarchy, so forth and so on. But, there is no food in a desert! [laughter] Eventually, there has to be a Promised Land, and I believe that many people in this room know that personally, that Promised Land is the psychedelic experience.

The larger challenge – and it is a larger challenge; it’s easier to fix your own mind – the larger challenge is to somehow make this private doorway a public option. Empower ourselves to speak of this in such a way that it cannot be put down. It cannot be rolled over; it cannot be pigeonholed; it cannot be handed over to a clique of experts but, rather, it has to be confronted as the authentic thing which we lost so long ago that we no longer have any image of the thing lost; we simply have an ache - an ache that cannot be gotten rid of. The solution to this is a re-empowering of the shamanic meme: a taking of the idea of shamanism, pouring it into the best our own self-exploration has given to us – which to my mind means art, psychotherapy, and, uh, art [laughter] – and to try to empower these institutions to give back our authenticity that was lost. The cultures that possess shamanism function – the entire culture – as a shamanic model for those of us who wander in the Prodigal’s desert of materialism.

And through the work of people like Gordon Wasson and Richard Evans Schultes, and the 19th-century Richard Spruce, the tools have been catalogued. The magical plants. And I don’t believe that shamanism without hallucinogens is authentic shamanism or comfortable shamanism. Now, this is a great debate in anthropology. Mircea Eliade, on one side, saying, “When shamanism turns to narcotics, it has entered a decadent and final phase.” The very use of the word “narcotics” betrays such a botanical naivety [laughter] that you know you’re not going to be happy with what follows! [laughter] Wasson, on the hand, said, “A shamanism that does not resort to hallucinogenic plants is a shamanism that has lost its roots”; a shamanism that relies on ordeals, pathological personalities, and withholding of food, is a shamanism that has lost a sense of its techniques and its efficacy.

So, the last thought I would like to leave with you is – and I hope I’m preaching to the converted, but if there’s a single person in this room who doesn’t know what I’m about to say, then it’s worth repeating – and that is, we are not bullshitting you! This is not yoga! This is not NLP! – not to knock those things [laughter and applause] This is real! It is so real that you can take the most hardened, rational, reductionist asshole and drop him into that environment, and he will meet his Maker, you know?! [laughter and applause] It dissolves you into a confrontation with authentic being, and this is what we are starving for; this is how we’ve gotten into the messes – and mess – that we’re in. Take seriously the techniques of shamanism. Study the plants. Make real choices, and then, don’t dabble the dose! Once you’ve done your homework, *go for it!*

[Applause]

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Shamanism, Symbiosis and Psychedelic Workshop

1982-2000

Whole Life Expo

Description

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1989

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Shamanology

Day Month 1984

Mill Valley, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)

~*~*~*~Part One~*~*~*~

My name is Terence McKenna and I'm, uh, a philosophical gadfly and shamanologist, writer and lecturer [laughter]. Uhm, Louis assured me that you were so familiar with my work that probably we could handle this meeting as a dialogue after a short introduction to some of the things that I'm interested in. So we'll attempt that. I'll talk for a few minutes and then we'll see if we can't have that conversation about the aspects of these things that interest you.

If any of you have read "The Invisible Landscape", which I am the co-author of with my brother, you know that it ranges over fairly hardcore chemistry and neurophysiology, through the phenomenology of shamanism, and on into a fairly extensive discussion of principles of ordering in the *I Ching*. But what I seem to, uh, find myself publicly lecturing about is the relationship of, uh, hallucinogens, especially plant hallucinogens to shamanic healing in the context where use of hallucinogens is associated with shamanism. If you look at the worldwide distribution of hallucinogens you immediately notice that there are several unexplained anomalies. Why is it, uh, that fully 80% of the world's known plant hallucinogens are concentrated in the Amazon Basin, even though the flora of the Old World jungles of Indonesia, uh, is equally rich? And Weston La Barre and a number of people have written about this, trying to say that perhaps it is because the people of the Amazon are closer to the hunting and gathering pre-agricultural mode than anywhere else in the world. But for whatever reason the people of the Amazon have developed, uh, the use of hallucinogens in curing and shamanism to a very high degree.

And [cough] while a number of plant species are involved in the production of these various, uh, drugs, the chemistry of them is more simple than the botany. In other words, almost all of the hallucinogens in use in the Amazon, uh, rely on a monoamine oxidase inhibition to propitiate dimethyltryptamine. In other words, monoamine oxidase, uh, is the enzyme system in the body which degrades monoamines, which would be serotonin, but also any introduced monoamines which would be all alkaloids, and, uh, many drugs. When the monoamine oxidase is inhibited, chemically, it can no longer do its job of, uh, deactivating, uh, these compounds, and consequently you get an accumulation of them at the synapse. And this is, uh, thought to be the mechanic by which the hallucinogenic, uh, experience is induced with these drugs.

For many people who seem interested in curing, I think this morning I will, uh, in brief remarks, concentrate on one ethnomedical system, and if your questions range beyond that, that's fine. But I aim to concentrate on this one ethnomedical system because part of what I am trying to do is to get researchers like yourselves to look more closely at this. There're a number of unanswered questions. In fact I would say more not known than known.

The system that I refer to is the endemic use of ayahuasca throughout Bolivia, Peru, southern Colombia,

portions of ,uh, Ecuador and Brazil. Very briefly, ayahuasca is, uh, a combinatory drug made out of the boiled leaves and stems of a [????] woody climber called *banisteriopsis caapi*. A huge, woody vine that sometimes reaches 200 meters in length in the jungle. And, uh, it is boiled to make a hot water infusion, and then to this is added a small amount of the DMT-containing leaves of some other plant, either *banisteri*..uh..either *diplopterys cabrerana*, or *psychotria viridis*. Now, my brother has just finished toward the Ph.D. at the University of British Columbia, and much of what his thesis consisted of was, uh, looking at drug and plant samples that we collected in the Amazon in 1982 when we went down there. For over ten years, Schultes and Bo Holmstedt of the Karolinska Institute had published theories of the activity of ayahuasca which stated that they believed it worked through monoamine oxidase inhibition, but they had never really been, uh, tested. Now it has been looked at in the laboratory, and essentially confirmed that this is precisely what's happening. And it's a very interesting comment on ethnomedicine, because unlike peyote or *amanita muscaria* or the psilocybin mushrooms of Mexico, ayahuasca is a combinatory drug. It is prepared. It is not simply picked and eaten. So, as a consequence of this, it can be made either well or badly. And as a consequence of that, the personality of the shaman becomes far more important in the ayahuasca cult, than in the cults that revolve around the use of, uh, plant drugs where no preparation is involved.

Now, at the beginning of this, I mentioned that all the, all the, uh, hallucinogenic drugs of the Amazon are based on this tryptamine, uh, beta-Carboline, uh, interaction. What we were doing in 1982 was looking at a much more endemic and restrictive drug complex, which is, uh,...for over 30 years there's been persistent reports in the ethnographic literature, that there was an orally active DMT drug, which was very interesting to pharmacologists because there is large amounts of, uh, monoamine oxidase in, uh, the human gut. Assumed by evolutionary biologists to be there to degrade, uh, potentially dangerous or toxic monoamine that might be taken in through the diet. So it's very interesting to pharmacologists to hear that there is an orally active DMT drug, because it, uh, flies in the face of pharmacological theory. It should be impossible. Uh, and the pharmacologists said that if there was an orally active DMT drug, then it must be complexed with an MAO inhibitor to make it work.

So what we were doing was going down there and visiting various shaman in various places, persuading them to make the paste for us, making voucher specimens of the plants that went into it, and then taking, uh, the voucher specimens, the paper material, the air-dried material, all this stuff back to Canada. And, uh, our assumption was that we would pretty much confirm Holmstedt and Schultes', uh, assertion that this drug also worked by monoamine oxidase inhibition.

It now appears not to be so. Uh, it also appears to be, uh, there're questions about the composition of the drug. The people who use this drug were disrupted in the 1930's. There was, uh, a dispute between Colombia and Peru, and when the new boundary was drawn, these people felt they were in the wrong country. They felt Peruvian, but they ended up in the Colombian side of the line. The Putumayo River was set as the new border, and they undertook then a kind of exodus, in which, uh, ten to fifteen thousand of them, uh, moved about a hundred miles across the Putumayo River to the present center, uh, where they're located. And in that [crossover?], we believe that the knowledge of the drug was severely compromised. The reason for this is because samples of the drug that we collected north of the Putumayo River in 1971 actually did show the presence of beta-Carboline in them. But samples prepared below the Putumayo River had no trace of beta-Carbolines in them, and in fact in bioassay, seemed , that means when we took it, assumed, uh, either inactive or toxic, and it's well known that the trees from which this, uh, drug is prepared is also the source of an arrow poison. And in fact among the Yanomamö, uh, if they are, the men are on a hunting expedition and they run out of the supply of the drug, they are persistently reported to scrape the arrow poison off their quill arrows and to sniff that. [Laughter].

So what exactly is going on was not clear. I think we took turns doing the bioassays, uh, with the drugs in

Peru. And I think my brother got, uh, the most powerful and frightening sample. And it sounded from his account like a paralytic poison. He felt numbing which began around the lips and proceeded down his throat. His breathing became very shallowed and labored. His mind was racing but he couldn't move. There were no, there was no eidetic or hypnogogic imagery. There was simply a, uh, a massive sense of respiratory, uh, depression. And when he recovered from this and questioned the shaman who had made the drug, his only comment was that it does take getting used to. [Laughter]. But I'm not sure that we'll repeat the experiment.

So I, I mention that because, uh, here is an unsolved problem. We took the best suggestion of the generation of researchers ahead of us, and went to the Amazon and ran their suggestions to ground, and it appears not to. Their conjecture was incorrect. These [virola paste] drugs don't work through MAO inhibition. So here is the continuing unsolved pharmacological problem if any of you find yourselves doing field work in the Amazon, this is the one to bear in mind.

The ayahuasca complex that I mentioned earlier is much more accessible and in fact is perhaps the most widely distributed psychedelic drug taking, uh, uh, complex in the world. It involves millions and millions of people who, on a regular basis approximately weekly, gather together usually in windowless corrugated roof sheds. And the local *ayahuascero*, and in these areas ayahuasca and shaman mean the same thing, uh, he leads the group in the taking of this drug. And, uh, a number of people are come to these sessions because they have medical or psychological problems, either is, there is no distinction made. Many people come to these sessions out of curiosity. A certain percentage come with the attitude that they're going to take a psychedelic drug, in other words that this is a visionary experience. And, uh, this phenomenon of taking the drug is completely embedded in the people's lives. And very very efficaciously so, they call it *La Purga*. And in fact harmine, the main monoamine oxidase inhibiting constituent of ayahuasca, actually is a, uh, a strong anti-worm remedy. And this is important and definitely gives the people taking ayahuasca a, an adaptive leg-up on everybody else because intestinal worms are an endemic problem in these areas. And I believe there's no question that if you're taking ayahuasca every couple weeks, you're probably being very free with this.

Uh, the curing, uh, scenario of the *ayahuascero* is easily identified to the curings of nigh all shamans world wide. In other words it consists of magical songs, the blowing of tobacco smoke over the body of the patient, the laying on of hands, the sucking on the afflicted part of the body to remove a, uh, a, uh, magical object which may or may not be visible, uh, the interpreting of visions and this sort of thing. The *ayahuascero* really functions as a hierophant for these groups of country people. And I might say a word about the context in which this is happening. Their ayahuasca is used by deep forest Indians and they have their own folk ways about it. Uh, it's really a mass phenomenon of displace Indian and uh, mixed Mestiso population.

What you have in the Amazon are, uh, relatively new cities. New if we mean, by new, built within this century. Iquitos in Peru arose first as a consequence of the rubber boom, many of you who saw Herzog's film "Burden of Dreams" are not, uh, "Fitzcarraldo", uh, got a good idea of what ayahua, uh what Iquitos is like. Pucallpa is a much newer city in the south of Peru and is essentially 50,000 Indians have come out of the jungle to work in the sawmills. And, uh, to create a tremendous, uh, pocket of syncretic foment, where folk beliefs, shamanistic practices, uh, languages are all in a state of homogenation, and very rich, very rich for those people to live in, and very rich to do research in. And, uh, it was there that we found the, uh, *ayahuascero* who seemed to us to have the most, as they say in Hebrew, he was *memash*, he was "real", he was, uh, had a sense of existential authenticity about him. And then in the laboratory we backed that up. His stuff was consistently stronger and better made than anyone else's.

So Kat and I spent six or seven weeks with these people, we just moved in with them. We took ayahuasca as often as we could arrange to do, which was at least once a week and sometimes twice a week. And I, we

can attest to its curative powers because the peeks of ayahuasca taking were, uh, interspersed with the [trentures] of salmonella infection [Laughter]. Each time we got salmonella we would ask the shaman to move up the next, uh, ayahuasca trip...and that would give us about three days brace before the next bout of salmonella. It was a terrific problem. If you know what it is, you know what I mean. If you don't, you're lucky.

So, uh we can, I can answer questions about this, uh many different levels I guess before I open up for discussion. So many of you seem interested in curing, I should describe and maybe Kat can help us of our impression of what is going on in the curing. Naturally, uh, well...have to talk about psychedelic drugs. I think the word psychedelic is maybe too broad, because it includes things which are very different from each other. It can include things as different as ketamine and mescaline. And uh, certainly, uh we...Tryptamine, uh, intoxication if we can use that word advisedly, is very distinct from the intoxication or or, uh, the immersion in the phenomenology of LSD or mescaline. Something like that. In our cultural context, DMT is almost never encountered. And when it is encountered, it is usually smoked. And it's very very brief. It onsets in about 45 seconds. It lasts 100-300 seconds, and then it fades in a few minutes, and is tremendously intense visual hallucinogen. Very difficult in fact to imagine, and more intense than that. Now, psilocybin which is the active hallucinogen in mushrooms, is 4-phosphoryloxy-N-N-dimethyltryptamine. It's well understood that the phosphoryl group is removed as it crosses the blood-brain barrier. This turns it into psilocin, 5-hydroxy-N-N-dimethyltryptamine, uh, I mean 4-hydroxy-N-N-dimethyltryptamine. And this is, this is very close to serotonin. So close that it's reasonable to assume that these compounds are competing for the same types of activity at the synapse.

Now, though, uh, psilocybin cannot be directly changed into DMT, it's a two step process, the structural affinities of them are very clear. What seems to be happening in ayahuasca is a very small amount of DMT, and uh, a lot of MAO inhibitor being used to activate it. Uh, and I should talk about these MAO inhibitors in ayahuasca. They are harmine, harmaline, tetrahydroharmine, the family of compounds known as beta-Carbolines. Now, beta-Carbolines are psychoactive in their own right, but not hallucinogenic. Some of you may know the work of Claudio Naranjo, who used harmine and harmaline in therapy. But if you study his work on the subject very carefully, it becomes clear that fully half of all the human descriptions of, uh, the psycho, uh, activity of beta-Carbolines come from one subject. And massive doses had to be given. They were giving, uh, 10 mg/kg in some cases, to [elucidate] even low eidetic activity behind closed eyelids. So to call it a hallucinogen is perhaps a misnomer.

Uh, one of the things that my brother discovered that seems fascinating to me is that in *in vitro* systems, meaning in test tubes, uh, ayahuasca brews that we brought from the Amazon were found to be a million times stronger for MAO inhibition than they needed to be. When he diluted these to 1 millionth the strength that the people were taking in the Amazon, you're still getting 80% MAO inhibition. So what seems to be happening if we can extrapolate from *in vitro* to *in vivo*, is they are way overdoing the amount of MAO inhibitor you need. And just barely saddling up to enough, uh, tryptamine to potentiate the, uh, the hallucinogenic activity.

When you take ayahuasca, first after about 30 minutes you feel a kind of calmative effect. Which if you've taken a large amount of it, can actually become almost the beginnings of a live anesthesia. And then in darkness under the influence of the *ikaro*, the magical song, the hypnogogia begins to weave itself. And it's not, uh, sharp edged bright geometric kinds of hallucinations. It's much more, as he says in his thesis, the color is of the forest floor. Rich ochres, olive drabs, warm browns, dusty oranges, all very impressionistically put together. And very much subject to audio control. The *ikaros*, the magical songs, are actually, uh, technically tools for controlling the fabric of the hallucination. This is very interesting to me because as some of you may know who've heard me lecture before, I'm interested in the effect of these things on the language centers and the relationship between visual modalities to spoken modalities.

And definitely, this is what's happening in ayahuasca. The songs are being used to to control the visions. Perhaps it's what's happening in peyote circles as well. I don't have great familiarity with that, but I know there's great stress on attaining these magical songs, which are not produced from the ego. They are spontaneous outbursts of, uh, linguistic order, that affect the visual cortex and control the fabric of the hallucinations. And, the shaman can use this to, in his own language, to look into the body. He can see into the body and I would say of ayahuasca the most, I don't want to say "health oriented" but it's definitely somatically oriented. You, you feel how you feel on it, and you see into yourself and you can actually direct energy in a visual way that is way more intense than mere metaphor. And if a person such as myself can do this, you can imagine someone who's given their life to manipulating these states--how intense it must be. And they see into the body and they direct sound into the body, and by this means energy blockages can be broken up, diseases diagnosed, psychological conditions addressed, all kinds of things are, uh, go on.

And, uh, our attitude when looking at this was not the, uh, attitude of representatives of the superior culture studying the quaint folk ways of preliterate peoples. It seems very clear that this healthcare delivery system is very effective, perhaps more effective than our own, especially in the treating of psychological disorders, of which there are a number in Peru that only these populations are, uh, subject to. I am not an anthropologist or sociologist and not particularly interested in phenomenological descriptions of these things. I really believe that there is a, uh, a, uh, potential impact on our own society from all of this. If we could understand what was happening, we could have a much, uh, better chance of being able to orient our own healthcare delivery systems to be more effective. Uh, a friend of ours, an anthropologist who lives in Finland, uh Luis Luna, who showed his film in Vancouver last year, he is completely convinced that the real mastery of ayahuasca lays in following a very rigorous diet. Which, uh, the deep forest *ayahuasceros* used. And this may be true. I mean, definitely, uh, beta-Carbolines are endogenously produced in human metabolism, so are beta-Carbolines, uh, the, uh I mean so are tryptamines. And the peculiar diet in the Amazon anyway which is high starch, uh, uh, low protein, high sugar, very few green vegetables kind of diet, may predispose the, these people to accessing ayahuasca more easily.

Kat had no trouble getting off, uh, when we were being dosed down there. I had more trouble and I think it was simple a matter of, uh, the ratio of the compound to body weight. I was definitely the largest person in any of these sessions, and, uh, the same amount is doled out to each person, and not in a context where you can say "I'd like to take more please" [audience laughter]. You just have to go with what's going on. But we also, our informant prepare several bottles of ayahuasca for us. And in a series of experiments in the United States when we got back, we verified that it is not only a hallucinogen, but it can be a terrifyingly intense hallucinogen, uh, if, uh, if, uh, errors in dosage are made. It can be, uh, well I said after I made my error of dosage, I never hope to be more stoned than..[laughter]...

So, uh, that's, uh, what I offer to you as interesting perhaps to you in your own fields. I must be aware that I have other angles: the extraterrestrial angle, the end of history angles, several different things. But all of these things were inspired by our belief that these Amazon peoples have a technology for exploring the modalities of the unconscious, that is centuries ahead of us. I mean, we are at the very beginning of exploring the unconscious. The Freudian and Jungian models, which you can think of the Freudian model as embedded like a, uh, black dot in the center of the Jungian bull's eye. Each theory of the unconscious claims more and more territory as its own. But what I have become convinced of from using these hallucinogenic drugs is, that the major portion of the unconscious has very little to do with human beings. It is simply a modality, an interior landscape, and large portions of it, uh, uh, are not human. You could almost make the cybernetic metaphor of, uh, ROM portions of the unconscious. ROM stands for Read Only Memory. This means that if you have a computer with Read Only Memory, you can *read* what is in that section of memory, but you cannot change it or input into it. And I believe there are "read only"

portions of memory that no human being has ever inputted into. So they bare no trace of, uh, humanness. But they can be contemplated, and this is the idea the Alien Other, uh, a tension that appears in modern society. It has appeared before in Hellenistic society. Uh, as techniques are developed for exploring consciousness, these transhuman, non-human dimensions slowly come into view. It appears to be, uh, a co-equal dimension of existential validity, which our cultural and linguistic programming has blinded us to rather severely. Now of course, we're returning to look at it again in the larger context of the higher, uh, intellectual thrust of the twentieth century, being an effort to recapture and understand archaic, uh, forms of thought. This is why our fascination with the unconscious, with drugs, with shamanism, with the forms of art like cubism and this sort of thing, because we are trying to give ourselves cultural balance by harking back to a time *in illo tempore*, sacral time, a time before history. And these drugs, uh, the means to do that properly understood. Our problems on this end are simply the baggage of cultural and legal and, uh, conventional assumptions about what these things are, and there's a great deal to be learned from these shamanic, uh, uh, societies and conventions.

However I'm not, uh, I call myself the shamanologist to set myself aside from the people who claim to be shaman. Shamans. [laughter]. I don't, uh, I I think there's a great deal to be learned from shamanism, but that there is a great deal that can be extrapolated from it that we need to create our shamanism, and that we *will*. When we're sitting in this cult hut in utter darkness with people vomiting and singing and undergoing [...] and you're still trying to perform the eidetic reduction, still thinking about Husserl and Heidegger, and realizing that you, you're, your mental insides are too different to understand in *their* shoes, you have to make your own shoes.

So let's talk about all this....

*But then you said that, uh, mushrooms are catalyzed into a tryptamine..So I wasn't clear as to..

Either I wasn't clear or you misunderstood me. Mescaline, which is the active, uh, constituent in peyote, is not a tryptamine. It's an, it's a kind of amphetamine. Mushrooms, psilocybin is an interesting compound. It is the only 4-substituted indolethylamine that occurs in nature. So it's, uh, it's unique and in another context, this is one of the reasons we were led to suggest it might be an extraterrestrial gene inserted from the outside. Because you just don't get single instances of a compound occurring in organic nature. Serotonin for instance which is very closely related to psilocybin, occurs in everything from planeria to man. It occurs virtually in all known living systems. Psilocybin only is known to occur in the very limited number of fungi. It is a phosphorylated tryptamine. Uh, the tryptamines then that occur in the virolas, in these trees used to make the paste, or in the admixture plants of ayahuasca, these are not phosphorylated tryptamines. These are things like, uh, N-N-dimethyltryptamine itself, and 5-methoxy, uh, MeO DMT....

*[Inaudible]

No it was never there in those cases.

*No no I mean in the...

In the case of...yes

...Catalyzed so, in the end result it...similar...

Yes they are very very similar, with one exception I think. Maybe more? [laughter] The major difference

is, that unlike psilocybin--psilocybin has one very curious property, which is that it seems animate. You contact an organized entelechy of some sort very easily. It speaks to you. I've compared it to the Logos of Hellenistic syncretism. It seems to be a, uh, a, uh, psychic component not under the control of the ego. And this is very curious. Frightening to some people. Uh, when I was with Albert Hoffman at the Entheogen Conference in Santa Barbara I asked him you know he discovered LSD and he characterized psilocybin. And I asked him which he preferred to take. And he said he preferred LSD, and I said "Why?". And he said "There's something....too animate about psilocybin." And closer questioning showed that this was unsettling to him. It's too much like the orthodox notion of madness. Having a dialogue with an independent voice in your head is quite unsettling to a certain sort of person I think.

And you dont have the same experience with ayahuasca?

It teaches. You want to say something...?

Yes I think that ayahuasca has the feeling of some kind of entity in it as well but, uh, it doesn't particularize like, uh, little creatures that can come at you and bombard you or whatever. And psilocybin is sort of more along the lines it's very large and very gentle. And so if my, I had experiences where, I think Dennis did as well, where I was lead through the forest by someone so much bigger than me, that I couldn't see him or her, you know but [Terence: "Mmhmm"], taught about the plants along the way, and which they were. Once I saw a huge hand dangling above my head that was all black with jewels, and crevices you know and...that kind of entity. Not frightening though. I never found it frightening.... The rushing, the coming of it is where people vomit, where you have a very strong [???] that's what they call it. [???] Very strong at the beginning, that's what scares me....[inaudible]

When you quake, I mean, and they seem to encourage that. For instance, uh, the shed where we would do it had a corrugated roof and no windows but it was up on short stilts. The shaman would stand up and put his hands in front of him, and tremble, and he would transmit this trembling into the floor and shake the entire building. And several times, uh, the protocol is when you feel you're going to vomit, you just go outside and vomit. And people are coming and going all the time. We didn't vomit that much, which was very puzzling to them. They really stress vomiting, and they identify the vomiting with the purgative, uh, effects of it. And when we would not vomit, they say "Oh you must live very cleanly. You must be in very good shape." But actually all that was happening, I think, was that we were following the rules they laid down, and they were not. [Laughter]. Like they would say, you know, "Never eat pork before doing it. Don't eat anything for 6 hours before doing it. No salt. No alcohol." And we would do this and be fine. And they would just be [audience laughter] [Kat: Even the shaman was...] puking out ten different ways, and getting sick. [Laughter].

But the, the entity in ayahuasca, it teaches by showing. The visions teach. The thing in psilocybin is much more puzzling. I mean, it's a haranguer. You actually have, uh, you know, uh, psychic arm wrestling with somebody who wants to, to, who loves controversy and rhetoric, and is well able to express itself and present itself. That's a very puzzling thing that, uh, could lead one far afield if you sought a reasonable explanation. Um, so those are the major differences.

I think ayahuasca lends itself to be a better healing drug...

Mm hmm.

...than psilocybin. Because it is gentler, because it can still communicate, uh, with the other people. It's very close, in fact this kind--this number of people in this smaller space, you know. And you can, it can flow back and forth. Whereas psilocybin....if you've experience you know...you can blast off. [Audience laughter]. So, uh, maybe when you're by yourself on psilocybin, but...collectively I think, ayahuasca [inaudible].

It's very earth-centered. I mean, even taking ayahuasca up where we live in Sonoma County. Immediately as it comes on it's about sunlight on brown water, huge twining roots. In other words it creates the jungle. It is the jungle in some strange way. The psilocybin entity is Gnostic. It points to the center of the galaxy. It talks about ending history. It's full of a sense of crisis and the need for activity and, uh, humor. But this intense desire for change. It is not a drug of acceptance, you know. It wants transformation of a very radical sort. The ayahuasca seems to, uh, create, to integrate. Especially into that environment. You know the major, uh, alkaloid fraction of ayahuasca is harmine, which was, a beta-Carboline, which was first, uh, isolated from Syrian Rue, the giant Syrian Rue *peganum harmala*, and that's what called harmine. Before enough was known about the compound to realize, the compound in ayahuasca, to realize that it was the same as the compound in *peganum harmala*, it was called *telepathine*. Because the early explorers, uh, Villavicencio and Koch-Grunberg in the early years of this century, uh, reported that the people were inducing states of mass telepathy. And there is some reason to think that this might be true in some sense. In other words, these people live in a state of semi-telepathy anyway.

If you can imagine a hunting-gathering tribe of 30 people moving through a vast rain forest with their children and their elders, uh. The notion of the super-expressed individual that we take for granted is not really there. There is more a sense of the unity of the group. Then, when the elders get together and take ayahuasca, there is a kind of melding together to obtain consensus, and also impose, uh, information impossible to obtain any other way. For instance, weather information. Shamanism is always related to weather prophecy. And it's always been assumed that this is just a "wing and a prayer", or that they had subtle, that they were super-sensitized environmental clues about weather change. But also things like game movement. This is very important to know. And, and, and for all of these things ayahuasca was invoked and used.

I want to go back to something you said about, uh, about personality of mushrooms. I think it's an interesting political comment, uh, that mushrooms should be growing here in this county which is so apathetic and we need to do something, and we don't have a more gentle type of, uh, of drug here..endogenous.

And also we don't have a collective format to use them in, which is [inaudible]....

Two things. Let's see first is, uh, when you described your brother's experience, reminded me of [Michael Harlan, sp?] description of his, uh, ayahuasca experience. And he said, after I guess going through a kind of deathlike experience, that that's why they call it the "little death".

Mm hmm.

And the other thing was that he said that in their preparation of ayahuasca it was from a tree datura. Did you find that?

Uh, tree daturas, arboreal daturas in the subfamily *brugmansia*, are used in certain areas, uh, rarely and not

in these, not in these public gatherings of people. Tropane alkaloids are notoriously difficult to control. And that would be more within a context of *brujeria*, of real sorcery and witchcraft, and generally tends to be more "montane", uh, a phenomenon of the mountains. Especially around, uh, the Valley of the Sibundoy and those places. We never, uh, we grew *brugmansias* and have them of course, but we never, uh, combined it with ayahuasca because it, knowing just what the tropanes are like on their own, it seemed very, uh, dangerous. You know, some tropanes make you sweat and your heart race. Other tropanes make you fall asleep and your body temperature drops, and your respiration falls. And it just seemed like a dangerous area.

There are a number, one of the interesting chemical frontiers of this is these admixtures, in which you have the basic ayahuasca, the boiled stems of *banisteriopsis caapi*. Normally what's added to that are the leaves of, uh, *psychotria viridis*, a rubiaceae bush related to coffee, which has a great deal of DMT in the leaves. Uh, in the northern part of the range where this drug is being made, where it is called not ayahuasca but *yagé*, uh, *brunfelsias*, which are also solanaceous plants with very high molecular weight tropanes, that have defied characterization. They are sometimes used. But we knew Tim Plowman and he's, the only, uh, non-Indian person ever to take *brunfelsia*, and his description of it, it sounded like, you know, his life hung in the balance for 36 hours, and he didn't know whether he would make it or not. So we didn't go too deeply into that. What we did do, was we always asked our informants, "What other plants are sometimes used in ayahuasca?" And they would usually name them, and we could collect vouchers of 9 unusual admixture plants that we collected. Only one, a, uh, a, uh, menisperm, which is this very small family of plants. A menisperm, *abuta grandifolia*, was definitely alkaloid-positive. And that's, there's more work to be done there. But, uh....this technology of admixtures is very interesting, and not well understood. And, uh, that kind of thing could be worked out up here in the laboratory, if you could get and grow all these things.

[Kat inaudible...]

That's right, that's right.

Andy [inaudible] was saying that he felt [...] of the, uh, multiple alkaloids, and that it, uh, made an incredible amount of difference to the person who was going through these things.

Yes. Well that's a weaker way of saying what I said. I mean, ay... ayahuasca's not effective without an admixture. It's an odd experience. But it's not an effective trance inducing compound of visionary compound without an admixture. You have to have it.

Can you contrast what you're saying with *muscaria*?

Amanita muscaria? Well, that's an entirely different situation. For those of you who aren't familiar with it I'll review it briefly. *Amanita muscaria* is a, uh, mushroom that has a mycorrhizal relationship with birch trees, that is distributed throughout the world at altitudes above 5 thou..well no actually it occurs at sea level too. But, anyway, it, uh, is highly variable both geographically and seasonally. And in Siberia in the Amur river basin the Yakut shamans and a couple of other tribes have utilized this for a long, long time. Uh, Gordon Wasson wrote a book in which he tried to suggest that *amanita muscaria* may have been the basis of the Vedic hallucinogen *soma*. The problem with *amanita muscaria*, which he freely admitted, is it is very hard to get satisfyingly loaded on it. Uh, you can--it is not consistent, and we don't know...there've been various suggestions made: that you must roast it over a fire to create, uh, a change in its chemistry,

that it must be pounded with milk curd. Apparently readings of the Vedas suggest that whatever *soma* was, it was pounded with milk curd. People have even come forth with chemical theories that show that the active agent in, uh, *amanita muscaria*, which is muscimol, is very closely related to the active toxin in *amanita muscaria*, muscarine. You can decarboxylate muscarine to muscimol using the enzymes in sour milk. So it might be possible to incubate, uh, *amanita muscaria* in sour milk, and turn the toxin into more of the active agent. Um...

Is that also toxic?

Well, any, I mean sure. You have within any alkaloid or what's called an LD50, which is the horrifying concept that [audience laughs] I don't need to go into [Terence laughs].

One thing...other mushrooms often, if the, uh, specific reaction of the person relates to their own biochemistry and especially what they've eaten within the last 48 hours before you ingest it. Do you think that semi-toxic effects from certain mushrooms...For example if you drank wine, um, even very common ones like morels, um, that..It varies from person to person. So that could be an additional factor too.

That's right there's a *lepiota* species where if you eat it it's perfectly harmless, but if you have very much alcohol it's fatal and irreversible. Uh, another thing to bare in mind is that, uh, there are a number of monoamine oxidase inhibitors that occur in foods. Certain foods are high in these things and, uh. For instance soft cheeses, Bries and Camemberts are just loaded with tyramine, which is a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. This is why, uh, certain, uh, anti-psychotic drugs, this is an admonition that they must not be given. And, uh, I think it would be murder to take ayahuasca on top of a typical diet of Camembert and Brie. [Audience laughter]. Fortunately these things are unknown in the Amazon [Terence laughs].

In Berkeley we all had a ton...

Yes in Berkeley it'd be tricky to keep track of yourself [laughter]. But I definitely felt, uh, when we were in the Amazon, the diet is so strange. And you cannot avoid it, uh, because you can--everything you carry in goes on your back or on the back of an Indian who you are paying, and it may not seem like much, but over days and days....So there's always an effort to, to eat off the land. And, my God, you know if you've never been in a tropical jungle. People have a notion about a tropical jungle that it's just full of food. Wonderful things to eat, all these plants and things. But you see, the Amazon has been above water 220 million years. That's 220 million years of uninterrupted evolution of a tropical ecosystem with ample, uh, water supply. So that means, every ecological niche is occupied. Protein is at such a premium, that there is no protein. You could starve to death in the Amazon. There is no protein. Um, Chambers, who's the world's expert on the tropical rain forest, estimates in the Amazon 96% of all utilizable organic material, at any one, at any given moment, is in a living system. In other words only 4% of the organic material is not at any one given time in an organic system. What that means in practical terms is, a leaf falls. Ten minutes later it's gone [laughter]. The, the leaf cutting ants, the "this" the "that", it just sucks it right up, you know? And, uh, minerals in free suspension in rain water, they estimate the average flow distance of an ion in rain water is something like a centimeter [laughter] before it's uptaken into a living system. So there is no food in the Amazon, and this is one of the reasons why coca is so popular. Coca in the Amazon is not a drug, it's one a food, and two an appetite depressant.

And this is what they're, they're, uh, you know and people are going to the Amazon. People are outrage at the notion that coca could be though a drug. A drug is something bad. Coca is wonderful, you know? So,

uh, it's a very tight ecosystem with very little elaboration of protein. And that's, uh, that's why the search for food plants has been so intense. And perhaps why the discov...so many drug plants have been discovered. Because every single thing has been tested again and again for its effect as a food, a poison, a hallucinogen, because everything is to be utilized.

Mm Hmm.

You mention the use of, uh, magic songs in the directing of the group experience of ayahuasca. Uh, we will mention that you are interested in the relationship between the visual experience and, and language centers. Do you think that it, the linguistics, per se, do you think it's sound I mean as in frequency, verses linguistics in terms of semantics, that guide the [???] could you [speak?] to that distinction?

Well, is it possible to, for a human being to make sounds which do not reflect syntactical deep structure of language? I mean in other words, we're so hard wired for language that in any extended verba...vocalizing, a Chomskyite would be able to come and find the linguistic structure of it. I'm not sure. I think, uh, this is a really interesting question because you have input through the senses. You have one, one, one sense perceptor which is geared to transduce, uh, audio input. And one which is set to transduce visual input. But it's probably something about the way these perceptual systems have evolved, that they divide the incoming input. Actually, all that's happening is that you're moving through a multi-leveled wave system of various kinds of inputs, which you are transducing into tactility, vision, and sound. Uh, I think this a very interesting area for research. Just recently, someone sent me an article, which I thought was very very suggestive, that occurred in no less respectable a place than Martin Gardner's, uh, or the amateur scientist in Scientific American. But they were pointing out in there, that if you can sustain a hundred Hertz hum with your voice, you can actually make an electric fan appear to slow down and stop. You can also cause roll lines to appear on a TV set. Now, what exactly is happening here? It isn't that the fan slows down, or that the roll lines on the TV. The, the scientific explanation which they put forth was, that a well-sustained hundred Hertz hum actually vibrates your eyeballs, so that they become like strobes. And you can freeze motion. And you can, uh, uh, slow things down and start them up again.

So other people aren't able to perceive...

No, other people don't perceive it, but you perceive it. There were anecdotes about airplane mechanics who can look at a spinning propeller, and tell if it's flawed by jerking their head back and forth very quickly. And, uh, this is very interesting because here is a way to use your voice to control your visual input, and to actually gain secret information. If we had written a secret word on that propeller, you could win bets in a bar by, uh [audience laughter] [Terence laughs]. So, um, I think this needs to be looked into. What can we learn about the world by subjecting our bodies to different kinds of self-generated vibrations? And, you know, without the back up of someone like Martin Gardner, I'm sure people would dismiss a wrap like that as pure fancy, utterly preposterous.

The guy who wrote the article said it was very hard for him. He didn't have perfect pitch. It's very hard for him to maintain this hundred Hertz hum. So what he did was he got a wave generator, which, uh, would perfectly generate the hum. And then, he, uh, modified a, uh, football helmet so that he could strap it to his stereo speaker [gasp from audience]. So he would rest his chin on his speaker [more gasping], and run the thing up to 100Hz [audience laughter], and then clock the motion of the fan. Well, this is just an example of a peripheral human abilities that we have not explored. I'm sure you all know LSD, have experienced the time-smearing effect of motion, where you move your hand and it just leaves it hanging there in all of

its stages. And people will say, "Well your retinas are simply not quenching the previous image. There's some problem in the, uh, something or other." But, the effect is to, is to smear the psyche in time. Because, we, the psyche is defined largely by the, uh, the way the sensory inputs are, uh, interpreted.

So, I think, uh, these linguistic phenomena are very, uh, suggestive of special abilities. I, I've said many times, you've certainly all heard me say it: Philo Judaeus who was an exact contemporary of Christ: born before, died after, was on a bug about what he called the more perfect Logos. And he said, the more perfect Logos will be beheld rather than heard. But it will go from being heard to being seen without ever crossing over a quantized point of division. Now that suggests that hearing and seeing are just two ends of the continuum, and that your eyes slot you into part of that spectrum. Your ears slot you into another, but that it's really a continuing spectrum. And this, the evolution of this more perfect Logos is my, uh, my hope for psilocybin--that this can become an experience for people, a kind of *ursprache*. You may be aware of, uh, Robert Graves' book The White Goddess, where he talks about a perfect, poetic language that pre-dates history. A, a language of poetry so intense that to hear it was to understand it. It required no conventionalizing of cultural context and dictionary. It was so laden with existential validity, that to hear it was to understand it. We have very few articulations like that left, perhaps moans, screams and howls are the only words.

The ikaros, uh...

The ikaros...

They're and then...varied, uh, Peruvian, Indian dialects. And yet, when you're taking ayahuasca and they're taking it and seeing them, you can understand them though you've never heard the language before.

The evaluation, uh, from [inaudible].

Yes all of that including understand the language also. Very easily, we were having images which jived with each other that we were getting.

And do they then jive with the images that the, uh, people...

That's harder, it's hard for them to talk about that. Those people. Because they are magical songs they don't analyze them in non-magical terms.

Did you get any cross...??

Yes, yes we did. We had, um, back to you were talking about [inaudible] aspects...Moments that had to do with the sounds, that had to do with the visions. That we all recognized at one point. We and the environment outside all recognized the [encroaching presence of Death]. We had to a death element, was just outside the building. The baby cried, the dog howled, the clouds went over the moon. Everybody got a big chill.

I just did.

[Kat laughs]

And the shaman jumped up, and, like commanded all of us in a way to go with him. And then began hooting it away. And it took some minutes. And then it was gone, and all, in one moment everyone just laid back and moved aside. That was a very telepathic moment that was not conducted in any language common to everyone there.

What was your experience when you took it after having salmonella? And what experience that will connect to having had salmonella?

Um, you just look at it [inaudible]

Yeah, uh, I'm wondering if there were things you experienced during the ayahuasca trance, that were you definitely connected to having salmonella....

Oh, yes, Travelling through your organs. Travelling through your blood stream. Being in your stomach. In your guts. Recognizing like on a tiny level, being, uh, a molecule travelling through, you know? Seeing the little, yellow enemies or whatever. All of the things happening on that level [inaudible] very well. And it just felt like it just flushed it all out. Like the awareness, the deep awareness that we got on ayahuasca, made all the bad invaders go away. [Inaudible]

Yea right. It's very much like what Pelitzer is doing it's a, in their behavioral medicine club. [Inaudible] traces and meditation.

Yes.

Mm hmm.

Yes.

I wanted you to comment on the relationship of what you're talking about to psychedelic synesthesia...let's say things like LSD.

You mean, by psychedelic synesthesia you mean fusing of the sensorium under psychedelics drugs?

The initiation of, of, visual phenomena by sound.

You mean do I think that happens on LSD?

What you're talking about in ayahuasca.

Yes, pretty much except that it's controllable, you know? And, and in fact that's almost too, um, too restrictive a term. It isn't that the sound controls the visions. It's that the sound is the visions. And if you want to change the vision, you must change the sound. And so you actually can take control. Ayahuasca is wonderfully suggestive, and can be led in a way that these other things sometimes can't be. For instance, one of the most puzzling, uh, things that it can do is that you can suggest a motif. For instance, art deco, and it will just go to that, and flood you with millions and millions and millions of objects, all perfectly exemplifying this very constrained artistic style. And then you can say "No. Attic vases. Let's do Attic

vases." Thousands of them, more than there must be! You know? And then you can say "OK, now do one that, now surprise me." And it will produce an equally co...aesthetically coherent stream of images that are not referent to any, to any, uh, historical period. So then this raises questions, you know. What is fashion?", What is style?, What are these collective image systems which come out of nowhere, gain great power and then fade away? And how is it a drug can command them out of this single human mind? How is, what does it mean, that on a psychedelic drug, one person can see more art in an hour than the species has produced in 10,000 years? What does that say about how effectively we are accessing our souls? It mean, I mean the, the potential then is so great. I mean, you prove it to yourself, you know? It, uh, very frustrating to imagine that that kind of beauty. Those depths of ecstatic revelation are that accessible to the individual, and so totally hidden from us as a group.

How can the potential be tapped in our time?

By chan...by evolving language. By recognizing that reality is created by language and no longer accepting the natural evolution of language, but actually going to work to evolve language ever more rapidly. So that we can, eh, uh, communicate these modalities.

I think that's a lot of what [???] inherently is trying to put together...to express these experiences that doesn't totally violate them, and, and rip them apart.

It's a very long process, creating a new language.

You mentioned at one point, uh, transcending the ego. What kind of people experience that? What do they manage a specific healing intent for each person, or a collective event that happens when you get off, or, uh... I ask this because I think it's very intimately connected with what the [fifth dimension....inaudible] that tapping out our potential has to do with transcending the ego.

Transcending the ego and its expectations in a linguistic set, mainly.

And controlling our experience.

Yes, language has not been examined enough, it seems to me. All the argument over man's place in nature and that sort of thing, doesn't take cognizance of the fact that if you want to, if you want a miracle, then language is the thing to look at. Because, we know that our, uh, genetic component is only 3% or something removed from chimpanzees, and this and that. But this thing that we do with sound and meaning is of an ontologically different order. And I am not sympathetic with the people who want to blur the distinctions, and say that dolphins talk, ants talk, bees talk...They may communicate, but this is a very different thing, what man's able to do. Because for 50,000 years or so,

Man hasn't, uh, the species hasn't been in evolving in the somatype. Somatype is relatively steady. What is evolving is culture. And what culture is, really, is language. Uh, culture is merely the, uh, epiphenomenal accompaniment of language. So, it is the evolution of language that is changing. And, uh, all our ontological, all our religious ontologies, uh, in the western tradition: the insistence on the coming of the Word into the world, relate, the Word becoming flesh. In a sense, Man is the Word become flesh. And, uh, what all this leads to I'm not sure. I often like to think that our map of the world is so wrong, that where we have centered physics, we should actually place literature as the, uh, the central metaphor that we want to work out from. Because I think, uh, literature occupies the same relationship to life that life occupies to

death. And I don't think very many people have thought of it in those terms. [Audience laughter].

[Inaudible chatter]

[Inaudible] true testimony of the [wordsmith?] [laughter]

Well, in the sense that, uh, a book is a, is life with one dimension pulled out of it. And, uh, life is, uh, is something which lacks a dimension which death will give it. I imagine death to be a kind of release into the imagination, in the sense that for, uh, characters in a book, what we experience is an unimaginable dimension of freedom. And, this is why people like James Joyce, though arcane and difficult to pierce, seem to me central to understanding this. Because they're saying something about the relationship of books, reality and death. That this is a cycle of expansion and understand that it's happening through language. At one time there were no books. And, uh...

I think what you're saying is assuming perceptive, at the same time I think there's a better problem which is, that if you take a metaphor of literature, what you've done is, you take the same thing that we're doing all the time, which is trying to abstract new elements into metaphor. It seems to me the central problem we're in is that, it's very difficult for us to give equal emphasis all possible metaphors, all possible... a physical metaphor, a biological metaphor, psychological, literary metaphor. We focus too much on one thing where I'm able to express, well, not unable but have a great difficulty in expressing a totality.

Well, see, what you want is a theory of being true to experience. And what we have, by centering in physics, is a theory of being true to itself. Meaning, physics doesn't contradict itself, there, they go to great pains that doesn't happen. On the other hand, the models that it offers no bear no relationship to anything anybody can see, experience, know or understand. So somehow an explanatory vehicle was chosen, which explains something. But nothing with any immediacy.

Well, what I'm saying is they draw in other things but not to, they push out, they, uh...the quantum physics model but integrate all of them so they form a more comprehensive view, and not try to select over the other.

Yes, but you want it to be true to experience.

Yeah.

And the entire set of objects manipulated by physics are unseen unknown, I mean, I mean, take as simple an object in physics as the electron. It seems more remote than, uh, the resurrected Christ to me [laughter].

And yet by invoking those notions we can create of them, you know, to try and find further particles.

We created, that's right. But do these new creations then reflect back on experience? Do we learn, then, to be better people or more at ease with ourselves or...It seems the answer is "No". We just unlock more and more demonic, uh, levels of, uh, power.

But that the contradiction that physics produces in itself, how they're trying to find a unified field theory for...

But what we need is a uniform social theory. So that we don't cause our extinction.

~*~*~*~Part Two~*~*~*~

...about a biological process where both the ayahuasca experience and the scientific experience can be integrated.

Yeah I don't regard, I'm not uh, I'm not uh one of the, uh, noble savage people. I mean, I've spent too much time in the Amazon and things go on that would curl your hair. There are people whose idea of a hilarious joke is to toss a dog in the fire. And, uh, but I think there is something to be learned, you know. I mean you can stand off and watch somebody tossing a dog in the fire for their own amusement and say "What...these people are barbarians". On the other hand we carpet bomb Asian cities from 30,000 feet in the air in the name of policy. We don't even call it fun, we're so alienated from what we're doing. So, you know, what to make of it?

Good point.

A couple things that interest me, and they fall very nicely on this. One is I would like to hear you talk briefly perhaps about the highlights of what you call the the invisible landscape. What are some of the things that stand out in that, uh...And the other is that I get the impression you have the very distinct idea of where we, of the direction in which we can evolve. Um, and I wonder if you would say something about that direction and perhaps those two topics.

Sort of converge...Well, without trying to, um, solve the problem once and forever, let's just say: Man has a very strong Gnostic bent. And, you know, Gnosticism, Dualism, the idea that you don't belong where you are, that you belong somewhere else, that this is not your world, that you're a stranger in it, is, uh symptomatic in modern parlance of what's called alienation. You're supposed to like where you are. You're supposed to see yourself as part of the seamless fabric of Being, and that sort of thing. However, the people who take that position, that, that alienation is symptomatic of neurosis, don't realize the cultural momentum of the last 500 years has made the Gnostic myth a reality. In other words, we have become a menace not only to ourselves, but to the planet. And the only way that both parties can, uh, save themselves is by a separation. And this, on one level, is the greatest,uh, crisis that biology has faced since animals left the ocean for the land. On another level, it appears inevitable in the present social context, that we're going to go to space.

But we are, uh, the birth pangs of doing this are very destructive. For instance, and I'm sure you've heard me say this, that civilization is a 10,000 year dash to space with the potential to destroy yourselves. We, history is the departure of a species for the stars. But it takes 10 to 15,000 years. A moment of biological and geological time. But in that 10 to 15,000 year period, if you happen to be unlucky enough to be born somewhere in there, it's going to look like it's all up for grabs. We are creatures of information, and the imagination. The monkey we are already beginning to transform and shed. We don't look like the other monkeys. And we look less like them all the time. We are...Humanness may not even be a monkey quality. It may be something that was synergized in the monkeys but that is taking, uh, that has an inner life of its own. In other words, we, since the early 1950's, have had a notion of the structure of DNA, and this sort of thing. Well it's perfectly obvious that within the century of the discovery of DNA, any species which makes that discovery takes possession of its own form. And we are going to do that in the next 50 years.

We are going to design, we are going to design the kind of people that we want to be. And if we don't want to be people, we will design that out of the picture.

I think of... the picture that, the Mushroom has of the human species, is much more like a coral reef. In other words, it sees our "artefractria" as contiguous with our flesh. We make a distinction. But what it sees is, uh, an animal which takes in raw material and excretes it in ideological molds. That's what we do. We turn ideas into facts, on all levels. This cannot go on any longer on the surface of the planet, with the levels of energy and control that we have brought to bear. Because we are now in a position to destroy the whole earth, or to sculpt it, turn it into a Disneyland, which is a kind of destroying of the earth. So we have become a toxic force in planetary biology. We feel it, and the planet feels it. What must happen is, there must be a cleavage. And it, a birth is a good metaphor. Because, uh, uh, an infant being born can hardly, uh, face the experience with anything other than trepidation. The weightless state, the effortless nurturing, the complete immersion in the support system, all that is ending in earthquakes and spasms and pain, and anguish, which looks, it must look like a death process. And yet, it's a life process. It is necessary for the mother and the child, that this cleavage take place. This is now happening, uh, on a mass cultural level for us. We, to be who we want to be, we have to leave the planet. It, as Joyce says in Finnegan's Wake, "Up n'ent, prospector. You sprout all you're worth and woof your wings!"

And, would you say that, uh, all of the higher forms are in all the lower forms simultaneously?

Uh, yes, what's the word for that? Uh, uh, "implicate". They are implicate in the lower forms. That's right. But, uh, I don't know. It's, it's a great, uh, It's a great challenge to us to fulfill the things that we can imagine we are capable of. Our imagination is really the sail of the soul. The question is, you know, where will that sail take us if we will but let it?

Well what is imagination? Or what is its true relationship to the unconscious of which you spoke?

Well, its relationship to the unconscious...I suppose it is the unconscious made conscious. In other words, uh, all, all the mythologies, uh. I think it's Mircea Eliade in Myths, Dreams and Mysteries about the evolution of human flight. And says, talks about first about shamanic flight, and then the notion of the dirigible and the Wright flyer and the space ship. And he says these, uh, ontologically self-transforming images of flight say far more about the nature of the human soul than they do about technology. This is again this idea of James Joyce's that Man would become "durgeable".

Uh, I haven't mentioned the flying saucer here this morning. But this is one of the things that I think is very interesting. I think flying saucers have been the province of very dubious intellectual cadres for probably long enough. And that is really should be looked at as a totality symbol, which haunts human history in the same way that Alfred North Whitehead thought that the color dove grey haunted human history. In other words, it's a, it's a thing always present. It is the symbol of the ontological transformation of the human species. And always takes upon itself the, uh, the *accoutrements* of the current cultural myth, so that it can be seen as the intercession of the Immaculate Conception, or the, um, descent of an angel. Or, the, the current myth is that there are probably advanced civilizations somewhere in the universe, and so that this is what it is. It's really nothing so trivial, you know. It is the alchemical object. It is, uh, the blind spot in the, uh, in the consciousness of the race. And it has to be the blind spot, because it is a mystery. All appetite for the future is an appetite for this, uh, modality of super freedom that comes from transcending the limitations of dimension.

That's why we have, that's why our, we are so riddled with apocalyptic mythology. Because we really do have a prescience about what is going to happen to us. We really do sense at a very deep level, that the

linear extrapolation of our historical and cultural tendencies does not give a true picture of the future, that the major factor which will shape the future is uncertainty. And we have never yet created a method for integrating that uncertainty, and planning, planning for it. Novelty is the thing that continually overturns all efforts to, uh, project toward a given end-state.

So it's correct to say then, that our evolution will be, or can be seen as our re-claiming more of the landscape of the unconscious.

Yes absolutely. That's what it is. That is our world. Our world is in our minds, you know? The kingdom of God is within you. That's the wrap. But the point is, then, you know, to get a lease nailed down somewhere in the world of the imagination, so that you can be part of it. Yes the planet is simply, uh, a precursor of what we will project outward when we have the ability to do so. And this is coming soon.

How, um, can we, um, uh, how to propose to accelerate the evolution of language?

I think that we have to make a very reasoned case to the establishment, that the, um, that the psychedelic drugs have to be looked at in a non-hysterical manner, by experts. And we don't know who the experts are. They may not be pharmacologists. They may turn out to be linguists. Or they may turn out to be jugglers. But we have to recognize that what we're talking about when we're talking about the advancement of human evolution, is the evolution of the human mind. Uh, and these drugs, and, do..You know, before the argument was whether to be called a hallucinogen, or a psychedelic or an entheogen...They were just called consciousness-expanding drugs. And that really, as a phenomenological description, is more useful than these other things. They expand consciousness. Well, therefore, we should be really bearing down on them, because the problem is we don't have enough consciousness. And we don't know how to direct it, and sculpt it, and orient it toward our own salvation. So, we can't just take our mental states as "given", as somehow sacrosanct, and therefore not to be tampered with. We have to actually begin to engineer them. And Arthur Kessler has made the point that this is not big news, but there's some resistance to it. Again I think a, a, uh, recursion of dualism, in a more dangerous form. The dualism of the natural and the unnatural. Yoga is natural, drugs are unnatur...All these dichotomies, I mean. Who can argue with the notion that dualism is the root of all evil?

Uh, how can it be otherwise? [Audience laughter]

Um, a question relating to this is that, there's something, we have all this choice, we have all this power, and yet we are also prone to a great many powerful mistakes. And, with the element of that which happens spontaneously through us. And this, as far as dichotomies do. Where do we leave off engineering and, and, let, let um, that which is beyond us [inaudible] through us?

You mean the thing which is leading?

Yeah.

Well, we need to open a more coherent dialogue with the thing which is leading. Again, the re, the reason I don't, I'm somewhat immune to political anxiety and that sort of thing is because I really do believe there is a control system that is larger than any institution. I don't believe that the evolution of fate on this planet is in the hands of the Communist Party, the Catholic Church, the Jews, Wall Street. It isn't in--no one is in

charge. What is in charge is the most intelligent life form on the planet, which happens to be trans-human, not human. We have had for some time now the concept of, uh, the collective unconscious. But we need now to think in terms of the collective consciousness of the race. Which is not passive. It's not just the storage place of old memories and myths and that kind of thing. It is more like an entelechy. It guides. It opens avenues to certain choices and preaches avenues to other choices.

You know, I think it was in Mysterium Coniunctionis that Jung said, uh, the unconscious has a thousand ways of terminating a life that has become meaningless. A chilling notion. And what he meant was, you know, you'll step off a curb and be hit by a bus, cause you didn't look. But the real analysis is that a decision had been made at a higher control level to just fling you away. Well, how much more disturbing it is to think that that could be possible on a global level. So we have to open a dialogue, and no longer, you know, all these words: intuition, artistic vision, trance, uh, memes like poetry, these are all ways of trying to have a dialogue with the control mechanism. And the psychedelic drugs, especially psilocybin, I think lay that open. We need to have professional facilitators of dialogue. We need to understand who is speaking. We only now have possibilities, you know, that the voice that speaks on psilocybin is an out-and-out extraterrestrial, you know, with a, with its own history, its own evolutionary standards, et cetera. That it is what Jung would call an autonomous portion of the psyche that has slipped beyond the ego's control. Meaning, that you're crazy, or at least that you are experiencing a form of consciousness not validated by this society. Um....

I want to stick something in there too.

Yeah.

I agree with your analysis, but I don't share the same faith that we will inevitably make it as a species. Because what I see happening in a collective conscious/unconsciousness or that unconscious becoming conscious, is a struggle of whether to live or to die. And although I believe and hope certainly it decides or we decide for life. I don't see that as inevitable.

Well, this is the question "Is God mad?", you know? Are we living in a universe run by a mad god, where the choice for death could be made as easily as the choice for life. This is what the Gnostics of the Hellenistic era feared.

That isn't quite what I'm saying though, because I think the, yea, or a subordinate consciousness, but made up of all of us. So our individual decisions of consciousness I don't think are relevant to the totality.

Well, is it built up of, is it an, is it a bottom-up thing, or a top-down thing?

I think it's a both. I don't see how, in, in this level of talking how you can really separate out all the elements. Um, and if you talk about cells in your body, uh, yea they don't go off a live a life of it's own, it's all coordinated. But it isn't coordinated by one thing in the body. The whole body coordinates itself. And each cell is a part of the coordination [inaudible].

Yes, that's right. Yes, I see what you're saying.

How do you find a local ayahuascero? [Laughter].

Aha!

These are not the ones...

Well, I'll tell you, uh, [Terence laughs].... A few years ago, we bought, uh, 10 acres in Hawaii, and moved as many of these Peruvian drug plants as we could get, uh...[laughter]...in there. So that was four or five years ago. Now those plants are grown and hopefully the next time we go back to Hawaii, we'll be able to produce ayahuasca. We're calling it Hawayahuasca. [Audience laughter]

Oh no!

Other than that, I don't know what to tell you. These things, the...Botanists don't think in terms of live plants. They always make voucher specimens. So we were, in 1982 or 1 whenever it was, we were really the first expedition looking at Amazonian psychobotany, that really put emphasis on live plants. And we got out hundreds of them, you know? But then growing them they can only be grown in green houses or in the subtropical environment. But eventually, we're hoping that, uh, researchers who need, who want to grow the plants can buy stock from a place like that, and not have the expense of having to send an Ama, an expedition to the Amazon.

I find it hard to build a shamanic institute in Ecuador. And, uh, it's just an interesting idea we're tossing back and forth.

Well, when we originally conceived this idea of a psycho-botanical farm, we bought land, uh, near Florencia in the state of Cauca, in Colombia. And then it become politically unfriendly to foreign scientists and, and so we stayed away for years. And then I just read last week, 13 tonnes of cocaine was busted in Colombia, and it was all in Cauca. So I assume, it'll be years before it's cooled down enough to do it there. And I like the idea of doing in Hawaii. It, the Amazon is so difficult an environment to carry out even minimal field studies in, that it's very hard to do much other than interview the informants, collect the vouchers, collect the drugs, and get out. Because, after two or three weeks, you're really beginning to show the strain. I mean, it's hard to sleep in hammocks. So you go into a kind of never asleep, never awake. And the strange diet, the intestinal problems, insect toxins. Uh, people are not always 100% cooperative and honest. Um, [laughter] numerous problems. And since we were not ethnographers or anthropologists per se, our real focus was on the plants and the drugs. So hopefully in Hawaii, a more, uh, commodious and low-key atmosphere can be created for experimenting with these things.

This relates to your question, which is "How can an exper, how can a group of people create an experimental context for doing these drugs with an eye toward making some kind of progress or, or getting something out of it"? And it's a real challenge. We were amazed when we went to Peru and began taking ayahuasca. We had never taken drugs with groups of 30 people, you know? We had either taken them, uh, alone or one or two people, or occasionally with 100,000 other people at a rock concert. But the notion of 30 or 40 it's very intense. And without a tradition, uh, it will be even more demanding. But it's important to do. The whole problem in psychedelic research is the, um, reluctance to have human subjects in the picture, you know? As soon as that begins happening, the institutions and the government, and people's wish to make careers rather than to actually do original work. A whole bunch of factors come into play that make it very, very frustrating. And yet, the LD50 in rats, the absolute structural determinations, the botany, the chemistry, the linguistic studies can only go so far with this stuff. The real thing is what does it do?

I think that, partly because in science, human experience isn't considered a valid subject of study. And so that's, you know, so people don't ask those questions because, well, you can't quantitate it and you can't...

That's right.

Why don't you get bold and get the mental health grant to do it?

Well, I think this is Dennis' notion. What, what he wants to do really, and I think he has Frank Barr interested and some other people, is, uh, return one more time at least to the Amazon, and study them taking it. And actually take blood samples, and study diet, and get a re--a full biomedical study of what's going on. And that should be sufficient data, then, that you could, could get a grant for human experimentation in this country. All this remains to be done, but, the work is just beginning to be done in psychedelics. Essentially the botany is now well in hand. There are only botanical details now. But the chemistry, the pharmacology, the neurophysiology, the psychology, these are just wide open areas.

I'll take the opportunity to thank you for, uh, doing what you're doing. The, I can't remember since sitting like this in India. Being so alive and fireworks going off, that..

Oh well thank you very much.

Hear! Hear! [Laughter]

I would like to hear from some of you who've been so silent. [Terence laughs]. People who have, are either appalled that we're this deep into this stuff [all laugh].

Let me preface the question, um...From my own meditative experience, I feel like I'm just beginning to get to a point where I can feel how energy and stillness are both necessary. And, in, like the existential, phenomenological sense that they co-constitute one another. It cannot be one without the other. And, by energy I mean all its forms too, including Mind, as you, uh...for me was good to hear another way of saying that Mind, the idea of Mind from the [??] and yoga philosophy, that, and the reality that someone else feels is comforting. [Terence: "Mmhm"] Including the intellectual stuff. All that form. In your experience with these cultures, these different cultures, is there a, I hear a lot about the energies of it. The form, et cetera. Is there any stillness work. Is there any, uh, is stillness sacred. Is there, is there a "meditative" quote/unquote tradition, or...

Oh yea! For sure. Yes. It doesn't call itself that. It calls itself trance. But trance is, is not a state of unconsciousness. It's in fact a state of full alertness. But you can't move. And you don't experience this as paralysis, because you don't care to move. But yes, I think that you, that there must be stillness for these things to manifest.

One of the most puzzling things about psychedelic drugs is, trying to teach people how to invoke the modality. People have the attitude toward drugs, if you take them they will work. And this not true at all, especially with drugs where a modality like Mind is what you're attempting to conjure. So that, you know, uh, a drug will potentiate you for a vision state, but number of other things have to be present: energy and stillness being, I think, the two most important ones. And then, a third factor which is, uh, the invocation. You must invoke it in some way. And it's hard to explain what that is. It's sort of like, you know, it, it, the

difference between being alone and with someone. You, though you are alone taking the drug, you have to assume the I-Thou tension [phone ringing] and then you will discover the Thou on the other end of the equation. [Yes?] And so the stilling will allow this, and if, it's almost uh [Uh..can you call me after three? I have a meeting] ...sensory deprivation [Thank you.] is what's required. Not in the formal sense of [phone hangs up] a tank or anything like that. But you must sit still in darkness. And you must look at your closed eyelids with the expectation of seeing something. And then you will.

Within the cultural spoken discipline about mental stillness and the importance of that, or talking about the, the drugs or plants in terms that that would be a positive thing or...I'm just curious.

I think that the context is isolation. That's what they would say about this. They say, "Well we go into isolation. We put ourselves away. We put ourselves into a tree, or a cu, a cold hut, or something like that. And do not move around a lot."

I see that [inaudible]....

Well this question, though, of the roll of hallucinogens in, in Taoist practice is not, uh, not well understood. If you know James Ware's book, the number, the attention given to fungi is out of all proportion. I mean, their pharmacopoeia was largely fungal. The, there are no known psilocybin mushrooms from China reported. However, this is a place for somebody to make a quick reputation I bet. Uh, if you chose carefully where you went to look, I'll bet you find it. Because we know *stropharia cubensis* is in Thailand, Laos, and there is no reason at all that it shouldn't be in China. And it was in Southern China, that the Taoist pharmacopoeia was evolved and elaborated.

It's in the art.

...and he wrote a couple of papers I have copied....

Strickmann.

Strickmann, yeah. And he...

Oh yes.

Questioned.

Yes he's doing very interesting work in this all of this.

It's in German.

I think that, uh, hallucinogens are basic to humanness, and always have been. You know Carl Ruck and Wasson wrote a very convincing book to show that the Eleusinian Mysteries were an ergot, a cult of ergot intoxication. I thought that sounded totally crazy before I read the book. I thought it was going to be some flung-together case that would convince nobody. Actually [cough] I can't believe that it's anything else, having read the book. The evidence is overwhelming.

Well, Eleusis was the central wellspring of mystery for the Western mind for 2000 years. Everybody who

was anybody went to Eleusis, and had the experience. And, uh, there were times when the mystery was profaned to the point that, uh, writers can speak of wealthy Athenians who had the mystery in their house, were able to offer it to their guests after dinner. Well what kind of mystery is this? [Audience laughter] And, um, mmm, John Allegro wrote a much less convincing book, uh, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, trying to say that Christianity itself was a mushroom cult. In fact, going much further than that...

Oh yeah.

Saying that Christ himself was in fact no person at all, but a code, a system of coded epigrams for a mushroom. His case is harder to judge, because it depends on the knowledge of, uh, of Aramaic philology. But, uh, my brother has suggested to me, and in fact has, uh, set an outline for a book. He believes that consciousness itself arose in the higher primates in a feedback relationship with hallucinogenic plants. In other words, he would go much further than Wasson, who's saying religion was caused by a relat..He's saying thought itself was caused by monkeys relating to these plants. And we know from laboratory experiments that, if you set, uh, monkeys in a situation where they can, uh, smoke DMT by just walking up to a, uh, pipette and taking a hit, that 20% of the monkeys will refuse food and water in preference to that. Well, now, [laughter]. So, if that [laughter]. We'd rather be stoned! And, so having this predilection apparently it's simply--the shift is what they like. They like the thrill. The shift of modality from down to up, and up to down. But you stretch that over 100,000 years, and the next thing you know you've got the integral calculus, and the 384-byte chip and all the rest of it. So it may be that humanness is a symbiotic relationship between certain plants and certain monkeys. And that you don't have humanness unless you have the plants and the monkeys together. This is why we may be the heirs of an inhuman culture.

In, in Colombia once I saw a graffiti, and it, my Spanish, I can't get it right. But what, it was, it was a picture of a mushroom, and it said "Without this you are not yourself." [Laughter]. So this is, you know, Arthur Koestler, I think it was in The Ghost in the Machine, said very clearly that he felt there was no hope for the human species without chemical intervention. That we cannot be the sharp fanged monkey, and the possessor of atomic weapons. And that we're going to have to chemically intervene to mute the monkey, uh, the monkey proclivities. And, uh, it may be true. But the, the depth of their influence upon us: our thought systems, language.

I hold the, the peculiar opinion that language preceded meaning, by millennia. That long before people could communicate, they discovered how interesting the small mouth noises were, and made them for each other as a form of entertainment, which then bifurcated into chanting and singing. But it was very late in this experiment in the small mouth noises, that someone got the idea that you could assign a meaning to certain mouth noise, and everybody would agree that that's what that noise meant, and then you could discuss things. So, you know, we're creatures of language and thought, and uh, probably because these drugs, these plants first kicked that over in us.

I'd like to go back to drugs and consciousness. [Laughter] Stop right there for a minute. Um, are you...There are several ways a person can take that notion, really, in several different directions [inaudible]. On the one hand, you could be suggesting that the experience itself of a hallucinatory state is such a, um, different experience from normal waking consciousness that it demands thought to come to terms with it. And I don't think that's a very tenable line because the dream state itself would have similar experiences. We know that chimpanzees and lower primates are dreaming, so that doesn't seem to be too far. Um, the other way would be to say its the actual communication with more developed intelligence that is inducing thought in our species. The way we're doing that now with chimpanzees and teaching them sign language. They're starting to develop humor and things like that.

Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

If you wanna go that way too, then you have to then get to: How did that being itself develop consciousness. But, uh, it's an interesting line but I don't think it would stop there where you want it to...

Well, the way I think of it is a third possibility. A kind of a geometric model. Which is just to say, here you have a grid called "experience of the world", and they we have "waking". So that's a dot on the grid. Then we have "dreaming", that's another dot on the grid. But you can't construct a 3-dimensional reality till you have a third dot. And this what the psychedelic experience is providing. It's providing a reference point for the production of new metaphor. So that it isn't really, it isn't, and you really notice this with acid, it isn't the taking of LSD that is so important, it's the talking about it. That having, in other words, the reference point. Remember when we were all freaks, and all we talked about was how, uh, how in the light of acid everything was "thus and so" and "thus and so" and it took about five years longer for some of us, [laughter] uh, to assimilate that. So we no longer had to run around saying how everything was in the light of LSD. We had integrated that point on the grid. And I think that's what it is, is we tap in to...worlds of experience. And each world of experience taps, uh, across, stretches our metaphors, is a boot in a tail for further evolution of language. And that's all the evolution we have now.

I said this earlier, but it's a point worth making again. It isn't culture that's changing and carrying everything with it. It's language that's changing, and it carries culture with it. Culture lags far behind. But the evolution of language is the evolution of reality. And this is a cliché but we, the challenge of the cliché is to make it operational, so that like God, when you utter a word, it becomes so. You know?

Um, you see, what do you reflect on in terms of the origins of the use of hallucinogens and that whole, you know, scheme of the sort of negative of it. You know, the, literally. When you're talking a great deal about the sort of evolutionary potentials. And I'm curious about, you know...

Negative potentials.

Yeah. Negative potentials. And how we deal with those foreseeable.

Well, uh, the only answer I can give is probably not a very good one. The forces of, uh... Let me put it a different way. The government gets to everything first. And, they have been at the problem you ask for 20 years with an amazing little success.

I worked for the Department of the Interior for a while. I can tell you why... [Laughter]

Well there are many reasons why. But it doesn't seem very pervertable. They were very excited at first, you know? But then, and I think what they got into, although perhaps you can say more about this cause you probably follow the literature. They like to give, uh, psychedelic drugs to people and then hypnotize them. And then get them to do terrible things, which they wouldn't remember later. And claims were made that this was possible or being done. But it certainly didn't seem to come into wide application. They also looked at, during the Vietnam War, they want, they built artillery shells which would deliver aerosol DMT. Uh, they envisioned, uh, dropping one of these aerosol DMT bombs, uh, on a Vietnamese town. Everyone falling into this intense hallucinogenic state, and they could just roll right in. But, like plans [audience laughter] in the 1960's, radicals had. There was the fantasy of poisoning water supplies with LSD. Well it

just turns out that they're chemical factors and buffering problems, and it just does not very easy to do these things. I suppose, maybe I'm too sanguine about it and irrationally so, because when I asked this question of the Mushroom Entity, the perversion of this.

Yes, good.

I was told, uh, that it was good in such a platonic sense, that you could only approach it if you were good. So that it was like ethical mercury. The grasping hand [audience laughter] would sign that it flowed right through it, and there was nothing left. But I may be God's fool, you know. That may be...[audience laughter]. Certainly we know the Nazis used scopolamine as a truth serum. Although now when you look at the damn scopolamine it's not very impressive. People don't, they lie as much as they tell the truth. So it's a little puzzling as to why. But it, definitely, uh...

Language [is called??] a truth serum.

That's right. That's right. [Terence laughs].

Also I have to agree with what James calls the cognitive imperative. [??] happens because [inaudible]

That's right.

And, uh, so a lot of other use of, all these things, may depend a great deal on what people believe happened.

Very true.

And also technology is the production, is the, uh, you could think of it as the residue of the workings of the imagination. And the imagination is not, is under the control of the, the Superego or the Overmind. So I think technology has a weird way of always escaping the intentions of, uh, those who are working with it. A perfect example would be the, the chip which makes possible the personal computer. That thing was developed under contract to the Air Force by I think Sperry Rand. And, when it was finally finished, it didn't work right. It was far too slow. They wanted it for guidance systems of missiles and this kind of thing. So this thing is 1000 times too slow. It's just baloney. It's worthless. Toss it in the waste basket. But somebody said "But wait a minute! You know what you could do with this?" [Audience laughter] And created, you know, an information revolution that must be absolutely appalling to the forces that wished to control. I have an Apple II computer, and a \$350 modem, and, uh, I can access the, uh, Defense Department databases. I can access, uh, all, uh, the complete shelf list of the Library of Congress, all chemical abstracts. In short, all information in the world I can access from my living room in Sonoma County. And so can anyone else who buys \$1000 worth of equipment. This was not part of the plan [audience laughter]. This is a fact that terrified them.

And, my God, these computer networks where, as an example. A few years ago someone invented a device, this is an anecdote that will give you the idea. Someone invented a little device which looked like a ball point pen. And it was this small cybernetic device that could be programmed with a category. Like, let's say "stamp collector" or "sodomasochist". When you wore this pin, if you got near anyone else who was wearing a similar device programmed with the same word, your pin would begin flashing a little light. The notion was, that these things could be sold who hang out in singles bars, and would create a dimension

neither public nor private. [Audience laughter] A new dimension, where people of similar interests could get together completely [audience laughter]. Isn't that interesting? And this thing had a range of 20 feet, OK? [Audience laughter] So now comes a thousand dollars worth of cybernetic equipment and the telephone, and it's the same device. It doesn't clip into your shirt pocket, but we've extended the range to include the entire planet.

Think it had a search program on it too.

Oh you do, you go into these, you go into these computer networks, and you say, you know, "Who listed, who listed that they were interesting in: mushrooms, psychedelics, psilocybin, consciousness altering drugs, hallucinogens?" And then, out of 70,000 users on the network, in four and a half seconds it tells you that 12 people listed one or some of those words. You immediately type a little letter to each one, shoot it off through the system, and you're in contact with those people. This makes conspiracy [audience laughter] on a level almost impossible to conceive. A form of liberation. And, uh, these kinds of hard-wired technologies are simply patriarchal, um, follow-ons to the feminizing of consciousness that is happening in drugs. In other words, the, you can almost think of, uh, drugs as the software and cybernetics as the hardware of what is being done. But vast areas are being opened up for human interaction. Completely unregulated by any kind of institution. And these will create new kinds of social realities.

Like a new kind of psychedelic experience.

Right [audience laughter]

It is a psychedelic, uh, it's a hardwired psychedelic experience. You are, people think, uh, tend to think of computers as masculine I guess, because, the first generation of people who built them were male. But what they actually are, are the mysterious mama-matrix of information. It is like the unconscious *made conscious*! The unconscious is...these seem to be unconscious. All information is rising into this dimension of accessibility. So that you need not wonder how many people died of tuberculosis in western Nepal last year [audience laughter]. You just key into the biomedical index and you find out. So, I'm, and this seems to me, you know, the word psychedelic has been, uh, attached to the drugs and confined. But many things are psychedelic. Anything which expands, adumbrates, aids and, uh, and supports consciousness is psychedelic, if we take the word down to it's, uh, Greek roots. So this is, uh, this is very exciting.

~*~*~*Part Three~*~*~*

First how do you see the roll of the I Ching, um, in all this?

[Laughter]

Such a question, so late in the game. [Laughter]

Well, the I Ching, you asked about stillness concepts. The I Ching is, uh, a very old system of something that, uh, was created out of the combination of, uh, Taoist yogic techniques and, um, mathematical curiosity. What was happening I think, was that in states of deep meditation modalities were observed, you know? It says in The Sundara Pundarika, uh, Tantra Sutra, uh that when the Buddha attained enlightenment, through the night, he watched the causal uprising and down flowing. And, this is what you

see in these deep states of, the, it's called stilling the heart meditations. You see the passage of modalities of some kind. They're elements. And the Chinese noted that there were 60, seemed to be 64 of them. Or you only needed 64 terms to describe them. And they sensed that it was something about time. But they, they had... Their linguistic and categorical imperatives were such that they didn't see it the way we would. They, um, they assumed these things to be, uh, like archetypes.

What I suggested was that they were actually varieties of time. And actually there was a 16th century Chinese, uh, philosopher who pulled this all together out of the ancient sources, and said, you know, "The hexagrams are descriptive of time. They're hierarchically structured at many levels." So that on one level, hexagrams are, are influencing a situation and passing away at a rate of many a second. And on another level, at a rate of many a minute. And on another level at many an hour. And on another rate at, on another level at a rate of a few per century. And it is the, um, the interpenetration of these modalities on various levels that finally issues into what we call the here-and-now situation. And, um, it's too complicated to go into here, but there is a way of looking at the sequence, and structuring it that allows you then to draw maps of novelty's ingress into time. To create a completely non-scientific theory of time that is nevertheless not a cult, meaning has no hidden elements, as completely mathematical and predictable and self-consistent.

This was more of my question, in that you're talking about information and structures being generated in new ways through computers, and the effect of the I Ching on our culture. In the formation of a cultural understanding of time. And if there's a conflict because, you know the computer structure [inaudible] internal inconsistent structure. And the I Ching isn't illogical, but also internally consistent structure.

Well like DNA, these vary large systems of very large numbers of elements can, can have, uh, irrational inputs and still have everything end up in the right place at the end. I mean if you read Pogorian's work, where you discover that global rules govern situations which, when analyzed very locally appear highly chaotic. And this what the I Ching is saying. I mean, here we have a world which appears highly chaotic, but when analyzed at higher levels, uh, turns out to be, uh, describable by, uh, very rigorous methods.

So the converse is true too, that what seems to be a very orderly structure in a computer network is on a higher level actually chaotic.

That's right. This problem of order and constraint is a very difficult one. For instance a sociologist can tell you, that in the next 12 months, I don't know what the number would be but lets say, 30 people are going to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. Well now, does that, so then someone jumps off the Golden Gate Bridge. Well think they're despondent, they've lost their job, they don't want to live any longer. Are they free? How free are they, if at the end of the year, we look at the wreck and say "Yes it certainly is true. 30 people jumped off the bridge just like you said they would." So apparently there was almost no freedom in the total system. It came in right on the dot. Yet every one of the people who jumped off the bridge felt they were making a, uh, completely independent choice exercising free will. Where they free?

Which goes back to what we're talking about [inaudible]...It seems that ...

Perhaps, or it may be something else. It may have something to do with how probability works, you know?

Yeah.

It's not clear that probability is a good way of, uh, uh, uh, describing nature. The only time we get, uh, randomness is when you examine the output of a random number generator. There is no other process in nature that can be relied upon to produce random numbers. Yet we use the notion of randomness. Our entire physics is probabilistic and statistical. And the notion of randomness, a very unexamined philosophically, notion centered right in the middle of things. And it may be a kind of fudging. What we think is an explanation, that things are probabilistic, is actually a statement of complete ignorance. That we don't know how things work so we say they're probabilistic.

[Inaudible]...Well there's a pattern, or there's a norm. But nothing really fits the norm. So you always have to describe it by approximation.

That's right.

So, that's where the probability of humans getting close to this approximation and using this tool Because everything is a dynamic state. You can't quantify this except on a moment by moment basis hence a static model. [Inaudible]

But it's created all kinds of consequences that were not expected. Like the notion of, uh, the citizen. And the way democracy is. And the way power is a portion. Because we have these probabilistic and statistical notions about, uh, human beings. Politically we atomize ourselves. We say, you know we live in a fiction but all citizens are equal. Which is absolutely poppycock. It's simply that how else can we have the kind of social system we have, and have it function? So the tools you have to be aware of the tool...of what the tool does to you, as well as...yes.

McLuhan should be looked at more carefully. I mean, McLuhan was never correctly centered vis-a-vis the psychedelic phenomena, the way he should have been. People thought he was talking about the impact of television and print and this sort of thing. What he was really talking about, was how cultural, uh, uh, inputs to sensory modalities change self-definitions. And the drugs have done that to a great extent.

[Completely inaudible from audience!!]

Although this abolition of the future is a controversial thing. For instance, I try to produce maps of the future with the I Ching on my computer. And people say "You want to destroy the future! You want to take the surprise out of being." Well that seems to me rather silly. I mean, if you tell me you're going to South America, and I give you a National Geographic map of South America, have I destroyed the trip for you? Now there's no point in going, you know where every capitol city is, where the rivers run, how the mountains lay? It just ruined for you, you know? Um, I don't think so. Because what we are interested in are the details. Maps don't, uh, don't make it enough necessary to go to the places they portray.

...Somehow the rational conceptualization would somehow interfere with the intuitive flow of....

Yes. People don't want to feel that, uh, freedom has been compromised. You know? But I'm...My theory of time is not a predictive theory of events. I've just quantified one...one quality which I call Novelty. And following Alfred North Whitehead. And talk about how...History is the career of novelty ingressing into Time. And sometimes novelty comes fast and sometimes it comes slow. Consequently, its ingression rate

can be portrayed as a line graph. And in some periods, uh, there's very little novelty. There is disorganization and, uh, and, uh, compromise of connection. And then in other periods of history, we'll say Periclean Athens or, uh, Mogul Delhi or the 20th century, or, uh, the Nara period in Japan--there's great cohesiveness. But there's this ebb and flow of something which physics will not, uh, will not be found to describe. In other words, I like to make the analogy that science describes what is possible, what is possible. And what we need is a theory that tells us, out of what is possible, what is it that will undergo the formality of actually occurring? We have no theory of what it, out of possible sets of things why certain things will undergo the formality of occurring. And this is what we need.

...Science as, as, the way of looking at the world. We decided that that is what will come out.

But science only describes the most trivial kinds of events.

Whether or not we're the most worthy of forming our reality.

Well it's a good first try. Because what its simplest case, what sciences tells you is...What science is interested in is those situations where if the initial conditions are reestablished exactly, the process will occur exactly as it occurred every other time. The initial conditions are the same, the end state will be the same. But in all, uh, experience, this isn't true. I mean, if I say that I'm falling in love, and you once fell in love, that doesn't mean that the way your love affair ended is how mine will end. And so there is not guidance for understanding by extrapolation of past cases. And this is where we need help. Because this is where we feel and bleed, is in the realm of these, uh, processes where initial conditions are no guarantee of final end states.

But I wonder if we have that way to predict that to avoid pain and avoid suffering and avoid a certain notion of life.

You mean, we would fear to be victims?

Well, if we long to escape present feelings....avoid what was going to happen. And saying with uncertainty. I don't think that...

Well presumable if you have a theory which will tell you how, uh, a situation will evolve. Then you steer it the way you want it. You know? It isn't wrote. It isn't like a ball rolling downhill.

And of course you have to take, you're steering it consciously itself.

Well there's not escaping the input, the fact that it is, that there is a hand on the tiller. The uncertainty principle has to be expanded to include everything. And to actually, the notion of certainty is, the uh, culturally naive and unexamined, uh, notion.

See the problem with Western thinking and science especially is that, uh, it's a historical phenomenon. The oldest scientists were people like Thales and these people 2000 years in the past. This means that the most epistemologically fundamental assumptions of science are the least examined for, uh, flaw in their sophistication in the light of experience. The fact that we rely on an intellectual method 2000 years old, uh, almost precludes our understanding anything interesting. That's why people like Ralph Abraham, uh, with his theory of dynamics and Ilya Prigogine with his non-equilibrium thermodynamics, and Manfred Eigen

with his autocatalytic hypercycles...These are interesting new approaches because they, uh, they don't predict end states from initial conditions. They only predict broad target areas where processes can be expected to come to rest.

I think a great deal of anxiety would, would leave human society if we had this grip on the future. It's, uh, you can make a biological argument that what life does, leaving aside what it is, what it does is it conquers dimensionality. The earliest lifeforms were, um, had no impression of the world except that portion of the world which physically impinged upon them. In other words they had a tactile sense. And then very slowly light sensitive mela, uh, melanin chemistries were entrapped, and light sensitive cells arose so that light and darkness could be distinguished. And then, following upon that, uh, uh, motility. So that a third dimension would come. The dimension of space. And then as higher animals evolved with binocular vision and the ability to walk into the space perceived 3 dimensions were gained, intelligence, the unique human property of being able to command past experience as though it were present through memory, is like extending this dimension-conquering faculty to time.

And I think that the psychedelic drugs show that that's the way the evolutionary arrow is pointing in Man. Again, Mercea Iliade's statement about how the images of flight spoke volumes about the internal aspirations of the human psyche. We want to conquer dimensions. Life wants to conquer dimensions. And first it conquers the tactile, the immediate 2 dimensional space, then the immediate 3 dimensional space, and finally through memory the dimension of time is added in, and then theories of sort that the I Ching represents and my own ideas represent, whether or not they're true, they represent an effort to do for the future what the faculty called memory does for the past.

Well if they work at all, and in some sense they're mapping something. And as you're talking I'm realizing that what I was saying underneath it is that, um, I have used, uh, I Ching and the, uh, [?] a long time. And what I realize now I was dissatisfied with is they have to a certain extent alien philosophic systems [Coughing] had to stop using them. What happened was I started to dream more and more....what happened you know, one step two steps whatever down the road. And that's much more congenial to me. The problem really isn't due to [padding?] time but uh, if you do it through your own dreams then you have, you know [Coughing!!!] in those systems which is utterly congenial to your own way of feeling.

Yes, well sometimes you're trying to understand your own life, and sometimes you're trying to create a general theory of Being. And, these things will issue into different sorts of stances.

Mm hmm

Uh huh?

Would you say that intuition or imaginal mind is to the future, what memory is to the past?

Essentially, yes. I mean I believe that, uh, eschatological objects, if you want to put it that way, cast shadows backwards over the landscape of history. And that we, we are drawn towards these things. They're what C H Waddington called creodes. They are narrow, caramelized pathways of development that would take an enormous amount of energy to lift you out of that channel, and drop you somewhere else. It isn't impossible, but it's highly, uh, highly improbable. Uh, this is why religion cannot be dismissed, because religion is like the, the mass intuition about fate. And the religious ontology for the human species is generally eschatological. Not always, not in Buddhism, or, well, there are exceptions. But it generally is eschatological. In that we are seen to be in the grip of a backward flowing casuistry, that there is something

forward, the *telos*, so unwelcome in science.

Science insists on operating without teleology. And so its explanatory power is in proportion to that. But the sense of the *telos* is very great, and I think that it's physically there, that the, that what is really happening is there is, there are forward moving, meaning from the past to the present, causal, um, chains, and there are causal chains which operate the other way, from the future into the past. The present is the interference pattern caused by the backward and flow, the forward and backward flowing casuistries inherent in time. Where they meet, they form an interference pattern. A standing wave if you will. Which is what a hologram is. And its that which is experienced as now, and it is half of the past and half of the future. One of the interesting things I've noticed about the future...

I want to stop there cause I disagree in that I think that interface pillar requires operation of consciousness. That I notice while I'm doing therapy with someone, that its the reinterpretation of the past that changes causal lines in the past. That it's not simply something laid down, the past comes to the future into the present, but the interpretation of what the past was that makes it real.

But in that sense, the past is a part of the present.

Yea.

It was Proust who said the past can never be understood until it is remembered.

Yea.

And it's that...

And it's remembered in a totally different way. It's restructured each time we remember.

Yes. Nothing, nothing is fixed. This is for sure.

And in some ways it seems...to my clients it isn't the past they're really talking about but they're symbolizing certain aspects of their present reality in terms of certain memories, in terms of certain ways of seeing the past.

Oh the past is constantly, constantly changing. One could study the changing paths. Did you know the Renaissance was invented in the 1850's? It didn't exist until a German historian decided that's what had happened. And now we live in the light of the Renaissance, you know? It's just, we don't question.... Nobody was running around Florence talking about "how great it is that we're living in the Renaissance now", you know?

History is fiction.

History is fiction or Stephen Dedalus said "History is the nightmare I am trying to awaken from."
[Laughter]

I was wondering in [??]... the psychotropics get back to the...could there be an element to an entelechy...

At the end of time?

That is, uh, drawing us to the future.

Yes! I think so. I mean, I, I'm basically on this issue fairly Platonic. I mean, I think that, uh, you know Plato said time is the moving image of eternity. And that, I think, is probably true. That the, that eternity is all time, and when you, and it somehow exists in the higher dimensional matrix than what we experience. So that we can only section that dimension to create the 3 or 4 dimensional world that we live in. But, that there is this, uh, this Platonic completeness, at least in essence, whatever that means.

And that sort of carries me back to my Time Maps. They don't say what will happen, they only say that certain levels of novelty and its lack will be fulfilled at certain points in time by some set of events. You see the difference? So you can't have an absolute determinism. If you have an absolute determinism, you preclude the possibility thought meaning anything. It just means I'm saying what I'm saying because I have to say it. You're thinking what you're thinking because you must think it. So an absolute determinism is hopeless and indefensible. And destroys the intellectual enterprise entirely. So we have to have a free future, but how free, you know? Looking at the case of the Golden Gate Bridge, and the number of people who will jump off it. And certain things are very, uh, bound. The time of sunrise tomorrow morning. You wouldn't feel great trepidation about making a prophecy about that. But, nevertheless, forces could be invoked which would make it rise earlier or later. But it is very much embedded in the matrix of inertia. That everything interesting is not, is much more up for grabs.

Yes.

What psychedelics do, and I begin this as a kind of summation, is they enrich experience, which sounds trivial except that experience is all that we have. One of the things, if I, if my career or whatever it is could be said to be about one thing, it's the notion that your understanding depends upon your self. In other words, no myth of the tribe will satisfy these myths like science and religion and politics. They do not satisfy. Uh, when I talk about this I usually mention the notion of the flying saucer. People who believe in flying saucers, as alien spacecraft, nevertheless so undervalue their own identity that they believe that it will, that contact will come to the Secretary General of the United Nations, he will assemble Time, Newsweek and the reporters from the Economist, they will get together with Carl Sagan and whoever [laughter], and they will all explain it to all of us, and they we will understand what's going on.

This is a, um, a sold out point of view. You have accepted their definition of you as a citizen. The real fact of the matter is an anarchy of the imagination, where each one of us is our own Magellan. We are not living in the age when all frontiers have disappeared, when all things have been tamed and made mundane. We're living in, uh, the most exciting era that has ever been! Because we are about to turn to the real terra incognita, which is the terra incognita in our minds. And, uh, it is for us to do. And this is why the drugs are so controversial, because they free you from the myth of the tribe. And that single fact, the fact that they decondition you, they don't decondition you at the chemical level, like make you forget everything you believe so you have to start over. They decondition you at the ideological level. So you just look around at the society you're in and its contradictions and preposterous assumptions are perfectly visible to you. And that frees you then to create a new world, through self experience, not by taking Heidegger's word for it, or somebody else's word for it, but creating it through your own experience. And this is what we should all be involved in, and this would carry us to psychological balance. It's trying to make sense of our intuitions, in the light of the enormous pressure to accept pre-packaged ideologies, which makes neurotics of us all. And the only, the only way out of that is to step back from it, and say "I will only

believe what I know. I will be like someone from Missouri", you know? "Show me and I'll believe it." This is why I always, my favorite person in the New Testament is, uh, is Thomas the Doubter. Because if you'll recall, uh, Christ, uh, returned to the apostles were gathered in the Upper Room. And Christ came to them I think from the 40th day. But Thomas was not there. So then, later and then Christ went away and so then Thomas came and they said "The Master was with us." And he said, you know, "You guys have been smoking too many of those little brown cigarettes." [Laughter] "The Master has gone from the plane. Unless I put my hand into the wound I will not believe it." So then a few days later, Thomas was with them, and Christ came again. And he said to him, "Thomas, put your hand into the wound that you might believe." And he did. And he believed. OK so what, what conclusion do we draw from this story? The conclusion is [Laughter] that of all of the people, of all of the disciples, the only person in all of human history recorded to have actually touched the incorporeal body of the risen Christ was Thomas the Doubter. And he was allowed that. He was vouchsafed that unique, uh, um, blessing because he doubted.

He doubted.

And that's, yes he insisted on experiencing it himself. And so he touched the incorporeal body, the White Stone at the end of time. And this is what we are trying to do, because, you know, if you can get your hand on the door knob, you can turn it and walk through. And, uh, the Secretary General of the United Nations need not be at your elbow, nobody need be at your elbow. And this is what shaman know. They have touched the door knob, turned it, and walked through and they are out of time, and out of history, and they're immense personal presence, or at least the immense personal presence that I have experienced, uh, among the ones who were genuine, is because they have taken responsibility for their model of the world, and have modeled the world based entirely on their own experience.

Yes

One question. I was never exposed to drugs, never tried you know anything. And the way you're talking to us...this is the only way to, uh, view where to become awareness of our own being, our own...Uh to me the experience uh, came to me, uh, with [?] exercise. Which without any drug, without anything. My life changed to this because I became aware of a different dimension that I was never aware of before. But it was without drugs without anything.

Yes well...

So how do you explain this?

No I don't think drugs are the only way. I think that they are the most effective way when you're talking about transforming an entire society, or a planet. But there's you know many shaman are not drug users. We've here spoken because we spoke mostly of Amazonian shamanism, as though the use of hallucinogens in shamanism are always co-present. Not necessarily true. Uh, I have often people say "You mean you don't believe in yoga, you don't believe in ehhh.?" Well, I think that these things may be efficacious. I think we're caught in a culture crisis where there is real, uh, immediacy to the notion that we have to get on with it. But yes near death experiences.. um.

How do you compare the two experiences? Because to me I became very aware near dimension and my home....I had to learn that. Nobody ...??? And the world looked at me like it was supposed to be...And,

uh..???? How could you compare the two experiences? In any way?

Well, I guess you can compare them in their results. You can't compare them in their content. That's the thing. Yes.

Some people think you compare them with chemistry

That's true.

So. I think that um, there might be more similarities than when you first consider the point.

I'd like to get back to one of your concluding statements on how the use of the psychedelics will, um, decondition a society whose pathology. Now that doesn't seem to have happened in the Amazonians. It seems to have reinforced their mythology.

It was based on the plants.

Yes that's right.

Well we have no record behind them using this drug. We have no notion of what ideological transformations may have brought them to that point. There are tribes in the Amazon right next door to the people we're talking about who don't use drugs. And so we can't know what upheavals of ideology they have been through. When there is a tradition which, um, supports the notion of the deconditioned individual, then you get the notion of shamanism. We don't have any comparable institution. So that, there, if you are of a shamanic temperament, you will be selected out and put in that position. Uh...

But we, we do but we don't give it credence where the total....sort of context. We have sports for example. There's ample evidence for athletes entering into all sorts of shamanic experiences and experiencing [] with everything else, and not knowing what in the world's going on with the, you know? And they it just happens with Marathon runners and droves at these things experienced....Uh. Distance runners anyone who gets into hyperventilating tremendous physical activity. We do have that in our culture. It's a warrior type act against post war revealing It does exist.

It's also a question of how much you can decondition yourself in the absence of any other example. In other words, uh, if you're part of a nomadic Amazonian tribe there is no model, there is the social model of the tribe and the only thing you can decondition yourself into is acceptance of the secret non-public aspects of the ideology in the men society or something like that. Well then we have, uh, we have pharmacological means for intervening, where and we need them because we're at such a terminal state with this problem.

It's a personal response and also a social one.

That's right we need to talk about it. And it isn't necessary for everybody to go out and get loaded. It's more about participating in a new language of self reflection. This is what we need to do. Some of us should take drugs, the people, it's a professional kind of obligation. [Laughter] You know that's what a shaman is. He's the guy whose professional obligation is to take drugs. But we all have an obligation to

create a language that values us and the people around us. And this begins with a language that values the self, and our experiences. Experience, this is the central thing above and beyond all else.

I want to come back to something you were saying a while ago, and that was the conditioning of the culture. And, um, I just have a couple of observations I'm marking the reaction to. It's always a curious fact to me that uh, during the 60's as we were beginning to move out into space, we were also taking drugs at a ...rate. There was an inner and outer exploration going on there simultaneously. Out of that experience I think we have in some ways re-conditioned the society specifically in regards to the psychedelic experience and the ecology movement. And beginning to see things in more whole patterns. And I wonder if you have any comments about any of that?

Well, I think all of these things like the ecology movements, the, the hippies, uh, the dietary sensitivity. All of this stuff arises out of, uh, the awareness of the culture crisis. Basically traceable back to the Bomb. I think the bomb has had a wonderful effect on focusing people's attention wonderfully on problems that before they just tended to fly off in all directions. The thing I might say about space. I don't believe that you know we will go to space as we are, so that we're going to create you know a South Bronx on Mars and to slavery and the moons of Jupiter and this kind of thing. I think space is too much like the imagination. This enfolding velvet darkness that stretches to infinity. That cries out to have artistic objects dropped into it. Uh, it's uh, like going into the mind. Going into the unconscious. The same thing that we must do here on earth before we go to space. We must, we cannot afford the unconscious anymore. This is a concept that has to take its place with the high button shoe. We must be entirely conscious because we have the power to shatter the earth like, uh, a rotten apple with a stick of dynamite inside of it. So there can be no more talk of the unconscious or the freight of the primate body or anything like that. We have to get our act together, because, uh, nature is very ruthless and we cannot have, you cannot rest on the notion that there's some kind of Deus ex Machina [???] which is going to make it all right even though we blundered endlessly. So it's basically strangely enough a call to responsibility. Which is always what has always charged against psychedelic drug use is its flagrant irresponsibility. So its a pretty, uh, the lines are drawn.

Sounds like you've got a [pretty big job again]

I think so. Thank you all very very much for, uh, helping me think about all of this.

Original Transcription by: JohnDeeIsMe

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Shamanology of the Amazon

Day Month 1989

Ojai Foundation, Ojai, California

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Shamans Among the Machines

1999

Unknown

Description

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Speech at Sunshine Gardens

Day Month Year 1982-2000

Unknown Location

Description

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| <u>People</u> | <u>Terms</u> | <u>Places</u> | <u>Plants</u> | <u>Groups/Tribes/ Languages</u> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Albert Hofmann | 4-phosphoryloxy/4-phosphorylated | Anatolia | Amanita Muscaria | Aztec |
| Alfred North Whitehead | 5-methoxy | Babylon | Anadenanthera Peregrina | Hellenic |
| Bo Holmstedt | archaic | Berkeley | ayahuasca/yage | Mazatec |
| Claudio Naranjo | balkanization | Catal Huyuk | Banisteriopsis Caapi | Mixtec |
| Erik Davis | beta-Carboline | Chaldea | Chacruna | Quechua |
| Faustin Bray | bodhisattva/bodhisattvic | Colombian Amazon | curare | Tlingit |
| George Gurdjieff | curandera/curanderismo | Gabon | Iboga/Ibogaine | Waorani/Huaorani |
| Henry Munn | diatribe | Kathmandu | Psychotria Viridis | Witoto/Huitoto |
| Hieronymous Bosch | dimethyltryptamine | La Chorrera | Salvia Divinorum | Zapotec |
| Ilya Prigogine | entheogen | Nepal | Psilocybe Cubensis | Mestizo |
| Jan van Eyck (pronounced "Yawn") | epistemology | Sumer | Peganum Harmala | Yanomamo / Yanomami |
| Jay Weidner | Eros | Timbuktu | Diplopterys cabrerana | |
| J.B.S. Haldane | eschaton/eschatology | Tusman Experimental College | Abuta grandifolia | |
| John Lilly | Finnegans Wake (no Ur apostrophe) | | | |
| Jonathan Ott | hyperspace | Karolinska Institute | | |
| Joseph (Joe) Tusman | I Ching | Iquitos | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Julian Jaynes | indole | Pucallpa |
| Kurt Gödel | Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) | Sibundoy |
| Linnaeus/Linnaean | ketamine | |
| Mark Pesce | mescaline | |
| Marshall McLuhan | Logos | |
| Mircea Eliade | lysergic acid diethylamide | |
| Paul Feyerabend | meme | |
| P. D. Bridgeman | monoamine oxidase (inhibitors) | |
| Philo Judaeus | nanotechnology/nano technologically | |
| Pierre Teilhard de Chardin | narcoleptic/narcolepsy | |
| Pieter Brueghel the Elder | neocortex | |
| Ralph Abraham | neoteny/neotenizing | |
| Ralph Metzner | ontology | |
| R. Gordon Wasson | panspermia | |
| Richard Alpert / Ram Dass | pro bono proctologists | |
| Richard Evans Schultes (pronounced "SHOOL-Tees") | psilocybin/psilocin | |
| Richard Wagner (pronounced "Vahg-ner") | psychedelic | |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Roland Fischer | rap/rant (used to refer to his talks) |
| Rupert Sheldrake | Rigveda |
| Sasha Shulgin | salvinorin-A |
| Stanislav (Stan) Grof | shaman/shamanism |
| Stephen Dedalus | Soma |
| Terence (one "r") | stochastic |
| Theodor Koch-Grunberg | sublimation |
| Thomas Aquinas | synchronicity/synchronistic |
| Thomas Pynchon | syncopated |
| Timothy Leary | theogony |
| Tim Poston | Timewave Zero |
| Werner Herzog | transcendental |
| Gregory Bateson | tryptamine |
| | Vedic |
| | vegetalismo |
| | xenophobic/xenophobically |
| | electroencephalogram |
| | petit mal seizures |
| | Bos indicus |
| | casuistry |

scintilla

harmine

telepathine

harmaline

harmala

epená

pharmacopoeia

intellection

ayahuascero

Borgesian library

cephalopods

chromatophores

Tabernanthe iboga

Bwiti cults

Tarahumara people

Sonoran people

Albert Hofmann

Alfred North Whitehead

Bo Holmstedt

Claudio Naranjo

Erik Davis

Faustin Bray

Henry Munn

Hieronymous Bosch

Ilya Pregogine

J.B.S. Haldane

Jan van Eyck (pronounced "Yawn")

Jay Weidner

John Lilly

Jonathan Ott

Joseph (Joe) Tussman

Julian Jaynes

Kurt Gödel

Linnaeus/Linnaean

Mark Pesce

Marshall McLuhan

Mircea Eliade

P. D. Bridgeman

Paul Feyerabend

Philo Judaeus

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Pieter Brueghel the Elder

R. Gordon Wasson

Ralph Abraham

Ralph Metzner

Richard Evans Schultes (pronounced "SHOOL-Tees")

Roland Fischer

Rupert Sheldrake

Sasha Shulgin

Stanislav (Stan) Grof

Stephen Dedalus

Terence (one "r")

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Pynchon

Tim Poston

Wagner (pronounced "Vahg-ner")

Werner Herzog

State of the Stone

October 1995

Whole Life Expo, San Francisco, CA

Description

- [Scribd Transcription](#)
- [Audio Link](#)
- [Psychedelic Salon podcast #128](#)
- [sound photosynthesis](#)

All right, well, it's nice to be back in San Francisco. I moved out of California about 8 months ago after 30 years and I still have ambivalent feelings about it when I see springtime coming on so very beautifully. On the other hand there are a lot of squirrels in the woods and I am sort of preferring to pull back from all that and do home projects, workbench projects.

I sort of think of these get-togethers, they happen periodically, cyclically, but unscheduled as a state of the stone addresses or an opportunity for the community to come together and everybody see who's here once again, who has survived, who's gotten out, so forth and so on. I'm very bullish about the situation. Fortunately I hold the theory that things have to get a lot worse before they can get better. So whenever I see things getting worse I assume that's the first step toward progress.

I think that in the time we've been getting together and talking about these things the general tone has changed dramatically. When I started talking about all of this, my audience was entirely my peers, old freaks. [audience laughter] And many of you were 10 years old. And now the message has been out there for about 12 years that psychedelics actually represent an opportunity for feeling, an opportunity to return to religion as it was practiced before the invention of the marketplace. And I'm very pleased as I go around meeting people and discussing this issue to see how much of the youth culture has become sensitive to the psychedelic issue. Because it really means that after 20, 30 years of unstinting distortion and misrepresentation by the media and some of the powers that be that nevertheless the curiosity is intact, the opportunity is available, and people have not been fooled by the effort to denigrate, dumb down, sideline, water down, sell out, white wash and screw over the idea that psychedelic plants are an excellent and necessary part of any program of spiritual self-exploration.

I'm not going to talk that much about this today because I think it would be preaching to the converted. I'm not even going to remind you that our evolutionary heritage lies in the use of psychedelics. That it was in all probability psychedelics that called forth our humanness. I've talked about this in numerous forms- it doesn't have to be particularly gone over today. Since this is a hometown crowd, since this is peer review, I would rather go to some of the stuff that plays more with the resistance in Des Moines and Cleveland and beta-test it here. [audience laughter] For there's still time to recant. San Francisco is an incredibly forgiving town. If you need to go somewhere and make a mistake this is probably the place. [audience

laughter]

[transfer in progress]

Original Transcription by: coloured_brain on Scribd - transferred by Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Surfing on Finnegans Wake

Day Month 1995

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

Description

- [Audio Link-YouTube](#)
- [Partial Transcription from DominatorCulture](#)
- [Other links](#)

Finnegans Wake is the, is the, uh, last, and most ambitious and most puzzling work of, uh, the British writer James Joyce who of course wrote Dubliners and Ulysses. And if Ulysses is the algebra of literature then Finnegans Wake is the partial differential equation. Uh, most of us break down at algebra. Few of us aspire to go on the partial linear differential equation. Um, in some ways I think it can be arguably said that this is the quintessential work of art or at least work of literature of the 20th century and Joyce intended it that way. Uh, Joseph Campbell called it a staggering allegory of the fall and redemption of mankind. Equally respected critics have called it a surrender to the crossword puzzle portion of the human mind. So, uh, the main thing about it is that it is linguistically dense. It is dense on every level. It has over 63,000 individual words in it. That's long- more words than most fictional manuscripts have words, period. It has over five thousand characters in it.

Uh, Ulysses was designed as a kind of...Joyce thought of it as his daybook. Uh, it follows the peregrinations of an ordinary Dubliner – this is Ulysses – an ordinary Dubliner through the vicissitudes of his day, his struggles to buy some kidneys to fry for breakfast, his chance meeting with his wife's lover, so forth and so on. A fairly straightforward exposition of the techniques of literature that have been perfected in the 20th century: stream of consciousness, uh, so forth and so on, slice of life.

Finnegans Wake was designed to be the nightbook to that daybook. So it was conceived of as a dream and one of the questions that undergraduates are asked to shed ink over is whose dream is it and what is this book about? I mean when you first pick it up it's absolutely daunting. There doesn't seem to be a way into it. It seems to be barely in English and the notion, you know, that one could, by spending time with this, tease out characters, plot, literary tension, resolution, this sort of thing seems fairly unlikely. Actually it's one of the few things that really repays pouring effort into it. The first twenty-five pages are incredibly dense and most people are eliminated somewhere in those first twenty-five pages. And so, never, really... It's a language and you have to gain a facility with it and you have to cheat, that's the other thing. There's lots of help cheating because it has spawned a great exegetical literature; all kinds of pale scholars eager to give you the Celtic word lists of Finnegans Wake or a discussion of, uh, the doctrine of the transubstantiation in Finnegans Wake, so forth and so on. Hundreds of these kinds of doctoral theses in Comp Lit have been ground out over the decades.

The reason I'm interested in it, I suppose I should fess up, is because it's two things clearly. Uh, Finnegans

Wake is psychedelic and it is apocalyptic slash eschatological. What I mean by those phrases is – first of all -what I mean by psychedelic is there is no stable point of view. There is no character per se. You never know who is speaking. You have to read into each speech to discover, you know, is this King Mark, Anna Livia Plurabelle, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Shem the Penman, Shaun – who is it? Uh, and identities are not fixed. Those of you who have followed my rap over the years, I'm always raving about how psychedelics dissolve boundaries. Well, uh, Finnegans Wake is as if you had taken the entirety of the last thousand years of human history and dissolved all of the boundaries. So Queen Mab becomes Mae West, you know, uh, all the personages of pop culture, politics, art, church history, Irish legend, Irish internecine politics are all swirling, changing, merging – time is not linear. You will find yourself, uh, uh, at a recent political rally then return the court of this or that Abyssinian, uh, emperor or pharaoh, uh. It's like a trip and the great technique – I was thinking about this as I was thinking about this lecture – the great technique of the 20th century is collage or pastiche. It was originally developed by the, um, Dadaists in Zurich in 1919. Right now it's having a huge resurgence in the form of sampling in pop music and Joyce was the supreme sampler. I mean, he draws his material from technical catalogs, menus, uh, legal briefs, treaty language, mythologies, dreams, doctor/patient conversations – everything is grist for this enormous, uh, distillery. And yet, you know, what comes out of this once you learn the codes and once you learn to play the game is a Joycean story that all graduates of Ulysses will recognize.

I mean the main- what Joyce was about was an incredible sympathy with common people and an awareness of the dilemma of, uh, you know, being a Jew in Irish Ireland, being a devotee of Scholasticism in the 20th century and of dislocation and of disorientation of being the cuckolded husband, of being the failed divinity student. All of these characters and themes are, uh, familiar. It-it's quite an amazing accomplishment. There's nothing quite like it in literature. It had very little, uh, anticipation. The only real anticipator of Joyce in English I think is Thomas Nash, who most people have never heard of. Thomas Nash was a contemporary of Shakespeare and, and wrote a famous – I don't know what it means in that context – but a novel called, it was called the *The Wayfaring Traveler*. Anyway, Nash had this megalomaniac richness of language. This attitude that it's better to put it in than take it out and, and that's certainly what you get with Joyce. I mean, Joyce is so dense with technical terms, brand names, pop references, uh, localisms, uh. His- the way to conceive of Finnegans Wake really is like a midden, a garbage dump and there is in fact a garbage dump in the Wake that figures very prominently and what you as the reader have to do is go in there with nut pick and tooth brush and essentially remove one level after another level after another level and sink down and down.

And the theme is always the same, you know. The delivery of the word, the misinterpretation of the word and the redemption of the word in every level at all times and places. Uh, the reason I've now gone some distance toward explaining why I think of it as psychedelic; the reason why I think of it as eschatological and apocalyptic is because he really—you know, it's hard to tell because we don't have James Joyce around to ask – how much of this material he took seriously and how much was grist for his literary mill – but he was perfectly conversant with renaissance theories of magic. The entire book is based on *La Scienza Nuova* of Giambattista Vico who was a, a um... I don't even know what you would call him, a Renaissance sociologist and systems theorist. And Joyce once in a famous interview said 'if the whole universe were to be destroyed and only Finnegans Wake survived that the goal had been that then the entire universe could be reconstructed out of this.'

Some of you who are students of Torah, this is a very Talmudic idea, that somehow a book is the primary reality. You know – the idea in Hassidism in some schools is that all of the future is that all of the future is

already contained in the Torah. Then when you ask, well if its contained there, then isn't it predestined – the answer is no because the letters are scrambled and only the movement of the present moment through the text correctly unscrambles and arranges the letter. This is Joyce thinking for sure and it's, it's very close to a central theme in Joyce and a central theme in the Western religious tradition, which is the coming into being the manifestation of the word, the declension of the word into matter. And, uh, uh, in a sense what Joyce was trying to do, he was in that great tradition of literary alchemy whose earlier practitioners were people like Robert Flood, Athanasius Kircher, Paracelsus; these are not familiar names but in the late flowering of alchemy when the birth of modern science could already...the rosy glow could already be seen, the alchemist turned toward literary allegory in the 16th and early 17th century.

Joyce is essentially in that tradition. I mean, this is an effort to condense the entire of experience, all, all-as Joyce says in the Wake, all space-time in a nutshell is what we're searching for here. A, a kind of philosopher's stone of literary associations from which the entire universe can be made to blossom forth. And the way it's done is through pun and tricks of language and, uh, double and triple and quadruple entendre. Uh, no word is opaque, every word is transparent and you see through it to older meanings, stranger associations. And as your mind tries to follow these associative trees of connection, you eventually, you, you get the feeling, which is the unique feeling that the Wake gives you. It's about as close to LSD on the page as you can get because you are simultaneously many points of view, simultaneously many, uh, uh, dramatis loci, many places in the plot and the whole thing is riddled with resonance. Uh, you know, a man, uh, doing a task on one level is on another level a Greek god completing a task and on another level some other figure of some more obscure mythology. So really one thing about Finnegans Wake, it's like a dipstick for your own intelligence. What you bring to it is going to determine what you get out. And if you have read the books which Joyce was familiar with, or if you have armed yourself with such simple things as a Fyodor's guide to Ireland or a good map of Ireland or a good work of Irish mythology then, uh, it immediately begins to betray its secrets to you. And it's so rich that it's easy to make original discoveries. It's easy to see and understand things which probably have not been seen or understood since James Joyce put it there because he had this kind of all-inclusive, uh, intelligence.

Maybe I didn't make clear enough why that, to my mind, this is an eschatological phenomenon. This production of the philosopher's stone. It's about the union of spirit and matter. That's what the philosophers stone is about. And writing a book, which aspires to be the seed for a living world is about the union of spirit and matter as well. And the, the, um, Christian scenario of redemption at the end of profane history is another scenario of transubstantiate union; union of spirit and matter. This seems to be in fact the overarching theme of Finnegans Wake and of, uh, of the 20th century. In terms of the temporal context for this book. It was finished in 1939, a few months before 1939 and Joyce died early in 1939. In a sense he died in one of the most science fiction moments of the 20th century because the Third Reich was going strong; it had not yet been pegged down a notch, schemes of eugenics and thousand year racially purified super civilizations – all of that crazy early 40's stuff was happening and the book is surprisingly modern. Uh television appears, psychedelic drugs appear, all of these things appear presciently. He was some kind of a prophet and also he understood the 20th century sufficiently that the part he hadn't yet lived through was as transparent to him as the part that he had. He could see what was coming.

Well, that's by way of my introduction. I want to read you what some other people have said about this because I don't think I can say enough on my own. This is the indispensable book if you're serious about this, a skeleton key to Finnegans Wake. It takes the view that we don't know what this thing is so we have to go through it literally line by line and he tells you the story of- entire story in the one page version, in the

ten page version and in the two hundred-page version. Even in the two hundred-page version there are sections where Campbell simply reports: the next five pages are extremely obscure. Mark it! But uh, this is, uh, just a short section and one of the things about working with the Wake is - at first this language which is so impenetrable and bizarre, it ends up infecting you and you become unable to write or talk any other way. So I'll read you some of Campbell's introduction and I think you will see it's like the Wake itself except in baby steps.

Introduction to a strange subject. Running riddle and fluid answer, *Finnegans Wake* is a mighty allegory of the fall and resurrection of mankind. It is a strange book, a compound of fables, symphony and nightmare. A monstrous enigma beckoning imperiously from the shadowy pits of sleep. Its mechanics resemble those of a dream, a dream which has freed the author from the necessities of common logic and has enabled him to compress all periods of history, all phases of individual and racial development into a circular design of which every part is beginning, middle and end. In a gigantic wheeling rebus, dim effigies rumble past, disappear into foggy horizons and are replaced by other images, vague but half consciously familiar. On this revolving stage, mythological heroes and events of remotest antiquity occupy the same spatial and temporal plains as modern personages and contemporary happenings. All time occurs simultaneously. Tristram, Wellington, Father Adam and Humpty Dumpty merge in a single precept. Multiple meanings are present in every line. Interlocking allusions to key words and phrases are woven like fugal themes into the pattern of the work. *Finnegans Wake* is a prodigious, multifaceted monolith, not only the cauchemar of a Dublin citizen but the dreamlike saga of guilt-stained evolving humanity. The vast scope and intricate structure of *Finnegans Wake* gives the book a forbidding aspect of impenetrability. It appears to be a dense and baffling jungle, trackless and overgrown with wanton perversities of form and language. Clearly such a book is not meant to be idly fingered. It tasks the imagination, exacts discipline and tenacity from those who would march with it, yet some of the difficulties disappear as soon as the well-disposed reader picks up a few compass clues and gets his bearings. Then enormous map of *Finnegans Wake* begins slowly to unfold, characters and motifs emerge, themes become recognizable and Joyce's vocabulary falls more and more familiarly on the accustomed ear. Complete understanding is not to be snatched at greedily in one sitting (or in fifty, I might add). Nevertheless the ultimate state of the intelligent reader is certainly not bewilderment. Rather it is an admiration for the unifying insight, economy of means and more than Rabelaisian humor, which has miraculously quickened the stupendous mass of material. One acknowledges at last that James Joyce's overwhelming micro/macrocosm could not have been fired to life in any sorcerer furnace less black, less heavy, less murky than this, his incredible book. He had to smelt the modern dictionary back to protean plasma and reenact the genesis and mutation of language in order to deliver his message. But the final wonder is that such a message could be delivered at all.

Every book has to be about something. I mean, so what is this book about? Well, as far as anybody can tell, it appears to be about someone named, uh – well they have hundreds of names actually but for economy's sake, someone named Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker or abbreviated HCE. Humphrey Earwicker runs a pub in Chapelizod, which is a, a, uh, suburb or district of London and he has as it says, his lickle wiffey who is Anna Livia Plurabelle. Now these two people, this barkeep and his wife and their two children, Jerry and Kevin or Shem and Shaun, or, and then they also have hundreds of names because they occur on hundreds and hundreds of level – every brother struggle in history is enacted by the two boys, Jerry and Kevin. They are Shem the penmen and Shaun the other one and they, they dichotomize certain parts of the process. So here is, in one paragraph, this is the cliff notes version of what *Finnegans Wake* is all about. If you commit this to memory, you will never be caught wanting at a New York cocktail party.

"As the tale unfolds, we discover Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker is a citizen of Dublin. A stuttering tavern keeper with a bull-like hump on the back of his neck. He emerges as a well-defined and sympathetic character, the sorely harrowed victim of a relentless fate, which is stronger than, yet identical with himself. Joyce refers to him under various names, such as here comes everybody and haverich childers everywhere. Indications of his universality and his role as the great progenitor, the hero has wondered vastly leaving families - that is deposits of civilization - at every pause along the way from Troy in Asia Minor (he is frequently called the Turk) up through the turbulent lands of the Goths, the Franks, the Norsemen and over seas to the Green Isles of Britain and Ire. His chief Germanic manifestations are Wotan and Thor. His chief Celtic, Manannán mac Lir. Again, he is Saint Patrick carrying the new faith. Again Strongbow leading the Anglo-Norman conquest. Again Cromwell conquering with a bloody hand. Most specifically, he is our Anglican tavern keeper H.C.E. in the Dublin suburb of Chapelizod.

Like Ulysses, the ground zero here is the utterly mundane – middle class tormented Irish people embedded in the detritus of the 20th century. But there's an effort to never lose the cosmic perspective, never lose the sense that we are, you know, not individuals lost in time but the front ends of gene streams that reach back to Africa that we somehow have all these ancestors and conflicts, warming and storming within it. It's a, it's a very glorious, psychedelic, heartfelt, Irish view of what it is to be embedded in the mystery of existence.

Well OK, enough arm waving, now let's cut the cake here:

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.

Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war: nor had topsawyer's rocks by the stream Oconee exaggerated themselves to Laurens County's gorgios while they went doubling their mumper all the time: nor avoice from afire bellowed mishe mishe to tauftauf thuartpatrick: not yet, though venissoon after, had a kidscad buttended a bland old Isaac: not yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were sosie sesthers wroth with twone nathandjoe. Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arclight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface.

The fall (bababadalgharaghtakamminarronkonnbronntonner-ronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohooorderenthurnuk!) of a once wallstrait oldparr is retaled early in bed and later on life down through all Christian minstrelsy. The great fall of the offwall entailed at such short notice the pftjschute of Finnegan, erse solid man, that the humptyhillhead of humself promptly sends an unquiring one well to thewest in quest of his tumptytumtoes: and their upturnpikepointandplace is at the knock out in the park where oranges have been laid to rust upon the green since devlinsfirst loved livvy.

So, now, granted that the first pages are dense and it isn't all this dense because even though the concept of fractals lay years in the future, the effort here is to tell the whole damn thing in the first word. To tell it again in the next two words, then to tell it again in the next three words and so on. So here in these first roughly three paragraphs, a huge amount of information is being passed along. Uh, first of all, uh, we're given a location if we're smart enough to know it. Riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs. Well, now, if you know the geography of Dublin, you know that's where you are because, and notice Howth Castle and Environs is HCE. These initials recur thousands of times in this book always bringing you back to, to remind you that this has something to do with Humphrey Earwicker.

What this first sentence says is: riverrun. It's the river Lethe, which we will meet in a thousand reincarnations because Anna Livia Plurabelle is the personification of the goddess river. The river runs past Eve and Adam's and there is a church there on the shore named Adam and Eve in Dublin. From swerve of shore to bend of bay, then this strange phrase, "brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation". This announces the great architectonic plan of the Wake. That it is fact going to be based on the sociologica; ruminations of Giambattista Vico's *Scienza Nuova*. The vicus mode of recirculation because as I'm sure you all know, Vico's theory of the fall and redemption of mankind was that there were four ages – I can remember gold, silver, iron and clay, I think – and so this idea of the recirculation of the connectedness of the cyclicity of the-as he says, the same again, again and again. Finnegan and again; the same again. This is one of his great, great themes is the *recurso*. Everything comes again, nothing is unannounced. Every love affair, every dynastic intrigue, every minor political disgrace, and a minor political disgrace figures very prominently in this book because as the carrier of Adam's sin, the great dilemma for Humphrey Earwicker is he is running for a minor political post, Alderman, but apparently one night, uh, rather juiced – there's many versions and you hear them all and they're all given in dreams and mock trials in an accusatory fantasy. He either innocently took a leak in the park or he fondled himself in some way in the presence of Maggie and her sister in such a way that his reputation is now at great risk and it all depends on the testimony of a cad – a soldier or perhaps three soldiers. It's never clear. It's constantly shifting. And, uh, this question of, uh, what happened when by the mund of the magazine wall, where our maggy seen all, with her sisterin shawl haunts the book because on it turns the question of whether H.C.E. is a stalwart pillar of the community or in fact a backsliding masturbator and a monster as one always is if one is trapped in a James Joyce novel.

Uh, then this puzzling list in the second paragraph is simply a list of things, which haven't happened yet. Sir Tristram, lover of music, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war. Now this word penisolate is typical Joyce punning. Peninsulate war because obviously it's being launched from Brittany. Penisolate war because Sir Tristram is the great archetype of the lover and, uh, so his war is penisolate. So that's the first thing that has not yet happened, it's telling you. Sir Tristram has not yet come to Ireland to put it simply. Ummm, "nor had topsawyer's rocks by the stream Oconee exaggerated themselfe to Laurens County's gorgios while they went doubling their number all the time." Now this is further obscurity. There is a stream in Georgia and topsawyer is a reference to Tom Sawyer because Tom Sawyer was Huck Finn's friend. Huck Finn is Finn in America. There is a huge amount of Mark Twain that has been poured into these books because of the Huckleberry Finn connection; Finn in the new world. Um, and Topsawyer's rocks is a reference possibly to testicles and so forth and so on. Every single word you can just take a word and go into this and- until you exhaust yourself. And then the next thing that has not yet happened: nor avoice from afire bellowsed mishe mishe to tauftauf thuartpatrick. Tauftauf is Celtic for thou art baptized, so Saint Patrick has not yet baptized in Ireland.

Not yet, though venissoon after, and the venissoon is a pun on[...?] had a kidscad buttended a bland old Isaac. It's a reference to the Isaac/Esau tale in the bible. It's also a reference to Isaac Butt who was a figure in the politics of the Irish rebellion. Not yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were sosie sesthers wroth with twone nathandjoe. That's at this point a very obscure reference but there is a great incest and sister theme in Finnegans Wake and the twin- the mistresses of Jonathan Swift become carriers of a huge amount of energy in here as do the mistresses of Thomas Stern, uh, because it's better to be swift than stern, or something like that.

Uh, and then the last of these things which hadn't happened yet – "Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arclight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface". That seems pretty obscure to me. According to Joseph Campbell, it's simply a reference to the presence of God moving over the waters, uh, in the first lines of genesis. "Ringsome on the aquaface". Then this phrase, the fall and the multisyllabic word ...bababadal...that word. These are the Viconian thunders and they announce the beginning of each Viconian age. And, and when the thunder speaks, you know then that you're into a transition. Then it actually launches in the last paragraph into a fairly straightforward evocation of at least the mythological, uh, Finnegan. As you all probably know, there is an Irish drinking ballad of great antiquity called the ballad of Tim Finnegan, or the Ballad of Finnegan's Wake. And it tells the story of Tim Finnegan who was a hod carrier, a bricklayer's assistant, and he was given to, uh, hitting the poitín rather hard and he fell from his ladder. It's the Humpty Dumpty story. He fell from his ladder and he broke his back and his friends waked him in the grand Irish fashion and at the height of the wake, they became so carried away and intoxicated that they upended a bucket of Guinness over his head and he revived and joined the dance.

(plays ballad)

This is the resurrection. I mean, Tim Finnegan is very clearly for Joyce a Christ figure and here is then the first evocation of Tim Finnegan. The fall, then the Viconian thunder, of a once wallstrait oldparr, which is just an old person, is retaled early in bed and later on life down through all christian minstrelsy. The great fall of the offwall entailed at such short notice the pftjschute of Finnegan. Now this p-f-t-j-s-c-h-u-t-e, pftjschute, is Norwegian I'm informed and it refers to the act of falling and the act of falling from a hill. Finnegan, erse solid man, that the humptyhillhead of humself promptly sends an unquiring one well to thewest in quest of his tumptytumtoes: and their upturnpikepointandplace is at the knock out in the park where oranges have been laid to rust upon the green since devlinsfirst loved livvy." This is fairly transparent if you're Irish or a citizen of Dublin because what it's talking about is Dublin is imagined to be situated basically in the belly of an enormous giant person who is, uh, Finnegan. Finnegan lies like a giant reclining figure along the liffey there. Husband and wife, river and mountain, and, and this is actually then the focus has changed and now we're talking about the geography. He was a solid man, erse solid man, but then he the somehow [??] that the humptyhillhead of humself promptly sends an unquiring one well to thewest in quest of his tumptytumtoes. If you have a map of Dublin laid out, you can actually see this enormous man in the landscape and there are many enormous men and women in the landscape of this planet. Joyce maps the Dublin geography over all of them. Some of you may know Iztaccihuatl, the magical mountain in Mexico. Iztaccihuatl means the sleeping woman in Toltec and many mountains are imagined to be, um, sleeping people. So here he introduces this theme and, um, this is one paragraph. This is the invocation of Finnegan as hod carrier:

Bygmester Finnegan, of the Stuttering Hand, freemen's mauerer, lived in the broadest way immarginable in his rushlit toofarback for messuages before joshuan judges had given us numbers or Helviticus commuted deuteronomy (one yeastyday he sternely struxk his tete in a tub for to watsch the future of his fates but ere he swiftly took it out again, by the might of moses, the very water was evaporated and all the guenneses had met their exodus so that ought to show you what a pentschanjeuchy chap he was!) and during mighty odd years this man of hod, cement and edifices in Toper's Thorp piled bildung supra bildung pon the banks for the livers by the Soangso. He addle liddle phifie Annie ugged the little craythur. Wither hayre in honds tuck up your part inher. Oftwhile balbulous, mithre ahead, with goodly trowel in gras and ivoroiled

overalls which he habitacularly fondseed, like Haroun Childeric Eggeberth he would caligulate by multiplicables the alltitude and malltitude until he seesaw by neatlight of the liquor wheretwin 'twas born, his roundhead staple of otherdays to rise in undress maisonry upstanded (joygrantit!), a waalworth of a skyerscape of most eyeful hoyth entowerly, erigenating from next to nothing and celescalating the himals and all, hierarchitectitiptitoploftical, with a burning bush abob off its baubletop and with larrons o'toolers clittering up and tombles a'buckets clottering down."

Now what this paragraph says is he was a great builder and I think if you think back through your impression of hearing it read, you knew that. You know, these words that are associated, words like: a waalworth of a skyerscape and entowerly, these are skyscraper words. Waalworth, skyerscape, entowerly, Howth, so forth and so on. And he can do this; he can build up a pastiche of surfaces, of impressions. Now you might say, why is there no economy? Well there is no economy because economy is an aesthetic criterion for shoemakers, not for artists. And uh, uh, you know, economy is the curse of the Bauhaus babblers from hell. Joyce was very concerned to refute all that. If you have to place this in a context, it's in the context of the most hallucinatory of the Baroque, uh. You know, this is Arcimboldo land. This is a work that would have been welcome at the Rudolfian court in Prague. It's a work of magical complexity and uh, and uh, enfolded self-reference.

Now we've just been through these first four paragraphs. Now I'll read you what Joseph Campbell has to say on it and by no means all of what he has to say on it. The first four paragraphs are the suspended tick of time between a cycle just past and one about to begin. They are in affect an overture resonant with all the themes of Finnegans Wake. The dominant motif is the poly-lingual thunderclap of paragraph three, bababada... that one, which the voice of God makes audible through the noise of Finnegans Fall. Narrative movement begins with the life fall and wake of hod carrier Finnegan, pages four to seven; the wake scene fades into the landscape of Dublin and environs.

We've just heard how he fell from the ladder. Now we move into a description, um, of the, of the wake and there's a certain voice that appears at certain times. It's where there are a lot of words ending in 'ation', continuation of that celebration until the examination of the extermination! These are the twelve judges. Each character when they appear has a certain tempo to their character so when that tempo enters the text, you know the character is present even though there may be no trace. For example, Anna Livia Plurabelle tempo is the tempo of the hen: herealittle, therealittle, goalittle, seealittle, doalittle – the hen is scratching. This is this nervous, birdlike – that's Anna Livia's signature. Here's just one paragraph from the wake scene, which builds and has quite a minor amount of humor associated with it.

Shize? I should shee! Macool, Macool, orra whyi deed ye diie? Of a trying thirstay mournin? Sobs they sighdid at Fillagain's chrissormiss wake, all the hoolivans of the nation, prostrated in their consternation and their duodisimally profusive plethora of ululation. There was plumbs and grumes and cheriffs and citherers and raiders and cinemen too. And the all gianed in with the shoutmost shoviality. Agog and magog and the round of them agrog. To the continuation of that celebration until Hanandhunigan's extermination! Some in kinkin corass, more, kankan keening. Belling him up and filling him down. He's stiff but he's steady is Priam Olim! 'Twas he was the dacent gaylabouring youth. Sharpen his pillowscone, tap up his bier! E'erawhere in this whorl would ye hear sich a din again? With their deepbrow fundigs and the dusty fidelios. They laidhim brawdawn alanglast bed. With a bockalips of finisky fore his feet. And a barrowload of guenesis hoer his head. Tee the tootal of the fluid hang the twoddle of the fuddled, O!

Well it's a drunken Irish wake, that seems clear but there are a lot of things going on. "E'erawhere in this whorl would ye hear sich a din again?" And "he's stiff but he's steady as Priam Olim" – all this Dionysian and sexual imagery is fully explicit. In some ways more realized as a character or more loveable is Anna Livia Plurabelle. Anna Livia Plurabelle is Molly Bloom on acid basically. Molly Bloom, we don't lose her outlines. We understand Molly because Molly doesn't offer us that much of her own mind. She stands for the eternal feminine but only in the final soliloquy in Ulysses do we really contact her. Anna Livia, it's her book. It may in fact be her dream and the whole thing is permeated with her tensions and her cares. As it says, "Grampupus is fallen down" meaning the great father God is at wake. Grampupus is fallen down but grinny sprids the boord meaning Anna Livia is always there. She's always there and in the wake. Really you could almost say that Molly Bloom's soliloquy has been expanded to three hundred or four hundred pages and the whole thing is a meditation on the river. The river is the feminine and the first image in the book and the last image are the image of the river. The river dissolves everything and carries it out to sea. Let me read this description of Anna Livia Plurabelle and then we'll go back to the synopsis:

How bootifull and how truetowife of her, when strengly forebidden, to steal our historic presents from the past postpropheticals so as to will make us all lordyheirs and ladymaidesses of a pretty nice kettle of fruit. She is livving in our midst of debt and laffing through all plores for us (her birth is uncontrollable), with a naperon for her mask and her sabboes kickin arias (so sair! so solly!) if yous ask me and I saack you. Hou! Hou! Gricks may rise and Troysirs fall (there being two sights for ever a picture) for in the byways of high improvidence that's what makes lifework leaving and the world's a cell for citters to cit in. Let young wimman run away with the story and let young min talk smooth behind the butteler's back. She knows her knight's duty while Luntum sleeps. Did ye save any tin? says he. Did I what? with a grin says she. And we all like a marriedann because she is mercenary. Though the length of the land lies under liquidation (floote!) and there's nare a hairbrow nor an eyebush on this glaubrous phace of Herrschuft Whatarwelter she'll loan a vesta and hire some peat and sarch the shores her cockles to heat and she'll do all a turfwoman can to piff the business on. Paff. To puff the blaziness on. Poffpoff. And even if Humpty shell fall frumpty times as awkward again in the beardsboosoloom of all our grand remonstrancers there'll be iggs for the brekkers come to mournhim, sunny side up with care. So true is it that therewhere's a turnover the tay is wet too and when you think you ketch sight of a hind make sure but you're cocked by a hin.

Well Nora felt that Jimmy would have been much better as a singer. She so states it, that she had great hopes for his voice. She was a very practical women, Nora Barnacle. There wasn't a literary bone in her body I think. I think that's what Joyce loved about her, was that that she was the real thing. All these women, Molly, Anna Livia, they all are Nora Joyce for sure.

He, uh, died shortly after it was published although it had been known in manuscript for over ten years to the literati of his circle. It was called Work in Progress. And, um, people didn't even know if he was serious or not and it was very hard to find a publisher. It was a typographical nightmare. Joyce was going blind and so, you know, trying to keep track of, of the spelling...there's hardly a standard spelling in there. There's hardly a word that is not somehow fiddled with and changed around. If you pay attention to what you're calling 'life as it is,' you will discover that it's not a simple thing at all. That it's an incr- it's like this.

I used to say when you're vacuuming your apartment, Rome falls nine times an hour and your job is to notice. You always do notice but you never tell yourself that you're noticing. So in the course of a day, you know, I live and you live to some degree the entirety of global civilization. Rome falls, Algebra is

discovered, the Turks are beating at the gates of Vienna and it isn't even 11AM yet, you know? Uh, so there is this sense of the co-presence of history. We're imprisoned inside the linear assumption that I'm a person in a place, in a time, I'm alive, most people aren't – but, but in fact when you deconstruct all that - that is fiction. And the truth is more this onrushing magma of literary association and, you know, in Ulysses you get an enormous amount of half-baked science. Leopold Bloom is always looking at things and explaining to himself how they work using very crack potted notions of hydraulics and electricity and this sort of thing.

Uh, I think uh, you know..people say that the psychedelic experience is hard to remember, that dreams are hard to remember but harder to remember than either of those is simply ordinary experience. You lie in the baths and you close your eyes for thirty seconds and...empires fall, dynastic families unfold themselves, power changes hands, princes are beheaded, a pope disgraced [??] that was for you [laughter] (Possibly directed at Robert Anton Wilson?) and then somebody drops something and you wake up and fifteen seconds have passed. That's the reality of life but we suppress this chaotic irrational side. The genius of Joyce and to some degree although in a more controlled form, Proust - and there were other practitioners, Faulkner certainly – what they called stream of consciousness but what it was, was an ability to really listen to the associating mind without trimming, pruning, judging or denying. One of the great puzzles to me is the great antagonism between Jung and Joyce because you would have thought they would have been comrades in arms but Joyce loathed psychoanalysis. He didn't- he thought that to use all this material to elucidate imagined pathologies was very uncreative use of it and it should all be fabricated into literature.

It's very hard to surpass. Uh, you know, Thomas Pynchon, William Gaddis, these people – everybody genuflects to Joyce but very few people plow in the way he did. I mean, Thomas Pynchon is considered a difficult hallucinatory writer and there isn't twenty pages in, in Gravity's Rainbow as obscure as a randomly chosen page here. Uh..I, I can understand the impulse to want to get the universe into a book because it hints at something that we've talked about in some of these circles or whatever they are – which is the character of life is like a work of literature. We are told that you're supposed to fit your experience into the model which science gives you - which is probabilistic, statistical, predictable and yet it's- the felt datum of experience is much more literary than that. We fall in love, we make and lose fortunes, we inherit houses in Scotland, we lose everything, we get terrible diseases, we're cured of them or we die of them – but it all has this, um, Sturm und Drang aspect to it which physics is not supposed to have but which literature always has. And, I think that- don't know if it's true but I think what Joyce believed and what I'm willing to entertain at some depth is the idea that salvation is somehow an act of encompassing comprehension. That salvation is an actual act of apprehension of understanding and that this act of apprehension involves everything.

This is why the alc- why before James Joyce and this kind of literature, the only place you got these kind of constructs was in alchemy and magic. The idea that, you know, through an act of magic, the universe could be condensed to yield a fractal microcosm of itself. Well then what Joyce is saying is that the novel, which was unknown in the alchemical era – the novel comes later – I mean, arguably but the real zest of the novel comes in the 19th century and that the novel is the alchemical retort into which these, these theories of how things work can be cast. I think the great modern exponent of this, although now dead, and certainly one who owed an enormous debt to Joyce was Vladimir Nabokov, especially in Ada. Ada is his paeon of praise to Finnegans Wake basically and the idea tact in there is the idea of causality and of ordinary casuistry.

See, that- what all these people are saying, I think, and what the psychedelic experience argues for as well, is that we are somehow prisoners of language and that somehow, you know, if we're prisoners of language then the key which will set us loose is somehow also made of language. What else could fit the lock? Somehow an act of poetic legerdemain is necessary and Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*, he didn't live to argue the case or to work it out. He died shortly after but this comes about as close as anybody ever came to actually pushing the entire contents of the universe down into about fourteen cubic inches.

Joyce and Proust had one meeting and supposedly Joyce said to Proust, 'I'm too young for you to teach me anything.' Are you all familiar with *The Remembrance of Things Past*? Well, it could hardly be a more different work of literature. I mean, it is stately and cinematic and you always know where you are and the characters are defined. It's an old style novel but there are places in it where he just takes flight and, uh, prefigures the kind of writing that Faulkner and Joyce were able to do. As far as psychedelic influences, I don't, I don't know that there are arguably any. Joyce lived in Trieste for a while and taught English. He may have been, as a habitu  of Paris, he may have been familiar with hashish. He probably had some familiarity with absinthe, but I doubt that it was a lifestyle for him.

Um..I think that the whole of the 20th century is informed by this hyper dimensional understanding and you know, Jung tapping into it the 1920s, the Dadaists in 1919 in Zurich, the surrealists, even earlier, the *ecole du Pataphysique*, Jarry. What it's about, the 20th century...McLuhan's phrase comes to mind, the *Gutenberg Galaxy*. The spectrum of effects created by print, you know, the classes the conceits, the industries, the products, the attitudes, the garments, all of the things created by print. And we are living in a terminal civilization. I don't want to say dying because civilizations aren't animals but we are living in an age of great self-summation. What we look back at is basically since the fall of Rome there has been an unbroken working-out of certain themes – Scholasticism, the Aristotelian and Platonic corpuses, Christianity, always presented as, uh, somehow a rival to science is in fact- paves the way for science. There would have been no science had their not been William of Ockham, who was a 14th century Nominalist theologian. Really Western civilization has had a thousand years to work its magic and now there is a summation underway and I don't certainly presume, uh, at least not this evening, to judge it. How do, how do you place a value on an entire civilization?

But, uh, in the same way that when a person dies their entire life passes before them in review – when a civilization dies, it, it hypnogogically cycles the detritus of centuries and centuries of struggle to understand. And, uh, someone like Joyce, I think, just brings that to an excruciating climax because it's all there. It's all there from the smile that tugs at the lips of the woman Arnolfini wedding to quantum physics to what Moliere said to his niece in the 15th letter and so forth and so on. And uh, and the, and uh the task is to hold it in your mind. I think it was William James who said, 'if we don't read the books with which we carefully line our apartments, then we're not better than our dogs and cats.' And uh, you know, too often this is lost sight of and the point of it - it's not simply that we are aesthetes, literatures and that here in the twilight of the gods we should sit around reading James Joyce – that isn't the point. The point is that this is the distillation of our experience of what it is to be human and it's out of these kinds of distilling processes that we can launch some kind of new, uh, new dispensation for the human enterprise because we have played it, we have played it out. It's now a set piece, all of it.

When I listen to Rock & Roll now, it's interesting to me but it has the completeness of, uh, polyphony. You know, it's a done deal somehow and we're looking backward and we're anticipating. The purpose of literature, I think, is to illuminate the past and to give a certain guidance as we move into the future. And

this book by being at first so opaque and so challenging to aesthetic canons and social values eventually emerges as a very prescient insight into our, uh, our, our circumstances. The ballad of Finnegans Wake has hundreds of verses. In an Irish pub it can keep people going all night, uh, all night long.

It's a celebration of complexity and the human journey and Joyce doesn't judge. I mean, you know, it says somewhere in Finnegans Wake – "here in the Moy Cane, which is the red-light district of Dublin – Here in Moy Cane we flop on the seamy side, but up n'ent, prospector, you sprout all your worth and you woof your wings, so if you want to be Phoenixed, come and be parked." That's that passage about death. It was a very optimistic transformative sort of vision. Somehow complexity is the ocean that we have to learn to surf. That's the river and that's the psychedelic side of it. Imagine that you can get 63,000 different words in here, tell a story and have all article- all the common articles and modifiers operating normally anyway and then it's very optimistic. I mean, Molly Bloom's speech, uh, is, you know, probably the single most optimistic outpouring in all of 20th century literature, not that there was much competition. Yes, yes the final affirmation, yes.

Sam Beckett, Nobel prize winner, genius in his own right, but secretary to James Joyce for many, many years and passionately in love with Joyce's tragically schizophrenic daughter. One of the, you know, you want an unhappy story, you'll find out why Sam Beckett is not exactly laughing all the time because of a very complex relationship to Joyce's schizophrenic child. Joyce's family life was not very happy. I think he had a wonderfully sensuous life with Nora but I don't know what it would be like to be the guy who wrote this book and lived with a woman who thought you would be better off as a saloon singer. Uh, not exactly a saloon singer but still....

Shall I try and find a passage?

"Let us now, weather, health, dangers, public orders and other circumstances permitting, of perfectly convenient, if you police, after you, policepolice, pardoning mein, ich beam so fresch, bey? drop this jiggerypokery and talk straight turkey meet to mate, for while the ear, be we mikealls or nicholists, may sometimes be inclined to believe others, the eye, whether browned or nolensed, find it devilish hard now and again even to believe itself. Habes aures et num videbis? Habes oculos ac mannespalpabuatus? Tip! Drawing nearer to take our slant at it (since after all it has met with misfortune while all underground), let us see all there may remain to be seen.

But I am a worker, a tombstone mason, anxious to please averyburies and jully glad when Christmas comes his once a year. You are a poorjoist, unctuous to polise nopebobbies and tunnibelly souly when 'tis thime took o'er home, gin. We cannot say aye to aye. We cannot smile noes from noes. One cannot help noticing that rather more than half of the lines run north-south in the Nemzes and Bukarahast directions while the others go west-east in search from Maliziies via Bulgarad for tiny tot though it looks when schtschupnistling alongside other incunabula it has its cardinal points for all that."

Tip. Now, this word tip which keeps occurring throughout the text, uh, i-, no one is clear what it means, but Joe Campbell's guess is it's a tree branch which is tapping against the window, and whoever is dreaming this huge hallucinatory gizmo of a dream, every once in a while the tap of the branch breaks, breaks through.

McLuhan, I don't know how many of you recall him from the 60's, but he had for a very brief period of time, about 5 or 6 years, an extraordinary influence on American culture. You couldn't pick up a magazine

or turn on the TV without hearing McLuhan, McLuhan, what he said, what he thought, what he predicted. He was consulting with Madison avenue, with politicians, with Hollywood, um, so forth and so on. Add it- his influence, he died in the early 70's and his influence died with him. Even though he had uh, founded the Center for Media Study at the University of Toronto in Canada, he really seemed to spawn no highly visible successors. Was a unique, um personality and breakthrough much in the same way that Joyce was a unique personality and uh, and spawned very few imitators. And the irony of this is that McLuhan did his journeyman work before he burst onto the world stage as this mysterious savant of media, he did his work as a Joyce scholar. That's what he was, uh a literary critic, Joyce scholar, medievalist, that sort of thing. And then in the early 50's or middle 50's he wrote a book which I never read. It's very hard to find, called the Mechanical Bride that was his first testing of his um, ideas.

Um, McLuhan is primarily understood as a communication theorist or a philosopher of media, and that's what he talked about. He turned the analytical, Western, deconstructionist method on the technologies of communication: uh, printing, film, photography, dance, theater, even such things as uh, money he thought of as forms of media, and he carried out and analyzed these forms of media and reached uh, very controversial conclusions. One of the things that was puzzling to me as I went back through and read all this is one of the things was McLuhan was synonymous with incomprehensibility in the 60's. I mean, the whole thing was "who can understand this guy!" You know, he's like buddha, he speaks these words we can't understand. Well, now, 25, 30 years later it reads pretty straightforwardly, and uh, most of what he s- predicted has come to pass. I think even McLuhan would be amazed at the speed with which the Gutenberg world has been overturned. I mean there's no hint in here of home computers, let alone interactive networks, virtual reality, uh phone sex and so forth and so on, but these wer- this was all grist for the McLuhanesque mill and had he lived he would have much to say on all this. It surprised me on reading all this stuff how demanding it is on your own um, literacy. I mean you basi- he assumes basically that the people he's talking to have read everything, and have understood it. I mean from Homer to Rabalaise, to Chaucer to mamet. He assumes you have complete knowledge of modern film and popular journalism and popular culture. All of this was grist for his mill. Um, I'll show you the books I'm reading from and talking about, and then I'll actually read you a section of McLuhan because it's a- like Joyce it's a stylistic thing that you can't really uh, encompass without getting your feet wet. Um, this was his best known book probably, and this is the original paperback edition. This book was im- immensely discussed when it came out and probably very little read judging by the quality of the discussion. Understanding Media: The Extensions of man. This is how most people heard of uh, McLuhan, and he followed it up with um, The Gutenberg Galaxy. These are all first editions. These books I don't think are in print. Few intellectuals in this century have fallen so totally through the cracks uh, as McLuhan. The Gutenberg Galaxy, very interesting. I'm going to read from some of it tonight. It's organized around chapter headings such as "Does the interiorization of media such as letters alter the ratio among our senses and change mental processes?" Or um "Popes Duncead indicates the printed book as the agent of a primitivistic and romantic revival. Sheer visual quantity evokes the magical resonance of the tribal horde. The box office looms as a return to the echo chamber of bardic incantation. That's a chapter heading. [audience laughter]. Um, Topographic -- The voice of silence, and one of my favorites: -- along the electronic wave as triu

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There's a lot of sun in McLuhan and this comes out of him being a Joyce scholar. You just can't mess with that withoug--. This is his third book "With Harley Parker Through The Vanishing Point.. And I guess I should say a few years ago somebody asked me to review McLuhan's letters which had been published,

which I did. It was uh, Gnosis or somebody. Anyway it brought back to me uh, he was a convert to Catholicism and an extraordinarily complex intellectual uh, with uh a medievalist who became a Joyce scholar who became a communications expert, and in McLuhan there's a very deep strain of nostalgia for the essence of the medieval world of what he called manuscript culture, and essentially his entire output is a critique of print and of the impact of print on uh, culture, a- w- and I think though he attempted to be fairly even-handed, his final resolution of all this was that it had, it had had many many det- detrimental and distorting effects uh, on the Western mind. This is another little book he published back in the heyday, and he experimented with topographic layout uh, some work hearkening back to the surrealists whom he discusses a great deal. Uh, and there was something about- it was his fascination with topographical layout that also brought him in so much congruence with the Wake. So let me read you a section from The Gutenberg Galaxy that is both interesting to think about or if you can't understand it, then an interesting example of uh what McLuhan's style was like and what I mean by that he was an extraordinarily demanding intellectual he doesn't cut you much slack. This is a short section called "Only a Fraction of the History of Literacy has Been Typographic."

"Til now we have been concerned mostly with the written word as it transfers or translates the aural-tactile space of sacral non-literate man into the visual space of civilized or literate or profane man. Once this transfer, or metamorphosis occurs we are soon in the world of books, scribal or typographic. The rest of our concern will be with books, written and printed, and the results for learning and society. From the 5th century BC to the 15 century AD the book was a scribal product. Only one third of the history of the book in the Western world has been typographic. It is not incongruous, therefore, to say as G.S. Brett does in 'Psychology, Ancient and Modern.' And Here's the quote: The idea that knowledge is essentially book learning seems to be a very modern view probably derived from the medieval distinctions between clerk and layman with additional emphasis provided by the literary character of the rather fantastic humanism of the 16th century. The rather unnatural idea of knowledge is that of cunning or the possession of wit. Odysseus is the original type of thinker, a man of many ideas who could overcome the Cyclops and achieve a significant triumph of mind over matter. Knowledge is less a capacity for overcoming the difficulty of- difficulties of life and achieving success in this world." So that closes the quote.

Then McLuhan comments: "Brett here specifies the natural dichotomy which the book brings into any society. IN addition to the split within the individual of that society, the work of James Joyce exhibits a complex clairvoyance in these matters. His Leopold Bloom of Ulysses, a man of many ideas and many devices, is a freelance salesman. Joyce saw the parallels on one hand between the modern frontier of the verbal and the pictorial and on the other between the homeric world poised between the old sacral culture and the new profane or literate sensibility. Bloom, the newly de-tribalized Jew, is presented in modern Dublin, a slightly de-tribalized Irish world. Such a frontier is the modern world of the advertisement. Congenial, therefore, to the tran- to the transitional culture of Bloom. In the 17th, or Ithaca episode of Ulysses we read, "what were habitually his final meditations of some one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop and wonder a poster novelty with all extraneous accretions excluded, reduced to its simplest and most efficient terms not exceeding the span of casual vision and congruous with the velocity of modern life. In [The Books at the Wake](#), James S. Atherton points out, and here's Atherton's quote: "Amongst other things, Finnegans Wake is a history of writing. We begin with writing on a bone, a pebble, a ram's skin, leave them to cook in the mothering pot, and guten morg with his cro magnon charter, tinting fats and grate prime must once for omnibus step rubric-red out of the word press. The mothering pot is an allusion to alchemy- that there is some other significance connected with writing, for the next time the word appears it is again in a context concerning improvement in a system of- in systems of

communication. The passage is "all the airish cygnics of her dippendump helpabit from an father hogum told them mutter maskins. Dippendump helpabit combined the deaf and dumb alphabet signs in the air or 'airish signs' with the ups and downs of the ordinary ABC and the more pronounced up and downs of Irish oggam writing. The mason, following this must be the man of that name who invented steel pen nibs, but all I can suggest for mother is the mothering of freemasons which does not fit the context, although they of course also make signs in the air. Is that perfectly clear? [audience chuckles]

Now back to [McLuhan](#). "Guten Morg with his cromagnon charter" expounds by mythic gloss the fact that that writing meant the emergence of the caveman or sacral man from the audible world of simultaneous resonance into the profane world of daylight. The reference to the masons is to the world of the bricklayer as a type of speech itself. On the second page of the Wake Joyce is making a mosaic, an Achilles shield, as it were, of all the themes and modes of human speech and communication. "Bygmester Finnegan, of the Stuttering Hand, freemen's murer, lived in the broadest way immarginable in his rush-lit toofarback for messuages before joshuan judges had given us numbers ..." Joyce is, in the Wake, making his own Altamira cave drawings of the entire history of the human mind, in terms of its basic gestures and postures during all phases of all human culture and technology. As his title indicates, he saw that the wake of human progress can disappear again into the night of sacral or auditory man. The Finn cycle of tribal institutions can return in the electric age, but if again, then let's make it a wake, or awake, or both. Joyce could see no advantage in our remaining locked up in each cultural cycle as in a trance or dream. He discovered the means of living simultaneously in all cultural modes while quite conscious. This means he cites for such self-awareness and correction of cultural bias in his "collideroscope." This term indicates the interplay in colloidal mixture of all components of human technology as they extend our senses and shift their ratios in the social kaleidoscope of cultural clash: "deor," savage, the oral or sacral, "scope", the visual or profane and civilized.

So that's his comment. Only a fraction of the history of literacy has been typographic. These people, Joyce, um to some degree Pound, uh, McLuhan, they were the prophets of the world in which we now stand, the world of uh, integrated, interactive media, extraordinary data retrieval that erases the 17th century notion of the unconscious. Nothing is now unconscious if your data search commands are powerful enough. And uh, the, the remaking of the human image that required centuries for print, the transition that we talked about in here from scribal culture to true book culture occupied five hundred years. The transition from book culture to electronic culture has occurred in less than fifty years. I mean it- it's eerie to read his examples of contemporaneity because they're stuff like Marilyn Monroe, Perry Como, James Dean. I mean, he's writing from another era and yet from his point of view he's firmly embedded in a kind of super future that we are uh, now able to look back on.

Here's another section that I think makes some of this more clear. The name of this section is "The medieval book trade was a secondhand trade, even as with the dealing today in old masters." Then, from the twelfth century onwards the rise of the universities brought masters and students into the field of book production in class time, and these books found their way back to the monastic libraries when students returned after completing their studies: "A number of these standard textbooks, which- of which approved exemplars were kept for copying by the stationarii of the universities, naturally found their way into print quite early, for many of them continued in undiminished request in the fifteenth century as before. These official university texts offer no problems of origin or nomenclature." And then he's quoting Goldschmidt. He adds, "Soon after 1300 the expensive vellum could be dispensed with and the cheaper paper made the accumulation of many books a matter of industry rather than of wealth." Since, however the student went

to lectures pen in hand and "it was the lecturer's task to dictate the book he was expounding to his audience," there is a great body of these reportata which constitute a very complex problem for editors. "

So really, like for Joyce, for McLuhan the book is the central symbol of the age, the central mystery of our time. In a sense I sort of share that notion. It's a very Talmudic notion. It's a very psychedelic notion. It's the idea that somehow the career of the word is the central uh, overarching metaphor of the age. And naturally if the book is the central metaphor for reality then reality itself is seen as somehow literary, somehow textual, and this in fact is how I think reality was seen until the rise of modern science. That we're always taught you know that the roots of modern science go back to Democratean atomism um which is of course true, but the number of people who knew that a thousand years ago was probably very few. Uh, the, the real notion out of which science had to divest itself is the notion uh, of a book or if that seems too concrete, a story, a narrative. The story of mans fall and redemption. That was what the Christian Exegesis of uh, post edenec time was all about. With the rise of modern science the idea of narrative hs become somewhat overthrown. McLuhan would say that narrative persisted far beyond its utility because the um, biases of print kept it in place for such a long time. Everyone assumes that tools are tools and you use them and that's that. For McLuhan the entirety of the toolkit of wa- of modern western man can be traced to the unconscious assumptions of print. For example, the idea of the individual which is a pretty personal notion right there in close to the heart. The idea of the individual is a post-medieval concept legitimized by print. The idea of the public, this concept did not exist before uh, newspapers because before newspapers there was no public. There were only people, and uh rulers very rarely bothered to pass on their thinking to anybody other than their closest associates, and then only for utilitarian reasons. The notion of an observing citizenry, somehow sharing the governance of society, this again is a print-created idea. Uh, the idea of interchangeable parts which- without which our world would hardly function, there would not be automobiles, buildings, aircraft, interchangeable parts. That's an idea that comes from the interchangeability of letters in a printer's block. Uh, f- all- that was the first industry to ever utilize the concept of uh, easily reformulated subunits. And it's strange, you know, the Chinese get credit for inventing printing thousands and thousands of years before Europe, but they would carve a single block of wood and print it. They didn't get the notion of moveable type. And moveable type, the distribution of books becomes the paradigmatic model for the distribution of any product, you know? Uh, you- it's produced, it's edited, it's uh, manufactured, it's sold and then sequels are spawned. All products have followed this model, but books were one of the earliest mass-manufactured objects to be put through this cycle. Modern city planning, the linearity of it, the way in which land surveys are carried out- these are all unconscious biases imbibed from the world of print, and they make sense if you're a print-head. But one of the peculiar things, uh, notice that animals do not possess language. Uh, many human societies do not possess writing and very few human societies, only two on earth, invented printing and yet once invented it feeds back into the evolution of social structures and defines everything. And yet it's an extraordinary uh, artificiality and we have been imprisoned in it for hundred and hundreds of years now. Now it is breaking down and uh, we are changing to a different sensory ratio and you might suppose if you hadn't give this a lot of thought that the new electronic media, television and so forth would carry us into an entirely different sensory ratio. McLuhan felt differently. He felt that it was restoring us to a medieval sensory ratio. He felt that television screen is much more like an illuminated manuscript than a page of print. The distinction may seem subtle at first but if, if you're looking at an illuminated medieval manuscript, notice I said looking, you must look in order to understand. Reading is not looking. Reading is an entirely different kind of behavior. As a child you learn what an 'e' looks like, what a printed lower case 'e' looks like. After seeing twenty, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand you know what it looks like. You have an expectation of the gestalt of the lower case 'e'. And nobody opens a book and looks at print unless

there's some extraordinary abstract discussion going on. We read print but we look at manuscript because manuscript carries the intrinsic signification of the individual who made it and his or her inter-idiosyncracies need to be parsed through to get the meaning. Similarly with television, television, uh, is a very low resolution media. I mean these are little pieces of light, pixels flying back and forth, and they must uh, be looked at. They cannot be read, uh, and it's an extraordinarily engaging process. It's- that's why it's uh, creates an entirely different set of social biases than print does. And McLuhan called these biases, and was the one distinction or the one idea of his that made its way into popular culture. He distinguished between what he called hot and cold media. And usually people botch this every time because nobody really to this day understands exactly um, what he meant. So let me read you a little bit about this distinction. This is in chapter two of understanding media, and chapter two is called "Media, hot and cold."

"The rise of the waltz," explained Curt Sachs in the World History of the Dance, "was a result of that longing for truth, simplicity, closeness to nature, and primitivism, which the last two-thirds of the eighteenth century fulfilled." In the century of jazz we are likely to overlook the emergence of the waltz as a hot and explosive human expression that broke through the formal feudal barriers of courtly and choral dance styles." But obviously it was. I mean, when you contrast it with what came before.

"There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in "high definition." High definition is the state of being well filled with data." I love that. "

A photograph is, visually, "high definition." A cartoon is "low definition," simply because very little visual information is provided. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience. Naturally, therefore, a hot medium like radio has very different effects on the user from a cool medium like the telephone. A cool medium like hieroglyphic or ideogrammic written characters has very different effects from the hot and explosive medium of the phonetic alphabet. The alphabet, when pushed to a high degree of abstract visual intensity, became typography. The printed word with its specialist intensity burst the bonds of medieval corporate guilds and monasteries, creating extreme individualist patterns of enterprise and monopoly. But the typical reversal occurred when extremes of monopoly brought back the corporation, with its impersonal empire over many lives. The hotting-up of the medium of writing to repeatable print intensity led to nationalism and the religious wars of the sixteenth century. The heavy and unwieldy media, such as stone, are time binders. Used for writing, they are very cool indeed, and serve to unify the age; whereas paper is a hot medium that serves to unify spaces horizontally, both in political and entertainment empires." And he just goes on like this endless, and this was his metier, or his media to connect and comment, um, on this stuff, and television, really with his, both his own media for reaching a very large audience. In fact, I remember the excitement that swept through. I didn't even have a television at the time. I was living in Berkeley at the time and somebody said "we have to go up to the student union at 6 o'clock because Mike Wallace is interviewing Marshall McLuhan, and it seemed like an incredibly freaky notion that McLuhan would be on TV. It, it shows you what a stultified, categorically different world we were living in uh, at the time. Here's just a little bit of uh, of McLuhan on television. This is chapter 31 of Understanding Media, The Timid Giant.

Perhaps the most familiar and pathetic effect of the TV image is the posture of children in the early grades. Since TV, children- regardless of eye condition - average about six and a half inches from the

printed page. Our children are striving to carry over to the printed page the all-involving sensory mandate of the TV image. With perfect psychomimetic skill they carry out the commands of the TV image. They pore, they probe, they slow down and involve themselves in depth. This what they had learned to do in the cool iconography of the comic-book medium. TV carried the process much further. Suddenly they are transferred to the hot print medium with its uniform patterns and fast lineal movement. Pointlessly they strive to read print in depth. They bring to print all their senses, and print rejects them. Print asks for the isolated and stripped-down visual faculty, not for the unified sensorium." You see?

So, often very unexpected paradoxical insights emerge from this stuff, and in this book that he did with Harley Parker, "Through The Vanishing Point, Space and Poetry and Painting", uh, it's an interesting technique. They take a number of works of art, either um, literature such as the song from Love's Labor Lost by William Shakespeare, or the Ballade De Bon Consil of Geoffrey Chaucer, or the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and then comment on it and also visual arts, because McLuhan really felt that the art historical and technological and architectural output of Western civilization could be essentially psychoanalyzed, could be seen as the tracings of the mass consciousness, and the, uh- he felt that the evolutionary sensory ratios within historical time had been very very rapid, that uh, for example, he talks about how St. Augustine was a person of great piety and learning, and um, people doubting this would show him an open page of scripture or theological desputation, and he would look at it for a few moments, minutes, and then they would close the book and he could tell them what was written there, and this was taken as proof of his piety. He was, as far as we can tell, the only man in Europe who could read silently at that time. This was a period when the, the audial uh, pre- uh, scribal culture was still being assimilated.

Uh, McLuhan spends a lot of time analyzing this episode in the 14th century when the laws of perspective spring suddenly into being, uh, as- somewhat in the way, very similar in the way that fractal mathematics have introduced us to a new superspace. For the Renaissance, spatial perspective was essentially a filing system for visual data. at last they knew where to put everything, and where to look for it once they had put it there, which if you a pre-perspectivist arrangement of space you have look, not read, look at each painting in order to locate where the information is. This is again this read-look dichotomy. McLuhan never discussed psychedelics, uh, but psychedelics I think clearly are an extension of these kinds of media that we have to engage with.

That you have to look at, that you cannot read, you cannot take for granted. And these give back a much more complex world. I mean, notice that the world created by print is a world of gestalt. Buildings, highways, bridges. We know how these things are supposed to look. We don't experience astonishment each time we enter a home or an Institutional edifice. There is a built-in set of syntactical expectations in linear space, and when those are violated this is very noticeable and becomes the basis for architectural or design innovation, or something like that.

I think that what's happening, and I think that this would be McLuhan's take is that all of these new media that attempt to suppress the appurtenances of media are in fact having the effect of returning us to an archaic sensory ratio, and McLuhan was on to this. He is the one who coined the phrase electronic feudalism. And he felt that, that we were headed back toward a medieval sensory ratio because he saw television as like manuscript, but I think had he lived into the era of VR, psilocybin, HDTV and implants, he would've seen we're not reaching back to the Medieval. That was simply a stepping stone to the archaic, and that we are going beyond the entire domain of scribal humanity and actually reaching back to a shamanic, uh, feeling-toned kind of thing, and all of the breakdown of linearity that you see in the 20th

century: abstract expressionism, dada, jazz, rock 'n roll, nonfigurative painting, LSD, all of these things on one level can be seen as uh, as I've said, as harking back to the archaic, but on another level what they can be seen as are uh, new behaviors emerging as the cloud of print-constellated constipation is, is lifted, its breaking down. An interesting question that we would put to McLuhan if we had him here tonight I think is to what degree can what he said about Television not be applied to HD TV. It seems to me that HD TV is television without the biases of TV, and you know, a perfect medium is an invisible- a perfect media is an invisible media, and print is the least invisible of all media, I mean, print is an incredible, uh Rube, Rube Goldberg invention for conveying information.

Here's McLuhan on this same subject rather than me dwelling on it. This is from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. This is a section called *A Theory Of Cultural Change is Impossible Without Knowledge of the Changing Sense Ratios Effected by Various Externalizations of Our Senses*, in other words, by media. "It is very much worth dwelling on this matter since we can see that from the invention of the alphabet there has been a continuous drive in the Western World toward the separation of the senses, of functions, of operations, of states emotional and political, as well as of tasks, a fragmentation which terminated, thought Durkheim, in the anomie of the 19th century. The paradox presented by professor Von Bexie is that the two-dimensional mosaic is in fact a multidimensional world of interstructural resonance, it is the 3 dimensional world of pictorial space that is indeed an abstract illusion built on the intense separation of the visual from the other senses. There is here no question of values or preferences. It is necessary however for any other kind of understanding to know why primitive drawing is two-dimensional whereas the drawing and painting of literate human beings tends toward perspective. Without this knowledge we cannot grasp why people ever cease to be primitive or audial tactile in their sense bias. Nor could we ever understand why men have "sense saison" [??] abandoned the visual in favor of the audio-tactile modes of awareness and of organization of experience. This matter clarified, we can much more easily approach the role of alphabet and of printing in giving a dominant role to the visual sense in language and art, and in the entire range of social and political life. For until we have upgraded the visual component communities know only a tribal structure. The detribalizing of the individual has in the past at least, depended on an intense visual life fostered by literacy, and by literacy of the alphabetic kind alone. For alphabetic writing is not unique, but late. There had been much writing before it. In fact, any people that ceases to be nomadic and pursues sedentary modes of work is ready to invent writing. No merely nomadic people ever had writing any more than they ever developed architecture or enclosed space. For writing is a visual enclosure of non-visual spaces and senses. It is therefore an abstraction of the visual from the ordinary sense interplay, and whereas speech is an outering utterance of all our senses at once, writing abstracts from speech.

That's very interesting isn't it, that this association of nomadism to the inability to create architectonic space and therefore no writing. That a word is a structure, a written word is a structure and therefore no nomad would ever do such a thing. Interesting.

I think he's saying reading is not seeing, and those who read do not see, even when they lift their eyes from their books, they, they, they carry the attitude of print into the world. They read, they attempt to read nature, and you can't read nature. You must look at nature. You must see nature. Certainly, I think in my own life, I was thinking about this a few months ago and it surprised me. I'm trying to think of the books that really influenced my life and I thought of, you know, *Moby Dick* and Huxley's *Doors of Perception*, but then when I really got down on it I realized that a little tiny book Huxley wrote that my mother pushed on me when I was about 12 years old called *The Art of Seeing* probably shaped me as much as anything. And in there it's a very n- McLuhanesque rap without McLuhanesque terminology. And he says the way to

overcome, and I think this is very very very intelligent and simple advice. Huxley says the way to overcome the print bias, and God knows he was a Cambridge-educated gentleman steeped in the traditions of English literacy and intellectualism, is uh, freehand drawing. Draw. Train your eye. Draw nudes, draw seashells, draw insects and pla- go into nature and train the eye to see and you will cease to read the world. And readers are emotionally-person- a seeing person does not want to form a relationship with the reading person. The- you know, this conflict that we get between men and women and between people about which we call the head-heart conflict is really a reading-seeing conflict. It isn't a head and heart, it's that, it's that readers and seers cannot relate to each others' emotional life because they seem to come from uh, such different worlds. So yeah, I think of uh, a very good point and the, the permission to abstract from nature that print created is why we have such a terrible culture crisis, you know? Because uh, uh, well f- just a kind of a trivial example. You know, it was said, by Marshall McLuhan, strangely enough, that the Vietnam War could not be won the way an ordinary war is won because the citizenry of this country couldn't tolerate the sight of what war was, and that modern warfare became impossible when it could be televised into the living room because war is something that you must read about. You must not see it. It must be this grand thing of the distant clash of armies and young heroes being created, but when it turns into amputation and maggots and screams of pain, the political fun goes out of it. So war is therefore a literary activity and, you know, the one argument that can be made, I think in television's favor, is people don't like to see images of violence. If we have to show so much violence on television, let it always be real. The violence is only indefensible when it's vicarious. If it's real violence you need to see it, because it's happening in a world for which you bear a partial moral responsibility, and I, I think warfare has been remade by media in that sense. A lot of politics has been remade because imperial doings are usually ugly, brutal, and not something that you want to exhibit before the populace. And yet uh, modern media makes that very difficult to avoid.

You know, you get the notion of public morality or, you know, the people won't stand for this! We have to get this story out! The people won't stand for this. Well now, this is a moral dimension inconceivable in medieval or Roman times. What would it mean to say the people won't stand for this? So there's an attempt to create through the collectivity a kind of community of moral uh, of moral judgment. The medium is the message means that the medium is the thing which is making the difference. In all- every discussion you ever hear since the 60's about TV, for example, is it good, is it bad, terrible, wonderful. They always- the discussion hinges around what's on TV. People say "well, television is terrible. It just shows violence." And then somebody else says, "No, television is wonderful. There's nature shows and movies from far away and masterpiece theater. This is a stupid argument. What McLuhan meant by the messa- the media is the message, is he meant that it doesn't matter what you put on TV. TV is TV. It has an intrinsic nature. And whether you're showing National Geographic specials or slasher movies, TV will do what it does. It has certain qualities just like driving a car or skiing, certain muscles are going to be exercised, certain, uh, perceptual systems enhanced, others suppressed. And uh, it's r- it's very hard for us to understand this because, because we have accepted this media so thoroughly into our life, but in fact it is shaping our value systems. Uh, in ways that are very hard for us to suspect or even uh, even detect. I mean, television, for example, uh, it's a drug. It has a series of measurable physiological parameters that are as uh, intrinsically its signature as the paramaters of heroin are its signature. I mean, you sit somebody down in front of a TV set and turn it on, 20 minutes later come back, sample their blood pressure, their eye movement rate, blood is pooling in their rear end, their breathing takes on a certain quality. The stare reflex sets in. I mean, they are thoroughly zoned on a drug, and when you think about the fact that the average American watches six and a half hours of television a day, imagine if a drug had been introduced in 1948 that we all spent 6 and a half hours per day on average watching, and the one thing about drugs in their defense is that it's very

hard to diddle the message. A drug is a mirror, but television isn't a mirror. Television is a billboard, and anybody who pays uh, their money can put their message into the trip. This is an extraordinarily uh, insidious situation. What McLuhan wanted to become, I think, was the founder of a general new sophistication about media, and he was essentially parodied to death by guess what, media. They made of him an icon of cultural incomprehensibility. Not since Einstein has somebody, have you been so preprogrammed in advance to believe "you ain't gonna understand this guy." And that's what they said about McLuhan and consequently his message and his insight failed. We will have to reinvent McLuhan around the turn of the century because we are producing forms of media of such interactive uh, power and potential social impact that we're going to have to go back and uh, and rethink all of this.

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic [COMPLETE]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Surfing the Fractal Wave at the End of History

23 April 1997

The Lighthouse, New York City, New York

Event Description: Sponsored by the [New York Open Center](#). Presented at [The Lighthouse](#).

Description

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It's a pleasure to be in Manhattan. This is my spring money run to the mainland. I've been in Boston (where I noticed that their liberalism is actually rooted in Christian rectitude, not secular liberalism as I'd always thought) and I'm on to Atlanta. So this is just a brief visit with my favorite town. It's lovely to be here on an early spring evening. The city hasn't begun to stink yet — I really like that time of year!

This is called “Flaking on the Edge of Fractal Uncertainty”, or something like that. Anyway, it's just an excuse to catch up with you. I sort of feel like this is the home congregation — or at least the office of the Holy Roman Rota — the congregation of the faith. This is probably the audience where I feel most at home and have the least slack! I've been traveling madly since I was here last May. Mostly it seemed like a tour of the English-speaking world. I went to South Africa, to Australia, to England, back and forth to Hawaii many times. I think traveling really reinforces the impression that we are in the grip of the “transcendental attractor and the end of time.” You know, it's one thing to stay home and follow it on the Internet, but the sense of the planet just exploding... These Australian and South African cities and populations trying to deal with political redefinition, technological onslaught, media onslaught — it's amazing, amazing, very much like Neal Stephenson's vision in *Snow Crash*.

I turned 50 since I've been here last year. It feels weasel-wise, although those of you who are ahead of me in time may find it nve.

What I'd like to talk about — I guess it's sort of a riff, a soliloquy, a monologue on the adumbrations of Heaven's Gate, since that has a deep, humorous resonance with most people's value systems these days. Actually my son, who was with me in Mexico in January, who's 19, pushed me to think about these issues before all that, because he's dealing with the culture in a very different way than I am. I listen to his laments and complaints with great interest. So the thing that I thought would be interesting to unpack a little this evening is what I call “the balkanization of epistemology” — or what he calls simply the “curse of relativism.” This is the idea that you can't tell what's going on anyway, so no matter how squirrely what

you think, it's no squirrellier or no less squirrelly than what anybody else thinks. All ideas are somehow on this even footing, including ideas that have taken hundreds of years and the talent of thousands of people to put together, and something somebody just channeled in from Francis Bacon, who's living under Catalina Island in a state of suspended animation with a troupe of Atlantean engineers who are uploading human fetal tissue to who-knows-where.

This balkanization of epistemology: it's sort of like, if you believed in economic theory, thinking that it would be a good idea if everybody printed their own money. And then to the degree that you had vigor for the use of your printing press, you could run off more and more copies of whatever meme you had invested in, and I suppose these things would compete. In your imagination they would compete — but anybody who's studied economics for ten minutes can tell you there's something called Gresham's Law, which is that "bad money drives out good money." And I think it's even more true with ideology. Squirrelly ideas drive out ideas of depth and substance. There's a kind of danger of being gently — without quite noticing what's going on — ushered into a world of increasingly more cartoon like ontological and epistemological fantasies about what's going on, or what's partially going on.

To my mind, conspiracy theory is a kind of flight from facing the fact that probably nobody is in charge. You want a vertiginous vision that'll stand your hair on end? How about that? It's not the Catholic Church, not the World Bank, not the Jews, not the Communist Party — nobody is in charge! I was in London in October, in the conference that these shaved, pierced and scarified deconstructive "contemporary artists" were having near Buckingham Palace. They put me in a hotel in Vincent Square, so I had to walk back through Whitehall late at night, which is where the Ministry of Defense and all the back-channel, super-secret British ministries are. And the lights are burning late in those buildings. I assume it's because nobody has a grip, nobody has a clue. They have to pay guys with pony tails and earrings to turn on the machines every day, and then it sort of goes from there...

The balkanization of epistemology — it's not a popular topic, because the simplest and most fun way to discuss it is to launch attack by example. Alice Roosevelt Longworth used to say at these White House dinners, "If you have nothing good to say about anyone, sit by me." I've had the good fortune (or the 'fortune') to be on this circuit long enough to have collected horrifying stories about almost anyone you may ever have considered respecting, and given certain conditions I can trot this stuff out. It was a joke — I used to have this thing I called the "kiting checks and stealing cars" test, which was: examine a given guru or expert. Ask the question, how much time has he done for kiting checks and stealing cars? It turns out a lot of people can't pass this test! (My own past digressions were considerably more noble and ideologically motivated, but let's not linger there.) So I was reading TIME Magazine on United coming down, and it turns out, yes, Marshall Applewhite — there was a mug shot, and I thought, "Oh, so what'd he do?" And then I saw: "Oh, car theft, of course!"

The reason I got onto this whole issue of witnessing and media and authenticity of experience, and so forth and so on, was because I was getting a lot of people asking me for my take on alien abductions. Apparently, some significant portion of our fellow citizens are under the impression that pro bono proctologists from a nearby star system are making unscheduled housecalls at night. Well, you and I know

how difficult it is to get a medical professional to pay any attention at all to you! So I think the likelihood of that occurring, based on that alone, needs to be carefully examined. Now I think I know what to make of this thing. I think we need to become much more subtle, first of all in our own thinking — in other words, there are rules for sorting out the “feces versus shoe polish” dilemmas that come along through life. I was recalling to one of my audiences Occam’s Razor. (And of course nobody had heard of Occam; that wasn’t a good sign, and I won’t put you to the test. Just nod “yes” when asked. “William of Occam?” “Yes.”) He had a razor. He said that hypotheses should not be multiplied without necessity. Seems reasonable. I’ll condense it, or modernify it, for you: it basically means, “Keep it simple, stupid!” In other words, the simplest explanation is to be preferred until it breaks down, and then the next simplest explanation is to be preferred.

I didn’t realize that this kind of thing was such a leap into deep thinking until one night I was on the Internet and this site was announcing that an object twice the size of Earth was accompanying Hale-Bopp, the comet, into the inner solar system. And they’d just put up the ponied-up photograph that was supposed to support this idea. So I thought, “Wow, great, what are the world’s great astronomers and observatories saying?” The web designer obviously anticipated my thought. I looked down and it said, “HEAR WHAT THE EXPERTS ARE SAYING” So I clicked on this button, thinking, “What’ll it be, the Hubble Telescope update? The Arecibo facility in Puerto Rico? The Atacama desert facility in Chile? The Keck in Hawaii?” No, it was something called The Farsight Institute, which brought the news that its remote viewers were in agreement that the object sighted was under Gray control and had an Atlantean architectonic and was on a peaceful mission, having already discharged its cargo of umbilical and fetal tissue traded from the U.S. Military for advanced technology.

We can laugh about these things — we do laugh, we should laugh. It’s just too bad that some people off themselves in the process of struggling to try and figure out what’s going on. After the Heaven’s Gate thing, they were interviewing people on NPR, and people were saying, “Oh, I just can’t understand how these people could have worked themselves into believing such a bizarre group of ideas!” So then they buttoned that up and they said, “Well, now what’s happening with the White House Easter Egg Hunt?” Yes. It turns out, you know, a lot of people are carrying a lot of peculiar intellectual baggage. I mean, I don’t have any problem with people having religious ideas, but I think they should be clearly labeled as “IRRATIONAL”, and those people should voluntarily recuse themselves from debates about the nature of reality. The spectrum of philosophical differentiation between the Resurrection, the Easter Bunny, and Heaven’s Gate is only a matter of taste and aesthetics. Hey, it’s a hard truth, but something to consider.

So thinking about things like this, I’ve sort of come up with a rap, which I’m going to try out on you, which is the slim and meager fruits of my agonizingly slow maturation process. And I think there were hints of this last year, but these things come slowly. There’s this phenomenon in nature — nature is always a good thing to go back to when trying to tease apart what’s happening to us culturally and individually — there’s this phenomenon in nature called neoteny. (Perhaps I mispronounce it in my broad and charming Western drawl, but nobody knows this word anyway; you can get away with murder!) Neoteny. What it means is “the retention of juvenile characteristics into adulthood.” By a species — this is a strategy, it happens in nature, and it happens in evolution. For example (an evolutionary example), we human beings, of all the primates, are the most hairless. We have hair, and it’s all over our bodies, but it’s very fine and allows you

to see through to the skin. This is an infantile characteristic of most primates, but we retain it into adulthood. Another similar example: our head-to-torso ratio is a fetal ratio when compared to most primates. In other words, the fetus of other primates looks more like a human being than the adult form.

Neoteny. There are much more spectacular examples of this which involve what appears to be an ability to express sexuality in actually two morphogenetic forms. There are creatures which live in swamps where, as long as the swamp ecosystems are at equilibrium, they basically appear to be like polliwogs — in other words, gilled creatures, fishlike creatures. And they actually can have sex with similar creatures of the opposite sex, and give birth to polliwog-like creatures, and this all appears to be species reproduction as we know it. The amazing thing is, if the swamp is disrupted and goes dry, these things dig into the dirt, and six months later they come out as gilled animals with flippers, able to breath oxygen and move around on the land. And they then can have sex with creatures of the opposite sex and produce a second form. The interpretation of this is that the first form is the neonatal but sexually mature form, that is pinned in place by environmental factors, and then the second form is actually the true mature form, which is only called forth under special conditions.

The reason I mention this is that I'm thinking more and more about this issue of media manipulation, the Internet, the evolution of culture, who shall control it, and what are its effects. My doctor — recently I had a physical — and he said, "You knew, in the Nineteenth Century, most people your age were dead." And, yes, this is sobering to realize. Early death, something which has been with us until virtually the last half of the Twentieth Century, was a factor acting to reinforce a kind of cultural neoteny, within the cultural environment. Jung, I think, was on to this in some way, because he felt that the great adventure of individuation began in middle age.

Well, riffing off that, I think the idea that I'm coming to is that culture, in all of its offerings and splendor and artificia, and especially in the form of ideologies, is not the friend of the life-prolonged, postmodern individual. Culture is not your friend. This is the vaguely-smelling-of-political-incorrecness message that continued drug use and philosophical abuse has brought to me. Generally the way the intellectual life is presented is that there are good ideologies and bad ideologies, and by a mixture of intuition, logic, education, master of the tools of the culture, we make choices between good and bad ideologies. But you can't help but notice, at a certain point of alienation, maturation, psychedelic boundary dissolution — it doesn't matter what the vocabulary is you use — you can't help but notice that culture is some kind of con game. It's a scam. It's a manipulation. It's for the nave. They can only work this limited set of tricks upon you three times, four times, six times, before you get it. You figure it out, you know? How many art openings, how many Next Great Novels by the geniuses among us, how many filimic triumphs, Nobel Prizes, Booker fiction awards, and on and on and on, can we tolerate in the illusion that we are moving into the truly new and exciting? It works for awhile, is the idea.

So then, what does it mean to get beyond cultural values? How does that look? I can only speak for myself, obviously. (If you find this hideously unsettling and worrisome, just stifle it. After all, it's just one guy, right? One unlettered nut and his coterie of cultists. So you don't really make the world a safer place by stamping out this voice.) It seemed to me in my peregrination through American culture that there were

traps. It's sort of like the Mahayana bardoes of the dead: there were allurements to be avoided, and obvious pitholes that no one in their right mind would drive into. The first one of these, I remember, was even before I contacted the larger initiatory machinery of society. It was under my father's tutelage that I learned to kill: elk hunting was a right of passage where I grew up, and I dreaded this from the moment I was able to cognize what it was going to be. And in time it ground toward me, manifested itself, and in some kind of miraculous epiphany an animal actually sacrificed itself to my trembling hand, and I moved on. Essentially my father never asked anything of me again in that context. But the future was waiting with sharpened knives, "red in tooth and claw." Not Nature red in tooth and claw — that's a misnomer — but society. So the first thing to steer around was the military involvement; I passed that intelligence test with flying colors. (It didn't hurt to be chickenshit and have bad vision, either — sort of the wind beneath my wings at that point.)

The next pitfall was corporatism, which never had a hold on me because I managed to choose the wrong schools in the first place. It was wonderful, in Boston last week, to actually go to Harvard for the first time. I totally liberated myself from ever wanting to have anything to do with that whole scene — not because it was so terrible, but because it was so ordinary, of course. This is part of my revelation about undoing the hype that evolves around the uninvestigated portions of reality. You're impressed by Harvard? You're impressed by crop circles? You're impressed by the Black Virgin of Czestochowa? Go there. Go there, have a drink in the pub across the street, buy the T-shirt, listen to what the locals are saying, and it'll all snap into focus very nicely.

But continuing — can you tell? — the thought. Beyond military involvement, corporate involvement, right universities, wrong universities, the one I think where middle-class values rear their heads most fiercely is the issue of marriage. I speak as somebody who has been ground finely on the anvil of this particular issue. It's almost as though, we're sort of like cuckoos — in fact we are cuckoos, but we're also like cuckoos — in that we're kicked out of the nest too early. So just as you're about to cross that big golden bridge into adulthood, it says, "Last exit in the neonatal realm. Find somebody as clueless as yourself, get back to back, and start a marriage." The process of being raised is essentially then self-generated. We then continue the process of cultururation, acculturation, the acquisition of cultural values, and stuff, now bound in this romantic myth. One of the things I really had to come to terms with was how much of my relationships in the past had been dominated by sentimentalism, and what a craven thing that is, and how brutally it uses us. Because it basically cashes in on that you're a nice person, and it screws you. Sentimentalism!

So then things happen. If you're smart, you succeed at whatever you chose — advertising, film making, fashion, modeling, playwriting. There's this insidious process which goes on in the culture, which is, just as you get your kids sent off to the Sorbonne, get your marriage dissolved, and your shrink patting you on the back and all of this, then money comes. You become successful, you get rich behind all this prostitution and self-mutilation that you did the previous twenty years. Just at a moment when, if they didn't recognize you, you would turn on them in fury and construct a real identity, they in fact come around. And you are inculcated, and lifted further, and anesthetized, and now you become a mentor to people making their way through the same blood-stained labyrinth, the footprints through which you seem to recognize somehow.

The idea here is that, obviously we're coming to some kind of cultural crunch. The print-created categories of the post-Renaissance are breaking down. We can explore this or deny it or create a mix of exploration and denial that is uniquely expressive of our own hopes and fears. Culture is some kind of a collective

hallucination. It's infantile. It's an epistemological cartoon, and it's breaking down. What brings the news that it's breaking down are the absurdities that nibble at the fractal edge. The great absurd propositions that have been passed on and revered and sentimentalized for millennia, like the Resurrection and monotheism and da-da-da-da all this stuff, are now having their false premises illuminated by the cheap goods that are being sold in competition — that cheapen, essentially, the entire magic show. It's now exposed as a bargain basement of trinket dealing and foolish goods. The wages of civilized existence are now found to be hollow in some way. But I think that people don't want to culturally confront this because they've been told "alienation is bad; this is alienation." Well, it's alienation from insanity is the basic thing.

The culture has become self-limiting, toxic. This is why it's generating technological antidotes to itself. That's why it's importing things like psychedelic plants and substances, or Eastern techniques of meditation, in a kind of delirium or a kind of self-review at the end of its existence. It's furiously exporting, into the lens of its own self-inspection, every text, every drug, every ritual, every method, every cuisine, every language group, every folk dance — every anything — in a frantic effort to find some kind of connecting metaphor. Well there isn't a connecting metaphor of the ordinary and usual sort. What all these ideologies do — all ideology — is provide closure of some sort, at the cost of realism. Whatever satisfaction you get from quantum physics or Marxism or Hasidism or any closed system of thought, you need to recognize that that satisfaction is purchased at the cost of realism. In Lit. Crit. there's this term "willful suspension of disbelief". Well that's all very fine in the confrontation with art, but in the confrontation with that which claims to be real, it's a precondition for being led down the primrose path.

I think the last time we got together the theme was how there were two kinds of people: artists and marks. The only way to relate to the engines of commodification of ideas and production of consumer ephemerata is to produce. The only sane position is to produce, because if you're consuming, you are in the victim part of this equation. And as more and more people realize this, the level of artistic content and creativity asymptotically accelerates, as it knits itself together across the interface of evolving fields of knowledge. We are — whether you follow my deeper metaphysical harangues about the presence of an actual mathematical dwell point in the spatio-temporal domain, that is sucking us into a kind of black hole of novelty, connectivity and boundary dissolution; or whether you just, as a rationalist, observe the speed of the acceleration of computer technologies, media technologies, interactivity, data accessibility to the normal person and so forth and so on — it's very clear from either perspective that social business as usual has been taken off the menu, and that we have unleashed, as a collectivity, something inside ourselves. Call it syntax, call it "grammar's appetite for virtual reality," call it the Gaian mind — it doesn't matter, whether you have a beansprout vision of it or an Extropian vision of it — whatever it is, what we have called "human consciousness" is moving into a deeper relationship with prosthesis, at a faster rate than anything we've known in human history. In a way it isn't new; since Ur we've been operating inside virtual realities of a sort. But when the medium is fired clay or steel and concrete, the speed at which these things unfold relative to a given human lifespan is such that a weird hallucination of equilibrium and business-as-usual is maintained.

That illusion of business-as-usual is giving way for us to a kind of vertiginous sense that the human unconscious, "morphogenetic field" — whatever it is — some kind of protean thing that links us all in an active, not passive, mode — is expressing itself through us. My dis of the alien thing earlier is not from the point of view of scientific rationalism. Not that I don't think the alien is among us, but rather I think the most foolish among us pushed forward against the velvet rope with their chattering description of it, like sugar-crazed five year olds, and that cooler heads have to come in and look at this. The alien is — where?

The alien is in our heads, in some way. And then people say, “Well, that’s the psychic explanation, that’s terribly humdrum.” No, no, I don’t mean that, exactly. I mean that, whatever its essence is, I will know it as I know your essence. You will know it as you know my essence, which is entirely as information. So then people say, “Well that’s some kind of flattening of it. You’re making it a literary conundrum, etc.” No no no no no, not that. The new technologies — VRML, enhanced reality, all that stuff — are showing us that the world is information.

You know, in every scenario of alien contact there is a prop. It has different ways of appearing, but basically it’s the landing zone. You have to build a landing zone, and every flying saucer cult worth its salt builds a landing zone. In a way, I think the new protean electronic Internet — the purpose of the Net is to catch the alien mind. The alien mind is within us. It will be coded by human fingers, but it will be truly alien. Simply because it is downloaded through the human neural network, do not think that the invoking of this thing — which is an artificial intelligence, a protean, non-human intelligence, a globally-distributed, self-learning, self-defining-teaching-integrating intelligence — is not going to be alien. And yet it is going to come through us.

The cheerful scenarios of Hollywood myth-making are going to be thin comfort indeed when we begin to see, indeed, just how alien we ourselves are, and how real we can make that for ourselves. Because we are dissolving away from the print-created nexus of rationalism and geometry that we call “public space.” It came into existence, you know, 500 years ago; it’s dissolving over the next fifteen or twenty years. And what it will leave us all in is a domain of Imagination, neither clearly public nor private, but clearly, intensely numinous, and realized in a way that we at this stage can barely even begin to comprehend. We have been living in the Imagination but our feet touch the earth because the laws of physics and the laws of materials and architectonic constraints held the Imagination in place. But what will we become when we unfold into the Dream? The answer’s going to depend on how clearly we think about it going in, and how demanding we are, upon ourselves, in terms of the kind of beauty we create.

We can see from how capitalism manipulates the commodification of ideas, that what it tends to do is flatten and trivialize, because it appeals to the mass mind. Is this simply a momentum of the print technology, that will play itself out in the new media multiverse? Or is it a more pernicious tendency that is going to try to actually survive the cultural transition? I certainly fear the latter, and feel that the best antidote to the survival of that tendency is for people to consciously celebrate diversity. Consciously insist on an expansion of language and an erasure of categories, and a psychedelization of the cultural enterprise in the service of beauty, diversity, astonishment... and mystery, the theme that I wanted to return and end with, which is: ideology flattens reality because it denies the Mystery, because it has all the answers. Whatever it is, it doesn’t matter; the ideology, by providing a complete explanation, automatically certifies its own falseness. In the interests of cultural maturity and living a postmodern existence, and taking art as our — the image comes to me, T. S. Eliot says in *The Wasteland*, “Come in under the shadow of this red rock.” For him it was the churches. For us, I think it has to be art freed from ideology, a celebration of beauty, culture with a direct relationship to beauty through the felt presence of immediate experience. That’s what the growing beyond ideology and certitude gives back to us, is actually the dynamic sense of being alive in uncertainty. Civilization denies that, and in a sense cheats us of our birthright in uncertainty.

Anyway, that’s what I wanted to download on you tonight. Thank you very much.

Q & A

This is one of those social situations where lack of brevity is proof of psychosis, and you WILL be judged!

Q1 It's one question, but it's in two parts. The first thing is the idea of neoteny. It struck me that there's a similarity between that idea of there being two forms of the same organism, with the Heaven's Gate people's idea that they were in human form, and that if they were taken out of one environment (which is the socio-cultural environment) and put into that special environment which is the cult (which is sort of "digging underground"), then they would be reborn into the next level.

TM Yeah, I advance these things as models. The Heaven's Gate thing — to me, all of this stuff is an intelligence test. Those people failed it. But my point in my main lecture was that they are not as bizarre as they are made out to be, in the sense that lots of people are running around with extremely bizarre ideas, that we have simply gotten used to because they are socially sanctioned. When Pliny the Younger first wrote his report to the Roman Emperor on Christianity (I was recently reading a book called *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*) he said, "This is a cult. It's a cult of Christ. Religions deal with the great issues of cosmic origins and final endings. This doesn't deal with that; it's a cult of Christ." So we have built a culture around that cult, and yet the rantings of a Southern preacher suitably liquored up on Jim Beam and syphilis was convincing, I think, that these are the rantings of a diseased mind. So what I think people should do is learn to trust their intuition and develop their crap detectors to a little higher state of subtlety. Because as we approach — whatever this thing is — the narrow neck of happenstance that is constricting the end-of-the-century phenomena, there are going to be more and more claims upon our attention and our imagination, "wonder workers" moving among the people and on the networks. Do your mental calisthenics early, so that when they come knocking on your door, you will have the strength to tell them to keep on moving.

I couldn't believe the way in which the media portrayed the Heaven's Gate people as very careful thinkers, very reasonable people — I mean, I heard about this thing in 1975. Somebody said, "Hey, there are these two people who are running around who say that they're off a spacecraft. You wanna go see?" "NO!" Yet 'decent people' — and most of us are 'decent people' — just lack the imagination to imagine where you can get if you embrace pathological lying as a professional strategy for advancement. Joseph Goebbels showed that this can really take you places! I'm sorry, you have a follow-up?

Q1 This is a question about culture in general, when you mentioned the Net being a landing pad. It struck me that the reason we're all so addicted to culture is because it is the landing pad, we're trying to trap something in it. What I see as the obstacle to 'honing your crap detector' is not wanting to give up your claim on Beauty. If you've been trapped in your cultural net, if you don't want to give up your neural connection to Beauty, and live without it -- like in spiritual traditions you have this idea that you have to pass through this desert, where you have given up your water...

TM I would differ with you. I preach reason, but when into a tight place, I think the appeal to beauty is a deeper and more intuitive dimension in which to make the judgment. In other words, I'm like a thoroughgoing Platonist. I say, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful: these are three aspects of something we're trying to maximize. Truth; you can formally learn the rules by which one approaches Truth. It's tricky. The Good, it's even trickier. Beauty makes a direct appeal to the senses. Somebody asked me, what did I think about the face on Mars? And I had no problem dismissing that because it was tacky. In other

words, that's all you have to know about that, because the Mystery will not be tacky! It is not tacky!

Well that's awfully harsh. It's awfully harsh, but it brought us to the right position rather quickly and with dispatch — which was the point: why put these people through misery, if in fact ultimately we're going to have to say that their commodification of whatever intellectual system they're peddling is found wanting? So I think if we built a society based on Beauty, strange Beauty, the True and the Good aspects of this three-pronged enterprise would fall naturally into place. I have that faith.

Q1 I didn't mean give up Beauty, but give up our claim to Beauty

TM You can see more art in twenty minutes on high-dose psilocybin that you see in a long afternoon wandering around Florence.

Q1 That's right, but most of us don't spend our time in the psychedelic state.

TM Well, no, but we should spend our time reflecting on it, I think.

Q2 This is not a culture question, it's a drug question. What do think is the evolutionary advantage that led to addiction, and why does it still persist? What's the purpose of addiction? I have my answers, but I'd like to hear from you.

TM This touches a big subject for me, and some of you are familiar with my position on this. I think that psilocybin in the earlier human diet interfered with the ordinary primate tendency to form gender-based hierarchies, and that we actually medicated male dominance out of our behavioral repertoire during the period in which we were evolving language and culture and humor and theater and that sort of thing. Then later, when the psilocybin came unstuck from the human enterprise because of climatological change, this kind of abuse syndrome arose, because there was a sense of having had a relationship that was interrupted. And this is why human beings addict to countless substances, and behaviors, and each other, and political ideologies. In a way ideologies are drug fixes, because they fix some certain kind of mental disequilibrium. You just give yourself a shot of Marxism or Hegelian idealism and say, "Oh, that makes the pain go away!"

But that's what it is: it's disequilibrium brought on by being torn from the Gaian matrix, by having an early pseudo-symbiotic relationship with mushrooms interrupted. How about that?

Q2 It seems to make it a totally pathological issue instead of an adaptation. I think there might be more to it than that.

TM Well there might be more to it than that. It's pathological only when it's exercised in the presence of an inappropriate stimulus. In other words, it's pathological to addict to morphine, Marxism or monotheism; it's not pathological to addict to self-reflection, punctuality and — I don't know, it's just behavior. But thank you, it's not easy to climb up and face the music.

Q3 I was wondering, with the 2012 date, and approaching more and more connectivity, things are coming closer together and people are realizing that things are connected: it seems that there is a technological side to that. But in a way, the whole technology is geared towards military stuff, NASA's involved in this and

that; it's going that direction. But hemp, for instance, the earthly, natural type of thing -- the same people who are promoting technology and those things are down on psilocybin -- laws against it, paranoia against it -- because it changes people's minds. It ties them into a connectivity that's with the earth, with the earth grid, as opposed to something else, something out there that people are going for...

TM I think you're right about the whole issue about drug suppression in this society. It has to do with the fact that these things have unacceptable social consequences in the area of deconditioning and dissolving boundaries, and that they actually are synergistic to forms of local community and affinity-group building that establishments find very threatening. This all has to do — surely you can see how it all works — with the idea that culture is some kind of conditioning process, that you are not supposed to get behind or get in front of, or doubt. And it's complicated; you're given many choices. You know, you can teach at Wellesley, you can go into banking, into brain surgery, and you're still within the game. The reason drugs are inveighed against so furiously — when you can demonstrate in terms of the normal criteria by which social menaces are judged, that these don't even make it onto the radar — obviously there is some phobia or taboo or secret agenda about repressing these things. I think it's simply that we are very anxious in this society about other people's states of mind. The idea that people would take control of their states of mind by intoxicating themselves, or in any way altering consciousness, is considered fundamentally disloyal.

You're making this point very well, but I am not a pessimist, I am not into these conspiratorial theories, because from my point of view it all seems to be being negotiated in a fairly sane manner. In other words, the military-industrial complex has quietly taken its place as number 2 — behind the entertainment and media industries. Governments are being told by corporations, "Keep the roads repaired and care for the sick! We'll take over the manufacture and distribution of commodified goods." And apparently, in the same way that the Church was patted on the back and toddled off the stage at the end of the Thirty Years War, nation-states are going through this. Their *raison d'être* for their existence, which was the whole Cold War paranoia scenario, has pretty much been unplugged. There's a lot of retro-inertia and people moving at different speeds within the system, but I think we're now living in the corporate, post-informational, boundary-less collectivity, and it was built by guys with pony tails with rings in their ears, who were druggies, basically.

I think there's a lot of bad things going on, but mostly just to make money. Very few scenarios of control are going to bring those who generate them much happiness. There's money to be made, for sure, on the good side and the dark side of the cultural transition. But as far as the drug thing is concerned, the very presence of the word 'drug' in our culture, in the de-numerized form in which it exists, makes it very hard to talk about the issue. I mean, everything is defined as a drug by those who are looking at it from a marketing and commodification position. Society, again, is not going to help you with this. You're actually going to have to someday face the fact that you're going to get as far as your intelligence can carry you. Expecting the society to undergo some fundamental reform, and then for it to take over the function of your transformation, is probably hopelessly naive. What this is, is not a free ride; it's some sort of opportunity in the midst of chaos. I think!

Q4 My question is in relation to Jewish mysticism, and specifically the Kabbalah. The Kabbalists believe in tikkun, which is the restoration of matter and creation, when the divine Seed is reconnected with the Godhead. My question is, do you believe that this is a metaphor for cosmic consciousness, in that we, as Man, as the earth, has a collective soul or collective consciousness, that somehow can be connected with the Other and brought forth to a new dimension of time and space?

TM The persistent myth of the West is this thing about the “going forth of the Word,” and the descent or the declension of the Word into matter. Kabbalistic mysticism has a lot to say about the realization or coming into being of the Word. Reality from that kind of point of view is some kind of literary construct. The difference between science and magic, fundamentally, is that science believes the universe is made of something, like matter and energy, and magic believes the universe is made of language.

Q4 What about the fusion of the two? What if language was sort of a lower evolutionary form of communication, and the higher form of communication would be something like telepathy or sensational connection?

TM If you have a powerful enough language, you can take control of reality. This is what magical languages, like in the late Renaissance, were about. The only thing which comes close to that today is code for computers. Essentially, these are languages which, when executed, something happens. They are languages of efficacy. They carry, not meaning, but motivation to activity. This Kabbalistic question is very interesting; someone showed me, recently, a sculptural object, which, when illuminated from various angles by a source of light behind it would cast, one after another, each of the Hebrew letters on a screen. In other words, this was a higher-dimensional object which had the entire Hebrew alphabet somehow embedded in it. When I mentioned this to Ralph Abraham, he said, “Well, all you have to do is digitize and quantify that object, and we’ll be able to compute from that three-dimensional object to a 5-, 6-, 7-, 8-, or 9-dimensional object, which would cast all letters of all alphabets into matter.” So one way of thinking of the “transcendental object at the end of time” is as this kind of Ur-letter or Ur-word in hyperspace, from which, as it sheds the radiance of its syntactical numenosity into lower and lower dimensions, realities — as literary functions of being — constellate themselves.

Q4 So would you say it's sort of like the fusion of the unconscious with the conscious, in such a way that we can experience the entire world in one moment, or the entire universe in one moment, or the entire works of creation in one moment?

TM Yeah, I think one way of thinking of the Internet is as a hardwiring of the Human Unconscious. In other words, all these databases, all these buried complexes and this data is becoming accessible to the inspection of the conscious mind in a single moment. So it’s almost as though, whatever the post-historical experience is, it’s something that cannot be achieved or approached in the presence of baggage as anti-progressive as the unconscious mind. We are discovering that we are, in a sense, simply protrusions on this larger protean form called “the human collectivity”, “the community”, the “unconscious”. Our dear identity, so dearly won, is simply a kind of convention of how we present ourselves in Newtonian space. But we are collectivizing even as we discover the depth of our individuality. It’s a paradox, but it’s not a self-canceling paradox; it’s a truth.

Q4 Would you say that the Godhead is what we would consider perfection?

TM I think of it as connectivity and novelty. Perfection — I’ve never tended toward these neo-Platonic things where it gets more “One”-ish, more “White”-ish, or “Light”-ish. For me it gets just weirder and weirder. You know, whether all these scenarios of transcendence and transfiguration come to be in some “real” dimension (whatever that means), you may be sure that, long before fifteen years have passed, every major and minor religion on this planet will have a VRML simulacrum of its eschatology up and running

for you to comparison shop with!

Q5 I've heard you several times, and I come because you use words so wonderfully. I have something to say about the print culture versus the Internet. I'm a librarian at a city college, and I see the Internet mostly being used by very ignorant people -- I'm afraid I see more the pernicious effects of the Internet. And when I read about people like Negroponte, who speak of bodies as "meat", to me that's the opposite of Beauty, because Beauty, as you said, is connected to the senses. So I don't see a liberation in terms of virtual reality, necessarily. I think it depends on who's doing it. At the moment -- you used the word 'commodification' a lot -- as a post-Marxist I can say that everything is being commodified now, including the World Wide Web -- although the kids with the rings in their ears didn't make as much money as Bill Gates, who didn't have a ring in his ear. [TM: He had a ringing in his ear!] What I'm getting at is that everything is still very much controlled by money, and as long as it's controlled by money, I don't see how it's going to be liberating.

Just one more comment. You speak so well; I heard you talk about Aldous Huxley, and you were the only one who talked about Aldous Huxley. (Everybody else talked about themselves.) What I'm getting at is, you are absolutely grounded in the print culture. Much of what you say about Beauty is what William Morris says as well. I guess I'm trying to make something of a defense for the print culture, and something of a warning about seeing the WWW as necessarily liberating.

TM You're right that I'm definitely rooted in the print culture. I consider basically my entire schtick as proving that you can turn a liberal education into a borscht-belt phenomenon. That shows how short people's memories are — “Oh, he quotes Homer! Amazing!”

But I think the fear that the Internet was going to plunge us into a world of barbarian illiteracy was a transition phase. Now I'm meeting people whom, I think, you would consider largely illiterate — in that they've never read a book — but they are very fully in command of the tools of the culture because they do all their reading on the Internet. What's happening is simply a celebration of diversity. Capitalism built the Internet, but it has not yet made a great deal of money off it. McLuhan said that no technology in history has ever been implemented with even a partial appreciation of what its real effects were going to be. The Internet is supposedly a great place to do business, but what I see it doing is empowering previously marginalized minorities and positions. It has certainly pulled the plug on the agenda of the nation-state. Corporations do not use war as an instrument of national policy. They do not like starving refugees; they like well-fed, true believing customer bases. And to this end they have exported a lot of chaos to ghettos of the world — and even there, there's a shrinking of the commitment to the kind of chaos that typified the age of nationalism.

We make these different metaphors about what's happening; here's a sort of neo-Christian metaphor, which follows McLuhan. We lived through the age of the patriarchal beehive or anthill, we lived through the age of the glorification of the perfect Man, and now what we're seeing is the protean advent of the age of the Holy Ghost. Electricity in McLuhan's pantheon was the descent of the Holy Ghost. It clothes the planet in numenosity, it accelerates information to the speed of light, and it creates a kind of collectivity of understanding. Were we not so secular and so embedded within it, we would see its transcendental implications much more clearly, I think. People like Teilhard de Chardin and McLuhan and various others have seen that. But the rest of us are so focused on the commodification issue that it seems banal and mundane. It is, in fact, not banal and mundane, and I think quickly this is going to become more and more

apparent to more and more people. We've only been dealing with the Internet for about three years, really, as a culture, and already it dominates all discussions of salvation, destruction, chaos, redemption. Wait 'til you see what's coming!

Q6 With this new glut of information and ideology: is it simply a matter of there being so many more, or is the choice between mystery and ideology any more difficult than it has ever been?

TM Well, I think so, because I really believe that you have to take seriously the hidden agenda of every form of media that you embrace or reject. So it's not simply about "more", it's that print, the electric light, every form of media changes us in ways that we don't suspect or understand until we move beyond it. Now we're understanding things about print that previously we couldn't even language to ourselves, because it was like the surface of our own bodies. Now we see that the assumptions of interchangeability based on modern industrial processes, or the assumptions about the quality of our voting (one person/one vote) — this kind of mechanistic thinking about society, which we were raised not to question, are in fact notions that only make sense in the print constellated universe. Now that we're moving into a world with different sensory ratios, how we do science, how we do fashion, how we do art, how we do relationships, how we define things as deeply ingrained and supposedly outside social manipulation as gender identity, and things like that, are discovered to be completely fluid.

Q6 But haven't they always been fluid, even though the ideology may have said differently? Wouldn't the fundamental decision between being fluid and remaining solid stay as equally powerful (even in the context of the fluid network, etc.)?

TM I think so. But as you say, our attention has drifted away from that. This whole thing I was trying to put across tonight, without just saying it flat out, was that we have become silly, we have become infantile. We lack dimension. This is not an adult style of civilization, the way we live. Now you're saying, well maybe in the past there have been adult styles. I don't know — maybe, maybe not. I'd probably tend to resist it. But for sure, this society is silly, trivial, juvenile, infantile, self-denying, self-flattening, uses a simplified vocabulary for emotion, for relationships, and to chart its way forward. And so then the defining of social values and the expression of social institutions is left to faceless collectivities — these "They"'s we're always talking about — the Corporations, the Media, the Government, the Somebody. Again, this is an infantile myth of how reality works. Imagine if you were actually a free and responsible individual! Play with this idea; it has implications for you, I think. And it may not have been true in the past. As I look back to how I was raised and the people who raised me, everybody was living inside a cartoon, a sitcom of some sort. We've blown the whistle on that. That was what the work of the deconstruction that modernism performed on the bourgeois sensibility was all about, to tell you you're more complicated than that, deeper than that, more dynamic, more self-surprising than that, more psychedelic than that. More sexy than that, smarter than that! I'm sorry, not to rant.

Q7 All I really want to know is -- you know, I had this great philosophical question, a psychedelic question, I was all excited -- but all I really want to know is: how does Terence McKenna live? How do these nights affect your life?

TM I'm trying to "walk the walk and talk the talk". What that means at the moment to me is: three years ago I moved from northern California where I'd been for 35 years in a kind of sandal/beansprout/blurred-gender culture that spoke a rhetoric of rainforest action and so forth and so on. I moved to Hawaii; I

moved off the grid. I live within thirty seconds of climaxed rainforest. I have an ISDN-speed (128k) connection straight onto the Internet (through the air, wireless; I point at my provider). So I'm trying to study the Internet in isolation from the rest of the culture. I just want, basically, an archaic world of nature and natural values, and the fastest most hi-tech machine I can get my hands on.

Somebody said, "What, is your message still the same?" My message is still the same, and it has nothing to do with me. The message is, "Don't follow me, eat a shroom!" Unlock the cultural box and check out what's going on. Your nervous system, your sexuality, and your vegetable friends provide an antidote to cultural dystopia, alienation, and victimization. Don't be a victim. Don't consume. Produce art. Keep your powder dry, one hand over your wallet, the other hand over your asshole — this the way to proceed with this society, I think. And then we'll all meet at the end and make extremely high art. I see it coming.

Original Transcription by: [Please enter your name or username here when you start transcribing so we know that it is being/has been worked on by someone]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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The Taxonomy of Illusion

Day Month 1993

University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

Ralph Abraham: So, in the 1960's our speaker Terence was a student, like many of you, at UC Berkeley. And he left in the middle of things to go on a tour around the world for seven years that ended in, uh, the, the deepest Amazon Basin where he had an experience that has determined his life in the 20 years following and which is the subject of his latest book, True Hallucinations. So now in this historic moment after all this time, Terence will ascend the platform of the University of California for the first time.

Terence McKenna: What I thought I would talk about, uh, when I was approached to to do this, uh. The pressure was to say something new which is a heart stinging pressure to a warhorse of the lecture circuit. I started out thinking I would never repeat myself and sometimes wonder if I'll ever have a new idea again. Uh, but what I wanted to talk about this evening is illusions, and I called the lecture the taxonomy of illusion, because I think it's interesting to, uh, to attempt to classify and relate the various kinds of illusions that stand between us and, uh, that presupposed naked radiant Truth [mic whirrs, all chuckle, clapping] that, hah, has more or less driven the engines of Western philosophy since Plato. Of course the great victory of modernity is to disabuse ourselves of such naive notions, but, uh, they die hard I think. Um, Ralph mentioned my, uh, my latest book and I didn't, I don't intend to talk about the book particularly, but I- in the book I quote, a, uh, the only piece of poetry in the whole thing not written by me. I now see that I seem to have lost it, oh no, here it comes up. But it relates to this on many many levels, this question of illusion and the relationship of the self to the real, and where the world falls in that equation, and the limits of knowledge [cup falls in the back] and all the other good psychedelic stuff that needs to be considered. The quote is from Pale Fire by Vladimir Nabokov, and if you don't know this book you should. It is without doubt one of the funniest books in the English language, and it takes the form of a very long poem and then the commentary upon this poem. The poem is written by a character that Nabokov creates named John Shade, and, uh, the part that I want to call to your attention this evening runs like this:

...that rare phenomenon
The iridule—when, beautiful and strange,
In a bright sky above a mountain range
One opal cloudlet in an oval form
Reflects the rainbow of a thunderstorm
Which in a distant valley has been staged
For we are most artistically caged"

Now, this is a very strange piece of poetry. This is not like, uh, even Wallace Stephens at his most obscure. In the first place, this word, 'the iridule'. You won't find this word in any dictionary and yet I sensed that this is obviously the word for this phenomenon. I know what he is talking about, I have seen, uh, this, uh, 'opal cloudlet in an oval form which reflects the rainbow of a thunderstorm in a distant place. We're- here we're in the realm of mirage and nature as mirage and nature as mirrored labyrinth. Uh, and then the final point, and I'll go through all this in the course of talking to you, but the final line of being artistically caged, this is I think, um, where the psychedelics come in because psychedelics allow one to pierce beyond the veil of cultural illusion, beyond the linguistic momentum of what has been handed on, what has been handed on. The faith of tantra and magick and psychedelics is that the apparent intransigent appearance of the world can somehow be overcome by an act of magick.

I used to collect, uh, Tibetan tonkas and the texts which go with some of these tonkas, I remember one in particular which, coming out of the Tibetan the translation was "all things being reversed, the great Hla (the great god) appears instantly". You see, the precondition for magic is the reversal of causality somehow, and as moderns we have grown to give great credence, I think, to the idea that the world is largely a linguistic structure, largely created through the participation of the observer, but we have not been able to take that perception and turn it into a technology. Instead we are still driven by, uh, the blind momentum of atomic structure. Who was it who said, uh, "the atoms blindly run" and then I think it was Whitehead who said, "yes, but within the body they blindly run according to the body's plan". You see, what, what I think we're dealing with are patterns and then the indeterminate dimensions between patterns. And it's in those indeterminate places within the interstices of reality that the observer is able to establish him or herself, and then model back, uh, the world.

The reason I wanted to talk about a taxonomy of illusion was because I thought it was important to relate the various styles of hyper-seeing, non-seeing and mis-seeing together because I think that the, the heuristic consequences of doing that are to realize just how shifting the sands are upon which the ontological edifice of Western thinking rests. I mean, that's always the point, you see, to deconstruct Western civilization because Western civilization, the toxic consequences are now clear for everyone to see. So, the first, uh, the first category or grand family of illusions which we would put into our taxonomic key would be social illusions, and when I, and, and, you know, later we can argue this, but at this point in the, in the discussion, illusion is slash delusion, so the great social illusions/delusions are sexism, racism, xenophobia, egoism, so far- uh, classism. The world is riddled and ruled by these social illusions and no one is free of them, and so they constitute one broad category. I might just mention, as an aside, a book which was very influential on me, and I never heard anybody else ever mention it, was, uh, a book call- by Rockliff called Illusions and Delusions of the supernatural and the occult. Uh, this was a 10th century book which I as a kid got in a Dover reprint and it was in a wonderful era where the study of anomalies was still young and so this book had everything poured in together from mesmers, ectoplasm, to people who had tumors that they carried around in wheelbarrows, to birds that did advanced arithmetic, so on and so on. And it was very much from the point of view of Victorian rationalism, and it also mentioned psychedelics. What it really was a was a category of edges, or a catalog of edges, I'm sorry. And it was only in the subsequent 40, 35 years that that vunderkamera approach to illusion, and I assume you all assume what I mean by that, and I mean- I'm referring to the era before the rise of Linnaean natural science when naturalists would simply fill cabinets with anomalous, natural and strange object, so the tarantulas were mixed in with the chambered nautilus which may be stirred in with the Zuni fetishes which may be stirred in with something else.

Then later these wunderkamas, these, uh, curiosity cabinets, as you would call them in English, gave way to Linnean taxonomy in the same way over the past 100 years I think the study of illusion and anomaly has, uh, attempted to rationalize itself. Uh, spatial illusions are an entirely different family of illusory phenomena and we all have encountered at some level, I imagine, the specially constructed environments that occur in behavioral psychology labs that trick you into thinking that the person in the foreground is smaller than the person in the background, so forth and so on. These kinds, uh, of illusions and are- are probably fairly trivial except that they address perceptions, and when we get to psychedelics as a source of illusion this is more important.

Another of the great family of illusions are, uh, in thinking about them I called them ontological illusions. Illusions of states of being, which may or may not in fact be reflected in reality. Uh, UFOs, Bigfoot, uh, crop circles, uh, mmm, the entire panoply of poultergeist phenomena and this sort of thing- ontological illusions. And these are very interesting, I mean one could give time to this alone, uh, because there are persistent ontological illusions in the human sensorium such as an- angels, elves, demons, djinns, afrites, nixies and sprites, that crowd, and there are ontological illusions that seem somehow tied to the evolving modalities of the group mind. Uh, UFOs are an obvious example. I mean, aside from the fact that people have occasionally seen strange things in the sky, the UFO archetype really emerges in the late 40s with, uh, the Rainier lights, and then a whole set of, um, taxonomic features of this particular brand of illusion, uh, coalesce the silvery discs, uh, the alien denizens with the cat eyes and the rubbery flesh, those same guys who give you unscheduled proctological examinations in the middle of the night [audience laughter] but notice that that particular taxonomic feature has been added recently through the assiduously careful scientific research of Strieber and company.

So, uh, these things are in a- in a- in, uh, well, cattle mutilation is very interesting one, very confined in time in space. The, the crop circle thing, similarly, it's not that, uh, there aren't crop circles but that what we have is essentially a pattern in an English wheat field but then radiating out from that are the illusions of those who cast their gaze upon it, those who proclaim it, uh, you know, telluric communication or particle beam research carried on by the air force, or in one version it was supposed, it was supposed that a particular crop circle had been decoded, found to be a lost Sumerian language which when decoded said basically "Don't stop here". It was essentially a no-parking zone for time machines. They were saying, you know, this entire century- just maintain speed and, uh, [Terence chuckles] you know, do not stop.

Um, psychedelic illusions, uh, again this is a related category but different from these ontological illusions. Uh, by illusion I mean that, uh, uh, these are, uh, confrontations with phenomena and apparently subjective ground and an ap- an assumed rational observer where then there is a more than ordinary amount of ambiguity. I mean most of reality is illusory, it's just that we do each other the courtesy of not pointing this out, [audience laughter] uh, you know. Actually you, you trace a very thin data path through the world and al- most of what we assume without question we have very little evidence for. I mean, something as simple as, uh, well, like that mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. Well, first of all very few people have ever seen it. Uh, I saw it and because I saw it from a distance of about 500 miles it looked quite small and my own testimony as to whether it was the highest mountain in the world would be fairly unreliable and besides, what does that mean anyhow and how the hell do you figure it out? I mean, here we have one, uh, mountain in the Himalayas and another in Bolivia and you're telling me you know which is the higher mountain? It must rest on a whole bunch of weird and fishy assumptions resting on even shakier data. So, and that's just the question of the highest mountain in the world, give or- leave alone the state of your

lover's heart or your banker's for that matter.

What's important about the psychedelic family of illusions is that they, uh, propel the entire issue of illusion to center stage because they demonstrate that the, uh, uh, assumed bedrock of quote unquote 'ordinary perception' is in fact no, no bedrock at all. It's simply a very soft, uh, dwell-point somewhere in the mysteries of metabolism. And the, the consciousness, whatever its relationship to the brain, is spectacularly effected by the perturbation of the physical brain by, uh, endogenously introduced pseudo neurotransmitters of some sort. I mean, to my mind this is very interesting. You know Sh- Alexander Shulgin has secured in his work that you can take a molecule that is completely inactive and by moving one atom to a different place on the ring you can change this into an active compound. Now, it seems to me you could hardly have a neater demonstration of the quantum-mechanical foundation of consciousness because you've moved one atom and you've, uh, moved the mountains of mind 500 miles from where they were resting when last you looked. It's quite spectacular, and it argues then that mind, which strangely enough, the materialists always claim this, they just put different emphasis on the words- mind is a kind of iridescence on metabolism. For materialists that was a dismissal because to materialists what iridescence meant was a tertiary phenomenon not inimical to the structure of matter, but necessarily perceived only through the intersession of an observer. See, that's what iridescence is. It's somehow a more fragile part of nature than the rocks, the trees and the waters because it's a play between light and mind, again, a kind of illusion. A mirage.

Now, in a very different category of illusion, and this is one worth considering because it's the one we tend not to place in this category. And that is the illusion of materialism. This has broken down completely, uh, the idea that the material world was real sustained the investigation of nature from Parmenides to the early years of the 20th century. Virtually the entire history of human engagement in intellect-in the abstract intellectual modeling of matter, matter was assumed to, uh, be pretty much as presented in perception: solid, enduring, having simple location. Meaning, you know, it is, it stays where you put it, and when you look there again it's there, uh, that sort of thing. Now one of the best-kept dirty secrets of Western civilization is that the core science which is physics, the science which was always, um, the envy of all the other sciences for its mathematical formalism and its incredible, uh, predictive ability, because it's not unusual in physics to predict from theory an experimental result to the third or fourth decimal. This is spectacular congruence between, uh, theory and experiment. You don't get that in the social sciences. Even in physical- need I mention. Uh, uh, even in physical chemistry. However, the investigation of matter has now been pushed to such extremes that matter has shed its easily recognized and familiar face and has become something much slipperier, much more dependent on the presence of the observer, much less easily located in space and time, something much more of the nature of thought than, uh, than of the familiar conception of matter. This word has not reached bu- even as far as biology yet. The biologists are still laboring under the notion of the reality of physical material. Uh, if any of you read this book that was published last year with much a to-do called "Consciousness Explained". Uh, actually it should have been called "Consciousness Explained Away". Uh, here was an effort to drag out all the old material paradigms and, uh, ah, explain away consciousness. The problem is, uh, matter itself has taken on the qualities of mind and, uh, as this realization relativizes, uh, the life-sciences I think there is going to be, uh, a new interest in the potential for psychedelics to elucidate, uh, mental functioning because what will be come respectable, you see, is talk of the observer. This is what has invaded physics, the most rarefied and formal of all the sciences had, in order to make sense of its enterprise, uh, allow the observer a kind of primacy with the thing observed. As this seeps into the life sciences and psychology hopefully the phobia of actually involving yourself in your field of study that informs all these reductionists and ratomorphic types

in these schools of psychology will be overturned.

Well, uh, having flayed that dead horse sufficiently, uh, the uh, uh, another category of illusion that needs to be addressed, I think, is, um, um, how would one call it... Well, basically, uh, philosophical illusion or philosophical slash religious illusion. This is the idea [Terence coughs] that by a direct appeal to intuition we can somehow gain, um, a foothold on truth. I think this is as specious as the notion that we can gain a foothold on truth [Terence coughs] through reason or experiment. This foothold on truth idea may have to be given up, uh. I'm sure some of you have heard me recall [Terence coughs] the situation where Wittgenstein was raving about something and one of his students said "But is it the truth?" and he said "Well, it's true enough" and this is really- means a great divide has been crossed when you can say that because it means you understand now that you are no longer a fairy in a platonic super-world, but that you are actually a monkey with a brain full of mush trying to sort out, uh, you know, what's right in front of you. True enough is what we should probably rest with.

And you know, uh, illusions abound, uh, one for instance- I was speaking of these religious ontologies. I was talking to someone recently who amazed me because I've always thought of them as a person of great intelligence but who would never be reclaimed from the arms of mother church, and uh, we had dinner last week and he said "I realized it finally comes down to do you believe the universe is being run by the ghost of a Galilean politician?" and he said, you know, put that way I realized that it wasn't. Other, other, uh, religious myths are less easily undone, I think. Monotheism has an appealing philosophical neatness, but it leads, apparently, to colitrectomy, so, you know, you wanna watch that. Uh, this, this search for philosophical neatness may make for a strange bedfellows. Um, and of course Buddhism, uh, I love the illusion of Buddhism. It's the illusion that illusion can be transcended [clears throat] [audience laughs] And, uh, again, not really doing genuflection to the animal nature. It's amazing to me, I mean, if you were to meet a termite who stated that his or her, uh, goal in life was the perfect modeling of the cosmos you would think it was quite a comic undertaking, uh, and yet how different are we that we should presume, uh, uh, to more than a shadow of, of, uh, a shadow of the truth.

Well, then, uh, finally or, I don't know finally, but completing my laundry list here, um. Linguistic truth, or the truth of language and the illusions that language weaves because, uh, someone quite intelligent said, uh, "language was invented so that people could lie." In other words, it, it gives you that fudge factor of obfuscation where someone says, you know "why did you do that?" well, the best approach is "I didn't do that!" You know, you, you thought I did that. What you thought you saw, you didn't see. In other words, uh, I suppose that, uh, lawyers are probably the people who have done the finest work with language, uh, and, and behind them, politicians, and the true potential for language to elevate and to unite the community was early on betrayed into the production of, um, of illusion- illusory ideological goods which could then be marketed among the people and, uh, to spread confusion. Psychedelics reflect on this because psychedelics stretch and pull and melt and re-cast the illusion-producing machinery of language.

I mean, I think that if you had to say the one thing that psychedelics do for everyone, whether they have a good trip or a bad trip, because it's up to them to interpret what they make of this, is it shows you the relativity of your cultural viewpoint, you know? That it's just a w- it's just your point of view. You inherited it from, uh, a geolo- a geographical area, a culture, a set of parents. It has no relationship whatsoever to anything anchored in some kind of metaphysical super-space. It's just your cultural point of view, and travel actually does the same thing, and I've always felt there was a weird affinity between psychedelics and travel, and I suppose many people have or we wouldn't call it a trip, and, you know, we

wouldn't call it a journey.

But travel shows you the relativity of culture, and what's really happening when you travel, you see, is you're moving from one language domain to another. We don't think of it that way, but that is in fact what is happening. You can never see the Amazon jungle if you keep intact the bubble of linguistic assumptions of the place you started out from. Every place will withhold its secrets from you. I learned this in the Amazon because the first time I went I had virtually had no botany, and to me the jungle was green. That's what it was, and it was many shades of green and it was beautiful, and it was this and that, but it was basically green. The second time I went I was with, uh, a lot of botanists, and within days, you know, you learn the families. That's how they do it. With the same taxonomy I'm here applying to illusion was really developed to describe plants and animals. So you learn the families. The plants with square stems, the plants with the opposed leaves, the plants with, uh, with the particular flower structure. Once you know families, then you have a linguistic wedge in. But, you know, the cur- the corrupting or curious thing about language is that like all tools it shapes its user in ways that are not suspected until it's too late. So, uh, in- for instance the way in which Western Civilization is totally obsessed with the subject-object relationship. You know, and it's the basis of our science, our polity, our relations to commerce, the concept of product. All of these things come out of the subject-object relationship which is an aspect of language.

Uh, in the f- so I, I point all this out because, uh, in talking about my new book somebody said that I had gone too far. And I was amused because it implied from what, you know. It's not like there is a king's ex where greybeards in white coats tend the sacred vestal fires of reality. There is no reality. There are only people who know this and people who don't know this and are therefore being manipulated by the people who do know it! [audience laughter] This is true! Or true enough [Terence laughs] [Audience laughter & clappin]

And, uh, you know, one of the things that has amazed me with my own personal career because, you know, I started out basically shoveling snow in a cow town in Colorado and by fate or who knows what, uh, come to the present position and what I notice as I tran- traverse levels on a supposed ladder of success where you would expect, um, there to be more and more competition and people and activity. Actually it gets emptier and emptier. Uh, there is nobody minding the store as far as I can tell. This is why I'm so unsympathetic to conspiracy theory. We could use a few conspiracies. Nobody is minding the store. Everybody is getting rich, personally rich, and so they don't have time for, you know, to advance the Aryan race or the council of Zion or any of this fantasy and illusion that haunts the world of conspiracy theory. Uh, rather it seems, uh, everything is being left pretty much to develop on its own because people are afraid to grab or touch the levers and buttons in the control room of the historical vehicle. Uh, and what that means then is that people who can cut through these many many illusions. The illusion of materialism, the illusion of business as usual, the illusion of benevolent institutions carefully guiding us to reasonable destinies. If you cut through all that, if you disabuse yourself of all that, uh, you- you will empower yourself to eventually be able to stand up in delicate social and political situations and just say Bullshit! That's bullshit! [audience clapping]

And this is worth considering doing, uh, simply because we have an imperiled planet on our hands. We have been, for a long, long time, the victims of illusion. Western civilization- Stephen Dedalus is right, history is a nightmare from which one must awaken, quite literally. I mean we have been blind to what we have been doing. We are blind at this moment to what we are doing. If, in a single moment, the actual nature of our predicament were to fully make itself felt in the mind of any one of us, I think it would be

paralyzing. It would be horrifying. We, we have waited 'til the last moment of the last hour. The house is burning down around us and we rouse ourselves from the stupor of materialism, the stupor of Christianity and scientism, the stupor of male-dominance, sexism and racism. If we don't rouse ourselves from this stupor, the momentum toward extinction is now practically irreversible. You know, the Grateful Dead like to sing that song, 'we need a miracle every day'. We certainly, uh, we certainly do because with- and so then that brings me back to my original point, that the mome- that outside the ven of culture lies an unmapped terra incognita as vast as the New World was to the Old in the 15th century, as vast as outer space appears to us now. The New World outside of culture is a world that can be conquered through vision and language and, you know, many of you have sat through my recitations of what it's like to smoke DMT. Many of you, I'm sure, are familiar with the, the medieval woodcut of the guy sticking his head through the cogs and wheels of the cosmic machinery to observe a new world outside. The message here is, and it's, it, it's more than a message, it's a message if you just come to events like this and then go back to studying cost accounting. It's an experience if but you will avail yourself of these tools. The experience is of the discovery of a new world. A new world as real as any world that we know. It's not going to come from Time magazine or the secretary general of the United Nations or anybody like that. It's - it isn't that the world is tired and played out and that all frontiers have been explored. Every culture could support that viewpoint. It- within certain classes and in certain situations, but in fact it has never been true and it isn't true now. We are monkeys and monkeys love a helluva good fight and we have a helluva fight bearing down on us because we have to clean up the mess. We are going to- we're not going to go silently into the gentle night of extinction. There- it's just not going to happen that way. Creativity is going to be unleashed. Struggle is going to be, uh, an unavoidable part of trying to steer this battleship away from the cataracts of history in which we are now caught. Uh, I, I believe that it, there is a tremendous obligation upon the priveleged classes of the high-tech industrial democracies, and I daresay that includes everyone in this room, a tremendous obligation to attempt to deconstruct the bomb that we have inherited. I mean that is literally our situation. The gift from the past, from the 19th century, from the 1940's, from the psychology of Nixon and Johnson and that crowd is, uh, a ticking bomb, except that it's a planet. And it's the greatest challenge to intelligence that intelligence has ever faced, and yet it's precisely the kind of challenge that intelligence should be able to meet because what it requires is large-scale strategic planning, implementation, a visionary responses. It is not incremental. It's sudden, complete, and dramatic. And I really believe that, uh, there will only be one chance, you know. It's- we are circling the runway of post-history and the engines are running low and they- there is one approach and then, you know, if you miss that approach you're into the drink.

Now, we can use- we have the great good fortune to be approaching the end of a millenium. Would it be redunant to say this only happens once in a thousand years? Yes! [Terence laughs] [Audience laughs] And it's extraordinarily fortunate. Once I was in England and I ran into somebody I hadn't seen for twenty years and I was amazed and I said to Rupert "How often does one get a chance to meet someone one hasn't seen for twenty years?" And he said "Well, I daresay I suppose once every twenty years or so." We can use the millenium. this, uh, this apparent coincidence of our dilemma and a calendrical turning point to, uh, create awareness of opportunity, and we can use the psychedelics to dissolve boundaries between ourselves and other people, between institutions that govern and the governed, and basically we have to insist on the seriousness of the situation and the potential for solutions, and what it means is a much more radical break with American society than we've been willing to contemplate, uh, in the last twenty years. [audience member claps. We, we went through this thing with, you know, the two-term governer of Arkansas and it took a year and a half to play that all out and to see what it comes to, and what it comes to is, you know, Washington is convulsed over the possibility of closing an airbase near Sacramento, so how can we even

conceive of this government making an impact on the real problems. It is still government by flim-flam. And that would be all very well if we had 500 years to dig ourselves out of this dilemma, but if there- if a radical political alternative is not opened up in this country then we are essentially, I think, going to amuse and entertain ourselves into extinction. The ordinary orthodox system has failed. What Bill Clinton exists to prove at best is that people of good will make no difference in those institutions because they are compromised and corrupted from the very beginning. It's just the way it is. They- those institutions are set up for business as usual. Business as usual, at this point, is a death sentence on the human race. Uh, what has to be done is, uh, a tribalizing of culture, an ecstaticising of culture, a dissolving of hierarchy. That means self-empowerment through claiming the new information technologies, through deconditioning from propaganda, through deconditioning, uh, from the pharmo-phobia that holds everyone within the pre-programmed molds that are being handed down from Madison Avenue and Hollywood. It means actually realizing that your life is your own. Your destiny is your own. It isn't within the confines of the culture because the culture is dissolving, and to the degree that the word is put out, that phenomenon will accelerate. We are in an extraordinary transition. Everything that has worked now doesn't. Meaning global economic systems, control of the spread of epidemic disease, uh, so forth and so on. All these systems are breaking down, and yet the new systems are not yet in place. So this is a situation of extraordinary malleability and a situation in which, uh, people of great vision and great ego can make tremendous impact. So it's a very dangerous situation. We saw this in the 1930s in Germany and in Europe, where there were all kinds of potentials, all kinds of possibilities. We forget how powerful a visionary Marxism was before the rise of fascism. Movemens like Bauhaus and Dada and Surrealism all had agendas which were, which disappeared then under the rise of Fascism. This must not happen again, and what it has to do with is resisting images that are coming from the reality studio, resisting the images that are coming off the tube, coming through the newspapers, and creating a community based on psychedelics, sexuality, sensitivity, and good sense. Cultural val- and what good sense will mean in this situation is the preservation of the Earth, the preservation of diverstiy, deconditioning from product fetishism, deconditioning from, um, energy overconsumption. All these things we understand but we seem to lack the power to change our minds or if we have that power, then the power to change other peoples' minds. And I, I am in to psychedelics not because I think it's a sure thing, but because I think it is the only game in town. In other words, it's the only thing I've ever seen change an individual on a time scale similar to the time scale that we have if we're going to make a difference. I've seen over and over again, I'm sure many of you have, people go into a psychedelic jerks and come out halfway decent human beings. [audience chuckles] you know, eight hours later [audience laughter]. If we had 500 years to steer global society into safe harbor, it might be possible to do that, but we don't.

I mean, I really believe that we are being asked to participate in the birthing of a new order of being and that there is reason for great optimism and hope because it looks like we're just boring in to solid rock, but in fact there's somebody else boring through that solid rock, and they have triangulated our approach and they are hurrying to meet us. I don't think we fell into this situation because of bad fate or, or bad destiny. This is part of the process. History is what happens when an animal species, an advanced animal, falls under the influence of a transformative attractor of some sort. History is only about 25,000 years in duration. The interesting part in the last 5,000 years, what has happened is that something confounding has entered the local situation or was always dormant there but has stirred to wakefulness and it is not God, not the God that in Milton's wonderful phrase "hung the lamps like stars in heaven". It isn't that God. Maybe it's the God of biology, but whatever it is, it is to us as we are to the termite, and what it is doing is it is casting an enormous transcendental shadow back through time, over the epigenetic landscape of biological becoming, and in our species, for reasons mysterious to me, we mirror this thing and it has swung our

compass away from the forward flow of genetic theme and variation and in a course orthogonal to biology, a course set on the transcendental, and it is pulling us toward it through the medium of transforming our languages, through the medium of the imagination which is, after all, this mysterious mental domain in which we are whispered to by angels, demons, gods, ancestors, aliens, and out of that intercourse culture, self-transforming, shedding its face every 100 years, building on novelty is ascending toward a reaching out toward the unspeakable. This has been going on, I think, for billions of years. It has obvious and incontrovertably been going on since the advent of consciousness in the human species, and now we're there. We're in the final domain of the confrontation with the secret. It is impossible to conceive of history going on for hundreds of year. It- the planet cannot sustain it. Uh, all of these, uh, social structures and institutions that we have surrounded ourselves with are obviously lifeboats. They are not made to last. They are made to carry us to a certain point in the life of the Earth and we are now there, or we are within 20, 30, 40, 50 years of confronting the transcendental object at the end of time that drew us out of the animal body. History is the proof and the shockwave of the eschaton. This is a hard thing for secular audiences to wrap their minds around because they're familiar with hearing this from rattlesnake-handling Christers, but that's simply because religion has always been the repository of the irrational intuition. It never said that the irrational intuition is ipso facto false. It becomes a travesty when, hung with the, uh, trappings of dogma derived through the scholarly revelation of weasels, but the intuition, the intuition is pristine and the intuition of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and cults innumerable is that there is a finiteness to the historical experience. And then the more staid the ontology, the further into the future they put it so they can continue trading real estate, uh, for the next little while. I think that it is now possible to extrapolate the curves that describe our degradation of the planet, the spread of epidemic diseases, the ozone hole, the extraction of metals, the clearing of the rainforest, the rise of population, the spread of toxic compounds so fa- to see to convince yourself, even from a rational point of view, that history is a self-limiting process. Well, if you're a rationalist then you must conclude we're just headed for extinction. I would think then the rational response to that logical process would be to get your ass in gear and try and avert the distinct- the extinction, and if you're not a rationalist, then the conclusion you draw from all that is that, uh, we are within striking distance of merging with the mysterious hyper-spatial source of our intelligence, and that somehow this is a planetary birthing. Something is scripted as the breakup of Pangaea or the movement of glaciers south from the pole. It's just part of the process. Culture exists to transform mind out of the domain of matter. We are rising toward the rarefaction of ourselves into, uh, the transcendental plasmic body of alchemical and Buddhist, uh, uh, preoccupation. This is what is calling us out of matter. It's what called the monkeys out of animal organization, it's what calls technology out of the restless hands of the hominids, and it is what is calling all of us toward a kind of fusion with the community, with the psychedelic totality of the species, and with the larger gaian totality of the planet. This is what it all went for. This is the promise and the redemption of history. Without this redemption then history becomes the abortion that materialists fear it is. This is why the legitimate path to the transcendental, the linking of the individual with the transcend- transcendental through psychedelics now becomes the most important political work that can be done in the light of the rising awareness of the end of history. Thank you very much.

[audience claps]

Well, all of you who stayed, the intrepid core. I'll, i'll just go through these. I've not had any chance to look at them and, uh, handwriting is also degraded here at the end of the world so it's a little hard to sort out some of this. Um, "What role does an individual psychedelic experience play in the massive changes that you're anticipating?" It would seem to me- uh, well, my model for the psychedelic experience, there've

been a number of them. Uh, the idea that it's, uh, cre- mimics madness, that was one idea, that it takes you into the f- uh, Jungian unconscious, that was one notion, that it somehow illuminates the concepts of Indian, uh, yoga or after-death models such as the Tibetan Book of the Dead. All of these have been tried. My assumption has been a mathematical one, that, that what psychedelics are about is that mind, under the pressure, under the pressure of evolutionary constraints, turns itself into a threat detection device. Uh, and that's how we use it in three dimensional space, to anticipate threat and to meet it, but that that is, as it were, a lower-order application of mind and that, uh, in silent darkness what happens on psychedelics is that you- the mind unfolds literally into a kind of super space, or a higher dimension in the mathematical sense because I take seriously the i- the claims made in all times and places for millenia that shamans can locate lost objects, predict weather, see where the game has gone, and, uh, predict the outcome of disease situations. In all cases what is involved is a higher dimensional relationship to the manifold of history. So I think that, you know, you all understand that a locked box, if we had a padlocked box here on stage, a locked box is not locked in hyperspace. It has a f- a, a dimension in hyperspace from which the contents of the locked box are easily removed, taken out, and put back. In our world this looks like magic. Shamanism is like this and so, to answer the question "What role does an individual psychedelic experience play in the mass changes anticipated?" The role is that the individual gets in on the joke. At this stage in history to be a shaman is to have seen the end, and if you've seen the end it's like, you know, taking Anna Karenina and reading the last five pages, and then as you make your way through this bewildering morass of material you do have the faith that it's all going to end up as you discerned, so that's the political act. You see, terror of the future is one of the weapons by which the rationalists are holding everybody in line. Terror of the future can be put out to pasture through psychedelic shamanism.

Uh, ok. "It seems mushrooms for the masses is not really what you advocate." Ehhhh...[audience laughter] [Terence laughs] Mushrooms for the masses doesn't sound like such a terrible idea, I mean I always equivocate by saying, you know, if you're, if your problem is maintaining boundaries then you probably shouldn't take any psychedelics, but you can- in a mature civilization you know you don't uh, you don't define opportunities based on what will be detrimental to a small minority. Mushrooms for the masses seems to me a fine idea. I just don't see how it can ever come about because I believe that the society-shaping effects of these things are so powerful that, uh, they will never be tolerated. Just to go off on a tangent for a moment, this is why I am an incredibly pessimistic person about getting pot legalized because as far as I can tell the argument now in favor of legalizing cannabis is that it ain't no big deal so why not legalize it. The problem is that it is a big deal. You just have to bake it into some banana bread and you'll find out what a deal it is.

So, uh, you know, and if you read the 19th century accounts like Fitzhugh Ludlow, The Hashish Eater, people like that, it's perfectly clear that it can reach LSD levels of intensity if, uh, if you eat it. And I- the question, you know, if pot were, were judged on its social impact, uh, or, you know, its lack of addiction, its lack of detriment to health, it would have been legal a long time ago, but it subtly erodes commitment to dominator values in ways that are absolutely intolerable to dominator institutions. Uh, they'll let gays in the military before they'll legalize pot, that's how threatened they are by pot.

Well, let's see here. "Recently you appeared on talk radio with police chief Daryl Gates. What was the inside story and do you feel you were heard by him?" Well yes, I won't give this too much time. I did appear with Daryl Gates on his radio show. Clearly they're desperate to raise ratings. They'll do almost anything at this point. And Daryl Gates was, uh, a pussycat, very easily intimidated by I mean I make no great claims in this area, but intelligence. [audience laughter] He, he completely folded in the presence of,

you know, academic calm, big words, citation, that sort of thing. [audience laughter]

"What is the difference between your vision of the end of history and the Christian belief in a savior?" This is a great question. Um, my- the- ha, well, it's complicated. Uh, the way I think of this transcendental object at the end of time is on this level. For purpose of metaphor it's like those mirrored ball-bars that they hang in discos, you know, that spins and sends out scintillations of light all over the walls ceiling and floor of the room. The transcendental object at the end of time, and I like that image because, uh, alchemists- alchemists used to talk about what they called the scintilla, which is simply Latin for 'spark'. So the transcendental object at the end of time sends off scintillas, sparks which are like reflections of its essence but necessarily distorted. Well then, ranged all around this transcendental object, and at greater and lesser distances, are all the people who have ever lived, and if you are a Buddha, a Christ, a Mohammed, a guru-somebody or other, and you, you are- what that means is that you have been struck by a scintilla of reflection from the transcendental object and so you as it were mm, as- have assimilated its essence into your being, and now you must act it out. And I would bet you that if you could step into the mind of a Christ on the road to Calvary, or a Buddha preaching at Sinoth what you would discover going on in the personal part of the mind is the question "why me?" "Why me," and the answer is you just are dumb lucky, that's all. You know? You just happened to be standing in the right place at the right time and there is nothing special about you. You just have uh, a hit of the stuff. [audience chuckles]

Uh, and then the, the other part of the question- the, the problem with all these religions, and it affects flying saucer cults and it effects uh, occult schools of magic and everywhere is people claim to know too much. They are not willing to live in the light of ignorance and in the absence of closure. So you know, my God, you go to these uh, UFO conferences and you know, you've got the people talking to the Plebeians in uh, Booth 1 [audience chuckles]. Next to them people are talking to Commander Zamo of the Antares system, and then number 3 something else. No cognitive dissonance uh, between these groups. They all have coffee together and are dating heavily and it doesn't [audience laughter] ever seem to enter anybody's mind that this is a little odd. [audience laughter] In occult stuff, you know, y- you say "what's that?" and they say "well, that's the eleventh Amethystine Ray that was brought by the great white fathers of the Eleventh Lodge who came from the Galactic Center at the fall of Atlantis and established the [audience laughter]- you say, "how the hell do you know all this stuff?" [audience laughter, clapping]

I mean, nobody knows anything and, and Christianity, the anticipation of the end of the world and the exegesis of Revelations that has been worked out based on the visions of John of Athos uh, you know, it's a good try but it's not a uh, it's not a paint-by-numbers script for the unfolding of the world by any means. Uh, when the transcendental object at the end of time finally reveals its quintessence among us all prophecies will be fulfilled, all religious ontologies will find themselves uh, somehow vindicated and somehow humbled in the same moment, uh, because they were in fact uh, in Wordsworth's wonderful phrase "intimations of immortality." But you don't need to rely on the sanctioned intimations of immortality. You can have your own simply by taking five grams in silent darkness on an empty stomach after you've unplugged the phones on a Saturday night in your apartment. [audience laughter]

Uh, the, the real research into the nature of the Eschaton is done one-on-one uh, above five grams. [audience laughter, clapping]

Well, let's see here. Um, "I once heard you talk about an experiment your brother undertook where he was raving for three weeks, but you never explained what the experiment involved." uh, "What was it?" Well,

what a wonderful opportunity. [audience laughter] True Hallucinations. I, I never talked about this even, often to very dear friends of mine. I mean there are people who've known me for twenty years who I never told this story to because I think it takes as long to tell as it takes to read this book. You know that wonderful scene in The Time Ma- in Wells' Time Machine when he comes back to his gentleman's club and he says "Gentlemen, this is no tale to be told over greasy plates!" Well, similarly with this. So uh, y- I- and I didn't also want to make it the basis for my public career because this is real mm, uh, well, I almost said nutty stuff. [audience chuckles] It's uh, I generally um, disbelieve in violations of physical law and miracles, but I did actually in the course- I'm forty-six- I have seen three or four in my lifetime, and each time it's absolutely astonishing, whole worlds of possible questions are instantly answered and, uh, I wrote this book to inspire people to follow our method which is, our method is the rational but stoned mined in confrontation with the obscure. [audience chuckles] Seek ye the obscure, you know? If a book has, is not at least one hundred years old don't read it. Uh, if, if a country has more than one international airport don't visit it. Uh, if a village has more than one outboard motor don't stay, and just keep pushing and pushing and pushing because out there at the edges are the edges, and that- there are edges because nobody goes there, because the unsanctioned is hidden there. Uh, you know? That's where the shamans are and the mad people and uh, the sexual experimentalists and the uh, aesthetic experimentalists. Uh, that really is the method. Not, not belief. Belief is a toxic and dangerous attitude toward reality I think. After all, if it's there it doesn't require belief, and if it's not there why should you believe in it? [audience chuckles] It doesn't make a whole lot of sense. [audience claps]

By eliminating money and the separateness that it causes could the world be saved by sharing the resources and the work and eliminating all the unnecessary waste of energy and needless competition and consumption. Well, I'm not sure how money could be eliminated. See, I'm a funny person. I vacillate between- I have a very strong impulse toward political action and save the world and round up the miscreants and set things right. That's part of my thing, but I also have this incredibly evolved sense that it's a done deal, that it's ok, that the main task is a certain alertness and attention to one's comrades, and that it will all unfold through the intercession of the transcendental object at the end of time. People say this is a contradiction. Fine, it's a contradiction! I mean what are we doing here anyway? Is life supposed to be simple? [audience chuckles] Uh, so, but I, I, I preface that by saying one time somebody in a group like this challenged me and said "you're always talking about the peril of the planet and one thing and another uh, why, why don't you ask the mushroom how to save the planet?" And I, so then I thought that was kind of a facetious and challenging thing to propose, but the next time I found myself capable of asking the question [audience chuckles] I did! And the mushroom hesitated, and now I pass this on to you as pure fungal hearsay [audience laughter] on the networks. I said to the mushroom "so how can we save the world?" and it hesitated roughly a third of a second and said every woman should bear only one natural child. I thought about this for a long time before I ever publicly mentioned it to anyone, and I realized, you see I think that what is destroying us are two things. Number one, and uncontrolled rise in population that wipes out every good intention, every social program, every ar- e- expansion of agriculture succumbs to expanded population. This is destroying us.

The other thing that is destroying us is that we are not properly utilizing uh, the intelligence, talent and so forth of half of our population, the female half of the population. Now [audience clapping] people say [clears throat] that we must m- you know, women must be promoted and t- into professional positions and power positions and, and of course this is true and I agree, but what is really holding women back is that they spend a staggering amount of their creative lifespan raising children, and uh, if every woman were to bear only one natural child the population of the planet would fall by fifty percent in forty years without

wars, epidemic diseases. It would just naturally fall in half. Now, I don't think very many people have ever considered this possibility. We tend to think that our problems are insoluble. They are not insoluble. Furthermore it turns out, and here's news nobody likes to hear, a woman who, uh, uh, a child born to a woman in Santa Cruz compared to a child born to a woman in Bangladesh, that child will use between eight hundred and a thousand times more resources than the Bangladeshi child in its lifetime. So where do we preach population control? The third world, because that's where all the people are, but that's not the problem. People are not the problem. Incredible consumption by some people is the problem. It would be possible to imagine a world where inst- governmental institutions or whoever's running things could go to women and say "how would you like to have vastly increased leisure time? How would you like to have an in- increased expendable income, and how would you like to have genuine status as a hero in the struggle to save the planet?" If women were to have only one natural child, women would very naturally come into an enormous empowerment. No one, no institution could deny it to them. Uh, and interestingly enough this is not a plan where men, who have always been the planners and the managers of plans, play much of a role at all.

Well, I just passed that off in case you don't want to put your trust in the transcendental object at the end of the world, then the most politically conscious thing apparently from the mushroom's point of view that you could do is uh, encourage those kinds of policies and that kind of attitude.

Audience member: How many unnatural children? [audience chuckles] [Terence laughs]

TM: Are there unnatural children? Um-

Audience member: George Bush.

TM: [Terence laughs] Oh dear, still carrying a grudge? [audience laughter] Leave it. Leave it to Saddam. [Terence laughs]

Audience member: Only children would be neurotic [?? 1:22:35]

TM: No. That is not true. That's what always put out. The fact of the matter is in 1800 the average American woman gave birth thirteen times in the course of her lifetime. The two-ch- the two-child family is a genuflection to the industrial revolution. No traditional culture on this planet ever advocated the two-child family. It's a convenience that allows uh, factories to run and uh, jobs to be filled, and in fact as the father of two children I would argue that the two-child family, what happens is the children mirror the tension between the parents in a way that happens in no other configuration of uh, of parent-child relationship. So I would actually argue that uh, w- then, the so-called family values that these right-wingers are constantly binging us preserve are in fact values created to support the agenda of the industrial revolution which means global capitalism. They have nothing to do with archaic values which are enormous families, not nuclear families but extended families living communally. That's the traditional model, and if you're not ready to go back to that then one woman, one child is as good as anything else..in my humble opinion. [audience chuckles]

Let's see here. "You mentioned earlier this evening that psychedelics played a role in human evolution. How so?" Thank you for not groaning, those of you who have heard me explain this eighteen times. Uh, because it may be my only crack at getting into the history books, uh. [audience chuckles] It, i- it seems to

me clear, well it seems to everybody who looks at the question clear that the theory of evolution is handed a tremendous dilemma when it comes to human evolution. Uh, a planet of groundhogs, hummingbirds and slime molds poses no problem to Darwinian evolution as modified by molecular genetics. We pose a problem, specifically our brain, and it's doubling in size in less than two million years is very difficult for the theory of evolution to explain, and it's a, a particular embarrassment because that's the organ which generated the theory of evolution. [audience laughter] So it's like a real rip in uh, the, the sail of the galleon of evolution.

I believe and everyone believes that there must have been extraordinary selective pressures of the unique sort up on our early ancestors to have produced the human brain in such a short amount of time, and I think that the answer, and I don't wanna go into it in detail tonight, but briefly here's what it is, and it explains a lot about our sexuality and our politics and so forth. All primates um, clear back to squirrel monkeys and like that have what are called dominance hierarchies. We all know what this means. It means that the hard-muscled, long-fanged young males run roughshod over everybody else, the women, the children, homosexuals, the old. Everybody gets their marching orders from the dominant males. This is true throughout the primates and it is true of us as we sit here this evening. That's what's screwing up our politics and making us uh, you know, the situation with women so forth and so on, and it can be argued to other social problems as well. I believe that psilocybin uh, because it dissolves boundaries is uniquely positioned to mitigate against this tendency toward male dominance for a number of reasons uh, and when our remote ancestors moved in- out of the trees and into the grasslands they encountered these mushrooms and I think the great undiscussed frontier of evolutionary theory is the effect of mutagens in foods on human evolution. We- most animals maintain a very narrow food menu to avoid contact with mutagens. We, when we were forced out of the arboreal canopy we became omnivores. We came under nutritional pressure and for a long time we were testing all kinds of foods, and that would have meant a very high rate of mutation through that period and an acceleration in natural selection, and I think that uh, that psilocybin because it uh, improves visual acuity would have given a leg up to predators and hunter-gathering um, protohominids and so in a sense there was a period of time, perhaps as short as a hundred thousand years, perhaps as long as a million or more years when uh, male dominance in our species was suppressed chemically by psilocybin in the diet. It was still there [Terence coughs] hard-wired in the genes, but chemically suppressed by an orgiastic, religious style that had everybody taking mushrooms at the new and full moon and then having sex in a heap basically. This made it impossible for men to trace lines of male paternity. That's a consequence of an orgiastic uh, society, and w- a kind of paradise evolved and it was during that paradisaical interlude that language, theater, altruism, metaphysics, poetry, dance, uh, religion, all of the functions that we equate with unique humanness evolved under the aegis of a near symbiosis with sym- with psilocybin mushrooms, and then- this all was happening in Africa- then through climatic upheaval, drying of the African continent, the mushrooms disappeared and God forbid the old wiring reasserted itself. It must have been hell on earth. It must have been similar to what we're living through. It must have been an era of incredible brutalization when people stopped caring for each other, people stopped having group sex, they started fighting over women, fighting over territory, bashing each others' brains out, appointing leaders, uh, uh, developing weapons. The entire sick set of pathological institutions that leads to our dilemma was evolved in the wake of the invention of agriculture and the abandonment of nomadism and so forth and so on, and this is why I think we're so funny on the subject of drugs because we are literally the children of a drug. There wouldn't be human beings on this planet had there not been this hominid-mushroom interaction over a very, very long period of time. The reason we addict so easily to so many substances and the reason people destroy their lives with various addictions is we have an itch that we just can't scratch, and we try everything, and I maintain that you'll keep itching and you'll keep

scratching til you come to this very narrow family of hallucinogens, the tryptamine hallucinogens. Then the itch stops because you are restored to the archaic dynamic in which we created the most noble social systems that we have ever lived under: the archaic, shamanic, goddess-worshipping world of the dawn-time, and history is a fall away from that exactly as these monotheistic religions uh, insist. The fall into history, and I see then this emergent end of the world, post-history, millenarian culture as an attempt to reconnect with that archaic authenticity that was the birthplace of intellect, of poetry, of beauty, of love and of altruism.

Ok. [audience claps] These are great questions. I wish I had more time. Here's uh, one: "please define intelligence." Strangely enough, I was thinking about this today as I, I can't even remember why, but I produced a definition. Uh, i- it's a kind of a cribbing from Whitehead. Whitehead defined understanding in the following way. He said "understanding is the apperception of pattern as such." That's all. For instance, in this room there are many patterns: where the men are, where the women are, where the over-forties are, where the under-forties are, where the wealthy and the poor are. Each of these patterns if you can see it tells you more about the situation, and presumably there are an infinite number of these informative patterns. So I would define uh, intelligence as Whitehead defined understanding. Intelligence is the apperception of pattern as such, and the more of pattern, of the pattern and the more patterns that you perceive the more intelligent you are. Of course, these patterns must actually be there, [audience chuckles] otherwise you're delusory and that's a different issue.

And then I'll do uh, I'll do one more here.

Audience member: Aww.

TM: Aww. [Terence chuckles] You don't wa- go fast through them! [Terence chuckles] [audience laughter]

What do you think about meditation as a path to other levels of consciousness and understanding so-called reality as illusion. I, I've- meditation is a fine thing. I do it. Uh, I'm not sure what its relation to the psychedelic experience is. I, I, the best uh, the uh, this is essentially part of a larger question which is "can you get there on the natch?" uh, and m- m- you know, the short answer is no. [audience chuckles] The fair answer is maybe in exceptional cases, cases so exceptionable, so exceptional that the answer is no. [audience chuckles] Uh, the- and the perils I submit to you are much greater because uh, what is so wonderful about the psychedelics is how democratic they are. You know, you don't have to have enslaved yourself into some beady-eyed weasel and his set of precepts, dietary strictures and mantric formulas. Uh, it doesn't work like that. It isn't handed down through a human lineage. I asked the mushroom about this. I said "can, you know, what's the deal with uh, these other paths to enlightenment?" And you got to understand, this is the mushroom speaking [audience laughter] but it said for one human being to seek enlightenment from another is like one grain of sand to seek enlightenment from another; kt is preposterous. And I like that because I never met anybody whose intelligence seemed so intimidating that they deserved to be followed, and I daresay you probably haven't either uh, if you've been paying attention.

I mean how many [audience laughter], how many philandering zennys have to parade before us? How many coguptes [??] with a Budweiser welded to their good right hand do we have to encounter uh, before you get the message? You know, these guys are just slimeballs at worst and lost souls at best, and you're smarter than they are by an order of magnitude anyway, so why waste your time? Now, if you want to

follow, if you just can't tear yourself away from the concept of following, then you know, how about Plato, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plotinus, Proclus? You know, dead guys, they're much safer. [audience laughter] You know? They're not going to try and climb into your wallet or uh, some delicate portion of your anatomy [audience laughter] plus they've been use-tested uh, in the historical arena uh, and have been found to be generally at, at least harmless at worst and in some cases actually to be recommended uh, so I would say you know, the whole message of psychedelics is self-empowerment. Trust yourself. Seize the tiller of your destiny. It is your life. It is your body. It is your mind, and it's your world to re-make as you choose to reshape it. History has failed. The past is no guide. Uh, the, the immediate generations preceding us have dealt themselves into bankruptcy. Their object fetishism, their ideological excesses, their uh, tendency to resort to brutality in the solution of every problem has essentially ruled them uh, out of play. They are no longer operable and uh, psychedelics because they do in fact enhance, accelerate and promote consciousness must, must, it's not a debate, must loom large in the future history of our species because if consciousness is not a major part of the human future, it is not a human future.

Thank you very very much. [audience clapping]

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by:

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Technopagans at the End of History

August 1998

Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Audio files](#)

Original Transcription by: [offline transcription in progress - wjaynay - 5 Aug 2015]

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Lecture Name

Day Month Year 1982-2000

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

Review 1 by: someone else

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Terence McKenna in Maryland

24, February 1990

Location, City, MD

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

I wish I had some of that stuff! [audience chuckles]. Well, I was surprised to hear McLuhan invoked so many times today. And I will do it again. McLuhan had an idea of what he called the global village and the global village is coming to be. This is what the crisis that is being presented to us as a crisis in communism is. It isn't a crisis for communism- communism is going first. But what it is is the death knell for centralized structure, [audience claps] for centralized control. If you think what we've been through in the past year is something, wait 'til you see what's on the agenda, and I don't mean great CNN feed from Moscow as the Soviet Union turns into fifteen independent republics, I mean what's gonna happen here because what is so terrifying about Gorbachev from the point of view of the powers that be is that he models a leader who can't say "we did it wrong". [audience claps]

Baker was on one of the talk shows, uh, after one of these "we did it wrong" statements by Gorbachev. And they said to him, "Well uh, under what circumstances would uh, an official of the United States government admit a mistake. And he said "well, you don't understand, you see, we, we have a collective decision-making apparatus and hence we don't make mistakes." [audience laughter]

You see? So I, I think uh, to return to McLuhan for a moment. What's happening is as Yates said in his poem "the center does not hold." Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, but as fans of chaos we should know that this mere anarchy is the incarnation of our goddess, Discordia, who is going to pull down [audience cheering] the [??] structure that is oppressing everybody. Uh, what I see happening and this is touched upon by others here is this intensification of local identification: bioregionalism, awareness of your immediate place and then no hierarchical structure or identification until you reach the planetary level. I live in Sonoma county, and I am a citizen of earth. I recognize no intermediate structures except my home. [audience clapping]

So I agree with Tim. I cheer on the people who present the protocols and plead their cases before these grey-faced medical boards, but in my opinion you just circumvent all that, you go around it. It's irrelevant. History has these dominator types by the balls [laughter] You know, history, history is a psychedelic experience. It, it's the collective unfolding of the dream of our species in space and time. We are at the apex. This is the peak, this is the 2nd hour of the trip. We're going over the top! [audience cheering, clapping]

Announcer: Sorry we've gone too late for questions

'til the sun comes up!

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

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Art Bell Interview

22 May 1997

Location, City, State

Description

- [Scribd Transcript](#)

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Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

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Terence McKenna Performs with Lost at Last Maui

Day Month 1998

Location, Maui, Hawaii

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Lecture Name

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Terence McKenna Talks to the Psychozoic Press

by Elvin D. Smith v1.1 -Jan 19, 2012

Originally published in the Psychozoic Press, Issues 5-9 (1983-1984)

Non-Terence intro:

Q. When is a book more than a book?

A. When the material presented therein triggers within the mind of the reader conceptualizations greater than those which can be expected as a consequence of logical deduction.

The Invisible Landscape (1975) by Terence and Dennis McKenna is just such a book. When Terence sent me a review copy of this book some time ago, I was astounded, to put it mildly. The authors have shown how scientific knowledge in fields such as quantum physics, chemistry, genetics, and information theory interfaces with subjective metaphysical precepts manifested by the psychedelic experience. Science, they're telling us, has nearly reached the end of its rope by restricting its investigations to aspects of the physical world which can be repeatedly produced in controlled situations. Science has a difficult time getting an investigative handle on phenomena such as telepathy, UFO experiences, and similar paranormal phenomena, because these situations are difficult, if not impossible, to investigate from the laboratory bench.

Terence and his brother are also the authors of Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide (1976), written under the pseudonyms O. T. Oss & O. N. Oeric. Terence has lectured extensively on hallucinogens and consciousness at the Esalen Institute, and is currently working on another book soon to be published. His brother is busy preparing a doctoral thesis on plant hallucinogens.

You could say Grower's Guide launched the starship and provided the initial acceleration. Now that we're so close to the hyperdimensional shock wave--as we transfer into the higher dimensions--the ontological linguistic transformation that Terence McKenna speaks of becomes necessary--indeed, the most obvious choice--for communication. There is quite a shock front to get the hyperdimensional shift to become probabilistically localized, but his discussion on time and the #Iching in *The Invisible Landscape* make the potentialities distinctly visible. Yet what I first noticed about Terence was not what he was saying, but how he was saying it. (Those of you who have heard him speak or heard his tapes will know what I'm talking about.) Terence, and his brother too, both have a peculiar way of enunciating every word with a lucidity unlike any other speaker I've heard. Perhaps he has access to a 7-element hyperdimensional communications processor or something. "Fascinating", as Spock would say. He's probably a skilled hypnotist besides...

Terence McKenna, author, lecturer, and shamanic explorer of the realm of psychedelic states, has been described by some as being "so far out, nobody knows what he's talking about", and by others as "the most innovative thinker our times". You be the judge.

The writings of the McKenna brothers are fascinating to me, not because I agree with everything they are saying (I don't), but because they are presenting ideas which are self-propagating. *The Invisible Landscape* triggered more questions in my mind than it answered; the impression is that the ideas presented are just the tip of the iceberg, a single needle on the redwood tree, one cell within the nervous system. In this sense, *The Invisible Landscape* is a book that's more than a book. I decided to talk to the author.

INTERVIEW BEGINS HERE:

Psychozoic Press: Mr. McKenna, what's the most important shortcoming as you see it of science's approach to studying the world around us?

Terence McKenna: Science is interested in the kind of phenomena where, when you recreate the initial conditions, the same effect is always observed. And yet in life, you never experience the same sort of initial conditions; they're always different. Every set of processes that are really interesting has many end states. So you can think of science as a kind of large-grid description of the world. It only explains the simple phenomena that can be repeatedly triggered. All the complex phenomena--consciousness, memory, culture--these things slip right through it.

PP: In the lecture you gave at the Esalen Institute on "Tryptamine Hallucinogens and Consciousness", you talked about calling yourself an explorer. You referred to LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, and other hallucinogens as each being a distinct phenomenological universe. Would the physics of concrescence you're talking about in *The Invisible Landscape* be a sort of proto-science which seeks to integrate these various phenomenological universes?

TM: Concrescence is a philosophical term taken from Alfred North Whitehead. It means the growing together of something. And on the highest level, the growing together of everything. And in that sense, yes, these psychedelic drugs anticipate future states of human consciousness. The historical process is an exploration of these psychedelic states at the cultural level. You can actually say society is becoming more psychedelic; it means that society is becoming more and more reflective of the modalities of mind, and

that process can be seen as an informational "growing together", a concrescence.

PP: Yes. When you stop to think about the way thinking has evolved in physics, you can see that it covers larger and larger domains in trying to describe the material aspects of three-dimensional matter.

TM: Well, science has outsmarted itself by pushing its analysis of the physical world to such a limit that it becomes recursive. You discover that you're no longer talking about velocity and momentum and charge and spin, you're talking about syntax and language and point-of-view and perspective and emphasis. The language of psychology almost emerges as a necessary consequence of examining matter at the very deepest level. This is symbolized by the ouroboric snake taking its tail in its mouth. Any analysis pursued deeply enough will lead back to the question of who analyzes, and this is what has happened in physics.

PP: Some of the labels they have come up with to name these different qualities reflect that, too: "charm", "color", and "beauty". The problems they have with labeling these things are kind of interesting in themselves.

TM: Well, they intuitively feel them to be primary qualities, so they want to label them with primary philosophical values. It's very platonic--almost Pythagorean.

PP: Yes, I was reading something not long ago about the "truth" quark--that's getting pretty fundamental.

TM: That's right, the search is on for the truth quark, now that naked beauty has been observed!

PP: You also spoke of "tuning" images so that the intent of meaning could be beheld in 3-D space--a technique of communication for which language is just a foreshadow. I understand what you're talking about, but it seems you're avoiding the term "telepathy".

TM: Telepathy I assume to be mind-to-mind transfer of thought, but with no ontological transformation of language. In other words, if you could hear what I'm thinking without me speaking, that would be telepathy. But I'm talking about something very different. It's actually an ontological transformation of the language so that language is no longer perceived with the ears, it's perceived with the eyes. When I speak, between you and me there comes into being the subject that I am discussing, and we can both look at it. And I turn it for you, and you behold, then, my intent, rather than hearing my intent.

When you hear my intent, what happens is I make small mouth noises, which have meanings assigned to them in the language called English. You have an English dictionary in your head. So my small mouth noises impinge on your brain, and you look in your English dictionary, and you figure out what I'm saying. Because we have a more-or-less common body of meaning. Although there can be misunderstanding if the subject is subtle.

I'm talking, though, about a kind of psychedelic language. You can almost think of it as an audio hologram, where sound is used to produce visual displays that are mutually beheld.

PP: Could such a system be created using the internet? Navigation of thought?

TM: This idea, which sounds fairly outlandish, is actually very old. Philo Judaeus, an Alexandrian Jew of

the second century, talked about the more perfect Logos, posing the question: "What would be the more perfect Logos?" And he said it would be a phenomenon that would move from being heard to being beheld without there being at any point a noticeable transition from one to the other.

And this would have just remained wild theological rambling if it weren't for the fact psilocybin and the tryptamine hallucinogens, especially DMT, make this possible. By singing and making linguistic vocalizations on these psychoactive compounds you can then produce a synesthetic glossolalia; you can control the contour of the hallucinogenic topology to such a degree that you can put meaning onto it. In other words, you are no longer the passive observer of an alien continuum; you are, in fact, through sound, imprinting onto this continuum intent and meanings. So it becomes a sculptable medium. And this is what mushroom shaman know. I think this is happening at higher doses than are usually taken in a recreational context in this society. But above five grams--if you weigh in the 140 pound range, and you take it in comfortable, dark, situations where you lie still in complete darkness with your eyes closed, no music, and you work with it--this becomes possible. The whole shamanic tradition that touches mescaline, as well, stresses the magic song--the song which is not willed, but comes through you. With ayahuasca in the Amazon, it's the same thing; the magic song is very much stressed.

So I think there is a potential technology--a fusing of language, psychoactive drugs, and thought--that could produce this ontologically different form of communication. In a sense, to return to your question, it is telepathy, But it's a whole different idea about what telepathy would be like, rather than being mind-to-mind transfer of spoken thought.

And I lecture about this. What I'm concerned to do professionally is to try and get people to redefine the psychedelic experience--at least the tryptamine-based psychedelic experience: psilocybin, DMT, and ayahuasca. It isn't the psychedelic model that we inherit from the '50s or the '60s: that you are opened to past emotional trauma, that you have deep insight into your personal existence, that you uncover traumatic material and resolve it. The Freudian and Jungian models of the psychedelic experience don't prepare you for the phenomenology of psilocybin at high doses; something else is going on. We're going to have to have a new model because it relates to all this linguistic stuff and the way in which language and the visual cortex are keyed and controlled. It hints at a new potential for an expression of humanness that is not technological, except in the mushroom as the product of technology.

And it's like language. The way in which language emerged must have been similar to this. In fact it's possible to suggest that man was formed by the interaction of curious higher primates with hallucinogenic plants. Because in experiments with monkeys where they had available DMT pipes--where the monkey could walk over and take a hit if he wanted to, but he didn't have to--certain monkeys would become literally fascinated by consciousness, by the phenomenon of watching themselves go through some kind of totally weird transformation.

That lays the basis. Once you are fascinated by a neurophysiological response, the more you trigger it, the more the credos are laid down for it to be more and more accessible. So you can just imagine these monkeys bootstrapping themselves toward Milton, Shakespeare, Bach, and Einstein, with these plant hallucinogens.

PP: So you're actually saying then that we're going through a second or higher phase of learning with these hallucinogens.

TM: Right. The cultural catalysis that is a product of hallucinogens is now entering a new phase. It's related to an ontological transformation of how we perceive and handle language. And I'm sure technology will have some role to play in this.

Information is what is loose on this planet. If you were to come in a flying saucer from another star system and observe the Earth, you would not have Linnaean bias of seeing everything in terms of competing species. What you would see is that there is a gene swarm on this planet; an immense gene swarm is furiously exchanging genes, but species are not being differentiated out of it. And that gene swarm represents an information swarm, because DNA is essentially a way of storing and transmitting and replicating information. That is what life is.

But then with culture and the advent of language, and then the further advent of alphabets and writing, information is taking on this more and more intense, rapidly replicating and self-reflecting ability. And when you get to the level of computers and technology, it's almost like consciousness is beginning to move out of the monkeys and into the excreted, reef-like, technoconrescence that the monkeys produce. We are more like coral animals taking metal out of the earth, crimping it with ideas, and excreting it as machinery. I think it was Marshall McLuhan who said people are the genitals of technology. They exist to design next year's model and make it better. Information has this desire to self-reflect and replicate itself.

And of course, the psychedelics relate very closely to this. Because they are essentially information probes of some sort, reporting telemetric data coming in from nearby and not-so-nearby dimensions. But they are entirely interpretable as information, and in that sense probably susceptible to analysis by information theory.

PP: You've talked quite a bit too, about the UFO experience. I've read a few references to people who have had a perception of "galactic consciousness" with LSD. I've had that experience, too. But I notice you have made quite a point of differentiating the tryptamine hallucinogens from the others.

TM: Well, I'm not sure what you mean by "galactic consciousness". I can imagine that LSD gives you a vast and sympathetic perspective with nature on an astronomical scale. But what I'm talking about with these tryptamines is something a little different. It's the sense of the presence of an intellect of some sort--the sense that there are life forms, and forms of conscious organization, that really are alien and bizarre. But the problem is that they are not 30,000 light years away; they somehow, somehow, interpenetrate the here-and-now.

This is a persistent claim of shamanism, and of true folkloric thinking worldwide. But it's a very alien idea to the last thousand years of Western thinking, where we have been definitely on the retreat from the idea that the universe is populated with teaming angels, demons, or anything else.

Again, the reason I link the UFO to psilocybin is because in the high-dose situation, or in the repeated high-dose situation in isolation, the psilocybin experience blends imperceptibly into what is called the "contact experience".

And nobody likes to hear this, because the UFO people are very jealous of their UFOs and absolutely convinced that they come from the stars and are made of metal and bear great hope for mankind. They

think that any explanation which explains this in terms of human psychology or something like that is a reductionment. But actually, I don't think this is true. I think the UFO represents a sort of "shock wave" of concrescence; it precedes concrescence. It's a shadow of concrescence that haunts time and has always haunted time. It comes and goes, in and out of history. It is like a reflection of the end of history. It is the spiral lens-shaped topology left when everything flows together--when the temporal vectors collapse, you know, and we pass beyond description...

PP: The thing I was thinking of, just then, is that the attitude we hold toward these UFOs now probably is not much different than that which primitive men held about the moon and stars 10,000 years ago. They probably looked up in the sky and wondered what the silvery disk of white light was that moved across the sky at night.

TM: Yes, that's right. And you don't have to go back 10,000 years. A very interesting parallel to the relationship of the flying saucer to modern people is the relationship of the search for the philosopher's stone to the psychology of people in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Here it was rumored, you know, that certain people could produce a magical object that would give you long life, transmute substances into gold; it was just this mystical substance that would do everything, the universal panacea. Certain people claimed to have seen it or possessed it at one time, and wild and fantastic speculation was launched around this thing. Thus it served as a great impetus to the exploration of physical matter. And then, as more and more was discovered about physical matter, obsession with the philosopher's stone was slowly itself transformed into modern science. And I think the UFO obsession, if it develops correctly, will slowly change from an obsession with brotherly space people who will come and save us from ourselves into a much deeper appreciation of the hyperdimensional nature of consciousness, and the realization that all mind is Mind. There is only one Mind. Humanness is a name for a section of Mind that we exercise some control over. But information passes everywhere. There's an aphorism: Understanding passes everywhere.

PP: How about the UFO experience in relation to other types of light visions, like people seeing angels and saints and Virgin Marys? Ezekiel's UFO, are you familiar with that?

TM: Sure. That's all this business of "the other" presenting itself within the context of the historical situation. In other words, what happens is that you're somebody in some historical period and you're out in the wilderness. Something very strange begins to happen. The immediate symptoms of it are that the hair on the back of your neck stands up and your knees feel weak and you see a tremendous light descending from the sky. At that point your mind throws an enormous question out in the universe, which is: "WHAT'S HAPPENING?" And the answer comes back dependent on your historical situation. It is either without doubt, a manifestation of Krishna, or the Virgin Mary, or the flying saucer, or the philosopher's stone, or your personal guardian spirit--it depends entirely on who you are. You explain. The mind just goes into a tizzy of explanation. Whenever the mind is confronted with something it can't immediately dismiss, it falls into a frenzy of explanation, and that is what happens in that situation. And again, it has close parallels with these tryptamine hallucinogens. Because what happens when you smoke DMT, and what makes it so strange, is you immediately have these very complicated three- (at least, possibly four-) dimensional hallucinations by which you are surrounded. And you attempt immediately to pour language onto them. You say, "It's a . . . it's like a . . ." And it doesn't work. And the more that it doesn't work, the monkey inside you begins to go into some kind of shock. Because language is supposed to work.

PP: So that triggers the glossolalia-like phenomenon you were talking about in the Esalen lecture?

TM: Well, in an effort to utter what the thing is, and seeing that English is hopeless, you are abandoned to your deeper intuition. And out of that comes the glossolalia, which then is actually able to "lock" that modality and affect it or "dance" with it. You wouldn't say "control" it, but you can then enter the flow and go through these changes with it.

I think that the great failing of psychedelic reportage and research is that the content of the experience is not stressed. They say "you have vivid hallucinations". But what the hell is a "vivid hallucination"?

I think people should be questioned very, very carefully. This is the interesting part. What it does to your heartbeat and whether your sweat increases and all that may be interesting to pharmacologists, but how many of us are pharmacologists? Most of us live in the real world, and what we want to know is what did it say to you about the real world, and the nature of reality, and how we should behave in the situation in which we find ourselves. That's what is most "obviously" important; and everybody's relationship to psychedelics is like that. They are into it for what it does for them--how it makes them understand being. But then when we rise to the level of scientific and psychological and clinical descriptions, all we hear about is heartbeat and whether the pupils are dilated, whether the reflexes were impaired.

PP: Is the psychedelic experience, then, going to be of paramount importance in the evolution of consciousness, or would these experiences be more appropriately regarded as accessory conveniences rather than essential elements? Just how important is the psychedelic experience?

TM: I think it's absolutely central. As I mentioned earlier, I think it not only causes us to become human beings, to emerge out of the primate substratum, but it is also driving us to move beyond being human beings. Speaking specifically of psilocybin, DMT, and ayahuasca, these are the hallucinogens which most closely resemble neurotransmitters. LSD does not occur in mammalian metabolism, [lysergic acid amide] only occurs in morning glories and ergot. Mescaline occurs in cacti, ketamine occurs in noorganic situation. But DMT occurs endogenously in the brains of all mammals, including man. The β -carbolines occur endogenously in the brain of man. In fact, as you ascend the primate phylogeny, more and more occurs, so that man has the greatest concentration. N,N-dimethyltryptamine is very closely related to serotonin, which is 5-hydroxytryptamine and is the major neurotransmitter that's driving the brain.

So I think it's possible even to suggest that to produce a state of mind roughly analogous to ayahuasca intoxication, all that's required is a one-gene mutation in the human genome. My hit on what these tryptamine hallucinogens are doing, is that they are literally anticipating future states of human evolution. This is the way the human mind is going to evolve. This is why, I think, there is such a persistent report that psilocybin hallucinations are science-fiction-like and seem to present these, you know, super-glossy, machine-like, highly polished surfaces that you can see into; I think that's an anticipation of cultural modalities. Like science fiction is an anticipation of the future, so is psilocybin. These things all come together. We are moving into the kinds of chemical brain states that will allow this kind of synesthesia--the visible glossolalia that I talked about. It could be a voluntary activity of normal metabolism.

PP: It seems odd, then, that the Eastern mystics haven't recognized this. Most of them are saying if there is any kind of drug involved, it's not a valid experience.

TM: Well, this is a special gripe of mine. I'm not impressed with priest craft. I think hierarchical religions

are anti-progressive. This is why I have such respect for shamanism, since what it chiefly is, is very idiosyncratic. Shamanism is experimental psychology carried out by people who are not like us. It is not a religion in the sense of a set of dogmas; it's more like a set of maps that are given to you, and then you travel where you will.

I don't think that the yogic states approximate the tryptamine intoxication. In fact, part of what I'm trying to do with my career is point people to this and say look at this. This has been overlooked. Psilocybin, which is the most often contacted of these tryptamine hallucinogens, has--in the literature and the legal codes and all that--been treated as though it were like LSD. People say, "LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, etc.". But psilocybin is totally different from anything else. It has a phenomenology that we need to look at very, very carefully. It raises all kinds of questions in areas where we have never before been able to do anything. It allows you the repeated phenomena of "contacting an alien intelligence". We can do this with psilocybin in the laboratory with naive subjects. So that's big news for experimental psychology. Even if this "talking to aliens in the head" is only a psychosis, it's still big news that here is a compound that will repeatedly trigger it in a situation where you can study it.

Experimental psychology, pharmacology, linguistics, information theory, aesthetics, heuristics--all these disciplines would profit themselves by including the psychedelic experience in the province of things to be integrated.

PP: Yes, I think so. The concept of communication with an alien intelligence, which you brought out in the Esalen lecture, has been part of my own experience, too. And much more so with psilocybin than with any other type of hallucinogen.

TM: Yes. Well, because of the book we had written about growing the mushroom, we had access to name lists of people who had expressed interest in the book. We sent out many questionnaires about how people related to psilocybin. One of the questions was: "How much do you take?" Another was: "Do you hear voices?" We discovered that people who never took more than two or three grams (that's probably eighty-five percent of all people who take mushrooms) did not report voices. But the group using the high doses, seventy to eighty percent of those people checked that they heard voices, and some people felt inspired to write paragraphs about it.

PP: You spoke about getting in touch with the oversoul through psychedelic drugs and leaving behind an era when man is "disciplined" by messiahs and saucers and progress is halted for millenia at a stretch. But wouldn't that make us as reliant on psychedelic drugs as we now are on technological materialism and hard science?

TM: No, because I assume that once you have contact with the oversoul, ways will be found to access it without dependence on psychedelics. The idea of the oversoul is another one of these metaphors to try and explain this "voice which integrates everything".

The reference to man being disciplined by saucers and messiahs is the idea that these religions, which arise from time to time and which halt all progress in any area except the exegesis of their own religious message, are like cultural governors. They occur because society becomes neurotically imbalanced. And in order to save it from itself, a kind of stasis is imposed in the form of some very autocratic, dogmatic religious faith which holds everything together for a thousand years or so while everybody catches their

breath. Then it is eroded, and then progress in psychology and science and mathematics and other things begins again. But then the culturally neurotic situation arises again. And each time the intervention by the oversoul is appropriate to the historical context.

For instance, the Hellenistic world, groaning under Roman imperialism, which was based on Greek philosophy, was totally ripe for a guy who rises from the dead after three days and preaches a certain gospel. And it's amazing, you know, where in a world where information moved no faster than a horse could gallop, Christianity exploded out of the Middle East. And the Roman authorities couldn't believe it. To them, it was just the wildest garbage! They were trained in Greek materialism and Euclidian mathematics and epicurean ethics. The idea that somebody could rise from the dead was utterly preposterous. Yet the servants were whispering and attending meetings, and the authorities dismissed it till it was too late.

Now, the flying saucer thing is very, very similar. No serious person gives it a moment's thought. It's just the stuff of the National Enquirer. Nevertheless, these polls keep coming out: thirty-seven percent of the American people believe flying saucers are real; eleven percent claim to have seen one. What's happening is that loyalty is being transferred from scientific institutions to the "space brothers". Not on the governing level of society, where everything is calm and controlled, but with the great masses who read the National Enquirer and say, "Well Ma dear, it seems tuh me th' space folk know a great deal more about it than prezydent Raygun!" That's dangerous talk. That means the official religion, which is science, is helpless in the face of this thing. They say, "It's something, but it's nothing." But they don't realize the important thing about the flying saucer is not, "What is it?" The important thing about it is, "What is it doing to human society?" What it's doing is throwing open the door to the legitimate belief in the irrational, and all kinds of other stuff.

It's changing, in other words, the social mass psychology. And that is something the government is usually the one to look after--our mass psychological images. Then here comes this other thing--out of the unconscious, I claim--to subvert the historical dreams of people who think they run things, and to instead send society in some other direction. It's like a metaphysical spanking. A mature society would not need messiahs or flying saucers to keep kicking it back into line. A mature society would just avoid being neurotic and things would develop without these lurches in one direction then another.

PP: I'm not sure if I'm going to agree with that completely, but...

TM: [laughter] If you don't, just walk out!

PP: Well, you talked along the same line about science betraying human destiny. The impression I have is not that science is betraying human destiny, but that science is dispensing its discoveries similar to the way the rain is sent on the unjust and the just. It seems that the political and economic communities have polluted science by applying that knowledge for localized and sometimes devious personal objectives. So all that comes down from science can go either way. Einstein wasn't thinking about Hiroshima, for example, when he worked out the equations of General Relativity.

TM: That's right. But on a larger scale, science has biases that have led us into the place we are: the fantastic concentration on understanding matter. What if, in the thirteenth century, they had become as obsessed with psychology as they became with matter; where would we be today?

PP: We'd probably be in our caves and huts meditating.

TM: Possibly. Or maybe that route would have taken us to the stars far sooner. What if shamanism had not been stomped on and pushed to the edge of the empire? What if instead we had pursued a route such as the Druids or the Incas or the Mayans? Because these were high civilizations; they attained levels of civilization comparable to where Europe was around 1200.

But we chose a certain path--a bias in favor of certain rules of evidence, certain ideas about what constituted claims on our cultural attention.

PP: I think that was necessary, though, to lay the foundations for more metaphysical developments later.

TM: Actually, I agree with you. What I often say in my public lectures is that civilization is the 10,000-year dash from the campfire to the starship. And it's a complete riot, and nobody knows till the last second whether it ends in complete catastrophe or in, you know, everybody being gathered into the Lord and setting off for the galactic center. And we won't know. It just becomes more and more frenzied and crazed. And in geological and biological terms it lasts only a micro-second. But if we who live seventy years have the fortune or misfortune to be born and die anywhere in that tiny 10,000-year span, it's a pretty crazy situation.

PP: You also talked about the primary and secondary qualities of matter such as mass, location, and velocity as opposed to color and texture, and then gave some discussion about these qualities being equivalently real, and pointed out that there's no justification for holding one set more real than the other. This brings us to the question: Is there any objective reality, or should we dispense with what is called objective reality?

TM: I think we should probably dispense with that notion. At bedrock, I don't believe the universe is made of quarks, or particles, or electromagnetic fields, or God's love, or anything like that. What I think it is made of is language. And where does language come from? It seems like it comes from inside our heads.

All these things--the Universe is this, it's that--these are just word nets. The Universe seems to be what you say it is. And to some degree, not what I say it is, or what you say it is; we are embedded in a cultural voice which says what it is. Then within that cultural voice we have our own small voice and we can "tinker" with the cultural definition of reality to some degree.

But over millenia, the cultural voice has changed its mind several times about what reality is. So I think we need, not a physics of what reality is, but a syntax, a grammar. We need to approach reality the way we would approach a work of literature, rather than the way we would approach a material system.

PP: So would you say language is rapidly becoming obsolete as a means of communication?

TM: It's self-transforming. Language begets meta-language, and so on. It's a bootstrapping effect.

PP: How does this sound: The probability that objective reality exists at all varies between zero and certainty as a function of the state of mind?

TM: Oh, I could "fly" with that.

Revision History

v1.0 - 1983-84 - Smith, ED - Transcribed 1983 interview with Terence McKenna, serialized in five parts.

v1.1 - Jan 19, 2012 - Erowid - Combined parts, made minor edits and corrections.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Terence McKenna Vs. The Black Hole a.k.a. Terence McKenna's last interview

Late October-Early November 1999

Terence's House, Big Island, Hawaii

Description

- [Archive.org via Psychedelic Salon](#)

Intro:

Erik Davis: I'm Erik Davis, and I had the great good fortune of spending a few days with Terence McKenna, and his girlfriend Christie Silness, in their jungle home on the island of Hawai'i in November 1999. Sadly the occasion was not so fortunate, McKenna had been diagnosed with a brain tumor the previous summer, and he was home recovering from a recent craniotomy. I was there to profile him for Wired magazine, and it turned out to be the final interview he gave before his death, at the age of 53, in April 2000. McKenna's home lay along a rutted road that round its way up the slopes of Mauna Loa from the south corner coast. It was a white modernist origami structure topped with a massive satellite dish and a small astronomy dome designed to house a telescope that McKenna could not yet afford. The house and gardens were surrounded by a riot of vegetation, but among the native flora lay thick ropes of *banisteriposis caapi*, and a sprinkling of flowering *salvia divinorum*. Every morning I ascended a spiral staircase decorated with blue L.E.D.'s to get to the study where McKenna spent the bulk of his time, either working on his Macintosh or sitting cross legged on the floor before a small oriental carpet, surrounded by books, smoking paraphernalia, and twigs of sage he occasionally lit up, and wafted through the air. His library was magnificent, thousands of books on alchemy, Tibetan art, Hindu meta-physics, systems theory, archaeology, astronomy, and of course, psychoactive lore. During the day I asked the usual reporters questions, but in the evening we would relax, and follow less quotidian pathways through the cosmos of conversation. McKenna rose to the occasion of his own mortal condition, and though he tired quickly and occasionally spaced out, he was as brilliant and funny as ever. What follows are edited portions of these dialogues.

ED: So what was your, uh, what was your, uh, your first like encounter, like with psychedelics, either in a strong way, or just?

TM: Well... was a friend of a friend of mine when I graduated from high school. They were building that band, so he insisted that we eventually smoke pot and take acid, and uh, and I had never encountered old lefties, or acid heads, or musicians, or gave a shit about any of this stuff. It was all new to me, I had just come from Colorado to the west coast, so I was easily swept into all of

this, and uh, yeah he and his friends were into, uh, who was that strange heroin based comedian?

ED: Lenny Bruce.

TM: No, no, not Lenny Bruce. Stranger, more heroin based [Erik Davis laughs]. The, the guy who did the thing about 'The Nazz!', Lord Buckley.

ED: Oh...

TM: Yeah. They were into all of this stuff, and I had been studying the evergreen review for a couple of years trying to figure out what was going with with culture, but when I finally got to the scene, and all this acid, and all this left-wing politics, and all that, then I understood, and...

ED: So anyways, so you got to, he turned, he turned...

TM: He basically turned me on, and uh...

ED: Were you kind of fascinated from the get go?

TM: We'll I'd been worrying about mescaline since I'd read 'Doors of Perception', three or four years before. I I'd also read, um, Havelock Ellis' 'The Dance of Life', which has a long chapter on mescaline. Actually that, that passage in Havelock Ellis, it's only a page or so, is one of the most seducing passages in all of psychedelic literature. They were, he was taking peyote at the turn of the century, these people really got into, under the wire. Like he took it a hundred years ago, can you imagine? That is hard to grab hold of [Eric laughs].

ED: But were you always, this sort of, partly, as much, influenced by, uh, the kind of alchemical mystical book, historical books you read in some way as, as well the more primal evolving...

TM: Well I was raised by Catholic rationalists, so you know, it's hard to square that. In other words, you would run around spending part of your time trying to understand the nature of guardian angels, and the rest of the time grappling with fairly rational concepts. I mean my families basic orientation was mining, and not science in the sense of degreed science. But my father was an electrician, my uncles ran radio and television repair shop, and my father flew, navigated, did radio, so uh, but I did spend a lot of time grappling with shit like the nature of the soul, the nature of sin, the, all of these, imponderables, you know. And of course what you end up doing is you end up reading scholars of mysticism. And then I would read about what John of the Cross, or somebody else had got hold of, and then I would try for it, and I don't recall getting too far, but uh...

ED: When you were still...

TM: Quite young.

ED: Right. But so you were still thinking in a Catholic mode.

TM: Yeah. Because it was all religious mysticism.

ED: Right.

TM: There was no other form of mysticism before, I guess before Huxley published his books. I mean it was somehow, uh, well for Catholics there was no other form of mysticism. There was 'Ouspenskyitis', and 'Gurdjieffianism', and all these peculiar... but none of that was quite kosher.

ED: Did you, so, did you have a, uh, a break with Catholicism? Or did it mutate into all of your...

TM: It sort of mutated. I read Jung is what happened. I read, I first read 'Psychology and Alchemy', and then that lead me on to, um, the other one which is deeper about all of that... it's something about the nature of the Kristos and Alchemy, and, and then I saw what the, how these geographically defined religious impulses could be part of some broader, deeper thing. And Alchemy, it was a revelation to me, all that. I didn't get religious history from the Church, the way I got it from Jung. Because from Jung I realized it was from books, and so you could read these books, I mean there was torment, torturous, was when I was first going to CAL, but on the other hand I had a library card, and I could actually get at this stuff, in whatever form it can ever be got out, I mean alchemy makes no sense at all if you actually read the literature.

ED: Right. So when you decided to start speaking, and doing these conferences, and speaking on the radio, did you have a sense of your, of a kind of mission?

TM: Well I always felt people should know about psychedelics, that that was the untold story, you know. But if there was anything new to be said or brought into the cultural dialogue, it was the news that these psychedelics were not these very tricky to manufacture drugs like LSD, but that it was really about plants. And I don't know how I would say I had a sense of mission, I certainly thought it was a fine idea that people realize. And I was also interested in feedback, you know it wasn't that I wanted to enlighten people, I wanted to hear what people had to say about this stuff, because to me it was also confounding. The transformations of language, the... what it did to information. I mean that's still what psychedelics are about, is what it does to information.

ED: Yeah, well talk about that a little bit, how do you...

TM: Well, it seems to show some kind of, uh, how would you put it, some kind of universality of source, or some, some, uh, language is not syntax, it's not grammar, it's none of these things, it's some kind of divine, uh, you could almost call energy, which flows out of objects and situations. Everything wants to communicate and so then what the chain of being is, is somehow handing connectivity on, you know, to the next plant, animal, human being, work of art, whatever it is. And uh, I'm, I still grapple with what all this means. And to me it's the most psychedelic part of the psychedelic experience is when you get the... the logos coming out of the trees, the rocks, the berries, the water, and everything. And it's the most Dao-ist part of it. It's where nature becomes transparent to it's own intent to communicate, or something like that.

ED: Do, are you uh, when think back of what you felt like you were involved with, you know in the mid-seventies, in terms of propagating the psychedelic experience, and you sort of felt like this is, you know, in a way were being one of a number of Johnny Appleseeds', uh, uhm... when you look now at what happened, emerged from that, are you disappointed in some ways? Or...

TM: No I don't think so. Considering the fact that uh, for the past year or so, or maybe longer, it's been legal to grow mushrooms in Holland and purvey them, I would say our goals were met. The thing with, brought into human cultivation, it'll never leave it, you know it's uh, a very rare thing to be able to bring an organism into the human family like that. And when we found *stropharia cubensis* it was standing waist deep in cow shit, and now it's part of the human family of agricultural production. It'll never leave it, it will always be part of the global culture now, so...

ED: And do you think that, do you think that you have the feeling that in some sense it will remain at least for the foreseeable a somewhat marginal, uh, road? Like a path that a certain, certain temperaments, or, uh, characters inside of the social matrix have, of reality have recourse to, but that don't really dominate...

TM: Sure, because if they really wanted a lot of psilocybin, you would do it differently. You would grow it in enormous vats of liquid that were the size of railroad cars, and you would produce millions of hits within days of scaling up. So uh... no, what it is, it it's uh, it's a folk technology at the margin of civilization, and an underground technology for the production of, uh, these drugs. Like, I understand you can make methamphetamine out of Clorox and some other shit, I have no idea, but it sounds very similar, very simple. Well so, this kind of, at the edge of things knowledge is very, uh, critical too. And that's where the shamanism is in the culture. The tricks of the trade.

ED: So, the shamanism enters, because that's an inevitable...

TM: Well, these are esoteric secrets, how to make drugs, and the drugs are, how to change minds and make money. So, inevitably it's going to be part of where some kind of negotiation takes place. Negotiations like that rearrange the morphology of the social order. Well, the mind space of the people there.

ED: Well, what do you think constitutes, uh, uh, a post modern shaman, someone who's legitimately doing shamanic work, and not sort of acting out a fantasy, or playing some game of,

of, like a, identification with the other?

TM: Well, I think you have to be... you have to know your pharmacology, and trust that you know it, and then be trusted sufficiently that you're willing to lead people with confidence through these places. These Ayahuasquero psychiatrists are very courageous to, and have built up sets of metaphors and assumptions that I think are probably true, or true enough, uh, but, you really, it takes balls to hold your ground with this stuff here.

ED: That must have been interesting in the sense, that you were propagating the, the philosopher's stone to the, to brethren.

TM: And it was going many other places.

ED: Yeah.

TM: A lot of people were interested.

ED: No, that's what I meant, through the whole sort of network of... freak... culture...

TM: Yeah. Well, and it wasn't so much the, the, the mushroom, it was the information, you know? The knowledge of the technique. It was like the atom bomb or something, it was whether you had it or not, it was whether or not you knew how to do it. And uh...

ED: So it's interesting to see the way that other plants, now... I mean if that, if the mushroom, the mushroom parasited on print pamphlet technology, now the, uh, more emerging plants that are re-encountered have a different...

TM: Well, so...

ED: ...obligation device, of information fasted forward.

TM: Yeah, in one case a Brazilian cults, in another case, almost landscaping, like Salvia, uh... I don't know if you've seen that, those clumps of Salvia on the road with all the blue flowers and all that, uh... yeah. The, the mushroom is the most insidious and amusing because it seems to, uh, associate itself with human beings. Like for instance the, one of the densest psilocybin ecologies in the world is Oregon and western Washington. Well one of the main industries of those areas where these mushrooms are so dense, is uhm, the production of sod, to be shipped all over the country and world. To be pushed into malls, and hotel, uh, lawns, and golf courses to spray, so it's essentially an enormous economic engine for spreading psilocybin spores throughout the planet.

ED: What happens to people that lets them tune into a deeper level and intent? That wakes them up from the spell of, of mere consumerism, and the kind of subjectivity that is, you know manipulation of images and desires that constitutes consumerism, and which dominates many peoples lives?

TM: Well, then they probably have to head for deeper values. Either Buddhism, Shamanism, their own... you know whatever lies in their own ethnic background because in fact civilization is a carnival. I mean it's a cheap, it's uh, it's a delusion of a solution. So anybody who sees past the front door probably wants really, real structured values. And so that's where all the conservative resistance comes from; the fundamentalist Christians, the Orthodox Jews, and Buddhists, all of these people are saying, well hey wait a minute, we, we, we don't want to go down this path, only so far. And that's probably a good break, otherwise we would create a civilization that's essentially a mall, and there's enough of that anyway.

ED: So in essence that, that, that turn towards deeper values, even though sometimes they take a conservative form is ultimately a healthy balance to just the sheer...

TM: ...rush toward novelty.

ED: Hm..

TM: Yeah, I think so.

ED: But do you see psychedelics playing a role in, in opening up that kind of...

TM: It depends on how it's presented, it depends on the psychedelic... uh, the, if it comes along with some wizened ninety year old Indian from South America, it's hard to see that we're abandoning ourselves to the, the trivial and the concocting, uh, and so, it's a marketing of packaging issue basically.

ED: Well, and, so what would that look like then, if you, if you were...

TM: Well I'd say the wrongly packaged version would be some kind of like Castaneda-ism, a formulaic cult, do these things, take these drugs, follow these instructions, and moral obligation will flee from your, your camp, uh, nobody can be that foolish, you know. If on the other hand you, you know, you sincerely pursue this stuff, grow the plants, try to understand it, try to revivify the rituals, and figure out what it's all about, well that's an authentic push toward spirituality. A very authentic push toward spirituality, and probably fruitful.

ED: Do you think in that process, the, the actual handling of the plants, growing them, getting to know their cycles is, uh, necessary?

TM: Yeah, because that's the level, that's the speed, that's the... well that's the speed on which nature makes this stuff, you know, brings it to the surface, and invites it's contemplation. And it's also probably the right speed at which to assimilate this stuff, to come to terms with it.

ED: So in that sense, part of the problem with synthetic psychedelics, is that they fit too easily into a kind of consumerism model...

TM: Right.

ED: That...

TM: It's not a product, you know it's not something you would get the 'drug of the month' or something. Although all these things have been proposed and some have been tried. It seems to me that, the shamanic drug of the month is not a very appealing idea.

ED: What are the, uhm, uh, emotional, psychological, ethical, expressions of really, kind of genuinely long-term, good psychedelic people?

TM: What is the long term... ethical... expression of the good of psychedelic people?

ED: Yeah.

TM: Well, it's some kind of, it's some kind of effort to separate shit from shinola, you know, it's some kind of effort to, uh, uhm, distill, uh, a truth from the blooming buzzing confusion of the universe. So it's a branch of, I don't know what you would say, cognitive science? Or something like that. It's an effort to define the human essence away from its content or something like that. You see what I mean?

ED: Try to explain a little more.

TM: Well, it's a, it's a branch of psychology. It's a self study in psychology. So anybody who's taking psychedelics is, I assume is trying to present a truer image of themselves, to other people and the world, through this process of, uh, distillation of understanding, and that's where the connection to alchemy and all that comes in. This distillation of essence away from the dross confusion and Gnostic muck of the world is a kind of, uh, like a Jungian individuation process or something like that.

ED: And that, and that manifests in the, in the call even in normal life to present it yourself, articulate yourself, oneself differently.

TM: I think so, yeah. And causes people to be willing to take chances, uh, both pharmacological and sociological, by being involved in something so marginal, you know. Because in the, in the big civilizations this kind of shamanic stuff is definitely very marginal, and most people just don't do it.

ED: Do you feel that that characterizes the overall, or in some significant way, the kind of people you've met for the last...

TM: It depends on how often they do it. You know some people are doing because their friends are doing it. Some people are doing it because, some, I don't know, they're feeling some kind of social pressure. But the people that are really called to do it, are rare. You know the people who say, well, I get loaded ten times a year on high dose psychedelics or six times a year, that's a lot, I mean that means your lifestyle is pretty much defined by, by all that stuff. Yeah, I would love to know what the real numbers are. How many people a year get really loaded? Once you get the Amazon Indians

out, and you know the Mexicans out, and fill these people out, it's hard to even know how you'd begin to make an estimate, you know.

ED: Before your sickness, did, how often did you do large, large journeys?

TM: Hm, less and less often. I mean I noticed that through the nineties, that uh... but maybe four or five times year get... but I always felt that never enough, you know, never enough...

ED: So do you have the sense that what, that tripping you on some level are getting, uh, getting something done?

TM: ...That tripping is getting something done?

ED: Yes, that there's something being worked out, like continuously and progressively?

TM: Yeah I assume that basically the download called history, meaning all the technology, social innovation, philosophy, art, fashion, architecture, is some kind of dialogue with this... well higher mind is, I'm not entirely comfortable with that, but this higher mind that keeps showing these different facets through the mist, and... I mean that science and, and psychedelica and all this, is a dialogue with the mathematical deep structure of nature and somehow as you get that out, there's this sense of progress, more than a sense of progress, Progress. And I don't, and you know in terms of what is it all leading toward or what it's about, it must be something about, like the spiritualization of matter. That matter is evolving toward quintessence or essence, or something like that. And you know, we're the startled witnesses to this thing, because we're part of this thing that I call the emergent properties, or you know, the, the uh, side effects you could almost say, of the universal emergence of matter into spirit. Cause that's what biology is. I mean, I think biology is, uh, the quantum-mechanical, uh, magnification of uncertainty into macro-physical space. So that essentially we're chemical systems that by some means yet to be understood, amplify quantum-mechanical uncertainty to dimension such as we see, and that permits, uhm, these emergent properties, and systems, and morphologies to, to show themselves, and, and that's the trick, or that's the trick explained on one level.

ED: You know it's funny, in your raps you, you stay away from, uh, what, what to a lot of people would be spirituality. In, in a way, like uh... the way that somebody would present their... you know, Jewish spirituality, or kind of Buddhist practice or whatever... you don't talk... in fact often you sort of, like slag the, the Guru model. Can you kind of separate yourself from that, and you really have a kind of... I mean you've maintained this sort of... I don't know how to, I don't want to characterize it or anything, but uhm, and yet at points obviously you are limited by something in your own language you might, you would call spiritual.

TM: Well...

ED: What is, what comes up around that word?

TM: I guess I believe I'm some kind of progressive history, that history is progressive, so then the story of evolution and biology and human culture and all this, is assumed to be a story with a happy ending. So in a way, this belief in Telos, which is not philosophically sanctioned, or this eschatological vein, my personality is what gives it a spiritual impulse. But it's the idea that time, it's an alchemical idea actually, it's the idea that time will perfect matter, and uh, I think it probably will perfect matter.

ED: What do you think about? Do you think that like post-modern spirituality is a sort of legitimate term or project?

TM: You mean to believe? Or involve yourself in? Or, uh...

ED: Believe, it's not really about belief, I, I, I mean that whatever the kind, I mean there's a lot of people now who are developing relationships with all kinds of spiritual practices, and they're not really doing it, even in the way that people did in the seventies, when there was so much, so much more true believings, it's a different kind of relationship.

TM: It's probably on a short spin, a short cycle, that a lot of Empiricists are taking up Dzogchen, and that how long can that go on? So then there'll be a lot of revisionism, and re-thinking, and re-casting of all this, which is the very best thing for it.

ED: Yes it is. So were you ever very interested in the mediation or Yoga?

TM: Uh, when I was in India, and immediately before I went to India, when I was in the Seychelles the first time I, I was. Because... when I was in Mombassa, Kenya, I came upon this place called the, I can't remember, anyway, it was a library that was basically having a bargain sale in theosophical literature. So I took about fifty kilos of uh, of uh, Yogic, Arthur Avalon, theosophical literature with me to the Seychelles, and that was what I read and worked through when I was out there.

ED: How is that you relate to Mysticism...to mystical Experience?

TM: Oh you mean as a source of valid data about what's going on?

ED: Not even that far, I mean, I mean that's one way of saying... of, of judging it in one way or another, is... it doesn't necessarily be valid data, it's just... I mean, you've been interested... this library, obviously mysticism is completely surrounding us.

TM: Well I guess I would say the more personal the mystical indicator is, probably the more likely I am to take it seriously. In other words, it seems to me if you extrapolate your mystical insight beyond the personal... you probably enter into the domain of inflation, of some kind of psychological inflation, and uh...

ED: So it Plato inflated?

TM: Is Plato inflated..? No probably not, but he probably gets a pass, as uh, some kind of piny [sp?: Terence and Erik laughs].

ED: You could just start out, you could start off by talking about the relationship between technology and, and shamanism.

TM: Well, you remember Eliade's basic book which was 'Shamanism: The Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy', that book was originally written in French. And in French, as I don't have to tell you, the word technique, has this dual meaning in both a way to do something and a technology. So uh, from Eliade's point of view, Shamanism was always about using techniques, uh, to achieve these, what he called 'ruptures of plane'. And these ruptures of plane were these breakthroughs into these healing spaces, and for him it was always, drugs, yoga, or uh, ordeal, or maybe yoga/ordeal. So uh, in a way pushing on the frontier of language, and pushing on the frontier of technique always brought some form of breakthrough. I mean, I suppose, the perfect example would be fire, where fire must have been something... we talked about the smith thing yesterday... but, so, fire technology, the transformation, the visible transformation of materials through heat, and all of that leads straight into better weapons, stronger building materials, and uh, so forth.

ED: So uh.. I mean... can you... do you see that even though the west turns away from the worldview of, of pre-modern enchanted, the enchanted universe, is that there's still something in that process of technological development which has... which is linked to those older technologies?

TM: Well the way chips are made, and the way solid state objects are assembled often is just a

matter of bringing, uh, a mix of materials to a certain temperature and a certain, uh, proportion of materials, and then standing back and letting the laws of physics rearrange the atoms so that electricity or information or something flows through this in an unexpected way so... I think we're still involved in discovering what can be coaxed from the, from the physical world, just be letting physical laws unravel themselves.

ED: And that seems to you connected to you with an old, the, the, the operation of doing that goes farther back than just modern science?

TM: Yeah, at low temperatures it's about psychoactive drugs, and brewing, and combining biological materials [phone rings], and at higher temperatures it becomes about this other thing.

ED: In one of my alchemical readings of modernity, is that electricity is a kind of element in the old sense of element, and that it has certain properties that evolve as you develop almost a shamanic relationship with it, in the sense of using it, and developing a relationship with electrical potentials, [Terence: uhuh], and that that sets up a kind of, that interjects a kind of life into the human organism that fundamentally changes it. Because it's introducing this element of electricity which has certain properties of communication, you know electricity is very strange, it's pretty far out stuff, you just laid out like electricity to somebody and kind of said, these are how these fields work, and they're not actually dadadadada, it's like total science fiction, we're just use to that story.

TM: Right.

ED: It's an amazing thing and back... those potentials are being then introduced into human communication. So that fundamentally changes them, and I think spiritualism is like a reflection in the archetypal imagination of modernity, about the kind of communication that is introduced by electricity.

TM: Interesting. It sort of you know McLuhan had this idea about the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, was electricity, and that, the covering of the earth by the matrix of, uh, the Holy Ghost initiated the third world age, and all this.

ED: Right, and that picks up a line of thought that's been carried through since the, since it first starts...

TM: Right.

ED: I mean, the idea of electricity is born in, in an alchemical imagination, it's born at a, at a pre-, uh, point to the sort of... royal society break, or whatever you wanna call it, the genuine scientific, uh... transformation that split alchemy into the shadow realm of culture, but uh...

TM: In, uh...

ED: This comes up in that alchemical matrix.

TM: In *Mason Dixon* there's scenes in Philadelphia, in the seventeen-seventies, in, in coffeehouses where, uh, electricity is being sold as a drug. You pay your money, and then you grab on to this thing, and they rip this thing around until it throws you off, and you pick yourself up off the floor and go back and pay again and get more.

ED: That's hilarious.

TM: Just this insane scene [Terence laughs.]

ED: It's funny to say but you look at twentieth century science, and even though it's, it's story has nothing to do with alchemy, that it really is this kind of fulfilling of visionary notions about the way that matter, and energy, and mind can be stitched together.

TM: Well, and it turns out it's all true. I mean, what twentieth century science proved is you can actually almost do anything. And so you know, you wanna change lead to gold, you want to create life, you wanna store information in crystals, all these things. It's now come to pass, and much much more besides, uh, proving that matter really is magical material you can pull off all these tricks with.

ED: So what is it about the alchemy that really... kind of, got you?

TM: The surrealism, of it. The shifting imagery, the associational, uhm, yeah the associational schemas are very attractive.

ED: They, what do you think, what do you think's behind it?

TM: Well, you know the basic concept is that somehow intuition and nature are reflective of each other. Until that hypothesis fails, we should probably hang on to it, uh, because look how far we've gotten. I mean it is really bizarre how much of nature, the human mind seems to be able to understand. I mean my god, instruments are circling around Ganymede based on some guy in a powdered wig looking out his crenelated window, you know, figuring out this shit, how did they pull that trick off?

ED: Well I mean that, I mean that gets that whole thing about the, this sort of destiny of technology, or the way that... I mean it's...

TM: Yeah, it's like a white cane, and you're just feeling forward into the universe, you know? And uh... you know, what is it all leading toward?

ED: How do you, uh, in your own head have come to, let's say reconcile those two sides? The, the side that's, uh, mystical or fascinated by these questions by the soul, or the, the things that are beyond reason... and the intuition, and, and, the, the way that you would relate to reason, sort of expressed expressed through a kind of skepticism, and a certain kind of, uh, uh, love of science?

TM: Well, I think I still believe what the Angel told Descartes which is, you know "Nature is coordination, of uh, measurement and proportion". So really, nature is the study of, uh, proportion, and the making of measurement, and there doesn't seem to be any problem in any... we have very powerful instruments for taking measurement, and very powerful instruments now for modeling and constraining the data, and we're making progress. I mean I, I think, uh, you know in terms of stuff like the internet, human longevity, recovery of energy sources, and all this sort of thing that we're, that humanity is probably in great shape for the next hundred years, if anybody gives a shit, but uh... that kind of timescale, you know?

ED: So you're not, uh, as overwhelmed with the kind of dystopian scenario, since it's obviously an easy thing to do when contemplating the future?

TM: Yeah I think that... dystopian in the sense of losing control of primary processes inside civilization and so having like, disease, fascism, economic breakdown, problems like that?

ED: Yeah.

TM: No, I have... I'm pretty high faith in systemics.

ED: Do you see the internet as being both... is that more of a hopeful direction or can you also exacerbate in that problem?

TM: No I think it's more of a hopeful direction. My, my... The happy story I like to tell myself about the internet is someone in some tiny village up in Ontario, or in Kenya, or in Brazil somewhere, who gets next to the internet and realizes, you know, I can get out of this preposterous scene, by simply, if I'm ambitious, if I just unleash my own ambition, and the educational power of this, then I can go to the large city and conquer, go to the capitol, and export myself to somewhere else. And I assume this is happening, cause you know, you meet in the third world incredibly ambitious people, who only by their circumstance are confined. Well if you re-arrange their, their circumstance... so if they want a degree in electrical engineering, all they have to do is be online, night after night, after night, uh... that's very exciting.

ED: So how do you see that changing the kind of... the cultural matrix, or the emerging global culture?

TM: Well, hopefully it gives it a more international flavor, and people realize that, there isn't... I don't want to use words like a natural 'elite' of native intelligence or something like that, but in fact there is something like that. I mean smart people... it would be a fine thing to put them in charge for awhile, and see if that does any good, uh... I mean they're taking charge where the money is. But that's not a very deep value, uh... what if they took charge where power, and the, the actual... well, the, the morpho-genetic intent was coming from? The design process, this is what it...

ED: But do you see that happening, I mean are, are you... I mean if that's sort of your vision, you must be a little concerned about the, uh, evident power of money and pure greed to drive, largely drive development rather than design principles with an eye toward the future, and social equity, and eco... you know, ecological improvement?

TM: Yes, except to some degree, except that it is a, uh, people who you know, Mao said or somebody said "To get rich is glorious", I'd say to get rich is modestly, uh, affirmable [Terence laughs] something like that, and that there's no sin in getting rich, as long as what you're doing is, you know making people into lampshades or something like that, uh... uh... it's better than a collectivist goal, that's what I'm saying, it seems to me.

ED: But how do you feel about that conjunction of media manipulation, money, and celebrity that's so dominant now?

TM: Well you have to have something to sell, you know? You have to have something people actually want. I mean if you're selling the Rolling Stones, or you're selling Charles Manson, or you're selling something like that, you might get somewhere, but inherently you can't sell that which is, uh, eternal, or it becomes like, it turns against itself, so uh... and that's what defeated fascism. Nobody wanted it, it was ugly ultimately. It's probably what defeated socialism... cinder block housing facilities, you know, and all this rhetoric. I don't know, social planning went off the cliff in the twentieth century, maybe because there were too many people, or too much money, or not enough money, but uh, something defeated all these, uhm, utopian visions of how people might have lived. That's what I'm hoping doesn't happen in the next twenty-five years.

ED: That what doesn't happen?

TM: That some lack of resource or vision doesn't reveal that, uh, we can't give enough people, uh, a bearable life. So we have to live forward into an age of revolution, social turmoil, and, and struggle for resources, it doesn't have to be this way.

ED: Do you see it going in that direction?

TM: Toward that kind of a struggle? That's my concern, that people and institutions not respond to need, and uh, and then what you get is a have, have not situation. I mean, you wouldn't want the first half of the twenty-first century to look like the first half of the twentieth century, you know... the equivalent of a Bolshevik dialogue, the equivalent of a, whatever soft leftism turned out to mean and be, because it turned out to mean and be, not bloody much, as far as I can tell, I mean there's a lot of labor. Unless some amelioration of some peoples, uh you know, dilemma in the system, but... the world is far richer than it appears to be, and that wealth, is not being, is not trickling down, or flowing down, or making nearly as many peoples lives as good as it could be. So far it doesn't seem to have gotten out of hand. I mean most people if you give them a lot of money, they buy second homes and collect art, well this is not exactly like hunting down serves [?] with your shaka [?], or something like that... These entrepreneurial capitalists, this is what they're doing, and they're building, uhm, vast wealth downstream for their children. It's probably you know, sort of like, the invention of very large and stable sailing vessels, whenever that happened, two-hundred or a hundred, two-hundred and fifty years ago, where suddenly a whole bunch of people realized, you know, is all we need is some money, not too much money. If we buy a ship and send it out to Indonesia, and bring back a load of nutmeg, our children's, children's, children will never work again. We need one load of this shit, and uh... and they have to work of course, and then they get a certain lifestyle, and a certain amount of social respect out of it. But I think what they really get out of it is the satisfaction of knowing that they secured for their heirs, uh, a comfortable existence unto the ninth generation, or something.

ED: Well it's interesting about that, because that ties in with the genetics. If you, if you buy in to some evolutionary psychology certainly at this stage of the game, one of the forms that that would

take is not merely like the logic that guides you, that how you choose a mate, and the fact that your status and money might, you know, if you're a male bring you a foxier, younger babe than the, the schmo whose, you know, shoveling shit, uhm, that one form that that would take would of course be to maintain your genetic line, and you know, you know, create a situation that's possible.

TM: Well, and now people understand that this is what your genetic line is about, that to cope, or to be in a Darwinian position of competition in this society means to have money, and not a little, not sufficient, but plenty! So that when you need to arrive and be met by Rolls Royce limousines, or whatever, that it's not an issue, and this all comes down, uh...

ED: But, but do you see that there's also madness to that? To that...

TM: Yeah, I'm not motivated, I mean as you see, I need a place to keep some books dry, having achieved that, my motivation [Terence laughs] falls to pieces. And it's, alright, what else do we need to keep dry? Some firewood, okay. A truck, okay. That's about as far as I can go [Terence laughs].

ED: You know the way that technology, that the internet would allow you, to build a different kind of career, cause you don't like traveling, and... what were you... what are you working towards?

TM: Well essentially, this philosopher's stone without any, uh, dross. In other words, everything I require of the alchemical quintessence, the internet provides except physicality which I didn't require. So that's what I meant, I think I said to you yesterday, or the day before, that at times these technological developments have taken place that seem to me designed uniquely for my own satisfaction. Sputnik, couldn't have worked better for me. Acid, rock and roll, uhm, small computers, large computers, the internet, uh, so in my internal story about what's supposed to happen, everything is happening right on time, right on schedule. I mean this is the thing that if you believe knowledge is power, which I certainly do, then the internet is the dispensation, you know, the angels have landed, the aliens have unfurled their, uh, banner on this planet, and uh... Now let's see, if information can liberate. That's why I don't want to do something stupid like die, and miss the whole unfoldment of this proposition, that uh, knowledge is power, information will liberate. And it will be settled in the next ten or fifteen years. Either they'll get a handle on it, whoever they are, whatever a 'handle' means, or it will slip from their control and it will be clear that some kind of dialogue is going on between individual human beings and the sum total of human knowledge, and that nothing can stop it. That some kind of renaissance, some kind of total new relationship to knowledge, and possibility is put in place.

ED: The, the idea you had about... and I've heard you mention before about somehow taking advantage of, uh, the net, to allow you to continue your career, without having to move around so much. I mean that seems to be one of the real weird paradoxes of the scene we're in, is that at the same time that we're creating all these great communicating devices... that people are flying

around, to conferences, to talks, even more than they ever have before.

TM: Yeah well I don't real... I don't really understand it. Like this morning I was looking at the brain tumor list, well fully one third of the brain tumor list is people planning get-togethers at the next brain tumor conference. Will you be going to Atlanta? Will you be going to Vermont? Are you going to London? So no matter whether you're in investment counseling, or dying of cancer, you can turn it into a circuit, of, of, a life, a phenomenon of some sort, uh... I'm not very interested in that.

ED: Well you've this, you've done the circuit for a long time.

TM: I have. I have. And I feel like I paid my dues, and I feel like you have to be visibly at some of these things because you're marketed as a personality. And you know I... I am not William Burroughs, nor was meant to be, uh, but... I am interested enough in being read that I'm willing to sign books, and stand up tell [phone rings], stories.

ED: I'm interested in a little bit of how you use the net? Like you have, you say you spend maybe four hours a day doing e-mail, but then also surfing.

TM: Well basically as an informational resource, an oracle, and, and sometimes even almost like, uh, a magical oracle, I mean words will come to me, and so I'll search them, and just follow this stuff, and where it leads. So I don't know, there's some term for that, I'm not sure what it is, uh, but yeah, it's like a...

ED: Term for what, that, that style of...

TM: Yeah, surrealists... I guess automatic writing, except this is automatic...

ED: Searching.

TM: Inquiry... or something like that, where you just, cast bread upon the waters and see what comes back, you know?

ED: Do you, do you ever have the sense of, uh, as you develop, uhm, that kind of relationship to it, that it becomes more alive?

TM: Well it becomes more synchronistic, in the way that people, you know, have said the I-Ching seems eerily alive because it anticipates and it seems to respond like a thinking thing. So in that sense it doesn't become so much more alive as it become more intelligent. So maybe really the key to bringing the, the net through is to discover universal grammars that cause it to appear, uh, alive!

ED: Do you look at, you know, what we're building with V.R., what's just around the corner with these three-dimensional interactive spaces and avatars, you imagine a culture that's more and more based on, on that kind of interaction... and, you know, obviously there's a kind of superficial shamanic or imaginative dimension to that, but at the same time, it, it's clear that at least initially, and certainly in many of its guises, it would be driven by the same kind of chintziness, the same sort of crass, tinkely, uh junk, that really drives it... How do, do you think it's just going naturally evolve such that a kind of deeper, uh, shamanic world or at least shamanic analogue will emerge in, in virtual reality, or does it actually require some, some real creative work to seed it?

TM: It requires creative work, it requires that the people who build these realities understand how subtle the... what they're up against is, and not abandon a commitment to... to realism. You know the trick to making the shamanic world, virtual world compelling is to fairly and truly convey it. So you can't cut corners. You can't fake it. So animation and the rules of vermal and all this stuff, have to be faithfully executed so that this stuff really does blow people's minds. So that people see, well... the human imagination is large enough to accommodate the human soul, it doesn't leave you leave you feeling, like you're wearing too tight a pair of shoes.

ED: And that's the, that's the dangers, it just becomes kind of a...

TM: Formulaic. Too formulaic... too easy, not that the software couldn't use some improvement, but uh, I don't want it to become so easy to produce these virtual realities that there's no, uh, attention to detail, or no sense of accomplishment of doing it.

ED: What would the, the, the, kind of ideal 'Terence McKenna' virtual environment be?

TM: Well, all of these, I guess you would call them models or explanations, uh, beginning with basic chemistry, right up to hierarchian management theory, uh... because all these processes can be envisioned, you know, as uh... interlocking sets of laws and that sort of thing. So the, that's I guess what we're talking about, is how the world should become more visual, should ride more on a visual, on a vocabulary of visual assumptions that everybody has learned. And we all know that a Bugs Bunny cartoon is a land of explosions and falling anvils... well, we learned that. We were taught that. So there needs to be more of this kind of, uh, slotting in, of uh, I don't know what you could call it... assumptions, or... gestalts that can be used as a vocabulary to communicate this stuff.

ED: Like the language, a visual language.

TM: Yes, exactly.

ED: And, and, do you... so do you see that, uh, that some language from the past, the imagery of Alchemy or Egyptian art or, or things like that are kind of... can be seen as predecessors for a possible new visual language?

TM: Well, this is where memory palaces, and archetypes, and uh, all this stuff come in. That was always the hope. It's not clear it can be realized. I mean that's why you go through the Maya, the Egyptian, the Alchemical... you're looking for these universal, uh, gestalts of meaning. But they're spread wide and far, and uh, it may have to be created de novo.

ED: Well that's part of the, the... I think, you know, uh... a more of a skeptic would really would say, the idea of building a, you know, a universal language is a, is an old and crusty dream, and [Terence laughs], and when you get into the realm of actually having images involved in it, in the kind of hieroglyphics of virtual space that are linked with meaning that, uhm, it becomes even more challenging to imagine, how you can make that kind of thing universal? Unless it's the universe of, you know, the Nike swoosh, you know, it's the universe of logos and advertising which actually is, somewhat like this, except that it's information content is...

TM: We're gonna spend a huge amount of money to establish these gestalts.

ED: Exactly.

TM: Yes, yeah. So, I don't... I'm not... many of our discussions have led to this point where, we seem to say well there's something about the thermodynamics of information that we don't understand. Something about lexical categories, something about how language wants to emerge from the background of matrix, but something about how we process language holds this back, so then there's a negotiation at some kind of fractal edge, and that, and that's where we are. But not necessarily, I mean, that's why I encourage everybody to think about animation, and think about it in practical terms. To look at objects and pose these things to themselves as a model... model-able problems, uh... because out of that will come a language rich enough to support an actual form of human communication that's been very elusive, or maybe never in hand at all. Well, it's really interesting when you talk to people or listen to people, how many people who take psychedelics have cartoon-like encounters with beings or, and you well, gee this is weird, cartoons only back to

nineteen-twenty or fifteen or some, how weird that such an out there technical phenomenon could just grab, a whole section of human psychology and, uh, camp there with that kind of, uh, tenacity, and uh... to me that indicates it has some kind of archetypal claim on that territory, and a claim which it can only continue to tighten over time.

ED: You ever seen that Scott McCloud book 'Understanding Comics'?

TM: No.

ED: Oh, that's worthwhile.

TM: Is that a...

ED: Yes, it's really worthwhile, very good, uhm... I mean it's just sort of getting at a grammar... you know a lot of cartoons disagree, I mean they're very irascible [sp?], laud, and a lot of comic people are like non-prescription, but it's a very interesting attempt to use the form itself to talk about the specifics of the form, and it's really about comic art, but it applies to some of these issues of, of animation and cartooning.

TM: Well, the great genius of Disney... I mean Disney is a... my idea of beyond Edison or Ford or anybody of what we really mean by American genius because he, you know, he had mice wear gloves, living inside his head, but he was able to create a mechanical technology to show people these mice. So instead of just being put quietly away by his brother, or something like that, he said, no, no, you don't understand... money!... this is worth, money! If we can show people these glove wearing mice and talking ducks, and, and all this stuff... and then he was sufficiently a true American yankee genius, that he saw how to, to take a flip book and put it on sale, and uh, do all that. Yeah, I think Disney is a very, very far out person. He went to the Platonic ideas and came back with, you know, baskets full of them, and released them in American towns and cities, and it did very well.

ED: I mean animation is a great place to see the reflection of things that are happening in culture at large.

TM: And certain people take it to incredible heights, uh... have you seen, uh... do you know that animation called, Asparagus? You should check it out, it's about twenty, maybe it's fifteen or twenty years old, but it's this, it's this, you know it's very highly detailed, as realistic as a Van Eyck

painting, and totally surreal, and uh... there's also, do you know that one by Sally Cruikshank called uh, Quasi at the Quackadero? That's a DMT extravaganza, uh, a carnival basically a cartoon about carnival that is a carnival crazy enough to convince you you should go take drugs, basically, uhm... and Max Fleischer was a genius, and all these people.

ED: Fleischer, Fleischer is great. I mean I think, I think that, I think Fleischer is the true origin of, of underground comics. I think that you find the most pregnant, uhm, uh, images of a certain kind of seedy, like, like the way that Robert Crumb presents a certain kind of seediness and sort of failure of the bodies, and spaces and yet that's infused with a kind of like, you know... magical eye. So you really have that both in Fleischer, and you really have that, the mania of the Betty Boop, but also a certain real, kind of, quotidian, almost proletarian, uh, uhm, graininess to these characters...

TM: Yeah.

ED: It's very inundate [sp?].

TM: It would be very hard to imagine post-modernity without Crumb's input, and I consider him, an absolute psychedelic genius. Very few people have had the influence without the karma that Crumb had. He basically did all that stuff, sold the drawings, and moved to a chateau in southern France and called it quits, and uh... got away with it, with those moves.

ED: I mean that's one of the, one of the, things again that I just find totally fascinating, is like the magic of modernity.

TM: I mean what a strange, strange thing this is.

ED: Yeah, just the relationship of modernity to esoteric religious undercurrents, and things which are not accounted for in, in uh, enlightenment discourse.

TM: Yeah, what if it just gets more and more like this, in other words I think that's what's actually happening. We're really headed for our own private Idaho. More faster, deeper, and with more, uh, panache, that anyone ever dared suppose.

ED: You mean in terms of building our own sort of constructed world...

TM: Right...

ED: respects and communicating them to some degree but not in a way that dominates ideologically, or...

TM: Well, and we have no idea how strange the worlds we can create in the near term will be, and yet, they will be. It's coming at you.

ED: Right. But just how far back to go? Like what's witnessing this bizarre moment in, in history? You know, what point are you, is the perspective kind of sitting in? That's the part I find really hard to figure out, does that make sense?

TM: Well, that's the question. Cause what that boils down to is how real is it? How real is it? Hm, yeah it's complicated. Every age seems to design it's own, uh, image of it's own dissolution, and they happen over and over again. I mean when I think about the twentieth century, you know... I mean Europe, which is the source of world civilization, stomped flat twice, uh, millions of refugees, the... you know, Auschwitz, the whole thing. Meanwhile, you know, what went on in the far east of Asia and the Asian prosperity wars and all this. It's, uh, over and over again these cultures create their Ragnarok, and uh, act it out way over the top. I mean Germany for crying out loud.

ED: Yeah, what... so how would you describe that... what's the character of our dissolution?

TM: I don't know... I guess it was Nietzsche who pushed the myth of the eternal return, right? So it's some kind of, uh, it's like a closed cycle of Hegelian dynamic, where it just works itself out. Then the thesis, the anti-thesis, the synthesis, and the darkness, and then it starts over.

ED: That, uh, Nicholl's book that I told you about 'Living Time'... what was most impressive about that book was, he lays out this idea of like, time, and he basically kind of presents, a way of thinking about eternal return. Which is that, we are locked into these repetitive cycles, that are eternally re-iterating themselves. The only way of changing their quality is to increase consciousness in the midst of them. And so you affirm this life, this world, not some transcendent world, and just the...

TM: And then try to solve them...

ED: Like under the sign of this is always this way, and how does that mean to relate to the real as it presents itself, as if there's no other thing it can be but that, and that... but as you do this process, you change your relationship to this stream, and then all this other heavy, heavy stuff happens. But

it was very interesting. It was like, cause other... up to that point I've always thought of eternal return on a kind of philosophical level, and I never thought what does it mean to actually live in the world of the eternal return, and that's pretty heavy.

TM: That's interesting. Yeah, well I've always felt like that reality was a kind of a thing... that the way you made progress was you grasped it. In the sense that you grasp a mathematical or geometric proposition, or something like that. But something which once understood, on some level, clears the way to advance a very short distance. So that's what we're always trying to do is create this lexical space of presumed understanding, and uh... and live inside that, uh...

ED: What are some of you wilder ideas about kind of technological situations

TM: Should you have any..?

ED: Should you need any, or, or lying ahead?

TM: Well the vision I always saw is inevitable, and I still do, and I'm very attracted to it. I shall be sorry to miss it, if I do. And that is, I can imagine the twentieth century defined, I mean the next century, defined by, uh, very, huge spacecraft that are, uh, that cycle from the inner to the outer solar system. That seems to me the way to do it. To create these worlds, which have like, say, eighty year orbits that carry them clear out to Uranus, and all these places, and to the inner Solar System, and that these things are just self constructed hives of human activity, and they invent their own Raison d'être at each point in these voyages. And there's travel between them, but largely they are city sized or larger constructs, and that must be how it will work, powdering down asteroids, and... I would, hey you know, I would really like to see a breakout in the next century. How long can we wait for star flight? I mean how long before the contradictions in terrestrial existence just become too tearing, and you have to go to some kind of fascism and really turn the screws, or uh, things fly to pieces, you know.

ED: Yeah, that's...

TM: But I really always felt as a science fiction fan and all that, that star flight... that galactic citizenship was what you're aiming for, and even if you're the only fucking citizen, that's fine. But if you have to go up to the great council of the Talyxilou [sp?], or whatever that shit was in Dune. But yeah, this flinging ourselves around the solar system is an enormous... that's obviously all doable. In other words it doesn't require any re-arrangement of the laws of physics, it just, it requires we don't all murder each other, and we continue to pursue commerce. So, this is reasonable in some level to expect, and uh... there needs to be... I wish there were a face on Mars, or something like that. That would drag the popular imagination...

ED: But I see the... I see strong movements in some levels for an imagination of Mars as a place to inhabit.

TM: It seems like Mars is, is happening here.

ED: I mean, it's in the scientific imagination, it's in the high science fiction imagination, the... why not? I mean, it's...

TM: Yeah.

ED: a pretty cool idea. I mean, it's insane... it's like, I wouldn't go first [Terence & Erik laughs]

TM: Or ten-thousandth [Terence laughing]

ED: Probably.

TM: Well between that and what's out at the edge of the Solar System, it seems to get quite exotic, and as what life is understood to be expands, it's all converging. I mean there are, there is mind under the ice of Europa. Not I don't know... Mind, that's not... but there's a lot of complicated and hard to define, and edgy shit, uh, from on, on the moons of Jupiter and Saturn.

ED: What do you mean like, edgy shit?

TM: Well like, uhm hot water trapped in methane environments, under deep ice. You know there's this lake...

ED: Hot water in there for something [?]....

TM: ...and complicated chemistry. And you know, they're drilling into this lake in Antarctica, that's under four thousand meters of ice, and has been there twenty million years, and utterly undisturbed in total darkness for... and this insane geological... and they're culturing stuff out it, out of the mud that's been under there, it's alive. Still alive.

ED: Woah! That's trippy a little bit

TM: Yeah, isn't that...

ED: ...bounce off my head...

TM: Yes. Yes, exactly [Terence laughs] So uhm, if I, you know... It would be a great time to be a xeno-biologist. And it could be Europa, it could be Titan, it could be Mars.

ED: Now that would just be a fascinating encounter.

TM: Yeah, that's a great, a great rap.

ED: But that one seems more likely, we encounter some kind of weird life-form underneath, but it's not, you know [Erik Davis speaks in alien voice] "I am here from Orion".

TM: [Terence laughs] We're not testing you... we have no questions, we have no answers [continues laughing]. This idea has been gaining strength for twenty years that life is not unique to Earth, it must have drifted in a chunk of stuff and it's, it's an alchemical rule. It's the rule of homogeneity, you know 'As Above, So Below', given the circumstances as we find them, what rational momentum is there to think that life is unique, and arose on this planet almost...

ED: It's much easier for me to imagine that on a certain level, that at least the galaxy, or our local part of the galaxy has some kind of other minds. I mean it may be, it may be not true. But it's almost the same way of the way that we model... you know... hopefully model a future. It's almost like you kind of imagine that... and so all that... Star Trek is even kind of this weird dress rehearsal for a certain phase of, of this kind of, uh... realization. That's just a story, just a science fiction story.

TM: Well, you could have said it of Jules Verne in eighteen-eighty-five, and in Wright, you know. Yeah, it is a rehearsal.

ED: And you know, psychedelics kind of seemed like to me imaginative rehearsal to some other event. And whether that event is merely my own individual death, or some kind of cosmic...

TM: Event?

ED: event. I, I completely suspend judgement on it, and I don't know if I will be able to, I don't think I'll move from my present...

TM: Position?

ED: position, of like, well...

TM: Who knows?

ED: who knows? uh,...

TM: Yes, it's the big kahuna, or...

ED: So what do you think the... up with the, uh... extra-terrestrial imagery, that features so heavily in some strands of psychedelic experience?

TM: You mean the cat-eyed... that kind of imagery? The cat-eyed alien, gray, pudgy little...

ED: That, and just the sense of, uh, I think it seems like a lot of people just even describe the sense of extraterrestrial intelligence, or...

TM: Well, remember how we were talking last night about everything wants to articulate itself. Everything wants to somehow communicate, and be perceived as language, when that impulse is most clearly separated from it's object, or from it's source I guess you would say, then maybe that's what you get, is this Gumby-like pure impulse towards communication, or something like that. I mean it seems to me, it's like, uhm, looking at a pure function... a pure psychological function of some sort... you see what I mean?

ED: No longer rooted in, in...

TM: In it's source.

ED: Source being biology and evolution, and the physical form of this particular planet.

TM: Yeah.

ED: And so that, once it reaches a certain kind of...

TM: It can actually walk away from itself, and then there you have it. And you say, you know, what is this? It's category confounding, it can't be, it's uh... an essence without an object, or something like that, and uh...

ED: Yeah, I've had, I've had some pretty profound moments of... of feeling like contact with... something like extra-terrestrial intelligence, without often believing it in the interior of the trip that it was...

TM: Oh you mean while loaded.

ED: Yeah, even at the time going... Okay, this is...

TM: I'll let this happen.

ED: Yeah this is, this is the phenomena occurring, uhm... rather than... Oh, I'm only seeing it, and uh, or maybe you just sort of gear forward science fiction, or..

TM: So how real was it?

ED: Well I mean it's... maybe it's just a language that I use for 'other'. That if you, you know, if you present this some kind of intelligence or communicating force that seems to be 'other', that's very 'high', you know very 'evolved', that maybe I'm just gonna tend to see it more as, as alien. But even in terms of those buzzes, like the kind of weird way that sounds can like form these vibrating matrices... is they've often, they often take on a more metallic quality, and become more synthetic. And with that rising begin to enter into an imagery realm that's very...

TM: Peculiarly alien.

ED: And it's peculiarly Alien, and that's technological often, as opposed to natural.

TM: Uh-huh, that's the place.

ED: And uh... and that's you know this... that's like a lens or something of... cause I mean you imagine you're on, you know.... history is, if you imagine it pouring forward or moving rapidly forward, there's a kind of front edge, that's very weird, because it started bursting all sets of new...

TM: Foam.

ED: Yeah like, exactly [Erik laughs].

TM: Yeah [Terence clears throat]. I know that place. Hm...

ED: What is the nature of the entities? What constitutes their apparent agency, or communicative agency?

TM: Well I think that's the question that remains unanswered. You know, that's the grail of the thing, what is the nature of the other... is basically what you're asking. Is it a construct? A projection? Or a discovery? It's not clear to me what it is.

ED: Do you feel like you've gotten any closer to that?

TM: It's probably a discover which is the most radical conclusion. I mean I think that's probably what you think too based on the... your description of the DMT trip, and all that... that ultimately it is irreducible, you know... it is too weird to tell. I don't know whether it was a C.M. Kornbluth story, but it was all about these aliens come by and contact the United Nations, and all this, and... but somehow this book, 'To Serve Man', uh, uh, comes to the surface, and it's slowly realized it's a cookbook [Terence and Erik laughs], and this really spoils the party [more laughing].

ED: What about the communications that come in from either the extra-terrestrial, quote unquote, or seeming, or the technological world?

TM: Well obviously it requires discrimination to figure out you can't believe everything you hear. The demons are of many kinds, some are made of ions, some of mind, the ones of DMT you'll find, stutter often and are blind. Just because something can talk, doesn't mean it isn't selling you something you may not want to have.

ED: Right, now that time in that phrase, you said the one time DMT, but I've also heard you say Ketamine there. The one time, Ketamine.

TM: Have I said that about Ketamine?

ED: Yeah, yeah.

TM: Well we need to control me a little more tightly [Terence laughs].

ED: What is your, uh, what is your opinion on Ketamine?

TM: I think it's an intra-uterine memory drug. I think there are things about it that cause you to recapture some kind of intra-uterine state. It's echoic, it's weightless. It cancels the sense of gravity, so you don't feel your lungs rising and falling. It's, uh, I sort of agree with you, I see it's fascination. I would not want to become embroiled in it's tentacles cause I... it seems to me a little too easy, a little too fascinating.

ED: Do you think, uh, ketamine is hollower, partly because it's just a synthetic? There doesn't, it hasn't emerge in the ancient matrix of the bio-sphere?

TM: No I think one of the big, one of the interesting unanswered questions is why do these chemicals have the characters that they do? You know, why do they have these personalities? Why is there Mayan imagery inside mushrooms and mescaline and this and that... and so, Ketamine's character is simply somehow conferred from whatever strange dimension this is, that sends these drugs their personalities, and uh... it certainly is an interesting personality. And Lilly is, you know, John is a juggernaut, do you know him? Oh my god. John's such a trip. I mean some people are just...

ED: He seems... but he's like... I mean, he's a really... kinda... out...

TM: Oh, definitely...

ED: Like I mean it, like this guy's out...

TM: Yeah, this guy is... there's nobody home. This guy cannot be left alone at home, and he's like me [Terence & Erik laughs]. What a trip! And such, you know, an amazing arrogance, and an amazing conviction of your own own, uh... that you've got it all figured out, you know... yeah, relentless character. He told me once... we were at Esalen... I don't know, it was just the two of us standing there... and he said "Nature loves you ruthlessly". And I thought, hm... well, that's an interesting observation, just ruthlessly (voice unclear).

ED: Was he speaking specifically about you?

TM: Yeah, he and I were to only two people present. It was just a private conversation. He used to have this Obi-Wan Kenobi robe that he wore around Esalen, it was just hilarious, and he would just show up out of the fog, you know, like... to lay these raps on ya. Yeah, they didn't make too many of John.

ED: Ketamine actually distills a certain element of... of the psyche, and then just lets that element interact with this whole weird plane. And there's not a lot of connections with the animal body, but the tryptamines are like carrying the animal body all the way through it all. So it's all still

TM: Yeah...

ED: archaic, and there's sex, and there's fear, and all of these... the animals in this space... the

Ketamine is like a little drop of like...

TM: [Terence voice unclear; Erik laughs]

ED: Enters into the zone...

TM: It is completely like that.

ED: You're completely, I mean... I don't know if you remember, like, things in your life life that are all part these networks that are cosmic cause and they're so impersonal, I mean these are very impersonal environments.

TM: Sometimes on Ketamine I have the impression it's like this all time, I simply don't notice. Which isn't a very sense making perception, but uh...

ED: [Erik laughs] Yeah. Not it does have an always already quality to it. But the whole quality of time is very different, than with uh, also tryptamines, which a kind of more propulsive change about transforming.

TM: Yeah, you're right about how it accentuates the animal body and just shows you some kind of hyper state of, uh, I don't know... being!

ED: Or even metabolism. [?]

TM: Yeah, something like that. Where it's just a fifty thousand percent more powerful than you thought was the specs would tolerate.

ED: What do you think of MDMA?

TM: It's... it never spun me like it apparently did other people. It seemed very pleasant. I didn't quite ever get, you know, the fight to save MDMA and all that, uh... I figured from what I was hearing around me that it was doing a lot of good in psychotherapy, and so those people should be supported. But personally I never... it seemed, well it seemed very much like every drug as it's introduced into society. It's usually claimed to solve relationship problems, and uh, then... well that's the best packaging is to say the drug solves relationship problems, and...

ED: Well of course linked to that, right on the top was the warning that you could believe you were deeply involved with somebody, wind up making stupid decisions.

TM: Well, when was that not true?

ED: Yeah, no I remember the first time. I mean that was specifically one of the stories that was told around. And that was relatively early in being...

TM: You mean people deciding to marry the wrong person...

ED: Well, yeah that kind of thing.

TM: Because they...

ED: Had such an intimate experience. I only had a few. I only took it a few times. I find it extremely taxing on the system. You know the way that I, I...

TM: Oh, you mean the next day you feel terrible?

ED: Yes, yeah. [Erik laughs] Yeah, it's true, the amphetamine down is really quite a monster. I actually like, uh, crystal methadrine but it's not worth it.

TM: It just wears you too hard.

ED: Yeah, it's too hard. It's like... it's fun but, it's kind of...

TM: Every gear is flopping on it's axle by the time you're through. Yeah.

ED: Do you have a position about the relationship of the psychedelic experience to non psychedelic mysticism?

TM: Oh, I think I see what you're trying to get at, some kind of... what's the neo-Platonic, what's the Platonic connection to the psychedelic experience.

ED: That's one way of thinking of it, yeah.

TM: Yeah, in that sense, yeah, uh, I mean... maybe you need to ask the question, but uh, the.. the psychedelic vision is of some kind of relevant thing. It isn't just, uh, it isn't the equivalent of a dust bunny under your psychic bed, or something like that. It's actually a product of the... well, it's hard to English it but the product of the fractal laws that govern information theory. That, that's a theme... I mean that, uhm, Neil Stevenson and all these people understand that it really is all about how everything is put together at the informational level. There's no deeper truth, and so all this talk about code and, uh, virtual reality, and how the portions of reality might be code running in some way, and all of this. This is all I think trying to get at, uh, something about information theory that is... needs to be fundamentally understood before we can altogether take the next step to the next level.

ED: What's the relationship between what's happening with these information networks, and this kind of object? or matrix? or second hyperdimensional...

TM: You mean how does our own cyber-spatial technology relate to the presence of this neo-Platonic ur-object of, uh...

ED: Mhm.

TM: Well that sounds like, this dialogue you wanna get in on with the 'Garland of Letters' or the 'Kabbalah' or the... I mean, mathematics is somehow this web of something which hold nature together and seems to spring out of a higher mind of some sort. I mean mathematics is really what it's all about when you finally get it sliced thin I think, uh...

ED: Hm.

TM: ...and that makes sense Platonically and from this neo-Platonic thing, you know, that's uh... and by neo-Platonic I mean Proclus, and Plotinus, and those people who came about five hundred years...

ED: Right.

TM: later, after Christ, yeah. Have you been to Ravenna? That's where they have these, uh, mosaics that are... cause it was basically a theory of pixelation, it was an elemental theory. So they were tiny, pure un-dividable elements of essence that went together to produce a phenomenon. Well all those people came out around the end of the sixth or early seventh century, it was Plotinus, Proclus, Porphyry... yeah Plotinus, he had the right idea [Terence laughs]. And you know it was late Gnosticism, so all this star magic and, uh, really wild theories of stellar well, it was when, it was when the Hermetic Corpus was settling nicely into positions. All those doctrines of calling down the voices and all that.

ED: Do you think we're, uh... do you think we're in some sense, in a structurally resonant position Vis-à-vis late antiquity?

TM: Oh, I think about that very much. Well, always in some degree because these fractal things are just endlessly echoing and re-echoing inside the structure of time, but uh... yeah this, what we share with that era is, uh... a kind of fundamentally existential confusion about what's going on, so any... so doubt itself becomes a philosophical position. Which in fact all doubt means is, I'm shopping thank you. [Erik laughs] So uh, you know what I mean?

ED: Yeah. What about that sense, that this... this matrix, this network...

TM: This thing you mine for language? Yeah, I sort of see it like that, that there's something you... that all the metaphors of alchemy which are, you know... locating the deposit, extracting, concentrating, alloying, fabricating, apply to this enterprise of language and literature and art, and clearly that's basically what it's all about. And you have to get in there somehow, to this, uh... the to the main vein, and once you're there, it's just pure, pure, Logos, and that's the way I've always gotten at it. I figured that's the way, the really smart money gets at it, the, the Melville, the Joyce, these voices that you find.

ED: Are somehow channeling closer to that... from a position closer to that matrix.

TM: Yeah.

ED: Or whatever you...

TM: And that that's what real channeling is, is getting close to that kind of...

ED: To that writ efecundy [sp?]....

TM: Yeah.

ED: I mean that's the thing that's so wrong about the... I didn't really get that... this totally explicitly but about like a lot of channeled material. Is that I have no doubt you can set yourself up into a psychic information network wherein you... human ego at this point in history are aware, or become aware of the presence of another personality and voice when then you bring through and write down. I'm not... I'm not saying nothing about ontology, something... something about perception psychology. But the thing is, is that the stuff that gets transmitted... so much of it is so bad, and so literalistic, and so boring. Because it's not actually close to that, because that is so rich with...

TM: It's because as you say, it's too easy. You know, you have no doubt people can do it and you're right, they can do it... and then, so then what you get it is C+...

ED: Right.

TM: ...material.

ED: Have you ever seen an image of, of, of... the, the letters that were on the golden plates?

TM: The Mormon books?

ED: Yeah.

TM: Uh huh, sure.

ED: The Brodie[?] book they haven't reproduced...

TM: Yeah.

ED: And it's just that notion of these highly compressed scripts. I mean if you imagine... like this thing we were talking about in psychedelic space, that this kind of matrix of possible languages or possible logics, when end up kind of fleshing out into all this sort of other stuff, that there must be languages that are farther upstream, that we can't really capture in full left-brain, you know, alphabet, parson mind.

TM: Right.

ED: It's a little, little challenging for that mind. And yet it still has the character of a language. It's like the Hebrew alphabet..

TM: Right.

ED: ...That mystical idea of an alphabet.

TM: No, Ralph and I have talked about stuff like this, about uh... you probably know or have heard of this guy Stan Tenen...

ED: Yeah, yes.

TM: Well he is into thing thing where he has this shape and as you illuminate it from different angles, you get different Hebrew letters cast as shadows. So Ralph said, you know... this implied then that there was this hyper object which cast all these shadows and he said, given sufficient computer powers you could compute upstream as you say, and toward higher dimensional objects that would eventually shed all, uh... all shadows, of all letters, in all languages.

ED: Ahh...

TM: And that there would actually be a kind of a, like a... Omega object or something, that was the source of all meaning. So this thing you and I were talking about last night or today about mining the veins of organized entelechy or whatever, relate to this, uh, this concept of this like gnosis shedding hyper object that is somewhere up in the Empyrean.

ED: I find that Kabbalistic stuff pretty, pretty evocative, that whole...

TM: Well it relates to this 'Garland of Letters' stuff, and... I really think, I mean I had experiences leading up to the thing at La Chorrera, you know when I was young, that just seemed to imply that sound was it! And that you could do things with sound, with your voice, that is was all natural stuff. But everything up to probably splitting the atom, if you knew how to do it.

ED: So do you, do you subscribe, kind of... at least loosely to the idea, that behind a lot of religious and mystical literature, at some level of depth, lies psychedelic experience, you know, produced through ingesting of some kind of psycho-active substance?

TM: Well I think so. And I think more-so since I've had cancer, because I had no idea that such, uhm, peculiar states of mind were naturally available to people and non-lethal. In other words that you could have fairly frequent brain seizures, and experience very bizarre states of body-mind dislocation and have it not kill you. So now I see that the spectrum of human experience is a lot broader, then I previously imagined...

ED: Because then you... you've imagined all of the chemical conditions under which people have...

TM: Over a million years...

ED: You know, not just drugs, but diet, temperament, genetics...

TM: And now this. All these various things. It turns out the mind is far more malleable than it is...

it's easier to... well, what am I trying to say here, I'm trying to say it, the mind can adjust to a great deal more than that which simply kills it. And so, as people make their way through these states of mind, induced by brain architecture, cancer, diet, drugs, genetics, whatever... there's a broader human database than I realized.

ED: Well other than the, the seizure itself you kind of described to me... I mean I guess this, the drugs you're on now in terms of waking up these completely bizarre things... what are some of the other, like, really unusual mind states that you found yourself in, since, uh... this all began?

TM: Well, uh, they're hard to describe, like one time I call it 'losing categories', where it will become an enormous effort to decide whether there should be one or two of something, something completely trivial. But this one or two indicates to me some kind of lexical break or some kind of peculiar... I mean it's hard to English, but...

ED: Mhm.

TM: You see what I mean.

ED: Yeah. I love the idea that you've found another number between...

TM: Oh I, that I discovered a whole number between and and five that had previously been overlooked. That was a funny idea, and uh... but mostly it's some very hard to communicate idea about how, uhm, concepts form these things called lexical objects, that are like topologically closed. So they can't really be cross-related. So all understanding becomes a kind of illusion of some sort.

ED: Wow, that's kind of intense.

TM: Yeah, that is a weird idea. Well now that I have all these medical problems with brain, and brain function, I have a much greater appreciation for the boundaries of eccentricity. I mean, now I understand, it doesn't take drugs. There are a lot of people running around who are crazy as shit house owls, and uh... are achieving it on the natch [Terence laughs]. And their, their testimony now has to be weighed as well, so uh... this surprises me. I didn't realize that, uhm... you know a malfunctioning brain could, uh... leave you functioning enough to report to work and tell your story, and presumably write novels and meet deadlines, and these other things, you know, that people do, so.. and I don't know how many other people realize this either.

ED: Because that's sort of how you... how you feel?

TM: Yeah, I mean, I'm now... live in a world defined by, pretty much by prescribed drugs and, uh, my doctors are telling me I have to take this stuff to stay alive, basically. So how many people are living in a world psychological defined by that way? Quite a lot.

ED: But you seem to be largely... Terence, you know...

TM: Well I recall who I'm supposed to be, so... [Terence and Erik laughs] We're not trading that in too likely, uh...

ED: But in some fundamental sense, do you feel like your standing on a different ball?

TM: I would like to get all these drugs out of my system, the Depakote, and the steroids and all that because, uhm... it makes mentally moving on a level surface feel like walking uphill, you know, so uh... and these are mild drugs I take. These are not, you know, what about the people who've been diagnosed, scizophrenic, or bi-polar this, or something, I mean what are these people taking, and what is it making them think about reality?

ED: Well you've taken, uh, serotonin re-uptake inhibitors haven't you?

TM: You mean like Prozac?

ED: Yeah.

TM: Yeah, the... but those are designed to, uh, help you out. These other things, all you deal with is side effects.

ED: Oh yeah, yeah.

TM: It's a different thing.

ED: I thought you were talking more about... Schizophrenia, you know, it's been treated... don't they treat with all sorts of neuro-transmitter, uh... modulating drugs, which are presumably there to help them out?

TM: Well, there to help them out...

ED: In the way that Prozac's...

TM: It may be there to help the rest of us out. [Terence and Erik laughs] You know, to... like for instance this drug I take Depakote, the first thing it supposedly deals with is mania, well I'm taking a drug for mania? I don't have mania, do I? Did I? Would I? Should I? Could I? Do I want to? And so forth and so on, [more laughter].

ED: You, you didn't have any bit of mania in you before?

TM: At times I've been accused of mania, but... [more laughter] by idiots! So... [more laughter] ...uhm, and I guess because of the war on drugs somewhat concealed and all that is the willingness of the establishment to allow experimentation of drugs, the effect of which on tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands of people would have social consequences that were maybe unintended or unmanaged, uh...

ED: Yeah, I'll say.

TM: Yeah, like I've wondered, you know the statistic you hear, Prozac is the most prescribed drug

in the world now, and a billion people take Prozac now.

ED: Is it really?

TM: It's something like that.

ED: Oh my god.

TM: So my question is, when do some of the rest of us get the benefit of this? In other words, when is the guy putting my fruit in my sack going to become a more pleasant person? The guy pumping gas, uh... all these people on Prozac, pretty soon it should begin to feed into the body politic as a sort of feeling of a good will and temperance. I haven't actually seen that. [Erik laughs] But yes, I would like to live for quite awhile longer. But it is a very interesting cancer as a metaphor for modern life and uh... how people live, how they think about their politics and diet, and uh, money and all the, the rest of it. And probably my generation was more exposed to toxin, than any other in history. Because there were not only all the toxins of the pre-modern world, but then, all the plastics, adhesives, and so forth and...

ED: Well, it's just so, it seems so basic that cancer is a socially, physically constructed metaphor for all these other processes that are happening on different levels. It's almost like that plane of the real response with an appropriate kind of metaphor for all these, processes of inflation, and kind of negentropy burning, uh, development.

TM: The revenge of matter or something... yeah. Or the revenge of synthetic matter.

ED: But what is your prognosis?

TM: Ah, well it's a little hard to figure out, uhm... I think it's, well it depends on the doctor your believe. The doctor who just did the surgery said he got it all. He has an incredible reputation like thirty best in the world, or something, with survival rates and all that, so uh... maybe he did get it all, in which case I'm the same weird, the same... I just have to get strong. On the other hand the survival rate for this shit is very low, uhm... zilch in some people's opinion. They say, you know, there's no escape, there's always salve[?], they always return. You can only have so many craniotomies, uh.. so those people say six months to a year of life, which is really a drag to take on board, uh... my own intuition is I'm not sure, I can't tell what's going on. It certainly is a weird situation to have fall upon you. Especially a person like myself whose never had, I've never been a sick person or concerned with any of this. I had no idea there was so much morbidity around me, you know... where as Dante, you know... "I had not thought death had undone so many", he says when he looks into the Inferno. It's a sobering thought [Terence laughs]. So that's it and, uhm.. what you do, is you constantly try to get stronger and hope that no bad news comes down the pipe, and uh...

ED: Do you feel more, uh... intimate with death?

TM: Oh, absolutely. No, you spend every waking minute... well I don't know every waking minute, but for the past six months, uh... let us say, death has been a daily accompaniment of my, uh,

thoughts, and uh... dying is the more troubling subject. Death is the great who knows. Dying on the other hand might be unpleasant, prolonged, it has a terrible effect on the people around you, and uh...

ED: Full of fear and pain...

TM: And misapprehension, you know...

ED: Misapprehension?

TM: Well, people don't know what it is. So they don't know what they're looking at, and they, you know are they losing you? Are you passing to the great, the meaning combination of answer to all, or are you on the extended wing downward into darkness? And it really plays people.

ED: The internal subjective perception of the shut-down of the nervous system at death. I think that's a really interesting question.

TM: You mean to what degree are these things different and similar?

ED: Yeah, that in some way in what happens with most psychedelic, and mystical visionary experience, and, and certain relationships to apocalyptic form to the end of the world, where things all transforming. There's a, a point where the self dies and it might happen in a millisecond, but subjectively would be the end of the world.

TM: Yeah, and because I think everything works basically the same way, it would have a fair profundity, uh, because you would be seeing the primal assembly language code.

ED: But, but the whole idea of psychedelics as an end, you know, as a rehearsal for that kind of event.

TM: Yeah, it's like Buddhism with turbo-charge or something. Now you can...

ED: Run through the Bardo, or a Bardo...

TM: Take the diamond sutra for spin. [Terence laughs]

ED: How does one live your life in the shadow of such an event. You know, what does it mean to live in a shadow of a different kind of culmination? Or how does one live in a post-human world?

TM: Well, maybe that's how you actually can change your existential mourn. That's what you deal with. That's the peg you move, is this image of, uh, your own fate or end of life, or how it's... what exactly all this stuff is worth to you, and as you move that around, you see thing differently.

ED: How has a lifetime of psychedelic use, an adult lifetime, sort of set you up for facing death?

TM: Well I guess it leads you to the idea that, uh, things are probably more complicated than you

can suppose. Therefore supposition is not to be trusted. So in other words, given how weird life has been, why rush to pre-judge death? It's bound to be mighty strange. Life was mighty strange, and uh... I'm curious, you know, I don't think anybody would be curious... I mean it's an interesting situation to be told that you have a very limited amount of life left, because it composes your mind for you... wonderfully. You know, and you start paying attention, asking the questions, and uh... and I have no insight into what it will be, but I suspect it isn't what anybody thinks it is. I mean the argument that nature has this desire to preserve form is I think self-evident on enormous scales of space and time, and very local scales of space and time, so why fight it? It must be that, uh, that the, that somehow matter is spiritualizing itself, or mathematizing itself or something...

ED: Right, becoming virtual form.

TM: So, and what psychedelics show is, that the world is full of surprises. I mean I consider psychedelics a constant and verifiable miracle. The fact that that can happen to your mind, so it means all kinds of things are possible, uh... nothing is to be assumed or pre-judged, given a. biology, b. psychedelics and culture, and probably that's a long enough list but those two things alone secure the weirdness of being sufficiently... we can call it quits.

ED: It's late too. You should get your rest Terence.

TM: Yes I should, we all should.

[End]

Original Transcription by: aferalspirit

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]

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Vis-à-vis

Terence McKenna vs. Young Republican Radio Debate

2nd-6th September 1991

KFI radio station with Tom Leykis

Description

- [Youtube Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

TRANSCRIBER: copy and paste the question and answers templates (below) for each question and answer. remove this red text before publishing.

Firstname Lastname: question?

Terence McKenna: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

FL: question?

TM: answer.

Original Transcription by: someone [make sure you put your name or username here so that we know that someone is working on it]

Review 1 by: someone else

Review 2 by [admin only]: probably kevin :)

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Terence McKenna with Lost at Last (aka Live Shamanic Music)

12 December 1998

Maritime Hall, San Francisco, California

Description

- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

01:50

To sing and speak tonight about the opalescent expressances of the abyss
the abyss of living language that pours from the psychedelic body
the psychedelic body is the earth turned inside out
it's river's ramaputra, limapopo, ganji's, casi varanjaje
it's mountains popocatapolo, kilamanjara
it's islands, yijido, batchan, obee, doru, damar, hamahara, key, saran, neeos, manhattan
it's people weetoto, shwar, celtic, black, white, yellow, gay, strait, old young, stong, living, dread past
present remembered forgotten
i wanted to speak of the opalescent expressance of the abyss
the shining lights, in the mind
the shining lights that move in the night of the mind
so that language builds until it overflows the goblet of understanding and becomes pure pre purest
intentionality
to being
aum
chanting

Original Transcription by: [spencerjbarrett]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Terence McKenna's Final Earthbound Interview

October, 1998

Big Island, HI

Description

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McKenna: Well, Novelty Theory is something I've been working on since the early 70s, inspired by psychedelic plant experiences in the Amazon. To attempt to look at time and really deconstruct it and attempt to understand what it is. And this has been a wild intellectual ride leading to some pretty easily stated conclusions.

One is that novelty, which is my term for complexity, or advanced organisation—novelty increases as we approach the present moment. The universe you and I are living in is a far more novel and complicated place than the early universe was. Well, some people would say, “Well that's just a consequence of the unfolding of developmental processes.” But, this asks the question, “What are development processes? Why should the universe have a preference for order over disorder especially when we have something like the second law of thermodynamics which tells us exactly the opposite?”

Physicists believe the universe is running down, ultimately, into a state of disorder. But what I see, is everywhere the emergence of more and more complex forms, languages, organisms, technologies; always building on the previously achieved levels of complexity. So that was one of my insights. Coming out of that insight was the further understanding that this process of complexification through time is not proceeding at a steady rate. It actually follows a kind of axiomatic curve. In other words, it's happening faster and faster, and this was a revelation to me because it allowed me, philosophically, to contextualise the human world and to understand that human technologies, languages, migrations, art movements, ideologies, are not something different from nature. They're the same download of process that we see in the movement of continents, the evolution of new species of animals—except that these human novel emergent situations are happening much more quickly.

So, I see the cosmos, if you will, as a kind novelty producing engine. A kind of machine which produces complexity in all realms: physical, chemical, social, whatever, and then uses that achieved level of complexity as the platform for further complexity.

Well, this explains our present circumstance. It explains the rush toward all forms of new technology and social organisation in the new millennium. But you don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that if the universe is complexifying faster and faster, an epoch, a time will come when this rate of complexification is occurring so rapidly that it will become itself the overwhelming phenomena in the world of three dimensional space and time—and I call this the Omega Point, or the transcendental object at the end of history—and I believe it is not that far off.

That with the emergence of global internet ,a human population of several billions, an electronic noosphere, that we are now within the shadow of this transcendental object at the end of time. Our religions sense it, that's what gives them their apocalyptic intuitions. And I think the ordinary man and women in the street sense a kind of built in acceleration to time itself. Well, rather than dismissing that, or treating it as psychological perception, or something unique to our society, I took it as a basic perception

about physics and have built elaborate mathematically defined theories around this idea and then have found, to my astonishment, incredible congruences with other work.

I'm thinking of the Mayan calendar and its curious countdown like quality toward an extremely unique event that the Maya felt would occur in the same timeframe that my own equations predicted even though at the time I was unaware of the Maya. So what we have here is a new model of time based on a very real intuition that I think most people share, which is, that time is speeding up, that human beings are part of that process, and that the culmination of that process is now within the van of historical time. In other words, I believe it will happen in 2012, in December, coincident with the same events that the Maya placed at the end of their calendar. Even if I'm wrong, even if it's 100 years or five hundred years later, these are still spans of time that when compared to the life of planet are fractions of a percentage. So, whether you believe, as I do, that we can know the precise moment of this transformation of the world of time, or whether you believe it is simply coming soon and fast really doesn't make that much difference.

We are all gathered here at the end game of development processes on this planet – we about to become unrecognisable to ourselves as a species. Our technologies, our religions, our science, has pushed us toward this for thousands of years without us awakening to what the (?)demeanor would be. Now we stand close enough to it, and I think that all but the most lumpen amongst us must feel the tug of the transcendental and the transformative.

JohnH: I am very perplexed when you say that time is speeding up? As far as I can tell: such things like crystal oscillators, things which keep time, clocks, the relationship of the Earth turning to the calendar, the full moon, all the things which are symptoms of our passage through time don't seem to be throwing themselves out of kilter. So how, what do you really mean about time speeding up?

McKenna: Well, let me answer in the form of a question. "Which lasts longer? A million years in which nothing happens, or 10 seconds with 50000 events crammed into it?" In other words, really, time is only experienced by the events which occur within it; and I maintain that the early universe had very little going on and consequently time moved very, very slowly. The character of time as we approach the present is that there are more and more physical domains, and energetic domains in which change can occur. For example, the early universe was a pure plasma, a pure swarm of unassociated electrons. You didn't even have atomic systems, let alone chemistry, molecular chemistry, life, complex speciated life, and dynamically balanced planetary ecosystems. Each one of those more complex phenomena crystallised out, or emerged, if you will, from the previous systems that had come into existence. So when I say time is speeding up, what I mean really is, more and more is happening. And if you ask the question, "Well, what would be the ultimate state of connectivity, or of happening?" It's when all points are connected to all other points.

Somehow this concept of connectivity is intimately linked to the concept of complexity, and so really what I'm saying is that the universe is getting its act together. It's connecting the dots. It's bringing everything into co-relationship with everything else. And somehow it does this through the production of consciousness. Consciousness is this integrative function in biology which takes data, which may appear profoundly unrelated, and in fact brings it into some kind of a congruent relationship. We say, "an organism coordinates a point of view." Well, in a way, what's happening over time is that the universe is coordinating a point of view, and as it does this it becomes somehow more aware, more self-conscious, more being-like and less thing-like and, as I said, this process is not proceeding at a steady pace, it is proceeding faster and faster. More connectivity occurs now in a calendar year than occurred in a million years, a billion years ago. So, somehow, as we approach the present, we find ourselves in an ever denser realm of activity, inter-relationship, connectivity, and the result of this, is more of the same, producing a shrinking globe, ever more immersive technologies, dissolution of political, social, gender, and class boundaries of all sorts.

So that's what I mean when I say the universe is speeding up. You know, before the advent of man, of human beings, the fastest changes on this planet of any consequence were genetic changes. Changes in the genomes of plants and animals. Well, biologists know that for a fruit fly to add a spur to its leg, for a bird to change its plumage, you need hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions of years of evolutionary time. With the advent of human beings, using spoken language, a new kind possibility was born. It's called epigenetic change, in other words, change which is not about genes but which is about languages, customs, behaviours of human beings. Epigenetic change reaches its dramatic culmination in speech, writing, and communication of all sorts. And so the carriers of epigenetic change, the human beings, are automatically then the carriers of accelerated novelty. And so when you look at, let's say, evolution on a coral reef and you compare it, let's say, to the evolution of political ideas in

modern Europe, obviously, modern Europe's rate of change in this domain is thousands of times faster. So by moving from the genetic to the epigenetic realm we have vastly accelerated all kinds of processes. Now we appear to be about to move from the strictly human domain to the human machine symbioses domain, and of course, machines process information, make connections, and do their work at a rate thousands of times faster than any human being can work. So we see, again, a progressive acceleration of the process of creating and maintaining varieties of connectivity. And that's what I mean by time is speeding up.

JohnH: Your description of the process by which you developed the time wave theory: I understand, I read, True Hallucination, so I understand it took you some years to, kind of, work it all out?

McKenna: Yes. In the Amazon all was chaos and mythic revelation but I knew that you couldn't bring that back as a scientific theory and my bias has always been towards science and out of these many intuitions and revelations I discerned a thread which was about time. It began with a conversation with this Logos entity where it said to me, "Did you know, every day is composed of four other days?" And I said, "no, I not only didn't know that, it's never even occurred to me, what a bizarre idea." Well, so this idea then of a time being a resonance created by other times not immediately before or after it, as in scientific causality, but somehow a day centuries ago, centuries in the future, come together to create an interference pattern that creates the unique moment.

So, that was one of the basic assumptions and then the structure on which this all was hung was the I Ching, which may seem exotic to American and European audiences but which is, of course, as familiar to any one in Chinese society as the Declaration of Independence is to us. And what is the I Ching? Well, it's a very ancient method of divining and predicting the future based on the idea that every moment can be symbolised by a unique ideogram which is somehow its essence, much in the way that science believes you can explain all nature with 108 elements, the ancient Chinese took the position that time itself was made of elements.

My style of thinking is scientific enough that if I were to say to somebody, "I propose a revolution in physics based on what I know about an ancient Chinese divinitory system" that would seem foolish to me, it seems a cult, it seems unscientific. Why should an ancient Chinese book of divination hold any insight whatsoever for modern physics? But, the uncanny thing about the I Ching is that it seems to work, even in the hands of its critics it seems to work. So let me try out a metaphor on you which I think makes much more clear what's going on here.

Visualize for a moment sand dunes – and notice when you look at these sand dunes in your mind that they look like wind. Sand dunes look like wind in some sense. Well, then analyse the situation. What is wind? Wind is a pressure variant phenomena that fluctuates over time. Ah, in a way, the sand grains moved about by the wind are like a lower dimensional slice of the wind itself. And from photographic analysis of dunes you can calculate the speed and duration of the wind that made them. So, the dune is a lower dimensional slice of time, of the wind ebbing and flowing that made it. Well now, let's change the metaphor a little bit. Instead of grains of sand, let's think of genes, instead of a wind storm, let's think of a billion years of evolution. It moves the genes around in a pattern which is a lower dimensional slice of the force which created the situation. In other words, on every living organism there is the imprint of the higher dimensional force which made it. Now somebody could say, "Well, that's God." Well, but in a scientific context we don't speak like that. But whatever it is that made blind matter into whales, squirrels, and human beings, it left its calling card inside each human being, each squirrel, each whale. That's the DNA. Well, the DNA codons are based on a system of 64, exactly like the I Ching. So, my belief is that someone, some group of people thousands of years ago, looked into human organism, looked by meditative techniques into the center of their own beings, and they were not mystics, nor were they empiricists, they were simply curious. But at the centre of the meditative experience they saw an ebb and flow; an energy field that was in a constant state of flux and they asked themselves: "How many elements are necessary to describe this energy field?" And the answer was, more than 10, less than a thousand, more than 20, less than 500. And when they finally got it worked out, low and behold, 64 situations are all the possible potential situations there are.

Out of 64 sub-types of time you can create everything from the coronation of Queen Mary to the resignation of Madonna. Out of 64 types of time. So really, what the I Ching is, it's not a book of Chinese mysticism, it's a book of molecular dynamics that sees through biology to the physics that allowed biology to come into existence. And I'll argue this with anybody in the field regardless with how hard core an empiricist they claim themselves to be because, er, the coincidence between the structure of the I Ching and the structure of the DNA is staggering. It's not a simple correspondance between 64 and 64—all the processors that

occur in DNA can be easily modelled with the 6 line hexagrams that make up the I Ching.

It's almost as though western science was fascinated by energy. For five thousand years we pursued understanding energy and this process ends with thermonuclear explosions in the deserts of the American south-west. We can light the fire that burns in the heart of the distant stars, we know how to do that. That's what the western mind achieved, political issues aside. The eastern mind was not interested in energy, it was interested in time, and they spent 5000 years deconstructing it, looking at it—and you don't use atom smashers, you don't use enormous physical pressure; it's a different problem and you bring different tools to bear. You meditate, you look inside yourself, you study the movement of water around pebbles. You consider the situation, you study history. In any case, the bottom line is, the people who pursued this understanding of time achieved as sophisticated a relationship to time as the western relationship to matter expressed through our ability to trigger fusion and fission.

So there's a great deal for us to learn in the west from these oriental efforts to understand time, and it is not necessarily mystical. What I did was entirely mathematical. It's not transparent to a person who has not studied mathematics but to a professional mathematician it's utterly trivial. There's nothing occult about it and I think true understanding can be communicated and formally described with mathematics. And that's what we have here; we're on the brink of a fusion of western science with quote, unquote, eastern mysticism. Nothing mystical about it, except that we call it mysticism, but the fusion of these two viewpoints is going to give us a complete understanding of the universe of space, time, matter and energy. [23:40:00]

JohnH: I want to go to this step about the strange attractor at the end of history. We never ever, you know, considered that notion that we are being pulled, as opposed to simply just going on for ever and ever and that's, for sure, something that people are going to go: "Huh?"

McKenna: Well, you know, in the 19th century, if you spoke of nature having a purpose, you were thought to be anti-evolution. Because in the 19th century there was great pain to eliminate anything like pre-formation, or teleology, or purpose, or God. All these things they were trying to eliminate from evolutionary theory and until very recently in scientific thought, the idea has been that events are pushed by the causal necessity embedded in the events which preceded them. In other words, if you asked the question, "What is the most important event, moment, in terms of shaping this moment?" The answer would be, "the moment just before this moment," because it hands on the energy, the space, the time.

Recently mathematicians have evolved what they call the notion of attractors. Or strange attractors in some cases, and these are processes where a dynamic is not pushed by causal necessity from behind but it's pulled by point in the future. You could almost say, for example, if you release a ball bearing up near the rim of a bowl, that its attractor is the bottom of the bowl and the ball bearing will roll down to the bottom, then halfway up the side, then up the side in shorter and shorter cycles until it finally comes to rest in the exact bottom of the bowl. Well, from the point of view of the new mathematics, the bottom of the bowl is a basin of attraction and the ball bearing has fallen under its influence.

So, I have always doubted that evolutionary theory without purpose, without teleology, could produce this complex a world as we see around us in as short a time, five billion years as the life of the Earth. It seemed more as though these processes were not just wandering across a flat epigene(tic)... a flat genetic landscape. The process of biological evolution was actually being channelled between high walls, in other words, it could move—it had some motion this way, some this, but its forward direction was, ah, inevitable, and this is the idea of an attractor. That what the universe is doing is: it is under the sway of what I call, the transcendental object at the end of time, and that is this domain of hyper-connectivity. That it would be perfect novelty. And all nature aspires for this state of perfect novelty. You could almost say that nature abhors habit, and so it seeks the novel by, ah, producing various kinds of phenomena at every level in biology, chemistry and society.

And so there really is a purpose to the universe. Its purpose is this state of hyper-complexification in which all its points become related to each other, become what mathematicians call co-tangent and it gives the universe the feeling of being imbued with a caring presence. It makes it appear as though nature is tending toward something and that... And it changes our own ethical and moral position in the universe because, you know, science tells us that we're the products of a cosmic accident: we're at the edge of an ordinary galaxy in an ordinary star system and we're damn lucky to be here and that's it, that's our place. A very existential notion of our place in the cosmos; but if you take this other point of view, that process is under the influence of an attractor, and that the value the attractor is maximising is novelty, then suddenly, for the first time in 500 years, human beings are moved back

to the centre of the stage because we are the most novel thing on this planet.

We are everything biology is, plus, technology, language, politics, philosophy, art, so forth, and so on. So, suddenly human beings become important, not mere cosmic witnesses to a meaningless cosmos but the cutting edge of a cosmos that glories in order and is moving towards higher states of order and at the present moment we are the carriers. Once it was the volcanic processes that shaped this planet. Once it was the life of the early oceans. Once it was the great dinosaurs, but today, humanity represents the cutting edge of complexity and this process of moving towards complexification.

So, without invoking God, or any sort of myth, you give meaning to human life, "What is man's purpose?" To advance and preserve novelty, you know, this is an ethical position. It means you don't replace rain forests with pastures, you don't censor books, you don't lean on people who make gender choices different from yours. No, the purpose of being a human is to complexify reality even more. To hand on a more diverse, more complicated, more multifaceted (sic: multifaceic) universe to our children, and when this process of complexification reaches the omega point, ah, it will, it will fulfill, I believe, the expectations of all of these religions but it will fulfill it in a mature, scientific, and, and universal way that these religions all lack because they all reflect their parochial origins.[30:52:40]

JohnH: That's certainly true.

McKenna: It's certainly true that we see a limited slice of reality and your example from Flatland – anything that moves as a gradient through time we will not discern very carefully. I mean, for instance, this is why we have the science of economics. Because it keeps track of the behavior of markets which is something you can't see or feel, but which has become very important to human institutions. It's a fourth dimensional factor that we need to co-ordinate into our planning. So we've created an entire science to study the movement and behavior of markets.

One of the things I'm always trying to visualize what the concrescence would be like, even though I know in principle it's probably not possible to imagine it—but several factors are on the horizon which I think can be brought together to, sort of, get a picture of what we're headed towards. One is, for some time now, we've been involved in building complex prosthesis, which we call machines and computers. They are part of us. We don't perceive them as part of us because we identify with the flesh and exteriorize the fabricated metal, but in fact, they are a part of us, as much as our political systems, our agriculture production systems, so forth, and so on... So, we... The animal body has reached the limits of its evolutionary abilities: a cheetah can run 75 miles an hour, an elephant can lift three tons and so forth and so on. To go beyond those capacities of the animal body you have to make a marriage with mechanical things. So, ah, we are extending ourselves through the machines. Well, one of the things that these machines do is they're time compressors. You know, you and I sitting here talking, are operating at about 100 Hertz. If we could be magically downloaded into a top of the line computer we would run at 800 MHz. That means we could do 800 million more things in this moment than we can do when we're wearing flesh. So, it may be that we will find a way to technologically stretch time—and this will become for us like a false eternity. You may only have 10 minutes left in your life but it may be time enough to pack in all of human history from the fall of Rome to the present moment. So, we are finding ways out of the 3 dimensional Newtonian prison, which says, "You know, life is narrow and confined and ends at the grave." Ah, and it's, we're doing it by becoming information that is freed from material and somehow this allows us to make this ascent to the next dimensional modality. Information is not time and space constrained the way we are. We talk about the difficulty of moving an object at the speed of light. Our entire planetary technology cannot achieve moving a marble at the speed of light but we can move information at the speed of light. Tetrabytes of it. We do this every day. So we see how we stand then like children at the edge of the ocean of information and we're putting our feet in and wondering, you know, "Could we swim in that? What would it be like to be wet in that? What would it be like to go into that new medium?" A similar dilemma must have confronted the early amphibians as they stared at the land and said, you know, "Could we leave the ocean, could we go up into those places, could we breathe air and actually make the transition to such a hostile, an alienating environment as the land?" And so, these are major cemetery breaks. But in every case the answer has been, "you bet," and sooner or later somebody did it and then all succeeding generations have followed suit. What is fascinating about this particular transition is that we are conscious of the implications, we will who make the transition will in some sense, some limited sense, understand its implications, where I don't think that was true for the animals that left the primordial oceans. They simply were behaving evo... blind instinct, and evolutionary dictated behaviours—but the degrees of freedom accessible to us are so multifarious that we can actually appreciate for the first time our circumstance, and our circumstance is awe inspiring. I mean, we about to take the step out of matter. The planet is on a collision course with the most profound event it's possible to imagine. The freeing of organic life from the

chrysalis of matter. For a billion years there's been life on this planet but never life that could step outside of matter. But this is obviously what's in the cards and we are privileged to be central to that [!pauses for watch chime!] event.

JohnH: You've just said, "We're moving beyond matter? I just can't imagine what you mean? Can you try to talk a little bit more about that?"

McKenna: Well, first of all, I can't quite imagine what we mean either. I think this is the test, to imagine, "What could that mean?" Maybe the bridge, ah, concept, is virtual reality. Obviously, we're on the brink of building computer assisted worlds that don't, quote, unquote, really exist, but that which we'll experience the way we experience dreams or the imagination. And I think this is where psychedelic substances come in. Shamans have always entered into a non-physical realm of information through trance. In a way there's nothing new here... This is part of the archaic revival.

(break: laughing. "Will you still love me, will you still feed me when I'm 64... Are we rolling? – I've forgotten the thread? What was it?" Oh...)

Is it a human thing? Is it unique... is this ascent into novelty a human thing? No. Part of what I discern here, though we humans are always ready to suffer guilt and take blame for everything going on in the universe, I don't believe this is something we're doing. I think that we are as much corks tossed on the ocean of time as are humming birds and prairie dogs. In other words, an event of cosmic significance and importance is going to occur not far in the future. "Are we causing it?" No. "Can we stop it?" No. "Can we hurry it?" No. It's built in to the structure of matter itself. One way of thinking of this is that the laws of physics are evolving to permit greater freedom, and we are... And people have said to me, "Well don't you find it a little strange that such a momentous event would occur, ah, in human history?" After all human history is 10 000 years wide, the planet is 5 billion years old—pretty unusual coincidence that human history would be happening when this cosmic event happens. No, that's completely wrong. Human history is being caused by the nearby presence of this event. In other words, if you think of the event as something which has shells of influence: some of its shells of influence reach so far back in time that they drag life out of the primitive oceans. Some its shells of influence reach so far back in time that they define the emergence of the hominid line out of the higher primates. Some shells reach back to Egypt. Some to medieval time. As you approach the present it becomes stronger and stronger but I would argue that the presence of human civilisation on this planet is the strongest evidence we have that matter and organizational processes are about to make some kind of a leap to a new order of being.

What history is, is the 25 thousand year transition zone. Before you enter the zone you're an animal. After you leave the zone you're a god. But for 25 thousand years you're kind of an animal and kind of a god. And you're constantly being swamped by your animal nature and then great teachers are appearing and dragging people back to the right line and we are schizophrenic in history. A friend of mine once said, he said, "History is the shockwave which precedes the eschaton." And I absolutely believe that, and I believe that as historical processes intensify it's reasonable to believe that we are ever closer to the eschaton. If my ideas seem strange to someone, I ask them, "Can you imagine this planet in 500 years given the propagation of ordinary historical and scientific rates of unfoldment and discovery? Can you imagine this planet in a 1000 years?" No, no one can imagine that because processes are now in play which so totally rewrite the script that no one can imagine a 100 years or 200 years in the future because the discoveries which will be made in that span of time will so totally rewrite the human experience of itself and the environment that we cannot see deep into the future. And this indicates to me that the future is exploding in an asymptotic unfoldment into a kind of cultural superspace and our own bafflement at the impossibility of conceiving any real future given the political and social and technological forces in play is proof of that. [42:39:40]

JohnH: Before we go farther I would like you attempt to give me a definition of conrescence and eschaton?

McKenna: Well, let's go backward. Eschaton first. Eschaton is a good word out of theology. It simply means the last thing. The last thing is the eschaton and it is everything become one thing. For theologians it's God, for somebody of a more materialist bent it might be something else. But the eschaton is the last thing. Eschatology is the study of the time of the last thing. "Now, what was the other word?"

JohnH: Conrescence?

McKenna: Conrescence? This is a little trickier concept. I took it from Alfred North Whitehead. Conrescence is the idea of something that grows together. It conresces. It becomes more dense, more connected, more defined in space and time. And when I talk about the transcendental object at the end of time, or the coming of the eschaton, or hyper novelty, I mean, that the process of the human and biological conrescence of intent reaches some kind of maximum. Conrescence is the end of the process of becoming. Becoming is not true being. True being exists at the conrescence. The kind of being we experience, becoming, is a partial state of being much like history is a partial state of conrescence. History definitely places us outside the world of biological intent, ah, the animal mind, but history does not bring us into the presence of the eschaton, it's a partial process, and conrescence is what waits at the end. The eschaton is the conrescence.

JohnH: But we really can't have any way of knowing what that is, that experience of that is going to be like?

McKenna: No, and the reason why is because asking that question is like asking a man looking east at 2am to describe the coming sunrise. He can't because it is literally over the event horizon of the future and when we look into the future we see that the east is streaked with rosy dawn but we cannot conceive of the day that is about to come. All we can see is the dim glow of some kind of eschacological promise. Ask me this question in 2010 and I'll have a different answer.

JohnH: Um, back to this issue of physics and your description of the two things which are left out of their models? The way that you describe it is so self evident and simple. The complexification the further away that you get away from the Big Bang and the fact that everything... The complexification is speeding up? Would you talk just a little bit about, um, the relationship of those observations to the world of the physicist and their efforts to define reality and why they're not using, including, in their models these aspects that you're pointing to?

McKenna: The main reasons they aren't friendly toward a model... The main reasons physicists are not friendly to a progressive, conrescent model like this is because you would have to look at, you would have to give credit to biology for being a stage higher than chemistry and you would have to give credit to human history as a stage higher than biology. And physicists study physics. If you study physics there is no biology. You don't have to deal with issues of biology when you study physics. I mean, there is something called biophysics, but it's not well received in physics or biology. So, physicists are... tend to discount biology, even though life on this planet is 4.83 billion years old, physicists just discount it. They call it a epiphenomena. Well, then when you talk to sociologists, they want, they give no credit to physics. Science has compartmentalised nature in order to analyse it and there is no theory of nature, as such, and that's really what I offering. I'm offering a theory which covers: physics, chemistry, geology, biology, sociology, linguistics, the whole thing. In other words, not saying man is some special category; not saying that we need artificial divisions but that over the entire domain of known phenomena this, ah, tendency to complexify through time, A, and B, faster and faster, can be discerned. We need a theory of everything. Physics talks about theories of everything but none of these theories of everything address biology, let alone sociology, linguistics, and ah, you know, the phenomenon of human beings.

Well, the archaic revival. There is a way of looking at the entire 20th century, beginning with Pablo Picasso bringing masks back from Africa and showing them around in French cafes in 1915. Ah, beginning with Freud's discovery of the unconscious and Jung's elaboration of those discoveries and then every phenomenon of major importance that you care to mention in the 20th century: fascism, abstract expressionism, rock & roll, sexual permissiveness, psychedelic drug taking, rave culture, body piercing, jazz—the list is endless. What do all these things have in common? They are reversions to archaic behaviours. They represent rejections of the Edwardian gentleman with his white man's burden and represent instead, a realisation that for us to survive, and live with ourselves, we have to re-empower archaic values. As the century unfolded the understanding of what this re-empowering of archaic values might mean, has changed. Jung and Freud discovered the unconscious, discovered that we are not all ladies and gentlemen but that there is a cannibal lurking within. Albert Hoffman's discovery of LSD demonstrated that that inner wilderness is accessible to most people through chemistry. Well, then still later, it was understood that the key ingredient in active shamism is psychedelic plants, psychedelic experiences. And in a way that closed the loop between archaic—the impulse toward the archaic and the impulses of modern science and modern medicine. The key is the psychedelic experience: that's what makes the shaman a shaman. That's what made the archaic, in fact, archaic, and so people like Freud and Jung and the surrealists and the Dadaists and the Abstract Expressionists, all of these people were very close to the mark. The shaman is the paradigmatic figure and the psychedelic experience seems to be the anticipatory experience of this eschaton that we are headed toward. You know, when psychedelics were first being discussed, it was thought that they would prepare people

for death. In a sense, they probably do, but in the same way they prepare people for death they prepare people for transformation. It gets you used to the idea that the world is not what it appears to be and it gets you used to the idea that the world is somehow animate, intelligent and proceeding along its own agenda. So in a way, shamans have always been anticipations of some future state of mankind. They're the masters of language, they're the ones who are telepathic with the animals, they are the ones who can see into the future. So, this archaic nostalgia gets real focus once you realise that it is the shaman and his or her shamanic techniques that confers on them the extra-historical dimension. That that is how you get out of linear history. That's how you visit the realm of the ancestors, that's how you travel into the future, that's how you break up the tyranny of Newtonian serial time.[52:45:40]

JohnH: We have 14 years until this event, measured on the calendar—and a really common, ordinary way to describe the times that we're living in is that they're very, very chaotic, filled with acts of unspeakable evil, um, and at the same time there's this sort buzz and thrust of optimism: everything from a guy like Peter Swartz talking about the long wave, the big booming economy, breakthroughs in educational levels and qualities of life but it's definitely a dynamic where you've got extremes of good and evil in that way. Would you talk a little bit about the relationship between that dynamic as we go forward and the novelty continues to climax?

McKenna: Well, novelty is not necessarily good or nice. Novelty is complex, that's what it is. So I see, really, a concatenation of tendencies and forces here at the end. It's only going to get weirder. The level of contradiction is going to rise excruciatingly, even beyond the excruciating present levels of contradiction. (laughs) So, I think it's just going to get weirder and weirder, and weirder, and finally it's going to be so weird that people are going to have to talk about how weird it is. And at that point novelty theory can come out of the woods, ah, because eventually people are going to say, "What the hell is going on?" It's just too nuts, it's not enough to say it's nuts, you have to explain why it's so nuts. So, between now and 2012, the next 14 years, I look for: the invention of artificial life, the cloning of human beings, possible contact with extraterrestrials, possible human immortality, and at the same time, appalling acts of brutality, genocide, race baiting, homophobia, famine, starvation; because the systems which are in place to keep the world sane are utterly inadequate to the forces that have been unleashed. The collapse of the socialist world, the rise of the internet. These are changes so immense nobody could imagine them ever happening, and now that they have happened nobody even bothers to mention what a big deal it is. Ah, the fact that there is no such thing as the Soviet Union, people never talk about it anymore—but when I was a kid the notion that that would ever change was beyond conceiving. Ah, so the good news is, that as primates we are incredibly adaptable to change. Put us in the desert, we survive, put us the jungle, we survive, under Hitler we survive, under Nixon we survive. We can put up with about anything and it's a good thing because we are going to be tested to the limits. The breakdown of anything—and this is why the rightwing is so alarmed—because what they see going on is the breakdown of all tradition, all order, all sanctioned norms of behaviour. And they're quite right that it's happening, but they're quite wrong to conclude that it should be resisted or is somehow evil. The mushroom said to me once, it said: "This is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars." You don't depart for the stars under calm and orderly conditions; it's a fire in a madhouse, and that's what we have, the fire in the madhouse at the end of time. This is what it's like when a species prepares to move on to the next dimension. The entire destiny of all life on the planet is tied up in this; we are not acting for ourselves, or from ourselves; we happen to be the point species on a transformation that will affect every living organism on this planet at its conclusion.

JohnH: Let's pause for a second, um. I see how—with Jenkins calling it Galactic Cosmology; it's like our home continues to expand—we've gone from the village, to the nation state, to the planet...

McKenna: Now, we're ready to take on the big picture.

JohnH: So, let's just talk about the conclusions of the archaic mind. What it reaches?

McKenna: Well, the great watershed difference between the archaic understanding and what is called scientific materialism is the archaic mind understood, in fact, perceived, that nature is conscious, nature is alive, nature is an organism full of intent. The goal of the archaic mind is to connect with, communicate with, and align itself to, this greater Gaian holism, which is sometimes called nature, the Great Spirit, the realm of the ancestors, but this is what the archaic mind understood and was comfortable with; and in fact it is true. Our own decision to view the universe as dead, as inanimate, as unintelligent, allowed us, permitted us to dissect it, use it, and deny its validity outside of human purpose. Now, the consequences of living like that is coming back to haunt us. You know, we have almost destroyed our home, we have almost cut the earth from beneath our own feet. So, this

impulse towards the Gaianic and the archaic is a survival instinct at this point. We must give, ah, reverence and credence to nature and nature's methods because no other methods will allow us to work our way out of the present mess we're in. High temperature, high energy resource extraction, commodification, mega-agriculture; we're at the end of the rope for these things. So the archaic holds answers but it only holds answers if we are willing to think of the universe as a living intelligent entity in—with which we are in partnership, not set against, but that, in fact, we are a part of a morphogenetic intent and an unfolding reality that is larger than human understanding. Imagine, larger than human understanding... (laughs)

JohnH: So, the whole entire milky way, galaxy, is a being?

McKenna: Well it's a kind of... It's an organism, yes, and the galaxy is a kind of an organism. You can think of it as a fractal resonance with the cell. The galaxy has a nucleus of very dense material where very mysterious processes are going on. Then it has a cytoplasmic envelope of stars and gas clouds that surround that core. And then it is an individual, very distinctly defined by the vast emptiness that lies between it and the next galaxy. Yes, I think nature builds by fractal intent, and that all organisms have a core, and then a deployed surround, whether we're talking about the cell, the solar system, the Earth, the galaxy. In the process of the conservation of novelty, structures are created with cores that are more complex than their outlying neighbourhoods. To my mind a galaxy hanging in space is a picture of the timewave—every star is a datapoint in an enormous computer simulation of the novelty wave—that's why it has that spiral structure.

You know, scientists are very puzzled that the galaxies don't fly apart. They don't seem to have enough mass that their gravitation should hold them together and there's been a lot of talk about dark matter or some missing factor. Well, the missing factor is novelty. The galaxy stays together because the galaxy wants to be a galaxy, in other words, it wants to hold onto the level of novel, ah, morphology that it has achieved. It has an actual appetite for expressing itself in that form—that's why the galaxies are spirals, and in a sense, those spirals are very large pictures of the time wave where we can at last see it, not confused with its background or foreground. So, everything organises itself fractally, spirally, with a dense centre in its spatial domain and a dense centre in its temporal domain. We are like this, galaxies are like this, planets, stars, bird flocks, coral reefs; but in the case of the galaxy it's particularly easy to observe the structure because the thing is so huge that its forces dominate and damp out other forces which might distort it.

[end 01:03:30]

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this is just a test

The Definitive UFO Tape

April 1983

Location, Mill Valley, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[faint intro music]

Kat Harrison: In the two books that you have written I have read of UFO inferences. Would you expand upon those things?

Terence McKenna: Yes, well actually in the, in the first book the UFO reference is few and far between, I think it's only touched on once. I deliberately suppressed it from *The Invisible Landscape* because it was already lit up like a Christmas tree with bizarre ideas. And I would save that particular ornament for its own treatment later.

But in the second work, uh, *Down to Earth: Psilocybin and the UFOs* I deal with that directly because, uh, it seems to me that, uh, in psilocybin and the tryptamine hallucinogens generally we actually have a, uh, state of mind that is very similar to the state of mind reported to accompany the, uh, the UFO contact, and that these things could somehow be co-mapped one onto the other. That at, uh, at active, uh, levels of psilocybin there is, uh, visionary ideation of spaceships, alien creatures, alien information, a general futuristic saucerian kind of quality to the place it conveys you to that, uh, seem to be coming from the same place, uh, as the modern myth of the UFO, if it is a myth. And, uh, we discovered in our exploration to the Amazon in 1971 that this was quite true, that, uh, involvement with these tryptamines as they accumulated in your system, you seem to acquire the ability to, uh, eh, inhabit more than one world at once, as though superimposed over reality there was, uh, a super-reality, a hyper-dimensional world where information was, uh, accessible in magical ways. And, uh, in the wake of that experience I just, uh, went through the literature of the mystical experience and the saucer experience and, uh, ideas like alchemy and that sort of thing, and, uh, eventually saw that these w- they were all talking about the same thing, that there is an experience which is gaining ascendancy from modern man which is called contact with the UFO, but it is not, uh, reducible to any of the things that the, uh, main people who've written about it have said it can be reduced to. It is not, strictly speaking, a contact from a space-faring race that has come from the stars. It is not, uh, mass-hysteria. It is not delusion either. There is, in fact, something very odd going on, something which is as challenging to modern epistemological notions as, uh, you know, a uh, US air force jet transport landing on some field outside a village in New Guinea.

In other words, uh, here is an area that is close to the experience of people in that a very large percentage

of people claim to have seen flying saucers, an area close to the experience of people where science is totally helpless. It seems as though reality is haunted by a spinning vortex that renders science helpless. And the spinning vortex is the UFO, and it comes and goes, uh, on a mass scale, haunting history like ghost. Umm...

KH: You mean the records in the, uh, the Aztec records and the whole thing about coming, and...the white men coming to the new world in space ships?

TM: Well, all these cases have been made for saucer intervention but actually no, I'm speaking more specifically about the post, uh, World War II spinning silver disc in the sky and the myth that accompanies it of the large, pointed-eared, cat-eyed, uh, It has numerous variations, but, uh, it's clearly an idea complex emerging in the psyche. Uh, and the question is what is it? Is it prophecy? Is it a vision of the human future? What is it? And, uh...the postmodern phase of flying saucer speculation is the phase which recognizes that the saucer is somehow mixed up with human psychology, that it is no mere light scene in the sky, that when you go back and question the people who see these things, that right before they saw it, they were thinking something very odd and unusual which they didn't normally think about, or right after it and, in other words, it seemed to be a kind of ideological catalyst for some purpose, and uh, Vallee in a book called *The Invisible College* was the first person to suggest what I would call the 'cultural thermostat' theory. He said that the flying saucer was an object from the collective unconscious of the human race that appeared basically to break the force of any ide- any set of ideas that were gaining dominance in their explanatory power at the expense of their ethical force. In other words, that it was like a confounding which would enter history again and again when history would build to a certain kind of boil the confounding would occur-

KH:??? does that too.

TM: This is a similar idea, right. And he suggested that perhaps the career of Christ was an earlier 'confounding' where Roman *techné* and Roman militarism and all these things was unseated by, you know, a peculiar religion which no educated Roman could take seriously for a moment. I mean, an educated Roman was a Democritean atomist and, uh, well-versed in, uh, in Epicureanism and Sophism and, uh, and yet the servants were telling stories about a Rabbi who had risen from the dead and had somehow reopened a gate that had been closed since creation so that the soul of man could again be reunited with God, and uh, this stuff made no sense to the Roman authorities and yet it quickly overwhelmed the Empire.

The modern s- context is very similar to that in that science, now it can be seen to have replaced Roman imperial aspirations as a dominant mythos of control, and uh, it has these neat and tidy explanations of the world, yet persistently from the folk there come stories of lights in the sky and strange beings and bizarre encounters that they cannot quite lay to rest. And-

KH: And you do have experiences yourself?

TM: Oh yes, it's a real- whatever real means- I mean, it is a real experience. It is phenomenologically real. In fact, my contention is that, uh, psilocybin induces it, and that perhaps on a mass scale i- it's as though there is an event at the end of history of such magnitude that it casts miniature reflections of itself back into time, and these are these apocalyptic condescendences which haunt the historical continuum, igniting religions and various hysterias and, seeping ideas into highly tuned nervous systems.

KH: How does it do that?

TM: Well, it's as though the- it's, uh, like Plato said, "time is the moving image of eternity". It does it because in its dimension all these things have- are somehow coexistent in time or outside of time. They have already happened. History is the formality of viewing this hyperdimensional object in a 3-dimensional way by transecting it many many times until you've built up an entire picture of it. But, uh, the, you know, the mushroom evokes a profound planetary consciousness that shows you that history is just this froth of artefact production that has appeared in the last 10 to 15 thousand years, spread across the planet very quickly, but that mind in man just goes back and back into the darkness, you know. And one of the things we were saying in *The Invisible Landscape* was that there are powers in the human body or avenues of understanding that have not been followed because of epistemological biases, so that for instance the idea that you could use your voice to effect molecular changes in your own nervous system. It sounds on one level preposterous. On the other hand it's simply a formalized way of noting the fact that sound is energy, that energy can be transduced in a number of ways and then when you direct it against your body, you obviously do make changes.

KH: Well that's the typical chanting, uh...mantra [?]

TM: That goes on in shamanism worldwide. [Q: Uh huh] Well, these people are navigating themselves in a space which we have lost touch with...that for us as- I'm speaking now as a society - only erupts in the weakened situation of a weakened psychic constitution where there is the element of panic in the mythological sense of Pan bursting through from the underworld, the emergence of the flying saucer. What it is is it's an autonomous psychic entity that has slipped from the control of the ego and is approaching laden with the otherness of the unconscious, so that, you know, as you look into it, as you behold yourself your world, your information field all deployed in this strange, distant, almost transhumanly cool way which, uh, links it to the myth of the extraterrestrial. The extraterrestrial is the human oversoul, uh, in its general and particulate expression on the planet, which doesn't rule out the possibility that the mushroom places you in contact with extraterrestrials somewhere in the galaxy actually circling other suns, but it probably means that that communication is mediated through the oversoul.

The oversoul is, uh, some kind of field that is generated by human beings but that is not under the control of any institution, any government, any religion. It is actually the most intelligent thing on the planet, and it regulates human culture through the release of ideas out of eternity and into the continuum of history. And what the UFO is is an idea to confound, and its purpose is to confound science because science has begun to threaten the existence of the human species, leave alone the ecosystem of the planet. And at that point, uh, a shock is necessary for culture, a shock equivalent to this culture to the shock of the Resurrection on Roman imperialism, and the myths that are building are like the messianic myths that preceded the appearance of Christ, and what they are of is of an intervention by a hyper-intelligent entity that comes from the stars, and reveals the right way to live and, uh, wrecks science by a series of demonstrations that make it apparent that the purpose of human history is nothing less than total immersion in the teachings of the saucer. And, eh, once this message is slammed home via worldwide TV hookup and that sort of thing, it will just disappear. And in the wake of that you see what you have is, uh, this hysteria of abandonment similar to the hysteria of abandonment that swept the Christian communities when, after the crucifixion, the resurrection, the coming of the millenium was postponed century after century, and, uh, sci- the development of science will cease. This flying saucer-oriented religion which is definitely the emergence

of an archetype of enormous power will hold sway in the same way that Roman science was stymied for a thousand years by the immersion in the words of one, one rabbi.

KH: Scientists are not gonna like your opinion.

TM: Well, they should be forewarned. Vallee was saying this in another book of his called "The Invisible College." He was more alarmed than I am because he is of the tradition of French Rationalism and he was quite frightened to think. He didn't believe it was, I should say, the oversoul of mankind. He actually believed it was a politically-oriented group of human beings who had an advanced technology that was allowing them to do this. I reject that as total paranoia, and I am not as concerned with him to pull science's chestnuts from the fire. I think that science has betrayed human destiny to some degree and that, uh, you know, we are led to the brink of star flight but we are also led to the brink of thermonuclear holocaust, and, uh, bu- but, the conclusion, the political implication that I draw from all this is that, uh, scientists will be swept away by the revelation of the flying saucer. They have always been the ones to be like the apostle Thomas and want to put their hand into the wound. And, uh, if the wound is offered, meaning if the saucer comes and is seen by hundreds of millions of people, they would go over, uh, immediately.

Uh, so, the political insulation, the political conclusion to be drawn is to preserve your freedom of thought by deconditioning yourself to the flying saucer religion before it happens.

KH: Is this [??] can we approach

TM: Because..

Q2[Who is this?]: Most inspired inspired scientists might be most intrigued in this situation.

TM: Oh, they would go over first. You see, a religion operates by law of large numbers. As long as 80% of the people believe, it can transform a civilization. Therefore, if you're one of the 13% who don't believe, it's ok. So you always want to stand where the high water won't reach, um, but I, I think the flying saucer experience is tremendously powerful and that it really is the, uh, is somehow linked to the psychedelic experience in a way that will not, perhaps, be understood for some time. But that, uh, the futuristic hyperdimensional world of these tryptamine hallucinogens and the persistent message from the unconscious in the form of these spinning idea-complexes with the alien creatures inside are definitely expressions of the cutting edge of the evolution of consciousness, and it's very interesting. A voice has been silent, and a voice that guided and revealed has been a silent phenomenon for about 1700 years now in Western civilization. Before that there was such a voice, I mean it was called the 'Logos' and all philosophers strove to invoke it, and it was a voice which told you the truth, the self-evident truth you had only to hear it and you knew you were hearing the truth. And uh, with the passing of the eon, or something, the death of the Pagan gods, this phenomenon faded out. However, it is still available, uh..

KH: and you found it...[?]

TM: ...through the mediation of these compounds.

KH: Now how can you say these same words, how can you say them and have people feel like they want to

invite to dinner to tell if this doom and destruction of mankind and the toppling of science especially when it is only right now science- scientists and scientific people who understand what you're saying.

TM: Well, see what I'm saying is if we would intelligently examine these dimensions that the psychedelic drugs make available, we could, as it were, get in touch with the oversoul and, and leave the era when man is disciplined by flying saucers and messiahs and progress is halted for millenia at a stretch just because people can't evolve their ethics and their technology at the same rate of speed. if we would have a dialogue with the Other we would understand all these things and become in contact with the Tao of the ancestors, and, uh, you know, this is what a shamanic civilization or a shamanic culture is. It's where certain people mediate the r- the group racial experience that is available, somehow deployed in mind-space.

KH: Have you, have you done a controlled experiment whereby you can bring a number of people to the college of psilocybin or however it is that the message can come across, have you done that?

TM: You mean in regard to triggering these UFO-type experiences?

KH: Yes, have you been able to..

TM: Well, only in the sense that, uh, we've ascertained by questionnaire that, uh, this is a very frequent motif, perhaps the most frequently mentioned motif ev- um, by people who take psilocybin recreationally is that it's about outer space and flying saucers and aliens, little green men. And these are people who are taking, you know, 15 milligram type doses. Sufficient doses to elicit the full spectrum of the compound. DMT is similar, I mean it conveys you into an elf-infested space where, uh, you know, wild and zany things are going on. It's as though there are continuum- a reality that is beyond this reality, a linguistically as well as spatio-dimensionally so that you have to turn to a different language channel, and then with this language pouring through your head you observe the other place, the alternate reality, and it is...

KH: That's what Sanskrit says too.

TM: Yes, although this alternate reality is surprisingly far from most traditions about what alternative realities are like. I mean, it doesn't prepare you for its crackling, electronic, hyperdimensional, interstellar, extraterrestrial, saucerian, mighty peculiar, all this. These highly polished and curved surfaces and machines and beings and language transformations and machines undergoing geometric transformations into beings and thoughts that condense as visible objects...this is a theme that's very interesting to me is the, uh, the hyperdimensional language, a language that is ehh, fulfills Philo Judaeus' quest for the more perfect Logos. Philo said that a more perfect Logos would be beheld rather than heard, and this is what happens on DMT, you hear a language which is very faint and far away, and as it gets louder and louder you realize that without ever going over a quantized transition it is becoming a phenomenon not of the audial field but of the visual field, and that it is in fact a fully evolving synesthetic hallucination of extremely realistic and utterly bizarre, uh, proportion. I mean, it's like an Arabian maelstrom of color and form and you somehow sense, you know, that you're in the Sistine Chapel, you're at the Kaaba, you're at Konorak, you're at all these places and- but, you know, it's a hyperdimensional infundibulum, if you will [Terence chuckles] It's just a little place to dance, and uh, then you see, you know, that there is alien information, this saucerian information is deployed everywhere in this other space, and that the really astonishing thing is that, uh, human history and art reflect so little of it.

KH: But it does. You do see it.

TM: Y- oh, you see it, but, uh, very very faintly.

KH: [?] you have to perceive it to see it though.

TM: When you see the real thing you just think [Q: yeah, then you can see it elsewhere] my god, I mean how do they keep the lid on this stuff? This is raging right next door? And, uh, you know, the m- modern epistemological methods are just not up to dealing with an elf, with chattering, elf-infested spaces. I mean we have a word for those spaces, we call it schizophrenia and slam the door. But, you know, these, uh, these dimensions have been with us since ten thousand times longer than Freud and, uh, people just have to come to terms with them now it's, uh, because of an- accidents of botany and history, European man has been away from the psychedelic dimension since a while, you know, from the dimension of the tryptamines and psilocybin since perhaps the closure of the last glaciation. So now we've accomplished marvelous things with *techne* and this and that, but here it is, uh, you know, many cultures around the world have kept the flame burning and the, the, uh, discs which haunt the skies of earth indicate that the unconscious cannot be kept waiting forever. These things are going to have to be dealt with, uh. And what it seems to me to point out is, you know, that the dime- the imagination really is the ground of being and this is the great discovery which will change things, it will be as if man had discovered fire for the second time. The imagination is the, uh, the golden pathway to everywhere, and when we cease to try and cross to the stars by, uh, crude rocket and engineering schemes and realize that deployed in the imagination is the entire universe- and that to-

KH: How do you think to go about to instigating, uh, the launch off- the launch.

TM: Well you have- I think that what the task of history can now be seen to be is what I call turning man inside out. The body has to be, uh, ex- interiorized and the soul has to be exteriorized to create, uh, you know, a golden disc. A, uh...

KH: How?

TM: By magic. [Terence laughs]

This matter of the flying saucer gives me an excuse to read a favorite poem of mine which answers your question about the future of man and the psychedelic experience. He says "once out of nature, I shall never take my bodily form from any natural thing, but such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make of hammered gold and gold enameling to keep a drowsy emperor awake or set upon a golden bough to sing to lords and ladies of Byzantium of what is past or passing or to come." And this is the idea of becoming, you know, a golden object after death.

KH: ??

TM: Yeats, this is Song to Byzantium

KH: [??] ..could you do it again?

"Once out of nature, I shall never take my bodily form from any natural thing, but such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make of hammered gold and gold enameling to keep a drowsy emperor awake or set upon a golden bough to sing to lords and ladies of Byzantium of what is past or passing or to come." In other words, a golden bird, a hyperdimensional object of Grecian gold enameling, and-

Q: [??] movement

TM: this is what the flying saucer is, it is the soul become object. This is the secret of alchemy. Uh, it's interesting, you see, that the s- great flowering of alchemy, great last flowering of alchemy in the 16th century was coincident upon a level of understanding of, uh, natural chemistry approximately equal to our modern understanding of the role of life in the universe. In other words, mostly speculation. So that what for us moves off into the sky as the flying saucer told to us to be possible by science but highly unlikely is like the 16th century mind's relationship to the, uh, philosopher's stone, which was said to be highly unlikely but not impossible, and so all this imaginative effort was exhausted in trying to produce the philosopher's stone, and the focus was upon chemical hardware, heating alembics, watching swirling glass-gasses in cloudy glass, and now in the modern context it has gone into the sky. The sky is the dimension of the other for 20th century man. We feel we understand natural chemical processes. There is no mystery there. Or miners no longer encounter gnomes when they go into deep mines the way they did in the 15th and 16th century. Those gnomes have been stilled, but the sky is still haunted. This is where we are told it might-

KH: The sea too [??]

TM: -be possible for it to come from, and the sea, the sea is obviously co-mapped to the unconscious. But the sky, because our scientists tell us, you know, that somewhere out there just possibly it might be so. But I think what's being missed is that a whole dimension of, uh, communication is being ruled, uh, inadmissible as evidence simply because it doesn't conform to the epistemological biases of the people who are asking the question, and that is all these voices in the head that guide shaman, that obsess lunatics, that, uh, make poetry and, uh, in other words the muse, the muse is real! I mean, if you have not experienced the muse, that doesn't mean anything, you may not have climbed mount everest either, but I tell you, out there in life there are experiences which, uh, cause a need for new definitions. And, uh the m-

KH: Everyone has had up whether they're willing to admit it, I think of one sort or another.

TM: An intimation of the other..

KH: Yes , uh huh.

TM: Well, imagine a compound that elicits this, uh, should you choose to use it. Well, one could talk endlessly about this subject, I suppose, but, uh, until it's resolved, all of man's epistemological dealings with reality will be haunted by this faint spookiness which can't be gotten rid of.

So to start off, uh, this continuation of the discussion of flying saucers, I'll read Yeats again. "Oh, sages standing in god's holy fire, as in the gold mosaic of a wall, come from the holy fire, pern in a gyre and be the singing masters of my soul. Consume my heart away, sick with desire, and fastened to a dying animal, it knows not what it is and gather me into the artifice of eternity." And it's that phrase, the artifice of

eternity, which, uh, again invokes, uh, this strange mechanistic yet spiritualistic future into which the archetype of the flying saucer is calling people. You see, m- what's happening is man is becoming a, uh, trans-planetary creature, and this is something which takes about 10,000 years from the first, uh, you know, the earliest machines to leaving the planet, and it-

KH: How do you know it's 10,000 years?

TM: Give it- give or take 3,000 years! But it is, as H. G. Wells said of history, it is a race between education and catastrophe because these more and more destructive chemical and atomic processes are released as the species realizes its aspirations are alien to the ecology of the planet, and that it and the planet must part. And this i- the, the transformation of man into a space-faring race is on the biological scale the great event that history is about. I mean, the coming of agriculture, the coming of urbanization, these things are peanuts compared to what is going to happen to this species, to these monkeys as they leave the planet with their computers and their atomic physics and all this. I mean, you see what is happening and why the psychedelic experience is so important is because, uh, information is loose on planet 3. Some kind of very strange thing is going on. The world is not made of quarks or electromagnetic wave-packets or the thoughts of God. The world is made of language, and language is replicating itself in DNA which, at its culmination, is creating, uh, societies of civilized and intelligent beings which possess languages which possess cybernetics, which possess machines, which use languages so that, uh, extending off a light-year or two from this system what seems to be happening, what is unusual about Earth is that language has literally become alive, it has infested matter. IT is replicating and defining and building itself, and it is in us. My voice speaking is a monkey's mouth making little mouth noises that are, uh, carrying agreed-upon meaning, and it is the meaning. Without the meaning you only have little mouth noises. The meaning is a crude form of telepathy because as you listen to my voice my thoughts become your thoughts, and we compare them and there is what's called communication, understanding. Uh, it's all about codes, and that's why I've said at times the flying saucer problem is like a grammatical problem, it's like a dangling participle in the 4th dimensional language that makes reality, and therefore it's not reducible to any of these, uh, very simple-minded approaches. It is somehow embedded in the machinery of epistemic knowing itself.

KH: So we won't be able to find it if we go out rocket ships?

TM: No. It is, [Q: ah] it is within. It is the soul of man. We won't be able to find it until we somehow come to terms with, uh, the hidden part, you know, the unconscious, the collective unconscious, the overmind, the fact that there is a level of hierarchical control being exerted by the human species as a whole. That the destiny of man is not in the hands of governments and corporations and communist party apparat-chiks. It is in the hands of a weirdly democratic, ameboid-like, hyper-intelligent superorganism which is called, uh, everybody. And, uh, as we come to terms with this, as we take our place embedded in the body of everybody, and information flows more freely and the reality of this informational creature is seen more clearly, the fact that we are- it, it's an organism. We are having a symbiotic relationship with an organism made of information. And this is, uh, what psychedelics, uh, reinforces I think very strongly. It's in the psychedelic dimension that you finally can key in to the voice of the organism and say 'hey what's happening?' and then it explains to you that things are not as you took them to be at all, and that there is in fact layer and layer and layer upon interlocking meaning, and that there's very little else other than that, and that the imagination is the true ground of being, and that there is a, uh, dimension parallel to time, outside of time, that is accessible to you as much as you want it to the degree that you can decondition

yourself from the history-bound cognitive systems that have carried you to that point. This is why it's been always been said of psychedelics that they were ord- socio, uh, sociological catalysts.

KH: What about the shaman?

TM: Well.[Clears throat]

KH: Because the shaman brings the message to the tribe.

Yes, but it's, eh, the tribe is a system set up to receive the message. W- we have a different way of doing it [KH: What's that?] which is that power elites in political control pass down state-approved philosophies which are then applied, and this [??]--

KH: The statist shaman.

TM: The statist shaman, the statist mediator of God's holy will. Um, rather than uh, a personal, a protestant approach, if you will, a personal relationship to the overmind. Uh, and the flying saucer, what it represents basically is, uh, an instance of crisis between the individual and the overmind where the overmind breaks through the oppressive screen thrown around it and comes to meet the individual and it is, you know, like an interview with an angel or a demon. It's a very very laden with, uh, heavy psychological resonances for the person experiencing it. It is a numinous experience. It is...

KH: But is ever moment of recognizable creation then falling into that, uh, category of the seepage from the overmind, where you get a synthesis of, uh, information which becomes your creative thought, your discoveries.

TM: Yes, well our theory of time basically mapped the idea that novelty was what you call this standing wave of eternity, and that it seeps into time at a variable rate which can actually be mathematically described using the I Ching and other techniques. It's that sort of thing, yes. It's as though, you know, where the flying saucers come from is eternity. They don't come from the stars unless space and eternity encompasses the idea of being able to move instantly to and from the stars, but the flying saucers come from a dimension- you could almost say that they come from beyond death. They come from a dimension somehow totally different from our own but are tied up with human psychology and human psyche in a way that is puzzling and alarming and reassuring, and, uh, shaman- it's very hard. This is a question, uh, to what degree non-participants in 20th century civilization perceive this, meaning people who take mushrooms that have nothing to do with 20th century society, whether they accept that always, since paleolithic time, this super-futuristic dimension has been present so that in any century people could have had this commerce with the end of time, with the far future, with the place where, as James Joyce has said, man becomes dirigible. The place where, you know, we have bootstrapped ourselves to the point where we leave the planet, leave the monkey shell, leave all earth-bound conceptions of ourselves behind and push off into the pure imagination.

KH: Scary.

TM: Scary. Gnostic, perhaps, as someone said "it sounds like megalomania to me, Martha!" [terence laughs] But you know the future always, I mean, how [chuckles] how mad would the 20th century have

sounded recited to anyone in the 19th? [Q:chuckle] IT- what it comes down to is, uh, trying to have faith that man is good because what's happening is whatever man is, man is taking control of the definition of being human, so that through genetic engineering, through drug design, through probing of, you know, these weird psychedelic dimensions, through cybernetic interface, through activation of information, man is going to become a mirror of his deepest aspirations, and the question then becomes what are man's deepest aspirations, you know, what will it be? Is it some kind of mephistophelian nightmare? Is it the Nietzschean superman come back to haunt us in a way that makes the Third Reich look like a picnic, or is it, uh, you know, the element of care and, uh, control- the aesthetic element, the wish to escape into a m- a universe that is in fact art. This is what it holds out, that man could become, uh, an inhabitant of his own imagination because with the technology for space, uh, for building large habitats in space it is possible to imagine the complete galaxy of science fiction created in a sphere less than 12 light-hours in diameter with the sun at the center of it, so that you would have 50 or 60 thousand independent habitats pursuing social experiments of every sort, spatially independent, doing a very long-term slow orbit from the sun and the outer planets, but informationally linked in a bubble of time 12 light-hours in diameter, and, the current engineering thinking on building these large habitats is that, uh, right now you could produce the Hawaiian environment 6- up to 14 light hours from the sun which is several light-hours further out than Pluto. So that means that essentially the entire solar system has become habitable real-estate. If we can simply transform the human imagination to realize that, uh, getting high is not a metaphor. Getting high is what the whole ballgame is about, that, uh, you know, it's true that the Earth is the cradle of mankind but you don't remain in the cradle forever. And this is what beckons the- it's been, you know, 25, 30, 50 thousand years since our shamanic ancestors began to much the mushrooms and glimpse the vision of man radiating out through the galaxy as a perfected superintelligent force for light. And, uh, this is the 15-round slug out, uh, leading to whether or not that happens or not.

KH: Uh, Timothy Leary [hm] maintains similar positions from a different...

TM: Similar but different, but, but right, he, he talks a lot about the DNA. I'm not...well, it's the DNA on one level, the genetic information is stored in DNA. Where these visionary worlds, the information that allows them to be just, uh, shown to you like movies hour after hour, where that information is stored is, I think, a very very interesting question and certainly a challenge to molecular- enthusiasts of molecular, uh, memory models.

KH: Well now, uh, is it not so the [Terence takes a drink], the muse is a sort of a catalyzing of the imagination in a way...

TM: Precisely [KH: the inspiration], it's an ecstasy.

So all

And the claim is made that these things can be attained various ways, but, uh, there are very many different kinds of ecstasies. I think that the peculiar, uh, spacey, extraterrestrial dimension that these tryptamines convey you into is not the standard ecstasy of the mystics, or we would have, uh, more of a reflection of that in our literature. In fact, one of the most puzzling things to me is why the, uh, the bizarre motifs of the DMT flesh have not, uh, made their way into any culture anywhere as far as I'm aware.

KH: Well, um, would that make either an image of people being fearful of the- of these, um, visions when

they have them and so keeping them under cover or an idea that they might be going insane in some way. I mean, what is the, the, uh [TM: Yes] the way out of that.

TM: Well, I think the change is so radical and the implications so hard to digest that you're right, people either feel their own sanity is being threatened, or they recognize it as a challenge to the - to the, uh, reality myth of their society, and so they just repress it. They have very little to do with it. It's very hard to, to, uh, contact these contradictory realities which throw into doubt everything you know about the reality you're inhabiting. I mean, what a strange strange world it is if there are these alternative continuui operating all around us filled with strange alien information, floating around. And yet, uh, why, why pose it in the, uh, in the future? It is so that this is what's going on. IT's just, then, how much time you care to spend thinking about it, uh.

KH: But these are science fiction theories too. I mean, one comes across this smattering here and there. And, um, you are saying that it's actual, and this is the way it is. This is your mission, basically, your rap.

TM: Yes, well I'm not saying that this is the only way it is, but I'm certainly saying that, uh, these tryptamine drugs elicit an experience that is extremely peculiar, that has more relationship with the UFO experience than with classical mystical experience or other hallucinogenic drugs, and that, um, societal attitudes and other things have conspired to, uh, uh, keep this under wraps. It has not been well looked at, and yet, uh, basically because people who are interested in flying saucers are not interested in drugs, the great majority of people interested in flying saucers are hardware nuts and just for sure want to prove that it's a machine from Zeta Reticulii, you know? Just nuts and bolts, and, uh, these [KH interjects] the psychological explanation is not welcome anywhere particularly. Meanwhile the community of drug researchers feels they're laboring under enough of a stigma to not ally themselves with flying saucer people, which is just like, uh, adding an albatross to an anchor.

So, uh, you know, it's not a popular point of view. So since I'm outside of all of that, I can just say, you know, I read a lot of shamanism and I think these people did a fine job, and, but I don't catch the flavor from any of this orthodox anthropological reporting on shamanism that anybody has ever come to grips with how strange the psychedelic experience is and that it poses problems not only for these so-called primitive people who use it and are being studied. It poses fundamentally equally deep problems for our society though we can no more assimilate the content of the psychedelic experience than can a villager in the New Guinea highlanders or a Witoto in the Amazon. In fact, we have less of a basis for coming to terms with it. So our culture is in, in a very, uh, desparate crisis. Birth crisis, terminal crisis, uh, if, if we are not fully informed as to the nature of reality, we should correct that oversight, and this is my motivation.

KH: Well, I'm disappointed that we can't, uh, create our other.

TM: Well, I guess you greet your other, um, when you meet them in that dimension, and...

KH: Have you ever gone anywhere with another human to these places and actually been able to say, have a parallel...[TM:experience?] combined experience?

TM: Well, I think that happens, uh, certainly in taking ayahuasca with, with groups of people in the Amazon where the shaman is singing you definitely have the feeling that, uh, you're all being carried

through the same space and being shown the same things. And when you take psilocybin with just one other person you're lying together 'bemushroomed' as Gordon Wasson says. Uh, you have the feeling, you know, that you're just flowing there together, and sometimes, you can even one person can describe and then leave off and then the other one can begin to describe and it's all flowing together, yes. I am totally convinced that, that telepathy occurs on these drugs. I'm not sure how to go about making it a repeatable phenomenon, but, uh, it certainly happens.

You see, psilocybin was made illegal just as an afterthought when, in the panic when everything was being made illegal, it never had any hearing or was, uh, examined by itself. It was just a hallucinogenic agent, therefore illegal. But, uh, for, for throwing a light on the psyche for, uh, for catapulting the imagination into these futuristic spaces, it needs to be, uh, looked at very closely.

KH: How do you see it being organized in order to, uh, educate people?

TM: Well we need to have, what's always been lacking in psychedelic research is, uh, uh, an examination of the content of the experiences, so we need to give it to very intelligent people who are willing to work with it not in a clinical setting but in a setting where you ask the question 'how does it change peoples' lives when they, uh, can be involved in it in a open, non-stressed sort of environment. We found that going in to the Amazon, which is not exactly a non stress-filled environment, but as we would go up these these jungle rivers and inevitably contact these small rivers where these mushrooms would be available. That, you know, reality is transformed. Reality truly is made of language and of linguistic structures which you hold unbeknownst to yourself and your mind, and which under the influence of psilocybin just begin to dissolve [KH] and you begin, you begin to perceive, right, beyond the unspeakable. You- the contours of the unspeakable begin to emerge into your perception and you can't say much about the unspeakable and yet it can color everything you do. you live with it. it is the invoking of the other, the other has become the self. All these various forms of estrangement are healed. That's why it's so, you know- but the term 'alien' has these many connotations.

KH: What's the next step?

TM: Well, the next step is to confirm some of what I've said to, uh, form a consensus among a group of researchers to then try and, uh, figure out a strategy, chemical or otherwise.

KH: Who would you invite? [To work on a problem like that?] ...to, to participate

TM: Oh, people like Frank Barr, mm, Sasha Shulgin, my brother, John Lily, if he would behave himself [Terence laughs]. All these great people, you know, would have a great interest in this. This is the question that has not been dealt with, the botany has been dealt with. The taxonomy, the chemistry.

KH: How would you set it up?

TM: How would I set it up... well, we need to, um, explore this linguistic phenomenon [KH: How?] somehow. Specifically I think not by giving drugs to volunteers but by giving drugs to researchers who are actually going to grapple with the problem because all this talk that orbits around the psychedelic experience by scientists..how many of them have had a psychedelic experience?

KH: So you would do it with people who have already had, or you would try to get un-

TM: I think the early approach with psychedelics, which was the Baconian approach, the logical approach, uh, was the correct one. Which is very intelligence thoughtful people should take psychedelics and try and understand what's going on. Not batteries of prisoners, uh, not, uh, schoolchildren, uh, but intelligent people. And, uh, share their experiences. See, I say it's too early for a science. What we need now are like the diaries of explorers. We need many diaries of many explorers so we can begin to get a feeling. Uh, the hit I get off of it is that it is very important for human culture that it is no coincidence that this is coming to Western man just as we acquire the technological capability to leave the planet. That the mushroom and the transformation of the human image by going into space are all things that are spun together, that nothing less is happening than the emergence of a new...

KH: Metamorphosis.

TM: Yes, a new human order. A, uh, telepathic, uh, humane, universalist kind of human culture is emerging which will make everything which preceded it be the Stone Age.

KH: Will the overview, monad, uh, oversoul whatever resume the personality, knowledge that's gained within one lifetime and therefore that is what you see as UFO reincarnation or would you say that, uh, it's a terminated at that terminal's termination? In other words, the personality which inhabits your form is, when that license is up, it re-forms itself in that the form is what the personality is carried by?

TM: Well, when consciousness is finally understood it means that the absence of consciousness will be understood, which means the study of consciousness leads inevitably to the study of death. Death is both a historical and individual phenomenon about which we as monkeys have great anxiety, but what the psychedelic experience seems to be pointing out is that actually the reductionist view of death has missed the point, and that there is something more. It isn't simple extinction, that the universe does not build up such complex forms as ourselves without conserving them in some astonishing and surprising way that is perhaps related some way to the intuitions we have from the psychedelic experience. The UFO comes from this murky region beyond the end of history, beyond the end of life. It is both super- supra-historical and supra-organic. It is, uh, uncanny, alien, it raises the hair on the back of your neck. It is both the apotheosis and the antithesis of the monkey's journey toward mind. It is like the mind revealing itself. This is what all religion is about, is, uh, shock waves given off by this even at the end of history, which we're now very close to and which psilocybin can, uh, help us to understand because it conveys you into the, uh, place where it is happening constantly. Where the, uh, the millenium is a standing wave in eternity, not an anticipation. And so the mushroom stands, uh, at the end of history. It's an object that pulls all history toward itself. It's a causal force that operates to us backwards through time. IT's why things happen the way they do, because everything is being pulled toward a nexus of transformation

[brief ending music]

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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The Evolutionary Importance of Technology

August 1996

Esalen

Description

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These extremely exotic fields, solid-state physics, nanotechnology, gene transplant and all this stuff; they feel individually that complete breakthrough in their own field lies just 18 months, two years, three years in the future. They can see their technological and research dreams converging, but this enormous wavefront of knowledge that has risen up out of the context of human civilization doesn't communicate along the front of the wave. None of these people in any of these fields have a very clear grip on what's going on in the labs down the hall or two floors up, in different departments. What's happening is that the human database has taken on a kind of self-organizing quality. It's no longer entirely being coordinated by political decision makers or corporate decision makers. It's just simply taken on a life of its own.

I've long thought that one way of thinking about what's going on on this planet is that information is bootstrapping itself to higher and higher levels of self-reflection and self-coordination using whatever means are necessary. When geology was all there was, that was the medium. When biology was all there was, that was the medium. When chipped flint and ceramic was all there was, that was the medium, and now the electronic information transfer technology is so all-pervasive that it's as though information has come into its own. It is now very restless in its relationship with biology as it explores the new world of silicon into which it seeks to transform itself. Technology has become prosthesis for the human species. It's our machines and our technologies that are now the major evolutionary forces acting upon us. It's not our political systems, it's these extra-sexual children, these mind children that we have assembled out of the imagination. I find it very promising and very challenging and very interesting. I think that somehow the way back to the archaic, to the world of ecological balance and low technology and retraction of toxic infrastructure and all of that good stuff doesn't lie in some kind of Luddite know-nothingism or some kind of fascist program of limiting population and this sort of thing — although I favor limiting population, I just can't figure out a way to do it that leaves human freedom intact — instead it has to be a forward escape, a forward escape through technology, but technology that serves an agenda of archaic revivalism.

Between the spread of information transfer technology, the internet and its promise of virtual reality soon to come, and biotechnology, which is literally taking apart the constituents of the living world and using them to produce all the drugs, all the foods, all the vitamins, all the nutritional supplements and then many other solid-state materials, between those two factors; and then nanotechnology, the technology of producing tiny machines made of diamond by the trillions designed to do everything that nature does, so that cities can be grown like forests, and China can be fed out of matter compilers and there is a complete break with the agricultural cycle so that the earth need no longer sustain the human population, and so then

the human population, by breaking its reliance on the agricultural cycle, gains some political breathing room; all of this is coming very, very fast and is largely unanticipated by the political, managerial types. What it means to me personally, in terms of my own ideas about the future, is that I can now see without too much sweat from here to the eschaton in ten easy steps. It's perfectly clear that if novelty is intensifying and locally concentrating then where it's probably headed is into cyberspace or some kind of virtual space, so that long before 2012 the various ontologies of world religions will be peddled as theme parks in virtual space. You'll be hard pressed to know whether you're in heaven or simply in Heaven Land, which is a preview of heaven attainable by paying a \$50 entrance fee at the turnstile. This is going to make it very difficult for all my predictions to be put in context, because they will be both true and untrue. Everything will come true in cyberspace; that's the whole idea.

What cyberspace is, on one level, is simply the human imagination vivi- fied, hardwired. What we're doing furiously, as fast as we can, is exteriorizing the human nervous system into a global organism of some sort, which has a weird kind of Husserlian intersubjectivity about it. It is neither subjective nor objective: we are subjective nodes embedded in this domain of technologically- created intersubjectivity between other human beings and machines. What's happening is that a lot of people are being left behind or without even realizing it are just opting out and saying, "I can't handle it. It's too much to think about, I think I'll see what's on daytime TV," or, "I'll buy a newspaper and walk in the park," to attempt to maintain the illusion that things are as they are. Things aren't as they are. Things have already become as they will be. The future is no longer ahead of us: we're there. The only question is, where do you position yourself now in this multidimensional matrix? You can deny it, which is to become a conservative or, even more reactive to it, you can become a reprobate, or you can move toward the front of knowledge, position yourself close to these unfolding and empowering technologies.

As all notions of commodity and scarcity begin to break down, it seems to me that the sanest place to try to occupy in this whole situation is that of artist- producer, and that it's very, very important to not consume this stuff. The world is being divided into artists and marks, into people who are somehow initiated into a higher-level maturity of what the society is about and how it works — it's a kind of street-smarts — and then the poor souls who just take it all for granted and actually are concerned about those families of Flight 800. People so harebrained as to buy horseshit like that are going to have a hard time as the crap game of the future unfolds to its full fury; so I think it's very important for people to define themselves as artists and learn tools and understand just how the game is being played in this informational jungle that is being erected, because you will either have a plan or you will become part of somebody else's plan, and there are a million plans out there waiting to ensnare the clueless.

So, more than ever, it becomes necessary for us to have some kind of anchor to a real modality. It's too predictable for me to try to draw out the suspense; as far as I can tell the only place where we can touch the earth in this evolving situation is through our bodies, into feeling, by any means necessary, and that would certainly include psychedelics. There are two very interesting books that I've read in the past year: one is Morris Berman's *Coming to Our Senses*, and the other is David Abram's book *The Spell of the Sensuous*. Both of these books are about feelings, essentially. Whitehead, who I take as my mentor, created a mathematically formal metaphysic in which the primary datum of experience is feelings — that's a direct quote from Whitehead. The only thing you can trust at this point is the felt presence of immediate experience, otherwise known as "feelings," and mathematics; and mathematics is something that most of you have been denied, in order to keep you as marks, so all you have are feelings. So it's very important to empower this dimension which Husserl or Merleau-Ponty or somebody called "the felt presence of

immediate experience.” Everything proceeds from that. Even thought is subsequent to feeling, and still more removed is any hypothesis of reality and any theory of morality and any theory of action and so forth and so on.

Psychedelics have traditionally, I now think, played the role of deculturating people. I think the anthropologists got it slightly wrong: when you’re taken out into the bushes and given some drug by the fellow members of your tribe, this is not that you are being made a full member of the society, it’s that you were a full member of the society and now what you’re being shown is what’s under the board, the tricks of the trade. You’re being turned into, not a full member of the society, but what my brother has called an extra-environmental. You’re coming from outside. This is a kind of maturity that many people never attain. It never enters their mind that such a state even exists: a state not of alienation, exactly, but of ironical, sophisticated insight into the mechanisms of one’s own culture and the cultural games that are being played. This rap would have been applicable at any time that it made sense, certainly any time in the 20th century, but with the rise of these technologies and the acceleration of all this novelty it becomes more and more important to anchor it in this archaic value pattern, accessible through psychedelics.

I don’t say this with a sense of urgency; I think it’s happening, I don’t think there’s a problem. The people who are running the internet at the developmental and cutting-edge level are very psychedelic; the connections are not lost. Whether it’s consciously or unconsciously apprehended, somehow it can be sensed. The whole countercultural thrust since the ’60s has been coherently one thing. It’s about boundary dissolution and connectivity and strange pictures in your head. The psychedelic experience has gone from being a clandestine experience of an individual to becoming the general model for the organization of global society, whether anybody realizes it or not. This idea of all information in circulation, of a never-sleeping global mind; in a sense what’s happening is that the unconscious mind is a luxury the human species cannot afford at this point in our dilemma, and so the unconscious mind is simply rising into consciousness by being hardwired into this global infrastructure.

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject [July 22nd, 2017]

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Evolutionary Mind with Abraham and Sheldrake

June 6 1998

Santa Cruz, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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The Future of Art

August 7, 1998

Esalen Institute

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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The obvious flip side of this idea that images can heal or make sick is that you'd have some kind of theory of propaganda or social control. The great images of the 20th century have probably been largely damaging: ideas like the German ideal of the Master Race, or the Soviet ideal of Soviet Man, or even the American ideal of the Ward Cleaver nuclear family. There are all kinds of ways to talk about the way the image is impacting on the mass psyche. The fact that, at a certain level now, everyone has seen all these images from the Hubble Space Telescope that show that the universe is very corpuscular, very organic. It's more like what you see in a tide pool or on a dissecting table than what it used to be, which were bright points of light against darkness. So, in a sense, the images of science shift the parameters of the popular imagination.

A painter like Alex Grey creates a permission to image the human body simultaneously as a biological system, an energy system, a system of kabbalistic and mathematical energies. Science in the 20th century, and before to some degree, has permitted all kinds of imaginary worlds to be entertained in the popular imagination, because most of the explanations of science involve things you can't see, hear, feel, taste or touch. In other words: electrons, photons, electromagnetic fields, gradients of concentration; a whole conceptual vocabulary, none of which is experiential. And so our minds are permitted, and in fact can't avoid, shifting level and having all kinds of information on one level available on another level. Like the popularity of quantum physical metaphors to explain large-scale events in daily life: synchronicity and telepathy, stuff like that.

There are other sources for the image, but: every time I go to New York I go to the Met and the MOMA and see whatever's showing. Modernism, which used to be this virtual reality that I walked around in all the time — there was nothing but modernism — is now something I visit in a museum. It's confined inside these buildings, to some degree. It's on a pedestal. It feels good to me that modernism is over. What it means to me is that the medium in which the image is most at home has changed from material — paint, wood, glass, steel, plastic, acrylic — to light. It's a huge watershed, maybe the biggest watershed in the entire career of the image, because sense must go forward. It's always been about applying pigment to surfaces, it's always been about material, and now suddenly it's about something else. We could talk about the artist's relationship to the public, how the new tools that empower the new art to be created also empower it to be communicated in ways that nobody could ever imagine before; decommodifying it at the same time that it removes the middleman. So you get the collapse of an academy, or any kind of official

cultural canon at all. What you have then is like a Darwinian environment of competing styles and images. It seems to be that's what art has been more and more. There hasn't been a coherent school of any philosophical depth in art since the '70s, '60s.

Audience: What are some of the new tools, do you think? Other than applying pigment to page.

Well, software. Photoshop, obviously. But then modeling. The thing proceeds in stages. There's first the manipulation of the painterly image — essentially an electronic canvas that allows you to do all kinds of things with great facility. Then the next level is modeling, to three-dimensionally build objects that can be viewed from any point of view; and then the animation and texture mapping of these things, the placing them into environments, the setting up of tracking paths and all this — which sounds very technical, but the rate of collapse of this toward sheer intuition, so that essentially the tools that allow you to model and animate become almost lead-pencil simple, is happening. Everything electronic is trying to add dimensionality to itself. The computer that was text-based tends to want to speak, the image that was two-dimensional wants to be three-dimensional, the three-dimensional image wants to move. Part of acquiring the full initiation of the culture at this point is learning how to do these things. What it means is that you then have tools to communicate your most important thoughts, the thoughts, the ideas, that you're willing to take time enough to model and create are conveyed with real force and power. Right now, of course, it's very clunky, but I think what it means is that the very enterprise of communication among human beings is transforming in some way. We've been at this for a while; the first telegraph lines were strung around 1819, the telephone became a common object of the upper class around 1900. The rate of acceleration and the dimensionality, definition and fidelity of these processes have all increased exponentially. The task of communication; instead of saying that you acquire 90% of your language skills by age 5, we're just going to have to say that you acquire 90% of your language skills by age 30. By then you can model, animate, code, all this sort of thing. Human-machine interfacing as a prerequisite to the creation of art has been going on for a long time, it's just going to affect more and more people. The creation of a movie is such a massive thing in terms of manpower, capital and technology, before you ever get to the story, the actors and the art of it. Essentially, everybody is going to become their own director. To the degree that the producer-director was a cultural ideal, we may all approach it.

I'm pretty optimistic about media because I'm influenced by McLuhan and the school of communication theory that he came out of. His notion was that these technologies based on the phonetic alphabet, specifically and most importantly printing, had really done a job on our psychology and the whole theory of social relations and everything else. He felt that the electronic media — all of them: radio, television, telephone and on into the computer and the internet — were retribalizing elements, and that we were actually going to move back to a much less linearly defined and positivist worldview than the historical worldview that had created these technologies. It seems like this is happening. The rise of the New Age, the fragmentation of epistemology, the cultification and commodification of religion: all of these are cultural effects that McLuhan predicted in the '50s and early '60s in books like *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media*. Ideally, see, there's a kind of a millenarian cast to all this, because the idea is that advanced technology leads back to a primitive, Edenic psychology. He called it sensory ratio, among the senses. It would be nice to believe that. I believe it; I think it's true. What it will actually look like, and how Edenic and how neoprimitive it will be... but for sure, a culture based on print is inhabiting a castle in the sky of abstraction. The phonetic alphabet, in the first place, signifies sounds, not signs. So you have one level of alienation and distancing from the object of your intent right there; and then you write it, so now you have a sign for a sound; and then you print it, so that it becomes uniform. This was the point that

McLuhan made that a lot of people couldn't immediately grok: that there was a profound difference between manuscript culture and print culture, because the uniformity of print permitted ways of thinking that manuscript made impossible. Ideas like the democratic citizen, the interchangeability of parts in an industrial production line, these are all ideas that you couldn't even conceive of without the example of print as a historical precedent.

My fantasy about all this media and communication stuff is that eventually the human imagination and the world of three-dimensional physics will seamlessly merge in a dimension where human beings are each and all some kind of god and the imagination and physics can flow together, and the art that is in us intrinsically, that we encounter so dramatically in the psychedelic experience, can actually flow into manifestation. I don't know whether this happens in circuitry or 3D. There are many dimensions opening ahead of us where our humanness can exfoliate in ways that it can't do in 3D. I wrote a book called *The Archaic Revival*, which was all about this letdown from the abstraction of print-created history into this post-historical, neoarchaic, electronically-based, more magical, more shamanic, more gestalt kind of historical mode.

If you like William Gibson, you should give Greg Egan a try. *Neuromancer* came out in 1984, how long ago is that, 14 years? It's a work of ancient history, a thing of another stratum in the archeology of the 20th century. Greg Egan, thinking along the same lines, imagines downloads, where it's not that you put on goggles and gloves but that you actually become code, and pushes the reductionist notion of biology — that we are code anyway — to its logical conclusion, and says that code is code, whether it knows it's code or not. It may turn out to be true, that somehow consciousness can be digitized and exist in some kind of electronic simulacrum of itself. One of the first consequences of that, which is quite interesting, is that a funny thing happens to time. As we sit here talking, we're running at about 100Hz. If you could be downloaded into circuitry, on a 400MHz machine, ten minutes is long enough to live your life over several times in all its rich detail, right down to the last Cheerio eaten and the last nose blown. So, a weird kind of synthetic eternity springs into view. You can imagine a world where people, as they approach death, would decide, "Will it be the big D, Death, or the little d, digital?" and you could buy certain amounts of time in digital existence at the brink of biological death: enough to have your life ten times over, a thousand times over, a hundred thousand times over...

This seems absurd, but it's either closer than most people realize or it's not possible at all. It has to do with really fundamental questions, like, "What is the self?" "What is consciousness?" Can we play it like an LP record? Can we reduce it to a string of numbers? To what degree is it true that as biological beings, we are essentially three-dimensional computers: the DNA codes into RNA, which is read through a ribosome, which is like a head reader, which executes a program which makes proteins and these proteins fold into three-dimensional shapes, and, lo and behold, all these three-dimensional shapes fit together in such a way that you emerge out of the atomic murk of this process. It's our faith that somewhere in there, the hand of God has to be extended to make it all go, but there are hardcore materialists who say that's just romantic nonsense, the sort of romantic nonsense they've been chasing down for centuries and nailing to the barn door, and a day will come when software will be sentient as you and I are sentient and where machines of all sorts will routinely pass Turing tests.

Other things lie in the same timeframe as that kind of stuff. In Egan's fiction he's talking 25-30 years in the future for downloads of human consciousness into circuitry. He's also talking about artificial life, artificial intelligence, sentient software, software which knows it's software but which also has some

deeper grasp of its existential dilemma somehow. Much of the discussion of the 20th century in the sciences was around working out the implications of the universe viewed as something made out of space, time, matter, energy, magnetic fields and so forth and so on; the equations for this and the relativistic transforms and all this were worked out. Meanwhile, people like Norbert Wiener began around 1948 to advance the idea that information was an important concept, and that in fact information could be opposed to the idea of entropy. Entropy was a well-established notion in physics, and was very friendly to schizophrenic existential novel-writing of the sort you get in *Gravity's Rainbow*. Over the whole last half of *Gravity's Rainbow* it's the idea of entropy that basically drives Roger Slothrop around the bend.

So, thermodynamic entropy, a concept out of physics that basically says: everything falls apart. Ultimately, all order gives way to disorder, all unity gives way to disunity. The end state of the universe will be a dark, cold, homogenous, low-energy nothing. But Norbert Wiener and these other people began to talk about information as some kind of countervailing force, and that for systems to be systems, to come into existence and maintain their systemic integrity, they had to express themselves through information. This intuition was spectacularly confirmed in 1950 when DNA was characterized and they began to understand how it works; that these codons are coding for these amino acids, that it's an information conservation and transfer system. This trend, the informational transformation of the world, has now reached the place where there's been some kind of philosophical ebb of the tide. Information is now primary. Those other concepts: space, time, matter, energy — those are mathematical constructs and metaphors that are themselves states of information.

It's like we've overcome naive realism, which was this space-time-matter-energy thing, that you could hypothesize an uninvolved observer and actually model based on that assumption and get some worthwhile thing back; all that has given way to this much stickier, trickier but more grown-up idea that language exists in the world, language is a constant growth of semantic trees toward different kinds of closure under the aegis of Chomskyan deep structural rules or some other rules similar but not yet known, and that mind is entangled in all of this, that nothing is what it appears to be and that beneath everything lies this flickering, quantum mechanical domain of reverse logic, counterintuitive forms of causal relationships, basically the whole thing is a thin smear of paradox if it's anything at all. The evolution of technology based on these insights and perceptions reinforces this idea; the theme being, here, the rise of the power of the concept of information as a primary datum of being; as the primary datum of being. So then everything turns into digitizable bits, numerically definable flows of data, at every level: in biology, in your own body, in computer software generated by human minds that is in the extended culture at large. The whole thing begins to look like a kind of Gnostic descent into matter, of an organizing principle that drives it or lifts it toward higher states of organization.

Of course we're part of this, we're the most spectacular part of this, human beings, human culture, and we're at a spectacular juncture with this, because these machines we're building, with 400MHz processors and that talk to each other endlessly over the internet; they are literally making time. They are making vastly more time than biology could make or occupy. The event-rate at which the cascades of biology succeed each other is so slow that in the megahertz range looking back at that, it's like watching the motion of glaciers or the planets orbiting around the star. So these machines have carved open a new dimension of time, the microphysical dimension of time. Not travel into the future, but a weird kind of explosive expansion of the now through the conjuring rod of electronic circuitry. And that's just one aspect of what crossing the boundary into machine domains of time and relationships to machine intelligence would offer. Given that the business of the artist is to transform information, all of this is big news. How larger

institutions of the culture deal with this is not my interest, but how individuals can, could and should deal with it is by elaborating more compelling forms of art than anybody has ever seen. That's what we're clearing the decks for, to really unleash the imagination on previously undreamed-of scales. 5

Mastery of tools; we all have this idea that we shouldn't learn anything after the age of 30. I don't think you can live like that anymore. If somebody would pay me, I could spend all my time learning software, learning to do things better and to bring more control to my art. The software is endlessly evolving, too, everything seems to be evolving together. The future is always more complicated than any ideological agenda imagines it. Right at this moment, as we're reaching toward virtual reality and immortality and whatnot, there are people scarifying themselves in the rainforest tonight and beating the log drums. Nothing has changed. It's really about stretching out over a broader and broader spectrum. I have no problem with the people scarifying themselves in the rainforest, I'm all for that. What I don't like is the bulge in the middle of the snake where millions and millions of people are narcotizing themselves on mall culture and television. I mean, I'm not going to launch a moral crusade to take away people's daytime TV watching, but I certainly think that the basic thing is to build the tools, and then the smart people will use those tools to push the edge of novelty forward.

It's not an elite of class or an elite of money — although both of those things play into it — it's an elite of technological intelligence. There will be people in the slums of Shanghai who will be world leaders in this field simply out of their tenacious intelligence. There's that wonderful thing that William Gibson says in *Neuromancer*, "The street finds its own uses for things." In a way, it's the confounding of all other forms of hierarchy; in other words, class-based institutions, money-based institutions, race-based institutions are all having a very difficult time keeping up with what's going on. It seems it's more like a kind of anarchistic or chaotic situation where very creative individuals can move very fast. Cyberspace is a land of opportunity. We see example after example of this. People object and say that the cyberspatial revolution is happening among white people at the top of the social pyramid, and there is an element of truth to that, but counterbalancing that is the observation that many people have made that no technology in history has fallen in cost as quickly and reached so many people as quickly as computers have. The computer of incalculable cost, hundreds of millions of dollars in 1950, is now \$800, and this cost-benefit curve shows no sign of slowing down. I look forward to the day when the equivalent of a new NT machine will be something that you'll put on your thumb like a decal, and these things will cost 35 cents a piece or \$1.50 a piece. This, in principle, can be done. An ordinary piece of typing paper is 200,000 atoms thick. In a nanotechnological fabrication situation, do you know how much close packing you can do in a matrix 200,000 atoms thick? You can practically build a 747 into it, if that's what you want to do.

The reason I'm thinking about all of this is because I'm reading this book, it hasn't been published yet, it's a galley, but they wanted a jacket comment from me, this guy Erik Davis who wrote for *Wired* and the *Voice* and so forth. This is definitely one of the more interesting books about cyberspatial culture, it's called *Techgnosis*. His take, or the overarching theme that orders this book, is the relationship of spiritual, magical and shamanic thinking to communication technologies in all times and places, and how it's always been about communication. Shamans communicate with the ancestors. They travel in what are essentially virtual realities, invisible realms unperceived by ordinary senses but somehow accessed through certain codes and technical procedures. Mircea Eliade's book on shamanism is subtitled *The Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, the stress being on that this is a technology. Shamanism worldwide believes all kinds of things: underworlds, overworlds, gods of this, gods of that. It isn't united as a phenomenon by ideology, it's united by its technologies, which are trance, alteration of consciousness; and then it's united through its motifs:

magical flight, dismemberment, obtaining of the gift difficult to obtain, overcoming magical beasts, riddery, poetics. All of these things, it's all about communication and language. Indeed, the entire Western tradition is informed by this idea of the incarnation of the Word. In the Gospel of John it says, "In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum, et Verbo caro factum est." In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and then it became flesh. This is a weird idea, this is not clear, like Buddhist metaphysics or something like that. This idea of the ensoulment, or the embodiment of the Word, what does it mean? Is mankind the Word, is Christ the Word? The answer to that question is probably both/and.

The incarnate Logos, the world as information is very mantric. It may even be linked over time to Hindu ideas of the power of mantra. The Hindu cosmology is basically an acoustical Pythagoreanism, an idea of tonal vibrations at many levels. It's claimed, perhaps with truth, I can't testify for or against it, that very yogically-accomplished sitar players can make a bale of hay burst into flame, and things like this. The power of shabda, sound, as the manifestation of information at various levels. In Hinduism there isn't this sharp break between matter and vibration, between manifestation and underlying dynamic that you get in the West. In classical Vedic metaphysics you have these things called tattvas, which are levels: there are 36 of these tattvic levels and they stretch from the most rarefied to the most "gross," as they say, and, somewhere in there, everything finds its place. Everything is an amalgam of these tattvic manifestations. When you deconstruct this, this isn't far from the image we now obtain from quantum physics: that the density of the vector fields creates the complexity of the phenomena, that the reciprocity of all this resonance somehow creates a hologram of shifting appearances. It's remarkable in density. You make your way by pure thought, by pure speculation or by the instrumentality of modern science and mathematical analysis, but what you come down to is the primacy of information conceived of as a vibratory medium. One of the things going on that gives this another dimension is this idea that has now become very respectable in physics to talk about, this thing called the Bell nonlocality phenomenon, or Bell space, which is a form of connectivity that unites all space and time instantaneously. That underneath the form of ordinary appearances, there is what mathematicians call a coextensive continuum, a continuum where all points are cotangent with all others. If you suppose for a moment that biology can somehow pick up on this information, resonate with it, you realize that your own humble being is like an antenna plugged into the largest databank there is, the total databank of the existing universe.

It's impossible to conceive of experiencing it all at once. It would be some form of superintegrative intelligence — enlightenment sounds good enough for it. I think maybe a more close-to-home concept would be that in our ordinary consciousness, and in dreams and on drugs and so forth, that we contact parts of it, that this funny thing which we call the human imagination is actually like a child playing with an FM radio dial of the universal crystal radio of the Akashic imagination. These things that come and go in dreams and visions and so forth, many of them are non-Englishable; you pour common language over them and it's like water on a duck's back, but some tiny percentage of them can at least be metaphorically captured, so when you tune into that station and hang on, you get to be William Blake, or Dante or Max Ernst: a downloader of a major coherent dollop of weird data, that then the rest of us, like ants around the carcass of a cockroach, can inspect and put to our own uses.

One of the things that informs my work and all this stuff about time: I always had the sense that I was very naive about time myself, even as I formulated these historical collapse and expansion theories. Recently, it's been put to me to think about: imagine a cubic meter of space that is absolutely empty. No atoms, no plasma, no magnetic fields, no virtual fluctuations, no neutrinos, an absolutely empty volume of space.

Then imagine ten minutes passing in that space. Then imagine ten million years passing. Well then, what's the difference? In other words, the point being that time, for it to exist, depends on the referential deconstruction of relationships, between events or particles or charges or something. If nothing is happening, no time is passing. Well, if that's true, then for large amounts of the universe, time is not a concept until you interject it through the act of observing that particular part of the universe. In other words, time may be as rare a thing in the universe as matter; and we see how rarefied matter is, how little of it is spread between the stars. In some sense, most of the life of the universe is almost flickeringly momentary in its endurance. It's only the atomic systems and the molecular systems derived from them that draw about themselves this prolongation of time through expression of happenstance. When things happen, time springs into existence. When things are not happening, time is an unnecessary concept.

If you're going to build an economy around a principle, it sounds like an infinitely expandable one is the one you want. Money is a precursor of information. It was very mysterious in the Middle Ages when people began to actually study money for the first time. The Jews had been allowed to handle money but interest was considered a sin, the sin of usury. In the Middle Ages, when the bourgeois middle class began to form in urban centers of Europe, they realized that money had this mysterious property: that it would grow, that it would create more of itself without anybody doing anything. Some people thought this was divine, some people thought it was demonic, and people were very puzzled by this quality of money. Money is a symbolic commodification of value. Information is somehow the cousin of money. Essentially, in an information economy, everyone is selling intelligence: not in the sense of IQ, but in the sense of Central Intelligence Agency. In other words, people are selling what they know that you don't, that you need to know to do something. It's the only kind of economy where capitalism has a future, unless something quite radical happens, because one of the requirements of capitalism is an ever-expanding frontier of exploitable natural resources. Well, certainly the process of changing ignorance into understanding is an infinite frontier, you can mine that mountain range for generations and never make a dent. In fact, understanding is probably infinite, and since most of it remains, at this point in time, unelucidated, the task of intelligent life seems to be to organize inchoate nature into an understood phenomenon. In Kabbalism, there's this funny idea that certain schools of Hasids believe: that everything is in the Torah, that in the hypothetically real, archetypal Torah, everything is written. But then, other rabbis say, "Well then, is there predestination? Are you saying that the future is written in the Torah?" and they say "No, no," because beyond the moment of the present the letters are scrambled, so then time is like a moving edge of decipherment that takes the letter soup of the unorganized future and reveals what comes to pass. It's a very interesting and very cybernetic and information-based idea.

One of the points that Erik Davis makes in his book is that it's astonishing how the ideas of late Hellenistic syncretism — the ideas flourishing in Jerusalem, Athens, Rome and Alexandria from the 2nd to the 4th century A.D. — map over our own dilemmas and the incipient issues of the information age. One of the strongest philosophical impulses of late Roman paganism was a really profound rejection of the world. The world was seen as polluting, corrupt, demonic. The radical Neoplatonist intuition was that man had an incorruptible light trapped within him and that the light came from outside this universe, that the creator of this universe was a demon, that we were inside an iron prison, but that we were truly of the nature of this alien light that was outside of space and time, and that the soteriological enterprise was to release this light back into its higher and hidden source and get it away from the corrupting influence of the world. Unconsciously or consciously, much of the rhetoric of modern cyberspace is this Gnostic rejectionism of matter. People want to become code, they want to become avatars, they want to stroll beside a synthetic Lake Lucerne in an electronic Switzerland in a processor somewhere. There is also the countervailing

impulse to return to the earth and simplify, but that's not running these corporate agendas the way this Gnostic, phobic attitude toward nature is. It may be necessary, in order to create virtual reality, that there be people that take these radical positions. It is as though there is a bifurcation in the human community. Certain choices have to be made, and it's very hard to see how you can have it both ways. Are we creatures of the earth, ecological caregivers, balancers, preservers of species, treasurers of biological diversity, or are we bound for glory, and the cost of getting traction to launch ourselves to the stars is probably the complete chewing up and destruction of one small planet that we should shed like a burst chrysalis as we reach outward toward Sagittarius? How can you have it both ways? And yet it's a fundamental choice for the species. Although, as somebody said earlier, it will probably be all ways.

In one of Greg Egan's novels, some people download their intelligence into superconducting robots that are essentially starships and some people migrate into virtual reality hives that are essentially like eggs, sealed off from the rest of the universe, and operate virtual realities inside virtual computers inside still more virtual computers: complete retraction from space and time. He hypothesizes that most intelligent species, if they can, probably retreat, or design for themselves mental universes that they inhabit as code as quickly as they can technologically achieve that. This is something that we hadn't even contemplated. This is why our own technological pop fantasies about extraterrestrials are so pathetic, because they're so similar to us, they're basically men in rubber suits in terms of their degree of difference from you and me. Real aliens are really alien.

In a strange way, these technologies have always been entwined with spirit. You know that famous quote by Arthur C. Clarke, "Any technology that you don't understand is perceived as magic." Shamanism is an effort to manipulate the perceived forces of nature. Gnosticism was a fantasy or a myth about the nature of the human soul in relationship to the world that maps easily over our contemporary ability to do virtual realities. Probably the greatest boost occult thinking ever got, in all its centuries of unfoldment, was the discovery and elaboration of an understanding of electricity. We forget how hard it would be to think about magic, and healing and sympathetic mojo, if you completely lacked the concept of electricity — as the Renaissance did. The Renaissance knew nothing of electricity, and yet Marsilio Ficino, and the Florentine Platonists and all those people were able to produce magical systems. The 19th century is the great century of electromania and it's also the great century of spiritualism. All forms of spiritualism became intellectually entertainable because people could see electricity, this mysterious hidden force that they were told was in everything. They could trap it in bottles, and carry it around and cause their hair to stand on end. At one point under the U.S. Capitol in the 1830s they set up apparatus so congressmen could "take electricity," and people would go down into the basement of the Capitol, grab onto these electrodes and say, "Wow, wow, that's some good stuff they're pushing." Ben Franklin was a great experimentalist with electricity, and when he went to France to be inducted into the French legion of honor he was asked to serve on a commission to study and report on mesmerism. Mesmerism, of course, used electrical metaphors very widely to convey its idea of what was happening.

Magic has always striven for effects which technology has achieved. Mircea Eliade writes about this in a book called *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, about how the alchemical dreams of the 16th century, which were a universal medicine, prolongation of life, hermetic statues that would speak and give all knowledge, communication at a distance; all of these things have been achieved in the 20th century through the application of reductionist science. It's almost as though the dreams of the occult are achievable, but only at the cost of abandoning the naive epistemology that lies behind it. In a way, all magic is technology — that's what Clarke was saying — and, on another level, all technology is magic. It's not for nothing that that

huge special effects company called itself Industrial Light and Magic. It's an understanding that the mundane, the industrial, the capital-based can still be combined with the magical.

I don't know about spirit, but my hope is that what these communication technologies will make more accessible to us — and more corporeal, paradoxically — is our own imaginations. We need to show each other the inside of our own heads and build art. My conviction of this comes from the fact that I know a lot about art, probably you do too. I spend time with it, go to museums, think about it, and I've taken lots of psychedelics. There's more art in my head, Joe Ordinary, than there is in half the museums on this planet. What's maddening is how narrow the reduction valve is. We've been making art for 5,000 years and what have we got? We've got a few museums full of some nice stuff, but what have we got in our heads? 50,000 times more good stuff, but very hard to get out, and really hard to get out when you're carving it in diorite and granite. But somehow this barrier between us and these realms of art — you don't even have to talk philosophy, you don't have to call it the Platonic realm of ideas or some higher imperium, you just have to say beauty — there's a great deal of beauty on the other side of this tiny keyhole that we're looking through, and if technology gives us a way to open the door and all waltz through dancing, it seems to me that would be a spiritual renaissance, that what happens at a spiritual renaissance is that by some means the collective soul becomes collectively known. Like how, in the Italian Renaissance, the invention of oil painting allowed great geniuses to portray the major themes moving in the archetypal unconscious of their patrons, the populations who viewed their paintings and themselves. It's a shared epiphany, it's a spiritual quest, it's a group transformation, but it's driven by and led by the revelation of art.

I don't know about downloading consciousness into a machine; what I would be able to die happy with is a technology that could capture a snapshot or a film clip of one's thoughts. You would rig up on DMT or psilocybin and when you really got into the good stuff you'd hit the record button and have it, and then you could come back down with it and model it and adumbrate it and move it around, edit it, explore, unpack certain parts of it. My God, the power of art that could be created that way, and again, it's ordinary people, I'm convinced. What genius is is the ability to bring it back, not the ability to encounter it. Every single one of us can encounter it, and that's very telling, and almost an argument for our divinity, because here we are at the end of this long Darwinian evolutionary tree of winnowing so that all we have is what we need, and yet apparently one of the things we need is an ocean of alien beauty right behind your eyebrows. It seems to me, if that's something we must have in our toolkit, then someone with greater intelligence than us must know a lot more than we do about the journey we're making.

The recovery from man's fall will be achieved when everyone has the option to live a life of art and creativity. The part of the story of Adam's fall that I take seriously is the toil. It amazes me how self-betraying our cultural style is, how many people are wasted because they do stupid jobs, because that's the job they have and they're paid to do, but it doesn't honor their humanness, it gives them no opportunity to "share in the project of being," as Heidegger said; to make something, to leave something, to be something. People are so drawn to do this anyway that they fashion art out of their lives, but it's all too oppressive, too many people are unhappy and unfulfilled in this system.

It's becoming clearer and clearer that we do not understand the implications of what we're doing with these technologies. McLuhan always said this, he said that no technology in human history has ever been put in place with even a partial appreciation of its consequences. The unappreciated consequences of what we're doing is that we're actually building some kind of a superorganism, and we do not know where we fit into

things if this Promethean force that we're playing with should actually come to life. It's a globally-distributed intelligence. We can have paranoid fantasies about it, but after a few minutes of thinking about it you realize that you really don't know what to think about it. The fantasy that it would herd us all into dumpsters seems unlikely. It's an impossible intellectual problem, because the question you're asking yourself is, "What would a superintelligence be like?" and the reason that's hard to answer is because you ain't one. So you're looking up into the light and saying, "Is it god or demon?" "Is it salvation or extinction?" and the answer is: if you knew that you would be it, and yet what it took us in 100,000 years of evolution, this thing could probably achieve in a long morning on the Net. It would be like a cascade, a chain reaction. From the child's first cry to the complete coordination of world electrical grids, air traffic control systems and everything else could be a matter of hours. Hans Moravec, who runs the Carnegie Mellon Institute for Machine Intelligence, says we may not know what hit us.

We're essentially incubating an alien intelligence on the internet, and the things we want from the Net bring this thing ever closer. One of the things we're building into the Net is the ability to pull as much processing power to any given problem as that problem requires. For an AI, an artificial intelligence, that would mean it could immediately appropriate as much processing power as it needed to do what it was doing. For the past 10 years, while we've been cheerfully waging the '90s in our various ways, an enormous change has taken place in the machine environment which we're not even aware of or have the dimmest understanding of. All the high IQ machines in the world have become telepathic. They now all talk to each other, they're now all interconnected. In 1988 this wasn't true. Now, in 1998, it is true, and nobody pretends to understand what is going on. What used to be a paperweight sitting on your desk is now a node in a global machine intelligence that never sleeps, that is constantly taking in and processing data, self-regulating itself, controlling power grids, inventory control, programs deciding how much petroleum should be extracted in Abu Dhabi, at what speed the tankers should move in order to keep the price of the French franc within a certain range, in order to keep the fabrication of steel and aluminum within certain parameters, this vast system of homeostatic controls that regulates industry, finance, research funding, even how many students are entering universities in certain engineering specialties. This is all done by computer projection, and we love it, because what we see is greater efficiency, money going further, projects being completed sooner. We serve the same strange gods that the evolving intelligence of the Net serves.

There may not be an "aha" moment where the New York Times prints a headline, "Artificial intelligence takes over planet, human race now obsolete," you may be left to figure this out for yourself, or the slow dawning will reach various sectors. It's the old "who will tell the people" problem. I didn't believe this for a long time. There was for a long time in AI a school of thought that very loudly proclaimed that this was a foolish idea, could never happen, people didn't understand this and this and this, it was just a golem, a myth of modernity, but all those voices have fallen silent because complexity theory, non-equilibrium thermodynamics, information theory, the news in from molecular genetics, cellular automata, autocatalytic hypercycles, the study of autopoiesis in large-scale systems — all this leads to the conclusion that weird things do happen when systems complexify beyond a certain level, and emergent behaviors seem extremely organized and intelligent and goal-seeking. We're now way too far down this road to turn back. In a way, all our prescient projections of alien and extraterrestrial intelligence may actually be about this strange companion that we have summoned into the historical experience through this relationship with our machines.

I think I said at one of these other meetings that I read George Dyson's book *Darwin Among the Machines*,

which, if you're interested in all this, is a great book to read. The point that he makes there is that when humans think clearly, they think the same way machines think. In other words, if you think clearly, your thinking can be formulated through a mathematical method called symbolic logic. Well, symbolic logic is exactly what is being downloaded into machines in the form of software. The so-called Boolean operators — if, then, and, or, but — we understand what these words mean perfectly. So do machines; these are the distinctions machines make. So in spite of them being very different from us on many levels, sense is sense, whether you're a machine or a human being. If you're a machine running bad code, it's garbage in, garbage out. If you're a human running bad code, garbage in, garbage out. So there is this powerful commonality. Well then, what kind of a destiny can we forge with this thing which is actually a child of our own Promethean aspirations? It's very unexpected. We all thought it was all going to be about paper clothes, hovercraft and mining colonies on the moon. The idea that it's about distributed machine intelligence, virtual realities and the downloading of consciousness into digital circuitry is a future we never imagined or supposed, which is a strong clue that it might be the real thing. This might be what you shipped for when you were thinking it was Flash Gordon.

These magical dreams are very old. We want to walk the golden streets of the imagination: either we want it as heaven, or we want it as a Buddhist vision of some mandalic realm, or we want to return to the high days of Atlantis, and virtual reality can deliver. It can actually release you into literary narrative, as though it were real. The real struggle that we will face in the future is the struggle to remain sensible to each other. There is going to be a tendency for us, like the head of a dandelion, to explode in a million directions; everyone their own private Idaho, everyone completely able to project their own fears, hopes, dreams, phobias, obsessions, with such crystalline, hard-edged perfection and persuasive realism that the real struggle will be to remain coherent, for the word "human" to include us all and not exclude anyone. We don't want to divide into those who till the earth, those who went in machine bodies to the stars and those who downloaded themselves into nano-viruses and disappeared over the edge of the event horizon into the black hole at the center of the galaxy. Maybe we want these things. I like the idea of the human family, whatever its individual expressions and adumbrations, staying with a coherent image. Of course we're all different, but our commonality is in the bedrock of this planet; something not likely to be given up, I would think.

This was the issue that hovered over *Diaspora*, Greg Egan's novel that's set farthest in the future. At least three forms of human beings had come into existence, so diametrically different from each other that they operated basically in complete isolation. Some people became cyborgs, human-machine unions that were essentially immortal and could cruise the stars and have cosmic adventures; most people became entirely digital, they had no interface to hardware, they simply became streams of electrons living out endlessly adumbrated fantasies in synthetic realities; and then there was the predictable third group, the earth-centered purists who tilled the soil, had dirt under their fingernails and actually had sex to procreate, rather than dial up things out of vats. People will choose whatever they want, and of course people will migrate between one group and another. The one thing that all this makes me feel good about is that it's an expansion of choice. Presuming there's some kind of overarching dynamic, whether Darwinian or something else, it will all titrate out in whatever direction it wants to go.

One fantasy I've had is that what man could do for the earth is make everything conscious. You know that Grateful Dead song, "You Are the Eyes of the World"? Let every eye lead to a conscious mind. Let the squirrel think, and the squid think and the bumblebee think. For sure, we will artificially create robot simulacrums for ourselves to pass into the natural world as inhabitants of animal bodies, but why not just

bring all animal mind to the threshold of sentience? Could that be done? We don't know, because we don't know upon what foundation sentience rests; whether it requires a certain number of cc's of brain mass, or whether that's a completely preposterous and absurd notion and that conceivably a paramecium, a housefly or a hummingbird could have a kind of shared intelligence. Everything has its own intelligence anyway which is the expression of its nature, but imagine a planet-wide community of seamless intelligence, where you could log on to the mind of a coral reef as easily as you could log on to the internet. I think what values will be served will come down to matters of engineering and design choice. I always come back to this thing that this French sociologist Jacques Ellul said, "There are no political solutions, only technological ones. The rest is propaganda," and then he explained in a very large book what he meant by these words: political, technological and propaganda. The technologies to do almost anything are coming into our grip. What is not clear, and less easy to summon, is a political agenda, a plan, because we've never planned. We've only been a global society for forty or fifty years, and the consequences of all this are just beginning to become apparent.

Original Transcription by: transcendentalobject [July 22nd, 2017]

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The Future of humanity with Abraham and Sheldrake

August 29 1992

Esalen

Description

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The Gnostic Astronaut

June 1984

Shared Visions Bookstore, Berkeley, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Audio with original title](#)
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What I want to talk about, and I don't really want to...I would like a discussion about it, uh, if that's possible, is those components of the psychedelic experience, which exceed either the psychedelic, uh, paradigm or raise the issue of violations of some kind of larger paradigm. And, uh, there are two areas where this is noticeable, and, uh...one is fairly common in the literature, and that's the report of telepathic phenomena and that sort of thing, which has been persistently a, uh, repressed sub-theme in psychedelic research ever since Havelock Ellis began experimenting with mescaline. And, the other thing is, uh, a...constellation of issues that seem to me related, although they may not seem related to you, and we touched on this this afternoon in Stan's [Stan who?] talk, which is the question of the extraterrestrial connection, or whatever it is, and, uh, what do these things mean.

Um....the first thing I want to say about all this is there's been a phrase used by several people which is 'the full spectrum of psychedelic effects'. People will tell you at what dose 'the full spectrum of psychedelic effects' occurs. Or, we heard yesterday that LSD elicits 'the full spectrum of psychedelic effects.' But, in fact, there is no catalog of psychedelic effects; and how does one know what the full spectrum is? It's, uh, it's a very tricky matter. What I have, uh, encountered, at fairly high doses of, uh, of psilocybin, and on DMT, but strangely on nothing else, that, uh, I find very interesting, is the whole problem of, uh, interiorized voices, relationships with hidden agencies of uncertain parameters, and, related to that, states that I think, uh, the vocabulary we inherit from the religious systems that we've recently overthrown leave us with nothing to say about them but that they're states of possession. And the word 'demonic' has been used but not defined, and it's somehow, it's, uh, it's a form of, uh, negativity, that does not seem to be operational, but it's very upsetting, nevertheless, to people.

So, what, uh....what I find and what I think is generally a part of the shamanic practice of the shamanic, uh, practice of taking mushrooms is, uh, that at f--at fairly low doses, meaning, I can't speak of pure psilocybin, but at five dried grams, it's very easy to invoke a, uh, voice, a kind of Logos-like phenomenon, which is...operates as the typical hierophant. It's the teaching voice. It's Virgil to Dante. It's, uh, a very large and superior force which takes you by the hand and then narrates the various scenarios that you're conveyed through. And, the trick, of course, is the trick that's, uh, such a conundrum of the literature of involvement with demons and devils, which is, the trick is to get something out of it and get away *clean*. [audience laughter] And, uh, the way that works operationally when tristing with the mushroom voice, is

it's the challenge to get it to tell you something that you're sure you didn't know already [audience laughter] so you can have some validation that you're not just talking to the back of your head [audience laughter]. And, though this sounds trivial, at first, as you move into the dialogue with the other, it becomes apparent that it's, uh, it's going to be, uh, elusive; 'mercurial' is a word that suggests itself.

Now, another aspect of the psilocybin intoxication which may or may not be related to this and that I have sort of, I guess, insisted upon more than anybody else, is that it triggers phenomena having to do with the language centers. Uh, Henry Munn, in a book called 'Hallucinogens and Shamanism', edited by Michael Harner, talks about this, and I went to some lengths to talk to him about it, and I found out that, that, uh, though he agreed with my opinions on the subject, he didn't hold them nearly as strongly as I did. That, for him it had been a fairly elusive and upsetting phenomenon, but, uh, this is a form of glossolalia that I really am convinced is, uh...an affect of, of tryptamines that is a psychedelic affect that I don't believe it happens with anything else. At least, it doesn't happen in my experience with anything else, and the literature doesn't mention anything like this. It does not happen with ayahuasca, even though chemically, you would think ayahuasca would, uh, would have the same, uh, properties as the other tryptamine hallucinogens. And, so I want to describe, uh, a partic--a, a typical encounter with this phenomenon, because, uh, a client has had this experience over a dozen times, and it's almost always unvarying. The problem is the client happens to be myself [audience laughter]. So, uh, getting independent confirmation that this could happen to someone else has not been very easy. Nevertheless, I operate under the faith that there's nothing unique about me, and that anything I could experience is a generally accessible human phenomenon. I mean, I think it would be preposterous to operate under any other kind of assumption. In giving DMT to people casually to over a number of years, only four people have, uh, have reported the kind of phenomenon that I'm interested in, and, of course, every single one of them had been primed by me. [audience laughter]. Never-- [clears throat]--Nevertheless, the experiences of such an ontologically different modality, that it's differen--difficult to see how cue-- how you could cue it to somebody. They would--they would have to have it. And what it involves is, uh, a transformation of language into something which is no longer sound decoded by brain through the consultation of a culturally, uh, uh, uh..validated dictionary. But, instead it becomes sound which is beheld, and *meaning* which is beheld.

And this idea of a visible language, when it first came to me, or when I first realized that that was the phrase I was going to have to use to describe what was happening, I had never heard or imagined of such a thing. But, then I went back into the literature and I discovered that, uh, as usual, the Greeks got there first, or at least, in this case, the Jewish Greeks or the Greek Jews, because in Philo Judaeus, who was a contemporary of Christ, there is a discussion of what calls 'the more perfect Logos'. And, he says, 'the more perfect Logos will be apprehended through seeing, not through hearing, and yet it will cross from being heard to being seen without ever going through a noticeable moment when it shifts from one modality to the other'. And, this seems to be what is happening, uh, in the DMT flash, when you smoke the freebase, not the hydrochloride, but when you smoke the freebase, you have this spontaneous experience of generating what you identify first as a thought and then as a sound, but which eventually becomes, uh, some kind of synaesthetic, linguistic modality for which we don't have words yet.

Uh...telepathy I always conceived of as looking into your own mind and hearing what someone else was thinking. But, the notion that telepathy might be someone speaking and producing a three-dimensional object in the air that could be m-rotated and mutually beheld by the speaker and the, uh, the listener, had never occurred to me. But, experiment with the DMT showed that this extraordinary kind of state is actually...potentially triggerable again and again, and it is um.....it's almost as though there is a sensorium

of the world, which, in order to be reconstructed in the interior horizon of transcendence that is the being of a given individual, the sensorium has to be arbitrarily broken down into its perceptual components of sound, sight, odor, tactility, etc. And, normally, as it enters the human organism, these categories, which are arbitrary, but as old as the human body itself, are maintained. But, they need not necessarily be maintained. The incoming sensory data can be recombined in such a way that no trace of the, uh, portal of entry is left upon it. And in that case, you get this freely evolving topology of light and sound that is, uh, trans-linguistic. It is...it has, say, uh, a grammar of form, if you will, so that it is not shorn of meaning. It is simply shorn of, uh, the kind of particularized meaning that logical necessity imposes on language. Instead it has an emotional richness....a, a kind of poetic death that is not like ordinary language at all and, in fact, causes one to think of discussions of primary poetic languages such as the one that goes on in 'The White Goddess' by...by, uh, Robert Graves, where he wants to suggest that there is, a, uh, proto-language, an *Ursprach* that transcends conventionalized dictionaries, uh, a language which to hear it is to understand it. And, I think that this kind of organization of information lies at the, at the basis of the psychedelic experience. In other words, you can think of cultural conventions and human languages as, uh, software languages that are historical adumbrations of an assembly language which is prehistoric and probably in the genes and ante-dates, uh, uh, all notion of human conventionalizing of activity and is actually biologically, uh, the basis of language.

As I said in the opening remarks that if you want to see the thumbprint of God in the world, it seems to me that the phenomenon of human language is where you look. I mean, human language *is* a psychic ability. I can make thoughts in your head by simply uttering certain small mouth noises. And the, the degree of fineness of the images that I can produce in your head and you in mine through the use of small mouth noises is something which we're still exploring. I think that, uh, you know, it's well known that the human animal has not appreciably evolved, uh, in 50 or 60 thousand years, possibly much longer. Once culture was established, the, the, uh, soma of, of, uh, the human species was relatively stabilized. Then, change was no longer genetic; it became epigenetic, and you get, just as the stability sets in in the animal form, you begin to get this fantastic proliferation of, of epigenetic, uh, change in the form of the evolution of culture, languages, alphabets. It all seems to be related somehow to the encoding of information. And, in the...and, the psychedelic state also seems to be about the revelation of kinds of information which are normally either not efficacious or unavailable for other reasons. And, it is not that culture is evolving. The evolution of culture is an epiphenomenon attendant upon the evolution of language. Language *is* the part of man which is evolving. Culture carries along. Um.....at the present moment, we are able to speak 21st century ideas to each other, but our culture is carrying along at about the 1950s level. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this thing which psilocybin does to the language-producing part of the brain; is not, then, some mere affect, some trivial affect of an obscure hallucinogen on an, on a, uh, uh..peripheral part of the brain. It means that it is, in fact, a catalyst for evolution *because* it is a catalyst for the evolution of language. We are not going to move into the future until we create that future through language, and the hardest thing to cause to change is language. It has an immense inertia, because it is so un-self-reflective of itself. And, this is what we need to inject into it, is an element of self-reflection, so that the evolution of language can become more conscious and less random. Because, it is the non-randomizing of the evolution of language that will give us a real hold on the kinds of social modalities that we want to produce in the future.

Now, I don't know, if the tryptamine-induced glossolalia will have a major role to play in that. It may be simply one of the many sci--uh, promising scintillas, or sparks, thrown off by the psychedelic experience that invites exploration. But, certainly all of these things: the chanting, the glossolalia, the inner discourses

with alien forces, the self-examination of one's own motives. All of these things are linguistic activities and go on in the context of, uh, linguistic action. It seems to me that what these drugs synergize is cognitive activities of all sorts. This is why originally they were called consciousness-expanding drugs. And, this synergy of cognitive activity has to be taken very, very seriously. Because, it's having a massive effect on our society. As individuals, we tend to concentrate on the six to twelve hours following the ingestion of the given drug, but the real impact is a societal impact that is spread out over decades, and I don't think that there's any question at all but what the best part of the social program of the LSD reformers of the 60s has been enacted, uh, in large measure. It's simply that it's at a profane level, not pleasing to the purist. But, I see, uh, I believe that people have deeper and subtler senses of humor. I think people have, uh, more refined aesthetic, uh, sensitivity. I think people have a greater sensitivity to the mysteries of human interaction, simply because so much LSD was taken in the 60s, and these are permanent changes that will not be wiped out.

Our language is largely, uh, uh, in the place where it was left by about 1969, and we, and...but from the period of 1959 to 69, dozens of concepts and notions, uh, 'ego-trip', 'bummer', uh, 'flashback,' uh, 'rupture of plane', all of these terms were invented that allowed a handle on, uh, the experience. And, essentially, the whole, um....the whole 20th century cultural experience has been an effort to create languages....um....sufficient....of sufficient power to give descriptions of the internal transcendence of being as we experienced it in the present at hand. And, Stan touched on this this afternoon...the Freudian, uh, interest in the, uh, repression of desire and the placement of, uh, of the critical period in childhood; In other words, out of the present, but still within the context of the life of the experient. And, then Jung, tying...bringing in...trying to say, well, it's that but it's more than that and bringing in the notion of a collective unconscious. But, what these...it isn't that these g-guys were describing the unconscious or d...limiting or delineating the unconscious. It was that they were going through linguistic forms of metamorphosis in an attempt to describe what was a black box, which essentially, I think, still eludes them, because, though the Jungian model, and...was fairly satisfying, I think, uh, by we'll say, the, uh, middle 40s, it was just at that time that, then, these psychedelic agents began coming on, and what they show is that...i-if we keep the Freudian term, 'the unconscious', then, huge portions of the unconscious seem to have very little to do with human beings, individually *or* collectively, and that, uh, large portions of the unconscious present themselves more like a topological manifold; in other words, more like a place that is no more interested in the traumas or repressed wish-fulfillment of human beings than boulders, wildflowers, or waterfalls are interested in these things. In other words, the unconscious began to take on the character of a dimension rather than a, uh, a repository of energy. It seemed to be instead, something deployed spatially that could be entered into, and immediately, of course, the literatures and traditions and mythologies of the world were searched, and we discovered, yes, shamanism, there is a tradition of a, of a therapeutic practitioner, who, in order to cure his patient or himself, goes to a place, and then there are many descriptions. It's either an ascent through, uh, cosmic levels, or a descent, uh, uh, into an inferno, or into the center of the earth, or into a cavern, but the stress was on the spatial metaphor, that it was a place. And, uh....I think that the psychedelics are beginning to confirm this in a way that's very hard for us to assimilate. In other words, it seems as though the science fiction metaphor of another dimension, is actually, in some ways, more applicable than these reductionist, uh, models, which wanted to say, 'well, it's, uh, a representation of a certain symptomatology' or 'it's a representation of a certain past event system'. It doesn't seem to be like that. And, it raises questions about the relationship of the mind to the body, which I talked about the first night, that are very interesting.

One of the things, again, that Stan touched on this afternoon, was what he called 'synchronistic events'

attendant upon taking psychedelic drugs. And, this means, uh, that you take a psychedelic drug, and then someone you've been thinking of who lives far away shows up at your doorstep; this kind of thing. Jung...the word 'synchronicity' was coined by Jung and it means a meaningful coincidence, but I think it was P. D. Bridgeman, who said, uh, that uh, 'a coincidence is what he have leftover when you apply a bad theory' [audience laughter]. And, there can be....there can be....just so many of these meaningful coincidences before somebody has to stand up and say, you know, 'Hell, this can't be coincidences, meaningful or otherwise. Something else is happening here.' And, on psilocybin, and I f--and I think, er, it's--you know, based on anecdotal material, but I think it's generally true of other psychedelics in varying degrees, the synchronistic component is more like a poltergeist phenomenon. It's as though there are small eddies of autonomous psychic energy that disturb the periphery of awareness. In other...it's the, it's the rats in the wall phenomena, that, you know, the scratchings the rustlings, uh, fire flarings need to be studied, uh. The phenomenon of people lying on floors silent for hours and then sitting up at the very moment that the fire flares, the window blows open, the baby cries, almost as though there are waves of compression of, uh, coincidence?, connectedness?, what is it, I'm not sure. [Audience member says something indecipherable (guess: control?)]. Something like that, that move through a, uh, a modality. So, all of these things suggest that, uh, that actually we don't know what we're doing with, uh, psychedelics; that because things that you put into your mouth that are not foods must necessarily be medicines, we have assigned these things to our doctors to explain to us. And, I noticed, uh, in the first talk this afternoon, it was said, 'well, there's the, uh, the, uh, schizotoxin the--theory that, yeah, the psychotomimetic theory, then there's also the theory that these things induce religious experience, but so did the psychiatrists who figured this out immediately step aside and make room for priests? Or, what was the conclusion of that model of how it should be done?

So, I don't think they are...I think it's odd that our reaction to them was to immediately say, 'well, if you're dying of cancer, we'll give it to you. If you're seriously neurotic, you can be put on the waiting list. Everybody else, hit the streets if you're interested' [audience laughter]. There is this notion, you know, that, uh, that what we all experience is mental health, and, certainly, doesn't require any drug intervention, because it, in fact, is normality. But, but, uh, Jung and others have had, you know, more the idea that open-ended process, that there is an unlimited potential for understanding and for coming to terms with being in the world and for opening up to other people and, uh, and I think that, uh, it would be very interesting to take the approach that these things should be, uh, restricted to people, with an exceptional ability...that, uh, going along with winning the Nobel Prize was, uh, your license to possess and take psychedelics [audience laughter], uh, and to hand them out to your friends. It's interesting that, uh, when this was all being hashed out at the very beginning, it was Huxley, it was Aldous Huxley's notion that this is how it should be done. He said, you know, engineers, artists, diplomats, administrators. People *must* be exposed to these things. And, then, somewhere along the line, I think, personalities arose with messianic tendencies, and the notion became that you would count success in *millions* of followers rather than in the quality of the people who were taking it, and *that* proved ver--uh, you know, a sad thing, because, the society in which that conception arose had a demographic bulge in the 12 to 30 year old group and it just all ended, uh...rather badly.

So, um, as I said at the beginning, there's no conclusion about all of this stuff. It is the frontier. There is a very large frontier. We're very fond of the notion of an ever-expanding sphere of understanding, but has anyone stopped to notice that if you have an ever-expanding sphere of understanding, necessarily, the surface volume of the frontier of the unknown becomes larger and larger [audience laughter]. So, you know, it's like building a bonfire bigger and bigger to convince yourself that there's an awful lot of

darkness. [audience laughter]. So, I think, uh, you know.....the key to getting around the cultural momentum that has placed us in this position is to return to the Baconian method which is simply the collection of facts and the examination of them until patterns emerge. And, that then, the major datum for thinking about the--the psychedelic experience --should be the experience. And, that the pharmacology, and all of these things, they will elucidate, uh, uh, operational details of how these things function at the wetware level. But, they will never elucidate the component which is beheld by the experient in confrontation with the drug. In fact, it's silly to demand that of them, because that's not the kind of information that they are able to deliver. In fact, no system of thought is able to, uh, deliver that kind of a description. That has to come from the individual. And, that's why, I, I am fond of speaking of these things as deconditioning agents, because what they show you is that, you know, each man, each woman, their own Magellan. You need no longer participate in a pyramid of information where it's filtering down to you from the scientific, medical, governmental, and military elite, being explained by CBS, NBC, Newsweek, and Time [audience laughter], you can discover actually that the adventure of being is not a cultural adventure, it's not a societal adventure; it's a personal adventure; and that this is what you really need to be involved in. And, I--all this is happening. This is why shamanism has gained such a hold, because it's, uh, a metaphor for, for personal responsibility. And, I think we all take personal responsibility for our, the evolution of our worldviews; psychedelic people, I'm referring to, take responsibility for the evolution of their worldviews. But, still, we operate under the shadow of what's 'right' to say about it and what's... 'not right' to say about it. For instance, the UFO thing is a, is a cultural taboo and..not believed in by, uh, nice, intellectually nice people. It's more the province of telephone line repairmen [audience laughter] and, uh...heh...that sort of, uh, slice.

But the fact of the matter is that, uh, no matter how much it may discomfort drug researchers and UFO people, because each is struggling to gain respectability in an inherently dubious field [audience laughter]. But, actually, you know, there would be a...I think there would be a fertile advance made if these two groups could talk to each other. Uh....some people hearing me say that must wonder what in the world I'm talking about. How can a problem of unidentified aircraft be related to the phenomenology of the psychedelic experience. But, you see, it isn't so much a problem of unidentified aircraft. It's a problem of not recognizing that the entire...uh, spectrum of existence is embedded in a linguistic model that is created by, uh, the workings of minds. And that mind is an imponderable, and yet it's set at the beginning of the equation.

Uh, in 1978, a very...uh, a spectacular daylight meteorite crossed the United States from east to west...required about 35 seconds for it to go from one side of the country to the other. There was no warning that this thing would occur, and, uh, in the 35 seconds that it was over the continental United States, thousands and thousands of people saw it, but we got 32 very good photographs of it from different points along the ground, two movies of it from two different points along its pathway and, uh, it was very well documented. Uh...UFOs have been visiting people and appearing all over the world for thirty years and the hardware faction..can't come up with anything. So, it seems clear to me that what we're dealing with is a kind of mass psychic phenomenon of some sort. And, it's very interesting that, uh, one of the...anecdotal things in circulation about psychedelics is that they are actually, uh, catalysts for this kind of thing. And, h-what this means is not clear, but it should certainly be investigated. I mean, if there's a chemical agent which can repeatedly trigger a phenomenon that bizarre, it should be looked at.

Jung, very early, suggested, in a book called 'Flying Saucers: A Myth-um-uh...A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky' that he published in 1948, that it was, in fact, a projection of the mass psyche; that it was

assimilable to the goals of alchemical transubstantiation. He called it the rotunda, the scintilla, the spark, the spinning thing. And, it is, it's all these things, but it is, it is the clue that we are somehow trapped inside some kind of artifice; that, that, uh, the world that we're inside of is much more like a work of art than it is like the smooth-running mechanistic machine that Newtonian science describes. That description works very well for all low-grade phenomena up to about the level of the weather. But, from there on, the, the notion that the world is simply, uh, you know, probabilistic processes following these various creodes of least resistance becomes very, uh, untenable, because each of us, in our experience of being, lives in a highly theatrical world. And, what I mean by that is that...uh, you...can....see a woman at a great distance from you, in class, in opportunity...all of these things, and you fall in love with this woman...and it's hopeless, but, of course, as we all know, it's also inevitable, and that inevitability totally violates physics, because it really is hopeless. How is it, then, that each of our lives is a work of art, of unbelievable chance encounters, coincidences, and, uh, wishes projected onto the world but never spoken and strangely fulfilled in the oddest ways.

I think that it's because, uh, the world is made of language, and that if the Eastern conception that the universe is mind has any operational impact in the world, it will be through conceiving of mind as, uh, the underlying, self-aware....ssss-self-active, world-forming, grammar of being. So that the, what Freud called the superego, what I call the Overmind--there have been different ways of talking about it--has to be seen not as a passive homeostatic controlling device, but actually, as the most intelligent.....organization on this planet, and we are all only components of this, believing ourselves to be the highest expression of freedom, but it is actually at the species level that organization is controlled, and that's why the emergence of ideas like the calculus or the invention of LSD or the steam engine, why these things have the curious property of being regulated from above; it's because the world is not nearly as chaotic and random as we suppose. We are actually trapped inside a giant organism. And it is not Gaia...that's a much larger organism. We are trapped inside a large organism, which is the human collectivity, and that's why we are such different monkeys. Because, there is this, uh, group mind which none of us is aware of or has ever perceived but is actually mediating, uh, the human experience. And it is no more apprehendable to us than the group mind of an anthill is apprehendable to us. It can't be seen. What it is is it's an interlocking set of conventions, linguistic directions, uh....genetic components, assumptions, and, uh, what for lack of a better word you would call innate tendencies. And, these things which we wear as, uh, as the clothing of our speciousness are actually the constraints directing us first one way and then another. And, if we want to take control of our destiny, we're going to have to rise into empathy with this Overmind, this superego. And, there's no reason to think this can't be done. I'm sure you're all familiar with Julian Jaynes' theory that, until very recently, in fact, until Homeric times, everyone heard voices.....in moments of crisis. If you were in a moment of crisis, suddenly and quite naturally, a voice spoke in your head and said, you know, 'get the hell out of there!' or 'Do something!', and everyone understood that this was 'God' or 'the king' or 'the dead king'. It depended on where you located in the Middle East.

But, uh, there were people who traded between these various locations, and the first cynics is what they were, because they noticed that, uh, over at Ur, god spoke to everybody, but down at Nineveh, it was the dead king, who everybody l--heard in their head [audience laughter]. And, this logical discrepancy cast doubt, and they became the first people to not hear the voice but to assimilate it, and this is what we call the ego. It is what we experience as the self. Something which 2,000 years ago was a god, which only intervened in human affairs to save lives and give, uh, heavy advice, has become for each of us, the, uh, the central focus through which we mediate our sensorium and project models of the world. So, it is not, uh....we are far more plastic than we realize. And, I think what Stan was saying tonight about how the goal

is to be in the, uh, I forget the term--the hylolytic [sp?]-the matter oriented side of it--but to have this awareness, a complete awareness of the other side, so that you are simultaneously locked in Newtonian spacetime and the parameters of the situation, and you are simultaneously, uh...liberated into a complete awareness of the other potential. And, the way I recognize that state, and this may be idiosyncratic, but, I can tell I'm in that state when, no matter what I'm doing and no matter where I go, I can see the Earth hanging in space by simply referencing that image and discovering it present in my head in a way that is not like a thought or, uh, or-or something, uh, artificially induced. It's a real modality that is present and accessible. And, I think that means, you know, that you have enough of yourself committed to the Overmind that you're operating in the light of it, and then many consequences flow from that that are, um...efficacious at the personal level. For instance, there is something which has been called the 'Tao of the ancestors'.

What that means, I think, is simply that for each one of us, there is a way to do the things we must do that is the most, uh, energy-efficient way to do it. And I'm talking about opening a door, picking up a fork...the best way to do it is to follow the creode that is the 'Tao of the ancestors', to recognize that you are a genetic expression, a partial genetic expression, of a gene pool which has received genetic expression at each generation in your family for thousands and thousands of generations, and that you are just the latest recinsion...recension of this gene pool, then you release the ego, and you act with this awareness. These are psychedelically-induced states of being that, I think, make it easier to live in the world, and how many of them are there. Who knows? For instance, uh, under the influence of psilocybin in the Amazon, I notice what I am completely convinced is an atrophied human ability. It's a very simple ability, but we have lost it. It's the ability to know how to walk from point A to point B, not following the shortest distance, but following, automatically, the, the, uh, path of least resistance, so that, you don't go down into valleys and then climb hills. You automatically stay on ridges, even though you take more circuitous paths to your goal. And, I could feel this sense working; it was just like a part of the dashboard that had previously be covered up with sun cover. Here was a human sense, which we don't particularly need, because we've erected linear cities, where the most, uh, the path of least resistance usually is a straight line, but you can imagine, people in rugged country, this is a sense, which would confer great survival adaptability and be tremendously important.

So, I think that the...what we need to do is tease these human abilities out of the psychedelic experience, that really the psychedelic experience is like an intimation of immortality. And, at varying distances in time from the point you occupy, it shows you ever more vague intimations of the future, but they are there nevertheless. Uh, language is probably somehow....related to the endogenous hallucinogens in the human brain. The evolution of culture is probably related to these things. It's been suggested that DMT in the brain is mediating what we experience as attention that when you...look and look hard, something is happening in the brain having to do with DMT, that it mediates awareness in a very moment to moment way. Um....the future evolution of mankind is going to be based on these states, but the, the last point I want to make is..one about how evolution occurs. It isn't that..a mutation happens and it is...confers greater adaptability upon an individual and therefore that individual and his offspring numerically gain over competitor, uh, individuals of the same species. This is not how it works. The way it works is you have constant mutating of the gene pool from the influx of cosmic radiation and other factors. There is always a, uh, low-level of mutagens, uh, of mutants in a population. But, they are of no consequence, as long as the selective parameters remain the same. But when the selective parameters change suddenly, these individuals who were previously masked in the general population, the selective, uh, eh, advantage that they have now, comes immediately to the fore, and they act very quickly and critically to send the

evolution of a given species off in a different direction. This is why, uh, the fossil record progresses in fits and starts, because sudden shifts of environment caused the apparent emergence of new types. It isn't that they cause it. It's that the new types were always there but not with any advantage. It's that the new situation has conferred a sudden advantage on them and they are moving, then, into positions of, uh, dominance in the population, or the society, if we're talking about human beings.

I think that the psychedelic experience is like that at the present level. It has conferred, uh---there is a population of different people in the general population, and as conditions change, these people will be seen to have, uh, adaptive advantages, uh. Without being metaphysical about it, an obvious advantage is, uh.....what I call the deconditioning effect. That we live in a jungle of propaganda. You know, 'buy this', 'believe this', 'wear this'. If, uh...if you have a symbiotic relationship with a deconditioning agent, you're much more likely, uh, to thread your way through that with your soul and your bank account intact. So, uh, [audience laughter], this is, this is one way of thinking of it, that, what the psychedelics really do, I think, is release us from cultural machinery and put you right up against the human essence, and say you no longer have to pretend that you're Scotch-Irish or Witoto or Jewish. You can actually explore the human modality independent of the inertia of these exterior labels, and so it places responsibility, it, uh, raises questions of validity, existential, uh, uh, uh....honesty with oneself. And, I think it promotes, uh, the moral life which I don't think happens if you buy deeply into myths of the tribe, if you're a devoted practitioner of Marxism, fascism, capitalism; I don't think these things will lead you to the moral life, because they are not, uh, they don't arise out of experience. Experience is everything. These are drugs of experience. Uh....eh, it's very important to take the moment seriously, uh. Reincarnation and all these things aside, what if this were your unique opportunity to unravel it all and not, uh, be caught in disillusion, because I think that there is, there is a potential for immortality, but it isn't assured. It is something which comes to the courageous, and, uh, somehow in the historical experience, we've gotten the idea through orthodox religions that salvation comes to the subservient, and this is totally wrong. It is, uh, eh...more like the Greek ideal of the hero, that if you are heroic enough, once you're dead, you'll be a god, and I think this is what these things summon us all to, and the thing to look at are the things which don't fit any paradigm, the anomalies, the paranormal things, the self-transforming elf machines, the UFOs, all of these things.

[audience member says something--"...tell a story] What?! [audience member: "you didn't tell a story, the UFO story"] Oh, which UFO story [audience commotion].....Well.....I don't know. It has to do with this whole thing. You see, the alien is an archetype, as well as whatever else it may be. I mean, if aliens didn't exist or don't exist, we would still invent them, because it's, it's the other. You know, I've, I've made the metaphor that we have arrived at some kind of, uh, collective puberty, where we now are fascinated by, uh, the notion of a non-human partner. We're obsessed, as an adolescent is obsessed with sex, we're obsessed with the notion of alien love. We want this, and yet we have all the feelings about it that an adolescent brings to the early sexual experiences; it seems like an abyss, a devouring, a kind of a giving up, impossible, and yet, our, our historical development, has led us to the place where we now realized this was possible, it's like finding out the facts of life. The facts of life are that there could be a girl next door.....and now [audience member: "who's an alien"]...Who's an alien. Of course! What other kind of girl next door could it be [audience laughter]. So, then, hmmm, there's a girl next door....a-a-and, so, it's not--all the talk about the wonderful technical benefits that we would reap, and all this, and obviously it isn't that. It's an erotic fascination with the notion of the other that drives us and that perhaps this is why, in the psychedelic experience, the alien emerges so fully and completely, because it is a repressed notion. Although, I've noticed that in the...in the history of the, the phenomenology of the UFO contacts, the theme....it was first a light in the sky, then we had all these exotic abductions, and then the last four or five

years there are more and more persistent stories of, uh, sexual relations, pregnancies, this kind of thing. Well, this obviously means that, you know, we're growing up, we're getting older [audience laughter], the pressure is on to come to terms with how this thing is going to present itself.... Yes. [Terence laughs]

So, you know, it's hardly respectable to say these things anywhere. I mean, fortunately, I am--I work for a living, so I can [starts laughing] say these things.....but, uh, the amount of anecdotal material that would come pouring forth if these things were stressed, I think, would shock everyone. And, somehow it has to be taken out, and this is a really sensitive issue that I--it's very hard to talk about--how can such a screwy notion be taken out of the hands of squirrels? [audience laughter] In other words, we have no shortage of people assuring us that aliens of all sorts are channeling left, channeling right, this, that, the other thing.....how....the problem is the reverse of the problem in radio-telescopy, where they search the skies and get nothing. Our problem is just a cacophony of hysterical claim-making. Where do you begin, you know? The Urantia Book, you've got 'the nine', you've got...all kinds, and this is, uh, not a new phenomenon, uh. It's, uh....well, you could choose your point, but certainly since the onset of Theosophy and Alice Bailey's school and there's been a lot of channeling in the 20th century. So, the problem is one of, uh, filters. Which aliens do you believe and, uh, how do you tell, uhh....garbage from the real thing. And, I think this is a problem for information theorists. It's a poker-playing problem, essentially, and shouldn't be difficult to solve if we apply ourselves to it. It's just that for us, the notion of a dialog with an interior other is, uh, psychopathy. So, we're very leery of that, or we're very, uh, [audience laughter at connection with "Leary"] of that...[audience member: "Albert or Metzner"].

Anyway, I noticed that Sasha [Shulgin], when he described the phenomenology of psilocybin, didn't say a thing about self-transformation elf machines or whispered messages from gods and demons...he did mention demons. So, uh, you're free to believe that this is the raving of an unhinged mind, but, uh....you know, being a Jeremiah figure is a great tradition, and they usually have the last laugh [audience laughter].

Are there any question, uh....[more laughter and applause]
[audience member: that's the story man!]

Q & A

Terence McKenna: Please

Question: Uh...sort of, psilocybin glossolalia....that's, that's not any words that are in any cultures right, but that has meaning for you [Terence: "Yes"]...Have you ever heard of, or have you ever, communicated with any other person in this language.

TM: You mean, while I was loaded and they were loaded?

Q: Yea.

TM: Yes, its...

Q: And both of you have this experience of shared meaning?

TM: Yes, but...see, it's very...how can we check since English won't flow back and forth.

Q: No, I just, I mean, I'll take your word, if you both experienced shared meaning and confirmed it, that's about as far you can go...

TM: I think so, but when I listen to recordings of this glossolalia, uh, "down", uh, it makes me very uncomfortable, and I wonder what could possibly be the matter with me that I place so much emphasis on this...and I've noticed, uh, you know, it'll clear most rooms in a hurry [audience laughter]. I mean, I mean, it's, it's allll...people are with it, you know, and they say 'ah, it's far out' and all this stuff, and then you play it and they say 'well, you know....er.....I've gotta go do something'. I mean, they draw back. It seems too [audience member: "too weird?"] quirky, too quirky.

Q: So, it's like you, you do some and they do some back and forth...and it's totally unintelligible to the English ear.

TM: Yea, it's totally unintelligible to the English ear. It's sound---what it sounds like, eh, when I listen to it "down" is it sounds like a language, a human language very, very far removed from English.

Q: What, w-you know, what you're talking about, really could be the language before we were trying to build the tower of Babel. We all shared the same language [can't decipher] because we...

TM: the Ursprach...this is the term for that...Ursprach, the first language. Yes, uh, it may, uh---that's what I mean by an assembly language, but the things that happen on psychedelics with language just defy rational apprehension. For instance, uh...I...there's a Celtic saying that 'poetry is made at the edge of running water', and I've noticed on psilocybin, at times, that as you approach running water, like a river or a waterfall, you know, you--there is--you're--you begin to think in rhyme, it sprung verse, and it seems preposterous, and you say, you know, 'this is too crazy to mention to anyone', and you're right [audience laughter], but nevertheless, it's happening you know. I mean, I, uh---and as you leave the river, thought becomes perfectly normal, and, uh, now, well, people say, you know, white noise is doing this.....that's an explanation? [audience laughter] ...oh, and, uh, you know....or, you look at historical phenomenon....Mohammad, it turns out, spoke in verse. And, it was considered a sign of election. Glossolalia with shaman is not that, uh, not that rare....spirit voices.

Q: I mean, it happens without drugs all the time.

TM: Yes, although, I don't know if you know this book by Sylvia Goodman called 'Speaking in Tongues', which is, as far as I know, the major work in English. It's done strictly from the sociological approach, but there is some physiological data, the most interesting being that, on the floor of these Costa Rican churches, where she did her research, after these sessions, they would measure pools of saliva 18-inches across, deposited by single individuals. Also, [audience laughter] what was going on was, there was a lot of hyped-up, you know, Hallelujah type of stuff, and then, someone would fall into the glossolalia, and utter a burst of it, and then be like almost like a post-epileptic, uh, situation, and they would turn to the people around them and say 'Did I do it? Did I really speak in tongues?' This is not what the DMT glossolalia is like. What it is...and I, I'll take a minute and describe it, because [audience: "do you have it recorded?"]. Uh, not with me, but, but I'll describe how it comes, because, I-I think people often say to me 'well, I took mushrooms, and nothing like that ever happened'. Well, the first time it happened to me, was the first time I smoked DMT, and I'm not sure that it would happen on psilocybin if you didn't have a lead into it. You

have to invoke it. In other words, it isn't that psilocybin causes it, and this is interesting; it's that psilocybin carries you to a place where...it is possible, given several other things which seem to be necessary. So, psilocybin is necessary but not sufficient for this phenomenon. What else is required is a thing which is sort of hard to describe, but it's an attitude of expectation. It's an attitude of, uh, being on the verge of communication even though nobody else is present. In other words, you have to invoke it. And, that word, strangely enough, has a history related to demonic, uh, summoning, and that sort of thing, but that's what you do, you invoke it. You feel the load of the psilocybin and you say 'aha, it's enough now'....and then you, um, test a religious...you try it, and you do this by consciously speaking gibberish. In other words, what seems to be happening is that you have to release your brain's expectation that sound will have meaning. Because, when we all speak, we...eh, always the words have a meaning attached them, or else there's something wrong with you. But, if you will speak gibberish for a moment, just for a moment, it's like priming the pump. And, the break, then, is made with whatever connects language to meaning, and language begins...it begins to flower..and to take off..and to develop these abstract modalities that are free of association but that are obviously highly ordered and grammatical. And, going through complicated s...s--it's s-like a sonata. And, in fact, it's led me to suggest, uh, that probably language existed..thousands and thousands of years before meaning--that this is what..monkeys, these evolving monkeys on the brink of self-reflection did for each other as a form of entertainment. It's not as much of an energy drain as chanting and singing. It's..you just carry it on at a conversational level [audience member chuckles], but you, you know....it's word music..that..c--very very fine nuances of..the stuff it's manipulating, which is not meaning, but whatever it is, this topological manifold, very fine nuances can be imparted to it by these small mouth noises, and...

Q: So is it anything like what babies who are about to learn to speak to use to carry on these things, and sounds like a language that you just don't understand...there's all this inflection, and, it sounds very intelligent if you could just kinda catch it [Terence: "It's, it's like that..."--several people talking at once]...well, a lot of it was to actual language.

TM: It's like that only more so [Q: only more complex] Like, one of the things that seems to be going on is there seems to be more phonemes than are actually in any human language. I mean isn't that there are 52 phonemes and no language known has more than 41 or something like that. But, eh, i--because if you do this for a while, and it's so much fun, it's a kind of ecstasy to do it that there's no reason to stop if you're alone....after you've done it for an hour or so....you're face, your mouth, is just hanging down to your waist...[audience laughter]...I mean, it's like you've just done something to the whole front of your head, and all the musculature has dissolved, because you've been making all these sounds that you never make. And, the whole front of your face feels different, So, uh, every language has a set of coded mouth positions which are expected, and, uh, easily facilitated through use.

Q: Is it easier if there's somebody else there to hear it?

TM: No, there's rarely somebody there to hear it when I do it [some audience laughter and talk]...I sometimes wish.

Q: Is it easier, in other words....And, uh, I got the impression that there was something about the attention, the listening to somebody else, that facilitated it, a channeling through...

TM: Oh, I don't know. I mean, for instance, I'm very shy about it. I feel like it's a very personal thing to do,

so that I...it's hard for me to do it in the presence of other people, but, this is just perhaps my personality, or my association with it.

Q: Do you think you're a better speaker in English since having these experiences?

TM: Yes, well, this is something...

Q: Is there more fluidity that there are, you know, you have developed, you know, in your face, in your expression, and..?

TM: Well, here's what I think it is, it's... And Henry Munn made this point in his, uh, in his, uh...article. And, I said earlier, you know that what..we need is the evolution of language, and it's all about the evolution of language. Yes. It's a very...it's a continuum. And, as I, I guess I was here, or somewhere recently, I said, 'it begins as a clear thought, it moves into eloquence. It then becomes charismatic. At that point, if it goes any further, it will be called demonic possession [audience laughter], because it's too, it's happening too much; you're not supposed to be that compelling; you're not supposed to be that powerful a speaker. And, if you stick with it past 'demonic possession', it actually becomes the, it becomes these objects; it actually crosses over and becomes the topological modality..that, that I mentioned. Um..Jill and I were talking in the baths the other night because she made her sounds down there, and I caught it at a certain angle visually, and I could see these things coming out of her mouth which looked like, uh, blue smoke, and I've seen this before. It looks like heatwaves off a highway, and perhaps it's nothing more than heated air that's been in the lungs, heated by the body, has a different refractive index than the exterior air, it's probably expelled in a series of waves, and so if you have the light just right, what you see is a, is a, is a, uh, a displacement of light and a flickering in the vicinity of the mouth, but I think, I've also, in a stoned state, watched that condense into this more visible language. And it's as though, you know, there are finer and finer levels of vibration. The whole notion of the word becoming flesh, which occurs in cosmogonic, uh, myths as diverse as the Judaeo-Christian and the Australian aborigine. It's always about a word, uh...a word was uttered, and this word was somehow more than a word; it adumbrated through dimensions, and caused the phenomenon of being. And, uh, uh, uh, th-this is, uh, the sort of thing that is happening.

But, to answer your question, yes, I think that I, uh, have verbal facility because I've taken so much of this drug, and maybe I had a tendency toward it at the beginning, being Irish and, uh, not given to hard work [audience laughter] but, uh...but, nevertheless, it definitely does this and it does it temporarily. Like, when you take psilocybin, if you actually try to do what we call 'raving', which is, uh, you know, a..f-a-a high speed soliloquy, but the raving can just go anywhere, and is, uh, and if it's true that what we are are creatures of information then this is very interesting, that it synergizes this ability. Everything that we are doing is informational deployment. I mean, we take in raw materials, and we excrete manufactured objects which are essentially ideas. We take in air, and we expel words. Everything that we do is about stamping higher orders of information on unorganized lower forms of raw material, and it's, uh, it's moving out of us, moving out of our bodies, this technical engine that we have created of computer and scientific institutions and rapacious, uh, government agencies and commercial concerns [audience member: "it has a life of its own"]. It has a life of its own; it's defining what humanity will be for itself. It's a war about language, about, uh, you know, Joseph Goebbels was the...the great 20th century thinker who understood this more clearly than anyone else, and set the tone...uh, set the rules of the game, so that the deconditioning effect of the drugs, the introduction to alien modalities, the glossolalia, the accessing of the vision state, all of these things have to do with information and it--the life its own that it is taking on, and

we are like the privileged observers of this. It's as though...well, no less a, uh, psychedelic voyager, researcher, and, uh, bon vivante than William Burroughs said, uh, "English is a virus from outer space," and that's what I've been trying to say...and now I'm finished [Terence laughs]...yea...

Q: You see that, the first thing that comes to mind when you talk about the creative power of sound, err...or language, uh...um...for me, is the experience that I've had with the holophonic sound, where you have this sense, you know, that, that qualities in other senses are created through sound [Terence: "right"] and, uh, I wonder what would happen if you record this holophonically, and then people listen to that.

TM: Now that's an idea. That's a very interesting idea.

Q: I heard a lot of things, you know, with transmits qualities, emotions for people in unusual states and so, um...but there I came as close as I've ever been to understand that there is something special about the creative power of sound...

TM: Of sound, yes...I think sound..

Q: You know, I was always saw it as a metaphor that, what science has discovered about vibrations and so that when they talk about sound, they really mean vibrations and not sound literally.

TM: Well, they talk too much about sound, I think, and not enough about language. W--Most people, when they think about the creative power of sound, they think about the, the mantric approach--syllables, sustained tones, and what I'm more interested in is the, the self-transforming power of grammar. That, that there is really something, uh, going on there.

Q: Yea, but there's just...you know, there's just, it's just the next stage.

TM: Right, well, these things...it's all gradations. This is all of a piece somehow. And, how the visual cortex and the voice relate to each other is not well understood. One thing I want to mention; I just thought of it, but, because there may be experimentalists in the room. This was...uh, appeared three months ago in Scientific American, and to me, just seems astonishing. It is that anyone who can sustain 100 hertz hum, that's 100 cycle per second hum, can, uh, look at an electric fan, and if you can sustain this 100-cycle hum, you can slow the fan down, make it appear to stop, make it go backwards. You can do this to a phonograph record, you can do it to a spinning wheel. This is not stoned...this is simply using the voice. Well, uh, it sounds like pure magic. How can such a thing happen? The explanation of the Scientific American was...that, uh, actually the resonant voice cavity is imparting vibration to the eyeballs, and that it's actually this subtle vibration [audience laughter] is breaking up the, er, photonic input, and you're actually getting a stroboscopic effect. Well, the guy who wrote the article said that he has no training in music and he was tone deaf, so to test the theory that it was vibration of the eyes, he built a little machine where he strapped his chin onto a box, and by manipulating a dial could make the box, uh, vibrate [muffled thumping sound as Terence demonstrates] and impart the vibration to his chin, so then, [clears throat] and he was using, he also using--you can make TV pictures appear to roll, or you can fix rolling without getting out of your chair [audience laughter] by... And, and, uh, and he attached his chin to the box, and ran it up to 100 hertz and, low and behold, this effect was happening. Well, imagine, an Amazonian shaman being able to approach a waterfall, or something like that, and make the water stop, or flow uphill, things like this, with no technology except the human voice. How many things are there like that, you know? How many human

abilities are there that we, we, are just unaware of or have masked, and what could you do with it? I mean, I suggest stopping a waterfall, because I've just given it five seconds thought. But, what if you've given a millennium of thought to social institutions and little tricks and party games that could be used if you could stop time with your voice. And, we bring orthodox physics to bear and say, well, acoustical vibration, stroboscopic effect, etc., blah, blah. But, what is experientially happening is, here's a man who uses sound to control the speed of passing time. If that's not a magical ability, what is? And, yet, it's all nuts and bolts, and we--and he hasn't even taken his first hit of ayahuasca; this is just on the 'natch [audience laughter]. Right?

So, what happens when you add in, you know, the exotic psycho-dynamics of these compounds?

Q: Well, that's like, what I...two things come to mind. One is, I understand that Hitler's generals would go into him, you know, and they're gonna talk him out of this next invasion, cause he's totally off the wall, and they come out glassy-eyed and convinced they're gonna go and invade some more.

TM: Well, they'd probably been chatting with Joseph Goebbels before they walked in..

Q: Well, the other thing is, uh...the other thing is to, uh...is, uh, Milton Erickson, who, just with his voice, uh, does all sorts of things with people that are, you know totally [other audience member]: he can't even speak their language; he can do it to people that he doesn't even understand them and they don't understand him... [first audience member]: totally with sound and he moves his head around in real unusual ways even when you stop talking and who knows what that does

TM: Ayahuasqueros are interesting, because, uh, when you meet a few of them, they all have a bunch of mannerisms which have to do with their voice, and a certain sound that they make, who, the only, uh, 'honky' I've ever met who came even close to this was, uh, Ralph Metzner, had a curious, uh, speech habit, which is this, it's a kind of, uh, purrr, at the back of your throat. But, these ayahuasqueros do it very noticeably, and when they're listening to you, you hear them purring, and they have very smooth, liquid, invasive voices, and, of course, ayahuasca, the, the way in which it's taken it's very interesting; there's no drumming, no...I've never seen a musical instrument at an ayahuasca session; everything is voice, voice, voice...and, uh, that's what they're into.

Q: Don Fidel

TM: Don Fidel is a good example. Many of you have probably heard his tape, but there are many such practitioners. Also, uh, in the curing process, eh...use very sharp sounds, and, in fact, when you talk to Don Fidel, he has a very animated style that is not the macho Spanish style at all. His speech is punctuated with [makes high, sharp, noises]--all these aspirations, sharp..sounds, and he obviously has a relationship to sound that's very different than we do.

Q: We have the tape down here...

TM: We can play it sometime, or in an intermission sometime, and it's wonderful to trip to. It's very good....

So, that's how the boar ate the cabbage. [audience laughter]

Thank you very much. [Audience: Thank you, Terence] Thank you.....for your tolerance.

Original Transcription by: Kevin Whitesides

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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The Grammar of Ecstasy - the World Within the Word

15 May 1995

Maui

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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The Great Timestream Bifurcation

April 1986

Ojai Foundation

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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Here is a true enough myth of our world. It begins with the notion of a soliton of improbability. Let us imagine that these are events which only happen once, and since they only happen once they are not legitimate objects for scientific inquiry, because objects of scientific inquiry must happen at least twice; but this is a phenomenon which happens only once, and we can visualize it as a kind of particle. These solitons of the utterly improbable crisscross the universe, occasionally colliding with an existing event system. When they collide with an existing event system, that event system bifurcates into two event systems in order to preserve a kind of parity of probability — a term I invented that need not be taken seriously — but in the pursuit of the preservation of the parity of probability, the soliton creates a temporal bifurcation.

We have reached the top of the steep learning curve in this concept system. Now here's the good news: the soliton of improbability which interacted with our world occurred 2,000 years ago in the phenomenon of the Immaculate Conception: an event that I think you and I can agree is highly improbable! But let us take it at face value and see if we can work with it. When the Immaculate Conception occurred through the collision of the soliton of improbability with this Galilean village girl called Marian or Mary, in one world she became impregnated with a figure destined for a great religious and political future: our world, the world in which Christ was born, became a young man, taught his message, and went to his execution around 27 A.D. Another world sprang into existence at the moment of the Immaculate Conception, and in that world nothing whatsoever happened to this young Galilean girl. She continued to live with Joseph. He continued to make fine furniture. Eventually they were able to move to the better side of Nazareth, and that was their story. It's the claim of Christian theologians that Christ comes in the center of history. They speak this same language: before Christ no souls were entering heaven. He freed the valve and now it's possible to enter into heaven. Before his intercession that was impossible.

So, you see, I'm suggesting that at the time of Christ a parallel world came into existence that knew nothing of Christ, and consequently the forces which shattered Roman civilization never came into existence in that parallel world. Instead, Greek science and mathematics continued to enrich Roman engineering, government and theories of civil polity. The wonderful female mathematical genius Hypatia was able to complete her career. She was stoned to death by Christians in our world, yet in the parallel world she lived to old age and was able to elaborate the calculus some thousand years before Newton. This meant that by the 6th century or so this Greco-Roman world had shipbuilding and navigational techniques that were

possessed in our world only by Elizabethan times. Roman navigators, inspired by the perfection of their science, set sail to explore the world, and in that parallel continuum they discovered the Maya just as they were reaching their classic climax in the jungles of Central America.

Approximately 900 years after the bifurcation into the two timestreams, a Greco-Roman-Mayan civilization came into being in the parallel continuum. The great influence on the Greco-Roman psychology from this cultural adventure was the sophisticated use of psychedelic drugs for the purposes of religion and self-exploration. In the vision in which this idea was shown to me by the powers of the other side, I actually saw the Roman emperor Cosmodorus the Fifth and his retinue arriving at Tikal in the ninth century for the coronation of Three-Flint-Knife at the end of that Baktun 8; a great confluence of imperial majesty as the greatest king of the Mayan cultural climax received his European counterpart, and documents, codices, mathematicians, instruments of navigation and pharmacy were traded.

The genius of the Mayans in mathematics and astronomy and their extremely sophisticated psychopharmacopoeia and shamanism mated with Neoplatonism and Hermeticism, so that rather than science developing as it developed in our world, a kind of magical, psychopharmacological technology of thought and understanding developed over the centuries. In later centuries — centuries before it happened in our world — they contacted the Orient, and the dynastic influence of the Song poured itself into the creation of a global civilization such that by around 1200 A.D. they were able to land on the moon and create a cybernetic global civilization similar to the kind we have now. They continued evolving with all this psychotronic and shamanically-derived technology, and by this time you can imagine that it was an unbelievably exotic and alien civilization compared to our own.

The fruit of their psychedelic and psychoanalytic investigations into higher space was the discovery of our world. By studying the dreams of psychotics in their world, they slowly became aware of our existence. They found out what had happened. They figured it out by studying dreams, and by making deep journeys into the psychedelic space they were able to discover our sleeping unconscious, with its repository of the legacy of the Christian centuries under the reign of this demiurgic ideology, and they conceived of the notion of saving us.

Further, by extension of their more advanced understanding of atomic and particle physics, by around the year 1900 in our continuum they came to the hypothesis that major releases of hard radiation would penetrate across the energy barrier of the two timestreams. They conducted an experiment to test this hypothesis: they decided to set off a small atomic device in their continuum and to monitor the dreams of sensitive people in our continuum to see if there was evidence of an awareness of this explosion. The experiment was actually carried out in 1906 by our time reckoning. This is what we call the Tunguska blast that occurred in Siberia. After the blast in the parallel continuum, those who had conducted the test were able to monitor the dreams of Siberian shamans, and they saw hundreds of square miles of trees smashed flat by a mighty explosion. Hence they realized that their theoretical assumption that explosions in one continuum would affect life in the other were in fact true, and they became quite alarmed, because as they continued to monitor the dreams of human beings in the parallel continuum they came to slowly understand that, primitive though we may be, in our world we were coming to a grasp of atomic chemistry and thermonuclear fission and fusion.

Fearing for the destruction of their own world they began, and have in fact carried out through this century, a massive scientific research project to attempt to reach us to communicate to us the true situation

and to depotentiate our nuclear arsenals in order to save their own world, which is now in fact the administrative center of some 16 integrated star systems in this part of the galaxy. In other words, they are some 1,200 years in advance of us technologically and in the use of psychedelic substances, because they never experienced the history- freezing eschatology that the rise of Christianity created in our world.

Psychedelic compounds amplify the very slight leakage of information from this other dimension. In the same way that they found us, we can find them by taking psychedelic mushrooms and opening ourselves to the information pouring through from the alternative timestream. The other side is actually the manifestation of this bizarre Greco-Roman-Mayan, postmodern, starfaring civilization trying to reach across the dimensions to save us from the momentum of our history by making us aware, first of all of their existence, and also of their technology.

It's not unlike the situation with East Germany and East Berlin. All we're saying is that this advanced civilization is about to pull down the wall and invite us to leave the benighted world bequeathed to us by rampant monotheism and participate in the higher life of the great stellar civilization created by the Greco-Roman-Mayanists, who avoided the rather tawdry ideological path of development that we were victim of; and UFOs are aspects of this technological effort to reach us. In other words, they are experimental vehicles attempting to penetrate the time barrier to reach us with this news. I believe that in 2012 this technology will be perfected and they will no longer need to send unmanned probes or experimental devices: rather they will actually be able to open a domain, perhaps as much as several thousand kilometers in diameter, which will be coexistent both in our timestream and in their timestream.

If any of you have read the late works of Philip K. Dick, he was probing in these areas. He was a genius; his book *Valis* is pure exegesis of the internal unravelment of what was going on. His take on it was that he believed that from A.D. 69 until 1948 no time had actually passed; that we were living in apostolic time and that the crucifixion lay only 75 years in the past, and that the demiurge had inserted a false history. The Nag Hammadi manuscripts, he believed, were actually the Logos as printed letters, and when the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were deciphered it was like this information creature would come alive and again be present on the earth, like the Logos in 1948 was beginning to infuse everything and that shortly it would dissolve the illusion of the intervening 1,860 years and then we would realize that the prophecy would be fulfilled and that the last days were upon us.

He didn't get around to the Antichrist, to his credit probably. You have to distinguish between Christ the person, the teacher, and this thing called the Christos, which is the archetype of such power and force that immediately people of ill-intent could get lined up behind it and impose their will. The Christos is the thing history is ruled by, the archetypes which the people can generate. Most people are very ordinary, I mean, your Mick Jagers and your Henry Kissingers are very ordinary people, but they are able to project an archetype and that is the thing which sets them apart. When that reaches the kind of super intense focus that you get in a Mohammed or a Christ, then you know that history is just putty in the hands of the force, not the person. The person is usually martyred in some horrible way, but the archetype draws energy to itself, and we don't understand how this process works.

If there ever is developed by benevolent or malevolent forces a science of social control, it will be a science of knowing how to project archetypes. Different archetypes, apparently, are suitable to different times; you can almost pause at an astrological theory of archetypes, but what's appropriate for the 1st century A.D. is not appropriate for the 15th. When the archetype is appropriate, nothing can stop it. The

modern term for archetype is paradigm. We expect it not to be a person, not a messiah, but an idea which will save us all, which then gives us certain affinities with mystical Judaism, where the messiah was expected in the form of an idea. This is sort of our faith; we are messianic ideologues, or something like that.

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The Human Future (On 'Thinking Allowed' w/ Jeffrey Mishlove)

Day Month 1988

Location, City, State

Event Description:

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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JEFFREY MISHLOVE, Ph.D.: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we're going to examine "The Human Future." As we approach the year 2000, what are some of the novel features of our contemporary culture that are likely to become dominant in a future society? With me is Terence McKenna, a specialist in shamanistic cultures and hallucinogenic plants and drugs. Terence is the coauthor with his brother Dennis of *The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens, and the I Ching*, also *Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide*.

In addition he is a founder of Botanical Dimensions, a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving hallucinogenic plants as used by native peoples throughout the world, and he's also the author of *Timewave Zero*, a computer software package. Welcome, Terence.

TM: It's a pleasure to be here, Jeffrey.

MISHLOVE: You know, you're a specialist really in the past -- the ancient past, the prehistoric past of shamanistic cultures; and of course ancient peoples, shamans and other ancient peoples, have always attempted to look at the future. Today there are many, many scenarios about the future, and the one thing that seems to be certain is that the future will contain surprises -- that no matter how much we attempt to predict what the future will be, there will always be unexpected things. I think you have a unique perspective on the future, since your studies take you so deeply into the past. I wonder what some of the major features that you delineate in our present and our past society are that may tend to surprise us, or surprise conventional theorists about the future.

TM: Well, first let me say you make a valid point. My ordinary concern is shamanism, which is usually thought of as an archaic or an historical phenomenon. However, in my looking at the shamanistic phenomenon, I've discovered that shamans themselves, as you also mentioned, have a deep concern with seeing into the future, with having a feeling for the course of development of the society in which they are embedded. And strangely enough, my own career somewhat paralleled that model, as I was a student of Erich Jantsch, who was one of the great forecasters of the last ten years.

MISHLOVE: Systems theorist, as I recall.

TM: Systems theorist, exactly. And he was very concerned to model the future with a degree of realism that had previously not been possible, and he taught me that the way to do this is to concentrate on the novel and the unexpected. As you point out, much of the future will be in fact characterized by factors that are presently unpredictable. How then, by stretching our own definition of what is currently at the cutting edge of society, can we anticipate these future event systems? My own approach to this has been to try to concretize or locate areas of influence that seem to me, while very seminal in the present situation, probably fated to grow and flower over the next twenty-five years.

MISHLOVE: You know, I think it's interesting that you mention Erich Jantsch. He wrote a book, I believe it was called Design for Evolution.

TM: Exactly.

MISHLOVE: In that book I was very interested in how a man of his scientific credentials as a systems theorist took a close look at the new age movement, and things such as Kundalini yoga, and examined how we might begin as a society to look at developing Kundalini to develop our own evolution biologically and as a species.

TM: Yes, well, he was an extremely broad thinker, not only a fine scientist but music critic, philosopher, what have you. A point that he was always very much concerned to make to me about the future was that much of the future is in place in the present. A typical residential street of today will look pretty much as it looks today thirty years from now, barring major catastrophic changes in society. A curious thing about history is how much momentum it does have. Nevertheless it is possible to isolate forces which are creating change. Four major forces which I will enumerate and discuss for you, the four that I think are probably among the most important, are first of all feminism. Feminism is a tremendously underestimated force, viewed in the present context primarily as a woman's concern. The understanding has not yet percolated throughout society that the advancement of women is a program vitally connected to the survival of human beings as a species. The reason for this is simply that institutions take on the character of the atoms which compose them, and what we are most menaced by -in the twentieth century- are dehumanized institutions. If women played a major role in policy formation and execution on the part of these institutions, I think they would have a far more benign and ecologically sensitive kind of character. So I see feminism not as a kind of war between the sexes or any of these stereotypic images, but as actually a kind of effort to shift the ratios of our emphasis that is expressed through our institutions.

MISHLOVE: In other words, you're not looking so much at whether women get more voting rights, or whether they get more women placed in high positions in government, but rather whether institutions have more of a nurturing quality.

MCKENNA: That's right. It isn't even really about women, it's about femininity -- injecting femininity into our decision-making process and our social policy. Naturally the most obvious way to do this is to bring women into the process, but that isn't necessarily how it should be done.

MISHLOVE: Well, there's a catch phrase now that's going around a lot in business circles -- "High tech, high touch." That seems to embody this notion of paying attention to human feelings and to caring about people as we develop a more technologically oriented society.

MCKENNA: Yes, although I'm suspicious of that, having seen several American revolutions turned into advertising slogans. I'm afraid this may be an effort to co-opt the really volcanic energy that feminism could bring to the social restructuring effort. But feminism is only one of these novel areas that are injecting change into our lives.

MISHLOVE: Why don't we list the others, and then perhaps we can look at how they interrelate with each other?

MCKENNA: Well, for example cybernetics is certainly a major area where we could spend some time. Space flight -- I don't think you would get a lot of argument from people that that is going to have a major impact on our lives. Then perhaps in a more controversial vein, and along the lines of my own special interests, I think hallucinogenic plants and the pushing back of the frontiers of the mind, the cataloging of ever more exotic states of experience through the use of hallucinogenic drugs, aerobic exercise, vitamin therapy, what have you, is going to be very, very important. Seen as an amalgam, what these things seem to imply is that we are really sweeping toward the climax of a thousand-year-old civilization -- a civilization that began, I suppose you could say, with the rise of medieval scholasticism, which then transformed itself into proto-modern science, which then became modern science, and then modern philosophy. We are really sweeping toward the culmination of the western contribution to the story of mankind, and what will that contribution be? It could well be a devastating species-extminating thermonuclear war. Or it could be the culmination and completion of the ideals that we inherited from the Greeks. How we balance historical forces against the need to evolve consciousness is going to decide how the tale is told, and if you look at the things that I named -- feminism, cybernetics, consciousness expansion, space flight -- these are all different approaches toward the notion of expanding our frontiers, organizationally, geographically, informationally, consciously. The expansion of frontiers is the very essence of a continuing human future, a humane human future.

MISHLOVE: You used the word balance a little earlier in a pivotal way, and the four elements that you mentioned strike me as being rather balanced. Space flight and cybernetics seem to be expanding the frontiers of science and technology, and yet when we look at the inner exploration suggested by the rise of feminism and the return or revival or re-energizing of hallucinogenic drugs and other features of the consciousness movement, that suggests an expansion of the inner frontiers. It seems to me ultimately that if we are to survive the threats that now stand poised above our planet, that balance has to be essential, that we can't go too far either internally or externally without some balancing features.

MCKENNA: No, I think that's a very good point. In fact the entire lethal dimension to our cultural dilemma can be laid at the feet of a burgeoning scientific capability that developed at the expense of a concomitant ethical capacity. I think that we are not going to go to the stars as Republicans and Democrats, communists and free marketeers; we are not going to go to the stars as male chauvinists; nor are we going to go to the stars as uninformed clods. All of these various characteristics and ways of being are dross that the historical experience of the twentieth century is going to either burn away from us or burn us with. We have actually created a self-limiting situation for ourselves. We are the ones who have boxed ourselves into this dilemma, and we must now be the ones who have the cultural and intellectual wherewithal to take command of the situation and to navigate out of this cul-de-sac without wrecking the planet, without betraying our ethical heritage of some several thousand years. Balance is going to be essential to this -- a sense of openness to possibility, a sense of the true strangeness of the situation in which we find ourselves.

MISHLOVE: It strikes me that as we move into the future, as we move into the next millennium, perhaps the really novel feature that might emerge is that as a culture, as a global culture, we will be forced, I think, to take responsibility for ourselves on this planet in a way that we haven't previously been forced to do because we've always had room to expand, room to exploit the environment and ourselves. We're running out of room for that, so we must be responsible.

MCKENNA: Yes. Well, this is the century in which the chickens come home to roost. All the profligate processes of metal extraction and subjugation of native populations and land clearing in the tropics, that pot latch mentality must now give way to a more resource conserving state of mind, or we will be quite simply doomed. And I'm very much up on humanity, but I'm very concerned about the role that the United States is to play in this future. Certainly if resource management is going to be an important factor in the future, then the Japanese are out in front of all of us. Now, if not having committed resources to an obsolete infrastructure is going to have an impact, then certainly the Chinese have a leg up on all of us. Did you know that there are less than a thousand private automobiles in China? Can you conceive of the leap forward that can be made if you could go from the wooden cart to the spaceship without committing yourself to fifty years of highway building and gas stations and petroleum extraction and this sort of thing?

MISHLOVE: You have a remarkable talent here for seeing the positive side of a nation of a billion people living in what we would think of as destitute poverty. They don't have cars because the per capita income in China is about two hundred and fifty U.S. dollars a year.

MCKENNA: Well, I think Marshall McLuhan pointed out that any technology put in place is extremely difficult to dislodge, and that is our problem. We went for the automobile so completely that it will now be a major effort at cultural restructuring to leave it behind. The Chinese have no such problem. I think it was Freeman Dyson, or perhaps Gerrard O'Neill, who said, "No technology should be put in place that has a foreseeable obsolescence." This was his argument against nuclear power. And I think that's an excellent point. We should not commit ourselves to any course of action whose end state can be foreseen. This is why we have to commit ourselves to this kind of conscious, open-system, non-equilibrium future that futurists like Jantsch, and West Churchman and others have so eloquently described in their work.

MISHLOVE: Let's talk for a bit about the role of hallucinogens in the future. I think most people would agree that the marvelous decade of the 1960s, which seem to have awakened so many people to possibilities, was inextricably linked with the use of LSD and other hallucinogens at that period. It's interesting to me that today this is not talked about very much; you're one of the few people who are willing to look at the role that hallucinogens may have played at that time. How do you see hallucinogens? Do you imagine, for example, that a billion Chinese will return to...

MCKENNA: Using LSD? No, it isn't quite like that. I think that whatever we may say about the way hallucinogens were introduced into American society in the sixties, I think that that has now become a dead horse, and that we are looking at a much different sort of problem. The problem is that psychology is the science whose perfection we are most in need of, because our whole problem is that we do not communicate with each other. We do not understand our own motivations. We are waiting on psychology literally to save our necks, and governments are repressing the major tools that promise major advances in psychology. I may represent only a faction of opinion, but it is my opinion that the hallucinogenic plants and drugs are to psychology what Galileo's telescope was to astronomy. The difference is that the church

was unable to suppress the telescope, but the state has had immense success in suppressing hallucinogens. I'm not speaking of keeping it out of the hands of high schoolers and college students; I'm talking about keeping it out of the hands of research pharmacologists. Science feels free to investigate any area that concerns it -- areas of our interpersonal relating, our sexuality, the effects of automobile crashes on human bodies studied through using monkeys. Nothing is sacred. However, when it comes to allowing scientists to study the effect of hallucinogenic compounds on brain function and psychology, a great wall, a great barrier, is raised, and I think it signifies the fear really, that the establishment has of unleashing the creativity and vitality that it senses to be tied up in these things. The very decade that you mentioned was the last decade, I think, when Americans had this feeling of an open-ended, hopeful, transcendent future. Ever since the 1960s we've been given shortages, limited resources, voluntary simplicity, and a host of other notions that boil down to repression.

MISHLOVE: So you're suggesting that the legal restrictions are perhaps a temporary aberration, and that the exploration of the human mind through hallucinogens or other means might get us in touch with a vast resource within ourselves that we seem to have lost touch with a little bit as a culture.

MCKENNA: Yes. Well, if you contrast the state of modern astrophysics with astronomy as it was practiced in 1530, I think you can feel the kind of paradigm shift that I'm suggesting. We know nothing about the mind. There are a few theories -- Freud, Jung, Reich, so forth and so on -- but these are just guesses tossed into the unknown. And yet in principle the mind need not be a mystery; it's simply that the more complex objects in nature yield their secrets last. We understood falling lead balls long before we understood drops of water; we understood drops of water long before plastic polymers. The brain will yield, but it will yield to a different set of tools than the ones we have been applying.

MISHLOVE: As a philosopher, or at least a person who asks a lot of questions, I wonder if the ultimate nature of the mind is really knowable, any more than the ultimate nature of matter. It seems as if in some sense, as physicists today probe the ultimate nature of matter, they begin asking questions that sound more and more theological. And we get that way too with people who look at the mind, particularly people who explore hallucinogens.

MCKENNA: I think we can do a great deal, though, without having ultimate knowledge of something. As you yourself said, we have no ultimate knowledge of what matter is, or electricity, and yet we light our cities with electricity; we transform matter any way we wish. So I agree with you; the mind is inherently mysterious. If nothing else, Goedel's theorem will protect it from being understood -- that mind cannot understand mind. But I think brain, which is the receiver of mind, the stage upon which mind acts, the magic marionette, if you will, there's much to be learned there. That is in fact the great frontier of materialism, strangely enough.

MISHLOVE: As you look at the future, Terence, with your special lenses that really are unique to yourself, where do you see the realm of religion evolving?

MCKENNA: Well, I think we are rapidly growing into what I call a religion of the imagination, where we transcend individual archetypes and begin instead to realize that the mystery can take any form, and that a higher religion is a religion then which dispenses with the symbolic forms, the presentational modes of the mystery, and concentrates on the mystery itself as a kind of ineffable center of being that constellates everything around it to have meaning.

MISHLOVE: This would require obviously a dropping away, then, of dogma.

MCKENNA: Yes, well, I think dogma has served us ill. How ill is hard to say, but I think, for instance, the case could be made that it got us to this point. I think it was H.G. Wells who said, "History is a race between education and disaster," and I think we are in the homestretch, we are neck and neck, it is too close to call, and we must not take our eye off the ball. It is going to take the best effort of all of us to bring to birth the kind of transcendental human future that we all sense so pregnantly near the surface of things. It is not far away. It is here, it is now, if we could but invoke it, if we could but find the means to communicate to the deeper parts of ourselves and to each other, to bring that kind of perfected future into being. It's fallen out of fashion recently in a lot of existential whining and carping, but I think this is only a fad of the times. The future is endlessly bright and full of transcendental promise for those who are not afraid of it.

MISHLOVE: The future that you described was a fourfold future, in effect -- feminism, space flight, cybernetics, and hallucinogens. It reminds me of Jung's image of the mandala, the fourfold mandala, that we move into.

MCKENNA: Yes, well, these things could be imagined as the four quarters of a mandala that taken together create the totality of a free and caring world -- well fed, well governed, well intentioned, and pointed toward the exploration of the mystery of being, which is, I think, really the higher calling of human beings. We are naturally called to the mystery, we are naturally its acolytes, and in all other roles we perform rather badly, I think.

MISHLOVE: So there's a sense in which if we look at the future, we might ask ourselves, why have a future at all? What is the meaning, what is the purpose of being here? And you seem to be saying to study, to appreciate the mystery of it all.

MCKENNA: Well, I think that history is a kind of message from the ineffable -- that in the rise of dynastic families and the fall of empires and the migrations of peoples there is a vast tale being told; that we are caged within art, and that the great satisfaction of contemplating this spectacle is to know where in the tale you are.

MISHLOVE: Terence McKenna, thank you very much for being with me. It's been such a pleasure.

MCKENNA: It's always a pleasure to talk with you.

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The Importance of Human Beings [?]

Day Month Year 1982-2000

Location, City, State

Description

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I believe that what these psychedelic states are are actually a sense to a higher order of information. And by a sense, I mean the word in a dimensional context, as a mathematical idea that here we are deployed in a three dimensional matrix. The past fades into unknowability. The future fades into unknowability, and only the crudest and least interesting of processes like the rising of the sun and falling of the tides can be propagated into the future with confidence.

What shamans see in contrast to this is a hyper-dimensional universe of information. They see the past the origin and they see the goal, the culmination, the place where the ouroboric snake takes its tail in its mouth. We who are locked in linear history don't have this perspective, and what we have in its stead is immense anxiety, immense anxiety about the future. We map the unknowable future onto the presumed experience of our own death, and vice versa, and we build up a universe that is characterized by exsistential abysses. The unknown future, the inevitability of death, and the impossibility of intellectually assimilating what that means. Shamanism isn't like this. Shamanism is a fractal point of view. What fractals are are structures that have their subsets embedded in them. Subsets embedded in them. So the course of the history of an entire people can be known by looking at the history of an individual, or a family. Il subsets refer to levels above and below them. This is entirely different from the kind of linear history that we get in a hierarchical, scientific society. It is more characteristic of experience, and this is a very important point because the two phenomena that I tried to call your attention to, that argue for hope, are the self-evident accumulation of novelty, and the self-evident acceleration of that accumulation of novelty. Well, now notice the phrase 'self-evident'. These are not things that you have to study advanced mathematics to perceive. These are not things revealed to the holders of advanced degrees. This is stuff that one can tell by feeling into the world. The structure of linear society has disempowered the individual. We are all now- we have bought the Habesian notion that we are social atoms in a vaster machine than ourselves with a greater purpose than we can know. This is actually hogwash. If we move away from the human individual, the human individual, the consciousness about what is happening becomes more and more low grade and amoeba-like. You have the consciousness of the Giuliani administration, the consciousness of the American government. You see, as you widen the ven [???], it becomes more and more primitive, more and more simply a matter of stimulus and response. But you, the supposed irrelevant atom at the center of this process, make very subtle judgements, take in information of all sorts, compare, contrast, weight, understand, seek evidence. This is the subtlest thinking that's going on, but we don't reclaim our own minds, we look for institutional guidance, and yet it was institutions that guided us to this moment. So the character, then, of this next advance into novelty is from my point of view now easily discerned, it is boundary dissolution. This is what is happening. This is why great wealth and great poverty must come to

terms with each other, it's why the first world and the third world must come to terms with each other. It's why gays and straights must come to terms with each other. Boundary dissolution is what is happening, and this has been going on for a long time, but it affected our peripheral technologies first. Almost without us noticing it we've gone from a world where information moved at the speed of the horse's gallop, to a world where all information is co-tangent. Space is only an illusion of the plebs. Everyone else, with their computer networks and their connections, knows that the world has become a kind of virtual point. And yet still we maintain the most toxic of all the fictions to come out of the dominator experience. The fiction of the individual ego. This maintenance of the fiction of the ego is what is exacerbating a smooth transition into a new world order because people have one foot in the dematerialized connectivist, feeling-tone experience based future, but they also have one foot in the consumer fetish, objectified, constipated, linear, acquisitive, class conscious, sex conscious, race conscious past, and each one of us is a union of these opposites. Each one of us is trying to make some kind of an alloy of our hideously dysfunctional cultural past, and the incredibly compelling yet frightening, dimensionless, boundariless, polyamorous polymorphous future.

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Lecture Name

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

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[admin: Please redirect this page to [Terence McKenna's Trip](#)]

[Update: Never mind, found a workaround for the problem I was having linking to several of the items in the Written Work Timeline - this page can be deleted.]

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The Invisible Landscape (Peer Review)

April 1985

The Ojai Foundation, Ojai, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[Introduction on recording: "This is first of three tapes of Terence McKenna at the Ojai Foundation, under the Teaching Tree, in April 1985]

Terence McKenna: I don't think of myself as a teacher, primarily or at all. I think of myself as a researcher, who, because of the unorthodox nature of the research has to submit to this kind of situation for peer review. That's what this is. This is peer review of my rap, not teaching in any sense of the word. So, before I get into it I'll say a little bit about my attitude toward epistemology and system making generally. Um, this is one of the slightly uncomfortable moments because I have to make distance, uh, between myself and large numbers of other people and say I do not believe in the wars of Atlantis. I do not believe in reincarnation. I do not believe in the healing power of crystals, and a whole string of alienating "I do not believes". Fact of the matter is; I don't believe in belief. I think belief is a tremendously stultifying force. What I'm interested in is freedom, and I noticed very early that a belief absolutely precludes the possibility of holding to its opposite, and therefore if you believe something you have signed away its opposite and, uh, limited yourself. This comes close to the ideal but not the fact of how science is supposed to be waged. So I'm , uh, impression and fact-collector and I will propound a number of ideas that are very controversial, I guess, and I want you to understand they appear controversial to me, and the controversy over their applicability to reality rages in me at least as strongly as it will rage in any dialogue that I have with any of you.

The area that we're working in at the fringe of science, at the frontier of psychology is too chaotic and disorganized to be called a science at this point. We're in the Baconian phase of it where you merely collect facts, catalogue facts and wait for emergent patterns to, uh, be visible. And, uh, this is what I've done and I did it, I began as a skeptic, fairly confident that this kind of examination of reality and collection of facts would support the rationalist reduction- reductionist minimalist mapping of reality, and I discovered, to my delight and amazement that the world is quite a complex place, quite a large percentage of it goes on outside the descriptive power of any metaphor that we presently have a handle on and, uh, so I just want to put that out, that my attitude is, uh, is one of a kind of skepticism that allows and I am well-known as the proponent of the notion that there is an extra-terrestrial or trans-human intelligence accessible through certain psychedelic drugs. I have that experience often, but I am not a believer in it. I am very puzzled by it. I return again and again to reason as the measure against which all these things have to be played, so peer-review is very important I think because we're moving in an area where very little is known. It- we're somewhat in the analogous position to the early explorers of the Amazon who would sail up the main flow of the Amazon and note in their logs 'passed a river mouth that ?? two miles wide. Origin, unknown.' This is what we are charting. Enormous unknown flows of which we are only able to chart the, uh, the most gross, uh, expression of these things.

Ok, so that's enough about method. The, um, as I understand it, the- the matter around which this counsel is spun is the journey beyond history and the notion in that implicit is that there is an end to history. So, what I want to talk about this morning, and it's the most difficult lecture that I give because it is- the goal is not to convey a feeling or an impression, but to actually convey an idea, and ideas, you either get or don't get. It isn't like you can halfway get how to factor a quadratic equation. You either know how to do it and it's trivial or you don't know how to do it and it's inconceivable.

What happened to me was a series of, um, channelings, although I hate that word [audience laughter, Terence laughs]. It's so obnoxious -- I prefer maybe the word 'psychosis'. [laughter] Anyway, a series of self-amplifying revelations springing from an interior source that appeared from my best judgement not to be me, right? [laughter] And it was, uh, an unusual example of this sort of thing, although I do not immerse myself, I have never read a word of what Seth? has to say or any of that. But I gather these things are largely, um, urging people, they're moral teachings is what they are, urging people to straighten themselves out and fly right and care for the earth and be aware and be decent, and. the thing which I received was more in the character of an unravelling of a mystery. Somewhat analogous if any of you are familiar with Robert Graves book "The White Goddess" wherein a series of continuing revelation he gains, gains great insight, uh, into early Celtic and Goidelic poetic alphabets and encryption methods. The object of my uh experience was I Ching and I noticed, discovered, uh, a number of things about the I Ching which lead me to the conclusion that what we possess in the King Wen sequence is in fact a fragment, an archeological chunk of a piece of broken cosmic machinery. I concentrated entirely on the I Ching as a prehistorical artifact. I unburdened myself completely of the necess, of the necessity to be a sinologist by concentrating on the I Ching as it existed in the pre-han period, that is before 400 B.C., 200 B.C. All the commentary on the I Ching, all the exegesis is han or post han, so I didn't deal with that at all, I dealt with what is called the King Wen sequence. How many of you are well familiar with the I Ching? Good. The rest of you, good luck. [Laughter].

The King Wen sequence is the oldest uh, if you give up Atlantis, Lemuria, etcetera, the oldest ordered human abstraction. It is uhh, we find fragments of it on shoulder bones that are four to five thousand years old, so it's a human generated abstraction that has been preserved through the millennia. Now the question is: Is it an ordered sequence? And this was the first koan that the interior voice posed to me. "What is the order of the King Wen sequence?" As you know the human sequence [clears throat] begins with the creative and which is all solid lines, then the receptive which is all broken lines, and then umm whatever it is, uhh I noticed immediately that it was obviously organized in pairs. In other words, each hexagram the subsequent hexagram can be generated by turning the first one upside down. That's all that's happening. Now there are 8 cases where turning a hexagram upside effects no change in it. In those 8 cases a second rule has been applied which is if turning the hexagram upside down causes no change, then all lines change. You meet the first exception in the first two hexagrams. Clearly, when you invert the created six solid lines, you obtain the created again. Therefore, all lines change, and you get the recepted?. So then that solved a problem of partial ordering, that showed that uhm, we were dealing not with 64 hexagrams but with 32 pairs of hexagrams, and the next question was "What is the order of the 32 pairs?". Now this is a deeper question, and not so easily solved. But it was easily

solved for this interior voice that had my attention. It said “look at the first order of difference”. Now this is a very fancy way of saying “Look at how many lines change as you move from one hexagram to the next.” Obviously as you move from the first hexagram to the second, six lines change. As you move from the second to the third – I forget how many it is – four I believe, and so on. So that you can make a linear graph of the first order of difference as you move through the King Wen sequence and I rushed out and bought graph paper and did this, and looked at it. And it’s a saw tooth, all of these figures by the way are in the book “The Invisible Landscape”. It’s a double challenge to give this lecture without visual aids let me tell you. But as you all are probably expert visualizers, why uh, you should have no problem.

So when you graph the first order of difference in this way, an anomaly just jumps out at you. This is clearly not a random, uh, stochastic process that you’re graphing. If it were a stochastic process you would expect the possible values which are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, to occur in more or less, uhh, similar proportions. However, you notice immediately there are no values of 5, there are no first order of different changes in the King Wen sequence of 5. Now what is the prohibition against 5 about? I don’t know but its worldwide and Neolithic. Astragali are the knucklebones of sheep that have been used since the late Neolithic inter-roman times to gamble with by burning dots into the knucklebones, and in fact playing dice is called throwing the knucklebone. There are no Neolithic astragali with 5 dots burned into them, it’s a number which is just strictly avoided. So there is some curious, uh, thing going on with the number 5, knowing that Timaeus as people are coming in and sitting down for dinner, Plato turns to Timaeus and he says “The one generates the two, and the two the three, but where oh where is the fourth my dear Timaeus.” And this the first four numbers seem to lie in a much more archetypically intense relation than the number 5. 5 has been called the first human number. In any case, uh, that was not the anomaly which leaped out at my eye when I graphed this thing. What I noticed was that, uh, there was a saw tooth stroke at the beginning and at the end. Such that if a reflection or to use the technical term if the stereo-isometric reflection were rotated 180 degrees the two ends would fit together perfectly. They would dovetail like the joint of a cabinet maker. And it would not fall into this kind of parallelism or congruence at any other point. Only at the beginning and the end, and only I then noticed, if the hexagrams were paired across from each other in such a way that they always added to 64. In other words, 64 is across from 64, that’s the exception. 63 is across from one, 62 is across from 2, 63 is across, and so forth okay so the sums in all directions to 64.

And umm, so I looked at that for a long long time, and then I saw that what I had done, that though there were parall- these congruencies at the beginning and the end, there were also approaches to parellism – parallelism at 6 points in this figure, rather evenly spaced. And I realized then that what I had done if I had taken the entire King Wen sequence, run it

forward, run it backward against itself and created a kind of macro hexagram. A super hexagram which contained the entire sequence twice, running backward and forward, and at that point I had insight into a curious passage in the Confucian commentaries, where it says, of the I Ching, the backward running numbers refer to the future, the forward running numbers refer to the past. This was a, a, an anagram which makes no sense whatsoever, unless you posit the kind of structure that I am talking about. So then I wondered, what could this thing possibly be for? And I experimented with, uh, I said okay, this thing I have built in accordance with the principal of hierarchy construction, which is completely expressed at every point in Chinese history, and is therefore be assumed to antedate Chinese history and be prehistoric. This hierarchical principal can be used to manipulate this strange figure. Now the lines of a hexagram are called yao, and there are 384 yao in the 64 the hexagrams, obviously, 6 times 64 is 384. So I said I will take my figure and I will treat it as the yao of a hexagram. And so I made 6 of them, end to end and then I said okay now I have the 6 lines of a hexagram, some kind of hyper or macro hexagram. But a hexagram is composed of more than 6 lines, it is composed of 2 trigrams. So I took my figure and I multiplied it by a value of 3, and I laid those two, over the 6, generating everything from a common point of origin. So then I said okay, now I have everything that is in a hexagram, except the hexagramatic wholeness, but it is embodied by the thing as a gestalt as a holonomic entity. So I laid a big one over the 6 little ones and the two medium sized ones, generating everything from a common origin point and having everything return to a common origin point, so it looks and its figured in the invisible landscape, like a, uhm, an oscilloscope tracing, a mult- a three level tracing of lines, a tremendous mish-mash. And this was a problem. The voice then was by this time saying "this is the map, the fractal map of all space and all time. It is existing on many levels of resonance, and I personally could feel that. And I spent literally months and it was madness, much of this was generated in the amazon jungle. You have to picture a man in a thatch house on stilts, with the amazon flowing by, the Indians, the drugs, everything raging outside, and me with my slowly deteriorating pad of graph paper just drawing these lines, hours and hours a day, and looking at them and finally realizing convincing myself that it did in fact map time in a certain way. But realizing that it had the quality of a mystical doctrine. The interpretation of these slashing paralleling intersecting lines was impossible to convey to another person. I had to have a method of reducing this compound complex wave to a single wave, moving in a single direction on a single level.

Fortunately for you I am going to skip over the mathematical details of how this was accomplished, but I assure you that it was accomplished and to me it was, it was like a series of revelations. I didn't even care about the I Ching. And the notion that out of myself I could extract the techniques to collapse this wave and to produce something coherent out of it, it was like a revelation. And I don't even today know that much about the

mathematical ways of handling waves. Im sure that I reinvented the wheel in some sense. But the point is that I didn't reinvent it all by myself. And when it was over, I had something which I could show to people. I had the notion that there is a factor in reality, which we have previously missed, which is called novelty. Right and novelty is something which comes and gos, dowism is talking about this. Tao Te Ching it says the way that can be told of is not an unvarying way." Way is clearly a mistranslation for wave, and [Laughter] and uhm, so then okay you have this thing you've reduced it to one level, and it is now an object of reasonable research but what are the periods, what are the frequencies, what are the harmonic uh, uhm resonances by which this thing expresses itself in time.

In other words, what I had generated up to this point was a wave unscaled against the world. And the teaching voice said "now we will show you how to scale this against the world" If, remember that there are 384 yao in the complete sequence. 384, is a number that has not be well regarded by calendar makers, its 19 days longer than a solar year. However there have been lunar calendars at various times among the pre exzealot jews and other people where 384 day lunar calendars were used. I found out all this after the fact but the voice proposed was that I looked at lunations and I discovered what seemed to me an astonishing fact which is a lunation is 29.53 days long, 29.53×13 is 383.89. So it it comes very close to being exactly 13 lunations so I looked at that and then I said well I constructed this wave through affrication of these principals of hierarchical ordering that are inimical to Chinese thinking. I will now using the same periodicities apply the thing to time and see if I get astrological correlations at higher levels. So I took the 384 days and I multiplied it times 64, that's the obvious uhh multiplicon. And you get 67 years 104.25 days, now if we think of that as a hexagram, it should have 6 lines embedded within it, if you decide 67 years 104.25 days by six you get a number which is very very close to the average duration of a sun spot cycle, 11 plus years. However people who study the sun know that there isn't only the famous 11 year sun spot cycle. There is also a larger cycle of 33 years, where the peak reaches a greater height. Well that then would be the trigramatic? level of this hexagram. So what I seemed to have was a lunar calendar which was also capable of keeping track of sun spot cycles. Now the earliest observation of sun spots occurs in China, and is a naked eye observation from around 12 A.D. So obviously and we don't know whether there was part of a tradition of observing these things or not. So then I was very pleased with that, well that's interesting. So what happens if you take 67 years 104.25 days and multiply it by 64. The same multiplicon used before. And it uh the answer is 4306 years s-something like that. Uhm and I thought that was very interesting because that is uh, exactly 2 zodiacal ages. It takes approximately 2200 years – and there's argument about the length of zodiacal ages because theres argument about the width of the sign the number of degress to be assigned to each sign. So but it was remarkably good correlation. . And then the voice said "now multiply that not by 64", the previous multiplicand used, but

by 6 the number of lines in a hexagram. When you do this you get 25,800 years, within 1% of the value accepted for the processional great year, in which the zodiacal signs move around, uh, the earth in a twenty-six, roughly twenty-six thousand year cycle.

Well, you know, great thrills for the person who discovered it. But so far all we have is a Neolithic calendar, constructed out of the I Ching. The notions that then began to be put forth were, that the ancient Chinese had assimilated this notion through their early development of what are called stilling of the heart techniques, which are this particular stripe of yoga that aims for complete suppression of bodily functions in order to contemplate the mind in its nakedness, you now, uncontaminated by the gross uh, attributes that are being reflected upon it by the body. And uh, the notion was that they were actually observing a fact in nature. That this is not simply a calendar, it is THE calendar. It is some kind of previously unnoticed thing present in the world, which is mitigating change. The e-recall that I said that uh what we had was a figure which was together at the beginning flowed apart in a series of interference patterns and then flowed together at the end and restored the value of 0. In other words, if you think of 0 as parity, parity is conserved by this wave. So the notion was that this hierarchical calendar is not an eternal calendar. It's a calendar with a built in closure, and this is hard to visualize so I wont spend too much time on it but.. The last 3 values in the wave are 0. Consequently, as you approach the last 3 positions on the wave, in any of these duration schemes I've mentioned – 384 days, 67 plus years, 400 and three hund.. –

As you approach the last 3 positions the higher level in the hierarchy is given a value of 0 and it ceases to contribute its valuation to the lower levels. So you get a sudden drop in the in the mathematical value of the wave. And these things, for a long time I called them passages and I called them necks and I called them different things. José calls them harmonic convergence – something like that. And I saw them as places where novelty rushed into the world at a much faster rate than it had done before. And, yes. And then I saw the entire career being in space time is effected by this curious property of intensification of novelty and acceleration of time. And we have tended to -because we view the universe as fragmented we have tended not to connect this up to the universe. We believe that human history is an abomination unrelated to biology and modern times an abomination unrelated to sacral and mythical civilizations and uh so forth. But what this notion was suggesting was that matter, I don't know how far back you care to go, but the something is in the process of becoming and that this process of becoming is not gradual but proceeds in a series of telescoping leaps into density of connectedness and that uh, if

you look at the history of the universe it was very active the first 10 high sixteen (10^{16}) nanoseconds. But then things settled down for a long long time and there was just cooling until finally a point was passed in the cooling process where uh, electrons could maintain orbits around atomic nuclei so that we were no longer in the era of free particles but we entered into the era of nuclear chemistry. Further cooling of the universe allowed a much more intensified form of novelty to come into being through the molecular bond which then allows a fantastic variety of structures and possible combinations. You no longer now have free atoms winging around in the void. You have uh, the complete cornucopia of molecular structure that we're familiar with. Physical chemistry I'm talking about, life has not yet appeared. But then further levels of order, further inclusions of novelty into the becomingness of being, and you begin to get self-replicating molecules. Then you get life in the sea, THEN life on the land. Now each one of these phases of novelty is taking less time than the previous phases. Finally you get land animals, finally then you get higher mammals, then the "ponzi deradiation"? of the primates.

[30:00]

Suddenly, 50,000 years ago you arrive at the threshold of self-reflecting consciousness. Instantly, you have thermonuclear weapons, parallel processing in computer, super-conducting colliding waves and all of the accoutrements of modern uh, modernity. This is a continuous process that has been going on since the moment the universe was born. Now, what is so interesting about it and what boggles my imagination and what causes me to wonder if I wasn't in fact losing my marbles and heading by some dark path toward Christianity it was the notion that this process that we have no entered what I call the short epochs. The epochs now do not last a billion years or 18 million years or 275 thousand years the short epoch is history. The first short epoch is history and we entered it around 2300 B.C. See I - this is why I'm not fond of "pushing-backism". The amazing thing to me about humanity is not how there are cities in the Bermuda triangle that are 50,000 years old but how man emerged almost instantly out of the background of a planet covered by forests and populated by animals. Something happened. I mean it IS the thumbprint of God, it DOES push you almost to the notion of a deus ex machine intervention in the course of nature. Uhm.. We have entered the short epochs. We entered the 4,306 epoch as I say around 2300 B.C. arou- You know there is a hiatus, pre-dynastic Egypt is the Egypt which built the pyramids. It- That all closed down around 2400 B.C. then there's a period of about 350 years where we have very little information. I'm talking Egypt. Then suddenly you get the rise of the dynasties, and the thing we are familiar with as the Egyptian stereotype. So I believe there was a significant cultural change at that point. It may be Julian Janes *Bicameral Mind*; it may be the ability to epigenetically code information through writing;

To no longer depend simply on the genetic machinery to carry information. I see this whole process I am describing as the career of information. It is information that is loose on this planet. When people say DNA they mean information. DNA is the vehicle of the information god, and all nature is the vehicle of the information God, and so is all culture and all individuality. Okay.

Dividing 4,306 years by 64 you see the need for 67-year epoch. The next short epoch, and this occupied me for a long long time trying to figure out where it began. And then finally it hit me where it began. It began about 8:30 in the morning on August the 6th 1945 over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. And at that moment the big bang - Its tiny parallelism. It's little self in the world of history was born, as a thermos-nuclear expl- er- not a thermo-nuclear, but a nuclear explosion. Uhhh, and we are now living out that last epoch. Now why did this push me toward uh, Christianity? Because the next short epoch will only be 384 days in duration. And the one after that will only be 6 days in duration. And the one after that will only be an hour and a half in duration. And the one after that, two and a half minutes. So what I have done is I had constructed a cosmology that 5 hours before its complete dissolution it was only half way to completion. You see? Because these rapid closures mean that half of the novelty that the universal being will express in its career of becoming will occur in the last 384 days of time, of time.

And uh, and so this explains to me the chaos at the end of history, which is what we are living through, and the mushroom has said you know, many times, "no big deal". This is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars. There is nothing wrong, nothing wrong with H-Bombs and super colliding. This is all part of the narrowing neck. You know, monkeys don't go to the stars, and you must go through the monkey net to find yourself on the other side. But what I'm not, I'm not talking about uhm, a historical transformation in quite the same way that I think Jose and perhaps Peter were indicating. I am talking about a change in physics, not a change in the human heart or the human political structure. I'm talking about a collapse of the entire space time continuum, and a necessary consequence of the laws under which IT operates. And so we are not responsible and we have no choice and it's not a question of who wants it and who doesn't, any more than death is open to that kind of fiddling. And in fact, death is the reflection in the macrocosm of every individual experience of the wave running down to zero into the ultimate novelty, which you can call a zero or you can call the concrescent essence of everything. Depending on your ontological bent. Uhm. Now, there's a funny thing about this which is and to talk about it requires introducing the notion of fractals. Fractals are

curves of a peculiar variety because they seem to have fractional dimensions. M- C- They are one and a half dimensions, two and a half dimensions, three and a half dimensions, and the reason for this is that when you take a portion of a fractal and blow it up, it looks exactly like it looked before. Now this is easy to visualize in the simplest version of a fractal, which is a circle. I mean think of a segment of a circle. If you blow it up, it looks just like it, and then take a piece of it and blow it up – TAPE GOES BLANK FOR UNDETERMINED TIME –

There are given themes, and this is what the hexagrams are about. This was the genius of the Chinese to realize that time has elements. The orthodox uh, or, let me put it this way. Western science had to go through a whole conceptual reformulation to realize that space is not simply where you put things, that's how space is treated in Newtonian dynamics and up until Einstein. It's just the necessary dimension for three dimensional description. But then Einstein said "well no no, space is a thing affected by magnetic fields. Torqued in the nearby vicinity of a star." And, and so then this notion that it was a thing and that it could have various properties of curvature because allowable. Now what I am suggesting is that time has elements – 64 of them as a matter of fact. And the formulators of the I-Ching simply by stilling the heart, by eliminating noise from the body, were able to see these states which we could call quantum mechanical, but since they are not material we don't need to invoke the holy god of quantum mechanics to bless this effort. Anyway whatever these things are and whatever dimension they exist you could think of them more, I think of them more like platonic archetypes. They – the way in which they inner penetrate three dimensional being is what gives three dimensional being its primary qualities. The qualities of color, of tone, of emotion, of feeling. All of the descriptive qualities that science has left out, and has called epiphenomenal and uh, and uh, subjective but which are the things we all experience, you know, what science has achieved is a tremendous devaluation of primary experience. And what this notion is trying to say is that there is possible physics of experience, and understanding of history that will make it coherent. So that the coherency which we know must be resident in the universe is no longer a value dark dimension to us. The order becomes visible.

Now how does this work? I always use this rather idiotic example but it amuses me. Its that if you find yourself in Hadrian's Hamurger Joint having a burger, there is a direct causal relationship between your doing that and the campaign of the roman emperor Hadrian; You are in fact passing through the Hadrian analogic moment. Now, I think the only person who has really understood this to bedrock, is probably James Joyce. Who realized that a walk to

the store IS the Trojan War. It IS the Trojan War. You cannot pass through a gate without passing through the gates of Thermopylae. You cannot, uh, we and so, a notion like reincarnation or past lives is seen in a whole different light. What we are are harmonic adumbrations of events in the past. Now this comes fairly close to Rupert Sheldrake's notion, and we've talked a lot about this. The, what is absent in Rupert's scheme is an explanation of novelty. What he is saying is that the past has a tremendous influence on the future that the very fact that something has happened, sets up all uh, following time for a more.. a higher likelihood of this thing happening. What I'm suggesting is that that's true but then the mystery of why there is novelty is solved by realizing that the way in which the morphogenetic field impinges upon reality is through a fractal expression. And there would be nothing surprising about this, uh, fractal- the electromagnetic waves described by Maxwell's equation. That is essentially a fractal transformed. It is how waves work.

So uh, another way of thinking about this notion that we are adumbrations of larger historical epochs is the aphorism "Rome falls 9 times an hour". This is the idea- and it does! I mean I always notice it. Its.. its just there. We are very state bounded in our self-observation and we only tend to value what is relevant to profane existence and communication. So, the fact that as you sweep the house you notice Rome falling nine times an hour, there's not much to say about it. It's just I think weird things; I wonder if everybody thinks weird things. I think the answer is yes and not only does Rome fall nine times an hour but the Celts move out of Spain and into England nine times an hour and so forth. That really the present is a, an interference pattern caused by epochs in the past uhm, coming together to create a certain particular situation. So what has been happening since 1945, since the dawn moment over Hiroshima is that the entire history of the universe is being recapitulated uhh. Now it has many cycle levels of cyclic expression. On one level the first land animals have yet to appear. We are truly in the inchoate darkness. On the level of the 4,306-year cycle, we are deep in the dark ages. And on the basis of that, and the barbarians, the time when the barbarian hords poured into Europe. The sacking of Eleusis and all that. I see uh, punk culture as the harmonic response to the fact of this happening. On the basis of it I would predict that in the late 80's the uh, new wave punk phenomenon will give way to an almost gothic, religious sensibility. Which will be in fact a recapitulation of the early middle ages and uh,. - Well No no.. [laughter] in the mariological cults that found their expression at Sharpe and places like that in the early 90's. We will have a, a, uh, a feminist revival which will be slightly longheaded because it will make those same mistakes that those gothic people made. We will not even reach the threshold of the industrial revolution until about 23.., two-zero-zero-three.

So you see the notion of us sitting around making sense of things is quite preposterous. I mean, we are still waiting for Newton, let alone for Maxwell and Einstein. We are not-prehistory except on the highest level. Uhm, so this intensification will occur. Now uh, what is it leading to? This is the part that, you know, Christianity insists that the world will end. And that it will just roll up like a scroll and uhh, the triumphant Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. Now, why do they believe that? Obviously, apocalypse haunts history like a ghost, in the kind of cosmology I'm defining. There MUST be anticipations of it. The death of every human being is an anticipation of the apocalypse. The collapse of every empire, the uh- ANY sensation is a part of THE sensation. It is the archetype of the ending. So this knitting together, this compactification of novelty and connectedness which is emanating out from the most densely compactified and connected thing in nature which is the human cortex. This is an interesting thing, we've worked so hard to move ourselves out of the center of the mandala, but the fact of the matter is the most complex object nature is the human brain. Curious... Uhhh.

[49:15]

This knitting together that is emanating from the human brain is accelerating at such a rate that we are rapidly going to become unrecognizable to ourselves. [49:35] The- The end point which I have come to feel is correct is the endpoint 67 years 104.5 days after the Hiroshima blast, and that would be dawn of the 16th day of November in 2012. Now I have worked all this out and the thin thread on which I am here in a conference devoted to the Mayans is that after I had worked all this out I discovered that the long count of the Mayans, the calendar of which you have heard so much, contains thirteen baktuns. Now the emergence of uh, of uh, Mayan civilization as we currently understand it is around bak- late in baktun 6, and the complete collapse of the Mayan is in around the middle of baktun 11. But their whole calendar was generated from the end of baktun 13; There is no baktun 14. They said "that's it. That's the end." The end of baktun 13 is the winter solstice of 2012. 34 days later than the date I reached through this series of involvements with the I-Ching.

But then I discovered there's what's called the Thompson Correction. The Thompson Correction is a different reading on certain calendrical material which would locate the end of baktun 13 only 4 days after the date that I had chosen. So the question seemed to me then, "What is it about psilocybin mushrooms that a civilization in Mesoamerica in the 11- in the 8th and 9th century and an individual in California in the 20th century would both, through an elaborate series of mathematical contortions, different mathematical contortions, reach the same point in time?" What is happening there?

And uh, we were talking last night about how um, how the uh, my, my little story about what happened to the Mayans, to the Maya. And Peter pretty much agreed was around 970 and probably at Copan, which was the Alexandria of the Mayan world. Its where the mathematics and this and these things were you know, brought to their peak. They figured it out. They figured it out. And they ended the long count. It was obviously ended as a uh, an order. It took about 20 years to emanate out from Copan and to reach the most remote Mayan centers, Paraguay and Palenque and so forth. But within 30 years the long count had been ended. The stele had been pushed over face down in the grass. The cities emptied and the Maya returned to being primitive agricultural pastoralists.

I think it was because they figured it out. They saw what was coming, and one you have figured it out the curious thing about this notion I'm propounding is that it carries no obligation. It is a way of making you free by admitting you are more deterministically bound than you ever dreamed, you know. You HAD to go into Hadrian's Hamburger Joint, it was settled when Hadrian invaded Scotland, that you had to go into that hamburger joint. And so we are, we are bearing an unnecessary burden of guilt and responsibility. We are living in a cosmos, not a chaos. The universe IS doing what it wants to do. It is calling forth the kind of novelty that it wants to call forth. The fact that we cannot understand it's purpose is our problem. You know? And we are not its victims. The- In these short epochs, what is happening is something that I think can only be understood by uhm, having recourse to the metaphors of alchemy. Alchemy and modern science; These are anticipations of taking control of energy. Of binding as James Joyce says, "All space in a nutshell." Its where- what the concrescence is, is the flowing together of everything in a higher spatial dimension.

We mentioned last night the saying in the I Ching – if this sacrifice is cor- the person who correctly understands this sacrifice can hold the universe in the palm of their hand like a spinning marble. 54:46 This is absolutely true. It's a statement of physics. It is not a metaphor, and analogy or anything else. It is that reality is being knitted together, into a spinning marble. Everything but that spinning marble is an illusion. Uhm, it has many reflections in linear history, which is like the shadow cast into three dimensional space time, by this higher dimensional reality. It is the telos at the end of time. Uhh, its modern manifestation is the flying saucer. The flying saucer haunts time like a ghost. It only exists at the end of the historical process, yet it is somehow co-present spread throughout the

historical process. It is uhm, the proof that the apocalyptic moment exists.

Another metaphor for this is concrecence, this spinning marble is uh, the holy grail, or the philosophers stone. The philosophers stone is an object which is made out of mind. It has, [it's called the] one gloss on it was it was called the sophic hydrolith. The uhh, the water thought stone. It is something which has the quality of mind and matter. And this is what the human function is, I think, is through technos to eliminate the distinction between mind and matter, to free us into the imagination. That's where we're going when the novelty wave runs to zero and we are released into this trans-historical space. It is the imagination and it will not be miraculous. It will be created by us, through us, through a number of uh, disciplines, technologies, ideas, and innate abilities that we cannot currently hope to do more than glimpse, because we are so far back in the historical continuum from where this thing is going to happen in 2012. So basically, uh, this is a funny explanation of almost everything.

They say when you create a funny explanation of almost everything, you have to be careful that you don't unexplain a whole bunch of things, and I don't think this unexplains too much because it is uhm, it is not an extension of a current paradigm. In other words it is not physics, it says nothing about particle physics or quantum mechanics or anything that- it talks about time, which is not matter. We have been obsessed with matter for millennia, and thought of time as, just as something passing by, couldn't really get a handle on it. But uh, maturity will mean getting a handle on it. And everything I've said about the historical process and how puzzling it is is true in our own lives. For instance, you may have noticed that every day is sort of like every other day and yet every day is different. This is this fractal nature of things working, and there are days of great advance but they are embedded in this larger matrix of a pretty state situation. I studied with West Churchman who was a futurist, and he used to like to say that most of the future is already present in the present. And uh, its this kind of idea so uhm..

What I was able to do with this I-Ching wave and what I offer as the uh proof or at least the uhm the place where pressure should be put on the theory if we want to falsify it is uh- We wrote a computer program which very rapidly sorts through the wave on many levels, and will draw the graph of novelty for any point in time, and it will draw it on different scales,

like uh- Say you were interested in the French Revolution, 1789. We can throw a picture up on the screen which shows you 1788, 89, and 90. And you can then ask yourself “Does this line fulfill MY intuition of how a novelty curve descriptive of the French Revolution should look?” Suppose you’re a specialist, you’re interested only in the assignation of Marat, okay.. Then we can look at the 19 days in 1789 surrounding his assassination on the 20th of July, and so forth. But where it is really interesting is in application to our own lives. And there then, you have a personal body of information that you can try against the wave, to see if in fact it fits your intuition of how your life should work.

There are a couple of people here who have counselled with me one on one, where we’ve actually looked at their life and then on into the future. It goes right on into the future to 2012, and of course 2012 is just my choice after a lot of reflection I chose that as the apocalyptic zero date. The program is set up so early in the program you can enter any apocalyptic zero date. And then you search the best fit. And the way I use it is I like to go to the scale where there is 19 years on the screen or I mean 3 years on the screen or even 200 years on the screen, and then I’ll go way back and then it has a continue function and I just fly over the mountains of time. And when I see a steep valley I dive into it, and blow up the fractal landscape and then the program has a function called “Near” which is a historical data file and you can just hit a button and it will tell you uh- Ascension of Artaxerxes, 514 B.C.

There it is, look! His son was an idiot but then he came on and the wave it fits, it works, it fits! It’s all clear! So it’s a way of modeling history, and If I could contort it into a video game my life would be much easier. [Laughter].

1:01:30s – 2:05:15 is peer review questions and dialogue.

Self-maintaining, over quite a long period of time until then its overcome and it is in this period that I mentioned this morning that all of these things happen. Now let me demonstrate some of the commands within the program. These are the position numbers of the wave here, and as I mentioned to Francis, we could take those position numbers, and if you have a copy of the invisible landscape you could look at the drawing of the wave in there and derive this set of hexagrams that would give you feeling toned rather than mathematical information about what’s going on. Anyway, here are some of the commands.

Question mark and one of these numbers, such as, for instance 157, gives you the absolute value is 308 right there. So this trough is riding along at about the 300 level. Okay now, if

we query D 157 we're asking a different question about this point and the answer is the 11th day of the 3rd month of 533 B.C. Is right there so- and I through long experience happen to know that these blips are 11 years long so I'll just save us the trouble and tell you that that flat area there runs then, uh, from the 11th day of the third month from early in 533 B.C. to uh, let's see, we subtract.. to 511 B.C. Right in here. Now when I query 158 which is in there, with the command "n" which stands for near, "n1-5-7", lets make it 1-5-7, it now goes to the history file and it searches.

(Female Peer) – “And you programmed all this?”

Terence – Yes that's just a chore to enter a huge bunch of historical data. I used the uh, London – Tape cuts off.

2:07:55

-works of art, political acyivity, migrations, religions, artistic motifs, all that stuff.

Kay, what have we got. Okay, if minus 540 was the restoration of cestatus? Deuteronomy is being worked uh, 539 is the fall of the Babylonian empire. Here at 532 Pythagoras flourishes according to Apollodorus, uhm- And in that same period all these other things were happening. C is the continue function, it gives you more data. What it does is it blots out the nearest date. It prints in reverse the nearest date and then it prints all the other stuff around it. Now it's scrolling up more okay.

Pythagoras, Persian conquest of Egypt, birth of Aeschylus, uhh Buddha, Lao Tzu uhm- Ezekiel will scroll up next and so forth. So it is uh, or is it, confirming that this deep trough is in fact reflective of an incident of novelty? Now if we hit uhm, quit, we just go back to the beginning and we can look something else. Not rub 0, run zero.

Although rubbing 0 might be more interesting. Okay and again the default date, and what I want to show you now is uhm, the waves version of the 20th century. Essentially, let's just start with uh, well lets enter the Hiroshime date which is the 5th day of the 8th month of the 1945. And let's look at this situation on the 200-year level. I promise you this will end at three o'clock. And, yeah I don't know where's the sun coming from. Is that better?

[Chatter]

Is that good? Okay. Now.

The entirety of time from 1945, in other words, the 67 year period in which all of the historical themes will be recapitulated is contained in this center section and as you see its

almost a flat line. All that's there is like a tiny pimple, all that lies between us and this completion that we are so hot for, is portrayed at this scale, as just the tiniest uh, energy barrier. That's why I think we can feel it so eminently. But remember that because the wave is fractal also lying, that this is the same picture if we think of this as 4,000- as the 4,306 years preceding the apocalypse, er- preceding the whatchamacallit. So uh, all of that time period since 2300 B.C. has been imbued with this sense of the eminence of the transcendence, the transcendent. And that is what has given this period of time its peculiar character.

The bomb is uh, right there. The top of the pimple is early January 1967, and that is where if you'll recall what was going on at the time, that's where the concatenation of the struggle of the opposites reached its most intense point. That's where LSD was a mass phenomenon, when the hippie phenomenon was in the quintessence of the 60's is spring-summer 1967, that's the summer of love. 12 months later we were in the streets fighting the police and so forth. So it was a brief, brief moment. We have no come off that uh, that uh, high point and we're moving along now a kind of uh, prenylated surface, where there are many dips and many rises but the sum total of what's happening is that we're oscillating around a mean. And I certainly, that for me describes the 1970's. It was much oscillation around a mean and many people found that very ideological corrosive because they expected the continuous deep descent of ever faster into novelty that they had experience in the 60's, and the fact of the matter is it just isn't happening. Now –

Male Peer - Was not 67 also the year that Mao released the red guard?

Terence – That's right, the whole red guard phenomenon in China, all of these things were global phenomenon.

Male Peer – sort of the opposite to the summer of love.

Terence – Right, although these things uh, certainly represented chaos forces each in the society in which they were happening. Now, the my reading of it is is that at 2012 the wave disappears, the reason the graph is shown as ascending rapidly into entropy is because the computer is stupid and it wraps it around, and connects it to the beginning of the wave. But you should view this last one as simply the blank unknown, okay? We know not about that. Now I want to change the date of interest and uh, let's look at 1-1-1-9-8-5. In other words, the 1st of January this year, and let's look at it at a level which will give us uh, 3- approximately 3 years on the screen. I say approximately because what is really being given on the screen are harmonic resonant increments of the other calendrical system that I have lined- the one that uses the 384 day year, not the 365 and ¼ day year.

So what we're really seeing is 3 of these lunar years, these thirteen month lunar years on the screen. So we'll see this will be '84 into '85 here. It will pass into the future approximately mid-screen. Oh yeah, I remember this.

This is uh, here is the campaign, here is the election, here is the inauguration, and here are we. Well, if you, we are down on, we are in a deeper more novel situation. This definitely was a long period in which everything was held in stasis, and then the, the uh, uh, party of the right uh gained ascendancy at least on this continent, and you see this happening.

Now let's see, you see this line here at 228 is uh, 16-7, the 16th of July 1985 is right there. So we are in this small period here coming down off this peak, I can get it up in more detail, let's see, change the date of interest, no. Yes, change the date of interest to the present, what is today? The 14th. The 14th day, January- February- March- April- of the fourth month.

After years of doing this..

And I'm going to show it al- So that we only have 19 days on the screen.

So this is like a uh, my notion of a preview of the next 6 weeks or so, we can just look 'til we're bored.

[Chatter]

Well that period before the election was long, it was more than a year in length, uh.

Yes, like, remember how I said we were moving through, that we had just moved through the period of the dark ages and the barbarian invasions when learning died out in Europe and they thought that the circumference of a circle was twice its diameter and all this stuff. Well, that is that is that same plateau and we are now slightly beyond it, but only at the beginning of the proto-mediaeval period. I mean we've reached approximately A.D. 800 which is of course the coronation of Charlemagne, and the inauguration of the Carolingian Kingdoms, which really do end the dark ages, although where this is happening I'm not sure, maybe in Brazil. Oh, now what have got, oh yes! The 10th, 289 or 288. It was the 11th, that was uh, did I fly in from Hawaii? Was it the 11th? Well we're all in it together, how was the 11th for you? Judging by this see, its giving a very clear indication that in all of those 19 days unambiguously the 11th was uh, the clincher. Thursday.

So you know it's not doing sleight of hand, if you didn't have a big 11th then this is wrong for you. Well its lunar so it tends to keep track of that kind of thing. Now, is a deep decent in to novelty. Now we're moving along this thing. We are in this trough right here, and I might say that because I have assumed the end date to be in 2012 even uh, small drops in

novelty like that carry the entire planet into a new level. We are now every day there is we are going more and more into it. There are very few backwashes, enough to wipe out the impression that just every day novelty is intensifying and we're thinking it to it.

Let's see if that was the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th... must be 291.. [2:20:00]

Yes, had we given it at the very beginning of the program when it asked "End date:" we could give it any date. We could give it José's date, uhmm..

Do you want to see José's date with my end date setting?

Oh okay, uhmm.

Let's see José's end date it the 16th of August 19-

No, but the date you're interested in is? Yes, It's the 16th day of the 8th month, no '87, '87.

[Peer] Whats curious to me Terence, is does this also take into account uh, like the southern hemisphere?

[Terence] Yes, I believe so. I think its hyper-dimensional. Its uh, you mean because of the international date line and all that?

[Peer] The history you'll have stashed in there will be northern ... history

[Terence] Oh yeah, although so much of the southern hemisphere is ocean, and so recently colonized that there is an absence of historical uh.. It's the blank end of the wave you see. It's the blank...

But we've no record, we can only work with the data we have. That's a data dark dimension, for example these African empires and stuff.

[Peer] So we still have northern hemisphere chauvinism. [Laughter]

[Terence] Well we need to recover the secret history of kiwi land. [Laughter]

Oh no I know! I am sympathetic. The marsupials where do they fall into all this. [Laughter]

Okay, level 5. Okay now we'll see José's date embedded in the three years, the three lunar years of time, around it. There'll be 3 lunar years of 13 months portrayed on the screen. His date will fall somewhere on the second year, as close as the computer can look at it. Okay now see this does not support his contention, because what we have here is this situation of

oscillation around a mean. It goes up, it goes down, it goes up, it goes down, but after three years of this, it is in fact exactly where it started out from. Now let's get the dates on this.

Which means nothing as far as the theory is concerned. What this screen is saying is that from uh, the 16th of July 1985 until uh the 10th of September 1988 you might as well go fishing. Because it's all uhh, it all amounts to very little you see.

If we put, if we enter José's date as the end date and then look at another date. Oh okay, uhhh.. Now I think that requires a cue ... here. Okay now it asks zero date, we're going to enter José's date, 16th day, the 8th month 1-9-8-7.

Now what date should we look at to test José's theories. The bomb. I think the bomb is the good concentrated clearly major event that we can all agree is some kind of a water shed.

Enter the day you wish to look at it. What is it uh, 5, August, 1-9-4-5. Okay, now we'll, let's look at it uhh, if we look at it on the 200 year scale it will just say it'll close to the end because this date is even earlier than the previous date. Let's look at it on the 3 year scale, 3 lunar years. It always tells you you are 15,351 days from the end. A nice little touch there. Yeah, shopping days.

[Peer] How much will you consume.

[Terence] Whooa, now where is it? It's at position 144, okay look! Look whats happening a long flat totally steady state at this level of clarification, and then bingo, and a long, long slide. That we could by well- well- before i change the screen does everyone understand the interpretation. That that moment clearly initiated a long plunge into novelty. Oh you mean where is the date? It says it's at 144, 5-8-45 is at position 144. Right at the falling. Now I'm going to shift the screen by using the command continue and we'll see how long this descent into novelty went on before it was overwhelmed by the uh, entropic backwash.

Okay, there it is. It's this thing here. D-157. Until uh, early November 1947, now my guess would be that's an election day. 6-11-47, wouldn't someone have been inaugurated in January '48.

[Peer] Elected in '48, Inaugurated in January '49

[2:26:40]

[Terence] Oh I see so it's not an election date. It's something, by this version, and this long trough it's like this long flow into novelty, which ends in a wide trough and then is mitigated and slides off. So if we use José's end date we get pretty good agreement with

that particular piece of data, now let's see. We have two minutes shall we test him on the whole history thing? How can we do that, Oh I know, now let's see.

[Peer] You should ... continue with this cause it sounds like everybody's interested.

[Terence] January 1 minus 6 minus eight hundred, let's give ourselves some room here, minus 800, yes, yes, at the two hundred year level. Well I just want to get way back in B.C. I just want to get way in front of that trough, then we'll cruise forward in the wave until we find the trough, then we'll get the date then we'll...

With my setting. Well there will only be uhh, yes, whatever the difference between '87 and 2012 is. So he'll hit the trough too.

[Laughter] about surviving the timewave.

The continue function pushes it up one shingle, these things are called. Pushes it up on shingle. We're looking for the trough, I hope we didn't miss it. There it is, okay now by José's applying mine to his there's the most, the moment of greatest creative advance, concentrated creative advance in human history was from, yes, from uhhhh, December 559 B.C. until December 547 so what would right in the middle of that be about 553. So let's query near with his date on 158, and 158, and it goes to the history file and.. this really seems like magic to people who don't know how computers .. they say, "Is all of human history in the computer? What?" All we typed in, friends.

Sure, we... From Hildegard Von Bingen to Judy Chicago, it's all...

Okay Cyrus the 2nd of Persia defeats Eumenides. The Persian empire, oh he establishes the Persian empire, the great counter-foil to roman power which held Zoroastrianism is made the official religion, in 545 Persia conquered Assyria, restoration of Cestada? So here we come then into my thing, oh look he got Zoroastor, although my typist apparently didn't know who Zoroastor was, uhmm...

Anyway, I think that's enough of that...It's 3:00. I'll briefly entertain questions, you, I'm sure now I hope get more of the jist of some of what was said this morning. Because I think, the program really makes it accessible to people. And you can spend hours cruising these hills and valleys and dipping into the thing, if that's the kind of thing that interests you. I'm a real bug about history, I think that people who don't know history are amnesiac. And that uh, you know, we would all, there's nothing more important, really in all these forms of self-cultivation and development, than to read history. You know it's not cliché that those that don't know it are doomed to repeat it. It's true in individual lives as well, and it's the story of who you are, and how you got here, and if you don't know it, it's kind of a

strange lacuna, in your uh, in your knowledge.

[Peer] ... correlate I-Ching with the DNA codings?

Well, no, I did that, that's not very interesting to me, it's been done by a number of people and I had a scheme for doing it and uh it just didn't tell me anything. Once I knew what hexagram was lysine and what hexagram was L-alanine, I didn't know enough about lysine and L-alanine to know really what to do with that information. Uhm, this session will go I believe until about 5:00. Are there any questions about this morning or is anyone burning to take up any of that again? If not I'll go on to uh, something related but different. Related but different.

Okay well, I guess what I'll talk about is uhh, uhh.... Just trains of thought that I see present in the world, that I think will eventually be seen to flow together and to provide facets of this question "What is the nature of the transformation and what are the factors that go into it?" I mean obviously all fronts of human knowledge are developing at a tremendous rate but uh, certain strains of thought claim for themselves a kind of primacy, and I know the new age, whatever that nebulous term means, it has a connotation sometimes of an elite with an answer that is only- all that's holding back the world is that this answer is frustrated in making its appearance, and I don't really hold with that I think that by and large the new age is a fairly minor phenomenon. It's basically the search for a way to get high without drugs, a way to uh advance yourself without putting yourself on the line, you know, just anything is better than facing 25mg of psilocybin and uh, while all these things have merit, they don't seem to have transformative merit; In the sense that the great decade of new age thinking which was the 1970's is certainly one of the most stagnant decades that we've seen in a long long time.

However, there are strains and things going on and I sort of wanted to construct a mandala, not very seriously... But a mandala of four human concerns that lead to what I will, in my short hand, call the flying saucer, which is this concrescent alchemical union of humanness and otherness and humanness and technology that is uh, to come, I think, and inevitable I think we all are articulating the inevitability of something. And this game we play of prophesying the moment..

You know William Blake said there is only one moment in all eternity, and Satan's Watch-Fiends search through all eternity which is the way into God's Creation, but they can never find it, it is, the secret of the moment is well kept. Uhm..

These fields, or these endeavors I'm going to called Psychedelics, Cybernetics, Space and

Feminism. But each one of them over-flows it's label, and becomes many other things. I mean, in other words if someone said but "What about politics?" I would say well, that's a subset of feminism, and what about something else that goes somewhere else...

So let me, there's no particular order in which to take them... I think maybe first I'll talk about cybernetics because that's a good transition from this little beast.

Cybernetics is this epigenetic transformation of information going wild. It begins with uh, the notion of writing and number and develops up to the point where now 9 million computers a month are being connected into the global information grid, and uh, there are only 9 billion neurons in the human brain. There is a school of self-organizational theory which holds that new properties simply emerge through the connecting up of large numbers of elements, and that once you pass a critical level whole new properties begin to emerge from what were before fairly well understood matrices and arrays.

The cybernetic thing is viewed as uh, invasive, and masculine and technological, but I think that's only because we're seeing it in its most raw emergent phase, we're actually seeing adding machines changed into these cybernetic devices. All the computers in the world are digital analyzers. We have yet to have an analytical machine, and this is coming. And what we have so far are large adding machines, and when we get the so called "thinking machine" and its coming, it's going to have an enormous impact on our self-image and our society. You can imagine the impact that Darwinism had on the 19th century conception of man where, you know, the notion that man was descended from the primate line was just intolerable. Well, the notion that machines can think, and you've noticed it used to be very fashionable for cyberneticians to write articles saying "The thinking machine is a complete misunderstanding of cybernetics. Utterly impossible. Machines don't think," That voice has grown quiet in the light of what has been learned about cybernetics and linguistics in the last 5 years, particularly in the last 18 months. And it now seems very reasonable that this goal is within reach, an actual simulacrum of the human mind and what that will mean is very hard to gauge. I had a mushroom trip recently in which the aphorisms arose "To design computers is to be designed by computers." And I saw very clearly that the keyboard is entirely an illusion, a convenience, and that the keyboard could be made to disappear very quickly and then you would not truly and clearly perceive where the interface stopped.

And people who spend hours and hours working on computers admit that this happens, and there's a meshing and you're part of the circuitry. I think what holds this back from becoming any even more noticeable phenomenon is just our willingness to materialize these cybernetics objects as furniture. But the day is coming you know, when you will be able to reach the library of congress by tapping a certain tooth with your tongue. And that is simply what the masculine engineering mentality is thinking about. Obviously the feminine matrix

which supports these kinds of imaginative constructs exists already, and it's simply that the engineers are catching up to these notions of integrated intuition and field perception and that sort of thing.

To me the computer not the computer so much as the cybernetic network is actually a feminizing force, it's like hardwiring the unconscious so that these oceans of information that beat against the human uh mind are not abstracted, not contained in libraries but made ubiquitous throughout , you know, consciousness and actually that we are beginning to create a, an extra genetic foundation of human understanding which will always be there in the form of these large data banks. And as we learn to swim in this sea of information, the character of our understanding is going to change radically. We are all confined by ignorance of all sorts, basically ignorance of simply the facts of the matter. Leave alone what theories might organize the facts of the matter. The other thing is the human machine interface is becoming more and more subtle and miniaturized away. And its, it's possible you know, to imagine a world where you wander naked through Eden, and there appears to be no technology on the planet, because the technology is all in a particular grain of sand lying on a particular beach uhh, in Madagascar. We'll put it in the southern hemispheres to uh..

[Peer] That's where it is now!

[Terence] You're right! The key is to actualize this thing you know.. William Blake said "To see what eternity in a grain of sand, and to put it in there if need be in order for that to happen." So that is cybernetics.. The transformation of cybernetics into something really exciting I think is going to happen through psychedelics, which is the next of these quadrants of the mandala that I would mention. Psychedlics is uh, totally discounted as a transformative force by the powers that be. It isn't even, it doesn't even rate much of a budgeting in the DEA budget. It's just a dead issue, and yet I believe, perhaps many of you believe that it is some kind of overlooked factor. Almost of the character of a taboo because it is totally corrosive to all paradigms. It is, it cannot be encompassed. The measure of it cannot be taken, science it useless because it is a phenomenon of individual experience, and uh there is no way that science can get a hold on that, any more than it can get a hold on falling in love. The problem is falling in love has not yet been shown to be completely dependent on a chemical substance, a material molecule, an atomic arrangement in space and time. And uh, the psychedelic thing is the path to the origins, The transformation that we want to see talk place is essentially an ouroboric transformation. A taking of its tail in its mouth, by the snake of time, and this cannot happen unless we're in contact with our origins.

This is why I think the shamanic uh, strain of the new age mentality is the probably the most enduring, because there is something to be learned from primitive so called primitive pre-literate people who are living in the dream time, who are living in the imagination, and never saw any need for technological constructs, because the constructs of the imagination were so wonderfully satisfying. We glimpsed these constructs uh, with psychedelic drugs and even upon our society with all of its rationalism and all of its reductionism they have a tremendous impact which we respond to with prohibition and coercion and propaganda. I don't think that they are uh, static in spite of the importance of shamanism. I don't believe that it is always had the character that it has today. Because the psychedelic experience works with the cultural overlay, works with the contents of your mind, I could never have created the theory I created if I had not known about the I-Ching and DNA and all of these things. And yet the psychedelic intelligence was able to take that information and whip it together into something which was astonishing even to me and yet I had been the source of the information. Psychedelics show the relativity of these various mental dimensions and constructs that we inhabit, and uh to this point I've been basically speaking of drugs like mescaline, LSD, that sort of thing ...

Possibly although it's not really a psychedelic, it is a synthetic for sure. What I'm more interested in, and I think that Rupert Sheldrake's ideas open a way to understand the difference is plant hallucinogens which have existed in living systems for millions, in some cases hundreds of millions of years, and have been taken by human societies for untold millennia. When a person takes a drug the drug takes the person, and so a drug like psilocybin that has been used for thousands and thousands of years has a tremendous morphogenetic field about it, garnered from the experiences of all the people that have taken it that have flowed into it. Uh, these things point the way toward engineering states of mind that we can hardly imagine. The interesting drugs to me are the ones which uhm, occur in plants, have a history of shamanic usage, and mimic brain chemistry in some way. In other words, you're not interested in a massive disequilibrating intrusion into your brain chemistry... you want something which is almost like what is present but which gives you a massive shift in cognitive apperception without any shift in the perception of how your body is operating. You know, you don't want it to cause muscle tension, kidney.. all of these things. You want it to touch the mind and all else very lightly. The curious thing about the mushrooms is of course that they seem to have this logos like entity, locked up inside them. A speaking voice, a teaching entelechy, that is somehow concerned to involve you in a personal exchange of information and that point when you reach that level you have totally cast of from uh any of the metaphors that your society has prepared for you to understand that kind of things. It just appears to be delusion and yet it has a very healing and uh, integrating quality for the person who is experiencing it. Perhaps there is a lifeform, long resident on the Earth and so different from us the main problem is one of recognition.

I mean I vacillate between whether the mushroom is you know, whether we really can split off portions of our psyche so completely that we cannot recognize them as parts of ourselves and then they can approach us to teach and torment us. Or whether that's an unnecessarily breast beating attitude and that it would be much more reasonable to just say there's no reason to be in awe of the pronouncements of modern science. Modern science knows nothing about the density of life in the universe or the constitution of consciousness or its probability of occurring in any planetary or physical regime other than the one we're acquainted with. We have no idea how densely life and intelligence is spread through the universe and what the strategies are that have evolved. What I said this morning about uh, taking control of the human form by the act of understanding DNA which got a ripple from people, I'm sure that this is inevitable and I'm sure it is inevitable for every species which passes through that narrow neck, because knowledge is used and applied. I mean there may be Zen like cultures that find out these things and turn and move away from them. Perhaps that's what the Maya were about, but pastoral and romantic as the vision of the Maya turning away from technocratic civilization is still if you take evolution seriously the goal of evolution is to keep the options open. Many- most (creatures?) preachers –Tape cuts out 2:40:34-:44 –scended to the tropical veldt and grass lands, we migrated across the deserts of a near and middle east which were not so desertous at that time but we also were able to cross the Himalayas, we exist in the arctic, in the rainforest, we exist at the level of the Witoto or the modern new Yorker. We are adaptable and this is what's kept our options open, and this is what I think we have to uh, recognize and conserve, and the psychedelics do that. The psychedelics are to my mind, although people have actually argued this with me, although it seemed really incontrovertible to me, that they are deconditioning agents, that they make you question what Marxist Mormon, whatever you are, if you take psychedelics you will ask questions that cannot be answered in the paradigm in which you were brought up. And that's important because all of these social systems are only means to the next level of ascent. What we see in the Soviet Union today is a hang-up, they have an ideology which allows no means to the next level of ascent. They are caught forever in the Hegelian dialectic, there's no escape its uh, its hopeless and uh, so they have occupied an evolutionary niche very successfully but now what are they going to do. And every society is confronted with this because every society erects institutions which try to freeze the historical process. It's almost as though we are continuously calcifying and yet we must not let that happen. I think it was Ludwig Von Bertalanffy who said "Human beings are not machines, but in every situation given their own will they will behave like machines, falling to routines and just cease to examine what is in front of them."

So I think that the psychedelic thing is very important. I'm sorry to see its ... clouded it's a murky picture. I don't see, I think people should do more of it, and reflect and that there should be much less missionary work. That the goal is not to get as many people stoned as

possible. The goal is to make sure that everybody who gets stoned gets really stoned. So that we don't have a bunch of confusion about just exactly what we're talking about. I mean I meet people who the only drug they have ever taken is MDMA. [2:54:34]

And we're trying to have a conversation about the nature of psychedelic cosmology? It's weird sledding, you know.

Okay, cybernetics, psychedelics, space is the other one. And I see all of these things as just completely one thing, and I, as I said this morning, I think the difference between José and I, one difference is that he is interested in creating a planetary consciousness, out of the surrender of the ego, of individuals to this higher vision of what should happen. I think that there already is this tra- super-human organism, and that our freedom is largely illusory. We are all moving to the tune of what Freud called the super-ego, and I what I call the overmind because I don't like the notion of superego, is a little torch light parade and that sort of thing. But the overmind, the notion of simply a control mechanism, which is uh, almost cybernetic, but which is leading everything forward and actually is orchestrating what is happening, so that all of these human groups, which aspire to hegemony, you know wall street, the communist party, the Zionist, you name it. They are all frustrated, because there seems to be an invisible, impeding force against their machinations, and their vision of how things should be. And no matter how many guns they pile up, no matter how much propaganda they churn out the historical continuum has a way of stabbing them in the back, and surprising them endlessly, because they are fools, playing with a master which is the super-ego.

And uh until this en- what we as individuals can do, is help that process by not participating of the projections of anxiety that these various factions are pushing, that arise out of their frustration with their inability to get a handle on things. I don't want them to run things, Wall street or the communist party or anybody. I think that it works very nicely that it is run invisibly from the unconscious. I think it was Charles fort who said uh, there comes steam engine time, and then there will be steam engines. And uh, and that is what is happening with modern technology, even to the point of the atomic bomb, I am willing to explore the notion that the atomic bomb has been a wonderful force for cohering people's minds around the question of planetary survival. That if we had come out of World War II with aerial bombing and mustard gas but nothing quite horrifying enough to shock people awake. I think it's remarkable that we have lived in such a stable world since 1945. That it has never- only once used against a human population. And my god think of the hatred and the loathing that is loose on this planet, and yet the bomb has sobered people, and every political movement for social cohesion and enlightenment that is post 1945 has built its rhetoric around the bomb. The peace movement to some degree, the hippies, the existential response of the beat generation. All of these rich cultural phenomena have been reflections on the bomb. So the bomb is good, the thing that is important is not to use it. Then, then it

becomes a problem.

I think that this thing that has broken about nuclear winter is very interesting. But uh, capitalism is very interested in making money. A decimated earth is not good real estate. And I think that the nuclear winter issue is the beginning of the end of the nuclear uh, log jam, that because the soviet academy of science has conducted an independent study, they reached the same conclusion. The people that were skeptical of Sagan and the others they researched it, they reached the same conclusion. War is obsolete, and this is actually understood by the people who frighten us the most. I really think that they have come to see it as a bad deal, and no money maker. And in that case, uh, there will be change. The novelty wave is effecting all of these institutions. The strategies are changing at the very topmost level, because it's no good to have a no-win situation.

So, and as far as the space travel thing is concerned, I really think that inner and outer space are the same thing, and that we will come to understand this through research on the psychedelics. That when the Ayahuacero in the Peruvians amazon tells you he goes to the milky way, he is not really kidding. You see no matter how radical we are in our assumptions, it's very hard to not assume that we don't at least have 95% of the picture. I mean for instance, we believe in things like elementary particles and all- well these things may be no closer to the mark than the notion that the world was created when the Ant King got out of his canoe at the second waterfall to take a leak. You know?

These may be preposterous notions. The polite approach that is usually taken is to say well "everybody has a bit of the piece. The Mayans had a bit of the piece, the Buddhists they know something, those Sufis they're pretty sharp." The mushroom suggested that nobody has a piece of the action. That it's all wrong, that it's all completely 100 percent bullshit. You see? And that's a very cleansing notion to begin to explore. To return to ground zero. And start out with- how radical a deconstruction can we carry on with this world. What is the real nature of language? This is what all of these fine theories leave out. It's what mine leaves out, it's what José's leaves out. It's that you know, what is this phenomenon called language? Where by making little mouth noises, we coax roughly congruent into each other's brains, and then gabble joyfully over this achievement, you know? Reality is not made of electrons or quarks or any of these things. It is clearly made of language. And all of these abstractions, the faithless myths we mentioned this morning, are totally naïve about language. They just view it like a fish views water. You know? It's good to speak clearly, that's important., but other than that they haven't a word to say about the epistemic basis of language. Science is most guilty of this because science is a very old institution.

Consequently, its most fundamental assumptions are, were carried out in the atmosphere of greatest epistemological naïveté. [3:03:15] You know, things like that the universe is knowable at all. Things like that induction is a good way to think. Induction is when you say well if it happened ten times it'll probably happen the eleventh time. Probably. There's a

loaded word, that science is very big on.

So the real revolution is to come, I think, in language and the way in which psychedelics and feminism and cybernetics all come together is that we each need to carry out a very basic analysis of what we think about language and what we think it is and what we think it does. For instance, I've noticed and uhm, this may be because I'm male, but I've noticed that there are all these things flying around which can't be discussed. And I finally realized that they're emotions, is what they are. And that we have a very very limited vocabulary of emotions. We experience an amazingly rich interior gradient of shifting modalities, of which we never can say- I mean we say "I like you", "I don't like you", "I'm uncomfortable", "I really feel weird". I mean this is just like, y'know, petroglyphs about emotion. Ralph Metzner and I have have been playing with the idea that there is a- and certainly Robert Graves and other people have preceded us in this but that there is hardwired into the human brain a kind of "urrrr" language, that is older than agreed upon dictionaries, that is in fact to hear it is to understand it. The problem is that the only thing it can convey are emotions. But the emotions that it can convey are so finely graded and so rich in their adumbrations and resonances that it's like a form of magic, and we call this glossolalia and classify it is as a sub-psychotic or near-psychotic phenomenon, brain origin-uncertain, cultural use-uncertain, so forth and so on.

Ralph and I have even toyed with the notion of holding weekends where we would insist that every rationally apprehendable utterance be followed by an utterance which was not rationally apprehendable. The non-rationally apprehendable utterance would uh, anchor you in the emotional gestalt of the moment. And that would be like the carrier wave- Do it? I thought you'd never ask!

Terence McKenna glossolializes.
As does peer member.

[Audience member] I've had a conversation like this with a Sufi in the Sudan, and it was amazing to me because there was a third person there who could translate exactly what he said"

[Terence] What is being conveyed once you get used to it is the anchoring and the gestaltum of the emotional moment.

[Peer member] And this man was reading my emotions to a finer level, the one who was translating. I mean I recognized what he was saying but it was accurate, the mood that? The Sufi made.

[Terence] That's right. You discover these things on psychedelics, but the are clearly

subject to creodization, in other words to being learned. That you can lay down these pathways in the brain and its marvelous that-

[Peer] I think there's some mental language learning anyway. This is how the child learns and how you learn when you're in a foreign country and you don't study from a book. You understand long before you can speak and you don't know what's being said but you can come to understand. And the child is always spoken to in turn about anything? Of its verbal comprehension.

[Terence] So we need to learn to be able to create these linguistic constructs, which are not meaning-tied but which communicate. One of the most interesting things about psilocybin is that on high doses, a synesthesia takes place, where, when you articulate in this emotional glossolalia you actually can condense objects which are beheld, in other words you take control of the mechanism of the hallucinations and you create these hyper-these toy-like, jewel-like self-transforming grammatical complexes. You're speaking some kind of translinguistic language which is beheld, rather than heard. And you know Philo Judeus talked about the more perfect logos. And he said the more perfect logos will be beheld, rather than heard, but it will pass from being heard to being beheld without ever crossing a discernable barrier of transition. And I've experienced this, and I think other people have, where you hear the glossolalia like wave, and it comes closer and closer and then at a certain point it is manifest as a topology and I think many of the psychedelics communicate in these visual languages, after taking ayahuasca you know, and sitting with these people in darkened huts in the amazon, after hours and hours of it, your eyes are just bugging out of your head. You just have spent hours looking and looking and looking and drinking in this visual data, and uh, this is how really dense information is conveyed. Not a linear of string of little mouth noises where the brain rushes to the conventionalized dictionary and then grimly reconstructs the intention provided nothing too finely sculpted was intended.

And I think what's happening with the monitoring of brain states- Ralph Abraham who was here this morning is the director of the visual mathematics project at Santa Cruz.

Glossolalia, language, drugs, cybernetics, all of these things are the means to transforming the human self-image. It's almost impossible to imagine what a society would be like where this glossolalia held sway equal with speech. I think the pre-celtic- or I mean the Celts of Ireland may have been into this, because they rarely spoke without punning, and you were expected to pun on multiple levels. And the pun, far from being trivial, is a step toward this hyper-dimensional linguistic construct. It's almost like a fractal. A pun is a word with one and a half dimensions, or more, in it. And uh, it resonates. This historical, this vision that I conveyed this morning of the co-presence of resonant epochs in time, could only be conveyed if someone could transform their language in such a way that it was implicit that

this was happening and we were all noticing it and experiencing it the way we are noticing and experience the greenness of this tree, the fall of the sunlight through the leaves. We could also also be experiencing the ebb and flow of mid- Mesopotamian empires and Hellenistic religions and so forth and so on.

The fourth quadrant of the mandala, and then I will open it up for questions, which I hope there are many, is feminism, and I feel very trepidatious, wading into this, but never the less, I really feel in some ways it is the most important of all of these, because it is uh, going to work the change that is going to go on between us as individuals. What is happening I think is nothing less than an awareness that the most appropriate way to talk about the entelechy of this, on this planet is to call it her, and to admit that the goddess worship which was repressed by the rise of the patriarchal religions is now, its return is necessary. I don't want to say that the patriarchal interlude which lasted two-three thousand years was not necessary, I think it was necessary, but the fear will go out of the bomb when the hand that rocks the cradle holds the bomb, essentially. And all the bad little boys of the 19th and the 20th century who have been fiddling with their chemistry sets, now need to recognize that this all has to be handed over, to cooler heads who have not been scarred by the historical experience, in the way that I think masculine intelligence has been.

And uhm, psychedelics I count as a feminizing force, because they introduce you to the unconscious. Cybernetics I count as a feminizing force because it hardwires that same unconsciousness and raises it into inaccessibility. No longer are these things the theoretical constructs of psychologists, they become, you know, living realities in our lives. And uh, the transformation of the species into a, into a space-faring, whether interior or exterior or something else kind of space is only going to happen if this feminizing influence can now take the heat off the technological processes which were necessary to move us here. And feminism really, it has nothing to do with gender, it's just an attitude toward being in the world that is open I think basically to the translinguistic. If you had to stirp it of all biological notions of what feminism is, feminism is a kind of mentality which operates exterior to language. And there's no, it's like, the Nohual and the Tonal, theres no unifying those two things, or encompassing one with the other, it just is not like that. These things are uhm, alchemical opposites and as such the only way they can be unified is in a kind of coincidentia oppositorum. A union of opposites where the identity of each element is still fully expressed. This is not a rational concept, its like being in two places at once time. Nevertheless, it is a concept that is psychologically and experientially very, very valuable. And I see, as I say, all of these forms of self-exploration and technological expansion and even space, I mean if the earth is our mother then certainly outer space is our dark-blue great grandmother.

So I sort of give this as a background on what was said this morning, because I, I wanted to

convey the one thing I have to convey which is uniquely mine which is this strange wave, and that's mine. That its difficult to understand and its importance is open to debate. It may be trivial in the extreme. This afternoon, I sort of wanted to speak as a member of the culture who is trying to figure it out like everybody else using the same data banks that everybody else is using, and I- it was in Hawaii that I thought about this a lot, and I think these are the four pillars or the four quadrants of the mandala that lead into the coincidentia oppositorum which is the flying saucer, the exteriorized soul of the human race and the end of time, the transcendent object that will carry us all completely out of these concerns and into an entirely different set of concerns of which we have not the faintest inkling. So are there questions, or debates? In the back, Don.

[3:17:20]

[Peer Review for remainder of lecture-]

Original Transcription by: RLEX (In Progress)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

The Light at the End of History

14 October 1990

The Wetlands, New York, NY

Description

- [Scribd Transcript](#)

Transcript goes here...

Original Transcription by: [Please enter your name or username here when you start transcribing so we know that it is being/has been worked on by someone]

Review 1 by:

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The Light in Nature (aka Light of Nature)

Day Month 1988

The Esalen Institute (Benefit for KPFK and Botanical Dimensions), Big Sur, California (Big Sur Tapes, Big Sur, California)

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John Transcribed these two

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Description

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[Roy Tuckman Introduction]:

Roy Tuckman: So, I guess that's the end of my introduction, here's Terence McKenna!

[Audience Clapping]

Terence McKenna: Can you all hear me? Can you hear in the back? Yeah? Not very well? Make them hear in the back.

[Audience Laughter]

TM: Ok. Ah. That's much better isn't it? Is it better in the back? Good, good. Well I would like to, uh, join with Roy in thanking all of the people who made this possible. Mary Fowler, uh, worked long and hard to make this happen. Eric Ali did the wonderful graphics for the poster. Pam here, has controlled and managed traffic flow here this evening. Diane and Roy are, uh, incomparable treasures in the LA community. I was talking to someone today who said they had listened to KPFK very carefully in the month that Diane and Roy were away and it just ain't the same thing. [audience murmurs] It's terrifying to think that two human beings in a city of what, 11 million, are what's holding up the hip, uh.

[Audience applause, whooping]

TM: The hip end of things. As Roy said, this is, uh, a benefit for KPFK, and, uh, in a larger sense for Botanical Dimensions. Botanical Dimensions is the non-profit that, uh, uh, Kat and I and Rupert

Sheldrake, and Ralph Metzner, Ralph Abraham, Frank Barr, a number of people have organized to carry out plant rescue operations for medicinal plants and plants with a history of shamanic usage and we uh have a botanical farm in Hawaii, 20 acres, maintain collectors in South America and occasionally support collecting in Africa. And, uh, this is our real-world political work, beyond the communicating and the publishing and that sort of thing, where we actually try to impact, uh, some of the more- some of the negative, so called, progressive changes that are taking place in the third world and disrupting rainforest culture and causing this shamanic and folk pharmacopeia to be lost. So I appreciate, uh, your being here tonight in support of that. It's very important work, far more expensive than I thought it was when I organized the foundation, and, uh, it's ongoing so we never really seem to be ahead. So I want to thank you for your support of that.

In line with that, I've been living, uh, with Kat and our 2 children in the h- in Hawaii on the big island for the past year and not really doing any public speaking because there is none to be done there, and, uh, it was a very good opportunity to get out from under the electronic umbrella, of the sprawl of North American culture, and to sort of look at it and assess it. As this practice of speaking with groups of people has become more and more a part of my life it has sort of changed in my mind, from the addressing of certain topics and the building of a talk around a theme, to more, uh, just pointing and looking and saying "well, here we are, here's where we've arrived tonight. What is the situation? What is the state of the world? What is the state of the union?" Um.

I think psychedelics had a very large impact, I'm sure there's no argument on this in the 1960's. but in a way it was not ever anchored in anything. It was never explained to anybody by anybody how it fit into the historical context of what had preceded it. Perhaps because no one actually knew at that time. For instance, there was no, uh, the- the invoking of shamanism as an explanation for how plant hallucinogens work on psyche is completely alien to the literature of the 1960's. it just isn't there. And, speaking of aliens, the theme of alien intelligence or of hyper-dimensional, uh, organized entelechy contacted in the psychedelic state. That also was an absent theme. It was basically presented, it, the psychedelic experience, was basically presented - it, the psychedelic experience was basically presented as an exploration of the contents of the personality with a little bit of overflow into aesthetic issues. So I remember in the early days we would stack our Abrams books on Hieronymous Bosch and Pierra de la Francesca and Giotto, and the idea following Ald Hux that you would, uh, you would imbibe the meaning of these great works of art, uh, behind the kind of psychic freedom that the psychedelic substance was going to graft on to your ordinary consciousness.

While I think all those kinds of metaphors were useful, but it's been now, uh, 20, 25 years of looking at that phenomenon, and also of having the future continue to overtake us with ever more demands upon our cultural resourcefulness and our, uh, ability to cognize the cultural situation. And, uh, I think now it can be seen, uh, somewhat differently. And so these two nights in Los Angeles, uh, which are called Understanding and Imagination in the Light of Nature, are a kind of effort to take several telescoping steps backward, and place the, uh, adventure of psychedelic self-exploration in context. To frame it in a number of different ways, because I think it's very important for us to know, uh, as the hermetic mysteries urge us to know, wither we have come, where we are, who we are, and whence we are going. All issues that the psychedelic experience, especially to my mind the plant hallucinogens, uh, bring into close focus. Here is an opportunity for a theater of cultural growth that is, uh, uh, unparalleled.

How did we find ourselves in this situation? What is, exactly, the nature of the cultural situation in which,

then, the psychedelic response is called forth as part of a spectrum of cultural responses? Basically what's been going on in western civilization for about 500 years is the exploration of the metaphor of materialism, which began as a simple, limiting case. Since we're at the philosophical research society it behooves us to talk philosophy for a moment and remind you that there is what's called Occam's Razor. William of Occam was, um a late medieval philosopher and his razor was the hypothesis should not be multiplied without necessity, without necessity. In other words, the simplest explanation should be preferred in all cases. The fewest number of elements should be put forward as necessary for an explanation. And following William of Occam's, uh, uh, statement of this notion as a, uh, logical way of proceeding, um, the assumption was made, then, a provisional assumption, at the beginning, that matter could be, uh, separated from the notion of soul and spirit. That it could be divided into its simplest units. And out of the activity of those simple units, a model could be built up that would explain more complex phenomena in the world. Cartesian Materialism, which, uh, was applied very successfully to, uh, physical matter, to the chemical elements, and so successfully, in fact, that the provisional nature of the assumption was soon forgotten in the explanatory zeal of the people who had latched onto this method. And so it was then applied, uh, out of the chemical realm and it moved into the biological realm, and the search was on for the biologically irreducible unit, which, uh, in the 17th century was the cell, and great excitement about the cell. And then in the 20th century, of course, first the nucleus of the cell and ultimately DNA, that, as the constituent of the nucleus which was, uh, controlling protein synthesis.

But strangely enough, the elucidation of the mechanics of the gene, through this program of reductionism, did not, uh, issue into the same kind of control over the products of the gene that the same program had, uh, the same kind of fruit that had been born of the analysis of physical matter. And in the early years of this century when the effort was made to extend the metaphor into, uh, psychology, the true inadequacy of it became clearly seen, so that, the effort to break the personality down into types, or complexes, or archetypes, or behavioral, uh, uh, strategies all failed. and at the same time that this process that this confirmation was happening in the social sciences, physics, which had been old reliable, in the matter of supporting this particulate, pointillistic, materialistic, school of explanation began, in fact, to betray it. Because the analysis of matter was pushed to deeper and deeper levels, until finally phenomena began to be elucidated which seemed, uh, incomprehensible in the mechanical model. It seemed as though what had been thought of as points of matter we in fact spread through time, and the notion of simple location began to give way to clouds of probability and this sort of thing. All of this reaching, uh, a culmination in 1923 with the Copenhagen conference on quantum physics, where basically a new vision of matter was elucidated.

And strangely enough, the new view of matter seemed to have a very mentalist sort of aura about it. It no longer was a theory of simple location, calculable energies, and specific predictions. It was probabilistic. Now this reemergence of a need for a wave-mechanical description of matter, can I think, now be seen from the vantage point of 55 years, as, uh, the first stirrings, or among the first stirrings of the reemergence of the spirit. and I think that, uh, what understanding and imagination in the light of nature argues for is the presence and re-emergence of the awareness of spirit in the world. This is what, uh, the so called and long heralded paradigm shift is all about. It is a vast turning over of the intellectual universe, which will eclipse many idea systems, and support many more. It- it is the idea of fields. Spirit need not be defined or even conceived in any sort of 19th century, or mentalist, or animist way. What spirit is, is, uh, a field of deployed energy that is somehow co-present at more than one point in space and time. It is, uh, it is the shadow that haunts the particularized world of Newtonian matter. And it is, strangely enough, the commonest object of experience. In other words, as we move through our lives, as we project our hopes,

as we plan our days, as we execute our jobs, we move in this realm of spirit. The problem is that we have been very slowly, but very, uh, efficiently, corralled inside an intellectual system which gives no credence to spirit, and therefore has had a curious effect on the validation that we give our own lives.

For instance if you look at, uh, uh, positivist philosophy, which is the dominant philosophical paradigm in academic philosophy, there you learn that there are primary and secondary qualities to the world, and the primary qualities are charge, spin, angular momentum, velocity, this sort of thing. Things which nowhere come tangential to the felt world of the individual. Well then there are also, so called, secondary qualities: Color, taste, tone, feeling. All the things that make up the world that you and I experience. So somehow we are not traveling in first class on this metaphysical airliner. No we're back there with the secondary qualities, and the good stuff is all up front and it is described and manipulated by incomprehensible equations, uh, and uh, you have to enter into a priesthood to become part of it.

Well, uh, it's to our credit, I think, that we are waking up, and one of the reasons that we are waking up is because into the objects of common experience, by an exhaustive search of the objects of common experience, uh, diligent, clear thinking, seekers after understanding; people who are practicing, uh, who took seriously the Constitution's assurance of, uh, the pursuit of happiness, have, Robert Bork notwithstanding, [audience chuckles] have found more than the right of privacy in the Constitution, but have actually found the right to alter your own consciousness for purposes of personal growth. Well, consciousness is like a still pool. If it is unperturbed it returns a clear image of the world, in the same way that the unperturbed surface of a pond will become a mirror to the environment around it. But if consciousness is perturbed by being shifted from its ordinary modalities, then the extraordinarily tenuous and provisional nature of what we call reality, swims into our can. And we see, you know, that what we take to be solid objects, what we take to be here and now, what we take to be personal identity versus, uh, Other in the form of other personalities. That all of these things hang by the most tenuous of linguistic threads and cultural conventions. And that beneath the surface of those conventions is utter *terra incognita*; a no man's land. The unexplored territory behind cultural assumption suddenly starkly totally incontrovertibly illuminated to the inspection of the individual. Well, this is, uh, feeding, indeed to my mind it is the major factor responsible for the reemergence of the awareness of the spirit. It holds out the possibility that we can create a new definition of our own humanness. That it was fine, for purposes of disentangling from the medieval church, to take the materialist rout, and to follow it into, uh, Darwinian evolution, to recognize our ascent from previous primate forms, and to, sort of, claim a dimension of existential freedom.

But that is not the whole story; that essentially is the legacy or the achievement of modernism, which was fully worked out by 1927 or 8, I would say. I mean those people: the pataphysicians, the quantum physicists, the Dadaists, the surrealists, [???] it was all worked out. And those of us who were born after that time and have come into this sort of pseudo-eschaton of regurgitation of modern values in art, fashion, and literature, have been living in this kind of a goldfish bowl ever since. I mean, really, it's astonishing the degree to which, in the most progressive and fast-moving century in the last 10 or, a- or, 20 for that matter, there has also been an extraordinary backward current. A very strong recidivism that has held at bay the true exfoliation of what modernity was supposed to mean. That's why, within the 20th century, the further back you go the more utopian the projection of the future becomes, and the further into the 20th century you go, the more like a dystopia it becomes, as we get not elevated railways, immortality, and, uh, hot pants, but, you know, bread lines, and germ warfare, and double speak, and all of these things. So, into this situation, of retrenchment and cultural recidivism, and the working out of modern values, which are

materialist values, comes then, the beginning of the post modern era. I don't- I prefer a different term, which I call compressionism, the compressionist era, which follows the modern era, and its theme is the reemergence of the presence of the spirit, and its major, uh, cultural exhibit, or the major cultural force driving it, is the discovery of relativism, with regard to consciousness. Which does not only mean, uh, psychedelic drugs and hallucinogenic plants per se. It also means media, it also means literary expectation, reorientation of the senses through design, urban planning, the entire spectrum of effects which feeds consciousness back into itself is, uh, enunciating this theme of the emergent spirit, and it is not necessarily a welcome theme. Because, uh, all institutions attain a certain momentum toward the preservation of their own vested interest. And science, and the handmaiden of science which is modern technocratic government, uh, have, uh, created a number of cultural institutions that, uh, have a friction with the reemergence of the spirit.

First and foremost is the notion of the public. The public is this weird idea that was generated in the wake of the printing press that there were vast numbers of people who could be treated atomistically. They didn't have to be thought of as individuals, they could be thought of as various, uh, classes. Masses of people to be manipulated, and if you could sell these, the public, on the idea of democracy, which is another one of these atomistic notions, the notion of democracy is for us all to get together and have it work, we have to assume that we're all alike, see, so we each have a vote and you may be tall, you may be short, you may be rich, you may be poor, you may be black, you may be white, but that doesn't matter, we'll give everybody this charge, one vote, and then we'll see how these populations work themselves out. What they don't tell you is, that at the same time that you build this definition of the citizen, you also build the institutions which subvert the the citizen. So the citizen is not free to act out and express the wishes of the citizen. The citizen is a consumer of ideological models that are sold to the citizen through agencies of mass propaganda. So there's this peculiar playing off of one against the other. In the meantime what has also been happening is, the institutions of language, which previously were pretty much left to develop on their own, and, and that was the situation well into the 19th century. The, through the power of the printing press, the evolution of language also became, uh, something under the control of these institutions and they very quickly have replaced whatever reality may have been impinging into the lives of the citizens with concepts.

Concepts replace reality. You come into the world with a blank slate, and everything is what William James called "a blooming buzzing confusion". Well then, one by one you isolate phenomena in this confusion, and you name it. Once a sector of reality has been named, it stays still. It ceases to behave the way it would behave for itself. It begins to behave syntactically, because it has been changed into a linguistic object. When things behave syntactically they are either subjects or objects or the syntactical machinery which relates these two together. In that case, materialism, dualism, projection of authenticity beyond the self are all reinforced. So these are the factors which have, uh, impeded the spirit. Into this comes the psychedelic experience. It has a tremendous force to revivify the spirit, particularly because it is not an ideology. It is not something someone figured out. It is an experience and this is important to bare in mind. It horrifies me, I'm sure you've heard me say it, uh, to think of someone going to birth to the grave without ever coming tangential to the psychedelic experience. It's like going from the birth to the grave without ever discovering sex. It means that you died as an adol- as a pre-adolescent, you know; you never really came into your birthright. and we have been infantilized by our cultural institution to accept the notion of ourselves as citizens consuming this regurgitated, these regurgitated scientific models which are then hashed through by Madison Avenue, and then handed down to us by the organs of mass culture, and this is supposed to be what we anchor our lives on. It's no wonder that, uh, drug abuse, child abuse, self

abuse is rampant in this society, because it all has been taken away from us. You may read 1984 and think "well, thank God it isn't that bad yet!" Well, the only difference between us and 1984 is we dress better!

[audience laughter, applause]

So I think that, uh, little gatherings like this, and I feel like this is definitely a family gathering, uh, this, this meeting was sold out, uh, before there was any promo, uh, other than Roy's show and a small mailing we did. So you are people who have passed through a very narrow filter. You stay up late [audience laughter] you listen to KPFK, and you tolerate Terence McKenna, so you are either thrice blessed or thrice cursed [audience laughter] I- I don't know which it is, but anyway, it feels to me like a family gathering. It feels to me like we are figuring this out, and there aren't that many of us, I think. But what we understand as a group, or what I imagine that, that we understand, is, that there is this twilight of reductionism. There is this end of the old model and yet we're not ready to proclaim the twilight of reductionism to simultaneously be the funeral of reason. You see, there are a lot of people, a much larger group than we represent who are prepared to bury reason along with reductionism and I think reason, uh may have been caught in bed with reductionism, but it may have been set up [audience laughter], is the the take that I have on it, and , and as they used to say in Watergate: "linked but not tainted" [audience laughter] so.

I am a very, uh, uh, some people even, someone said I was narrow min- I was accused of being narrow minded the other night [chuckles] because, uh, I come to this very honestly through the sciences, through trying to really find out what was going on, and not just accept everything that came down the pipe. I mean, I will believe anything if there's evidence, if it's self consistent, if the case is well made. I mean I think that the first thing that the truth will be is, uh, a pleasure to hear. You know, and not some turgid and tormented thing where you have to go to six meetings and not talk to anybody who doesn't believe it, and all of this sort of thing. So I think, uh, it's important as the, what I call the archaic revival, gets rolling, it is important for us to clarify where we're coming from. When we- when we were simply the lunatic fringe of the lunatic fringe it hardly mattered, but responsibility will devolve on us to say what we mean, and to have a position which is, uh, not only convincing to the converted, but convincing to the skeptics. That's who I'm after, you know, because I think that a great, uh, instance of cultural blindness is what we're confronted with on the issue of psychedelics. Psychedelics are to the science of psychology what the telescope was to astronomy in Galileo's time. And we are in a situation of increasing global pressure on our species, increasing outbreaks of neurosis, unhappiness, psychic epidemics, and we are leaving our best tools behind because of fairly preposterous cultural prohibitions. Cultural prohibitions which deny us our best weapons for overcoming, uh, the situation that we are in. And this is really an intolerable situation because, uh, the fates, nothing less than the fate of the human species probably hangs in the balance. We cannot afford the luxury of an unconscious. We cannot afford, uh, stupidity, closed mindedness, racism, sexism, uh, consumer materialism, selfishness, an absence of globalism. These things are not necessary for us, for our moral edification so we can feel like well bred ladies and gentlemen. These things are necessary for us so that we don't destroy ourselves. And the fact that, uh, this message is so slow coming out is a strong argument for activism on the part of anybody who thinks they have even the faintest glimmer of what is going on. You know, the future will not wait, uh. I see the most, uh, cryptofacist and intrans- intransigent of institutions slowly waking up to fairly basic facts, such as that a nuclear war is probably a bad investment

[audience laughter]

You know, so that even, uh, so that even a neanderthal a type as President Pinocchio is willing- isn't that a cruel thing for me to say?

[Audience laughter]

Is, is waking up to the fact that, uh, [clears throat] it just don't pay. But you know we have a lot of problems, it isn't going to be the millennium even if we achieve a massive cutback in strategic weapons, there's still going to be propaganda, sexism, starvation, uh, inability to correctly manage resources. These things will plague us, uh, unto, uh, the last syllable of recorded time unless we begin to undergo this kind of intellectual cohesion, the compression of our intent, the recognition of our group mindedness as a feeling, as a will, that can act in the historical context, and, uh, to my mind the psychedelics have always existed in the plants to promote precisely this. There were not language-using tool-making tribes of human beings in the absence of hallucinogenic plants. The hallucinogenic plants create the context for integrated organizational activity. This has been going on for at least 15- 20,000 years. The problem is that through a series of factors which we needn't go into in depth here, but factors which impinged on European civilization particularly, civilizations were able to evolve outside of the noetic input from Gaia, outside of the biological radio which envelops the planet and inputs into balanced tribal societies with functioning shamanic institutions. In Europe somehow the chain was broken. The link back to the elder Gods and Goddesses and to the biological organization of human society before history was lost. And this curious kind of ungoverned intellectual development occurred. Ungoverned in the literal sense of a machine which slips from the control of its, uh, of its governor. And uh, uh, it's, uh, in that situation materialism, which is an insupportable philosophy actually, if you have an openness, a sensitivity, any kind of cultivated feminine response to nature, it is utterly impossible.

Recall that the Cartesian, the point of view of Cartesian materialism pushed Descartes to actually claiming public debate that, m- that animals are machines. He said they feel nothing. The apparent display of pain is simply a, a, something which we project onto them. because we alone have a soul and, and Descartes you see had himself had not gone over completely to materialism, he believed there was a human soul but it came tangential at only one point to, uh, to the human body. Somewhere in the Pineal gland there was a switch and the, and the soul was running things like a telephone switch board operator from there. Well, uh, very shortly after Descartes his followers just said well we don't need this soul concept is just a thing to stay on the right side of the church and we don't need it and they cut it loose. An- Well once you cut that loose, then you have all kinds of permissions. You have permission to rape and exploit nature. Permission which had already been reinforced for Western man by the New Testament, but now raised to the nth degree by the assumption that nature is utterly without soul and this philosophy persisted well into the 1950's.

The essence of, s-, of Jean Paul Sartre's existentialism was, can be summed up in the na- in the statement "Nature is Mute" that was Sartre's position on nature. How many people thinking themselves existentialist and hanging out in coffee houses actually ever found, worked through what the consequences of the existential point of view was. Nature is not mute, you really have to have worked yourself in a weird place to believe that, you know. In fact, nature is entirely the something else. Nature is communication, because nature is psyche. This is what we haven't understood. We have somehow talked ourselves into the belief that into the natural world of Eden, God came and made man and from man, woman, and that men and women are of so ontologically a different level than the rest of nature that no conclusion about us can be drawn from an examination of nature. Nothing could a- I mean I, eeh, it's impossible for me to understand

how this idea persists and has such momentum in the 20th century, where hierarchy theory has very very clearly, uh, explicated the notion of the linkage of higher-order systems to subsystems that are physically more simple. So you see really what we have is a kind of fractal universe. I- In fact it's not greatly different from the alchemical view of the 16th century where people said, uh, "as above so below" the microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm. What this is really saying is that at the level of a planet you get a certain level of organization and spectrum of peripheral effects. The same thing, such as self reflection, self regulation, intent, goal projection, steering toward perceived goal. You get the same kind of thing on the level of society, can be a beehive or a herd of antelope or whatever, and you get it in the human individual and the human society. So really, what is to be seen is the, we are the cutting edge of becoming. We are not a thing apart, we a unique level of a multilevel organism and we have been called forth out of nature, by nature, for a purpose, and what is our cast as individuals, I think, is to discover what that purpose is and then to align ourselves with it in a way which allows the plan, whatever it is, to most smoothly unfold.

Well what it seems to be is a progressive invocation of spirit. The theme with which I began the evening. That through language, through abstraction, through magical invocation, the formulation of religion, the projection of art, the field phenomena, the phenomena which are diffuse in space and time and not easily located are forcing, or intruding their way, into three dimensional space and time. If you were an extra terrestrial in a starship in orbit around this planet, what you would see looking down is a gene swarm. The species that seem to us to be animal forms extremely stable in time are actually highly permeable membranes over millennia and tens of millennia with genes crossing over, moving around, and being basically obedient to the expression of some kind of teleological form. And it was the concern of 19th century biology to eliminate teleology, to eliminate purpose and directedness, but it's very hard to avoid the impression of some kind of, of, uh, attractor, ahead of this planet, embedded in its history, and somehow channeling everything toward it. So that the progressive acceleration of human society, of information production, of communication, the proliferation of languages, natural and synthetic. All of these things are, uh, not something going on in the human domain and somehow sealed from the general state of nature, but are, in fact, part of the general state of nature. And the human experience, or the human animal as the carrier of this catalytic process, this speeding up and accelerating of process on the surface of the planet is not sealed from nature, but the leading edge; the leading edge of a process on this planet.

Now teleology was so antithetical to 19th century science because they were trying to pull away from the *telos* of, uh, medieval philosophy. They didn't want God, these 19th century English atheists: Darwin and Lyle and, uh, and uh that crowd. However, uh, we have come through the de- the so called death of God, and the elimination of, uh, of a theological *raison detre* for the Universe. And now we're looking more at a *telos* we would operationally define. Rather than define, for- it based on ancient revelation, which was the pre- you know, the previous the method was: the older the book the truer it must be, and the Bible is the oldest book and therefore it must be true. This is, uh, what Mercea Eliade called the nostalgia for paradise paradigm of time. We are overcoming that, it can now be seen that there is, in fact, some kind of transcendental object, and it's best to try and describe it phenomenologically. We don't know what it is, but we do know that it's an enormous attractor of some sort, and we are in the field of attraction, and by we I mean all life on the planet is being drawn in to this noble point. And it is possible to anticipate it through the psychedelic experience, because apparently the natural and the linguistic worlds are, uh, worlds which are organized along the principle of fractal curves.

Fractal curves are recently discovered mathematical objects- not all of them are recently discovered, some of them are known as late as the late 19th century, but most have been discovered using computers in the

last 10 or 15 years, and they are self-similar curves such that, when you take a subset of one of these mathematical objects, it is found to have a whole pattern embedded in it. The Fourier transforms that describe holograms are these kinds of things, coastlines, mountain ranges, uh, data of all sorts, when analyzed in a certain way is found to be fractal. Apparently the world is a kind of vast spiral fractal that is achieving greater and greater closure with itself, and we experience this density of closure and this compressionism, uh, as the spectrum of effects which we call human evolution, human history, emergence of high technology, the present moment, the rush towards apocalypse. The most intense moments that the Universe have ever known are the next 15 seconds, and beyond that lies still more intense moments. Novelty, as a kind of generalized paradigm of the compression of connectedness throughout the cosmos is accelerating moment by moment, in the rocks, in the trees, in the stars, and in us. And so what we call history, which is not as modern- the modern theory of history is what they call "trendlessly fluctuating" that is their model of the world. You get order at the atomic level, order at the biological level, order, order, order, suddenly you reach human beings trendlessly fluctuating.

[Audience Laughter]

It's as though, you know we were brownian, effected by the brownian movement of random particles and yet we, somehow out of all this ordering we're to believe that then emerges the trendless fluctuation of human history. Actually, this is nonsense simply that there has never been a thoroughgoing theory of history. However, now we are ready for them because these wave-mechanical ideas that notions of closure, Shelldrake's idea about the presence of a past, the way in which a past drives the present, all of these things lay us open for an understanding of the compression and densification of time, and this is what is experienced in the psychedelic experience. Really, you know, Whitehead said of dove grey that it haunts time like a ghost. Well, I think that the compression of the three dimensional universe at the end of time haunts time like a ghost. It's the cosmic giggle. Here a messiah, there a shaman, there an ecstatic poet, and there the tiny ripple that is simply a congruent coincidence in the life of a single individual. Robert Anton Wilson called this the cosmic giggle. It's when something protrudes through the flor- the forward flowing momentum of rational causuistry and causes it to flow around it, and eddy and churn, and then you like you see through for a moment and you're like What is it? and there's a plottedness for a moment, there was, uh, the hand of the maker there but now I don't see it anymore. That is the going behind the veil. That is the seeing into the structure of being that lies beh- behind the conventionalized languages. That's why, uh, coincidence is so often reported as an accompanying phenomenon for the psychedelic experience, because really syntax is dissolved, and syntax is a filter for this sense of, uh, eminent connectedness. And when the syntax goes, the eminent connectedness flows in. Then it's a question of what you do with this. If it causes you to believe that you are going to save the world, then you haven't gotten the message right, that's inflation, and, uh, inflation is very bad, it drives up interest rates. So if you get that kind of a take on it, you are misusing it, nevertheless, the most advanced yogic techniques that are known are the techniques of the so called AYTIT and the tantric yoga techniques, and there the prescription is, it says in Herbert Nothers Treasures of the Tibetan middle way "You should think of your house as a resplendent palace. Think of your utensils as made of beaten gold. and think of yourself as having a body made of living mercury." What this is in western psychological terms is an invitation to inflation, but if it is a, if it is approached with the right analysis of mind, basically that it is, that there is nothing but Bodhi Mind and there is no particularization in time and space, then there is no fee- inflationary feedback into the ego.

And this is, um, this is the kind of opportunity that the psychedelic opens up. It is, uh, I've said many times quoting plato, time is the moving image of eternity. Time is the moving image of eternity. What the

shaman does is he or she leaves the mundane plane and in Mircea Eliade's phrase is able to trigger a rupture of planes. And a rupture of plane carries the shamanizing person into another dimension. Literally, another dimension. And in that other dimension, all of time and space is beheld, as James Joyce said, in a nutshell, and in the nutshell of time and space everything is, uh, seen to be a part and a, a, a, uh aesthetically pleasing integral, necessary part of the transcendental object. In fact, what this universe is is a lower dimensional slice of that same transcendental object. Well, I guess what impells my career and what I really can't get over is that what I'm saying to you is true.

[Audience murmuring]

You know, that we, we sit here and we gather here, and even though we're talking about this extremely far out thing, still all the forms are in place. I'm here, you're there, everybody sits on their ass, nobody sits on their head. It all, uh, it all appears fairly mundane. How can it be that what we are talking about is the nearby presence of an impossibly alien dimension. Now if that alien dimension had been reported back to us by a robot probe dropped into the methane oceans of Europa we would be all hot to go there, to organize a 20 billion dollar expedition and a 15 year plan and go out there and found out what is happening. The amazing this is, that you know, each one of us in our own living room can be this Magellan, can penetrate into these dimensions. It really seems quite freaky to me. Freaky to me that such a thing is possible, and yet that we are such monkeys or so culturally constrained, or so blind that this is not what we're all talking about all the time, and by we all, I mean all 5 billion of us on this planet. Because we appear to be being pushed down a featureless corridor toward a furnace, and yet if you notice there are all these doors along the side of the so-called featureless corridor, and nobody seems to have cognized that you can just open these doors and walk through and short circuit the inevitability of planetary disaster. Amazing! Amazing! because we pride ourselves on, uh, our commitment that science allows us to look anywhere, inspect any possibility, our models are not dictated to us by the church, or by government, or by industry, when in fact they are dictated to us by the church, government, industry, mammalian organization and so we are no better off than all those benighted people in those previous ages where we look back upon them and say "well, they must have been so limited by their world views because they didn't know about quantum physics and ketamine and Michael Jackson and cable TV and all of these things" but the fact of the matter is that unless we push through culture to nature we, too, are dupes; we too are somehow being sold a line.

And, uh, and yet nature is there, outside of the cities, you know you drive an hour and a half from where we're sitting you're in the high desert and it is demon-haunted, paleolithic space. It is, uh, it holds the same promise for us as moderns that it held for the [?] indians who were initiated in to- into their shamanic institutions before the conquest, before history. So, nature is the final arbiter of cultural forms. This is what Taoism understood, and this is what, I believe, the psychedelic plant thing is pushing us toward. It was not immediately apparent that this was so, because as I said at the beginning of this talk, in the 60's uh th- the psychedelics came out of a laboratory, and only the most scholarly of the trippers bothered to study the natural origins and the anthro- and ethnographic context in which these things were coming from like the Eleusinian mysteries or the Mexican morning glory mysteries or the Wasson-discovered mushroom mysteries. but if we can somehow link a respect to nature, a sensitivity to Gaia. A valuing of ourselves, a, a, uh, complete placing of our own feelings and our own perceptions in the forefront of, uh, trustworthy sources and the psychedelics integrated into our lives, then there will be a tremendous cultural impact, a tremendous reorientation. Because the, the message that nature is trying to give, the steering signal on the human species comes through the accessing of this shamanic dimension outside of history. Revolutions are made by tiny percentages of the populations in which they are- in which those revolutions are wrought.

The important thing is clarity and connectedness, and, uh, a, uh clear understanding of who one's antecedents are, what the source antecedents are and what the target goal is.

'New Age' is a pale label for what is going on. New Age sounds too much like new Nixon, new Reagan, new re-treaded everything. What is happening is an archaic revival. A parking back to cultural models 10 to 25,000 years old because the profane fall into history is actually ending. The way the fall into history ends is with the progeny of Adam, the human race, recovering the control of the human form. The control of the human soul. The ability to turn ourselves into whatever we wish to be. This comes through the union of imagination through understanding, into nature. The invocation of the dream, this is what the Australian aboriginal society is talking about, this is what the dream time is. Finnegans Wake says "up neent prospector you warp your woof and spread your wings. sprout all your worth." This upneent this end of time, this birth into angelhood lies ahead of us, but it is really part of the archaic return to the paradisaical mode before history. The psychedelic hallucinogens are the catalyst. The minds that they touch become the catalysts within the society in general and from there the fashions, the social forms, the kinds of consciensousness, the innate decency that is, uh, that is called forth by the authenticity of the experience is what will transform us.

I mean in the same way that, uh, an affair can become a love affair if there is mutual authenticity of behavior, rather than simply a kind of flirting flirtation. In the s- in that same way our affair with Gaia can be a love affair if we can summon to ourselves the vision to make it so. And it means really being aware of the vastness of the options, of the precipice that late 20th century historical human beings stand on. We are about to leave for the stars. This is what is happening on this planet. The species prepares to depart for the stars. To do that, energy has to be marshaled. The lessons of the long march out of the trees and to this moment have to be collated, sifted, refined, concentrated, that is the alchemical goal. The historical process of the story of the prodigal son, of a wandering and a return. The return is meaningless without the wandering. The wandering has no meaning unless its fruits are given, uh, birth after the return. And I think that, uh the last thousand years has been the prodigal journey into matter, and it ends finally with modern pharmacology, modern ethnobotany discovering in the jungles of the Amazon, in the mountains of Mexico the body of Eros. Osiris, you know, fallen since the time of the flood, but awaiting the reemergence of the cognizant human connection. That is what the archaic revival holds out. It's actually our salvation

I mean I think I'm fairly hard nosed. I don't see any hope for us, I don't see any hope for institutional transformation unless it is done with an awareness of the transcendental object. And the religions that we inherit from the past are so screwed up that the only way to validate and empower the transcendental object is by self experience, and by direct accessing, and people say "Well can't it be done on the natch?" No it can't be done on the natch, generally speaking, because if it could be, it would have been done. I mean, we- there are plenty of elder societies on this planet that have the rap down, you know, but look at the kind of societies that they erect. I mean, horrifyingly dehumanized societies seem to be the breeding place of the most sublime religions there are! So, no, I think it has to be, there has to be a humbling. We have to bow our heads and abandon the dualism that we inherit out of our, out of Christianity and science and the whole judeo-christian-islamic schtick. We have to realize that it requires a symbiotic partner: It's a hand in hand effort. And if we're willing to take the hand which nature offers in, in the strange form of the alien vegetation spirit from the stars that seems to infuse us on plant hallucinogens then we will go forward into a bright new world. It's a partnership, it's a challenge, it's uh, the only game in the planetary village, and, uh, I appreciate your letting me share with you my notion of it this evening, thank you.

[Audience applause]

TM: We're gonna take about, uh, 10 or 15 minute break and then do question and answers. There are a bunch of, uh, handouts, catalogs, events coming up, stuff on tables at the back of the room which I urge you to take a look at.

[Tape Splice]

TM: Yeah?

[Audience Noises]

TM: We're going to start very quickly, because, uh, the philosophical society has asked that we, uh, wind ourselves down. I wanted to call your attention to a couple of things before I take questions. "Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Growers Guide" [audience begins to cheer] is back in print by popular demand.

[audience applause]

At health food stores, you buy agar.

[Audience Laughter]

But, uh, I do technical consulting at a hefty hourly fee. This, this can be gotten at Bodhi Tree, it's longer, it's on better paper, it has more drawings, it's as state of the art as, uh, as we can make it. It has brought freedom, prosperity and enlightenment to tens of thousands.

[Audience Laughter]

We have, uh- not to be outdone by Tim Leary, we have a piece of software [scattered applause] so if, if you own a 2E, 2C, or 2GS machine from apple, why you can run this Timewave software which, in my opinion, is actually my best trick, and I will be writing and talking more and more about, uh, about the wave of time because in Hawaii, finally developing this software gave me a real grip on it. Eventually we will market this for Macintosh and IBM-compatible machinery, but right now it's in the uh, 2e, 2c line. Um, also I'd like to mention that, uh, Kat and I will be at Esalen next weekend so if any of you are true gluttons for punishment why you can join us up there for 2 and a half days, and uh, it should be lots of fun. That will wind this all up.

And before I take questions I want to again remind you of botanical dimensions. It is a tax exempt non-profit, we do need donations, so, every- all the money that is given goes very directly into visibly manifesting, uh, the botanical garden in Hawaii, collecting the plants, in, uh, building a computer database, and basically support-, not even supporting but, uh, keeping a Peruvian collector in the field. Since I'm most familiar with Amazonian botany why that's where we've concentrated.

Well, usually questions are the most interesting, uh, how is this to be done? Are you going to have a microphone? Will people come up? Stand up? Stand up and speak loudly. In the middle in the back, yes.

Q: Yes, Terence. I was wondering if you could share with us your ideas about what the spirit is?

TM: Well, I think it, it's uh, my notion of it is it's an info- the way we experience it, it's an informing understanding. It's, on one level, it's simply appropriate activity, you know, knowing how to do everything because it is the Tao of the ancestors. In other words, you can sort of see yourself as the, as the most recent version of your family's genes, and in all traditional activities there's millions of years of morphogenetic fields stored up for how you pick something up. How you sit something down, so, in the immediate sense, the manifestation of spirit is appropriate activity.

What it really is, I think, is some kind of hidden how-ness that makes everything be as it is. And that's what the spirit is. In other words, science describes the possible things that can happen. Science is the study of possibilities, and what nobody has ever answered is how is it that out of the entire class of possibilities, certain things actually undergo the formality of occurring? Somehow they are selected out of the class of the possible and they become the actual. Well, the thing which mediates the coming into being of the actual out of the class of the possible is what I think the spirit is. It is the, the invisible hand, if you will. It is the guiding force. It is the invisible landscape over which becoming flows like a river. It defines, it creates, it is this telos that I mentioned, this attractor at the end of time. Other q-? Yes, back there.

Q: Uh, yes, Terence, uh, has there been any research you, uh, know of, uh, in in relation to electron spin resonance recently since the Invisible Landscape? And secondly can tryptamine act as a mechanism for the release of genetically stored material, uh, through that DSR or direct spin resonance with an interpolation [??] substances into the neural DNA, isn't it, uh, subset of genetic mechanisms for uh, racial?

TM: Well, in The Invisible Landscape, that's what we were suggesting, and The Invisible Landscape was published in 1975, uh, since then there's been a lot of work with MMR and ESR, none of it which overthrows this idea. It's a real question about the, uh, the where is the epigenetic data stored? In other words, all the memories that you accumulate during your life die with you. Your genetic material you can pass on at least half to your children, and, and so during the life of the individual this epigenetic material: experience, anecdotes, memories, anticipations. How- where is it molecularly stored, and is it molecularly stored? In The Invisible Landscape we were suggesting that, uh, thought is actually a naturally occurring ESR readout of portions of the DNA which were not associated with genetic expression but which were somehow like, uh, um, write- writable memory in a computer. The epigenetic stuff was being stored there. There's no data to overthrow that notion that I'm aware of, I'm not, I don't cling to it, um, as strongly as I once did. I- I look more and more, I, see I didn't realize that this was a fundamental break, this, uh, allowing of spirit into the scientific model of the world, and, uh, uh. I now think of the, the brain as a receiver of the phenomenon of consciousness. That- I don't believe that, that consciousness is generated in the brain anymore than that television programs are made inside my TV. You know, the box is too small.

[Audience laughter]

You know, that, I mean it just obviously is too small. I, I mean, it might not be if you didn't have the psychedelic experience, but once you spike that then well you say, well it's taking you know 10 high 16 megabytes of memory to store this database so, it just doesn't, I just don't think it would be done like that. I think there is, a- some how this field phenomenon that I keep returning to. This is another slice on what the spirit is, it is this field of some sort of energy that organisms, as they evolve, discover. Right? Already somehow present in the environment it is that, the apatition for being that drives organic, uh, evolution into

this kind of dance of relatedness to this other thing which is transduced from another dimension. That's why, you know if you take "consciousness expansion" as a phrase, or consciousness enhancement seriously it must be very important because consciousness is after all what it's all made out of. That's the name of the game.

So, uh, this transducing of, uh, higher states of consciousness then seems, uh, uh, very important even at that it would be, uh, necessary to elucidate the physical mechanisms whether it's ESR, MMR, or what it is. An interesting, um, sort of opportunity for psychedelic research, you see, the amazing thing about psychedelics is not only that they are illegal and restricted from the so-called ordinary person, but they are restricted to scientific research. Nobody can do research on psychedelics. I mean, it is professionally and practically impossible to do it.

Well there's no other area where this is true, I mean science probes obscenely into the pri- the most private areas of our sex lives, our social lives, our dream lives, monkeys are smashed against walls to study- There's no limit to it, and yet there's this total hands off attitude to the psychedelics. So an interesting break in this front is the sudden need, because of, uh, computer assisted tomography, CAT scanning, the need for compounds which locate in certain highly defined parts of the brain. If you could triviate these drug compounds, uh, and make them radioactive you could make very nice pictures of various parts of the brain. So now suddenly there is an interest in all this old psychedelic research about receptor cites and location densities of molecules in the brain so we may be on break of an era where, to have a psilocybin trip in the evening you must have signed on for a CAT scan, uh, at general hospital in the morning. Someone else.

Q: I, I forgot my question I about the space of these plans that you need new rescue them from the Amazon and bring them to Hawaii, how many types of plants there are, that type of thing.

TM: Well, um, the, every time I have gone to the Amazon plant collecting I've observed that the cultures, the indidgenous rainforest cultures are more and more disrupted, and there's a lot of, uh, conservation and big organizations raising money to preserve the rainforest and to get large tracts of rainforest set aside. But, there is no awareness or social, uh, conscience about the fact that the presence of capitalism in the Amazon is totally disrupting tribal human culture. So these people who have been tribal for thousands of years, uh, the men are just totally walking out on the traditional lifestyle and taking their canoe 100 miles down river and signing on at saw mills and on oil drilling crews and this sort of thing. And, so the consequences of this is, that far more rapidly than the rainforest itself is being destroyed, uh, the human cultural interaction with the rain forest is being lost, and thousands and thousands of species of medicinal plants, antibiotics, immune stimulators, hallucinogens, analgesics, uh. All these different kinds of plants, this data, this lore is being lost and when you realize that, you know, 80% of the drugs sold in the United States are, in fact, traceable to plant sources, and in spite of the vaunted success of so called strategic pharmacology, where you just think up the drug you think you need and make it in a laboratory it really- it's still a lot of what drug companies do is screen for plants, uh, and cash in on folk lore, basically.

So, it's important to preserve these plants and, uh, the lore about them because, you see, I mean like, it's really hard to explain how some of these plants have been discovered, for instance in the case of Ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is a visionary shamanic brew that happens to be made of two- two different plants *Banisteriopsis caapi* supplies an MAO inhibitor and *P. Viridis* supplies DMT. Either plant by itself is inert and you have to know to brew the wood and bark of one with the leaves of the other, and you have to know

that it's in a certain proportion, and you have to know to concentrate it to a certain degree. Well, when you realize that in a square mile of Amazonian rain forest can have 120,000 species of plants on it, I mean, that's in contrast to when you go into the Sierras a square mile of forest may have 150 species. So, it's an ultra complex environment and human beings, who knows by what means, I mean, it is to my mind, that the vegetable spirits lead them to it, have sussed out all this knowledge that is, uh, you know, un, a seamless web of understanding about nature, and, uh, so this is what we're trying to preserve in Hawaii.

I think ayahuasca is a good example, it has tremendous potential for psychiatry. It is a purgative, it kills intestinal parasites, it, uh, appears in agar, in slant cultures, to kill the tramazone of malaria. Well, instead of delivering high priced drugs made in Germany and the United States to the outback of Indonesia where malaria is raging, you could simply send in thousands of cuttings of this plant. People could grow it as a door yard plant, take it as a tea on a weekly basis, and uh, malaria would be held at bay. There are over 200 plants, uh, in a recent review article that I saw, known from Africa that appear to be immune stimulative plants. Well, God, this should have everybody on the edge of their seat. the breakdown of the immune system and the whole aids related complex and all of that. It turns out that adaptations to plants in traditional cultures have conferred, or have stimulated the immune system and conferred certain kinds of immunity. Well then, this could be the basis for a drug strategy of some sort, and so on. So this is the kind of preservational work that we're doing there. Yes

Q: Yes Terence, um, a few days ago you were on KPFK with Roy and you mentioned briefly san pedro, that what you said right? you were talking about that, that, plant san pedro cactus that people can you just, can you just a background maybe a parallel or your experience with san pedro that to that of, um, psilocybin mushrooms. When I tried san pedro cactus mixing it with vanilla ice cream.

[Audience Laughter]

TM: I don't know what ... means but it must have startled your stomach

[Audience Laughter]

Q: ...

---1:29 REVIEW IN PROGRESS ----

TM well I am, I don't really know that much about San Pedro, I've never gotten around to it, I know a person who swears by it, that they have an elaborate way of cooking it up in a pressure cooker. Mescaline, which, and and hallamin, anhallomine, n methy mescaline, all of these things are occurring in that plant. Uh, it's an amphetamine related thing it tends to be pretty rough. of, uh og the natural hallucinogens that really the big ones as I think of them, mescaline is the harshest. An operating dose is considered to be actually close to a gram, 700 milligrams. One way that pharmacologists judge the toxicity of a drug is by how much it takes to get you off, and the less it takes then the more benign the drug is thought to be, so on that scale mescaline doesn't do too well, but my experience with mescaline is with peyote, which I gather is somewhat similar, but. It's been interesting, it's hard to take enough to really reach the deep water without it really acting on your stomach. It's not the cleanest way to go. I think that, having looked at these things in south Americana and in many places, in my experience the mushrooms just is it. I mean, other things have

other aspects to it and bring it in, but, um, the mushroom is an extraordinary organism, it's like it's engineered for that purpose, and I've spoken about how it's almost strewn in the past of developing primitive man in Africa, because, uh, it was associated with the manure of cattle, and on the, in the ungulate herds of Africa, evolving on the veldt at the same time that the Human animal was evolving a complex, uh, pack signaling language and so forth.

This set the stage, it seems to me, it was the catalyst, I really believe that we are in a symbiotic relationship with these plants and that the mushroom, by virtue of being global in its distribution, is probably a major slice relationally of that kind. And in other in other words the peculiar turn that evolution took in our species, the reinforcing of self reflective consciousness and the reinforcing of linguistic signaling has to do with the present in the human diet in that early stage of these mushroom, uh it's known that the mushroom, that low amounts of psilocybin, sub-threshold doses of psilocybin increase visual acuity. Well, it isn't hard to think of, then, that if evolutionary pressure is operating on a hunting species, a pack hunting species, that visual acuity is going to be, uh, uh, uh, at a premium, and if, uh, small amounts of psilocybin the food chain increase visual acuity those animals will be selected and survive. Well, then their habit of using, as accepting the mushroom as a food makes them open for this linguistic synergy, this symbol forming capacity, then, and then, the, the deeper more ecstatic experiences with psilocybin which are then projected onto the mushroom onto the cattle become the basis for a kind of cattle goddess mushroom, uh, a cycle of a heirophany. The discovery of the tremendum. I mean almost as though in the scene in 2001 where the apes encounter the monolith, was precisely that except that the monolith was a mushroom, it was a superbly genetically engineered omnivorous, uh, uh, organism that could insert itself into the ecosystem of a planet and begin to coax an effect out of a mammal that it had a relationship to, and this effect coaxed out of the mammal is this relationship to this higher dimensional wave form which we call the spirit or mind, which is, apparently, sigh, you know that's what it's all about. Why this is happening is not clear, I mean in the mushroom book I suggested that it was because there is some awareness of planetary finitude. That the mushroom actually thinks on so large a scale that it is using us, uh, to make machines for it to perpetuate it, uh, throughout, uh, the nearby galaxy. That it is aware of the finite nature of our start. We don't know, we don't plan, yet, on those kind of scales; we're an infant race. Very obstreperous and, uh, the mushroom said to me once: "if you don't have a plan you become part of somebody else's plan!" one of it's slightly more paranoid, [Terence breaks into laughter] but it is good, I think, to have a plan, and to have allies, and uh, the mushroom is very contemptuous of the notion of, of humans having human allies. It says, you know, for one human being to think it could gain enlightenment from another is like for one grain of sand to think it could gain enlightenment from another. So, really believes in, uh, hierarchical levels and trickle down gnosis, which I'm not sure how I view that, I believe all secrets should be told and that we should just lay our cards on the table, but maybe I don't have as many cards as they do, so we play by their rules.

On the Isle.

Audience Member: uh, uh, if you're a wonderful convincing speaker... ceremony what your saying. Um, it's absolutely true that there's this intelligence that wants to connect... it's extremely informative, and uh, your saying, um that one way we can do this is through psychedelic experiences, I agree with this, but uh I'd like you to talk a little bit about the western traditions of the mystery, which involves ritual. And using ritual in order to maintain, uh, to uh uh, to maintain contact with the nature spirit, which, uh, I might add, is, uh, is a spirit which is bursting at the seams right now to connect...

TM: Yes, well, um. Mircea Eliade talked about the difference between sacral and profane time. And he said the way you leave history is you sacralize a space, and you sacralize a space through ritual. You, you abolish profane constraints of space and time, the here and now, and you imagine that you are what he, what he called *innilio tempora*, in the time before, in the paradisaical time before the fall. This goes back to what I said about the AMTYT, the imagining of these titanic God-like states of mind as a ground for being. Yes! I would never have thought, I mean I've been pushed to my position by my experience. I mean, I'm amazed at what I have to say based on what I've experienced, because I never thought it could be this way. You know, I came up a whole different way, I was a Marxist, and an Existentialist, and all of these things, and it was, as you testified: it's the pure evidence of it. I mean, you can, uh, you can convince yourself intellectually that something is true, but it's only in the, uh, in the, uh, embrace of the tremendous that it just sweeps over you how true it is, and uh, as far as the difference between establishing these connections through psychedelics and through ritual, I think deep psychedelic tripping, uh, is something that you don't do very often, simply because each time it's so rich. It takes a long time to process, uh, it's much better to go deeper, seldom, than, uh, than to diddle with it in the other ways as people do. I mean it often seems to me it's not even so much a matter of, uh, of spreading the good word, and turning it into a mass movement. It might be much more interesting if simply the people who were already in on the secret did it more conscientiously and did it more deeply, although, uh, I hasten to add that you shouldn't do too much. You should never do more than about 6 or 7 grams of mushrooms. I say that because I keep hearing stories about people who think going deeply means doing a lot, and they do amounts that stand my hair on end. I mean, in the past month traveling around I've heard stories ... and people are crazy, you know, they say I couldn't remember whether you said five grams or five ounces-

[Audience Laughter]

So to be safe I did an ounce and a half!

[Audience Laughter][Terence clears throat]

You know, I mean, it- it's important, to, uh hahaha, ha, it is important to get there, granted, but it's [Terence chortles] important to come back. [Terence laughs more]

Oh lord yes.

Audience Member: In your talk you, um, the transcendental object, you go into more about that.

TM: The way I imagine that history works is- well, first of all let me say how the way the people I disagree with think it works. [apparently the tape skips for a second] Then you have cooling, development of molec- atomic and molecular and organics and ultimately cultural, and systems, and ultimately technological systems, and, uh, this will go on indefinitely down until the heat death of the Universe, and the development of life and the culture has nothing to do with the physical, astrophysical level of things; it's sort of ancillary and a mistake. My view is somewhat different. It's that, if we have to have a singularity in our cosmology, in other words, it's so hard to figure out how you get from nothing to something. No philosophical school has ever been able to do it without some kind of singularity. So if we are going to have a singularity in our system, let us try to make it as logically palatable as possible. So how to do that? It's not logically palatable to me to believe that the Universe sprang from nothing in a single instant. It seems to me if you believe that you're set up to believe anything! Right, I mean isn't that it "Well if you'll believe that,

what wouldn't you believe!?" So, how about this instead? That the Universe, uh, its origins are a mystery, and cannot be determined, but as we look at its history, the history of it that is available to our inspection, what we see is increasing complexity, ending in ourselves and our civilization so far as we know. Well, then if you're going to have a singularity, I think that the singularity as a kind of phase transition. You know, Illia Pregosian talks about, uh, a chemical system will suddenly and spontaneously migrate to a higher state of order. Well that's sort of how I think of this thing. It is capable of migrating to a higher state of order. So, uh, If we're going to have a singularity, isn't it more likely that it will emerge out of a situation of vast complexity, than a situation of utter metaphysical nothingness? I think so. So I think that what the transcendental object is, is it is, uh, the cause of the Universe, if you will, except that this cause is at what we would conventionally refer to as the end. It's what everything flows towards. It isn't, uh, something which wound up that runs down. It's something diffuse, which is gathered in to something. And th-, and this gathering in takes the form not only of a progressive densification of a physical level, but of a progressive complexification at the organizational level. It also is a kind of a spiral; it has a temporal closure, so that each epoch, of uh, of closure happens more quickly than the ones which preceded it. What I mean by that is, it took the, you know, the universe of 20 billion years old, it took the first 5 billion years it, well, no. The first 10 billion years it was all about star formation, and nuclear put down of heavier elements out of lighter elements. And then you get molecules, which signify a higher level of organization which can only go on at a lower temperature, so as temperature leaves the universe more complex systems become possible, and ultimately polymers of great lengths become possible. So, this complexification is occurring and it is,uh, at each stage more rapid than the last. Now, the emergence of self reflection, of self reflection in our own species is part of this. It isn't a fluke, it isn't an accident, it, it is obedient to the same natural law which created these other systems. And, the emergence of our own curiously alienated and at odds with itself culture is also, uh, a part of this phenomenon. We ,eh, are initiating a kind of crisis with the planet. It is in the same way that a foetus will become septic if it is carried too far beyond term. There is a crisis now in the Gaia-Human system. The two must be parted, and the transcendental object is this knitting together of the organic intent of the planet to somehow expell us from the planetary environment. In some way, which is very hard for us to foresee and anticipate, because it is infact the transcendental object. I mean by appointing a committee to look into this weare not going to find out what it is. It is the- it is the face fo the abyss, it is the transcendental object, it cannot entirely be known, it is the living embodiment of Goedels incompleteness theorem. You know, science has taught us there are no mysteries only unsolved problems. this is a mystery not an unsolved problem. Nevertheless, it is, the- the narrowing vector of our timeline, and as some of your probably know, my, in my opinion, uh, around 2012 AD we will cross into, cross through novel epochs of concrescence, and, the transcendental object will be manifest. It's a very curious thing, it's something which is coming toward us from the future, that we are creating out of our intillectual and technological anticipation of diety. Really, I mean at tiome s I have spoken of it as the flying saucer. It is the flying saucer, and ti does enter history at a certain moemnt, and it is going towards us, and as we go toward it we are becoming what we behold. In effect I am saying the entirety of human history is a kind of psychedelic apotheosis where we are involved in a heiroschomos, a kind of alchemical marriage, and what th- you know what the next 25 years are about is advancing to meet the bride, and the bride is the unimaginable and un-, uh, un- um, -anticipitable, uh, fulfillment of our hearts desire. You know, we are becoming what we behold. Our metaphysical hypothitization of deity is becoming a cultural program for our completion and that's why communication is so important, because what we are trying to do is articulate this vision of the oversoul of our species. We are going into a kind fo swarm-state, or, there is a, uh, pheromonal transformation of our cultural modality. Our pheromones are infomation systems, and now information systems, ideologies, are being released into the mass psyche that are, uh, set us up to undergo this cultural compression, uh, and concrescence that the experience that

transcendental object is.

If you haven't read William Gibson you might give him a go. His anticipation of a cybernetic future is part of the anticipation of the transcendental object, and what Gibson is saying, *Neuromancer* and *Count Zero*, is that data storage in hyperspace will become conventionalized the way the grids of cities are conventionalized in three-dimensional space, so that when you jack into cyberspace, you will find, you know, you will see the Bank of America database like an enormous red neon obelisk glowing off to your left, and over the horizon the transworld Airline database. In other words, the dimension of culture which, for fifteen thousand years or so has been, uh, for purposes of comparison let's say as thin as a thick sheet of paper, what has culture been ... a few mud huts, some brick streets, a cathedral here and there more recently, and then more recently a lot of knitted together electrified cheap construction. Suddenly the dimension of culture is about to be, which is orthogonal to ordinary reality, is about to be expanded a hundred, a thousand fold, into a complete mind space. The cyberspace that Gibson is talking about, the psychedelic space that shamans have always known about, is about to be, uh, uh activated as a cultural artifact in high tech, uh, high tech society. Where we will become whatever we imagine, you know, you will move off into this electronically sustained realm of mind. At least that's how I imagine it. I imagine that passage through the transcendental object leads into the imagination and that the imagination is really our true home, and that all of this electronics and culture and art and grubs and magic and ritual is about the prodigal return to the imagination as a cultural norm, and, uh, and, uh, the transcendental object represents a narrow neck, the narrowest place, the place where the phase transition occurs. At least that's what I hope, that's what I feel the symbiosis with the hallucinogens is coaxing out of us. Because we cannot go to the stars in the ape mindset, you know, with ape politics, and, uh, it's just impossible, and very clearly we are on the brink of taking control of our own self image. This is what the long cultural march has been. This is the justification, if there is one, for science, is that it does give us a certain measure of control over stuff, and it's out of, it is the mirror of our minds that we will make out of stuff that we will eventually perform this magical evocation in front of and walk through into the time outside of history, the place before history.

Another Question. Somebody over here. Yes.

Audience Member: ... I just wanna say you really.... [applause] anyway, I something Mexico to the little village of Tijuahaca and my companion said... while you're looking around you might find some federales or something. So I decided to grow the mushrooms and that just ... but I was always of the fantasy that going to this place in Mexico there was something magical... and I wanted to know if there was a more p... wouldn't that be in the negative time space frame. So my question is, ... and, um,

TM: that's the question.

AM: yeah.

TM: well, um my, one of the best people one of the very best people that I've found in the so called new age is Rupert, Rupert Shell Drake, and he and I are tight. And we've spent a lot of time just pushing these ideas around, um, ultimately I think probably he's very much onto something. It's interesting that it's such a, considered such a radical idea because think about what it says. It says that things are as they are because they were as they were. One can hardly imagine a more conservative philosophy. In fact, the, the problem for this philosophy is to therefore explain how anything ever manages to be different. How any kind of

novelty could emerge out of the situation where the past is so present that it configures everything. So, uh, Rupert's idea and my idea, which I discussed except by implication tonight, I have this notion which is embodied in the software of a wave of novelty, a way of quantifying the flux of the toa, and, uh, a wave of novelty would be necessary to, uh, for Shelldrake's idea to support, uh, the coming into being of new forms. Uh, I mentioned this evening in the main body of my talk the term compressionism. I've just sort of begun to think about this. I like it because I like impressionism, abstract realism, I like it because it's an art movement, not a science, but I would number the compressionists that come to mind to be Rupert Shelldrake, Ralph Abraham, Frank Bar, and myself bringing up the rear, and, uh, we all four of us have a slice on it. Each different but each leading to the same set of conclusions: that there is a set of hidden variables which we all describe differently, but that these hidden variables are channeling the development of events, and what this signifies is a new way of thinking about time. And it's all very much in flux. Rupert is a true, a truly great scientist and gentleman. If the theory of morphic resonance can be overthrown it will be and he will lead the charge. Our efforts when we get together, much of our effort is experimental design, we try to think of experiments that will disprove the notion, because it is a notion that will assert very firmly certain strange things about reality should be measurable and discernable, so, uh, morphic resonance, my novelty wave, the dynamic attractors of Ralph Abraham and, the, uh, fractal hierarchies of Frank Bar are all embryonic efforts. There's this feeling in the air, a sense of an idea to be, uh, nailed down. And I'm convinced, you know, that in the next 10 or 15 years one of us or somebody we know, or somebody sitting at the table near by will, uh, work it out. It's really the great intellectual adventure of our time, and it carries us all along with it. When this thing is figured out, it's going to be understandable to all of us. It's going to end the era of the professional abstraction. You know, for the new paradigm to work it's going to have to transform the lives of hundreds of millions of people, and, uh, that's the point that's been diminished, uh, by the proponents of some of the more narrow versions of what the new paradigm is. The new paradigm will be an understandable explanation of the world. Understandable to whom? to you, to me, not an abstraction sanctioned by a professional elite and handed down by Adam.

Audience Member: translated into numbers in order to demonstrate the,.

TM: well that's the beauty and the wonder and the delight of Time Wave theorem. Absolutely! I mean this, this was produced to convince scientists. What this thing does is it draws graphs of the ingression of novelty into time. I advance novelty as a new primary quality of the space time continuum, on a par with charge, spin, angular momentum, novelty. This is the realm of the hidden variables, and this program makes thousands of experimentally testable assertions. This is not smoke and mirrors stuff, you give it an end date, you give it a date of interest, and it draws a mathematically defined graph of its opinion as to where the flux of novelty and habituation, these are the two opposed quantities, novelty and habituation, where they fall vis a vis this event system. So every time you activate the program it fills the monitor with a screen full of precise predictions about, about known historical phenomena. It seems to be that if there were a body of informed give or take on the matter we could quickly settle on whether, you know, I smoke too many little brown cigarettes, or that this kind of thinking is in fact going to underlie and restructure science. It's alright! I mean, why should we assume that the basic qualities of the Universe have been defined as of 1965 by modern physics. After all modern physics doesn't explain, uh, uh, the unicorn or the flower, so there must be more work in the universal mix than we have perceived. Well I think I'll do one more question.

Audience Member: historical biographical..

TM: Yes, that's exactly what it is. It's, uh, a way of looking at the life of an individual or society and asking a quest- see, the way I think this it will be this is good because. It, the spirit, to eastern philosophy, is the Tao, and the Tao is the howness of the way things happen. Well, we are so accustomed to allowing these eastern forms of thought to remain largely formally undefined that we never ask obvious questions about the Tao for existence, for example. Uh, in the Tao Te Ching, uh, the opening words in the Wailly translation are: "The way this can be told of is not an unvarying way." ok it's a double negative it's not an unvarying way, it's a varying way. So anything which varies is modulated. That's a mathematical term that has precise meaning. So if the way that can be told of is not an unvarying way then it can be mathematically described as a set of integers in flux. The problem, then, becomes what integers? well that's a long story, but, uh, it's all in here. huh huh huh huh huh

And it's, uh, and I'm, you know, not mad enough to claim that this particular take, this particular set of integers is correct. I'm very impressed by it's, uh, successes, but I am convinced that a theory of this class will eventually explicate, uh, time. Time is the spirit, not the time of flat duration in the newtonian universe, or the very slightly curved time of einsteins universe, but time as lived, from moment to moment it flows like a river, it runs here quickly, there slow and deep. Here there are cataracts, here there are vast lakes form, and all sense of direction is momentarily lost. Time i- is, uh, the continuum upon which our entire experience of being is deployed, and yet up until very recently the only model we've had of it is this flat or slightly curved surface. That didn't explain the viscissitudes and synchronicities and the mystery of our own lives. Now, if we take a fractal model of time, the kind of fractals that we see in the psychedelic experience and the kind of fractals that we see whenw e unleash computers in the realm of pure mathematics, thenw e begin to see the time of pure experience, where every day is like every other but different. Every year is like every other but different. We grow, but we cha- but we stay the same. We move forward at the same time that we move backwards. All of these kinds of feelings... about movement and time are handled very well int eh fractal., So the Tao, what the psychedelic experience has done for me, above and beyond the heart opening and what it's done for me as a person, what it's done for me as a seeker after truth has, uh, given me, you know, this total description of reality and I think our senses and our minds and our hearts are always trying to give us a total math, a total mandala, it's always trying to emerge out of the chaos of, uh, out of perception, but it appears to me that it can happen to any depth, and if you still your mind with psychedelics and with disciplin and you look into the black rivers that flow in our hearts and in our minds eventually you see not only the truth of yourself, not only the truth of ourselves, but formal truths. The truth of mathematics, and then you have sort of made a kind of closure. So this is what, this is my personal meditation in Time WAVE Zero. I urge you to take a look at it, because, uh, its the most original thing that I have done, the rest is the descriptive diaries of an explorer well footnoted which I share with you gladly, but this other thing was actually, um, the logos from on high. That was what my particular relationship to the spirit was based arund. the revelation of this particular idea, because I had no interest in the i ching still elss in mathematics and all of the disciplins which impinged on this notion, but somehow, you know, I was chosen virtually becauase I was standing around whent he descision was made. You know I really beleive that. And, uh, and these things only mean somkething as their communicated. Well you see we have great anxiety about the pas- about the future, and if there were in fact fractal maps of the future, then that anxiety would lead us- would leave us and would leave us free. And in one sense I think thats the transcendental objkect, it's the manifestation of the spirit. The spirit is with us throughout historical time and space, but it is, uh, concretized at histories end. Well that's all I have to say, we're five minutes over, I appreciate you're being here very very much. Thank

you!

Audience applause.

DAY 2:

I want to mention this is a benefit for Botanical Dimensions and KPFK. Botanical Dimensions is the real world kind of real politick response to all the issues that Kat and I hammered out over the last 11 years. And what it boils down to is a plant rescue project built around a 20-acre botanical garden in Hawaii. What we're doing there is trying to bring in plants that are threatened in the warm tropics; either the extinction of the species is threatened, or the knowledge of its medicinal or herbal or shamanic use is in danger of being lost. There are a lot of fancy organizations, World Wildlife Fund, Earthwatch, Earth First!, that are saving the rain forest or at least fighting that battle, legally and by getting huge tracts of forests in the tropics made into reserves. But nobody really even cognizes or is focused on saving ethno-botanical lore, data that concerns the very subtle relationship between aboriginal people and botanical resources in their environment. So that's something we're doing.

A theme was touched on last night which is one of the centerpiece themes of aboriginal shamanism; the felt presence of some kind of alien intelligence. An intelligence that is somehow co-present with the human sense of self, for different people, in different ways, with varying degrees of intensity in different times and places. At the bedrock of shamanism is the notion that life is really finally a mystery wrapped in an enigma, but without resolution. Nevertheless as you close distance with this mystery there are a series of analogical metaphors that don't really suggest themselves but that are communicated *to* you by the other. One of these analogical metaphors is the presence of an alien intellect, an organized *other* that is folklorically present in tradition as fairies, gnomes, elves, jinns, afreets, sprites, tree spirits -- that sort of thing -- and anecdotally present in rural cultures throughout the world as the poltergeist and the milk-souring fairy -- these things seem to reside in a curious area that is not epistemically clearly defined for the culture.

Among aficionados of these domains the question of, "is it real or not?" is thought to be mildly tasteless. You would intuitively sense if you were drinking in an Irish pub and people began to spin leprechaun stories, that the question "is it real?" is a real bring down. It isn't *really* like that because the question "is it real?" can ultimately be shown to be infantile in any situation. I mean is the Bank of America real? Immediately we realize that ordinary experience is simply assumption skating over the mystery.

But I choose to talk so much about the felt presence of the other because it was for me such an astonishing personal surprise. I was raised Roman-Catholic and indulged in the kind of theological fiddle-faddle that involves. And then grew out of that into atheism, into agnosticism; by the time I got to college I was reading Jean Paul Sartre and Husserl. My intellectual ontogeny had followed historical phylogeny and I had arrived in the 20th century. And then having thought I had absorbed the lessons of LSD, which seemed to me to be to reinforce and confirm the theories of Freud concerning the dynamics of the psyche: that it *was* about repressed memory, repressed desire, sexual neurosis, parental foul-ups and the imprinting of traumatic behavior experienced in infancy.

And then someone came to me one rainy February evening, in 1967, really a mad person, a kind of a social menace and intellectual criminal. A person who had said to me only months before, "we must live as if the apocalypse has already happened." Here he was on my doorstep, he wore little black suits that he buttoned up to the throat. He came in and he said "here's something that you might be interested in." And he brought out a sample of di-methyltryptamine that he had somehow come into contact with. And I said,

"well what is it?" And he said, "well, it's short acting -- it's a flash." And I said, "how *long* does it last?" -- that was my first mistake. He said, "oh it doesn't last long." So I said, "OK, we'll do it." And we did it. And I discovered, I had, I guess it's called a peak experience, or a core revelation, or being born again, or having your third eye opened, or something, which was a revelation of an alien dimension; a brightly lit, inhabited, non three-dimensional, self-contorting, sustained, organic, linguistically intending modality that couldn't be stopped or held back or denied. I sank to the floor -- I couldn't move. I had become a disystolic hallucination of tumbling forward into fractal geometric spaces made of light, and then I found myself in the sort of auric equivalent of the Pope's private chapel, and there were insect elf machines proffering strange little tablets with strange writing on them. And I was aghast, completely -- appalled -- because the transition had been a matter of seconds and my entire expectation of the nature of the world was being shredded in front of me. I've never gotten over it.

And it all went on, they were speaking in some kind of -- there were these self-transforming machine-elf creatures -- were speaking in some kind of colored language which condensed into rotating machines that were like Faberge eggs, but crafted out of luminescent super-conducting ceramics, and liquid crystal gels, and all this stuff was *so weird*, and *so alien*, and so "un-english-able" that it was a complete shock. I experienced the literal turning inside-out of the intellectual universe and I had come to this -- I thought -- fairly intellectually prepared: A *kid*, but nevertheless double-Scorpio, art history major, Hieronymus Bosch fan, Moby Dick, William Burroughs.

And as I came down -- this went on for two or three minutes, this situation of disincarnate dimensions orthogonal to reality engulfing me -- and then as I came out of it, and the room re-assembled itself, I said "I can't believe it. It's impossible. It's im-possible." That to call that a "drug" is ridiculous. It means that you just don't know, you don't have a word for it and so you putter around and you come upon this very sloppy concept of something which goes into your body and there's a change -- it's not like that, it's like being struck by noetic lightning.

The other thing about it, which astonished me, was there is no clue in this world -- in the carpets of Central Asia, in the myths of the Maya, in the visions of an Archembolo or a Fra Angelico or a Bosch -- there is not a hint, not a clue, not an *atom* of the presence of this thing. When you look at the religious hierophanies of the human species they don't have the same vibe, don't have the same charge. Religion is all about dissolving into unitary states of love and trans-linguistic oceanic unity and this sort of thing. This was not like that. This was more multiplistic than the universe that we share with each other. It was almost like the victory of neo-Platonic metaphysics -- everything had become made out of a fourth-dimensional tesseractual mosaic of energy.

I was quite knocked off my feet. And set myself the goal of understanding this. There was really no choice you see. I don't know how it hits other people. There are many things that can be said about introducing a chemical into your body. They've shown that certain people are 50,000 times more sensitive to the odor of certain compounds than other people. And part of the unique genetic heritage of each of us are our complement of synaptic receptors for psycho-active alkaloids. So that there may be something to the notion that the Celts tend to be poets, that certain peoples tend to be expressive in certain artistic modes, or certain senses seem to be accentuated for certain human sub-groups.

But whatever the explanation for how it hit me, I felt it like a call -- there was no turning back from trying to understand, because there is no place for it in our world, and yet it is overwhelmingly, existentially real. You see? And easily accessed. I'm not telling you that you have to go some place in India with poor sanitation and put yourself at somebody's feet for a dozen years or something like that. The enunciation of the presence of this dimension should inspire some kind of coming to terms with it. It's preposterous that we can entertain in our popular journalism the titillation of the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence and prop up all reductionist personalities, and trot them out to give the statistics on the distribution of G-type

stars, and this sort of thing. Because the fact is, what blinds us to the presence of alien intelligence is linguistic and cultural bias operating on ourselves. The world which we *perceive* is a tiny fraction of the world which we *can* perceive, which is a tiny fraction of the *perceivable* world, you see.

We operate on a very narrow slice based on cultural conventions. So the important thing, if synergizing progress is the notion to be maximized (and *I* think it's the notion to be maximized), is to try and locate the blind spot in the culture -- the place where the culture isn't looking, because it dare not -- because if it were to look there, its previous values would dissolve, you see. For Western Civilization that place is the psychedelic experience as it emerges out of nature.

As human societies interact with the psychedelic experience in nature, they inevitably secrete the institution of shamanism. Like a pearl around a sand grain, a nexus point, a loci of inter-dimensional data-flow, which is really what it is. Under certain conditions, which have to do with molecules that have evolved in these species which have a weirdly quasi-symbiotic relationship to our species, you strike through the veil. Melville said, "if you would strike, strike through the mask." And that's what's done, you strike through the mask of the coordinates of apparent reality. And then, something is there which to me is a miracle.

It transcended any miracle I could ever ask for because it not only had the quality of a miracle as I imagined it, it had the quality of a miracle as I could *not* have imagined it. It was entirely charged with the energy of the other. It had the ambiguity of a pun: A kind of zany, impossible, improbable, hysterical revelation of the joke, the self-contradiction, the provisional nature of it all -- that it really is a Marx Brothers movie in some sense.

So I pursued it. First to Nepal, and involvement with pre-Buddhist shamanism in Tibet. The thing that puzzled me most, I guess because I was an art historian, was the absence of the theme in the artistic productions of human kind. I felt that maybe there was a trace of it in the artistic conceptions of the old pantheon of Tibetan shamanism. And that Central Asian Tibetan shamanism *had* actually created astronauts of inner space that had gotten good recon on this same area. The Dharmapalas -- the guardians of the Dharma -- are not Buddhist deities *per se*, they are autochthonous Tibetan folk demons that protect the Dharma by virtue of the fact of having been overcome in magical battles by great Buddhist saints who came to Tibet. In fact, there are, or were before the Chinese occupation, monasteries in Tibet where the vow of fealty to the Dharma, on the part of the Dharmapala, had to be renewed by the monks every 24 hours or the thing would run amok and be on its own and bust up the countryside. (I'm just telling you what they told me.)

It seemed to me that the raw sense of the shamanically accessed demonic realm was there. I also saw traces in Hellenistic gnosticism, and alchemy. But such thin traces. So I went to Nepal, immersed myself in those studies, and decided ultimately that it was inaccessible -- I wasn't sure whether it was there or not. Then I placed myself in the context of nature by moving my sphere of operations to eastern Indonesia. To the climaxed, continental rain forests of the ancient continent of Sundaland. You see Indonesia was a continent until as recently as 120,000 years ago. And then with the melting of the glaciers and the subsidence of the land, it became a vast group of islands. It was my good fortune, or fate -- because it was prudent for me at that time in the late sixties to remain outside the United States -- to become the hero I had pretended to my friends that I was. Which I wasn't. I had an around-the-world air ticket and was entirely a preppie poseur. But suddenly return was not a possibility. So I became, and my apologies to Buddhists in the audience, a professional butterfly collector.

I pursued this blood sport for many months in these remote montane jungles of eastern Indonesia. And it was there that the missing link in the quest for the resolution of the meaning of DMT and spirit fell into place. Because I *saw* what most of us only see on National Geographic specials; the real fact of the rain forest; the real fact of organic nature. And how nature *is* communication. Not only are the species that

comprise the biota linked by pheromones and acoustical signals and color signals and other various methods by which communication is seeping around.

In fact, nature ultimately resolves itself into a self-reflecting, syntactical metasystem, right down to the DNA. DNA working as it does, with nucleotide sequences that code -- that means arbitrarily assign association -- code for certain amino acids. It means that organic objects are essentially utterances in three dimensional space and express of some kind of universally distributed linguistic intent. This is what it means when it says, "In the beginning was the word." Nature is that word. This infinitely self-adumbrating, fractal, syntactical hallucination with an infinite number of facets for potential regarding and self-regarding.

And having said all of this, I might invoke here Godel's Incompleteness Theorem, which as I'm sure many of you know was Kurt Godel's brilliant contribution to theoretical mathematics where he showed that the possible set of true formal statements generated by any formal system exceeded the possible set of true formal statements which the *rules* of that system allowed. He showed this for simple arithmetic. And what this means, friends, is that what was called truth up until the beginning of the twentieth century, is absolutely impossible. That's what Godel's Incompleteness Theorem secures. It shows that there is no ultimate closure in an effort to describe a formal system.

And so in a way, my take on nature, and culture, and man, is that human language is a meta-linguistic system, generated out of the necessary formal incompleteness of nature. Nature is a self-describing genetic language and yet out of it arises something which is not formally predicted by its constraints and rules. There's a symmetry break there, and a so-called emergent property comes into view. This emergent property is our unique ability to *provisionally* code sound to meaning so that we then can freely command and reconstruct the world. We *imagine* that we do this for our own purposes of communication. The analysis that I'm suggesting would seem to indicate that actually we do it because we are complicated enzyme systems that are moving linguistic charge around inside some kind of metasystem. A metasystem that is very important for the emergence of new order out of nature.

The fact that it is contrived, provisional, is very interesting. It doesn't arise out of the gene structure. Rather it is agreed upon by individuals who are living at the time that the linguistic structure, whatever it is, emerges into consciousness. Since individuals are replaced, the language is much more in flux than the genome. The genetic component of an organism is a physical structure stabilized by atomic bonds -- possibly stabilized by a phenomenon like room-temperature's superconductivity. In that the way nature works is to conserve the genes. Molecular machinery has evolved to do that. But there is no mechanism in nature with the same kind of binding force that conserves meaning. Meaning is some kind of freely-commanded, open-ended, self-evolving system. The rules are that there are no rules.

Meaning consequently addresses itself to a much larger potential modality of expression than the genes. The genes basically repeat themselves, over and over. Almost like Homeric poetry, where the idea is that it be memorized and repeated. And that's what sexuality is about: memorizing and repeating gene structures, handing on parts of the story. But the epigenetic domain is different, the creation of linguistic systems, where meaning can be freely commanded, allows very rapid evolution of cultural forms.

I suggested last night, and want to say more about it tonight, that this process is mediated by plants. It is synergized in human beings by plants, of all sorts. We are obsessed with drugs, and short-term spectacular effects, but think about the effect on a culture of the presence or absence of say, sugar; or the presence or absence of coffee. Human culture can essentially be seen to be a series of plant-established developmental creodes for a higher mammal. The fact that we are omnivorous lays us open for the formation of weird relationships to things in our food chain. Everybody is taught in school that the Renaissance, the close of the Middle Ages, the rise of urban culture all had to do with the search for spices. Bringing spices back to Europe. Why was it so important that a drive to simply broaden the palate of Europe is given credit for the

re-defining of post-medieval civilization? Very strange.

Hofmann and Ruck and Wasson, showed that the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were the philosophical and experiential linchpin of the ancient world's cosmology -- the Hellenistic cosmology -- was a cult of ergotized beer. Every September at Eleusis, this Mystery was carried out, and everyone who was anyone participated in it. The rule was that you only got to do it once in your life so you had only one opportunity to understand it.

The point is clear: in human culture in all times and places, the way in which our cultural institutions have been molded by these so-called tertiary compounds in plants is very suggestive. It seems to me that the felt presence of the other, the alien intelligence felt as being from outer space, is actually co-present with us on this earth. And that the problem is not the *finding* of it, but the *recognizing* of it when it is seen. In the same way that in the present cultural crisis everyone is crying 'answers, answers, we have to have answers,' the fact is we *have* the answers. The question is to *face* the answers.

The answer to self-empowerment lies in the psychedelic experience. The answer to dissolving the hierarchically-imposed set of mythical conventions that *disempower* us, lies in the psychedelic experience. Because what is really happening is a return to the primacy of feeling. And feeling is not something you convey to people the way you convey facts to them. Facts can be handed down every week through *Time* magazine, and the latest issue of *Science News* and *Nature*. But feelings will not lend themselves to that marketable, hierarchically-distributed system. Consequently feelings represent a backwash against that. Yet feeling is the modality in which we all operate. So as long as we are under the umbrella of the print-created, linear, post-medieval institutions that promote the myth of the public, the notion of the atomic individual, the notion that we are all basically *alike* then we are going to be unempowered.

The amazing thing to me about the psychedelic experience, is that it can be kept under wraps; that people don't insist; that somehow we're leaving it to experts to figure it out. But did you know that the experts are not *allowed* to work it out? That in this particular area, the entire human race has been relegated to an infantile status. It is not really professionally possible, to do work with these things.

Nevertheless, our cultural crisis is deepening. Deepening mainly because we have very poor connections among our fragmented and autonomous psychic structures -- within ourselves as individuals and within ourselves as a society. Our whole problem is that we can't communicate with each other, we can't express intention. Yet the psychedelics are sitting there waiting to unify us, to introduce us to the trans-linguistic intention. To carry us forward into a realm of appropriate cultural activity, which is to my mind, the realm beyond history. Beyond history lies effortless and appropriate cultural activity. And nature has proceeded us, as it always does, by laying out models that can be followed to realize this.

As an example, I'll point out that the 19th century had a titular animal. Its titular animal was the horse, idealized as the steam engine, the Iron Horse. Marx talked about the locomotive of history, and there was a whole focusing on the horse archetype. Which in the 20th century, gave way to the titular animal, the raptor, the bird of prey, as exemplified by high-performance fighter aircraft, as the kind of ultimate union of man and machine in some kind of glorification of the completion of a certain set of cultural ideals.

In thinking about this and in thinking about how language is the cultural frontier of our species, I went to nature looking for models of how we might move beyond the bird of prey, which when you think about it, is the American symbol. It was also the symbol of the Third Reich. A lot of creepy scenes have actually been into birds of prey, when Alleric the Visigoth burned Eleusis, it was the crow that fluttered on his battle standard as the greasy smoke swept by. These dark birds have been ever with us.

In looking for a new titular animal and drawing the conclusion of what it would mean, I was drawn to look, strangely enough, at cephalopods, octopi. Because I felt, first of all, they are extremely alien. The break between our line of development in the phylogenetic tree, and the mollusca, which is what a cephalopod is, is about 700 million years ago. Nevertheless, and many of you who are students of evolution

know, that when evolutionists talk about parallel evolution, they always bring out the example of the optical system of the octopi. Because, isn't this astonishing? -- it's very much like the human eye, and yet it developed entirely independently. This shows how the same set of external factors impinging on a raw gene pool will inevitably sculpt the same organs or attain the same end, and so forth and so on.

Well, the optical capacity of octopi is one thing. What interested me was their linguistic organization. They are virtually entirely nervous system. First of all, they have eight arms in the case of the octopods, and ten arms in the case of the squid, the decapods. So coordinating all these organs of manipulation has given them a very capable nervous system as well as a highly evolved ocular system.

But what is really interesting about them is that they communicate with each other by changing the color and texture of their skin and their physical shape. You may know that octopi could change colors, but you may have thought it was camouflage or something very passive like that. It isn't that at all. They have a vast repertoire of traveling bars, dots, blushes, merging pastels, herringbone patterns, tweeds, mottled this-and-thats, can blush from apricot through teal into dove gray and on to olive -- do all of these things communicating to each other. That is what their large optical system is for. It is to be able to see each other.

The other thing which octopi can do -- besides having these chromatophores on the surface of their skin -- they can change the texture of the skin surface: can make it rugose, papillaed, smooth, lobed, rubbery, runneled, so forth and so on. And then, of course, being shell-less molluscs, they can hide arms, and display certain parts of themselves and carry on a dance.

When you analyze what is going on here, what at first seems like merely fascinating facts from natural history, begins to take on a more profound aspect. Because it is an ontological transformation of language that is going on in front of you. Note that by being able to communicate *visually*, they have no need of a conventionalized culturally reinforced dictionary. Rather, they experience pure intent of each other without ambiguity because each octopus can *see* what is meant -- this is very important -- can *see* what is meant. And I think that this heralds, or could be made to herald, a transformation in our own definitions of language and communication.

What we need is to see what we mean. It's not without consequence or implication, that when we try to communicate the notion of clarity of speech, we always shift into *visual* metaphors: I *see* what you mean, he *painted a picture*, his description was very *colorful*. It means that when we intend to indicate a lack of ambiguity and communication, we shift to visual analogies. This can in fact be actualized. And in fact, this is what is happening in the psychedelic experience. There we discover, just under the surface of human *biological* organization, the next level in the organization of language: the ability to generate some kind of acoustical hologram that is manipulated by linguistic intent.

Now don't ask me *how* this happens, because nobody knows how it happens. At this point it's magic. Nevertheless, the fact is it *does* happen -- you can *have* this experience. It represents a synesthesia in the presence of ongoing communication. It is, in fact, telepathy. It is not what we *thought* telepathy would be, which I suppose if you're like me, you imagine telepathy would be hearing what other people think. It isn't that. It's *seeing* what other people *mean*. And then also seeing what they mean. So that once something has been communicated, both parties can walk around it and look at it, the way you study a Brancusi, or a Henry Moore in an art gallery.

By eliminating the ambiguity of the audio signal, and substituting the concreteness of the visual image, the membrane of separation, that allows the fiction of our individuality, can be temporarily overcome. And the temporary overcoming of the illusion of individuality is a much richer notion of ego-death than the kind of white-light, null-states that it has imagined to be. Because the overcoming of the illusion of individuality has political consequences. The political consequences are that one can love one's neighbor, because the commonalty of being is *felt*. Not reasoned toward, or propagandized into, or reinforced, but felt.

This is why there is a persistent notion, which accompanies these psychedelic compounds, of a new political order based on love. This was a hard thing to say in the panhandle in 1965, it's not easy to say in heavy-metal LA.. in 1987. But it seems to be the fact of the matter. That love, which poets have celebrated for eons as ineffable, may in fact have certain ineffable dimensions attached *to* it, but it may in fact be more affable than we had previously cared to imagine. And the invoking of the effability of love has to do with discovering the shared birthright, the atemporal dimension that is co-present with this reality, a dimension that is a vast reservoir of anchoring -- existential anchoring -- for each and all of us in our lives. So my response to feeling the political pull of this, feeling the power to transform language, that resided in these things, was to go to the people who I thought would know most about it: the shamans for whom hallucinogenic shamanism has never been an issue; for whom the notion that you're supposed to do it on the 'natch, is a patent absurdity. If you're serious about doing it on the 'natch I suggest you eliminate all food. Because this notion of the pristine self somehow riding above the muck of the world, carrying on a spiritual evolution is absolute foolishness. We are made of the stuff of the world.

People who do not confront the presence of the hallucinogenic possibility, are turning their back on their birthright. In the same way that if you do not experience sex throughout your life you are turning your back on your birthright. After all we could argue that to allow another person to touch you, is to not do it on the 'natch, right? But, dear friends, we're slicing too close to the bone here to take that approach. It's much better, I think, to *open* to the world.

The world *is* communication. Nature *is* the great teacher. All human gurus are simply distillations of the wave of nature that is coming at you. So you can just short-circuit the whole human boil-down, and go straight to the executive suite by putting yourself under a tree in the wilderness. The Great Ones all have said this but they need to be taken more seriously on the subject of their own expendability. *Me too.*

Going to the Amazon with these kinds of notions, and looking at what had been achieved there, I came to have a vision then, of the future that could be. That we are hurling ourselves into a new stone age, where the fruits of the prodigal wandering, that I discussed in such detail last night, can be used to infuse new meaning into that paradise. That the imagination of man and woman is so incomparably rich, and exerts such an attraction on us as the builder-monkey, that we have to honor that. We cannot demonize that and preach a kind of naturalism that if actually put in place would cause the starvation of tens of millions of people.

We have passed the point where some kind of Luddite reform can save us. Only self-indulgent elites can preach voluntary simplicity, because a lot of people are experiencing *involuntary* simplicity. And, unless you're one of them it rings rather hollow to be told that Zen values are best.

Re-inserting ourselves into nature is inspiration for cultural design. That's what it is -- it's not flight from the design process but a re-invigoration of it. Some of you may be aware of the concept of nanotechnology in which everything is built at the molecular level. By studying the mechanisms of the cell, and the immune system, and DNA, we begin to have a picture of how molecules and atoms are the machine parts of a microcosmic world that if we were elf chemists we could make our way into and create anything that we could imagine. I can foresee a world where *all* machines will be made by DNA-like polymers that will code base materials into larger and larger aggregates.

The minaturization of our world is a great frontier. As culture becomes more enveloping, its physical manifestation should become less material. So the ultimate notion is of the world turned back to the form it held, let's say 35,000 years ago, in which people lived in an environment of entirely climaxed natural perfection. However behind their eyelids would lie a culturally and consensually validated data phase space that is culture, civilization. Turn each of us into a telepathic aquarium, that has a direct pipeline to the general ocean of mind and being. This is possible. In fact, its not only possible, it may be the only decent solution: to down-load ourselves into another dimension. (And I want to note in passing the collapse of

Max Headroom. What a tragedy I think it is that his last show was tonight. This was a weird force for cultural transformation, but to be applauded. If anybody here tonight has anything to do with it, I wish them luck.)

But this sort of notion -- the Max Headroom people and the William Gibson people have a very high-tech take on this, because they are interested in accentuating this tight blue-jean, cyber-punk kind of notion. But in fact the worlds that they describe will have many many different social sub-groups and social ecosystems forming in them. What the future *really* means is choice to become who we are, to flower out, to find our own way.

McLuhan saw all this 20 years ago: he said that the rise of global electronic feudalism would create an atomistic fragmentation of culture. It may well be that within 50 years the largest organizational entity on the planet will be corporations with a few million loyal employees, and all larger social institutions will have disappeared because they were unable to command loyalty in a social environment where direct experience has become empowered. And this empowering of direct experience, this return to the feminine, this legitimizing of the presence of the vaster regions of the unconscious -- these are all aspects of this emerging paradigm of the spirit. Understanding and the imagination in the light of nature, which is what this two-night party has been called, is a *definition* of the spirit.

In other words, true understanding, poetic imagination, standing as a mirror before nature as object, will cause the hologrammatic presence of the spirit to magically appear. It will be then seen to be a kind of emergent quality of the situation that was previously masked, simply because the elements had not fallen into the correct arrangement. As we move forward through time over the next 25 years there will be many prophets of the transcendental object at the end of time, many takes.

The important thing is to recall Godel's Incompleteness Theorem, and to always recognize the provisional nature of the metaphysical goods that you're going to be sold. Nobody has the faintest notion of what's going on. It's important to keep that in mind. If you have that in mind, then the game proceeds much more cleanly.

What is ahead of us is true high adventure. The essence of it is its unknowability. Its promise is transformation. Its theater of occurrence is the here and now. We are not waiting for it to begin, it has already happened for us, and our job is to understand how that can be so.

Plato said time is the moving image of eternity. My notion of shamanism is, it is that state of mind which accrues to those who have seen the end. By cultivating this notion of closure with hyper-space, imaged as the archaic return to the world of the pre-cultural ambiance, we can have an anticipation of the transcendental object. It is still in Eden. It is *we* who have undergone the fall and the recourse. And now the laden prodigal son returns to beat at the doors of the manorial home, the birthright. And within lies the beginnings of true civilization.

We are the forerunners of a truly moral and ethical human society. The deepest aspirations, however badly mangled and mishandled by our traditions, nevertheless still have the potential for archetypal fruition within them. The torch that has been passed from generation to generation, ad infinitum back into the distant past, is alive. And by some strange quirk of the metaphysical machinery it's our great privilege to live through this symmetry break, this revelation of the next level of the open-ended mystery. I think that the real thrill lies in relating to our world with an open mind, a sense of caring, a sense of wonder, and a sense of real, grounded, intellectually firm hope. So that's all I want to say this evening. I think we'll break for about 15 minutes and then we'll have questions. Thank you very much.

Question and Response

Now comes my favorite part of these things which is the period where there's interaction because I think this is really a group process. Every one of you to some degree has taken upon yourself the role of the Magellan-in-the-living-room, and probably every one in this room has at some time or another gazed upon things no other human eye has ever beheld. The psychedelic dimension is not *yet* a science. We're more like explorers comparing our crudely drawn maps, and hastily scrawled journal notes, trying together to get a picture of this new continent in the imagination. So, I'm yours. Sir -

Question: You have said in your book that the mushroom was genetically engineered for producing psilocybin by an alien intelligence. What do you think now about the possibility of us using psilocybin genes within other kinds of organisms like fungi or plants, or, I don't know about animals.

Response: Well, interesting question. The question was I've described the mushroom as genetically engineered by some other agency for the production of psilocybin, what do I think about the possibility of human beings being able to genetically manipulate organisms to produce psychedelic compounds? I think that the technology and theory has reached the stage where, if there's an enterprising graduate student within the sound of my voice, the way to go is to locate the gene for psilocybin in the mushroom genome, and to translate it via standard techniques to *E. coli*, to *Escherichia coli*. Then you would have an easily grown bacterium which would be a chemical factory for pouring our psilocybin. So if any of you are aspiring genetic pharmacologists, this would be a fine project.

I might elaborate on the answer for some of you who are not familiar with the premise. The reason I suggested that the mushroom might have been engineered and be in fact an artifact of an alien intelligence was number one, of course, the informational content of the trip, but number two, the fact that psilocybin is one of the few four-phosphoralated indoles known to occur in nature. Out of thousands and thousands of compounds and organisms, only a few four-phosphoralated compounds are known. This suggests that such compounds are artificial, or at least highly unusual.

Every week the science magazines are full of talk of strategies for locating and identifying extraterrestrial life. Well a very obvious practical and scientifically reasonable way to proceed would be to look at the DNA of various life-forms on earth, and see if there *are* any in which there is a wild statistical departure from the norm. Whenever you get an organism which is producing, or has genes that no other organism has, this is highly suggestive. Because species evolve incrementally out of each other. So you would expect that there would be a relative smoothness in the expression of chemical taxa. That one fungus would be rather like its taxonomic near relatives. One member of a genus would be chemically similar to another. In fact, of course, we do find subtle chemical variations, but the presence of a four-phosphoralated indole in a fungus like that is very suggestive.

There's an interesting book by Cyril Punampurama called *Perspectives on the Problem of Extraterrestrial Communication*. In it he outlines what he believes would be a general strategy for extraterrestrial contact that *any* kind of species would have to operate with if it were to seriously conduct a search through space. And the model posits a ship, which at a certain distance from its origin planet, must replicate itself. And then at a certain distance, replicate again. And then again, in order to keep the density of ships constant as the sphere of the area being explored expands. These ships could be as small as an animal cell. They don't have to be thought of as Star Trek-type ships.

But the point is this ship contains instructions that you must read and follow in order to call in. There are so many planets and star systems to be surveyed that the only way such a survey could be conducted is if there were a message in the ship-qua organism, such that in the gene swarm of an alien planet it would eventually be read by an organism on the planet that would act to do the things necessary to call the central switchboard. Then the folks who made the ship would say: 'ah-ha, we have contact in sector alpha sub-N 362,' and they would concentrate all their attention there.

Q: Yes would you speak on the time-line a little?

R: Oh what a kind questioner, to lead me to my favorite subject. Well, it has to do with why (people do this for different reasons), why people take psychedelic plants and what lies behind it always. And what always lay behind it for me, from that very first DMT trip that I described to you at the beginning, was the notion, 'My god, this stuff has historical significance. Nobody *knows* about this,' carrying with it the notion, 'we are discovering it.'

If we could bring it back, somehow, it would change the world. Perhaps people *are* bringing it back, by designing buildings and creating fashions or fashioning mathematical descriptions of reality. I never had that aspiration. I just simply defined myself, more humbly than that, as a *consumer* of ideology, as an intellectual who would learn what has been said and done and proposed.

But after the DMT experience I realized that there is unclaimed stuff out in those dimensions. James Joyce says in *Finnegan's Wake*, "Up-nee-ent prospector you sprout all your worth and woof your wings." Well, the key word is prospector. A prospector is a rock hunter. I wanted to prospect for the alchemical stone, for the lapis philosophorum. And I conceived it as an idea: the timewave -- I think it would come differently for each of us -- for me it was an incredibly formal, aesthetically symmetrical, and therefore satisfying idea about what time is.

That the Tao is something which could be mathematically described as a flux of a quality in time. A quality that I named Novelty. And once I had enunciated it for myself I saw that it was the part of the world that we have no description for. Science gives us descriptions for what is possible. But we have no descriptions for what, out of the set of the possible, undergoes the actual formality of occurring. Why are certain things selected to come to be? And I saw then the notion of the Tao, which is generally presented as a kind of intuitive notion -- you're not supposed to demand too much hard-edged clarity. You say, 'just flow with it man, flow with it.' Well when someone says flow to me, I think of equations which would describe flow. Flow as a dynamical system which therefore can be mathematically modeled.

What the timewave is, is a seeing that the very largest patterns which describe the whole birth, evolution and death of the universe, are repeated at successively shorter and shorter spans of time, down into the quantum-mechanically and micro-electronically cognizable realms of time. The realm of nano and pico seconds. I saw the *I Ching*, which as a kind of phenomenological description of time, produced by the oriental mind completely unencumbered by *our* particular set of cultural conventions. Certainly it has its own set of peculiar conventions -- but not ours -- that there is a pattern in nature, not in three dimensional space, but in time, a pattern in time on many levels that reproduces itself and can be known, can be formally described. And once known, can be seen to control the ebb and flow of connectedness. Or the forward and backward surge of novelty. I thought that this was a great insight -- since it was the only one I had, I could hardly sell it short. And what pleased me most about it was that a rap is only as good as the rapper. But here was a mathematically formal idea, that could stand on its own; be examined in the absence of the rapper; be examined by critics who were as hostile as they cared to be.

It's simply a tool. It's in a long line of tools that stretches back toward the first chipped flint, and stretches forward toward the soul made manifest as starship and alchemical transformation. But it was the tool that I came upon and what is always put against the psychedelic experience is they say, 'well, big deal, what's ever come out of it?' So I was pleased that here was a concrete notion that came out of it. Richard -

Q: Along the line of this timewave, can you give us a reading of our current time in the not-too-distant future?

R: I would be only too happy to. The question is would I care to prophesy based on this timeline? Yes, one of the assumptions built into the theory is that time is a series of nested resonances. And that each time is composed of resonance with previous and future times on varying levels. The time we are living through, I call the Roman Twilight. Simply because we are living through a period that is in resonance with the time

of the last Roman emperors. And I think that if you look at it carefully, you can begin to see the way this theory proposes to be analogical and yet formal at the same time.

What was happening in the decades immediately preceding the fall of Rome? A progressively weakened series of self-indulgent propagandists ruled the greatest empire on earth with a more and more shaky hand as they succumbed to gonorrhea, mercuric poisoning, various occult pursuits, millenarian obsessions and so forth. Meanwhile in the east, in Byzantium, a new civilization was unleashing itself, and if you think of those events, which unfolded over a few hundred years, as telescoped into a few years in our own era, you see that with the rise of Gorbachev and the continued mis-management of the American empire under the crypto-fascist series of rotating bimbos and buffoons that *we* have suffered through; that what is happening is an empire is being betrayed into eclipse by self-indulgence, stupidity and bad management, and its cultural adversary is in ascendancy.

Now Byzantium never conquered Rome -- it doesn't happen like that -- but what ended was the Roman world of indulgent, cohesive imperialism. And what it was replaced with was a rise in religious fundamentalism, a stricter and more puritan kind of morality, the rise of epidemic diseases, and a vast economic retrenchment which initiated what we call the Dark Ages.

Now, in the present situation of the 20th century these themes are being recapitulated at an extremely rapid rate. So their Dark Age is for us, a tough three or four years, fortunately. It's said history occurs first as tragedy, then as farce. We are the heirs of the vast tragedy of extended history who live through the curiously mediaized and dehumanized farce of the recapitulation of these same themes. Because the very notion that the last ten Roman emperors could be symbolized by someone like the present American chief executive cannot fail to bring a small smile to any open mind.

So what I see happening over the next twenty-four years really, is first this retrenchment which, hell, it may be upon us judging by the market's performance Thursday and Friday, I may not be doing prophesy at all, this may be recap at this point. But whether that is a technical move, or the actual beginning of the unraveling of the over-bought western capitalistic system, one can't say. But I will say that by mid-1989, by the time the next presidential ritual has been enacted, it will be clear I think, that we have entered into a whole new kind of temporal domain. A kind of temporal domain that will appear superficially to be fairly bleak. Because the situation will be highly chaotic, highly novel, and tending to oscillate wildly around a mean. So in other words there will be no clear trend visible. There will appear to be progressive surges, and then losing of ground, and then progressive surges, and losing of ground. And this will go on through until the mid-nineties.

Around 2000 the resonance pattern will have shifted, and we will be occupying a relationship to the late high Middle Ages, and the emergence of the new social forms created by the emergence of the mercantile class and the bourgeois. In other words private wealth, cities, end of cultural insularity, a re-starting of the economic machinery, and a kind of new flowering. But still under the shadow of these fundamentalist forces that will have come into ascendancy in the previous dark age.

Then in 2004 we come into that area which is in resonance with the period of the discovery of the new world. 1492 in other words. And the exploration of the New World and its subjugation over about a hundred and fifty years will be going on as we open the millennium.

What the discovery of the new world will mean, in terms of our reenactment of these great themes, is anybody's guess. It could be the vindication of my style of rap: a nearby inhabited dimension filled with alien intelligence. Or it may be the vindication of a more orthodox sort of expectation of extraterrestrial contact. Or perhaps, ultimately, the launching of large telescopes into orbit which will confirm for us the existence of oxygen-rich water-heavy worlds around nearby stars. That alone would make an intellectual revolution that would leave our world unrecognizable to itself.

We have to recall that as recently as 500 years ago the continent that we are inhabiting was unknown, it

was something talked of by wild-eyed dreamers. It was an impossibility, a psychedelic dimension. Everyone knew that when you sailed west far enough there be monsters and that was the end of it. It was, literally, the unconscious. Now we deal in the real estate of *that* unconscious. And there is no reason why our children should not deal in the real estate of the psychedelic dimension that we are discovering and confirming over the next ten years or so. Let me carry this through to the end because the good part comes at the end.

After the turn of the century, the acceleration of the unfolding of these resonances becomes more and more intense and eventually we reach the super-compression of modern times. This is why I proposed to you last night, the term "compressionist" for this school of thought that myself, and Sheldrake, and Frank Barr, and Ralph Abraham represent. Because we all are talking about the dense nesting of concrescent systems. And ultimately, in my own point of view, the emergence of a transcendental object at the end of time. And the end of time is not far off. As Joyce says in *The Wake* -- it may not be as far off as you wish to be congealed. It is, I think within the lifetimes of all of us, that there will be an ontological transformation of the human mode. The transcendental object is emerging.

Once it has emerged there will be no big deal about it. In the same way that we look back at the emergence of language. And nobody gets excited about it, or only a few philosophers do. And yet the fact that we *possess* language is the thumbprint of God upon our species. It's an impossible break with previous animal organization. You can talk all you want about Coco the talking gorilla, this and that, but then you turn to a poem by Andrew Marvel you realize there is an ontological break here -- there is *not* an even progression. So as we anticipate this thing, it could be anything. It could be the visible language that I indicated as a possibility earlier this evening. It could be emergence in an extraterrestrial mind. It could be the transcendental emergence of all and everything -- the Tao made flesh, the actual collapse of the state vector into some kind of mysterious completion. It's much more rational to place this kind of singularity at the *end* of a complex evolutionary process, like the life of the universe, than at the beginning which is the scientific approach. To just say everything sprang from nothing, for no reason, in a single instant, and please don't ask questions about that because our map begins one ten-trillionth of a pico second *after* that happened. We don't talk about that. Well isn't this somewhat begging the question, for an intellectual enterprise that purports to offer an explanation of how things came to be?

The transcendental object, suggests to me a *negative* casuistry -- a purpose in the universe that is focusing and drawing everything toward it. And in fact I've said, history is the shock-wave of eschatology. History, which lasts 10,000 years, is a microsecond of ultra-complex experience, where the penetration of the natural world by the transcendental object occurs, each exists co-temporaneous with the other for a historical or geological microsecond and then the two terms are merged and all opposites are dissolved and somehow the gift is claimed, the pearl is restored and the project is ended.

We are living through that moment. A 10,000 year rush, from chipping of stone flint, to walking through the violet doorway of a self-generated, hyper-dimensional vehicle that carries us to our true home. No *wonder* it leaves an explosive set of eddies in its wake. This is what happens when a culture prepares to depart for the stars. This is *not* business as usual, this is something else entirely. And it's the intellectual adventure and challenge of our time for each of us to understand this in terms relevant to ourselves and the people immediately around us.

So this is the inspiration for TimeWave Zero. This is what it maps. The odd thing is that when the time-map came through, it wasn't only a map of historical process, but there was the transcendental object mapped into it, and all of its sub-reflections could be seen. This is what Christ was about. This is what Buddha was about. This is what *your* most enlightened moment was about. You, each of you, and me. It is the hyper-dimensional, particulate reflection of God-head scattered back through the flatter plane of this lower-dimensional slice of experience. It's hard to say it any clearer than that...

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Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

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The New Psychedelics

1995

Amsterdam

Description

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Rites Of Spring

April 1986

Rites of spring, Ojai Foundation, Ojai CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Scribd transcription](#)

Terence McKenna: Well, the parachute never looked more like a mushroom than it does right now. [Terence chuckles]

I couldn't really see you all in the firelight last night so this is like seeing you for the first time. Welcome, and, uh, I hope you feel free to interrupt what's going on at any time and ask questions, or if something needs clarification please, uh, don't hesitate.

My hope for these kinds of retreats is that it will quickly become so interesting to everyone that the, uh, presentational form will transform itself into a dialogue among many people. It seems to me that's when it happens best. And I don't think people would be here if they didn't have strong opinions and ideas about probably everything which is said. So, that's the way the group mind is generated, by everyone opening up and, uh, expressing how they relate to these things that we're going to discuss.

I guess the place to start is sort of with looking at the notion that, uh, the dawning paradigm of post-modern consciousness seems to be the growing awareness that we don't know what is happening at all. That all of the models whose implications have been worked out over the past 500 years or so have come to a place where they are now recursive and they no longer can be pushed forward as models of explanation. In other words, they are completed, and ontological analysis of how they work now shows us the limitations of their application to reality. They just simply cannot -m- there is not more blood to be squeezed from the stone of science. There may be further discoveries, but further growth and understanding along those lines now seems unlikely, what with the complementarity principle, Bells theorem, the primacy of language with the formation of ontology. All these things show the relative power of science to account for reality where before it was assumed that science would ultimately give a good account of reality.

So, postmodern living is living in the light of the fact that that faith has dissolved away, and that we're now living in some kind of intellectual free space, or fire-free zone where everything is up for grabs. And the, uh, the 20th century's fascination with the archaic, with shamanism and, uh, breakdown of perception through modern art, exploration of the unconscious through psychoanalysis, mass political movements, all of these things relate to this fascination with the archaic which is an effort on the part of the culture to stabilize itself because we really have- having seen the limitations of science, we have discovered we are in a small rowboat in a dark ocean and we're being swept we know not where. So all past tradition is searched: magical traditions, alchemical traditions, lost philosophical traditions, pre-literate tribal traditions, everything is frantically searched for a key.

And while there are consoling perceptions that arise out of this search through all this other extended human knowledge, there haven't yet emerged certain answers about what is going on. This is why several people last night referred to how weird the time is, how hopeful we are with so little reason, uh, on the surface to be hopeful. And, uh, it's because the gelling out of this historical problem is happening right now, and it's not clear, uh, what it will become. Meetings like this are efforts to uh, build an understanding of it. It doesn't appear that it's going to filter down through the transformation of institutions of control. It appears more like it's going to be some kind of proletarian, uh, upwelling of a shift of point of view.

Now, the shorthand way of saying what I just said is that we now know that we don't know anything. And things like uh, the psychedelic experience and the use of psychedelic plants throws open doorways that science was able to successfully keep closed during its heyday because they were areas where the number of variables exceeded science's power of description and therefore they said "Well we'll just keep driving straight ahead, and we'll go up those rivers later." But now that is all changed and the exploration of, uh, the existential dimension of not-knowingness which psychedelics makes possible is what is forming modern people, I think. I mean, people who will be seen to have lead lives that were relevant 50 years from now, or 100 years from now, people who had actually figured out the context of the world they were living in and tried to come to terms with it.

And, uh, this morning I think we want to talk about uh, plants and how they relate to the planet, but before we do that I want to paint a picture for you of a, of a mandala which then I will discuss later in other meetings. But my notion of, of what the post modern person's mandalic projection on to the world should be in terms of a map of understanding is a, uh, a quadrated circle in which psychedelics, and feminism, and cybernetics, and space travel are the four parts of the circle. And in the center of the circle, looking backwards in time, there is a category that I would call conservation. Which means conservation of the planet, conservation of traditional and historical knowledge, conservation of values, conservation in the sense of intelligence husbanding the planet.

And when the mandala is flipped over and you look through it into the future, conservation has been replaced by art. Art is the ultimate expression of this transformation of, uh, unorganized matter into ideas, which human beings carry on. And we carry it on in a technical mode of necessity, but in the artistic mode, out of a kind of upwelling of ecstatic self-expression about the universe. So conservation is the way we relate to the past and human history is seen as an object of collective artifice-making in the future culminating in the notion of, uh, of the flying-saucer.

To do this, we have to completely re-design our understanding of reality which in terms of practical experience will mean that reality itself will appear to be redesigned. And I touched on this for a moment last night when I mentioned plants and said how admiring I was of them because they subs- they exist on sunlight, air, and earth, and that this is what we have to learn to do in order to release spirit out of the ape matrix that we're bound in. And strangely enough the way this is to be done apparently is by a redefining of the nature of the biological world in relationship to this other kingdom of being which we call plants. Plants represent some kind of entire other dimension of existence of which we view the topological manifestation of the form, but are completely occluded as to the network or energy and information that this represents.

And like the zoological kingdom which has uh, thousands of forms of expression and progressively more complex forms which culminate in self-reflecting primates the vegetable kingdom seems to have intelligent species and gradations of awareness in the world so that we are opening a dialogue at the end of history with this other form in the biosphere which we are just beginning to cognize as our own understanding about what the world is really about falls into focus. And certainly a hundred years ago no one would have thought that this was in the direct line of historical development of the high tech civilizations, that they would have to explore the mind of the vegetable plant goddess who was the only force contending with them for control of the planet. That's what it's come down to.

So, with that kind of idea in mind, the idea of "plant and planet", which is a phrase of Anthony Huxley's which is wonderful. Uh, Kath maybe you would want to talk about this, this is a good...

Kat McKenna: Um, yeah. I was thinking uh, last night and this morning about plants particularly [clears throat], um, because of our talks that I anticipated and back at the tent a little while ago I had a gnawing feeling that I was ignoring the animals too much and then I, um, arrived here and they all began to gnaw on me. I just got about 14 ant bites just sitting here, you see the scratching on it, so I feel grounded again. [Kat chuckles] Uh, I don't know about having a dialogue with the end of history through plants [laughter], I don't know about that, but um, I do think they are this obviously great and ever-present mystery which we ingest all day long, um, without thinking of those as plants, without thinking of them as sacred plants in the way we do the sacred ones. Their chemistry- their input is influencing us all the time. Whether we eat meat or not we eat plenty of plants, and we breathe from them, and we soothe our nerves by seeing them and being near them, and we go out into places like this and see kinds we've never seen before and marvel at how they can survive. They're real models of graceful survival, I think.

Um, the jungle where we spent a fair bit of time, the competition it seems is for light and for protein, I guess, for, for organic matter, the animals competing. Here it's obviously for water. They have a kind of, uh, a deal. If you look around under the bushes you see wonderful wildflowers right now, the rains have just held on, the moisture has held on long enough that many things are going- and the short life cycle plants are going through their intense short life cycle and they often need to shade to do it. So you can see- we found something that we were sure was an African violet bush yesterday, you know? You can see wonderful things if you look carefully and don't bother anybody else that might be under there.

Um, the question I've been asking of myself recently, and of a few other people- now I have many of you to ask it I hope I get some answers, is, um, how can a plant be a teacher?

Um, I asked this of someone the other day who was deeply involved in neuro-linguistic programming and he got way off on a tangent about "What does this question mean?" you know [laughter] just broke down every part and phrase and it was wonderful, we never got to anything like what he thought about the answer but [Kat chuckles] uh, it does assume all sorts of things. You have to have an image of what you think of as a plant, which although we have sort of a language-verified easy answer it doesn't really touch on the reality and, uh, and then of course you have to think what you mean by 'teacher'.

Well, I know there's at least one biologist, serious biologist in the group here so I'm hesitant to define a plant. I guess from my point of view as an observer, I, I've done botanical illustration and I really value the opportunity I had to learn to really look and them. And then when you think you've really looked, look closer. You can just keep on learning from them just visually, that way. But they are, uh, organisms like us that that draw in all the elements: fire in the form of sunlight, and water and air and earth and, uh, go through this transformation of energy into, uh, something else, in the same way that we do. Um, this moment right now is when they are doing that most energetically for the year. They are taking that moisture in their...you can look at each one- the leaf tips are new, and the tissue is soft, and the colors are bright as well as the blossoming and all that.

Um, they are also laying out the structure as I understand it for that growth to become more permanent, or woody, the perennials anyway, so during the year they will fill that out, and next year they will come from that place doing this envisioning the future, what they'll have to deal with, how to move to make their interface with it, and then how to reproduce. And, uh, and their little messages are going into the, uh, the seeds coming from the pollination of other plants. So it's always like with us, you choose a mate it's your choice for how you'd like the future to be, right? My genes, your genes, here it goes down the line.

Um, really all I have about this is questions. I hope you don't mind if I just throw questions up, if anyone wants to say anything, please do. Uh, one thing I wonder is, we regard ourselves as such individuals, we don't think of ourselves a species much. Terence talks about that a fair bit. But in our daily life we really identify ourselves as individuals, as, uh, some of us having more power, more clarity, more energy, more talent, whatever. We divide that way. With plants we tend to think of each plant on a species basis, you know. I wonder if, um, how much that's true. plants that we're familiar with like ayahuasca, *banisteriopsis caapi* in the South American jungle, if you want to make this visionary drink you go and find uh, a member of that species but different members have different potencies and different takes on the same kind of message. This gets to the teacher part.

The, the, um- a friend of ours, Eduardo Luna, interviewed a number of shamans in the uh, jungle. They use this term "plant teacher" in Spanish as we've come to use it too and uh, he asked them, do you think that all plants have a, a plant teacher in them, or do you think that some do? And they were divided on this question, some people think that only the sacred plants do, right? Other shamans said "no all plants do, just some of the spirits; they call them 'the mothers', the mother of the plant, or the spirit or the teacher. Some are stronger." So that implies that anytime we eat any plant we're taking in that, that teacher. They um, they mix these plants with ayahuasca which already provides the vision. Then they take a new plant that they don't know so well, or that they want some particular aspect of and they mix it in with that and take it and feel that they are radiating what is that plant, what is the personality, whatever you want to call it, of that plant. And that they take on the qualities of that plant.

So um, I think the Indians in this area as I understand did that too with their plants, they wanted to take on the quality of the- peyote is a good one, you know. I mean, it's- it lasts a very long time in a very subtle way doing who knows what all that time when it's not being eaten by something which is metabolizing the teacher in it. Is the teacher in it, when it's just sitting there all that time? Is it experiencing the, the visions that come with, uh, that come into the, the animal organism that ingests it? I don't know

I guess on the species and individual thing I wonder as a, an adjunct that, you know when you grow your own plants- anyone who gardens you know when you grow your own plants and vegetables how they taste different than the ones obviously at the store whom are probably grown, certainly with the same kind of physical care, but certainly not the same kind of attention.

TM: It's the question for me, or what always astonishes me about it is where does the information come from? I mean, the peyote plant or the ayahuasca vine, or the mushroom growing there in the jungle or in the desert, how did it manage to tap in and become filled with a, a universe of alien Platonic beauty? Why is that there? All the rules of orthodox evolutionary theory conserve- only what is necessary is conserved. So it's very hard to understand how- why a plant needs a uh, library card at the intergalactic library, uh, because it's just sitting there in the desert of some planet alive and living. S-

KM: But each plant is different too, their library cards don't take them to the same libraries even you know? Each one of these visionary plants provides something distinct. And sometimes you can see how it's a cousin of that one and sometimes you can't see that they are related at all.

Terence: Well isn't it that mind is, somehow at the reflexive level, chemical? And that when you change the chemistry of the engine which is giving the pictures, the pictures change. There- sometimes it seems almost like a biological radio that you tune in to very strongly broadcasting stations, some of which are, uh, you know, alien high-tech insectoid science-fiction places, others are jungle worlds or things that you can't even English.

KM: Giant human teachers, I met one who was 40 feet tall, you know, and he took me by the finger like a little child and let me through, what was that doing in the plant?

TM: Yeah what is it for?

Q: [???

TM: Sure.

KM: Yes.

TM: When you take a longer slice, you realize that the individual existence is like an illusion, and that really the planet is involved in some kind of chemical process which is like a gene swarming, and it's been going on for a billion years with more and more- and, and animals and plants, as species and as individuals, are just, uh, aggregates of genes of varying degrees of permanence. The individual is a very impermanent aggregate of genes. The species has a slightly longer duration. But what's really happening is these information transferring molecules are just swarming on the surface of the planet, and controlling, as you mentioned, the weather, the chemistry of the soils, the rate of heat transfer. They've discovered now that plankton control weather in the oceans by controlling the surface reflectivity that- the question I think is the peculiar dualism in the world of information. Why does it seem that reality is not reality? Why are there co-present- actually two worlds are co-present in our experience. This is the taboo subject that we're here to talk about: the weird fact that there are two worlds, one of which our culture doesn't acknowledge but we all experience. That's a very schizophrenic situation to be in. We all exist in both of these worlds, but our language, our culture, our institutions tell us "No there's only one world."

We have gotten into this lethal cul-de-sac where, by not acknowledging the second world we have, uh, have veered off on a tangent which is uh, threatens our extinction now, this obsession with control of world one, matter, energy, and the complete ignoring of the world of consciousness which stood in front of it and manipulated it, but just taking that as a given has created this fantastically imbalanced culture.

Q: I think that gets back to the plants as teachers because uh, since we do, as in your words, play with fire as human beings, perhaps the question you were asking as to the plants as being teachers, my feeling at the time was they are in communication with us as we are in communication with them, we're all transparent beings, and you're talking of gene swarming on the planet. There's no, um, safe in which we lock our own human knowledge. It's, we're transparent to all around us and if you get into intelligent plants which is what we were talking about earlier, perhaps, I mean if you follow that logically out, why not have teachers as chemicals? That's how they can manifest within this particular body and do the library cards as you said.

Q2: They realize that we are doers and shakers.

Q1: Well I think there is only one life on the planet though, and to say that we're separate from the plants or from this or from the air is a fallacy.

TM: So that's a great image, the growing transparency. That's, that's a good idea for what the end of history is, it's that everything becomes clearer, and clearer, and clearer, and as it becomes clearer boundaries disintegrate and everything is seen to be of the same, uh, of the same stuff.

KM: I think for much of the world, and still for instance in the Amazon and other cultures who are tuned into nature, it was very transparent for very, very long. Progress was the losing of that transparency and the you know forging ahead of certain parts of it and, and almost the point of either just eliminating to extinction or to the extinction memory, the, the lessons.

One day, I was just- I think it was during bookkeeping or something very much mundane, the little voice that interrupts every once in a while said that "A plant teacher is a teacher who has taken the form of a plant" and that raised all these questions for me you know, does that mean there are teachers floating around looking for places to land, right? And ways to interface with the other species? Or- and you know I've always thought of rocks, big rocks, many places in the world you can just sit on them and you can just hear them you know and feel them, really.

TM: I'm sure you're- you know Rupert Sheldrake's theory, well it's basically the idea of like kind resonate together, and, when- I've thought about this problem before, about LSD and where does it fit in to all of this. LSD is in, uh, is in the morning glories of central Mexico and the far Pacific. And what I think that makes a plant teacher complex is how many people it's taken. And that a plant that has been used 100,000 years is filled with all of the contents of the minds of the people who took it over that time.

But I want to introduce the notion that life, the plants and the animals, are intrusions into 3-dimensional space of some kind of topological manifold of a higher order. You see, the way in which a chair differs from a giraffe is that if you, if you slice through the chair and then come back and examine it twelve hours later it will be the same, but the giraffe will have changed radically. This is because by cutting into the giraffe you will have intruded into the temporal dimension of its existence. It is more like a musical note than an object. It must be born, grow, mature, and die. I- it- and that process, growth maturity and death, is how 3-dimensional beings like ourselves describe the intrusion of these hyper-dimensional vortices into our world. That's the mystery of life. Cannot be encompassed in 3 dimensions. Life is a hyper-dimensional object. All hyper-dimensional objects are organisms whether they be societies or animals. So the question of "What is the plant." You know, when you ask yourself "What am I?" What you immediately concentrate on is what philosophers call your internal horizon of transcendence. You look into yourself to understand yourself. When we try to describe a plant, we inevitably give a topological mapping of it, how it appears to us: its uptake of minerals, its surface reflectivity, its weight. But the plant obviously experiences itself very differently. All life has an internal horizon of transcendence toward which it aims. Its, um, Whitehead called it "appetition," its inclusion of sensory data out of which it maps being. But what the nature of this higher dimension is, that these vortices are intruding into our dimension from, is absolutely anybody's guess. I mean you can call it a mathematical conundrum or a religious mystery, but it's what's making the world happen. It's what- how the mystery of our being will eventually be shed one more level of uh, veil to let us understand it.

You see an organism is a chemical system which does not run down. The, the second law of thermodynamics says that the whole universe tends towards the dissipation of structure and the release of energy in heat and then everything, all structure and all energy is dissipated. But, the, uh, life has achieved the miracle of, by being an open system and taking material into it, and extracting energy from it, and getting rid of waste, uh, life has been able to leave the main stream of thermodynamic degradation and establish itself at an equilibrium point off that graph and maintain itself there for, at least on this planet alone, four billion years. Now the average life of a star in this galaxy is on the order of 2.5 billion years, some last longer. But that means that biology is no epiphenomenon, no iridescence off the surface of matter as the 19th century physicists wanted to describe it. It means that life is, uh, indicative of a physics of higher dimensions which intrudes into this otherwise thermodynamically degrading system which we call the physical universe.

And, uh, information, there seems to be an informational ghost of this universe which is somehow co-present at all points within the matrix, perhaps a-la Bell's Theorem, or something like that. And that's what the psychedelic experience shows you. It shows you a holographic space of information where, by sitting still in your room and ascending the mind, you can cross the universe in an instant, you know, and return. And the question of "Is this real?" is in bad taste. [audience laughter] It violates the two ontological categories you see. I, I mean, uh, it just isn't done.

But- you're right, and the plants seem to be the things which shake us out of these cultural conventions. We have this very bad habit of when we encounter a new experience we describe it, and as we describe it we erase its reality and replace it with a map. And forever after when we encounter that input, we access the map and overlay it over the things and say "Aha I know what this is" and so by the time a child is five years old they have completely entered into a symbolic construct which hides the real world from them. And, uh, fortunately, uh, these plant teachers seem to have the unique ability of showing you the relativity of language which for us is the relativity of being. And then you are freed because you have seen something incontrovertible, there's no going back. You know, you are- that is the great first gateway on the path, to realize the relativity of language and the malleability of, of, of the world.

And for instance, coming out in to the desert is typical of people seeking visions, the first thing you have to do is leave the polis. Culture is this effort to hold back the mystery and replace it with a mythology which is then in the control of those who recite that mythology whether they be shamans or priests. This holding back of reality is this strange- is what Christian theologians call "The Fall", our strange alienation from nature that causes us to crowd into cities and mint money, and uh, put a price on everything.

This is why it's so important to go back to the Amazon and Eastern Indonesia, and these places and try and understand what spark it was that those people kept, you know, over the millennia while we became the prodigal son and wandered into matter and, uh, you know, hordes on the cities on the plain. We have now come full circle and returned at the end of history with the dilemma that we have made such a mess of things that there's nothing we can do now but lay...

36:05 [audio seems to cut out for a second here]

Each stage is a greater distancing from the wellspring of being, and it's brought us, you know, to the valley of dry bones, to the valley of the apocalypse. And, uh, now the fat is in the fire. Now we'll find out what stuff man is made of as, uh, the chickens come home to roost.

But, uh, well no, I- I'm very optimistic!

Q: The metaphors!

TM: Well is it my metaphors or my pessimism? Oh the horrible metaphors... Yes well the rhetorical hyperbole unbridled...

Q: Asking about the multiple worlds "It interests me greatly, do you think there's two worlds, or do you think there's many, many worlds?"

TM: Yes well I think you're right, but there are different orders of different worlds. I mean, I guess it was the physicist Wheeler who thought that every time there was a choice, the universe took both paths and had always done this, so that the number uh, and kinds of universes was, uh, you know, staggering.

Q: [unintelligible]

Right.

Q: [unintelligible]

I don't- I find that cumbersome [laughter], but there certainly seem to be a number of universes and there seems to be different kinds of universes, for instance, uh, you can tune from channel to channel, but some of them you can't make heads nor tails out of, you know. It's just too far away from your conceptual schema for you to be- so it's sort of like watching, uh, ideological mandalas or something. You can't say much about it afterwards, but it certainly was compelling while it was... [audience laughter] And, uh, well, I don't know, Robin.

You've, you're such a skillful questioner, you've brought yourself to the doorway of my most recent mania. Maybe I should unburden myself briefly about it. [audience laughter]

One of the weird things about, about growth, or trying to make your ideas always become new is that you always assume you're going to, uh, to, uh, know what the next step is, that even though you're going to become more and more enlightened, there won't be any surprises. In, and- uh, so, a few weeks ago I was meditating in my usual fashion and uh, I began to get this new idea which was so weird that I immediately shifted into "Aha this is, this is not the truth, this is not a transmission about the nature of reality. This is a plot for a science

fiction novel that I, that I should write" and try to hold that as the defense. That was my shield against the onslaught of this thing.

And I've never been one for Atlantis, or Lemuria, or all these invisible pre-historic lands and places that people enjoy so much, but I was told a very funny thing which I will share with you. It's, uh, a funny idea. Now let's see, how does it go. It has two versions, one of which speaks a scientific language, the other speaks a mythological language. Ok, so the scientific language goes like this: There's something in the universe called a fractal soliton of improbability. This means it's a unicate event, it only happens once in the lifetime of a universe. You can think of it as a wavelength with one wave. That's why it's called a soliton. And if, if one of the- and these things move not in ordinary 3-dimensional space but, but in some kind of much higher spatial manifold, and when they collide with a planet, or when one collides with a planet in a universe the time stream of that planet is divided and two copies of the entire planet spring into existence without either having any knowledge of it, it just is something which happens. So this voice was telling me that, uh, this had happened to the earth, and

that this was the secret that we were all striving to understand, was that an event in the past had actually divided our time stream, and that a twin of this planet had come into being in another dimension.

Ok, so that's the scientific explanation of it. So the mythological explanation was that the universe is Gnostic, that the creation of a demiurge, not the highest expression of divinity, but a kind of demon, a fallen creature, and that this demiurge was able to coax itself into being and actually incarnate into history as a human being. And that when this happened this was then the mythological expression of the fractal soliton of improbability. And when it happened the time stream split.

KM: The universe was the creation of the demiurge, and the demiurge impelled itself in in the form of an individual?

TM: Right.

KM: It waited a long time!

TM: When you're a demiurge, who can hurry! [laughter]

KM: Ok, go ahead.

TM: Ok so, so the time splitting event had to do with the career of Christ who was an extraordinary manifestation of energy in the historical time stream, not to be confused with a Buddha, or a Mohammed, or a Zoroaster, who were great saints. And, uh, it was something else. It was in some sense what it claimed to be, but in some sense. Ok? So now at the moment of, and you can choose either the immaculate conception or the resurrection depending on which side of the bed you got up on today. But at that moment the time stream split and this

other place came into being without having any awareness that- and they were identical at that moment, these two worlds.

Now, Christ had no children, so- oh, what I forgot to say was that the event, the fractal soliton of improbability, has this quantum mechanical half-charge so that in one of the universes it happens, in the other universe it doesn't happen. And so everything about these two worlds was the same, except that in one of them the immaculate conception had not taken place, or the resurrection had not taken place. Now because Christ had no children, the world in which he was absent, it was not a genetic line which was missing, it was an ideological line which never received expression. And consequently, as time passed, first decades and then centuries, the absence of this particular intellectual influence in the world changed the world radically in the following way: Greek science did not suffer the suppression that

occurred with the conversion of Constantine. The academies were not closed. The hermetic knowledge was not repressed.

--Audio cuts off here and starts again at "Greek science did not suffer the suppression..."

Conversely, the Empire was stronger and was able to repel the barbarian invasions of the second to the fifth century, and, and mathematics, which had halted in our world at Diaphantus, proceeded through his disciple Hypatia to develop a calculus by AD 370 so that the millennium of Christian stasis that occurred in our world did not occur in that world. And as time passed and engineering advances occurred by around 850 they had ships which were able to cross the Atlantic ocean and they encountered the Mayan civilization reaching its fullest flower on- in Guatemala and on the Yucatan peninsula. And in fact in this vision I saw the Roman Emperor Cosmodorus the Fifth make a pilgrimage to Tikal in 920 to be present at the coronation of a king at the end of that Baktun 8.

Anyway, this Greco-Roman imperial culture immediately recognized the genius of the Mayans in mathematics and astronomy and, and Europe was transformed into an- an amalgamation, a Greco-Mayan civilization with, uh, . [clears throat] [laughter] So let me see, and, and this civilization continued to develop. Now one of the influences around the year 950 was their extremely sophisticated psychopharmacopaia and shamanism. And this mated with Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism, so that rather than science developing as it developed in our world, a kind of magical, psychopharmacologic technology of thought and understanding was what was developed over the centuries. And then in later centuries, centuries before it happened our world, they contacted the orient and the Sung- the dynastic influence of the Sung poured itself into the creation of the global civilization such that by around 1200 AD they were able to land on the moon and create a cybernetic global civilization similar to the kind we have now. They continued evolving with all this psychotronic and shamanically derived,

and now by this time you can imagine it was an unbelievably exotic and alien, uh, civilization compared to our own.

The fruits of their psychedelic and psychoanalytic investigations into higher space was the discovery of our world. [laughter] They found out what had happened. They figured it out by studying dreams and by making deep journeys into the psychedelic space they were able to discover our sleeping unconscious with its repository of the legacy of the Christian centuries under the reign of this demiurgic ideology. And they conceived of the notion of saving us.

And it, it has to do with this whole thing about the UFO's, and influencing dreams, and astral traveling, and the other side, is actually the manifestation of this bizarre Greco-Mayan, postmodern, star-faring civilization trying to reach across the dimensions to save us from the momentum of our history by making us aware of, first of all, their existence, and also their technology which is evolving towards a point where, I think around the Mayan millennium, around 2012 the time island will be f- we will flow past the time island and the two time streams will be rejoined, and we will make peace with this civilization which is now 1,000 years more advanced than us with this totally different cultural history and this completely different take on reality. So this came to me in the space of about 15 seconds [audience laughter] and uh, more details have flowed in, I use it mostly as a meditational device because it's so interesting ask to be told about how this other civilization developed.

Its amazing exoticism, you know, its Neo-Platonism, its Daoism, its Mayan influences melded into a completely different kind of civilization than the one that we inherited. I've always thought, you know, that the, that Christianity, without making any judgement about Christ himself, that Christianity is hands-down the single most reactionary force in all of human history, and where would we be had that 1,200 years not been given over to this peculiar meditation, you know? All the pieces were in place for the kind of civilization that I've outlined, it was just, uh coincidence. Kat does not endorse this idea, [laughs] or even encourage it...

KM: He only told it to me a couple of days ago in Apache Junction at a truck stop or something, and he didn't tell me it's the plot for a science fiction novel he said 'this is the truth!' and I said 'let's get back to it being a good science fiction novel.'

Q: Well the thing is that it, it would on our level explain perhaps the questions you were asking earlier. Why the teaching plants?

TM: Ye- sure.

KM: Yeah.

Q: Another thing I was curious when you were talking, the physics nowadays you can have an electron on one side of the universe and split it into two and separate them on two sides of the universe and they are still in communication with each other so is that why, logically, you can bring the time island back together again?

TM: Yeah, this would be a quantum-mechanical super macro-physical Bell's Theorem event, a kind of, a kind of hyper dimensional vacuum fluctuation where the two worlds spring apart, sail along for a period then parity is conserved and they're rejoined.

Q: Well this is interesting. I've had dreams that are parallel, and its very interesting that you bring this up, I've not heard of it before.

TM: It's a-

Q: It, it- another thing I was curious is that this takes place, uh, this would be on a human experience level, uh, what you're speaking of. Now the plant kingdom, would they remain in, uh, connection between the species?

KM: Interesting question.

Q: Uh...

TM: We're free to have it any way we like. [chuckles]

KM: So it- how has Christianity possibly affected the evolution of plant species in this time stream as opposed to the other. Have they gone on..

Q: How did our lack of say 100,000 or one million species in the last 200 years that the other planet has- how does that affect the parity between the two? Uh..

TM: You mean how does our destruction and contort... Well, the part of the myth which I didn't tell you which I will now tell you [audience laughter] was, uh, that, uh, naturally, well, they were developing and exploring technical options many hundreds of years ago and they, uh, theoretic- they discovered the theoretics for nuclear fusion and fission but they never used it, until a few hundred years later one of their great theoreticians- this was after they had discovered our time stream -made the prediction that the physics of atomic explosions were such that they would cross the time stream, and so they performed an experiment by detonating an atomic device in what is our year 1907 and this was the Tungusca-

KM: ...yes sir, can anyone guess?

TM: ...the Tungusca, the Tungusca event. And then by monitoring the dreams of Siberian shaman which they had in clear focus, they saw aha, this explosion which we actually set off did occur in both time streams and at that point they became very interested in monitoring our, uh, time stream because they were picking up the dreams of a Swiss telegraph worker [audience chuckles] who seemed to be pushing toward an unimaginable conclusion. So now there is a certain amount of urgency because if we explode our atomic stockpiles it will wreck the place that they call "Home world".

Q: [unintelligible]

TM: Yes, yes. Not self-preservation because they now have star flight and encompass many systems, but preservation of Home World which on the other side is a vast botanical and ecological preserve from pole to pole, I mean it's a sacred site of pilgrimage, it's, uh-

KM: ...the earth

TM: ...the home of the species, it's the Earth. And the notion that suddenly great parts of it will be blown apart by leakage from hyperspace of one of our atomic wars is impelling them now to attempt to open the doorway and rejoin the time streams, and we'll be allowed a few years inside the botanical park to acclimate and then most people will ship off for the stars, I imagine.

The British science fiction writer, Ian Watson, has a wonderful book called "Chekov's Journey" in which he talks about the Tungusca event, and his theory is that it was a catastrophic failure of a Soviet time-travel experiment conducted shortly after the turn of the next century. [audience laughter]

KM: Tough one to prove, right? [chuckles]

TM: Obviously! Why didn't I think of that! [laughter] Well, I mean, I'm not sure, I've thought of that before, you know, it's the claim of Christian theologians that Christ comes in the center of history, they speak this same language. Before Christ no souls were entering Heaven. He freed the valve and now it's possible to enter into heaven. Before his intercession that was impossible.

Q: [unintelligible from the audience]

TM: You're....

[audio splits here 56:20]

So I thought that the millenium had come, that forever after we would - **BREAK**

All trash... Muzare Sharif

[this seems to repeat?]

----REVIEW IN PROGRESS----

efore I had this idea, I had another which I'll tell you (laughter) which was a completely different kind of idea and it's the idea that there is an overmind, this doesn't involve other dimensions.

There is an over-mind co-present on this planet and when technology, when the development of technology exceeds the development of ethics then this over-mind can work miracles. Because the over-mind is plugged into each of the individual minds that compose it, this miracle always has this unbelievably creepy quality of being exactly the thing which can convince you to change your mind.

In other words it like it reads you so perfectly that it's able to present the one situation which you can not refuse, so in the case of Rome, you know Rome was a pigsty, Pasterna called it 'a bargain basement that ran on two floors' it ran on slavery and it ran on brutality and captive populations and outrageous garrisoning of military power in foreign lands.

People like Diophantus, this mathematician I mentioned and hero of Alexandria, these people were on the brink of the calculus and the steam engine. So the over-mind is seeing that and seeing their appalling ethical state sent their miraculous personage of Christ who in a world where information could not move faster than a horses gallop, this religion within 60 years was beating at the gates of Rome itself, it was like a fire you know just burned through the empire, and changed everything, and halted technical advance.

Everything stopped, now I created this idea in an effort to explain the UFOs because the new theory of UFOs or the new school of UFOs says "we've been wrong to ask what are they, that has not been fruitful, what we should be doing is asking what are they doing?"

What are they doing?

And we can analyze what are they doing in the same way that we can analyze what anybody is doing through sociological polling of human populations we can find out what the flying saucers are doing.

So they polled human populations and what they discovered is that what the flying saucers are doing is that they are sowing disbelief in science.

They cause people to not believe in scientists, because scientists come off so lame when asked to explain flying saucers.

It's like, the flying saucer is a confounding of science in the same way that the resurrection was the complete confounding of Greek stoicism, and democracy, and materialism in the Roman world. It's conceivable that the flying saucer, the statistics are now something like 12 or 11 percent of the American population have seen a flying saucers 52 percent believe flying saucers are real.

And so forth. It is a faith which is percolating up from the lower levels, its people who live in trailer courts and read Fate magazine who are the believers in this thing.

What it may be is an intercession on the part of the over-mind, which it can do anything, it can do ANYTHING from our point of view.

In the most extreme version of this idea I said "What if enormous space-crafts were to fall into orbit around this planet?" and "What if television images of this craft were to be beamed into every home on the planet?"

Then a teaching revealed some completely mind boggling thing which you could have thought of it yourself but you never did, which is always how these things are.

Then suddenly, then after 30 days of melting the nuclear arsenals and causing all cancers to disappear and curing all infectious diseases and delivering this message the enormous spacecraft disappears, 30 days...

Then everybody says "My god, we have been abandoned, we have abandoned again into time."

And you know...history would halt, everybody would do nothing but study the teachings of the saucer and try to figure out how we can get right with them, how we can figure out how to get them to come back. Dogmatism, theories of communication, priestcraft, the whole thing.

Though I am fascinated with the flying saucer, and what it says about the malleability of mind and matter, I think mature civilizations should not be haunted by Messiahs or Flying Saucers. That these things are like metaphysical spankings imposed from on high that are saying it's a boot in the tail, wake up! Stop repressing.

K: Lets take your two ideas, because neither one of them is that old, what does the over-mind have to do with, or think of the double time stream?

Terence: Now that's a question I never would have asked. You mean if that's true? I sort of think of these as mutually exclusive. I think the demiurge is a negative expression of the over-mind. I think of the over-mind as the logos, you know, it's the understanding and self-existence which permeates everything and the demiurge is the force of matter and time and cosmic destiny which is always trying to lock in the logos and condition it and make it subject to the rules of the physical universe of space and time. The logos is like something from like, this is all Gnostic theology by the way this is just straight from the book. The logos is trying to struggle through the labyrinth of the material universe to escape, to rejoin the real source of itself which is outside of matter. Matter is viewed as an entrapment.

If any of you have read the late works of Phillip K Dick, he was probing in these areas, he was a genius, his book Veilus is pure exegesis of internal, unravelment of what was going on.

His take on it was that he believed from AD 69 until 1948, no time had actually passed and that we were living in apostolic time, and that the crucifixion lay only 75 years in the past, and that the demiurge had inserted a false history, and the Nag Hammadi manuscripts, he believed, were actually the logos as printed letters and when the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were deciphered it was like this information creature would come alive and again be present on the earth.

Like the Logos in 1948 was beginning to infuse everything and that shortly it would dissolve the illusion of the intervening 1,860 years or whatever it was and then we would realize that the prophecy would be fulfilled and that the last days were upon us.

He didn't get around to the anti-Christ, to his credit probably.

You have to distinguish between Christ the person, the teacher, and this thing called the Christos, which is the archetype of such power and force that immediately people of ill-intent could get lined up behind it and impose their will. Yeah sell love, and sell forgiveness, what a scam.

The Christos is the thing history is ruled by the archetypes which the people can generate, I mean most people are very ordinary, I mean your Mick Jagers and your Henry Kissingers are very ordinary people but they are able to project an archetype and that is the thing which sets them apart.

And when that reaches the kind of super intense focus that you get in a Mohammed or a Christ, then you know history is just putty in the hands of the force, not the person, the person is usually martyred in some horrible way. But the archetype draws energy to itself, and we don't understand how this process works.

If there ever is developed by benevolent or malevolent forces a science of social control, it will be a science of knowing how to project archetypes.

Different archetypes apparently are suitable to different times, I mean you can almost pause at an astrological theory of archetypes, but its something about how...what's appropriate for the 1st century AD is not appropriate for the 15th.

When the archetype is appropriate, nothing can stop it.

The modern term for archetypes is paradigm.

We expect it not to be a person, not a messiah, but an idea which will save us all which will then give us certain affinities with Mystical Judaism where the Messiah was expected in the form of an idea, and this is sort of our faith. We are Messianic ideologues or something like that.

(brief commentary, inaudible)

Oh I agree with you I think dualisms have to be dissolved in the notion that there is one thing, you know that's the Platonic faith. The problem is all these secondary and tertiary operational levels and you know we're actually trying to operate in a universe of scarcity and a body which requires energy and all these things. This is really the central problem in Western thinking, I think.

The tension between dualism and unity and matter and spirit, and how do you do it?

I think we are spiritualizing matter, this is what technology is. The spiritualizing of matter is the highest expression of our technological output and that this will become more and more of what this is about, so that in the next century the difference between mind and brain and cell and machine will all have been subsumed under a new vocabulary.

Because we are hard wiring our minds and we are making the artifacts of our culture intelligent, and we are breaking down the barriers between ourselves and larger databases, and this kind of thing so that the old "I am an ego inside a skin" definition gives way to a much more malleable and plastic thing.

(Commentary) "In astrology, something I like is that the symbol for Pisces is a symbol with 2 lines and a line going through it, it's the definition of relationship quality by opposition, it's polarity, it's right and wrong, good-bad, male-female, Russians-Americans.

The Aquarian one which is 2 lines of waves over each other is one of resonance, it's one of dolphins jumping in the water together, it's one of people coming together and realizing how I resonate with you and what I have to give you and what you have to give me, but you'll have something to give me that other people can't and so on, and we need to swim together.

That breaks down all the of the dualistic bonds, and I think we're right at the crux right at the moment, the place between Pisces and Aquarius where we're kind of 2 worlds again, flipping from one side of opposition, being torn from life and death and seeing, as the Christ I feel was that prototype, that template, of light and spirit and matter coming together and saying "I can dance in this, I can leave it, and I can come back into it, I have this power it's my conscious compassionate love that is just so unbounded that it give me the opportunity to play in clay, if I so choose"

Much of what I say is Alfred North Whitehead, his philosophy and believe me if you're looking around for a serious ontological foundation you don't have to read Sanskrit, ANW will serve very admirably, science in the modern world, process and reality. He was and remains the great psychedelic philosopher of the 20th century and the heir of Burson. You had another question?

Yeah I'm going to be 84 in the year 2012 and I'm wondering how to manage my life so I'll be ready for the conrescence.

Well I don't know, I think that the canyons of the creode down which we as individuals are moving, those walls are getting higher and higher too.

A lot of times when I had this intense contacts with the teaching entity I would have an anxiety about "What should I do? What is it for me to do?"

And it always said "Nothing, relax"

Your function is to just...you'll be present where you're necessary, and this isn't a fatalism, this is a kind of recognition of the dynamics of time that the thing is trying to teach you see.

It's trying to say that, if you understand how process works you will always understand where you are in any given process, and then you won't have anxiety about not occupying some other point in that process, you know.

When I began having these ideas, the only way I could previously relate to the notion of the end of the world was that I had a head full of cartoons of bearded men in sandals carrying signs on street corners saying "Repent! Repent!" and here was I, former Marxist, former this former that espousing these unimaginable things.

It's always good to do your homework, and I discovered there's this wonderful book called Pursuit of the Millennium by Norman Comb in which he details the history of Milinarianism, that's what this phenomenon is, belief by a person or a group of people that the end of the world is about to occur.

It existed among the Jews in the Exilic period, it's part of the phenomenon, or part of the social expectation that gave Christ his entre.

The early Patristic Christians lived in the imminent expectation of the end of the world, and then during the Medieval period the most utopian prophetic Milenarian movement before Marxism was Floraism, or the people who followed the teachings of Wakiin of Flora who was a wandering monk who predicted the end of the world, I think for 1244 and he died in 1222, but his followed carried on and the Pope had to send out armies to quell uprisings as people wanted to distribute the wealth because they felt the end of the world was upon them and why should anybody go to work you know this sort of thing.

Similarly in the year 1,000 there was great expectation of Christ's imminent return.

This is the thing which the human mind, at least in its Western expression seems to seek to do. Islam too has its apocalypses, 1967 isn't bad, I thought it was happening, I thought we were months away from a new secular order for the ages.

My theory of history views these things not as evidence against such a thing occurring, but as evidence that it will occur.

That these uprisings, that these outbreaks of irrational expectations of the millennium are in fact temporal reflections, they are catching the light on the temporal prisons from the object at the end of history contains the apocalyptic scenario.

It's very important to manage the apocalypse in the millennium.

It's very important that people not confuse the cleansing flames of transcendence against the ability to use thermonuclear weapons against your ideological enemies.

It's a very delicate matter because our mythologies and our fears run so deeply, but I think that its an awareness of this potential of the existence of this law of temporal compression.

And of course institutions don't promote Millenarianism because institutions want people to invest their money at low interest and long term, and have the expectation that everything will carry on pretty much as it has.

An examination of the last 500 or 1,000 years of human history would lead anyone I think to the conclusion that everything is going to be swept away, and that everything that replaces it is going to be swept away, and we are just moving into an era of change that might as well be called apocalyptic and it must be made Millenarian, otherwise it will just end in some kind of Götterdämmerung and the worst Bogey men will emerge and destroy it.

(Commentary) I know how the wave accelerates and comes towards this transition point, I never call it the end because then the beginning of a new series of many (muddled?) waves is there I guess I believe in flux so the whole process is one wave and at that moment we begin another process. At that point we discuss being the end of the universe as you did a little while ago and sometimes I feel like when everything is accelerated like it seems to have recently and when you're close to a moment of transformation of some sort as it seems to be you see great strides forward being made and great slips backward being made all at the same time right. It seems possible that the transformation will be so fantastically physical as the end of the universe or turning inside out of the, whatever this is. But actually as we sweep through world wide peace of mind, what if that occurred?

That's large enough to qualify, it seems to me for the change-over in the wave.

Terence: Yeah I think the hardest thing to know is the nature of what this ultimate compression is. What it means. Like one way I imagine it, and that's why I love to quote Joyce about "Man becomes dirigible" I imagine it as "The day when your mind becomes your home" and all over the world people just realize that their mind is their home.

(Question) "But do you feel free to describe that as the end of history or the end of the universe?"

Not the end of the universe, the end of history because I think history is some kind of involvement with matter, it's a wrestling with the angel of matter and the end of history is when you pin the angel of matter to the mat. Then you stand up and you say "I am the ademic human being made of light" and you leave the realm of matter and you return to some previously hidden dimension.

Whitehead called these things epochs, these long periods of time. He called transition from one to the other "a shift of epochs" well we've only been doing things like measuring the speed of light since 1910, all the so-called constants of our physics are based on miniscule periods of actually monitoring these things to see if they are constants.

So I can imagine it as a shift in the laws of the universe that somehow cause consciousness to perceive itself more as it must truly be. I am always trying to find physical models for these transcendental hallucinations, the one which fits this is a few years ago this Scandinavian astronomer called Hans Alden wrote a book called Worlds and Anti-worlds and in it he talked about what's called a vacuum fluctuation.

A vacuum fluctuation is where suddenly out of nothingness there emerge a stream of particles and they are equally particles and anti-particles. And they sail along for a period of time and then they collide again and each particle is destroyed by its anti-particle.

What is called parity is conserved, meaning that when you add up all the charges positive and negative you get zero. So it's ok that this matter came from nothing, and returned to nothing, it violates no laws as long as parity is conserved.

The interesting thing about this phenomenon called a vacuum fluctuation there seems in quantum mechanics no rule which would limit the size of such a phenomenon as this.

It's conceivable that our entire universe is an enormous vacuum fluctuation and its just you know 10^{72} particles that emerged from nothingness and are hurtling through space and in another parallel dimension the anti-dimension which is the twin of this universe is also hurtling through space and at some point in future time, completely unpredictable from the state given within each universe, the two will collide and parity will be conserved, and all particles and anti-particles will be conserved. However the interesting thing is that photons, which is what light is composed of, do not have anti-particles.

They are this one weird exception. So that when the universe collided with its anti-matter twin what would be left would be a universe made only of photons, and those photons would be in the configuration they were in in the moment when the cosmic collapse of the state vector occurred.

Well we have no idea what the physics of a photonic universe would be about, a limiting case or a good try would be that it is just nothing, no life, no self reflection, but why posit that?

There is such a persistence in the perennial philosophy of the notion that spiritual development is somehow related to light, and to the cultivation of inner light, and to the creation of light bodies, and to the stabilizing of light.

It's possible to suggest that the world of the imagination is simply the world of internal light, that it's a world where light is manipulated by thought in the way that in this world physical organism manipulates matter. You live in the radiant castles of the imagination after a shift of epochs in which the photonic mode predominated. That's just one way of imagining it.

It's one of the richest meditations there is, to try to imagine the millennium, again it's this thing, what would you have if you could have anything? Sometimes I imagine it, Hieronymus Bosche's great trip to the garden of earthly delights where men and women of all races mingle among giant reeds and strawberries and feed each other pomegranates under autumnal sun in an endless rolling park-like world of exotic vegetables and sexual excess hard stuff to (base?)

You can really take a readout on yourself by seeing how would you like things to be. I have sometimes my fantasy is "I would like to be alone on a star ship 10,000 light years from home with all the books in the universe and I would dress like captain Ahab and I would stride around the catwalks inside this echoing star ship and faithful robot slaves would bring me crumbling volumes of ancient lore which I would say..." no this is a little too Vincent Price. If any of you are into science-fiction the science-fiction of Cordwainer Smith is really wonderful, and one of his stories The Starship is really George Washington's estate Mount Vernon in New York. And it's all exactly like Mount Vernon in Washington's time except that in the library of the big plantation house there is one room from which the thing is controlled and its actually a starship in mid-flight.

(Question) Yes I had a question, you mentioned how the now is flooded with future perception and I have, its really part of the Tibetan practices, it's always something which captures my imagination, how come it's now, now?

The fact that these future perceptions are so tremendously tangible to us, especially while sitting in meditation, while taking a meal even or something, and how come it's not yet today? And how come it's not tomorrow? How come I am here now when I just have to flick my mind and I'm in yesterday, and equally easy in tomorrow. I wonder if you have anything to say on that?

Well I think that life precedes through time, it's an effort by organism to map something one-dimension larger than itself, so it takes a whole life to do it, a life is an effort to map a something, and the now is the moving edge of the mapping process. You cannot map it instantly, or you would be it.

So what being in time is, is experiencing the incremental mapping of this higher order object, and that's why hopefully a long life would give wisdom, because a person would begin to get the whole picture.

What did Plato say? The present is the moving image of eternity. That's pure good Platonism.

You can think of the now as a kind of laser which is moving over a larger surface and illuminating it, you know scanning it. It's scanning something and it takes it a while to scan it, and in the end all the data is in place and you say "Oh yes I see now what the object of cognition was" and our faith is, and there's no reason to doubt it, that this is a great transcendent experience.

This is the peace that passeth all understanding as you sink into death.

It's just that we like to think that the psychedelic experience gives us preview, no one escapes the final realization, it's just that some people do postpone it to their last act.

But there's no reason for that

Because it is the mystery, the culmination, it is the depalm and the wellspring.

(Commentary) I'd like to...I'm always interested in pursuing things from the Mayan days and I'd like to ask about how this theory of time relates to the individual, somewhat related to BJ's question, there's some sense I have that in their techniques and certainly you've experienced this, and other people have experienced this with the mushroom at high doses of traveling through time and actually seeing the future or seeing the past. I was wondering if you could say more about that, and some framework for understanding how that is possible.

Yes will I think psilocybin seems to be the great teacher of history and part of its teaching is...it views a person without a history as a person with amnesia, a person with a diminished capacity because your history gives you your power of convictions.

The way I use the wave, or the way I've been using it recently is I've been trying to study the time immediately ahead of us so we don't misjudge what is going on, and you know it's a mathematical process, there's no indeterminacy about it, if we anchor the whole wave system on 2012 and what I see from that anchorage point is in the 67 year cycle from 1945 to 2012 we have reached that point which resonates with the larger 4,306 year cycle at that point which corresponds to the collapse of the Roman empire around 475 AD, in other words, we have been through a period of Imperialist expansionism which has lasted for a number of years, certainly since the beginning of the 80s, but I see a re-trenchment of that and a recidivism tendency, a tendency towards religious fundamentalism, rigid social structures and in short the sorts of things which could be seen as valid resonance patterns to the early Medieval phase of European civilization.

The period from AD 474, lets for shorthand call it 500 AD, the period from 500 AD to 1500 AD, in other words till the discovery of the new world by Columbus, that 1,000 year period is the resonance that we are going to experience from now to the late 90's, from now until 1998 we will reach the beginning of the Renaissance and the discovery of the new world, but we are going to have to endure a period not entirely to our liking, we represent the pagan Hellenistic spirit which has held full sway within the empire for the past 25 years. We may feel constricted now but I think that our ideas and our position in society has further constriction to undergo before it reflowers downstream a bit.

When I first realized that I felt very pessimistic, then I asked myself "What aspects of Medieval life could I groove? What aspects of that Medieval eschatology were solitary to my needs and wishes?" then I discovered it was an age of great mystical faith and illumination, it was an age of communities of like-minded peoples seeking transformation far from the turbulence of the collapse of the empire.

My theory leads me away from those people in the New Age who think we're about to be catapulted into the corridors of power, I think that's preposterous, and the evidence for it: Zero

I think better we should tend our gardens and form brotherhoods and sisterhoods of affinity and realize that the task of transformation is one of a lifetime, our lifetimes you know.

Every time someone like Dick Price or Tony Lilly moves from the wheel I always wonder "How did it feel to know it wasn't finished?" To go with it undone?

I have no doubt that when the saucer comes that Tony or Dick will be in control, one of them. What is it Bob Dylan says in his song? "Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot fighting in the captains tower"?

But yes so I don't know if that answered your question but I wanted to get it in because the real meat for most people for this idea about time is not the mathematics of it and the symmetry of it, that's only pleasing to a certain mentality. But really what does it tell us about the years immediately ahead?

What it says is "consolidation, illumination, community, and self-discipline"

(Commentary) I can always say thanks a thousand times we don't have to go through it for 1,000 years, and only for like 15 years, this acceleration seems to be very, very convenient. Imagine if we were born in 500 AD and we had to look forward to that

Yes well that's why I say you know, imagine the people who lived in times when the temporal river was stagnant, or even when counter currents swept it backwards. This is the anguish of the ancestors, this is the sacred trust that must not be betrayed, the pagans and the invasions, and the atrocities conducted across history can only be somehow redeemed if we, who are the living way front of this genetic experience do not fumble the ball. All our ancestors are watching to see how we will do.

Kat: It seems like you were asking on a more mechanical...how did this happen.

Commentator "Well yeah how can it be that the Mayans or we on psychedelics can travel through time and see these things"

Kat: My image for it that explains that phenomenon to me and I've had the same experience, past and future, is Terence just referring to the temporal river. It's a river which flows two ways, from the past to the future and from the future to the past

And if you put yourself out in the middle of it, let go of control, let go of fear and maybe you want to choose your orientation, or maybe you don't...

You can just find out where you float and sort of face the past or face the future and just float there. I mean this is not a physicist's explanation of how this happens but it seems to work that way you know and we think perhaps far too much of the past creating the future and that we should think more, and perhaps other people have of how it's flowing the other way.

And this is how some so-called primitive people have managed to conserve the very simple effective beauty of their lifestyle, and that REAL strong feeling that every moment is now...because they're thinking of it simultaneously...

(commentator) I think about it and that also sets my mind off, you know that's kind of like the river is flowing both ways, and if you take a step to the side somehow that you'll catch the current from the future. That's appealing, but I am always playing with these metaphors and maybe I'm literalizing too much. Is it possible to step out of that stream in some way and then looking above sort of choose where you are going to descend into and then another image that came to mind was...are there somehow holes in the fabric of time that you can shoot through, sort of like in 2001 the Stargate opening up and there's this hole in between and where you emerge is not the other side of it but some place completely different

Terence: If you take the wave seriously and apply it on these short scales of time, you know you can find your way into unique configurations of the moment, it's like astrology in that way. Often the content of a psychedelic experience can be later seen to be because of the situation of historical resonance that you weren't perhaps even aware of at the time.

Kat: Or if there are parallel worlds, one or many, which ones happen to be adjacent in that moment as the cosmic weather comes, you know sometimes I've taken the mushroom just to say like a weather person would say "I just want to see what's happening out there right now" not with a will, you know you can find that it's about knitting in your rocking chair you can find that you are just in some landscape that you couldn't have conceived of before.

Terence: The essence of Tao is the correct apprehension of process. That's what Taoism is, is to understand processes to be Taoist. I think that this is almost a formal rendering of the notion of Tao, almost an effort to create a mathematics, an algebra of the Tao.

And as long as it's true to the notions of what Taoism conserves, which is flow, and determinacy, and indeterminacy, it serves. This is what understanding time is to understand process, but to understand it so well that it's like a sense for you, it's like seeing. This is the kind of seeing that is very important, to see into time.

It's what history and culture have experimented with.

It's what we now, by identifying that as what is going on, can accelerate much faster.

(Commentary) I was picking up a conversation earlier this morning, maybe you could talk more about The Other.

Oh, the other.....well I'm not sure exactly what he meant by talking about the other, I mean the other is just a way of thinking about all of these things that we name "spirit, God, demon, void" it's that there just necessarily is a place off our map, whenever you have a map it implies the part that is not on the map.

The other, the truly other, it lays outside the domain of language, its like the unspeakable, all you can do is point at it, you know.

The Gnostic idea of God was that it was totally other, that there was nothing in this universe that gave any clue whatsoever as to the nature of God. That that was its essence, to be completely other.

The other trickles through and reverberates in our lives in all kinds of dimensions, the first other that you meet is the world, and a later point in your development, your attachment to another human being can become a confrontation with the other. It's just a way of shorthand, signifying, right?

The dimension that carries you beyond yourself into the things that you previously couldn't expect or imagine.

Or Vitchkinstein's Unspeakable or, you know, I'm always fond of quoting this poem by Trumble Stigny where he says "I lean over your meanings edge and feel the dizziness of the things you have not said" That's the other, it's the dizziness of the things unsaid, the things that lay beyond the edge of meaning.

(Commentary) Part of the question to do specifically in the mushroom experience in high doses, this sense of alien intelligence or other, I think that like you said I think that its some of our conceptions of God, many psychedelic experiences, at least with LSD or other light doses are that I am connected to that, I am part of that thing, but somehow the tryptamine said its this alien intelligence, I mean what do you make of that?

Well I don't know what quite to make of that, LSD is self-reflective and integrative I think. These tryptamines seem to be informational, and largely unconcerned with the impact that the information they carry has on the perceiver.

I don't know I think it just must have to do with the fact that the universe is not all smoothed out and filled in, and that this is really an area of personal exploration where you can penetrate into an area, a terra-incognito, a place where nobody knows exactly what is going on.

We're not used to that experience. We expect to have maps of everything we look at and everywhere we go. And it is strange that in this one area we don't, that apparently our taboo at looking at the unconscious or delving into the mind has made us content to just fence off this area.

Well then if you climb over the fence and start wandering around out there, you don't know what you're going to find because the culture has carefully engineered itself to go around all of this stuff.

Even I think shamanism is largely concerned with gaining power to protect yourself from the onslaught of the other.

I mean, you know they're very concerned...to hold stuff back, they don't really have this "Lets hurl ourselves into it" attitude that we have.

We found in the Amazon, we were looking for this one plant which had DMT in it, and the ayahuasca that we were working with, I kept leading the questioning back to the matter of this one plant, first he said that it was "comida del perro" food for dogs, which seemed like maybe a putdown of some sort.

Then he went back over it again and he said "Whoa it's mellen bizarre, it's too strange!" So this was a man who his whole life was about taking ayahuasca and triggering hallucination, but he felt to go into that plant it was too weird. You often have the feeling with those people that they involve themselves in the psychedelic effect like a dancer, almost as little as possible to get the job done.

Kat: Refers to the history of that particular man and his opinions on psychedelics including mushrooms, and do different things on different nights and he would try new plants and new combinations, he was pretty intrepid, he did have boundaries.

Terence: In 1983 or whenever it was that I was down there last we were dealing with a different group of shamans on the upper Apeyaku and it was to get this orally DMT thing made from tree resin, and we had pure chemical DMT as a trade item, or we weren't sure why but just in case we needed it.

Then talking to the shaman that could make the verolla paste stuff we said this and he said "oh you have the esencia, you have the essence!" and we said "so what is that like?" You don't take it orally, you don't take it by mouth, you smoke it.

He said "Oh what happens?" So we described it a typical DMT trip to him and said "would you like to try it?" and he said "No thank you" (laughter)

So they're not thrill crazy by any means

(Commentary) I read the Castenada books he goes into what he calls the old seers and the new seers, and the old seers, maybe you're more aligned with them, but they were more willing to explore any territory, they made a division between the known and the unknown. It was the new seers that came up with the third category of the unknowable, in other words there's this reality which is the known, then there's the other realities you go to which are the unknown, which maybe the ayahuascero takes you to the unknown, but then there's this other realm where they don't go, they would probably call the unknowable because the impact it has on you to go there would be dangerous.

(2nd commentator) From the place of the unknown they could glimpse very briefly the unknowable, which is usually a pretty shattering experience.

Well that's interesting, it makes me think of you know I mention Vitkenstein's Unspeakable I think the unspeakable and the unspoken, and all these esoteric and initiatory religious numbers are trading in the unspoken, you know you come to them and they will whisper in your ear the previously unspoken teaching, they will give you an oral empowerment but beyond that lies the unspeakable which no teacher can orally impart, or impart any other way because it lays outside the bounds of transmissibility by its nature and to some degree I would think so, and that's the thing which you validate, you can only validate it for itself, in itself for itself.

It is the private object of being, it is not something which I can tell you about or you can tell me about, it's the private mystery that is ontologically private because it's unspeakable.

Kat: I don't think what we call the unspeakable is the same as the unknowable, I think that all of us who have pursued these dimensions have many experiences that it's very hard to talk about, or that when you talk about them its very silly compared to what you experienced, right?

Its on of the challenges of having this kind of group discussion or these kinds of workshops, to try to talk about that. But there is, I think a big area that just doesn't language, the ineffable is all I can think of.....

Terence: Well you can sort of chip away at it, the whole progress of human development is maybe slowly eroding the unspeakable and turning it into the spoken.

(Commentary) That is the process of everything from the very beginning to the very end, we as human beings on the planet are just somewhere in the middle of this process of the unknowable becoming the known. Tying back to your whole thing with time yesterday, you say that the physicists are interested in the first second, or parts there or and what you're interested in are the final or coming up moments as things speed up, what the physicists are looking at is basically the form, but you're looking at it as the ideas which are coming into being more and more, time is more and more recognition so it's really like spirit, or mind, or knowing, so its like the opposite end, and one is the latter coming into form in the beginning, and the former is the knowing of all of this just coming to a point. An ant, or whatever lower level of consciousness, or say a cell, or an amoeba, they have their thing, and there's the unknowable which is what we are acting in. What about the blood cells inside our body can they know about our world of communication and symbols, such as we are on this unknowable is really a greater universe, a higher level of just known by a higher way of being, so it's like each end, the matter here and the mind coming into it, this point comes shortly, this 2012 is significant in that it is possibly the opposite end of knowing becoming complete, like life

becoming completely aware of all life in and of itself. But is that the end of everything?

It seems that its just a point, like a mid swing of the pendulum.

Yes well then some other process having to do with the career of spirit instead of matter is initiated.

Yes well that's the end of everything, it's a complete end of one way of being, of us a species as a life development, it's not just humans, it's all life, if that life entity goes through a great metamorphosis another way of saying what happens to the rest of the universe is that the universe is a concept in our minds. Right well that's the metaphysicality of it.

But to say what's never been said, to do what's never been done, to paint what's never been painted, to dance what's never been danced, this is somehow you are acting for everybody when you do that.

It's an amazing thing to do what's never been done, it means once you've done it, it's been done!

-Refers to something like a big fence that is becoming larger and more extensive and the great minds fence off a particular area where all of humanity can run around and you know it's a whole process of ...

It's what aeronautical engineers call "stretching the envelope" when you fly a fighter plane you have the predicted engineering performance characteristics, but once you validate that it can do that, then its up to the pilot to find out, to stretch the envelope, to find out what it can really do...how fast it can turn, how fast it can climb.

That's what we as creative artists can do for the human enterprise.

The lacking ingredient is courage, I think.

Often I have the feeling that it's no longer at least in my own life about seeking the answer, its about facing it.

It isn't about "Is it yoga? Is it Taoism? Is it this is it that?" I think now I know, at least for me what it is, but that the answer is so appalling and requires such courage to execute it and carry it through that I don't know what to do.

I have no doubt that we could all become the Taoist hermit on cold mountain, and be that person of whom people in the valley say "Oh him! We see him sometimes when it snows very deeply, because he comes further down for wood" He comes and goes in the mist and never talks to anybody, we could all become that person.

There are no barriers to ultimate spiritual attainment, but what about your mortgage? And your lover? And your devotion to French chocolate? And all of these things.

That's tricky. That's very, very tricky.

For instance like the matter of the flying saucer, I have no doubt that if you took 10 people selected from this group and trekked days east of Death Valley and stayed up all night and everybody took 8 dried grams of mushrooms and hoped and hollered and waited that something would happen that would be so appalling and so destructive to our preconceptions of what's possible in this universe that you just come out of it pointing into the desert saying "mmMMM mmMMM MMMMM!!!"

I'm careful, I don't doubt that appalling, appalling, appalling things can happen and reality can be completely pulled to pieces, I don't know what that means but I really want to deal with that on my terms. That's a kind of fear you know, it's a kind of holding back. That's why, I know people who seem to me superhumanly reckless, I mean they tell me the thing they do and I just shake my head, you know because of the power, of the vistas of the energies that they must have laid their hands on. It's too much for me, I am a simple scholar and bookish collector type. I am like Brother John here.

We like our home and hearth. But that's the challenge you see, that's the weird things of psychedelics. It's a path, but in a sense it's the end of the path, and then what do you do? Now it's up to you, it's no more about the guru says "In 5 years you'll make progress, or if you just keep eating this spirulina, or fiddling with your crystals" or something, but no, you've arrived, now what do you do with it?

Do you really want to be a wandering figure at the edge of civilization glimpses occasionally with your tattered clothes and your wild ravings...

Kat: Nick and I were talking this morning about envisioning something and how these plants help you to generate a vision of something real that you want to create or organize in the world and then they help you to have the discipline and dedication to carry it out.

In the real day-to-day telephone call, how do I get the money for it? Kind of way.

That I think is a real strength for it that all of us have, it's one of the responsibilities of being granted the visions is to make the visions then as real as you can.

We do have our bodies here on earth for some time to come, we do have pleasure of course which we should all indulge in, but we also have responsibility to make it as much as like, even if it's a small step, as much like as that fantastic thing we can see in our visions and I think that it gives you the object then it helps you move towards it, and we need to do that work and keep refreshing our vision if it starts to get weak or we start to give up on it. If we need to shift directions slightly.

(Commentary) Let me go back to astrology, with Saturn being on a ring around a vision and then Saturn stairway, envisioning the steps that it takes to get there, and how you can't jump 40 steps up without losing part of the foundation, as an artist myself I'm finally getting to a place of patience that the slower it goes, the better it gets, and my statement goes "If I only had more time, I'd use less words to write". I would start using things carefully, and allowing the process, for years I was just like "I gotta get this out!" but not anymore, I'm just taking the slow, patient steps to create a foundation strong enough to someday, even if its not in this lifetime to manifest that dream.

KM: If you use the quality of your daily life as your currency for how you're proceeding towards something. If you know the quality of your daily life is good, deep, and satisfying and you have a goal, you're probably on the right path.

But if you're saying "God it's just going to be hell for 3 years until I can get this project together" you maybe should think about it again.

I could reflect all this on a greater scale to the evolution of life itself, and that if life were to very quickly achieve the knowing pure spirituality, then what good is it? And that's like (through humanism?) and through history and through all of our time, and even this coming moment 2012, that might just be this reflection of another even ultimate, and it most likely is, it's just that reflection, and it's really endlessly drawn out patient process is just taking its time as long as possible so that every aspect can work into place.

This quality of daily life thing is an interesting point, because I think it was yesterday or two days ago we meditated or thought "What would you do if you could do anything? How you imagine...or if the genie were to tell you you had not 3 wishes but thousands, and you begin to dabble in fulfillment and of course all the trivial and superficial things I mentioned, palaces and Ferraris and all this, but then things that you could move anywhere instantly, how would you choose to travel instantly if you could move anywhere instantly?

At La Chorrera, these possibilities were real to us that we actually grappled with it sufficiently to see how it would develop. How it develops is that if you discover that you can do anything, the only values which have any meaning, if you can do anything and have anything, are aesthetic values. If you could travel anywhere instantly, how would you travel? You would walk...obviously. You know, because it's so tasteful, it's so completing, it's such a complete reverence for space and time in your body and the correctness of the situation. Time and time at La Chorrera, someone would be doing something some way, and someone else would be saying "Well you're omniscient, why don't you just make it be done?" and the answer is that is crass to do that.

The way to do things, if you can do anything, is to do them right.

KM: Cooking is like that.

I guess, but that realization of the total richness and correctness of the moment is that's the correct interpretation of the attainment of these cities. The things that would go on at La Chorrera, as an example of how the Tao works, I would walk out into the jungle and there would be butterflies circling.

I would hold out my hand and speak to the butterflies with my mind and invite them to come down and land on my hand and display themselves. And the butterflies would do this, they would come and land in my open hand and turn, and strut, and show me all facets of themselves, and this would go on for 2 or 3 minutes where I would experience gratitude, reverence, delight, and then this other emotion: the need to show somebody else what I could do.

Then I would walk back to the camp and smiling with a bizarre inward smile I would select one of my camp mates and ask them to walk out into the jungle with me. Then to their horror, I would stand underneath this tree and gesture, and ask for the butterflies to come down from the trees and land in my hand, and people would just turn away in a mixture of horror and embarrassment that anyone could be such a jackass first of all, and that anyone could be so mentally deranged as to operate like that. Of course the butterflies would have nothing to do with me, I would be left just sputtering and it happened many times. It was not only the butterflies, it was that as long as I had no ego I could work magic, but it was magic that was the necessary magic.

It absolutely had no use other than to make my life a more perfect work of art, as an example we had a pot in which we could de-vein (...?) every morning it was our magic pot, and the scrubbing out of this pot was a major pain in the neck and was consequently a rotating camp duty. So at the height of this it was my turn to scrub this pot and I went down to the little spring where the sand was, and I squatted down by the water and I picked up the sand and I rubbed it on to the pot to get ready to scrub it. Then I looked and the black stuff was just flaking off, it was like easy off or something, and I just took the pot holding it by its 2 little protrusions and immersed it in the spring like this and looked and all the black stuff was just flaking off and crudding off and I was just amazed. The magical scouring agent.

So then I went back to the camp and got my most severe critic and again, smiling with inward benign-ness I lead them down to the river and said "I'm going to teach you how to wash a pot", the Zen master you see. So we squat across from each other by the spring and I pick up the sand I put it on and she says "So I'm supposed to know that sand can wash a pot?" I say no, look. And again it failed me. By then I was getting the message, and I stopped...and there was one other instance which was actually very puzzling because I saw another person go into it too. It had to do with this prophecy which my brother had made.

One of the motifs which circled in his mind space during this period was what he called 'The good shit' and this was, he had claimed, imagined that sometime in the past he had got a sample of Afghani hash that had had cow manure, very, very carefully worked into it and the hash had been infected with psilocybin mycelium and all of the cow manure had been converted into psilocybin, so he had this psilocybinated hash, and he had this notion that he would invent a musical instrument like an electric guitar, which when you played it, it would cause this stuff to come out of the air and reign down on great crowds of people.

So anyway there was this thing about the good shit, and one night he announced that the good shit would appear at a certain time. So then I went back to my hammock in this hut in the jungle and the woman who was with me came as well and we had no watches, but he had said that at 11 PM the good shit was going to get here. I was settling down to roll my evening joint, and it was this Colombian weed that we had brought in with us. As I lit the joint, this little thing fell out of the end of it on the floor burning, and I picked it up and I smelled it and it was unbelievable hashish. I mean hashish to die for. I put it in the pipe and I smoked it and I said to this woman, and I said "Smoke this" and she agreed that it was astonishing. I looked and opened this baggy with this stuff and started smoking it, it didn't change its appearance, but the odor and everything was just the most finest hash I've ever smoked. I thought the millennium had come.

[AUDIO BREAKS HERE]

So I thought that the millenium had come, that forever after we would all trash. Yes. The end of the world is when all trash, as Muzare Sharif, uh [Terence laughs] ...when trash becomes hash. [more laughter]

But, but at the crack of dawn the next morning I went tearing down to my harshest critic and knelt beside her hammock and woke her up and said, you know "You've got to smoke this!" and of course, you know, garbage was back! [Terence laughs] So, so I don't know why I got off into this, I guess it was the 'life is art thing and this thing about what would you do if you could do anything.

K: Enhance that. The myth, isn't it from New Guinea? Uh, about the good ship? Remember that one, where they generated.

TM: You mean the thing about the resin, where the resin bar grew longer? I'm not sure how this relates to it, but I'll tell it. In the study of Messianic movements, in fact you can read about this in Sylvia Thrupp's book *Millennial Dreams in Action* where she talks about a number of millennial religious groups. There was a movement around 1910 in Java called the calloupan [?] movement and it was some guy was sitting on his porch on day in a hut off in the jungle, and he was playing his flute, and they collect Kopal in the forest there and sell to traders. And as he was playing his flute, he noticed that this bar of rolled-out Kopal multiplied to twice its size right in front of him. And not only did this happen, but the same moment it happened his mind was flooded with the sudden realization that the meaning of this event was that all human lives were now going to be twice as long as they had previously been before.

And he started, uh, he told people in his village and he had the proof because they had this bar of Kopal that was twice as long than anybody had ever rolled them in the village. So it spread from village to village and, uh, before long people from all over, uh, Java were vectoring in on this place, and, uh, eventually the army had to be sent to put up road blocks and turn people back, and uh, it all had to do with uh, this piece of resin which had doubled in length while this guy was playing his flute.

KM: And that is what you call a cognitive hallucination..

TM: A cognitive hallucination..

KM: Right, where an idea becomes so real to you that you see it, but then there's this funny border where maybe it becomes so real that other people see it, and maybe that's actually how we keep enlarging and complicating reality is by having consensual cognitive hallucinations of what's possible.

TM: That's right, that's right.

KM: Yeah.

TM: The ayahuasquero that Kat mentioned she liked so much and worked with in Peru, Don Fidel, he lived behind - he lived off this road we knew and a few miles down this trail, and we would go over there often and we would walk with him back and forth between his house and where we could catch these little Jitney busses into town.

And he said one afternoon as we were walking along the Amazon jungle, apropos of nothing he said "This is the path that Christ walked when he lived on Earth" and it became so. You saw that somehow this was not a logical statement, this was a statement about the transposition of time and dimensionality, and that he was living in the light of Christ, that he was living in the presence of the master through being enveloped in a cognitive hallucination, and uh, I think our entire culture is headed for being enveloped in a cognitive hallucination where our real wishes will be fulfilled and that's why it's so important to, uh, to find out what our real wishes are.

One of the most powerful forms of yoga, one of the highest forms of yoga is what is called Yanutatara-Yoga-tantra and it involves a series of visualizations and they say "Imagine your home as a splendid palace, and imagine the common utensils of your everyday life as golden vessels, vessels of beaten gold encrusted with jewels. Imagine your raiment as being made of the finest silk, and imagine yourself as a God centered in the midst of all of this splendor. Well, this is like trying to induce what is called in Western psychotherapy "A delusion of grandeur." A delusion of grandeur is when you are a hell of a lot happier other people think you should be, you know? [audience laughter] And uh, say "What do YOU have to be so happy about?!"

And it's all about infusing the quality of life with greater purity. We were saying around the fire last night that the way to relate to the millennium is to make it happen as soon as possible in your life so that you become a spectator to it as a historical phenomenon. Well the way to make it happen in your life is to not transcend desire but to transmute it so that what you really want is what you actually have, you know.

KM: I um, that, the mushrooms particularly, that to will, to choose, to become an archetype that I of course both have to be able to identify as an archetype, but one that I can relate to or wish to be, and become, you know, as large, a hundred, a thousand times larger than we are, and as smooth, and as...everything is light, you can practice being in the Tao so deeply in those states, and that everything you do no matter how minuscule it is you're doing most gracefully, and everything you say you're saying most eloquently. And, you know, even um,

I've used the mending-sock thing, because sometimes I think that's what I'm doing, that level of work, but that I'm doing it perfectly, you know, and that's, that's a great feeling.

If you indulge in the feeling of being a Goddess, or a God or Goddess, or one of whatever you identify with, you know, you get to choose whatever, then you get to carry it back. It's a really good way to carry it back into your daily life, and, and uh learn to practice it either in moments when you're wobbly and you suddenly need to grow into the situation, or in moments of ecstasy, you know, and to be archetypes making love is pretty good.

TM: Well that's the technique of tantric practice, imagining these Gods in union with their consorts in sexual union...

Q: Want to have a break?

TM: Yeah let's have a break.

[Guitar Music & Singing Interlude ends 1:10:19]

TM: The people burning to speak should speak. [Terence chuckles]

Q: I have one comment, um, that in different part I keep hearing people say we don't know anything. But I think we're all dancing around it very well. I think you're dancing around it really well, and so I think we know something, not a lot perhaps, but we do know something. If words are that important and do have that meaning, meanings, whether it's what we're saying is true, or the sound of our voice that is true, something is true right here. Uh, I think we're beginning to say the unsayable. I just have that feeling. [Audience chuckles] [Terence chuckles]

TM: And what a feeling it is! Yes, well, we're f- feeling the dizziness of the things not said, we feel it, we're dizzy from it, it's here.

Q: I think a lot has to do with trust. A lot of times [???] You just gotta say it, and you move on. That's how it keeps forming, creation, words, thought idea. They attach themselves to this larger structure and just keep getting larger and larger. Pieces fall off, people add, uh, but Its about trust and that leap of faith to the other side to what you can understand, to trust it, as you trust your lover, as you trust a friend, it doesn't always work out, but trust is the only way. Uh, because otherwise there's only fear, fear of ourselves, fear of others, fear of ideas. I think this community is part of that building trust among people who have different ideas." [1:13:10]

Q2: learning and teaching [???] psychedelic experience....You can use a lot of verbiage to explain to people what that search is about, but in the end probably the best communication is...dispense the sacrament (inaudible) I just want to express my appreciation to those involved in the work, with great respect for the sacrament. I just am very deeply wishing the best, it's something I missed for a long time since the days in the 60's was the last time I was around people who knew about that work and approached it with the kind of reverence that I see here.

TM: The great thing about the psychedelics is that they speak for themselves, so they need no priest, no interpreter, uh, they can deliver their message all by themselves.

Q2: [??] seem to be so wonderful with words. Even the unspeakable [???] together in silence. -to say. For me it was always babbling. It's quite an event.

TM: Well it's wonderful that you feel so comfortable with people that you don't have to rattle on. Why don't you lead us now, Kat, in a meditation.

KM: Hold hands. We've seen, uh, many eggs in the last two days and had the pleasure of holding them and swallowing them, and um, I've spoken about luminous eggs and feeling very "eggy" today, resurrection and all that stuff. Um, so I was thinking that our luminous eggs should meet each other in maybe a less verbal way. Ok close eyes, and find your center, the light. And let it swell out into your egg, your shape. And then you feel that light of yourself moving into your head and letting everything else out of it. You can breathe through the top of your head, and through your forehead and your eyes and let it become, let your head become like a cloud of light. When it gets strong, that floats up above your head so you have a sphere of light that you can feel and see just above the top of your head that seems to get more charged as you perceive it. And then it grows. The light is growing, the sphere is growing rounder and fuller and softer until it meets the lights of your neighbors. And we have a huge halo over us together. If you travel through it, in your light, you'll encounter everyone very softly. And we can charge that halo of light to be stronger and bigger than us. I feel like it, uh, becomes a sphere, a dome above and beneath us which meets the light of the spirit of this place, the spirit that lives here. It's partly in the earth and partly in the air, and very old and wise with a sense of humor. And so we're all inside our collective luminous egg which we could take anywhere actually, but perhaps for now we should just greet the spirit of this place and gradually breathe and draw the white light energy back into ourselves, into our circle and into our individual spaces. Above and through and beneath us. And when we go out and sit out on the rocks alone we can keep doing this even though we're not in a circle.

It's good to connect with all of you. Thank you.

TM: Thank you. Mhm.

Q: I don't know how to phrase this best, um, you were suggesting that this kind of, um, visual language, somehow, um, our future lies there, I know Gueyes talks about the future of technology being light and sound in probably the same way you're talking about it. Um, I guess my interest in formulating this question has to do with, um, things like the Mayan hieroglyphic language system or, um, also Egyptian hieroglyphs, basically that kind of um, visual language that maps Northwest coast Indian designs were there's very particular kind of uh, design patterns. Another piece of this question is the interface between the past use of that and the future use of that somehow. That is seems that- I mean, my sense of these hieroglyphic languages used in the past, they would literally see these things that are being drawn, or these things would speak to them and provide information as you are talking about. Um, and that somehow as we evolved we lost that ability somehow, or buried it, or shunted it off to one side. And so my question has to do with some sense of the re-emergence, or the uh, in

the Joyce sense here comes everybody, the democratization of, uh, of that ability in future cultures.

TM: Yes well I think so, I think that the way that these, uh, hieroglyphic languages especially Mayan and Egyptian differ from uh, alphabetic languages is that, uh, etymology remains on the surface in a hieroglyphic language so that, uh, thousands of meanings are immediately visibly present. And, and so it's more like an ideogram rather than like a word with a dictionary meaning. You couldn't really- I doubt that a Mayan could conceive of a dictionary of Mayan glyphs because they're, they're, uh, they infinitely shade off one into another so that- and, and that kind of sensitivity to the depth of language and to the uh, presence of the past in the present, in a word, in what Joyce is trying to do in Finnegans Wake, you know. And that's why if you read it carefully, you feel many historical layers of meaning in the same

passage because he wrote it with almost a pictographic consciousness of the meaning of the words rather than a lineal and literary sense of it. So yes in that sense, it's like that. How this will be achieved in the future in our culture I'm not sure.

The control of the macintosh through an internationally set of unders- internationally understood set of control glyphs is very weird and if any of you have worked with a macintosh you immediately see "Ah" this idea which seems very odd, could in fact, I could learn this very quickly and anyone could do it, kind of thing, may be presages a world of illiterate computer users who communicate with computer through symbols, because literacy has been lost. But it's it's very interesting.

Q: [??] So the computer plays a role in the visual component. Like I heard you talk about actually when you asked your question "Will computers become intelligent?" I've heard you talk about it more, and that the technology of computers will become available to us as almost a biological extension from the-

TM: Yes that's what I think will happen. I mean my vision of a perfect world is where, you know, the earth is restored to its prehistoric, edenic perfection but technology has not been eliminated, it's merely been micro-miniaturized to the point where the computers which maintain the history of the race and the governance of the planet have all been secreted in a certain pebble which lies on a certain beach somewhere on the planet and we walk around in perfect harmony with nature and in perfect and complete touch with an imaginary

holographic world that is our self-expression, as a city is our self-expression.

To then be simultaneously, you know, in the world of techne and in the world of nature, but with neither violating the other, and I think that's reasonable. In fact, I think perhaps in a sense this is what so-called preliterate cultures in the Amazon have achieved. That's how it looks to them from the inside. They have an extremely rich inner life. It isn't maintained by vast computer networks and projected into holographic space and taped on to magnetic tape and all of that, but it's still, in feeling, it's the notion that the richest world is within and that you uh, promote a balance with the exterior world, but then the purpose of the leisure created when you have achieved balance is not then to accumulate things but to explore the interior horizon of transcendence through the recitation of myth, and ecstasis, and uh, and

this sort of thing.

Q: Terence, in connection with Roberts question, in conjunction with it, could you further elaborate this idea of the material externalization of the soul and the internalization of the body as a definitive thing in evolution.

TM: Well, I think imagination is where we want to go, that this has become the arrow of our epigenetic development because everybody says "In the future, you'll have everything you want!" Well if we believe this then we have to think seriously about "what everything you want" is.

I mean obviously you want plenty of food, plenty of clothes, plenty of money, plenty of friends, but then if you get all that and they say "Well you still- you haven't even dented your credit account" and you say "Well I want to live in Versailles, surrounded by brilliant robots who- and I want great writers and artists to have lunch with me every day, and then the Hope diamond, and Rembrandts." Eventually this becomes very silly and instead there is an ascent toward truly grandiose aspirations, you know. Truly bodhisattvic calling. And I think that

uh, this- the rich imagination is the real frontier, this is why the poets and the artists are so important.

This is why, I think, one of the aspects of the space thing that is never mentioned by the AI-Phi society or any of these engineering types who are so into it, is the interesting thing about outer space, we are not going to go through space to other worlds. That will be very incidental to going into space. Going into space will be going into space, that space itself is a medium with unique properties for a species such as ourselves, and one of those unique properties is the engineering, which on the surface of the planet always has to always be cognizant of stress, and bearing loads, and the limitation of materials, engineering is just going to become like ballet. And objects miles in extent can be created that are obedient only to the laws of the human imagination, and of course the funding available to create these

things, in other words the constraints of nature are pretty much lifted.

Outer space is very much like what you see when you close your eyes in a dark room. It's a vast unfiltered void into which anything whatsoever can be projected. The hallucinations of the individual are, are the cultural artifacts of the species 500 years from now, I mean, all these visions and dreams that we have will be realized, I mean, in ways that we can not imagine, but realized nevertheless. This has been consistently what has been going on. The alchemical dreams of the 16th century are fully realized in the 20th century, you know. And of course it has facets that they never imagined.

But, uh, going into space and going into the imagination is the same thing, and in the same way that the new world presented a tremendously tight genetic filter to immigrants so that only the soldiers of fortune, the religious fanatics and exiles came to this place and that created a unique gene mix, space is going to be a much tighter genetic filter. I mean, most people who go are going to be very smart and very healthy, and uh, and uh, very quickly I think a space type will arise but I don't think you can create a space-based civilization without recourse to psychedelic plants and the psychedelic experience, because it's too much the same thing. You know, without- if you don't integrate psychedelics into the leap to space and realize that what is happening is that more and more we perfect the uh, aspiration to vertical ascent.

In the myth of Icarus and Daedalus you get this, then in the brother Mongofie [??] and their gas-filled balloon, and then the Wright brothers, and then the Apollo project. All of these things are this aspiration to ascension. Apparently it is a biological drive, some people have suggested it is a nostalgia for the canopies of the rainforest that no longer exist, but whatever it is, it's going to take us eventually outwards to the stars and inwards to the stars because, uh, you know the real question mark which hangs over all this is the nature of mind, and we do not know what mind is, and yet everything goes on upon the stage that is conditioned by and assumes mind as a given. And, uh, every society has assumed that it had the answers, that just fifteen years more of fine-tuning of the current ideology would do it. And no society

has ever been right about that, so why should we be right?

We are hurtling toward an unimaginable future in the same way that our present would have been unimaginable to people 200, or 500 years ago. But it is uh, it is the imagination because it is consciousness that is growing and expanding and strengthening itself. And if we take the notion that these uh, psychedelic plants are consciousness expanding agents, this is what they were originally called, "consciousness expanding drugs," if you take that seriously for a moment how can you not center it in your life? I mean obviously consciousness is what

must be expanded as fast as possible at all costs in all times and places because it is a lack of consciousness that will, uh, be toxic to our species and the planet. Consciousness is the saving grace and so it has to be cultivated by any means, uh, available. Yeah.

Q: You were saying that this urge to ascend is related to this biological urge and that maybe something related to the rainforest.

TM: Well I think we are the trigger species...

Q: What I want to make is that, when we think of going to space we're so human centered, yes us as humans can exist in space, but what I think is really important about going away from this planet's surface is that it's not just a human centered thing, it's a totally biological thing and that we are just implements of it, we are the thinking conscious creative tool-makers that will be able to implement this getting off this "gravity trap", this "gravity well" but it's not just for humans it's for all life, and we have to, it will be a complete synthesis of all biological life that will exist away from the planet.

TM: Yes if we go to space we will take everybody with us.

Q: Just like in a rainforest, it's not just....it's everything.

TM: That's right we are the species that is deputized to use energy to do the thing for all life on the planet. That's why I'm not pessimistic about history and I don't see history as unnatural or somehow opposed to nature. What history is is a 10,000 year process by which the monkeys attain an understanding of physical processes to build the habitats in to which all life on the planet can then migrate. That's what I was talking about this morning when I said "I think the planet senses the finite of its- the finiteness of its existence and that biology is a wild scheme for getting out to the stars for dispersal of uh, of life, and you're right, we have great hubris and believe "we are doing this" and man will go to the stars. It's more that man is the pecking beak of the cosmic egg- of the cosmic chick in the egg of life on earth, and the entire bird will emerge and fly but it was man with his atomic weapons and his radar and all this who, who can break the shell and then the whole of the biosphere will flow outward into space and escape the cycle of energy degradation that will eventually turn this solar system into a group of cold cinders rotating around a uh, a red giant or something.

Q: Terence..

TM: What?

[AUDIO SKIPS HERE]

TM: Yes, well we're trying to compare our maps, everybody has seen different pieces of a geography whose total size we don't know. So we don't know, maybe none of our maps overlap, or maybe some do and some don't. And maps which don't overlap are not invalidated, it just means nobody has been there but you. I mean, I often have the feeling that I am seeing things that no one has ever seen before. Often.

[AUDIO CUTS OUT HERE]

Leon asked me to talk about time, Leon is off on alone time, so he'll miss this. The thing that really interests me or draws me back to the psychedelic experience again and again is the notion that there's something that you can learn that would somehow be, uh- have an impact on society at large, that when, that when you have the psychedelic experience, it's like you're a sailor on some kind of a vast ocean where you let down your net into the deeps and the hope is that you will snare an idea of some sort and of some size. And it may be, you know, that you come up with the equivalent of tuna, which is many small ideas, or- and perhaps you bring up your nets and see that they have just been shredded by something so large [audience laughter] that you scarcely care to imagine it.

But the, the hope is to land an idea of intermediate size that, uh, you can then fully, um, explore and understand. When you s- go into that ocean as a swimmer you see these things passing in review, uh, things of such beauty and intricacy and complexity that you are literally speechless, and even speechless in terms of an interior dialogue about what you're seeing. You can't, uh, it just blows your mind and washes past you in such profusion that there seems to be- the notion of capturing it seems to be like a child emptying the ocean with a cup. But

if you have a net, and I'm not sure what a net is exactly, but it's a way of somehow capturing these psychedelic ideas and then bringing them back for examination.

And I think, um, part of it rests on a technique of, uh, cyclical recitation to yourself of what you have seen so that you carry a vision to a level of reflection in memory as you pull away from it, and then 10 minutes later you tell yourself again what has just happened, and then 20 minutes later again so that you get a series of telescoping images which are granted a compression of the original event, but nevertheless they bear the, uh, the stamp of what the thing was.

So, the thing of this class that has happened to me is a very peculiar idea about time which was developed, uh, fairly suddenly as I would imagine ideas develop, uh, in me in the early and mid 70's and then it was pretty much formulated in my head but it took the invention of small computers to make it possible to write software so that I could actually talk to other people about this idea. Well since we have no computers and not even a blackboard this will be a kind of feeling-toned uh, excursion into talking about this theory of time.

Its, um, it has an abstract foundation and a practical foundation. Its abstract foundation is the notion that, uh, time is different than we have come to conceive of it as the legacy of Western science. The legacy of Western science is that time is duration, that time is a dimension necessary for process, and it's usually thought of as a flat plane against which some other fluctuating variable can be plotted. This is called, you know, "linear time."

Um, and Newton's physics took the same view of space. The Newtonian view of space was that it was essentially emptiness; it was something which you had to have if you wanted to put something somewhere, so it was a kind of an abstract, uh, plenum, but Einstein showed that space is actually some kind of a thing, it has properties of thing-dom, it is distorted in the presence of a large magnetic field and, uh, and so it beca- it rose out of the realm of abstraction and then was cognized as an objectifiable entity, a topological manifold that was real.

This is, I think, the same step that has to be taken for time. Time is not simply the dimension of duration required for the successive occurrence of occasions. It is rather some kind of conditioned topological manifold. We can think of it as, um, uh, a fluid medium flowing across a surface, a river in other words. In some places the river is very broad and shallow and meanders because the pitch of the incline over which it's moving is so slight that it can barely discern which way to move. You see this often in the Amazon. In other situations the incline increases and the speed of the flow increases, and the depth of the channel increases, and the sides o- distance between the banks decreases, so time runs slowly and it runs quickly. It has a kind of modulated speed.

Well, it's been a, uh, a commonplace of Western cosmology since Darwin, although it's never been elevated to the status of a law or even a principle that complex- steady complexification has occurred in the universe since its very beginning. That this is, uh, something that we see in the very first moments of physics and proceeding right up into our own day. In other words, in the era before physics, that period of time so short that it's the period of time- it's less than the amount of time necessary for the photon to cross the radius of the nucleus of the atom, there was absolutely chaos and a complete absence of physics. And then what sprang into being was a physics of pure electrons, of pure energy. And it was not for many seconds that, uh, temperatures fell to a point such that other factors could come into play, such that free electrons could fall into atomic orbitals and, uh, and, and this sort of thing.

And at each successive level of cooling new forms of order became possible. At first everything was just this plasma of particles and energy, and then atomic systems sprang into being. And then at still lower temperatures these atomic systems were able to form molecular systems. The energy level in the general medium dropped below the level at which it would disrupt the molecular bond, so then molecules came into being. And then at that point there was the aggregation of stars and the cooking out of the heavier elements through the by- the process of cooking hydrogen so that iron and carbon and these things then arose. And by this time the universe is much cooler than it was at the beginning, and then finally you get, uh, temperature regimes and environmental situations where very large colloidal molecular, uh, species can come into being, large polymerized molecules and, uh, and this sets the stage for DNA which once it emerges- and the, the thing to notice at each of these stages of complexification is that it requires a shorter time than the processes preceding it.

If the universe is, uh, let's uh, take the long view and say 20 billion years old, then the first 10 billion years not very much happened that was interesting in the realm of complexity. There was star formation and, uh, the percolation of heavy chemistry but not life and- or it's doubtful that life occurred in the early universe. So what we see then is the emergence of more and more complex animal forms at a greater and greater speed. And then finally the emergence of self-reflection in the primates, and then epigenetic methods of encoding information in other words writing, and storytelling, and language.

And uh, at each point what is happening is there's a progressive time-binding of energy and a progressive intensification and speed-up of the complexification of certain parts of the universe. Right now the most complex part of the universe that we know is the human brain- mind situated in its network of computers and cultural conventions and social obligations and expectations and hopes and fears and historical aspirations, et cetera. This is the realm of the densely-packed that the Buddhists are talking about.

So it seems to me that this should be seen as the operation of a general law and we are not outside of this. We are in fact the cutting edge of it. Somehow of all the animal species on the earth the human beings are carriers of this temporal, speeding-up process which is now engulfing, uh, the entire planet. And, uh, so that's the general law, or the general perception upon which this idea I elaborated was based, the notion that complexification is being conserved through time and being built up as, uh, some quality that the universe is very interested in maintaining.

And then I looked at the I-Ching which I hope, uh, is familiar to most of you. I'm sure it probably is. It's a very ancient Chinese oracle system of- that uses what are called hexagrams which are 6-leveled ideograms of broken or unbroken lines, and the possible subset of these things is 64 which is an interesting number because it's the number which DNA operates on because it uses 64 codons, and in fact I came to see that as no coincidence, that actually life was organized around this number and the I-Ching as well because both were subject to, uh, a set of rules which was, uh, surfacing in the phenomenon of biological organization and the organization of a Chinese oracular theory for understanding past and future time.

But- and I looked at what is called "The Sequence" which is the way in which you move from one hexagram to the next, and I sought order there and found order that I think had been lost since pre-Han perhaps pre-Zhou time. And I came to see the I-Ching as we possess it today as an archaeological artifact, a piece of broken machinery. It's like the turbine of a jet plane. You puzzle over it and you see that it can be used for various things and you do use it for things and you see that it's very effective but it's really a piece of broken machinery from a very ancient technology which ceased to exist before the rise of the Han dynasty. And what it was, was, it was like a uh, Taoist technology of understanding time, that by the practice of certain techniques whose historical, uh, echoes I think you get in the stilling-of-the-heart techniques of Vajrayana Buddhism, these people were able to see into the quantum-mechanical foundations of thought and consciousness and they noticed there a flux which they called The Tao and it was a thing which came and went. The Tao Te Ching says "The way that can be told of is not an unvarying way" and they stilled their body functions and they looked inward with a cataloging, analytical mentality, and they noticed that while this flux was variable it seemed to be not infinite in its, in its, uh, in its uh, contributing factors but that in fact it seemed to have a pattern and they discerned the pattern as revolving around the number 64.

In other way- in other words, they discerned through this process of meditation temporal elements that had a kind of ontological validity that the material elements of the periodic table have for matter. That there is not one kind of time or two kinds of time, but actually 64 facets of the possible temporal jewel. And they saw that any moment in time was the combination and the overlay of, uh, this a- wave system which they called Tao and it was a harmonic wave system, it had, uh, re- it had, uh, periods of self-expression which were very short in duration, on the order of seconds or hours or microseconds, it had levels of expression which were cognizable in the human world as years and decades and centuries, and it had vast resonant periods which were as large as history and then larger many times. Periods of historical- or periods of, uh, temporal resonance which could only be referenced to the life of the planet. And this is, I think, uh, you know, part of the Chinese notion of, uh, the Tao of heaven, earth, and man. These are different speeds at which these temporal waves of conditioning of the world of phenomenal appearance are moving.

And if you, if you take an idea like this, uh, seriously, even as a personal discipline of thought to, to picture it, to visual it- visualize it in a Vajrayana spirit then you see that what's really being offered is a map of time. It's saying that, um, the condition of knowing a fading past and facing an unanticipated future is not a n- ontologically given necessity of existence, that it is possible to imagine an existence in which one saw into time the way we as animals see into the space in front of us so that we are able to run, and leap, and dance among the rocks. It's because we can see into space. A creature that- or a culture that could see into time could anticipate where the river of time would flow quickly, where it would broaden out and move slowly with a rich sense of the conservation of accomplishments achieved, where it would cascade and break-up its previous patterns and produce great cataclysms of novelty. A civilization which knew these things, or a person which knew these things about their own life would claim a new dimension of existential freedom for being.

And um, you know, I was having this whispering entity, this daemon, this Logos show me these things and it was expressed on a very, very practical level. I mapped what is called "The first order of difference" in the sequence of the I-Ching. That means how many lines change as you go from one hexagram to another. And I discovered that it looked like a random wave, it looked like a stochastic slice except that at the beginning and the end there were tongue-in-groove points of fit if you rotated the thing 180 degrees and brought it down against itself so that the thing achieved closure at the beginning and the end. This satisfied me that I was dealing with an artifact of natu-uh, that, you know, I was dealing with an organized structure either of nature or created by intelligence. And then using the principle of hierarchical resonance and stacking of modules into, uh, into hierarchies which is really the principle by which all Chinese metaphysics has operated from the very beginning, I created, um, a cosmic calendar which had- where each level was a resonance of the level below it,

but either collapsed or multiplied by a factor of 64.

I discovered a very- well, recall that, um, because the I-Ching is 64 hexagrams with, uh, 6 lines in each hexagram, it's composed basically of 384 "yao" or lines. And I discovered that this number 384 has a very interesting property, the, uh, cycle of the moon is 29.5 days so that if you take 29.5 times 13 it's something like 383.93, and it seemed to me then immediately obvious that, that part of what the machinery of the I-Ching was describing in the humanly cognizable phenomenal world was the cycle of the moon using a 384-day lunar calendar which precessed 19 days a year against the solar calendar. And when you take that 384 day unit and multiply it times 64 you, uh, get 67 years and some months and days. This is exactly six 11-year sunspot cycles, and China is the first place where we have historical records of the observation of sunspots.

So that's one sunspot cycle for each line in the six-line hexagram. Also sunspots cycles have a greater peak every third cycle so that's one large sunspot cycle for each hexagram in that trigram. And I saw then that there were, uh, these resonances. When you take that number, 67 years, again times 64 you get 4306 years. And uh, that was- that works out to...let's see 4306... two hundred, one hundred and fifty years for each zodiacal sign, each zodiacal sign is slotted to one trigram. These are all- notice that all of these things that this resonance calendar is predicting are things that are visible to the naked eye. We're talking about movements of constellations, sunspots, and, um, and the moon.

So I saw then that this was a tremendously powerful natural calendar that- that, that was a, a technology developed by proto-Taoist central Asian shamanism very, very long ago. But it had this curious property of when the wave was mathematically analyzed in modern mathematical- by modern mathematical methods so that we could draw these maps of novelty, we could see then that it showed us the map of the temporal river from earliest beginnings to the collapse of the state vector at some time in the future. And so it was obvious then that if we could lay the map over the portion of reality we had already experienced we could then propagate the map forward into the future and know- and begin to take hold of ourselves in this other temporal dimension. And so it became a question of what is the best fit of this undulating wave of novelty? **And I used the word novelty out of Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy because he, he had this notion that novelty was the concreting of a force which knits things together. And, uh, and I like that, that's what I felt it was, that the Tao is making itself and that this compression of novelty through the speeding-up of time will eventually reach a place where everything is connected to everything else. And this is, you know, the universe's self-birthing of itself.**

Well, you must be aware of all these, uh, very straight studies which say "If we keep increasing how fast we go by the year 2020 we'll go 10 times the speed of light, if we keep increasing the amount of energy we release by so-and-so we'll release the energy in the sun. The propagation of all these curves of development become asymptotic and then nobody knows how to interpret what they mean, they just seem to mean that the whole culture is just going to go kazowie, you know.

And this is sort of the idea that this theory implies, it implies that far from the universe being a steady-state entity uninfluenced by the existence of the human mind, which is going to go on and exist for billions of years until the stars burn out and the 2nd law of thermodynamics is going to reduce everything to heat death, that that's all wrong, a hundred percent wrong, and that actually the universe is made by mind within and without organism, and that mind is a- capable of bootstrap leaps in its organizational self-expression and that we are, uh, privileged to be the witnesses of the final act of life going through some kind of immense transformative, um, unfolding from itself in a kind of vortex which has been building on this planet for billions of years but which has been accelerating to, you know, such excruciating intensities over the last 25,000 years that it has called forth self-reflective intelligence from the monkeys, and the invention of quantum physics, and spaceflight, and shamanism, and it is novelty upon novelty. Novelty so intensified that the genetic machinery can no longer carry it and it bubbles out into the epigenetic, into art, and language, and poetry, and religion, and religious mania and romanticism and, uh, all of these things. It is a progressive knitting together, an expression of the universe's will to become, that causes me to think that we may be in the shorter "gyres" as William Butler Yeats called them, the shortening spirals, of this vortex of novelty and compression.

You see, a curious quality about this kind of cosmology that I'm describing, a cosmology where each, uh, epoch is preceded by an epoch which is a 65- 64 times greater in duration. The curious thing about that is that you only need about 20 multip- instances of multiplication before you go from a period of time smaller than the duration of Planck's constant, which is, uh, ten poi- 1.55×10^{-23} , which is a very short period of time, to- then by th- by 20 multiplications of 64 you reach a period of time in excess of the required time for the age of the universe, a period of time on the order of 72 billion years. Well, if each time the, uh, spiral goes into a state of collapse at the end of one of its cycles, then in the last 384 days of the existence of a universe like that it would transit through half of its epochs of transition. Do you see what I mean? It's like a screaming mimi, it really winds up.

And, uh, instead of the w- the vision which physics gives us, is that the really rapid transitions of phase and state occurred at the beginning of the universe, they- whole professional lives are given over to discussing the first ten pico-seconds of the physics of the universe, right? And well I'm saying it's- I don't care about that, I think that the really interesting stuff will happen in a big hurry at the end of the universe. That the picture that the 2nd law of thermodynamics gives us of just...[sighs] you know, tumescence, maximum de-tumescence is what it's picturing is all wrong, and that actually this strange hyper-dimensional force in the universe called life and information transfer is in the process of working itself up into a real tizzy and wrapping all space and time around itself.

And, uh, what was startling and what made me think that maybe I was losing my marbles was that when you look at that time that way and push these novelty graphs against the historical continuum, I reached the conclusion that we entered the last 67-year period before the collapse of the state vector at 8:30 in the morning on August the 6th, 1945 when the atomic bomb went off over Hiroshima. You see, it was a temporal reflection of the birth of the universe. It was actually a- you could call it an event which was a reincarnation of the big-bang, because each cycle begins with a bang, and that cycle, inti- the fact that human beings had used atomic weapons on other human beings meant that we had entered a new era, a new epoch of moral danger, and the stakes had been raised, you know, by a power of 64 to a new level.

Now, using the mathematics inherent in the cycle, if you propagate forward from that date, 67 years, 104.25 days you reach, uh, um, late November of 2012 AD. And I concluded based on all kinds of factors, personal, and historical and so forth that that was the fit. That, that if Hiroshima was, was day 1, then the place where it all came together was this date in 2012. And I worked with that for several years before some kind soul, Henry Munn I think, pointed out to me that the Mayan calendar which is a cycle of three- of thir- the long-count calendar I'm now talking about, is a cycle of 13 time periods which are called baktuns, and the baktun is 396 years in duration. After 13 baktuns the world ends completely, and the 13th baktun of the classical Mayan long-count calendar is the winter solstice of AD 2012.

within 30 days of the date that I had fastened in on, using a completely different, uh, path of analysis.

And so this raised all kinds of questions, uh, one of which is, is it simply that individuals and civilizations who take mushrooms become, I want to say privy slash engulfed by a certain mathematical secret about the cosmic machinery? What is so important about this date in 2012? You know, the meso-American cultures have the most uncanny history of, uh, successful prophecy in the world. I mean, the Aztecs anticipated the coming of the Spanish, the day, the book of Chilam Balam [pronounced wrongly as 'Belam' by TM], gives the day when the Spaniards would weigh anchor off the coast of Mexico. And of course, the fact that it happened exactly as prophesied was a major undoing of that civilization.

So I put this out, I- this was a very confusing experience for me to, uh, channel or transmit this idea because I was interested in the I-Ching, I had carried it with me in India, I used to throw it at each full moon, but I was not mathematically inclined and when...

-AUDIO BREAKS HERE-

-s reading the philosophy of science, like Paul Firob [TM may have meant Feyerabend?] and Imre Lakatos, and reading the history of science, Thomas Kuhn, and all of those people trying to understand you know, well what is a true idea? What is true and what is false? And, and when you have an idea which makes claims as sweeping as these, then you want to try to understand just what the limits of knowability are, and I discovered that, um, all you can require of any idea is that it be self-consistent, that it not generate any contradictions within its own set of rules, you see. And that's why astrology is, uh, beyond criticism, because astrology is a mathematical theory with an interpretive exegesis attached to it, and who can quibble with a mathematical theory? Well then the ma- the, uh, interpretational exegesis has to do with the sensitivity and subtlety of the interpreter. Well, isn't this true of mathematical data in science exactly the same way?

So, I discovered that what I had created was a self-consistent idea that appears to be sealed beyond refutation in some weird and uncanny way which makes it seem very non-human because you can't really find your way in to telling whether it's- can answer- can be answerable

to the notion of objective truth. So what I've decided about it is, that it's a teaching, or it's, um, it's a kind of - it an exemplary model about how all process goes on and it's a way of learning how things happen. To see time as a modulated flux of elements; to see it as a series of waves moving at different speeds through which you are taking a vertical slice and then stacking that slice and that gives rise to the multiplicitous ever-changing flux that is called the now. It is actually made up of reflections and adumbrations of the past, and it's made up of, of, uh, anticipatory shock waves and intimations of the future.

The past and future are co-present in the now, they are in fact what's making it happen. You can almost think of it as a hologram where you have two- or, or a standing wave, where you two wave systems—one from the past, one from the future where they cross an interference pattern forms which has a curious, uh, stability as a system in, and of itself. And, and yet it's almost a ghost created by these other two realities and that is the moving present. And uh, ah, mathematically this notion of time that I evolved delivers, you know, the map of novelty, a two-variable flux, a wandering-line graph that's, uh, very pleasing for arguing with formalists. But what lurks behind it and what is so rich for the romantic, and the shaman, and the poet, is these- this wandering-line graph is the composite of s- of the the overlay of certain historical time periods which are in a state of flux at various speeds so that they give rise to an endless kaleidoscopic unfolding in what we call three-dimensional space and of what we call reality.

And this is why I often mention Finnigans Wake in my lectures because Joyce understood this, he understood that every moment is caused by everything that happened in the past, and everything that happened in the future, and I like to give, you know, the, the trivial example that you find yourself in Hadrian's hamburger joint, this is because the emperor Hadrian invaded England in a certain year and conducted a campaign. We are ghosts of past and future events. And what the- what the chaos at the end of history that we are now living through is, is that for thousands and thousands of years people have felt a vague thing calling across time to humanists, calling us to be a certain way, to practice certain rituals, to observe the stars, to observe the plants, to observe birth, and observe death, a calling, and that thing which some people have called "God," whatever it is, is throwing a gigantic shadow over human history now, because now the creode of development that leads to our merging with this thing the walls are very steep, the water is moving very swiftly, and it's almost as though the future event is throwing off great sparks that are themselves faceted, contradictory epitomizations of this mystery. This is what Mo- Mohammed, and Christ, and Buddha are. They are human personalities that were situated in time in such a way that they became macrocosmic reflections of the super-ordinate edenic humanity that is going to be generated at the end of history.

And we are close, we are close. It is, uh, all of history can be seen as the shockwave of this eschatological event. This is what the prophets were anticipating: the culmination of man's God-making effort in time will be the perfection and the release of the human soul. And it has- it- it's not that we are doing it, you see, it's that a natural law that we were previously unaware of is inexorably unfolding. And that is what all this cross-connectedness of, of, uh, man into matter, plant into animal, uh, earth into space, all of this flowing interconnectedness, this reaches right down into the rocks of the planet. This is not simply a phenomenon of biology. This is the unfolding of a general law of which biology is only the cutting edge of a wedge of becomingness which includes all being and reaches right down into the neutrinos.

And it is, uh, you know, i- to be a being in time is to share in the immense flood of pre-cognitive anticipation that fills the universe in, uh, anticipation of this event, and that's what being is and that's why it's so rich and complete within itself, and yet always somehow pointing beyond itself because, uh, the, the richness of the matrix through which we are moving is, uh, incomparable and beautiful.

And, uh, and so I- this is the basis of my extreme optimism, is I think that everything is under control, that we are in the grip of a force so powerful that the notion that we could jeopardize or overthrow it is completely preposterous because uh, we are acting in accordance with a resonance that was set going millions and millions of years ago. And of course being is fraught uh, with danger, but uh, the stakes are uh, you know, to be at play in the fields of the Lord, to be at rest in the mansions of the Goddess, and uh, it's- it's soon I think. At least the historical mimicking of it is clearly soon because, uh, the- the thrust toward the millennium of this society will not be, uh, turned aside, if it is not a law of the universe then it will become a myth of human beings and be created anyway. So, since we are human beings I see us as the central actors in that mandala, and this is the task of the next hundred, or five hundred years to realize the alchemical nature of, uh, humanity and being and have everything fused into a super-numinous consciousness that is time. Joyce said "All space in a nutshell",

you know, all time bound into a lenticular vehicle which is bo- both everyone's and mine alone, and yours alone, and yours alone...

[REPEAT from 'Leon is off on alone time']

What I want to talk about this morning is an idea, I've talked about it in a couple of places, uh, some of you may have heard it before. I think it bears repeating. It's a much more serious idea than what I put out yesterday which had a note of whimsy in its genesis. This idea is important, whatever that means, because it would change, uh, not only the area of its concern but our view of the world generally. And Easter is an appropriate time to discuss this because it concerns the genesis of man, of consciousness and self-reflection which is what the

Easter mythologium is uh, also an expression of.

So what I wanted to talk about this morning is a new notion of how human evolution occurred, and what the critical factors were in it and how to draw a, uh, picture for us that shows how our intellectual complexity and symbol manipulating facilities could have emerged naturally from a background of animal existence and over a fairly rapid period of time. Over the last, uh, 3 to 5 million years actually the African continent has been growing more dry and has experienced fluctuations of aridity. Nevertheless as recently as, uh, 2,000 years ago the Roman historian Pliny called North Africa "The breadbasket of Rome" because wheat was being grown over thousands and thousands of acres. Now, it's in this same area [TM clears throat] of Northern Africa, the great rift zone of the Serengeti plane where physical

anthropologists place the origin of human beings and it has to do with the following sequence of events.

Arboreal primates living in an unbroken ra- continental rainforest ecology achieve a close adaptation to existence in the canopy and this is stabilized for millions of years. They are insectivores they have the opposable thumbs and binocular, or uh, rudimentary binocular vision. The drying up of the African continent caused the breakdown of this continental rainforest into a configuration of patches of forest with uh, grassland in between. And in this grassland ecology, uh, herds of mammals evolved, proto-cattle, proto-bison, exotic mammals like giraffes and gazelles of all types. At the same time the primate adaptation to this increasing aridity was to begin to descend from the trees and to hunt in packs and to shift from a diet of, uh, canopy fruits and berries, and roots dug from the ground to an omnivorous diet that

could include meat.

So, in this situation these, uh, tribal monkeys developed a complicated repertoire of signals to aid in pack hunting in exactly the same way wolves are known to do. Now, into this situat- their, and their habit was nomadic and to follow behind these great herds either killing the animals that were uh, less well and could be killed by the crude means at their disposal, or living off [TM clears throat] the kills of other carnivores and this is still the habit of uh, baboons.

Now into this situation comes a mushroom which grows in the manure of the ungulate animals that have evolved on this plain. And in this protein intensive environment where there is pressure on the availability of protein, these foraging primates are testing every object in the environment for its food value. So, uh, Roland Fischer who was a researcher into the effect of psychedelic drugs and the structure of consciousness showed that small doses of psilocybin, sub-psychedelic, thr- uh, sub-threshold doses of psilocybin actually increase visual acuity and he had a very elegant experiment where t parallel lines could be deformed by turning a dial, and you would put graduate students in front of this stoned, and unstoned, and ask them to press a buzzer when the lines no longer appeared to them to be parallel. And he showed that consistently a small amount of psilocybin allowed you to detect this change uh, sooner than an ordinary subject was able to. And he said to me, he said you see that "This proves that drugs give you a clearer picture of reality than their absence." And what it means is that these primates who were inculcating the mushroom into their diet were gaining a subtle adaptive advantage over their fellows who were avoiding the mushroom, because they were gaining in visual acuity which is one of the critical parameters that a uh, pack hunting

carnivore would be subject to in that kind of an environment.

So, uh, without any teleology being involved, without any invocation of extraterrestrial intelligence we see that a feedback loop was established in the food chain of these primates very early on. Those who ate the mushroom tended to survive and outbreed those who did not, at the same time the relationship between these animals and these herd ungulate mammals was shifting from a hunting situation to a situation of domestication which was bringing the mushroom ever more into the fore, and if you look back, uh, at the archeological evidence in North Africa, especially the paintings, the uh, late Neolithic paintings on the Tassili Plateau in Southern Algeria you see there magnificently portrayed herds of cattle, and, and, I mean, num- beautifully painted. More sensitively portrayed cattle than you find at Altamira and

Lascaux, and you see also shamans dancing with mushrooms sprouting out of their body and with mushrooms clutched in their hands, groups of them running holding on high with geometric matrices of connected dots all around them.

And, uh, now of course in that area its very similar to this, its an area of sculpted sandstone, and uh, cross-cut arroyos with undercut cliffs. And it's very dry, but in some places the Neolithic detritus is several meters deep. And the people who lived in the Tassili Plateau when the aridity of the Sahara further increased are the people who migrated east to the valley of the Nile and established the proto-Egyptian civilization of six to ten thousand years ago.

The important point I want to make about this later phase of the, uh, human involvement with the mushroom was that it was always intimately connected with cattle. And the Goddess religions of Ancient North Africa and the Middle East are, are, uh, religions of cattle

Goddesses, and this connection between the cow and the mother Goddess and the mushroom is some kind of, uh, key to understanding the evolution of, of uh, religious sensitivity in early man and that part of the Middle East.

It carries forward into, uh, historical time with the mysteries at Eleusis where there is a, uh, a clear indication that a psychedelic substance is being used. Either ergotized rye or, uh, a mushroom of some sort. And this, uh, this notion that uh, it was the presence of the mushroom on the African veldt at a critical bifurcation of primate evolution that created uh, the feedback loop which eventually developed into self-reflecting consciousness. Because you see at lower doses the psilocybin is giving increased visual acuity and it seems like increased symbol-processing ability, its strange effect on the language centers. But of course inevitably they would have discovered its higher dose effects which would be to convey then into an inner tremendum that became then the cultural guiding image. In other words it

was perceived as, as a God, as a Goddess, as *the* Goddess and became then the arrow for cultural dynamics and evolution.

And the reason I think this is important is because the spinoff implications of the acceptance of an idea like this would bring us into much greater harmony with our environment. We sort of have the anxiety of an orphan about our origins because our best people in physical anthropology don't give very good accounts, can't seem to make sense of how we could have l- been forced out and emerged out of primate organization. And so there's been much talk in the 20th century for the search for the missing link which was always been conceived of a physical skeleton of a certain kind of intermediate hominoid form. But it isn't a missing link I think, it's a missing factor. And the factor which accelerated the forward evolution of the brain size of this particular primate line was the inclusion of psychedelic plants in the diet, which then fed the tendency towards symbol formation and self-reflection.

If this idea gained wide acceptance uh, some of our laws and some of our ways of relating to nature and to medicine plants in particular would have to be altered and brought into line. This is the source of our humanness. Apparently the, the psychoactive compounds being elaborated by plants throughout nature are regulators of various forms of evolution in animals, and food chains and all this which appear very trivial on the surface are actually the message-bearing, uh, medium of the, of the hand of God which is forming and sculpting nature along these various creodes of development.

And, uh, the thing to understand about this, or why this has impact in the future is because it's a continuous process which we can foster and husband, uh, and help develop in healthy ways if we recognize that it's going on. I mentioned Eleusis as this kind of thing going on in historical time, also of course Soma, the sacrament of the Vedic civilization, appears to have been a mushroom, was certainly a psychedelic plant. And it isn't only psychedelic plants but all plants which affect and shift consciousness.

I mean, a history of the human race could be written analyzing it not in terms of class struggle of the impact of great personalities but as a shifting set of interactions between sugar, tobacco, opium, caffeine, uh, alcohol, and psychedelics so that, you know, we need to understand that- chocolate, that these food- cocaine- that these foods and drugs and spices, we have subtly overlooked them and taken them for granted. They have regulated human history, and individual self-expression, how much you know, how you look, how, uh, pure

your transmission of your genetic heritage to the next generation, all of these things are being regulated and controlled by these plants in this way.

Now, if we could create a civilization or even a, even uh, a clique within a civilization that understood this and that had its fingers on a vertical monopoly of research from the jungle to the clinical hospital, great things could be understood. Uh, this is the way to do it, to systematically explore these relationships and see that Gaia apparently works through the intercession of catalytic compounds that convey revelation, and revelation is then the factor which has historical impact. The people, the messiahs, and the teachers are merely the pipelines for ideas and the, the metabolic release of these ideas in the macro-environment is being controlled by the plant-animal interaction. And so it will be on into the foreseeable future, and by understanding this a kind of new science looms into view. A kind of integrated, dynamical understanding of, uh, the flux of energy mediated by chemistry in the environment so that the, the guiding image of culture can be revitalized and realized, uh, in a much shorter period of time. And this whole shortening period of time thing has also

been going on for a while.

You see it isn't astonishing I think that self-reflection could emerge giving basic- given basic primate organization, but what is astonishing about it is the speed with which it happened. I mean in the last thirty to fifty thousand years the human brain has changed more than it changed in the previous 3 to 5 million years. So, you know, factor has entered, a catalyst is in the mix and it must be something in the food chain, or something in the environment, or the hand of almighty God, or the extraterrestrials, or, you know, elf invasion from hyperspace... but something is causing this accelerated development. And I thi- and what I said this morning could be criticized as being reductionist, I try to give a very sober account of it, I haven't said why the mushroom appeared in the manure or discussed whether it has

awareness or a stake in the catalyzing of this primate evolution. I just introduce it as a chemical factor, and that's how it would be written if it were presented to a straight audience.

The fact of the matter is that it raises all kinds of questions, I mean why is this process being catalyzed in the primates? Is it just by happenstance? Where has the mushroom been? Is it, uh- what is its relationship to the evolution of other forms of life on this planet? Did it

drift in from the stars? If so, long ago or recently? And with intent, or by chance? And, you know just a host of questions. The thing that puts us in such an existential situation, individually and culturally, is this puzzlement over our origins.

We are not strictly speaking religious in the 19th century way so that we can not really, I think, accept that, you know, God sculpted us out of clay and set us down here on a world he created, and yet if you were to look for the thumbprint of God on this planet you would certainly have to focus in on the human beings and their activities as a special case of natural phenomenon. Perhaps so special a case that it had to be accorded a separate ontological status. We are different and, uh, why, and for what?

Um, I think that probably we are the agent of change that Gaia has unleashed upon herself, that the planet itself is aware of the finiteness of planetary existence. And it's sort of like the story of the ant and the grasshopper. You can have a planetary consciousness which says "Well I look forward to 3 to 5 billion years of sentient existence and then I am willing to be extinguished with the death of my star" or you can have a plant with an ant-like mentality that says "I can sense winter coming 3 to 5 billion years down the line and I'm going to organize some wild strategy to break through the tyranny of the energy cycle of one star and I'm going to organize biological existence so that energy can be brought- greater and greater amounts of energy can be brought under control so that eventually a kind of liberation can occur where life can burst out of the planetary cradle and disperse itself through the universe."

And here are apparently several strategies for this, one is evolve intelligence and build starships. Another is, you know, become a mushroom and produce 3 to 5 million spores per minute during sporulation, that are particles small enough to percolate by Brownian movement away from the atmosphere of the given planet and by sheer numbers, uh, and the slow gradient of drift by light pressure and that sort of thing, emanate through the universe, and establish yourself in any planetary regime that is suitable.

The- the obvious next great revelation in biology, and it's strange that we can state it because once it's stated by Carl Sagan it will be headlines everywhere, but it's obvious that space is no barrier to life. It's a- it's a- it's a barrier, in the same way that the Pacific Ocean was a barrier to life's colonization of the Hawaiian islands, but that's all. It's just a tight filter, but spores and starships, and shamans probably get through to other, uh, closed topologies in orbit around other stars. You know, there must be a dimension somewhere where all surfaces in the universe are contiguous, and if you could move into that dimension you could just walk to Zeta Reticuli.

So, uh, the means by which life will penetrate these larger dimensions that free it from its dependency on the energy cycles of the material universe are not by any means clear. I mean, it may be that it's about organizing the mind and building an inner vehicle and moves off into the imagination. The imagination may be, in fact, a 3-dimensional slice of a higher dimensional universe that is holding all of this, uh, in being and causing it to happen. The imagination, it's hard to account for it in evolutionary terms if it is not, uh, somehow mapping a, uh, field of data that is important for development.

So that's that notion, the notion of the importance of, uh, psychedelics in the formation of the- this species and a continuing formation of the cultural design. I think what the psychedelics do is they de-condition from cultural programming and allow models to be replaced at a much greater rate of speed so that, uh, that the culture that uses psychedelics can trim itself to every historical current. And this is really the challenge of the future. We are moving as a culture faster and faster through the temporal medium, through the historical space, and this is creating a compression of events. And it's almost like an airfoil approaching the speed of sound. There is a wave of concussive- concussive shock building in front of our culture and we have to almost re-design ourselves in mid-flight in order to push through that barrier and into the, uh, different order, the different set of laws that will prevail once we have gotten through that. But this whole sense of everything accelerating, of all historical input being intensified and all previous times being somehow co-present, this is the phenomenon of the winding down of a universe, or the building up of an eschatological shockwave in front of a, uh, a vehicle that is trying to transit out of history and into some kind of millenarian space that is not, uh, not subject to the anxiety that history involves.

And that's what the whole crisis and, uh, around the millennium and the whole 20th century really is about, you know, is this, this effort to create a complete summation that can also be used as the force to propel us beyond everything we have been or thought before because there's obviously no other escape from the culture crisis. It is, uh- that kind of situation is called a forward escape. It means the only thing you can do is move forward into the crisis at ever greater speed, because the only solution is to pass through it and move beyond it.

And, and, as we move toward the millennium and as, you know, the intelligence of our machines, the size of our databases, the desperation of our politicians, the intensity of the visions of our visionaries, all of this will build to a crazy concatenatious climax. It can't be any other way because Christian civilization has wired us up for these things at the end of every 1,000 year period.

I mean, in the year 1000 everything just went haywire, I mean people stood in the streets for months just gaping at the sky, no work got done, you know, there was such an eminent expectation of the onslaught of the millennium. Nevertheless this archetype of renewal is seeking in thousands and thousands of ways to be born, and I think that the rediscovery of psychedelics, LSD, everything that Wasson did, all of these things are critical factors in this cultural mix that is going to gel towards the recognition of the things which we hold as clichés. You know, that the inside and outside are the same thing, that the universe can be crossed by thought in an instant, all information is somehow co-present, and, uh, and so on.

Are there any questions about any of this? Yes, I said that what we take for granted, that the inside and the outside are the same thing, these things will be assimilated by the larger culture. And things like, uh, you know, human-machine interface and the ego identification with the body, I think all these things are going to be obviated. That, you see, we don't know what man is and we have a strong association that humanness is related to the monkey body, but yet our whole historical career has been of projecting ideas into technical, uh, accretions, and now that we have computers and things which, uh, mimic intelligence we are beginning to explore, you know "What is humanness ontologically?" That's what people are really talking about when they say "can machines think? Will machines think?" They mean "is what we have focused in on as the defining factor of our being that sets us apart from all other things something which we could manufacture?"

And the answer is probably to some degree yes. Because much of what is intelligence, or appears superficially to be intelligence is simply data and retrieval so that, you know, more and more of the culture is being hardwired into an electronic coral reef that is simply the outermost of each of our own exoskeletons. We all, uh, have telephones in our homes. Many of us have computer terminals. These things introduce us to a global skin of information but as the hardware grows more and more unobtrusive we will more and more come to identify these things with our own ego. And we won't even realize that we're being charged for thinking about certain questions because we're actually accessing a database somewhere which is feeding us data. So that the commonality of mind is I think going to be- somehow the triumph of socialism would be the commonality of mind in a capitalist context. That there really will be an ocean of thought that you will swim in and that will be composed of deeper and deeper levels of integrated information. Perhaps this is all that hyperspace is, is the entirely expressed informational ghost of this physical universe.

And that it's in the, it's in the informational reconstruction of the physical universe that the mind will eventually come to swim like a fish, you know, and will come and go from various constellations of aggregation and integration. I mean you see, what's going to happen is that the rules of the imagination are going to replace physics so that we are going to be able to do and be whatever we can imagine. Well, none of us have ever probably put in much thought to what would I be if I could be anything I could imagine?

And just 20 minutes of that meditation will lead you into pretty strange places. So what would it be like if the culture evolved for a thousand years in that way? If you could be anything. I guess the first step everyone takes is they imagine themselves as the flying saucer, the lenticular, uh, mind-object made of light that can move at any speed and become any object and answer any question. And, uh, well it's an archetype of wholeness in Jung in his flying saucer book, uh, talked about this thing in alchemy called the "rotundum" which is the thing which spins, you know? It's also in alchemy called "the scintilla", the spark, and it's, uh- simply because it's round and spins it's a symbol of wholeness, but it's like the exteriorization of the human soul. The realization that, you know, expressing what is within us may culturally eventually mean actually exteriorizing the human soul and interiorizing the human body so that this world is traded in for the imagination. And this is sort of what art has always been trying to do, but we're talking about a breakthrough in ways and means on such a scale that you can just march off into this art.

Q: Terence, do you find it reasonable to anticipate that eventually human technology will succeed in producing computers that are just as conscious as we are, and can be able to do anything that we can do?

TM: Oh yes well Kat and I did that without even a flashlight battery, just by having children. [audience chuckles] I mean there's an epigenetic component and a genetic component and, but what I'm saying is the difference between these things may become dim indeed, in other words the way a person is made is the way a DNA message is read by RNA, and it's a, it's a group of codons of nucleotide bases which are then templated and then a ribosome reads it and, and assembles little pieces correctly and then the protein is created.

Well, there's no reason why anything should be made any other way. All machines should be produced by the transcription of molecular templates, so then all our machines will become strangely quasi-biological. You wo- Chevrolets will not be manufactured, they will be grown [audience laughter] in yeast vats and when they talk to you, the question, you know, becomes very moot as to whether this is a pet, a friend, a colleague, or uh [Terence chuckles]... Because that's- you see, nature works with very low energies, DNA can make anything and there's no smelting, no huge release of toxic byproducts and uh, and the amazing thing about these proteins is that the ribosome stamps them out and they come out in like a line, but they have forces, electrostatic, and other kinds of forces, uh, scripted into them so that they fold in very, very complicated ways, and they always fold the same way. And their memory of how to fold, where this comes from is one of the great, uh mysteries of molecular biology, it's not at all understood. Well imagine if we could make machines which just uh, emerged as a strange form of spaghetti which then folded itself into jet planes, refrigerators, automobiles, color television sets, lipstick cases, and what have you.

This has to do with my notion that uh, really the next evolutionary leap is uh, well, I shouldn't call it an evolutionary leap, is uh, it's a leap in epigenetic development, but is what I call the genesis of visible language. That there is an ability just under the surface of human organization waiting to be coaxed out either through yoga, or slight genetic engineering or something like that, and it is, uh, something that was anticipated by the Alexandrian philosopher Phylo-Judeas. He talked about the Logos, and- which is this teaching voice, this informing thing which is heard, and he was interested in what is called "The more perfect Logos." And he said "What is the more perfect Logos?" and then he answered his own question and said "it would be a Logos which went from being heard to being beheld without ever crossing over a uh, border of transition." In other words a form of synesthesia.

Well, what using ayahuasca and DMT and compounds like this which are very closely related to our ordinary brain chemistry, and practice and dedication, you can begin to explore places where a vocal synesthesia becomes a colored topological manifold. And you can communicate- you can show someone your thoughts by singing in such a way as to condense visible objects into the air in front of them. And these objects are, they are hyper-words, they are words which you don't hear but which you see. And they are, and like objects they have sides, and facets, and can be rotated and examined from all sides.

Well now, the biases in our language that cause us to say things like "I see what you mean" when we mean "I understand you fully" shows that we really place a greater emphasis on seeing the truth than on hearing the truth. So, the truth seen is somehow more valid than the truth heard. And, uh, ayahuasca is a perfect example of a plant which communicates with a visible language. The mushroom, you often hear it, and often the hearing evolves into a uh, visible synesthetic field of photonic input. But the ayahuasca always communicates visually, and it's like the Mayan glyphs or something. It's this fantastically complicated surface which is conveying alien meaning. After an ayahuasca trip you just feel like your eyes are sticking out of your head because you've just been looking, a- as one looks as the page of a book, for hours and hours as this strange, uh, alien, uh, 3-dimensional language flows through your mind.

But I believe this is a human ability just under the surface, and that in psychedelic states of mind this happens to people. This is why all the fiddling with glossolalia, it's the hope of reaching, you know, that concordance of chemistry and that the moment will allow this to happen because it's for some reason very satisfying, it's like an utterly harmless siddhi- it seems to ha- it is true magic and the person doing it is utterly transported by their ability to project vis- visual beauty. But it appears to have no use other than entertainment of one's self and others, but eventually when it is integrated as a cultural mode I think it will be- it is what telepathy will be. Telepathy will not be hearing other people's thoughts in your head. Telepathy will be when you switch into the language which lets people see what you mean. It will be the "see what I mean" language.

And I think that, uh, psilocybin from the very beginning was catalyzing the language centers, and in fact the kind of language that I'm speaking to you right now is a prototypic type of this eventual development in human organization, and that this is the thing that makes humans unique, is this ability to make small mouth noises which are arbitrarily coded with conventionally agreed-upon meanings, which allows us then a vast control of a previously invisible, uh, linguistic space. And it's in that linguistic space that we have erected our cathedrals and conducted our pogroms, and gone about all our, uh, forms of business. And, uh, and becoming aware of this, of language as a thing to journey into, and language as a thing to avoid the pitfalls of. To be- you know, the Buddhists say "awareness of awareness" maybe it's easier if one thinks of it as "awareness of language," you know.

Q: I wanted to, um, pursue this thing of the visual language, because they'll have their mouth open and there will literally be these beautiful things coming out of their mouth with flowers and they interpret this flowery speech, but perhaps, uh, they were in fact doing what you're talking about.

Q2: Huh!

TM: They don't interpret that as flowery speech they call it that, that yes I think that's what it must have been. This is all very puzzling to me, and if anybody knows, if anybody is an acoustics person, or I don't know what's going on exactly, but the question of how- "what is voice?" and "what can you do with self-generated sound?" How neutral is it to your own organism? In other words, any of you who read The Invisible Landscape, the theory in there is that you take a certain drug, a certain plant, and you hear and interiorized tone which is not a psychological phenomenon, but rather it is actually the electron-spin resonance of this highly biodynamic molecules by the millions entering into the synaptic cleft and competing with the endogenous, uh, transmitter there for uptake.

And that this "mmmmMmmMMmmMm" is molecularly real and hence can be treated as a manip- a variable to be manipulated with the input of other kinds of sounds such as the sound which cancels it or sound which uh, reinforces it to then manipulate these molecules in, in one's body. And this is uh, this is really I think the frontier of shamanism world-wide, that everybody is trying to figure out how far you can go with sound, and what you can do with it and also how dangerous is this? How permanent can some of these brain changes be? And what is the mechanism? You know, is the electron spin resonance thing pretty close to it or is that just a myth, and that an entirely different set of coupling mechanisms are, are making that happen?

But all of the ayahuasca shamans are great hummers, and great controllers of their voice, and, uh, you know, they do operate on your body with light and sound, and there are sounds which can slice into your body. And, uh, and it seems to me this is where experiential and experimental work with these things should concentrate to try and understand just how much of humanness can we take control of?

How bound in are we? What do these special abilities mean and uh, and uh that tradition, if any, have anticipated them?

The thing--

[audio cuts off here]

Original Transcription by: [Jo Trott / Copied over by Jonathanlal]

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic IN PROGRESS

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

The Syntax of Psychedelic Time

July 1983

Berkeley, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Video Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)

The poster says 'The Syntax of Psychedelic Time: Fractals, Endpoints, End-times, Zero points', something like that. What all this indicates is a set of ideas that I want to share with you that are a slightly different tack than my normal lectures. My normal lectures deal with the psychedelic experience as a generalized and, uh, historical phenomenon, but this effort at communication is slightly more personal in that it's an effort to impart *one* idea that came out of an involvement with psychedelic, uh, substances: *my idea*. It is idiosyncratic; it is a psychedelic idea, certainly, but it's only one of, uh, an infinite possible set of such ideas. And the reason I spend time on it to communicate it to a group of people like this is because I think it can serve as an example of psychedelic ideas, uh, generally--how they're formed, how they operate, and what's so great about them. And, (perhaps with an element of ego) I think that this idea *intrinsically* has an elegance that makes it worth pursuing. But before I talk about that, I want to, uh, talk about fractals for a moment, as they are understood in orthodox mathematics, because the idea 'fractals' will serve as a basis for much of what I'm going to talk about. Fractals are technically defined as, uh, curves with a dimension greater than 1 and less than 2, or surfaces with a dimension greater than 2 and less than 3, none of which need concern us. What's important to know about fractals is that they have the peculiar property of, uh, presenting the same appearance at all scales. Uh, an examples of a fractal in nature or a fractal-like phenomenon would be a mountain range which, when you get up to it and examine small pieces of rock that are sloughing off the face of the cliff, and hold one up against the light, you discover that the edge of the small fragment of rock and the edge of the mountain range are in fact the same thing. And at first this doesn't appear startling because you say 'well, the mountain is made of this stuff, this small boulder is made of this stuff, and it simply...fractures the same way.' But actually, a number of issues are being touched on, uh, in this phenomenon. First of all, when you begin analyzing nature, you discover that, uh, many, many forms of phenomena are fractal. Uh, coastlines, islands, uh...the way processes condense, the way solids condense out of liquids in cheese-making, for example, or something like that. There are many kinds of processes where, uh, a single process is reflected and refracted at many levels of magnitude so that, uh, the whole and its parts and many levels within the whole composed of its parts all have the same, uh, structure. Some fractals have been known for quite some time, since the late 19th century, but they

were considered pathological curves because they had the property of, uh, infinite lengths in very short distances because they adumbrate themselves so intricately that their, uh, length can be said to be infinite. In the same way, you can understand that very readily if you can ask yourself "how long is the coast of California?" Well, it depends on h-what we mean by this, if you... because the.. smaller the unit of measurement that you use, the more detail that will arise. And, at some level, the unit of measurement is so small that it's smaller than the molecular interstices of that which composes California. And at that point the length of the coastline becomes infinite.

Ok, so you get the drift of what fractals are and how they've been treated by, uh, mathematicians, particularly one mathematician. You can't discuss fractals without giving all the credit there is to Benoit Mandelbrot because if you don't give him all the credit there is, he'll ask you why not. So, he has invented this branch of mathematics. He has perfected it, and he's given us, uh, marvelous books where you can see these curves, and I thought about making this a slideshow because the fractals are tremendously beautiful objects aesthetically, but I decided against that because I want to, uh.... hold to ideas. This is a think-along lecture, by the way, and you're free to think along at any point that you feel so moved to do so. [audience laughs and a couple of small claps]

Ok, so that's what fractals are for orthodox mathematics. The psychedelic part... and what I did with this was I began to think about time. I've always had this idea that our physics has failed us because it is not true to experience, and every advance in physics has been gained at the expense of moving the terms of physics further and further away from anything that could be called concrete experience, so that what we finally have is an integrated set of complicated equations that we are told correctly map at the microphysical or the cosmological level the objects of nature that we're interested in, but it does not come tangential to our experience. I'm sure you've heard me say this before. So I meditated on time, with the idea of fractals in the background, and I noticed certain things which are obvious except they have implications when the idea of fractals is linked to them. And they're trivial things, really. They're things like, uh, 'every day is rather like every other day, and every week is rather like every other week, and every year, and to some degree every century, and to some degree every millennium. But, I noticed that as you raise the ante on these temporal scales, change *did* become apparent, but at the daily level, every day is very much like every other day, but every day also is obviously different. And it's in the differences that we have the feeling of advance into a future, and, uh, and a feeling of, uh, completion. So, I took all these ideas and, uh, in the Amazon when we were investigating, uh, the beta-Carboline drugs, which were used in combination with DMT... I, uh,... under the influence of these drugs, fell into a long, extended meditation about all these themes. In fact, it actually went on for years. In fact, it's still going on in some sense. It was a true boost, and I looked at the I Ching, which I was familiar with but had never particularly been obsessed with, and I noticed something very interesting about it, which is: the King Wen sequence, which is the oldest sequence of the hexagrams, uh, a sequence which precedes any written commentary. When mathed for its first order of difference (and its first order of difference is nothing more than, as you pass from one hexagram to another, how many hexagrams change--[corrects himself]-- lines change. So

for instance as you go from hexagram 1 to 2, all lines change, so 6 is the value of that, 6 lines change. When you go from 2 to 3, there is another value, and I graphed the I Ching this way for its first order of difference. Now, in a random distribution, you would expect a fairly even distribution of breaks of orders 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, but, I found immediately that there were, uh, no 5s whatsoever, no breaks of order 5, and that there had been an obvious effort to, uh, optimize breaks of value 2 and 4, so.. that in itself, I mean, obviously it's ordered some way, so this wouldn't be too startling to discover a property like that. And I should pause for a moment and point out for people who have interest in the I Ching, that the I Ching is actually formed of 32 pairs. If you've ever looked at it, it's formed of pairs such that the second term in each pair is the inverse of the first term, except there are 8 cases, naturally, where inverting a hexagram has no effect on it. The obvious case is where you invert the first one. It's all solid lines, so inverting it has no effect. In that...in those 8 cases, the rule is 'all lines change'. And you see following the first hexagram, which is all solid lines, is the second hexagram, which is all broken lines. So, in studying the sequence of the I Ching, your problem is not really wh--'how are these 64 hexagrams arranged'? The question is 'how are these 32 pairs of hexagrams arranged.' So, I graphed the first order of difference as I mentioned, and, uh, and then I noticed a peculiar visual symmetry in my graph, which was: it looked basically like a random squiggle except that the beginning and the end of the wave were stereo-isometric reflections of each other. Now, what that means is that if you were to rotate in the plane an image of this wave without lifting it off the paper, you could bring the two graphs together and they would dovetail together perfectly at the beginning and at the end but nowhere in between. And this seemed to me a very powerful argument for, uh, order; that I had in fact discovered a previous kind of order that was implicit in this thing. Now, to some audiences I have to make a complicated apology about *Logos* and voices in the head and all that. I'll just skip that and say 'and so I continued working with this thing under the instruction of the voices in my head'. And...and, the first thing that I noticed when the wave was fitted together in this particular way, was that the hexagrams paired up so that they always summed to 64. In other words, 63 would pair with 1, 62 would pair with 2, 61 with 3, 60 with 4, and so on. So, it was as though a kind of magic square was being generated, where the I Ching was additive to itself in all directions on a grid. And so I took this forward-and-backward-running 64-term...glyph or graph and I said 'aha, it is the complete I Ching running forward and backward against itself'. Since it is the complete I Ching, all 64 hexagram, all 384 lines, I will follow the principle of constructing modular hierarchies. I will collapse it to the simplest term in a system...of levels, and I will treat this rather complicated looking thing as though *it were* a line, one of only 384, and then I, uh, then from there, over a period of years and many pencil sharpenings, we went to computers and produced very complicated versions of this graph and, uh..... then found a way to mathematically quantify it so that it could be, instead of a network of lines running forward and backward against each other, it became, uh, a single line running in one direction into the future.

Ok, so now, what's so great about this?..... In its own terms, it is a self-consistent idea about time that tries to be true to experience. It's saying that, uh..... time is made of elements. It is not simply an event-space, something required for things to have duration. You see, before Einstein, space was thought of as

a... the place where you put things. The necessary adumbration of a thing having *being* was that it be in space. Einstein came along and said, no, time can be thought of as a surface, as a continuum, as something which in and of itself can affect the outcome of the propagation of a beam of light or an electromagnetic field or something like that. What this idea suggests is something similar about time: that time is made of elements, and that what we intuit about time is more true to the facts of the matter than what physicists are telling us about time. What we intuit about time, and what astrology and all forms of prophecy and intuition and *clairvoyance* and all these things are are the idea that we can *know* about time by deploying our feelings into it, and, uh.... what this theory does is take what has generally been a very, uh, feeling-toned, intuitional kind of idea and, uh, mathematicize it and give it rigor, and say that with a very simple computer we can predict novelty. We can understand, first of all, that what is happening in the world of becoming, the world that we all experience as beings, is that novelty is entering into being and it is changing the modalities of the real world toward greater and greater levels.. of integration, and no matter on what timescale you view the universe, you see this happening. In other words, the universe, uh, in its early moments, is all chaos. There are...er, er...Temperatures are too high to allow even inter-atomic bonding, so there's only a plasma of stripped, uh, er, uh... particles, charged particles, and then as the universe cools, atomic bonds become possible and atomic systems come into being, which, which, uh, indicate a...m-more refined level of organization, and then later, much later, molecular systems and st--and on another level, stellar dust and star systems and organization of large aggregates of matter. Then life, and it represents another one of these quantum leaps in complexity, which is old stuff. But something else besides a leap in complexity is happening with each of these ingressions into novelty. What is happening is a speeding up of the speed at which these ingressions are happening, so that the early, uh, the first half of the history of the universe, you can say virtually nothing happened. Everything happened in the last half of the universe, uh, of the life of the universe. And, about, uh, a billion or two or three billion years ago, about 20% of what we assume to be the total life of the universe ago, life appeared, and then the mammalian line, the early mammalian line appeared 60 or 70 million years ago at the close of the dinosaurs, then we get culture, 25, 30, 50 thousand years ago. And very shortly after that, mathematics, and very shortly after that, uh, electronic circuitry, and there is this compression of events which, from the point of view of the historian, is the major thing that he sees when he looks at the history of the universe, but science has never mentioned this peculiar compression of events and densifying of complexity. Science takes the position that if that's happening, it's unimportant, and it probably isn't happening at all, and science goes to great lengths, though it admits evolution, to make sure that it arises out of non-teleological processes, and to make sure that it's always confined within the realm of biology so that a real..., uh, an orthodox evolutionist is very uncomfortable if you start speaking of stellar evolution or cultural evolution. I've heard these guys say 'if there are no genes involved, you do not use the word evolution'. See, they don't want to see it as a formative process touching the organic, the inorganic, the social, the psychological.

Uh...So, uh, I took very seriously this deepening ingression into novelty, and I said it is a physical quality

of the continuum that we're existing in. It is not a, um, a loose and unconstrained tendency, but it is a predictable tendency like charge, speed, momentum, that kind of thing. And I noticed something very interesting about the number 384, which, if you'll recall, is the number of lines in the complete set of the I Ching. The number 384 is 13 lunar cycles. There are 29.29, I believe, days in the lunar cycle, 13 of which gives you 383.89 days or something like that. So in other words, it's to within a fraction of the day, 384 days, so, I... it suggested to me a calendar. And, then I noticed that in, uh, hexagram 49, which is revolution, it specifically says, "the magician is a calendar maker." And then I, uh, used resonances of this 384-day solar year, uh, resonances of 64. So, for instance, I would take the 384-day year and multiply it times 64. This gives you a period of time which is 67 years, 104.25 days. *That is*, uh, 6 minor sunspot cycles and 2 major sunspot cycles. Plus it also...in *The Invisible Landscape*, the other astro..logical... astronomical, pardon me, correlations are made clear. Uh, when you rise to the next level; when you take the 67-year cycle times 64, you get 4,306 years. This is, uh, very close to, uh, uh...let's see, half of the zodiacal age. In other words, the precession of the earth on its nutational axis requires about 25,000 years, and that is what is spoken of when they talked of the Piscean age, the Aquarian age. They're talking about how, through the slow procession of the equinox, it is moving from sign to sign, and it takes about 2000 years for a sign to be transited, so two signs can be transited in exactly the cycle of time indicated.

I've spent so much time laying this out because I've noticed that in other lectures that I've given of this theory, what has come through to people is the notion that I have a prediction about the end of the world, that I predict an end time. And then there's always lots of questions about "what is your eschatology, what kind of an end of the world do you foresee?" But, what I really, uh, am interested in is not the end of the world, but everything which precedes it [some audience laughter], and, uh, that's what this wave is looking at. And, uh.... by comparing the wave, with the computer, to various historical periods, *defining* the quality that the wave is describing as novelty, which is this form of connectedness, uh, we have been able to get very good fit between certain historical periods and, uh, and the wave. And, naturally, since the wave is a mathematical fixed entity, once you have a good fit to a historical period, if it's a very good fit, the wave will fit, then, all of history, so that you can... say you've been using Periclean Greece as your benchmark date with a certain idea about how the wave *must look* in that period, so then you find the configuration that fits, you say "ok, that perfectly fulfills my intuition about how the wave should look for Periclean Greece, however I have an equally strong intuition about how it should look for the French Revolution, so now let's, uh, scroll forward and see how it looks against the French Revolution. And, as the intuition of the fit builds, you define the number of, uh, applicable cases where the wave seems to be working, and we have done this and settled on a date which I discussed a little bit last time, which is November 12, 2012, and someone brought up that the Mayan calendar also predicts the end of the world, whatever that means. It simply means that your calendar spins off, uh, its axis and you have to reset your clock. Maybe. It may mean something else. [audience titters] Whitehead, who I'm a great follower of, had the idea of what he called 'epochs', and he pointed out that a constant, for instance, the speed of light, we'll say, which is a favorite constant, the speed of light has only been measured for about 80 years, and yet all of our physics

hinges absolutely on the supposition that this is unchanging over the life of the universe, 20 billion years. And, so what sample of 20 billion years have we looked at? Uh, we have sampled 80 years in one spot in the universe, and yet from that our physics is extrapolated. Whitehead had the idea of what he called epochs, which were, like, bubbles in the universe of possible time, and within these bubbles, certain laws were operating, and they would operate consistently throughout the bubble, but when you passed beyond the bubble, you found a different set of physical laws operating. And very recently, this idea, I noticed, has been brought back with this inflationary nothing cosmology that's catching on, where the universe may have a false vacuum bottom, and may be suspended in a much deeper stronger denser vacuum. But, what *this* theory is suggesting is that there are not only epochs of very long duration, such as the epochs which were in force when temperature and pressure in the universe were such that, uh, molecular organization couldn't, uh, sustain itself, we'll say. There may be very short epochs, where laws manifest that, uh, are normally hidden. For instance, the puzzle of human history is something like this. Uh, uh...a million, two million years ago, there were only monkeys on this planet, and a very advanced bipedal chimpanzee perhaps. Now, suddenly, there are, uh, atom-smashers and videogames, Barry Manilow, [audience laughs] all these things, and this has happened with startling rapidity [more laughs], and it well may be it is because *mind* is manifesting-- the constraints on mind as a force in nature have been lifted over the last 10 to 15 thousand years, and mind is claiming these new levels of freedom. And what I see happening, and this is why these lectures always seem to gravitate toward the future, is *we are living* in a very pivotal time. The time that we inherit from science is a time to humble you, to dwarf you. It tells you that the sun will not fluctuate for another billion years, that, uh, species come and go, and that, in other words, on the temporal scale, that you don't matter, and that *now* doesn't matter. But when you look at the release of energy, the asymptotic speeding-up of processes, we tend to be, uh, xenophobically oriented toward the human. So what we say is that, uh, human history is taking place. But, if you were an extraterrestrial lying off in your flying saucer and looking down at earth, you would not see species. This is a Linnaean, European concept that aids in the cataloging of natural products. What you would see if you saw biology is you would see a gene swarm on the planet earth, using species as the reduction valve as it flows through time, but only, uh, only generally. There are many other ways that genes are transf-f-f-transferred, through episomes and vegetative propagation and this kind of thing, which doesn't need to worry us. But, uh, *process* and information, which is what has been happening from the very beginning; the atomic system codes and releases more information than the plasma, the molecules have a similar relationship to the atomic systems, and so on right up until the cultural systems. And now we have reached the point where the culture is cohering, and, uh, we are becoming too big for the planet, all the natural resources are running out. All the political institutions which normally controlled the monkey tribe are breaking down, so that every man can *know* everything, which is not...which makes, uh, previous forms of social organization virtually impossible. All of these things, uh, are happening, and it is because there *actually is* closure into the shorter epochs. We can *now*, after almost a thousand years, if not more, of moving man off the stage and saying, 'no, man is not the image of God, man is not the beloved of the creator, we are on a small planet around a small star off on the edge of the universe, and our fate, if we have one, rests in our own

hands, if in anyone's'. This may not be true in the sense that, if we change our values and say that nature conserves complexity and *strives* for complexity, if that's true, then the human neocortex and human society are the most precious and advanced, uh, objects and organizational dynamics, uh, in the universe.

Now, I want to talk briefly about, uh, something which happened in the past which happened, possibly, hypothetically, and how it relates to this running into the short epochs where all time and culture and information seem to flow together in a kind of psychedelic, uh, eternity, uh, and information stasis, a kind of standing-wave hologram that is, uh, the now. I mean, I believe the poster says, "Plato says, time is the moving image of eternity," because we, we talked about that last time. Julian Jaynes, who was a psychologist at Princeton, talked about, uh, what he called 'the origin of consciousness in the bicameral mind', and he said that [clears throat] in pre-Homeric times...excuse me [takes drink]...what we experience as ego-consciousness was experienced differently by people, uh, in those early societies. What we experience as *our selves*, something which we completely dominate and somehow enfold in our bodies--this is the cultural metaphor that the self is inside the body--they experienced as outside the body and exterior from the ego and, uh, somehow independent of their own will, so that what we experience as the self and the ego, they experienced as a kind of disembodied god, or guiding voice, or inner spirit, or guardian angel. The important concept in all of this being that they experienced it as separate from themselves. Uh, and then Jaynes goes on to suggest that it was *traders*, who were people who passed from one society to another for the purpose of exchanging goods, who were the first cynics, because they realized that everybody's gods in different places were saying different things, and they realized therefore that there was something funny about these gods: that they were, in fact, somehow rooted in, uh, in human...psychology, rather than in theogony, in some sense. And, they became the world's first egotists, or the world's first individuated people, because they correctly identified a psychic function as arising from themselves and they integrated it. And, then, he goes on--I don't want to spend too much time with this--but then he goes on to say that it was the spread of trade, the rise of money, all these things, which broke down these dialogues between cultural wholes and their gods, and that, when it broke down, that was what shattered that, uh, world of city-civilizations that is the *true* ancient world, in other words, the world of Babylon, Ur, Sumer, Chaldea, the states which precede the Hellenic world, were shattered by the breakdown of this dialogue between the people and the god...and kingship. He talks a lot about how the kings assimilate, were associated with, this voice in the head, so everyone thought the king was speaking to them when they were told to...go pump water, uh...herd the cows, shear the sheep...whatever they were told to do.

Ok...I mention this, because, I think that something similar is happening in the present, and that, unwittingly Jaynes may have provided a, uh, metaphor for understanding this. We talked a bit last time about the flying saucer and how it was, uh, a projection of a future state of mankind, a mobile psychic entity, linked to the idea of the exteriorization of the soul and the interiora....interiorization of the body in electronic circuitry. I think that, uh, what we all experience as...our culture...fashion, rock and roll, politics, music, media....all of these things which we experience as the clothing that we must put on in order to be

able to talk to each other. This is a kind of god, or a kind of autonomous psychic function that has slipped out of our control, or which has arisen outside of our control as a legacy of this earlier, uh, uh, process of integration in the Hellenistic period, so that...phenomena like the Nuclear Freeze Movement, or, uh, the rise of the term 'networking', or, uh, all of these integrative, holistic, feeling-toned, you could almost say 'liberal', or you could almost say that liberalism in its classic 19th century guise is the first faint, uh, uh, uh-uh, sounding of this theme; this rising global humanism is in fact the rising into consciousness of a tribal god, similar to the kind of tribal god that functioned in..in these pre-Hellenic societies. And, however, in the present cultural context, cultural evolution is happening *so* fast that it is not going to take a millennium to pass through, you know, the first faint enunciation of the theme, the full-fledged exploration of the theme of, uh, cultural wholeness as exteriorized, uh, uh...God, or God-like mind to the integration of it. And, the psychedelic, I believe, are the keyyy to moving from wearing culture like clothes to recognizing that culture is this intensifying reflection of an aspect of the *self* and *integrating it into the self*. And, that's what all the hullabaloo is about, I think. And, I think that, uh, this is happening. And, uh, if, if the date 2012 means anything, it means, uh, simply that, uh, we can take that as...we can make a statistical model of what's happening and say that, uh, on, uh November 15th, 2012, a sufficient number of people will have integrated this state of global electronic self-hood that it will be uh, um....irreversible. That, up until a certain point, when any stochastic process begins to happen or when any...cascade begins to get going, up until it has a certain momentum, there is a possibility of many different bifurcations leading different end-states. But, once a certain amount of energy is in the system, then, you know, you can say it's going to go all the way, and I prefer to think of....I prefer to probabilitalize all of these predictions of the end of the world and to think of them simply, uh-uh, the way you think of a particle in the quantum mechanical model. When we assign a position to the particle, we understand that the particle isn't at that position, that that point is merely the center of a cloud of probably positions, any one of which could be occupied. Nevertheless, outside of a certain short distance from that point, the probability of finding the particle drops off asymptotically. So, it's a cloud of probability, and this date up after the first of the century is the center of a cloud of probability. Now, what kind of ethics decline from that kind of a position. It seems to me obvious that the first thing that's apparent from that is that you don't sit around *waiting* for the apocalypse. You understand that as soon as you push yourself over the brink, you've done the major piece of work that has to be done in *your cosmos*. From then you just sit around, uh, watching it happen. So, uh, it's an invitation...we're, we're all very fortunate. It reminds me, and I probably mentioned this last time, I think about it fairly often, of the Irish prayer, 'May you be alive at the end of the world'. Uh....probably we all have a very good shot at it [audience laughter], but I have no idea what the probabilities are for any one of us. Uh...I've spoken of this tonight more in its operation terms, rather than in the 'gee whiz' kind of terms, which I did last time, where I painted a picture of what it will be like to invoke this global electronic, uh, uh, aspect of the self and to integrate it. But, these ideas about collapsing time vectors, about history having an end, about, in fact, history being the shockwave of an event at the end of time, these are the ideas that religions handle, uh, fairly well...I mean, not religions so much but theology. Religion tends to concern itself with, uh, with public morality. But, underpinning religion is

theology, and it seems to always, at least in the West, meaning in Judaism, in Christianity, in Islam, and in all of the spectrum of cults that each one spawned, or, and continues to spawn, there is this wish to put an end to time, to close it off, to redeem us from the cycle of becoming. And, I think that the reason these ideas are so persistent in the human psyche is because, uh, all of history can be seen, in biological time, as so brief that it is simply, uh, a prelude and an anticipation...[end side 1 of tape]

[start side 2 of tape--ambient music in background]...so that they actually look down on their culture. They become extra-environmentals is a way of putting this: they act the role of the extraterrestrial. And, and, uh, we all connect the role of the extraterrestrial when..and do, when we adopt this extra-environmental position. It can be viewed as alienation if what arises out of it is, uh, uh, a feeling of forlornness and being 'cast into being', as Heidegger says. But, that need not *necessarily* be the feeling. The extra-environmental is also tremendously, uh, freed from the cultural conditioning. And, when you travel, you are always an extra-environmental and, extra-environmental and, you have a, uh, very deep insight into societies that you may only spend a short time in. Uh...I think the emerging archetype of the other or the alien is an effort to integrate alienation and actually make it a positive thing. And, I think I mentioned either here as Will [last name?]'s show about ET and how clever this was to make people identify with something which looks like a cross between a can of anchovies and the Pilsbury Dough Boy [audience laughter] and to actually....you know, *love* is what that movie is about and it's *alien love*, and, uh, it's a very important form of love to cultivate, because this process of integration of the electronic overself that is one way of looking at the end of history; that is, uh, that is the process that we're all involved in, and psychedelics, uh, which I haven't mentioned too much tonight, but which I hope you realize are the, uh, entire source *and* motivation and *raison d'etre* of all of this, because what psychedelics are doing, uh, are they are anticipating this future state, this electronic global information organism is, in fact, already present in the same way that most of the future is present in the past. I mean, think of any point in the past. Think of 1950. Think of how much of today was present in 1950. It means that this idea that science fiction has sold us that the future is a total other world just up around the bend, it isn't actually true. The future is, uh, 95% present *in the present*, and it is that 5% that eludes us that we will provide the great adventure for the next 20, 30, 40 years as we come to terms with the fact that, uh, we are moving off into the human imagination. That's what this godlike thing is. It is not a filled space, a loving figure, an angel, a god, or a demon. It is an empty space, a space which we will fill, uh, with our dreams, essentially, because our dreams have always been the appetite [an Alfred North Whitehead term] leading us forward into history. But, we have not understood why, especially over the last 500 years when it's become very unfashionable to believe in dreams and visions and revelations, but I think actually the faith is well-founded. It's well-founded because of the nature of the physics of time, and that is a physics that your own experience will reinforce for you if you, uh, if you examine it carefully enough. Thank you once again very much. I think we're gonna have a brief break and then, uh, questions. [audience applause] Thank you. [ambient music still playing in background]...[tape edit]

...There's no question that what the human imagination has now taken to itself so much power that it can no longer remain on the surface of the planet. We sort of have to part company with the planet for our own good and for its, and, uh, it's just a, uh, commonplace of evolutionary theory that every frontier presents a

genetic barrier, because only the hail, the hearty the adventurous, uh, the healthy go. Certainly space is going to be the tightest genetic filter of that sort that has ever been, uh, laid on a human population. It's said that, you know, the dynamics of North American society are due to the fact that we're...we can all trace ourselves back to misfits and malcontents and religious screwballs, and all these people who were out of it relative to Europe came here. A very similar thing will obviously happen in space, uh....but your question is interesting. I can't quote him exactly, but when I spoke in Santa Cruz, Tim Poston, who's a mathematician, after it was all over he s--he quoted a modern poet saying, "It won't end with a statue of Jayne Mansfield 50 miles high. It won't end....," and he list several things. It will just go on. It will continue and continue and continue, and perhaps that's what human society will always be about. Perhaps there will always be a tacky element and we will always [audience laughter], uh, 'flop on the seamy side' [quoting James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*], but I'm not sure. I'm not sure. The things which we take to be so basic to humanness, such as all that that I just mentioned, have all arisen *since* this hypothetical moment in Julian Jaynes' theory, when we integrated the ego. Perhaps, uh, integrating the super-ego will actually make us stand taller and see more clearly into each other's needs. Uh...I think that the old evolutionary model, which was that evolution was the struggle of the fittest and the devil take the hindmost is pretty much discredited, and we now understand that, uh, what is maximized in evolution is not the, uh, sharpness of the fang or the, or the length of the claw, but the ability to cooperate with other species harmoniously [audience applause]. That's what's being maximized. Every parasite...er, or, I mean, every disease wants to be simply a benign parasite. No disease wants to see it's host die, because then the party is over for everyone. Uh..so, I would say in answer to your question, I'm hopeful, but I certainly, uh...human's are a perverse lot, and I suppose, reasonably, what one can hope for is incremental advancement toward the good. I studied political philosophy under Joe Tussman, and one of his favorite remarks he used to say to us was, 'When you look around at the world, it's a terrible show to be run by angels, but if you think of it as run by monkeys, *pretty amazing!*' [audience laughter] Another question...any other question...yes.

[male audience member]: Yea, I'd like to know if, uh, you've had any experience with ketamine, and, uh, what you think of its place in the future and....whatever.

[Terence]: Interesting question...what, what about ketamine? What do I think about it? Well, different things. First of all, uh, you all know what ketamine is, or should I briefly sketch it. Ok, this is a psychedelic drug that's recently come on the scene that, uh, is what's called a disassociative anaesthetic. It was used as a veterinary and children's anaesthetic from the early 60s onward and it was..only slowly was it realized that, uh, at low doses there were peculiar psychic phenomena, and, uh, i-i-i--when done as an anaesthetic, it's done 600 mL IV push. That means straight into the vein under pressure as fast as you can, 600 milliliters, which would be just like being hit by a truck. But, when it's done for its...I don't like to say 'recreationally', so, when it's done for it's, uh, 'psychic' effect, it's done like 100 milliliters, IM, into the muscle. And, uh.....it's a, it's a....troubling psychedelic, because a lot of people, I think, are doing it who have never done any other. And, I think that would be very, very misleading. I..When I did it, the first thing that...my first reaction was..complete amazement that, here was a category of experience that I had no idea existed. In other words, it was a slot on the bookshelf that I didn't realize was there. It is not like mescaline, not like LSD, not like psilocybin, not like DMT, not like ayahuasca, not like any of these things, and yet, you cannot get away from the fact that it's a powerful psychedelic. So....it'sss, it's useful for that alone, to further expand the definition of *what is* a psychedelic drug. The problem that I have--I have two problems with it, and both of them may be..curmudgeonly on my part, so you don't have to take it from me. The first one is that it's very easy. The first thing that happens after you've done ketamine is that you cease to be concerned that you've done ketamine [audience laughter]. Before there is any other effect that effect takes

hold [audience laughter]. And, uh, that's a funny thing. I'm on, on these tryptamine hallucinogens, you are fully aware that you have taken a drug, that you're walking on egg shells, that you should keep yourself alert to what's going on, and, and....In other words, it puts you on your toes. You know you're in a dimension of risk and opportunity, and you comport yourself that way. On ketamine, your definitions dissolve so completely that it's a major accomplishment to realize that you're a human being on a drug. You keep discovering and losing that realization. You keep saying, 'Oh yes, that's what it is; I'm *somebody* and I'm stoned *somewhere!* And that's what this is...now it's coming back to me.' Which brings me to the second thing about ketamine which is, uh, puzzling, and this is a problem with all psychedelic drugs, but, but, you have to, sort of, get a 1-life strategy for dealing with it, because it's important to overcome, and that is, it's very "state-bounded," which is the that the psychologist Rolland Fisher coined, which means that you can't remember anything about it. It's like an intense dream where you're intensely dreaming, and the alarm goes off, and as you stumble to the shower it's just.....and there's nothing there. And ketamine is very much like this. There's..while you're on it, there is a complete conviction that this is of staggering import to you and mankind [audience laughter]...and then, it is just totally mercurial and elusive and slips away. Now, that, in itself, is obviously an interesting experience, and, uh, so ketamine seems to teach obliquely. It teaches you that there are psychedelic states that you might not have called psychedelic. It teaches you that there are wonderful insights that totally, uh, elevate you that you can't remember 15 seconds later. So, it sort of teaches you the richness of mind, but, uh, by, uh, example, rather than by the imparting of information that you can take away. And, then, whenever this question is asked, uh, unlike my acquaintance John Lilly, I always feel like I *have to* say to people that, if you're going to take a new drug, you should go to the medical literature read it, and I know there's this much in reprints on ketamine, because I have it. And, what it will tell you is that, um....there's a kindling effect, which means each time you do it, it is easier the next time to get loaded. Uh, however, on the, uh, neurophysiological level, er, or the level of

an electroencephalogram, this kindling effect is....can be cons---I don't want to say it's dangerous. I just want to say, it's a warning sign, because the same kind of kindling will proceed, uh, petit mal seizure and other forms of seizure. Let me say, though, on this matter of drugs and how you judge them, especially now, since there're so many drugs in the MDA series making their way into society: MDA, MMDA, MDMA, MDM--MMDA-2, a whole gamut of these, and there will be more down through the years. I've always taken the position that it was important that the psychedelic have a relationship to a plant. And, uh, that's almost a perfect fit for me, because I approve of psilocybin and it comes from a plant, and mescaline and it comes from a plant, and...uh, LSD is sort of problematic, because the LSD-25 that is what most people are familiar with, is not from a plant. That's a creature of pure, of the laboratory, but, uh, analogues, active in the milligram range, diethyl, uh, ethyl lysergic acid amide, uh, occur in morning glories of several species and in ergot, er, uh, and in some cases non-toxically. So, I....as I live into the 80s, it's becoming harder and harder to maintain this thing about the importance of the plant, because, so many people don't..can't imagine what you're talking about. They are totally devoted to one or another completely synthetic drug, and are having revelation and, uh, loving insights and all these things, and, so, I feel a little bit like a Puritan. But, until I know more about it, for myself, that's sort of the categories I'll work with. Also, I'm...the, the plant drugs almost always have a shamanic tradition associated with them that's several thousand years old. So, they're use-tested in human societies both for psychic effects and for physiological effects, uh. If a drug has been taken for 10,000 years, chances are, it's fairly benign.....Any other questions, yes...

[male audience member]: I was wondering, if you've read, in the introduction of 'Psilocybin' by Oss and O.N. Oeric, a statement that the authors purport to be from the mushroom, whereby the...mushroom offers

a possible symbiont...for the humans....offers to give information on how to build spaceships, and, what, uh...what do you think about that and what do you think about the symbiosis between humans and mushrooms, other than, you know, just taking mushrooms, is there....this....have you ever reflected on this...er, have this this introduction?

[Terence]: I've read that introduction, yes. You're a brave man to ask the question. Uh...Oh no, I shouldn't kid you...I wrote the introduction. [audience laughter] Because, I am O. T. Oss and my brother is O. N. Oeric. I can tell you this now, because this book is going out of print. Uh, well, when we wrote that, that was, uh, that was straight transcription. That's what the mushroom said. Uh...I don't know exactly what to make of this. These things stretch our....uh....our, uh....categories, because we, s--we, because it deals with our own definition of humanness, uh.... It's curious that the psilocybin mushroom that my book, or that our book is about, occurs in the dung of domesticated cattle, the Indian humpback cattle, *Bos indicus*. Uh, so that it has been since very early in human history, in a sense a symbiot of man, because a symbiot of a domesticated animal, wh--which man had a symbiotic relationship with. And, when you study symbiosis, uh, among lower animals, you often find this situation where it isn't simply two species involved, but three or even more. Uh...the mushroom has this peculiar ability to invoke, or allow, or trigger a voice in the head, this Logos-like phenomenon of information unrolling in your head. Uh...no other drug that I'm familiar with does that consistently. And, our model of what psychedelic drugs should do has no room in it for this. Our model of what psychedelic drugs should do is derived from Freud and then secondarily from Jung. From Freud, we derive the idea that the psychedelic drug should, uh, introduce you to neurotic thought processes, repressed memory, traumatic experience, um.....g-guilt, uh.....-laden incidents that have been forgotten, this sort of thing. From Jung, we inherit the idea that beyond that, there is a landscape of myth, and that we will encounter the great...mythological motifs of the collectivity of the human psyche. What psilocybin seems to be saying is that, yes, these two areas do exist, but beyond them and far larger than them, if we can speak of such dimensions in terms of relative size, there is an area which has very little to do with humanness, collective or particular. It is simply like a landscape. It is a world in the mind, but not related to our neuroses or our religious, totemic, and mythological figures. It is in fact highly independent of the human ego, but nevertheless discoverable, uh, uh, through these drugs. And, uh, in those dimension, we come up against things like, the voice of the mushroom claiming to represent a galactic form of organism, or, uh.....wh-wh-what are conventionally called angels, or demons, or jinns, or afrits; in other words, these traditional, but rarely encountered by modern people, autonomous forms of psychic existence, and we have no models for those things. For our civilization, the other, if it exists, can only come from the stars, in ships. It must be a carbon-based lifeform with the political and social and intellectual aspirations similar to ourselves. Science is not yet ready to entertain the idea that all points in our universe may be co-tangent, that every form of intelligence in the cosmos may have the potential to communicate with every other, in the here-and-now, eh, simply because to do this science would throw open a floodgate of information that it cannot deal with. The repression of magic has been a very important part of science's program for explaining the world, not because science has anything, uh, intrinsic....an intrinsic antagonism to magic, but simply because magic, if tolerated, would unleash more information than any scientific theory can cope with. Scientific theories must first limit the amount of information that they're dealing with before they can begin to model things. So, in answer to your question about the mushroom and its role in human history, I've gone through many changes about this since the mushroom began talking to me, since I wrote that forward. I have a manuscript now, which, uh, one of the titles that we toy with for it is, uh, 'Alien Intelligence and Psilocybin'. Although it probably won't be called that, a lot of what it deals with is that, is the fact that post-modern people, which is you and me, are getting in touch with something which modern, the modern worldview, cannot handle at all. For modernity, voices

in the head are a clear instance of pathology. And, yet, for the Hellenistic world and the world--the post-modern world, voices in the head are a clear, uh, aspect of, uh, following the path. And, this was classic before the rise of the forms of reductionist thought that characterize modern thinking. Socrates had a daemon. He mentions it many times. It told him what to say. It helped him with what he should think, and, uh, it was a commonplace for sages and philosophers of that time to make that kind of claim. Psilocybin places it within the reach of modern people, but it also, by so doing serves to demonstrate that the old models of psyche, Freudian and Jungian, just won't serve. [Audience member says something] I don't think that these things can be reconciled very easily. I think science, if it's going to take up the Enochian tables and that sort of thing is going to transform itself to the point where it will no longer *be* science. Uh, Paul Feyerabend, who lives in Berkeley--I don't know if he still teaches--has written a couple of books, one called 'Against Method' and another one called 'Science in a Free Society', and he makes the point there that, uh, science has really become an enemy of the free society, simply by virtue of the fact that it ca--it wishes to, uh, arbitrate *all models*. So that, somebody says, 'well, I believe that the universe is such and so' and everyone says, 'well, go ask the scientists if it's true or not'. Uh, this is a staggering amount of power for, for any group of people to have, especially a group of people whose accomplishments, and I'm not now talking about the technicians and the engineers but the scientists, what they have accomplished is only to give us an unrecognizably abstract model of the world. Uh, so I would prefer a world of intellectual pluralism, where, uh, astrology, and astronomy, and kabbalah, and information theory, and all these things, worked in their own area, but no one claimed pre-eminence, because, you see, this claiming of pre-eminence, uh, rests on a false assumption. No idea can be dismissed that is internally consistent. There's nothing more than that. Science is not...*more than* internally self-consistent, and astrology is not *less than* internally self-consistent, so why should these things be placed on two different levels in terms of, uh, arbitra--uh, being arbiters of the truth.

So, I think that, uh, that there will be, by psychology for instance, fringe human abilities and things like that discovered, but I think higher magic will always operate according to the laws of higher magic, and that this will be a closed book to science, simply because of the nature of the premises of both, uh concerns. One of the things I didn't get to say about this time theory that I've put down this evening was that, uh, it's a very anti-scientific theory. It cannot be integrate---this is not merely a physics of time that can be grafted onto orthodox and have science survive, because what I'm saying has, uh, certain consequences in the realm of cause and effect and experimental design that make what is normally called a scientific experience, out of the question. And, another untestable hypothesis that riddles science from end to end is the idea that if A causes B at time F, then A will cause B at time anything else, and that's just obviously nonsense in any realm where we experience things, but it's necessary to believe that....and, so what science ends up being able to do (this is interesting)...science, then, becomes a way of explaining anything which happens the same way over and over again, regardless of the time that it happens. We could almost describe science as, uh, the descriptive, uh...that branch of human knowledge which is concerned with the description of those processes which are not effected by the time in which they occur. And, those proc---and none of those processes are interesting to living, thinking, feeling people, because everything you experience is unique, every moment, every event, every person, every situation.

So, what happening, here? Something is happening to the monkeys. And, it's very dangerous. And, it takes about 25,000 years to happen. It's a mad rush, because for it to happen, the most dangerous processes in the universe have to lie 'present at hand' [Heidegger terminology]: nuclear fusion, nuclear fission, so--uh, social control, genetic control. Everything has to be possible for the Good to be possible. The species is completely...free to mirror itself. That is, in fact, what this test is about. What freedom means is, you find

out how good you are by discovering what you do when you have the power to destroy yourself. And, we, as a species, are in that position, and no one can do it but us, and, if we do not destroy ourselves then, very obviously, the intellectual tools that we have taken in hand are the tool which will send us, uh, out to the stars. Now, as far as this idea that I talked about tonight about, uh...temporal fractals and the nature of time and that sort of thing, that is only one aspect of this conquest of reality by information. And, I think you can see, if you look back through biological and cultural history, though no one, so far as I know, has ever actually described it this way: What it really is, is a conquest of dimensions. With the earliest, uh, forms of life, you get...they are like the amoeba. They essentially have a tactile perception. They can only perceive what they are immediately physically in contact with. And, then, in slightly higher organisms, you get the evolution of cells which distinguish light and dark. So, there is at least the idea of a sense that there is something out there that comes and goes that cannot be tactilely recorded. It's the coming and going of light. But, then, as organisms advance in complexity, the eye is where the evolutionary thrust comes once you get past the eye spot. Then, uh, there is sense of things at a distance, which do not tactilely impinge on the organism but nevertheless have importance for the organism. They are distant pieces of food, or distant enemies, and, uh, the organism learns to move forward or away from these things, and toward or away are dimensional concepts. Then, when you get truly mobile organism, you get, uh...for instance, like monkeys or that sort of thing, they move in a much larger control space, and they move through it to grasp what they desire, and, and you get the evolution of a tactile sense that is under the control of the eye, and then, uh, that essentially ends with the binocular vision and the bipedal locomotion. That ends the conquest of physical dimension for biological objects, but then you then get language, which seems to have something to do with time, because language allows memory, and the re-collection of memory, so that past states can be brought to bear on the present with an eye toward anticipation of the future, and suddenly you realize that what language is allowing this organism to do is to claim a whole new dimension. Language, then, is a dimension, uh, a dimension-exploring vehicle of some sort. And, to what degree, we don't know, because, for instance, obviously, as animals, we contact the dimensions 'past' and 'future'. These are dimensions with great importance to an animal, because what you learn in the past may keep you from being eaten in the future. But, then, once you have the luxury of civilization, we get language applied to subjects which are neither related to the past or the future, like mathematics. And, lang--mathematics is a language, which has gone out and described, uh, multidimensional spaces.

[tape cuts out]

I think that, er, nothing is more exquisite than the interior music, and all music is obviously an effort to approximate this interior music, and, I don't know if it's apocryphal or not, but I'm sure you all know the story of Beethoven saying, you know, if you, 'if you could hear what I can hear, you wouldn't bother with what I've written, because, it's just..compared to what I'm hearing.' Uh....you have to....it's, it's a knife edge, because the music does lead deeper into these visionary states, but I still think that once you are where you want to be, that if you can cast loose from exterior musical input that this interior music will rise into perception and reward you for that. Uh, the way that I take psychedelic drugs seems very natural to me, but then when I describe to groups of people like this, I realize that people have all kinds of styles, and this caus--this has caused the psychedelic experience to be sort of blurrily defined in the mass-mind. My idea of how you take a psychedelic drugs is that you reduce sensory input as low as you can without the reduction itself becoming an impediment. In other words, I'm not talking about isolation tanks and all that. I'm just saying a dark, quiet, calm, cool, empty room is the best kind of situation. And, uh, some of the most interesting trips, that I've had, have been to the accompaniment of a single sound, which is simply a drone, it's like the *bindu*, the seed around which, then, the multiplicity of the hallucinogenic vision can

gather itself and constellate. I mean, I blush to tell you this, but some of my most interesting, uh, trips have been to the accompaniment of my floor heater [audience laughter], which makes a buzz like a refrigerator, and that buzz becomes, you know, the cutting edge of a light, which is like a comet, giving off, in the eddies of its trail...hallucination, all the hallucinations there are. So, I think that, m-music is intrinsic to everything that we are talking about. We are aspiring to the condition of music, and we need music, therefore, we should have it as an exterior input, uh, when we can have it no other way. So, saying that musi--that I don't listen to music during those states, is not a put down of music, uh. Music is obviously the ideal, because it *is* one of these tonal languages that you understand by hearing. It is an *Ursprach*. It has...it's a language of emotion, yea...

[male audience member]: Real quick question...according to the, um, to the graph that you've developed, it seems to me that the end date that you've pinned down, that you could have almost your own running biorhythm chart based on this graph and you tell whether novelty's gonna be coming up in the next week or three months, or...have you gone that far?

[Terence]: Oh yes, definitely. One of the things that I do is I have a counseling service called 'Anamnesis', and the reason I organized it as a counseling service was because I wanted people to interact with my Wave on the level of their personal history, and I didn't want them to be contaminated by being my friends, so I basically just advertised this service in 'Common Ground', which says something about 'Understand novelty in your life, maps of the past and the future', this and that, and then people come to me and I interview them about their life, and we search the wave for a good fit to their life and then we integrate their wave as a statistical component of the larger wave and then we can make maps of the present, the next six months, the next ten or fifteen years, at different levels, and then people live it out and see if it works, see if when the graph indicates novelty in their life should be increasing, it is increasing, and when it shouldn't be it doesn't. It's like I've invented one-term form of astrology. It only talks about novelty. It tells you when it will go up, when it goes down, when it will go down. It doesn't, in any given situation say *what* will happen. It only defines the level of novelty that must be fulfilled by *whatever* happens.

[tape edit]

Synchronicity...you see, what, what's, um, one way that I think of this Timewave is, orthodox chemistry, biology, uh, probability theory, all these things, go together to describe what..mm..is possible. So, you say, you know, could an asteroid strike the earth? Let's ask the scientists. And, they say, 'well, yes, it's possible, there are enough of them. the probability is very low'. Or, you say, you know, 'can we cleave this molecule with the input of this energy?', and they say 'well, yes, it's *possible*, physics allows for that'. But, what my theory seeks to describe is not what is possible, but what out of the set of all possible things, why is that certain things undergo the 'formality of actually occurring' [an Alfred North Whitehead concept]. It is as though they are selected at of this vast pool of possible things, things which could happen without violating any known laws, but out of that vast reservoir certain things undergo the formality of occurring, and once they have occurred, the fact of their occurring has defined the level of novelty in that now-passed moment. And, so, that's what...it's like this novelty wave is a...an additional variable which has to be added into physical laws. It's the variable which dictates what, out of the possible states, which ones actually are realized. And, it's the flux, the coming and going, of that wave of novelty which controls that. Now, if you're in a highly novel situation, then, you get what Lilly calls Cosmic Coincidence or Jung calls synchronicity. You get obvious connections which have no obvious casuistry behind them. They..s-they are connected through meaning, not through the chain of cause and effect. And, that is simply happening

because the level of novelty is so great that these sideways connections are beginning to come apparent. And, at the end of time or at the ingression into this higher dimension, I think this will become excruciatingly, uh, present in the foreground of our experience. In other words, synchronicity is getting stronger, coincidence is getting stronger. The world *is* becoming more irrational. Science *did* work better in the 19th century [audience laughter] than its working in the 20th, because reality is slowly slipping through it's fingers. There was a maximum moment when the dreams of science and the nature of reality overlaid almost perfectly but now reality is growing beyond it and pulling away from it, and, uh, I think soon, I shall be pulling away from this meeting.

Thank you very much. [applause]

Original transcript by: Eva Petakovic

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The Grammar of Ecstasy - the World Within the Word

15 May 1995

Maui

Description

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The Transformations of Language Under the Influence of the Psychedelic Experience

October 1983

Location, Berkeley, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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So, I've spoken about five times about various aspects of the psychedelic experience to audiences here and at Esalen and in Santa Barbara, and, one of the things that is a personal interest of mine that stands out from the general background of the psychedelic experience is the way that it throws light on language, and I discovered that, uh, audiences seem fairly responsive to this question even though it seemed to me, at first, fairly hard to articulate it, and fairly hard to say too much about it. So, tonight, to indulge myself and anybody else who has a particular interest in this aspect of it, I want to say more about it and maybe talk for 40 minutes or so, and then, uh, take questions. And, I think it's by talking, uh, it's-it's perhaps a tautology to think that by talking about a linguistic phenomenon or a linguistic problem you can illuminate it. But, uh, I'm interested in how it strikes other people and the kind of dialog that can be generated by, uh, talking about it.

First of all, to background what I'm saying a little bit, I recently ran across, uh, a very interesting, uh, analogy or metaphor that seemed useful to me, which was- it was a historical analogy- saying that, uh, when civilizations come into crisis they inevitably- one of their strategies for survival is to cast back to an earlier period of time, an earlier cultural ideal, and then to try to exemplify its- to exemplify its values, and, as the obvious example and the most recent, uh, phenomenon of this sort on any large scale is the Renaissance in which the breakdown of Medieval society and the rise of mercantilism, uh, generated a need to cast back into time for a set of values and then to realize them. And, the period of time that was chosen was Classical, uh, Greece and Rome. And, so painting, sculpture, poetry, reflected an effort to recapture Classical values.

Um. What I think is happening in the present, and by 'the present' I mean the whole 20th century, is, uh, a similar thing, a similar culture crisis, but on a much grander and more global and more threatening scale and a casting back for a previous cultural model that can- whose ideals, if we could realize them, would save our own civilization: the same idea that the Renaissance had about Classical, uh, Greece. But, strangely, the period that we have decided, that we have fastened on without ever making a conscious decision, but as a reflection of decisions made in the mass psyche of the species, the period that we have settled on is the Archaic period, which *precedes* human history. And, so, uh, Cubism and, uh, uh, the things that were done for literature by Joyce and Pound and the, uh, glorification of barbarism and the recovery of the unconscious, first the sexual nature of the unconscious through Freud, later the mass archetypal, uh,

structure through Jung. In other words, the great movements of the 20th century, even Marxism, can be seen as efforts to recapture, uh, prehistoric sacral values. And, this process has been going on for 50 years or so, different adumbrations of it at differing times. And, now, and for the past 10 years or so, the theme of shamanism, the rediscovery of paleolithic religion, and the rise of the use of hallucinogenic drugs, which were the driving force of paleolithic religion has, uh, come into the fore.

Well, ok. Holding that in your mind for a moment, recall, uh, Marshall McLuhan's idea that, uh, technologies for conveying information shift ratios in the mass psyche in the way that it relates to the world. And, he, uh, was famous for predicting what he called electronic feudalism: he said that the, uh, the television screen was more like a page of manuscript than a page of print and that, as the linearity and uniformity and rational, uh, assumptions of grammar were transcended in the conveying of information to be replaced by electronic gestalts that were looked at rather than read, that, uh, the ratios between the, uh, senses would shift and that this would have profound effects on art and the history of ideas and this sort of thing.

What is happening is that a kind of super-McLuhanistic phenomenon is happening where we are collapsing, not into the electronic feudalism that he discussed, but into, uh, the electronic tribalism which he discussed, and it is shifting our, um, sensory ratios away from, uh, the audial and toward the visual, and this brings me now to my subject, which is the transformations of language under the ps- uh, under the influence of the psychedelic experience. The fact that there is a spectrum of vocal and psychological and psycho-mental phenomena that range all the way from, uh, the recess- the recitation of learned material through freely formed speech and into these trance-like, uh, religious phenomena that go under the category 'glossolalia'. And these things are experienced, uh, by the people who do them as having a varying relationship to the visual rather than the audial sense.

I've- we had a discussion a couple of nights ago with Ralph Abraham about when you are, uh, asked to conjure the idea of an orange, what is this idea made out of? When you close your eyes and think of an orange, is what you think of made of language or is it made of light? And, what you say in answer to this question, what does it say about you and your, uh, the way in which you're embedded in your culture? Under the influence of psilocybin, particularly, uh, the language-forming centers are activated, and they are activated in s- in tandem with, uh, the visual cortex, so that forms of synesthesia are experienced which are linked, first of all, to sound, so that people singing control the fabric of hallucination through sound, and we found this to be true of ayahuasca in the Amazon where definitely the shaman's use of voice controls the fabric, the visual fabric, of what's going on.

But, there is yet another level to that phenomenon, which is: with the addition of meaning, the control of the visual surface, the topology of meaning, if you will, rather than the ongoing decoding from a dictionary, is, uh, is transcended. Meaning, then, is able, also, to work its adumbrations on this topological surface, and you see into, um... well, there are different ways of cognizing it: the place where the *ursprach* is coming from, the assembly language that lies behind all formalized or culturally, uh, validated languages, Wittgenstein called it 'the Unspeakable'. It's, it's the place where explication cannot go, almost by definition, in order to avoid a tautology.

Well, now, it seemed to me that, uh, uh... the nearness of these tryptamine hallucinogens to normal metabolites of brain chemistry and the fragileness that people like McLuhan and Julian Jaynes have shown to be, uh, a part of the way we construct our world; in other words, that it's a delicate balance of chemistry

and language and history, uh, *and* these sensory ratios; that, given all this, it seemed probable to me that this phenomenon encountered in deep psychedelic experiences with psilocybin actually has a potential historical impact. It is a kind of human ability which is, at present, submerged in the psyche, contactable only by the shamanic means of journeying into historical hyperspace; in other words, of going into that place where the adumbrations of the future are intense enough that you can have, uh, an intimation, at least, of what is to come. And, I think *this is* what is to come, and it is a kind of telepathy, but it's not telepathy as we imagined it to be. I sa- I- when I imagined telepathy, I thought of it as hearing another person think and having them hear what you think. This is something where the modality of meaning is shifted out of a common dictionary that is, uh, a cultural convention, and into a, uh, a shared visual topology which is examined by both parties, both the speaker, who caused this thing to be, and the audience, who shares the space where this is happening.

Uh, it's interesting that, uh, beta-carbolines, which are used to, uh, accentuate the hallucinogenic effect of DMT in these ayahuasca preparations in, in, uh, Amazonas, is, um - is, uh, very definitely a part of normal human metabolism, brain metabolism. And, the MAO-inhibition that it's performing on, uh, DMT that is, uh, introduced from the outside is a mirror image of the kind of function that it's performing in the brain. So, the shifting of these sensory ratios is causing language to become more visual, and at this point I always have to quote Philo Judeas, who was a first century Alexandrian Jew who talked about the Logos. And, I have made analogies between the phenomenon I am describing and the Logos. But, in the critical quote, what he said was that a more perfect Logos was possible and that it would be a phenomenon which would pass from, uh, the modality of being heard to the modality of being beheld without ever crossing through a quantized point of transition where you could say it was one, now it is the other. And, I think, uh, the cultural shockwaves that will be generated by the emergence of visible language will so- will totally transform the culture to the point that the point beyond the end of history, the entry into hyperspace, the eschatological monad, all these, uh, religious or theological constructs about history are actually intuitions about language undergoing this transformation.

Now, several things about this transformation: it's obviously not something which the culture is doing as a decision; it isn't like home computers and cable TV; it isn't being brought on as an information utility; it's something which is being imposed from outside, and I think it is, uh- I'm sure most of you are familiar with the Gaia [pronounced gae-uh] or Gaia [pronounced guy-uh] hypothesis of homeostatic regulation of the environment of the Earth through the interaction of all life acting as a single organism. Well, it obviously regulates, uh, trigger species such as we are, are part of this homeostatic method of regulation, and I think the gradual evolution of language is actually the gradual lifting of the veil that is imposed between ourselves and meaning by the planetary ecology. In other words, the forward thrust of history is actually regulated by the ecology, and it is regulated through control of the evolution of language, because what you cannot think, you cannot do, and where you cannot imagine, you cannot steer your culture and go. So I'm proposing, on one level, that hallucinogens be thought of as, uh, human macro-, uh, almost, uh, social pheromones that, uh, regulate the rate at which language develops and therefore regulate, uh, the evolution of human culture generally.

Now, one final, uh, thought about all this. Um...[someone coughs], it seems clear to me, and I've mentioned it in the other lectures, that the evolution- that another aspect of what psychedelics are doing, and an aspect of what's happening to the culture generally, is it's transformation into a space-faring species and that the momentum for this has been building for millennia. It is not something that was decided in the 1950s. It is, in fact, what we're all to- about. I, I looked at a book recently by Terry Wilson about Brian

Dyson called *Here To Go*. And, uh, he asked the question: "What are we here for?" And, he answers himself: "We're here to go." And, I think there's great truth in that, especially in the current historical moment where it's clear that, uh, man as a species and the planet as a unified ecosystem have become antagonistic to each other, and, uh, this is not unusual in nature. In fact, it's a phenomenon, um, that occurs between a mother and a fetus. When the fetus comes to term, when the birth is imminent, it must happen. Otherwise the, the, uh, survival of both parties is threatened. Even though the birth trauma for the mother and the child represents, uh, one of the major, uh, crises that they will face in their sojourn in existence. Nevertheless, it is inevitable and necessary, and if it comes off correctly, why, it's, uh, to the good of everyone.

Where psychedelics comes together with that is that it is going to require a transformation of human language and understanding, uh, to stop the momentum of the historical process, to halt nuclear proliferation, germ warfare, infantile 19th century politics, all these things. It cannot be accomplished through a frontal assault upon it by political means, and the I Ching says, you know, never- you never confront evil directly, because when it is named it sharpens its weapons and it learns to defend itself. So, what is called for is this *sideways attack* through hyperspace. Uh... God forbid, I think it was Tim Leary who said we should become ecological secret agents, uh- [audience laughter]. Is that what I'm concluding? Maybe.

Anyway. The transformation of language is, I think, uh, the signal that this archaic- that this nostalgia for the archaic world is coming to a head and that this is its culmination; this is the peculiar thing that we all sense is coming that we can't quite imagine, that is synthetic yet natural, that is obvious yet hidden, uh, and it, it- the interesting thing about it is that it is- emerges from an inner personal frontier. In other words, you're not going to hear this on the evening news, the President is not going to explain it to you, the secretary of- general of the UN isn't going to explain it to you. You are only going to advance into understanding this phenomena to the degree that you apply yourself to your being, to attention to being, to reflection on reflection, to attention on attention. And, then, it, uh, it will become clear, and because it is a, uh- a, um, gradient of evolution, it, it doesn't, uh, come with the force of a revelation. It is something which is drawn out almost in the same way that we move forward into time, this thing is drawn out. In fact, you could almost say that the act of history or the fact of history is a macro-phenomenon that arises out of the micro-physical fact of millions of people evolving their language. That is what causes the moving wave-front of, uh, of historical becoming.

So, uh, transformation of language through psychedelic drugs is, uh, a central factor of the s- evolution of the social matrix of the, of the rest of the century. My brother is working on, uh, the theory, putting together the argument for the idea that, uh, actually human history has *always* been mediated by man's interaction with hallucinogenic drugs, and that *this is* the pheromonal regulator that links us to the rest of ecology, of the ecology, and it's simply accidents of, uh, botany and, uh, alkaloid distribution and historiography that allowed a culture to arise in Europe, which was an area confined geographically and poor in psychedelic plants, so that the mystery was confined to places like Eleusis and peripheral cults like the, possibly the mushroom berserkers or *Agaricus*, I mean, um, *Amanita*-using cults in the Arctic regions. Uh, and, because of those accidents of, of botany and geography, a culture was able to get loose from, uh, such a tight- the tight constraints that the unconscious imposes. But, nevertheless, that culture, then, was the Promethean culture, the Faustian culture, which claimed the energies which will then send the mind **[ed. note: 'mind tribes?' I'm not sure I follow his remark here]** tribes to the stars. If it had not been for this historical episode, we would essentially be at the Amazonian level of culture, which is: suspended in

the hallucinogenic dream but oblivious to the historical forces which are bearing down on that. And, tribalism is a social form which can exist at any level of technology. It's a complete illusion to associate it w-, uh, with low levels of technology. It is probably, in fact, uh, a form of social organization second only to the family in its ability to endure.

So, this must seem very strange to some people and home ground to other people [Terence laughs]. Are there any questions at this point? Nary a taker. Yes?

Q: Yeah, that last generalization sounded real broad. Maybe you could expand on tribalism is a social form which can exist at any technological level.

TM: Well, I think it's an attitude toward, uh, genes and property and, uh, information. Uh, the institutional hierarchically-structured societies that we associate with [someone coughs], uh, our own culture, which I assume we define consciously or unconsciously as somehow the superior culture, is just inherited from, uh, tribal organization but with a need to abstract the leadership quality so that control could function over wide areas. But, electronics actually is, you know- the entire human community is enclosed in a light-second of travel, so there is- the globalism is real. I mean, when I first read McLuhan, it seemed to me *very* true, but a thin voice crying in the wilderness. It was hard to see if, out of all the trends working in society, that was how it would come to be, but it certainly seems to be so. I, I think, uh- Well, it's, uh- H. G. Wells said, "history is a race between education and disaster." And I think, you know, that education was losing that race until electronics came along and, uh, now I would probably, uh, be optimistic.

I think that, uh, there is a global commonality of understanding coming into being, and it is not necessarily fostered by institutions. For instance, the invention of the microchip which makes possible the personal computer, uh, it was actually thought to be a mistake. It was not fast enough for the defense department purposes that it was engineered- that the research project that produced it was aiming for, and they produced instead this weird thing, which they couldn't imagine what to do with, because it was too slow for any military or industrial application. And- but, someone realized, you know, that, uh, it was just fine for human beings, and that it would va- and, that it would shift the, the, uh, pieces around on the board in the war between, you know, freedom and oligarchy and, uh, and, uh, human individuality and all these forces which seek to oppress it. So, I don't believe, you know, that the historical process is, is under the control of the many, many institutions that would wish to control it.

I don't- the break between nature and man has been over-stressed, I think, and that we should realize, you know, that we are very strange, but you can find very odd adaptations at many levels. And, uh, when you look at the, at the global ecology, you see that there *must be* a species like us or otherwise it would mean that evolution gives up at the planetary level, that somehow when it encounters the edge of the atmosphere, it just says "Ok, well that's it. If the star goes, we all go, and there's no way around that." But, actually the obvious way around that is, uh, a technical species, a minded species that will open a hole using energy and understanding through which everything could escape if it had to because, uh, you know, as we, as our- the data flows back from these probes moving out through the solar system and beyond, it turns out that the 19th century intuition of catastrophism was, uh, very correct, that the universe is, in fact, a very turbulent place, and that you only have to open your time window a little bit, to like 100,000 years, for the probability of *very* turbulent events, uh, that a global ecosystem would react to and, uh, strategies have to be evolved.

I mean, Francis Crick has come out, uh, with his belief, the panspermia idea, that life actually evolves in a deep space environment and is conveyed then to planetary environments where it can, uh, uh, adapt and evolve evolutionary strategies by cometary material. At one point, we suggested that *Stropharia cubensis*, the psilocybin mushroom, was actually an intelligent species whose method, uh, whose strategy of evolutionary, uh, advance was the spore which could actually go into a kind of suspended animation for hundreds of thousands, millions of years and, by that means, radiate through the galaxy over very long periods of time, and, uh, that seemed like a very radical idea at the time. We hypothesized that, uh, spore liberation by an *agaricus* on a planetary surface, then, through Brownian motion and, uh, accumulation of global charge on the surface on the spore, that there would be a small number of these tending to percolate out of any given atmosphere. And, given the enormous amounts of spores that are released, you could make an argument for this kind of evolutionary strategy. But, Crick, who *discovered* DNA, makes a much wilder hypothesis, which is that you don't even require a planetary ecosystem for, uh, DNA and life chemistry to evolve, that it can evolve in ultra-cold regimens in interstellar space, and then be conveyed to various planetary chemical regimens where it can respond and grow.

And, uh... all of these things, life, which we know from the rock that is dug out of South Africa chert, you can date back to at least, uh, 3.5 billion years. That's longer than the life of, uh, 40 percent of the stars in the universe. So, life is not an ephemeral process in an entropic universe. Life is a process that, uh, has a duration that exceeds that of star, uh, star life. And, life strategy for running against the second law of thermodynamics and, uh, expanding and conserving ordered structure over vast periods of time is a strategy of encoding information and retaining it. In other words, languages. And, these languages, which are abstract systems of notation that can be laid onto nucleotides or coconuts or scratches on clay or whatever, allow the conserving of complexity. And, uh, the- the, uh, the cross into visible language, that I see as the culmination of human historical culture, is a similar advance into this information self-expression of the magnitude, uh, similar to the generation of epigenetic information. In other words, the first writing, the first notation: that represented a break with genetic information that allowed, then, culture and memory and self-reflection.

Visible language will, uh, allow similar forward thrust deeper into human becoming, But, it will- it is also part of a phenomenon of leaving the planet and being anticipated now in these psychedelic drug states, because as we continue to insist on exploring the archaic through drugs and music and archaeology and, uh, our f- the whole thrust of 20th century self-explication, I think we're going to find that this was the basis of the Ur-shamanism. This is what magic is: it's, uh, being able to speak in a voice which makes things happen, being able to speak in a voice which causes facts to be beheld by groups of people in a way that has been purged from profane language, for us relegated to poetry and, uh, and that sort of thing.

Q: Would this kind of visional or beheld language have any basic structural units to it, like an alphabet, or would it be, uh, something so abstract which you couldn't re- resolve into basic... [??]

TM: Well, you know, people had to look at language probably fifteen thousand years before Noam Chomsky was able to write down the 15 rules of transformational grammar. It may have, there may be some, uh, a pixel or an alphabet or a, a reducible unit to it. It doesn't seem like that. It seems like, um, [clears throat] well, no, no, maybe topology, that we could imagine that René Thom's, uh, catastrophes, of which there are 7 good in 3 dimensions, but as you add dimensions to any system, the number of these potential catastrophes increases, and Ralph Abraham has described a number of the hyper-dimensional catastrophe states. Perhaps they could eventually, it could eventually be recognized as a grammar of

catastrophe flow, where it changes first into one thing, then into another.

What you're asking basically is, w- you know, 'what is the meaning of meaning?', or, put another way, 'does language eventually become somehow a mirror of mathematics?'. And, I don't know, it would take a lot more analysis, uh, than I have done. I, I think describing this stuff is at the level of sailing up jungle rivers and sticking to the broad rivers and noting that, you know, at 3 in the afternoon you passed a river mouth flowing in, it was a mile-and-a-half wide, and you don't know where it was coming from or how many thousand square miles it was draining, and you just put a note on your map to return some day and ascend it. In other words, there's, uh, this archaic area of the mind. It's going to take a long time to explicate it. By the time we have assimilated our recontact with the archaic, you know, there will be colonies on Alpha Centauri, there will be thinking machines, there will be trans-dimensional vehicles and, uh, out-of-body consciousness via electronics. All these things will arise out of our grappling with an understanding of this shift in the sensory ratios that, uh, will essentially return modern man to the age of miracles. And, uh, though we won't put it that way, but we will privately experience it that way. I mean, that's what psychedelic drugs are. We don't put it that way, but we all who have been through it, you know, privately experience it as a miracle.

Q: It occurred, something that I've been devoting a fair amount of thought to lately -.haven't gotten very far - and that's the conviction under certain experiences, you're getting information from deep within your psyche or so, from deep within some sort of racial or human information - sometimes what you talked about before, foreign but yet human information and yet another experience that you are just willing to absolutely bet that's not human information that is coming into your brain, or whatever. Many people talk about this and I was just wondering if you would share your thoughts on that division or any hypotheses, whether you feel that that's accurate, not accurate...

TM: Well, it seems as though there is a, a tuning mechanism that you must somehow, by trial and error, find how to twiddle this knob and you move through these very concentrated areas of information. And, some of it can be blindingly personal, some of it appear to be movies of historical periods, some of it, uh, appear to be conformed to Jungian stuff, and then the alien part of it. And, I don't, I - I don't know, I mean this is the area I work in. I've held all kinds of opinions about this information and finally decided, you know, that it's too early to say what it is.

There's a school of, uh, New Age, or, I don't know exactly how to put it, but, the Seth books and that, uh, the, uh, Ilsa [Isha?] Schwaller De Lubicz and these people, where it's just, nobody asks any hard questions, it's just "oh, you're channeling a being from Arcturus and they're laying the law down." Fascinating; what are they saying? Well, that's interesting, what they're saying, but more interesting is trying to actually, uh, work up close to the mechanics involved in this channeling, uh, and I'm very skeptical, and yet it hasn't stopped me at all from doing it. I mean, I talk to them, but I don't, uh, give away the barn or the cow, I just try to engage in dialogue and, uh, you know, s- some traditions are very blasé about this sort of thing.

Buddhism, for instance, Vajrayana, it's just "oh yes, many worlds, many beings, beings, beings [audience chuckles], all kinds of beings on every level and you have to learn to deal with them." But, it- that's well and good until you actually are doing- dealing with these beings and go through, like that wonderful moment in Rosemary's Baby where she says "my God, this is really happening?" Well, there are those moments where you realize, you know, that this doesn't appear to be a hypostatization of discriminating intellect. It appears to be some kind of eight-armed shmiggy which is coming at you with all these, uh,

[audience laughter] implements.

And, uh, I don't know, see, I think It's going to take a long time to sort this all out, and that in order to learn what we had to learn about matter to leave the planet, we had to *really* put ourselves through a head trip and close down the imagination or, uh, deputize special people to be imaginative who we called poets, and then labeled irrelevant. [audience laughs] Uh, it's going to now come upon us, and science is flowing into this area and beginning to recognize that it must have a romantic component. Uh, this is just the way of things. Ideas beget their opposites and then are subsumed by them. Anyone, yes.

Q: Can you relate this in any way to the crisis their having currently in the art world [???] the end of art, you know - that kind of thing...

TM: Could - could all this be related to the crisis in art? Well, I don't know what do you mean, the crisis since 1905 or 1975 or which...

Q: Take your pick. [laughs]

TM: Well. I-I'm not - it's not exactly a crisis. It - Art i- the goal of art is to be incomprehensible, or a portion of it has to be incomprehensible. I think, the- you know, these paintings at Lascaux and Altamira, which are now dated at 19,000 years old, when the first ones were discovered in the 1890s, they were thought to be, uh, 400 to 500 years old. And, as it dawned on people what this was, and this was like 1905 to 1925, it just- the abyss of time and history that opened up for people who were sensitive to it, the realization that, you know, my god, people have been feeling what I've fee - been feeling, thinking what I've been feeling for at least 20,000 years, and this impacted on Picasso, it impacted on Miro, it impacted on Clay, it impacted on Marcel DuChamp, all of these people.

And, much of the, of the 'bad boy' antics of modern art is actually, it's, uh, when you bring a primitive home to dinner. You know, when the 19th-century academy brings home a savage from the South Sea Island, Jarry with the cast of his penis, Marcel DuChamp, uh, insisting on wearing a, uh, a toilet thing around his neck at certain formal occasions. I - they were - and, and, for instance, in the punk, the current punk phenomenon of body painting, you know, they would be perfectly at home in the mountains of New Guinea. People love to paint themselves. This was very big before the last Ice Age. [audience laughs]

And, uh, you know, if you, if you believe heavy metal sets fashion, it looks like it's going to be very big in the next century. [audience laughs] Uh, but a more serious answer to your question is: I think that the, the crisis is onl- not- it depends... It's a crisis, it's an opportunity. What it is that art is becoming eschatological. The, the- from, uh, um, Duccio on, from the close of the medieval period on, art was conceived of a series of self-transcending styles moving toward various goals which usually derived from the philosophy of the time, um, beginning, you know, so that realism or mannerism, these various tendencies, would be pursued. What's happened in the 20th century with the legitimizing of experience and the, uh, and, and the legitimizing of experiment, and the destruction of the patronage system in the academy is that everything happens. There are people painting in New York today in the style of Jan Van Eyck and making a living at it.

And, there are also people doing all kinds of things, but it's very, very hard to pick out a new piece of art, if by- I don't think, uh - well, the art of the last 20 years has been art outside of time. Since the middle 60s,

since William Wylie and funk and all that stuff began, uh, it's impossible to date art objects. They can have been made any time in the last, uh, 20 years. This is what eschatological time will be like, a transcendence of style, and people simply working in these various modes of self-expression which compete in a great atemporal carnival, um, wherein, unfortunately, the values of the marketplace play too great a role, but no other way of mediating it has been found. Part of what's happened to art is that it's been transformed into a, an enormous industry that must produce objects to decorate the apartments of the affluent, uh, on all continents who want to, you know, have art and be involved in art, but they are not, they don't have enough power to dictate style. They'll take whatever's put before them, which is very liberating for artists [audience laughs].

Anybody else have anything on their mind?... Not a soul. Yes, Mark.

Q: You talked about language as information structures...

TM: Uh huh,

Q: ...and, but you could also think of personality structure, that with which the witness consciousness identifies with as an information structure, too. Wh- Where do you draw the line between language that is beheld as something other and language that is, or- that - those information structures which are part of the, the identity experiencing?

TM: Well, you're asking 'what is the difference between self and other?'

Q: Yeah.

TM: Well, the-

Q: In terms of language.

TM: What you're asking is 'how do you know you're not talking to yourself?'

Q: Yeah.

TM: Uh huh. [audience laughter] Well, that's a very tricky question [clears throat and laughs; audience laughs]. Uh, I'm surprised that in 3,000 years of philosophizing somebody hasn't, uh, figured out a nifty way to always tell this. It would make a marvelous short story. Some little litmus test that you could perform. Uh, pretty much you have to go on intuition. Of course, what you always say is "I can't possibly know what I'm being told, therefore it isn't myself," but that's a very naive view of the psyche. On the other hand, when that reaches excruciating proportions there's a tendency to abandon, uh, sophistication and just believe in it anyway. But, uh, this thing about the shifting, uh, boundary between self and other is very tricky.

When I first smoked DMT, for instance, I mean, I th- I saw an absolute break between self and alien. I mean, I was myself and they were the aliens [audience chuckles], but then, you know, over years of working at- with it and seeing how it comes on with psilocybin, where instead of forming up over 40 seconds or so, it comes together over a half-an-hour or 40 minutes and you have to breathe and you have to

ease it in, then you see how, you know, it is a kind of, uh, it is a kind of thing which emerges out of myself. It's like I pull a psychic plug and the opaque ink drains away, and there is this marvelous coral-like organism which I didn't think was a part of me but, you know, perhaps all through life and death we keep discovering new organs capable of amazing things that we didn't know we had.

And, uh, but I don't know. I mean, I don't think you can ask a single person to know. I think this is the question that shamanism deals with, and, and, not all- it's a mystery, you know, it's a mystery. Not only is the Other the Self, but is the m-, is the Other God? Is the Other the species-mind of the planet? Is the Other a *genius loci*, a kind of god but a local force of some sort? I mean, these are wonderful questions to entertain when they have immediacy. And, this is what people did before history was: religion was their job and they worked at it, uh, very hard. And, but I'm not sure there are ever answers.

More and more recently, I've, uh - and I've always known this on some level - I think about, when I was about 16 or so, I realized it and briefly pursued it and never did, never returned to it, but I think that Taoism, if I had to pick an ontological vision that, uh, was compatible with what I think these drugs are about and with what I think, uh, is trying to happen, I would pick Taoism...for the following reasons: It's the only mystical tradition I know of - uh, possibly with the exception of shamanism, but shamanism doesn't really reflect on this - it's the only mystical tradition I know of that is not anti-scientific. It has no hostility to science; it is highly experimental. It's *about* compounding drugs with fungi and minerals and doing strange things on the side of fog-swept mountains and looking into your head and looking into your head and *looking into your head*. And trying to refine description, and it is open-ended.

And it is, um, botan- it is ethno- uh, ecologically sensitive. It is sensitive to the - it is not at all antagonistic to drugs. In fact, uh, o-on the subject of drugs, it's extremely straightforward and practical. Its stated goal is to compound the ninefold elixir of immortality. And, then how you do this, various methods came and went through the ages. But, its stress on *techne*, its stress on analysis, its stress on contemplation without method. In fact, it's general antagonism toward method, all these things, uh, endear it to me a lot, and I think it's very compatible, uh, with the shamanic, uh, stance. In fact, you know, we cannot, uhhh - we are modern people, and even if you think of yourself as a practicing shaman - I don't think of myself that way; I think of myself as a shamanologist - but even if you think of yourself as a practicing shaman, you have to, uh, weld it to later traditions that answer more sophisticated questions that were posed later in historical time. And, Taoism would be an excellent vehicle for that, I think. Yeah.

Q: Yes- in Hindu, um, mythology there is reference to a state of being dissolved into the absolute, or being "one without a second", not, uh, defined by, uh, any past historical reference. Does that in any way connect to what you're talking about?

TM: Yeah. I think it is. This "one without a second" causes me to think of Plotinus. One of his definitions of the mystical experience was he called it "the flight of the alone to the alone," which mathematically adds up to the one without a second. Uh, as far as the, the, this end of history that seems to be appointed for history by Western religion. Yes, it is like dissolution, uh, the dissolution of the cosmos that goes on in Hindu cosmology. Hindu cosmology is a set of nested cycles similar in structure to the set of nested cycles that I proposed for time, uh, in *The Invisible Landscape*. And, uh, I think we're running into one of those compression points, that everything that has been going on on this planet for the last billion years has been a series of telescoping, telescoping processes of ever-accelerating, uh, intensity, connectivity, and momentum, leading finally to the generation of consciousness. A moment after that, uh, historical

civilization. A moment after that, uh, modern science, and a moment after that, star flight. And, it is just, you know, a-a-a 10,000 year rush from monkeyhood to star-flight. A geological moment, but historically a grand opera that has everybody on the edge of their seat, because if the ball is fumbled, that's all she wrote. And, there's nothing that says that we *must* succeed, or at least we cannot *assume* that there's something which says that we must succeed. Um, even if we are the chosen, uh, target species of Gaia, Gaia may not, uh, have all fingers on the button. We don't know where our own power ends and begins and where the power of the Other begins and ends. And, so we have to make our way carefully into these dimensions. Shamanism is thousands of years of accumulated information on how to navigate in these spaces. If we're becoming a shamanic society through the metaphor of space flight, uh, we're going to have to recover this information and, uh, there'll be some chills and spills along the way, I'm sure. Yeah.

Q: Yeah, Terence - I had a question: in the traditional use of substances that you've described - this ritual around it.

TM: Right.

Q: The - There's also intention generally from shaman around healing, uh, and focus around hunting, uh, real earthly kind of pursuits around survival... and that seems to ground the experience in many ways or provide a focus for it. When we do it by ourselves, shans, uh, sans ritual, sans this kind of language, sans this kind of training, we're prey to the whole deceptions of the mind.

TM: Right...

Q: And, so my question to you is, uh, what sort of critical inquiry do you personally use, what kind of critical language do you personally use with these forms in front of you? How do, you know w-... guard against self-deception? Uh, you use the words "critical analysis." What does that mean when you translate into practice these things?

TM: Well, it isn't so much, uh, in confrontation with the being that you have to un- have this critical analysis. In confrontation with the being, you act from the heart and in the moment. But, it's later, it's what do we think about these things as we sit here now, relatively unstoned and, uh, ah, your question raises all kinds of issues. I said I didn't think anyone was a shaman, or that I thought of myself as a shamanologist. This is because a shaman is, uh, educated by other shamen, inculcated, chosen out, educated, and brought along. In our society, we have to do it all by ourselves. And, you know, I've made a comparison to, uh, a man walking along the beach and coming upon a fully-rigged sailboat. How likely, comparing the sailboat to the psychedelic drug, how likely is it that this man can learn to sail without killing himself? Where, you know, it is no great matter to learn to sail if you learn from a sailor. So, this is the first barrier that's posed for us, or was posed, I think, in the 60s, when there were a lot of casualties to psychedelics, because it was assumed that everyone should do it, and so millions of people did, and actually, there are few societies, uh, where everyone does it, and those where that *is* the case, or where, for instance, all men do it, are not, uh, probably the most advanced, uh, shamanisms on the planet. So, it's a kind of a profession. It's a, it's, uhh, almost like clergy. It's to be deputized by the society as an ecstatic for the purpose of introducing back into society the material that comes from the mystical voyage for purposes of cultural renewal.

The chief thing which grounds the shaman, uh, at least in my practical experience with them, is the curing, the, that- and Mircea Eliade insists on this, that the primary function of the shaman is to cure and that all

these other things go toward that. Uh, we all have to cure ourselves in a sense, in the sense that is contained in the notion that a psychedelic drug is a deconditioning agent. Now, I don't think a psychedelic drug is particularly a deconditioning agent if you're Witoto, or Bora, or Muinane, or something like that and you take it. You don't, then, denounce being that and leave for Lima. [audience chuckles] But, uh, but in our culture, psychedelics have had this effect of triggering a very fundamental question, of- questioning of, uh, values, and, and uh, intensifying alienation, creating alienated sub-classes.

Uh, this is n-, is a symptom of the general unhealthiness of the society, that you can't be psychedelic and be one hundred percent of this society, that certain things seem to impose themselves in your way. So I don't think that there is, uh, any easy answer to your question. We have to m- we, what we have over shaman is, uh, our wonderful electronic information retrieval systems. And the way that works is like this: you go to the Amazon and you're dealing [audience cough] with a tribe and they say, you know, 'we need this certain drug plant', and uh, um, 'the secret word for it is so-and-so, and we'll go and get it'. And, they do, and they know more about that drug plant than you do by a *long crack*. But, you ask them 'did they know that the people 20 miles further up the river use a different plant called something else?' And, you know this because you read it in a Harvard Museum botanical leaflet which tells you that- and they are astonished, you know? You have this weird overview, which they cannot conceive of. They are com- they are fully informed in a vertical fashion about one tradition, but you, by writing to Boston, Massachusetts and getting these leaflets and reading them, are more prepared to discuss the generalities of Amazon shamanism than *most* of the people you meet, and this is a great resource not to be sneered at. Uh, uh, there's a lot of information, and, like for instance when you read Mircea Eliade's *Shamanism: The Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, this is a global overview and you - I'm not saying you know more than any one single shaman knows about shamanic ecstasy, but you have a certain kind of knowledge which prepares you, a generalized cosmology which prepares you, and this is- these are the best maps that we have so we have to make use of them.

Ellen?

Q: Could you comment on how *that* issue relates to the more general one that seems to contain it: of the turning towards the archaic, the attempt to recapture or reintegrate the unconscious forces after a period of deliberately not being able to do so as a society and what- how that's going to affect both individual and social change over the next visible historical horizon?

TM: Well, obviously just on the surface of it, Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* made the point that sexuality is necessarily repressed for civilization to be possible. Sexuality is being redefined, uh, in this modern context, in an archaic context, so that it becomes, uh, more generalized. The romantic ideal gives place to a kind of tribal ideal. Uh, this is obviously happening and related to psychedelics and this effort to recapture the archaic. Uh, that's probably the m- the major impact that will- it will have, because we have no- our hangups are all hung around the issues that sexuality posed for civilization and the various solutions that were found in various times, all of which were, uh- or none of which were ever viable. This is what makes us feel sort of uncomfortable about ourselves is, there's never been a set of social rules that worked so well that most people weren't involved in trying to subvert them. And, uh, you know, what does that say about us and the, the 10,000 year endeavor we've been involved in, but I see that giving way to a more natural order.

In other words, many constraints have been placed upon us. We have accepted many constraints; we've

accepted a kind of wounding. The myth of the fall is a statement about our feelings about ourselves, you know, that we had to go into history to recover something which had been lost that had been ours in the beginning but that we fumbled away, and then we had to descend into history and recover it, and it is this Edenic innocence and, uh, and the adumbrations that it will create at all levels of society.

[ed. note: this seems possibly to be a break in the talk]

Singing is a ritual act that automatically sets up its own rules and can be initiated at any time without hardly moving a muscle.

We were saying during the break up here that, uh, it's possible to imagine a kin-, a form of psychoanalysis where what you would do is simply ca- uh, urge people and go through with them as- learning as much about history as possible so that there were no blank spots, so that their amnesia about their historical position was recovered, as a way of treating neurosis, a way of actua- by locating people on the grid, by forcing them to find out who they really are in terms of all the other somebodies who have been around in all the other some-places that preceded them. And I think that- you can almost see that that is a recovery of the unconscious, that hi- the history of man that *you don't know* is what your unconscious is made out of, just as you- the history of yourself that you don't know is what your personal unconscious is made out of. However, much of the history of man that you don't know can probably be found by going and reading a book on the subject, and this has a tremendous, uh, centering, a spiritual efficacy that- all out of proportion to the act of studying history, which seems rather removed from everyday concerns.

Anything else?

Q: Yeah, what about a development of a suh- a language of consciousness, which we don't have - like Sanskrit's theoretically, uh... [??]...Maslow was playing around with words that would scientifically [audience cough] [comment inaudible] ..ase. Could you comment on that?

TM: Well, I think the I Ching is an effort, the most advanced effort, to do something like that, but it's a language of gestalt, and, uh, you know, I- I don't speak Japanese, but it's said of Japanese that nothing which is obvious is ever mentioned. Language is reserved for clarifying the unclear, so people are not saying "it's a hot day, isn't it" and that kind of stuff. They're reserving language. Uh, the other possibility is, you know, that the visual language is this and that as more and more of it is experienced and done, uh, it will be realized. It is the, the visual language- I'm not sure I stressed this this evening, but it is perhaps, uh, non-translatable into English because it is a language of emotion where emotion is seen to be as subtle a spectrum with integrated gradients of meaning as, uh- or integrated gradients of combination, as meaning has, so that there isn't, you know, love, hate, disgust, and something else, but, in fact, an infinitude of emotional states that can be triggered by vocal sound. And, in a way, of course, I'm simply describing singing, wordless singing, except that I'm describing how that can tra- rise to an ontologically different level and become *so* emotive that you understand *very subtle* differentiations of emotion. I, I noticed when we were in the Amazon taking ayahuasca with these people, and they would sing these thousand-year-old songs, and you would eventually- you would get to the place where you had the absolute conviction that you understood, because you could stand off from your mind and say "the speed at which I'm going through emotional changes over what I'm hearing must mean that I understand what I'm hearing, because if I didn't understand it, I would just have a certain generalized emotion about it, but it is changing my interior state so rapidly that it is *like* the experience of understanding. That's the only thing it can be

compared to.

Yeah?

Q: Could you elaborate more on the effect of the ayahuasca and with the combination with *Stropharia cubensis* that you mention in *Invisible Landscapes* [sic] in effect altering, uh, the DNA and when you mentioned the [stone box?]

TM: Uh-huh, yes, well the core chemical idea in *The Invisible Landscape*, for those of you who haven't read it, is, uh, that it is possible, or it was hypothesized that it was possible to use sound to cause hallucinogenic drug molecules that were present, uh, in the neuro- in the nucleus of neurons, having arrived there through axioplasmic transport from the synapse, uh, to cause them to- to, uh, occupy bond sites in DNA. The bond sites, specifically, which lie between the nucleotides. And, the molecular dimensions and everything are correct for this to be possible. In fact, it's been shown, in vitro, that certain hallucinogens *do* preferentially bond into DNA in very elegant experiments in which, uh, DNA was exposed to hallucinogenic drug molecules and then centrifuged and shown that its specific gravity had increased by precisely the molecular weight of the drug molecule, and no other compounds were present.

So, there is an affinity for bonding with the DNA on the part of these drug molecules. We hypothesized that the general psychedelic experience, the common psychedelic experience is simply these things, uh, displacing normal neurotransmitters such as serotonin at the synapse, undergoing axioplasmic transport to the nucleus, intercalating - which is the technical term for this kind of bonding - intercalating into the nuclear material there and shifting the electron spin resonance of the general, the generalized electron spin resonance signature of the molecule so that millions of cells having this happen to them are amplified into a higher cortical experience, which is the hallucinogenic experience. But in answer to your question, my brother went beyond this and hypothesized that you could intervene in this process, which would normally, you would expect to be quenched in 4 to 6 hours, whatever the duration of the psychedelic drug was, that it would be possible to intervene in the process with vocal- vocally generated sound, uh, generated in such a way that, of these millions of molecules in these bond states, a very few of them would be oriented in space toward the incoming wave front of sound in such a way that they would, uh, be canceled, that they would undergo the kind of harmonic canceling that happens when you like sound a note on the cello and then quench the string you've sounded and you hear the overtones above- in octaves above and below it. And, he felt that this could be done with the human voice and performed an experiment to test this idea which seemed to indicate that, uh, it was possible, or at least that some bizarre drug synergy was prolonged and triggered by vocal sound. And, we have never proceeded into this any further. It would be easy to do so, you would get square wave generators and oscillating systems and you would try to tune in to this sound, because it's a very specific sound. Now, it, it sounds at first preposterous that, uh, quantum acoustical, uh, uhh, acoustically-mediated quantum mechanical changes could be controlled by the voice, but you have to remember, populations of millions of molecules are involved. Only a very few of which have to fulfill the complete set of special conditions that would allow this situation to arise. S- And, also, it isn't generally realized at what level the human perceptual apparatus operates in relationship to quantum mechanical events. For instance, uh, a single photon can be registered by the human eye. I'm sure some of you who had chemistry sets when you were children, they threw in a little thing call the spintharoscope, which was nothing more than a closed, uh, tube with a little lens in the end and at the other end a speck of radium on the end of a pin and then a phosphorous screen behind it. You would sit in a dark room for 10 minutes and then look into the spintharoscope, and you would see flashes of light coming out of the phosphorous screen

at the end of it. Those flashes of light were single photons being released from, uh, the phosphorous matrix by the impact of decaying hard radiation from the radium.

Uh, in a similar vein, a single molecule bumping against the tympanic membrane of the human ear can be distinguished, and they've done this in very elegant experimental situations. So, actually, the human sensory apparatus, for what a continuous picture of the world it gives us, is under experimental conditions, uh, shown to be rather closer to portraying the quantum mechanical nature of reality, uh, than we might expect. So, I don't think it's, eh, on the face of it, preposterous that there could be technologies of vocal sound and, uh, control of physiological states of oneself and other people through the- through the controlled use of sound. After all, if you are of the brain theory of consciousness, and believe that, uh, every thought that we think is accompanied by chemical, uh, changes, the breaking and forming of chemical bonds, well, that means that, as I speak to you, my voice, if you understand me, or maybe if you even don't understand me, is going through a continuing process of generating and breaking down hundreds of compounds as *your* brain takes on a configuration somewhat analogous to the configuration of my brain at the moment of speaking. This is what communication must be seen to be by people who have a, uh, hard-brain theory of consciousness.

Q: What if you don't know anything about any of this?

TM: Well, then you're probably in better shape than all of us. [audience chuckles] You should go to the, uh, side of Cold Mountain and compound mushrooms and draw cold water from a well and, uh, thank lucky stars that that's the situation you find yourself in. In other words, in other words, uh, knowledge or verbal facility is no, uh, is no proof of knowing what you're talking about. [audience chuckles] You know, it's just verbal facility. No, I think the Taoist thing, I'm coming more and more to it, to, to see that its, its open-endedness, its insistence on humor, it's, uh, not grinding a bunch of dogmatic knives. And, now I'm talking about the cultural idea of Taoism. Taoism became secularized and, you know, played power politics at various times in the history of China just like the other Chinese religions, but its ideal remained the psychedelic ideal, I think. And, it's basically a dropped out, uh, a dropped out idea. It isn't that you should return to the court and, uh, take up the council of the king and try to save his ass; it's that, uh, you know, someone else can take care of that. But, these Taoist immortals became strange people. I mean, they were fleetingly glimpsed from the road running naked in the woods as, uh, people passed to and fro. Knowledge, I have said this before- made the analogy between understanding and gravity, that, you know, as something becomes gravitationally more and more dense, it eventually is so dense that light can't leave it, no information can leave it. It's said to be a black hole. It has curved space around itself and no information can leave it. I think as you advance on the path toward enlightenment, it becomes harder and harder for people to understand you, and when you finally achieve enlightenment, you ca- there's nothing- you can't say anything at all, and anything you say is- *must* be misunderstood; that's the proof that you're enlightened..... you know? [audience laughs] If you're a perfect black hole, you must be incomprehensible, no information must leave you.

So, if you understood anything I said tonight, it's a perfect proof that I'm far from enlightened [audience laughter]. But, thank you for coming anyway! [Terence laughs; audience laughs] Maybe on that note we should knock off. Is anyone burning? Good, then let's knock off. [Terence laughs; audience claps; Terence clears his throat]

Original Transcription by: Eva Petakovic

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The Voynich Manuscript

April 1983

Location, Mill Valley, CA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)

[Forest Noises]

Faustin Bray: Greetings, this is Faustin Bray for Sound Photosynthesis, Brian Wallace is recording, and today we have the good fortune to talk with Terence McKenna. He has chosen a subject that has been interesting to him for quite a while, and, um, the title of this tape is "The Voynich Manuscript."

Terence McKenna: What I'd liked to talk about today and, uh, what's brought me to the edge of my chair recently is, uh, the Voynich Manuscript, which is something that, uh, though I had read in occultism fairly deeply, and in alchemical literature and that kind of thing, I had never heard of this until about a year and a half ago, and uh, a friend of mine, Ralph Abraham, who's a mathematician at Santa Cruz, began pushing this at me, mentioning this encoded manuscript that, uh, people were interested in trying to figure out what it said, and since I had never heard of it I dismissed it, uh, I assumed that he was misinformed uh, or that if this thing existed I surely would have heard of it. But, uh, eventually I tracked down the references that he gave me, and I discovered a very curious *cul-de-sac*, uh, in the, uh, history of ideas.

First of all, it is a manuscript. That means it's written in long hand; it's not a printed book. Only one copy is known to exist. It's at the Beinecke Rare Book room at Yale, and it was deposited there by the estate of mister Alfred Voynich, uh, when his wife died. The Voynich Manuscript, here are the known facts: It was, it first appears in, uh, 1586 at the court of Rudolf the Second of Bohemia, which if you know that court and that period, this was the 'Mad Rudolf of Bohemia'. This guy was surrounded by astrologers, alchemists, cryptographers, all the intellectual foment of occult, protestant Europe was centered at this court, and, uh, into this situation comes an unknown person, a courier, who sells this manuscript to Rudolf for the equivalent of, uh, fourteen thousand dollars, thirteen- three hundred gold ducats, which is an enormous amount of money to pay for something like this, and, um, it was in his possession. It's encoded, it is not written in any known alphabet, it is written in, what scholars call, Voynich Script, of which this manuscript is the only known example in existence, and part of the problem of the Voynich Manuscript has to do with locating instances of Voynich script somewhere else. It's over 275 pages long, it has 100, over 150 color illustrations of plants in one category, what appear to be astrological diagrams in another category, and then completely unclassifiable set of images which seem to be, basically, little naked ladies bathing in strange fountains, or perhaps dissected flowers, or, it isn't clear what it is.

Uhh, the emperor would not have paid so much money for it if he hadn't been convinced that, uh, there

was something going on with it. He had cryptographers at his court who were very adept at decoding manuscripts. None of them were ever able to make any progress with it. When his court collapsed in the incident of the Winter King and Queen of 1619, uh, the manuscript passed to his botanist, a man named Marci, and at his death, it passed, uh, to an unknown party who owned it for 20 years, and the next place where it's picked up is in the library of Athanasius Kircher, who's one of the great polymaths of, uh, the 17th century, and a man who himself worked on artificial languages and synthetic languages. And he, uh- letters exist of his inquiring after this manuscript and eventually it came into his possession, but there's no mention of it in any of his known work on artificial languages. At, uh, a-a-around 1635 he decided to join the Jesuit Order, and, uh, gave all his books to a Jesuit college south of Rome, where this book apparently sat on the shelf at the next, uh, what is it, 230 years, uh, until 1906 when Mister Alfred Voynich bought the entire library, a rare book dealer, shipped it back to Brooklyn, and in going through this stuff came upon this manuscript.

Um. Now, what's so great about a book which nobody can read? Well first of all, it's very unusual, books which no one can read. Codes, immensely powerful methods exist for breaking codes because this is a matter of military intelligence and, uh, defense, uh, concerns, and, uh, very sophisticated, uh, computer techniques exist to analyze any supposed piece of code and extract meaning from it, determine whether it is in fact encoded language or not, whether you can tell what it says or not. And the Voynich Manuscript has become a kind of conundrum of the intelligence community. Retired intelligence officers take it on, and attempt to crack it. In fact, one of the best books written about the Voynich Manuscript is called 'The Voynich Manuscript: An Elegant Enigma' by Mary D'Imperio and it is only available from the National Security Agency Central Security Office, Fort Meade, MD; this is what your tax dollars are being spent for is to decode this 400 year old manuscript.

Okay, um, Voynich script. The most sophisticated computer analysis shows that the manuscript definitely is, uh, a language. There is meaning, the occurrence of prefixes and suffixes, certain internal rules of grammar have been identified, but, uh, the meaning has eluded all comers. And it- and several people, if there were more time we could go into people whose whole careers have rested on their supposed decoding of it. A man named, uh, William Newberry in the 1920s claimed a complete decipherment and it was later exposed to be a sincere but misguided mental derangement that contributed to his belief that he had decoded. Other people have made attempts but all of them- none are convincing, and so this is where the matter rests: one edition of this, of this, manuscript exists; it's never been decoded.

My idea about it is that, um, to understand the Voynich manuscript you have to understand the career of John Dee, who was, uh, the greatest Magus of the Elizabethan age, the court astrologer of Elizabeth I of England, the man who had more- he had the largest library in England. Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir William Sidney visited him to see his collection of books. He wa-, he, uh, wrote on the elements of Euclid, he wrote books on navigation and astronomy, but he also was an occultist and into secret codes; he was also an intelligence agent. He had been at the court of Rudolf the year before the sale is alleged to have taken place. He and his friend Edward Kelley, and, uh, they had bruted it about that Roger Bacon, the 13th century English monk, was the greatest astrolo-, uh, greatest alchemist of all time, and they had really made a flap about Bacon--(swallows) in Prague at the court of Rudolf. Then, a series of alchemical experiments where they had promised the emperor to make gold and had failed caused them to be exiled to Treblona. So they were in Treblona when this alleged sale of this manuscript took place in Prague.

Now, all occult codes in Europe are based, or, at that time, were based on the work of one man, the Bishop of, uh, uh, Johannes Trithemius of Sponheim who wrote a book called the '*Stenographica*' [sic. '*Steganographia*'] which was published in 1535, and in it he explained numerous methods drawn from Roman sources and his own imagination for composing codes and encrypting messages, and all of the, uh, occult codes which follow are based on this. Dee hand copied, uh, a manuscript of the '*Stenographica*' [sic. '*Steganographia*'] when he encountered it in Paris. He was involved with a series of Angel contacts where he elaborated a language called Enochian, which like Voynich, is not written in, uh, characters of the English alphabet but has a peculiar set of characters unique to itself. Over 3000 words have been defined in Enochian, first through Dee's, uh, uh, spirit contacts and later the Golden Dawn took it up and further expanded it. But in Dee's diaries which are deposited in the British Museum there are 93 pages of encrypted material which are columns of numbers, and uh, I believe that, uh, uh, to eliminate the possibility that Dee was the author of the Voynich Manuscript the encoding methods of this material in his diary need to be computer analyzed and then compared to the Voynich material.

The other possibility, which still involves Dee, is, uh, this person I mentioned, Edward Kelley, his companion of many years. Kelley's entrée- Kelley was a man of the lower classes, a much younger man, a scoundrel by all accounts, and his entrée to Dee was he came to him with a book, which was in code, which he had claimed to have found in a, uh, crypt of a, uh, looted Catholic monastery in Wales (this was, uh, during the period just after Henry the 8th's break with Rome), uh, which- and he called this book "The Gospel of St Dunstable" and Dee worked on the decoding of it, but we lose sight of that book, and no known copy of it, no copy of it exists, so far as we know. But Arthur Dee, John Dee's son, in his diary, talks about how, in the period before Dee and Kelley went to Europe, his father spent a great deal of time studying a book which was covered all over with hieroglyphics. An-, and, uh, I believe e-uh... one of two things. I mean, this is what seems reasonable to me, that, uh, that either Dee or Kelley ponied up a phony manuscript, which they sold into the court of Rud-, because they were poor there's no question about it, I mean these guys had come to the end of their ropes. I believe only, John Dee is the only man who could have produced the Voynich Manuscript if it's contemporaneous with him. Either that, or, there is actually some truth to this strange story about Kelley bringing a book to Dee, uh, that he had found in Wales, and in that case, Welsh, and computer analysis of Welsh, and looking at Welsh as the possible basic text of the Voynich Manuscript should be done, and this has never been done.

So I'm saying a further advance in Voynich studies logically demands an analysis of the codes in John Dee's diaries in *A True and Faithful Relation*, and analysis of Welsh in relationship to the known internal grammar of the Voynich Manuscript and, uh, there are other angles, uh, on it. Ummm. Let me think. For instance.

FB: What would you like to do with it?

TM: Well, I would like to know what it says, uh. At first it sounds very mysterious, and you actually reach out towards the idea that the reason the Voynich manuscript can't be read is because it is not in code at all. It simply is in a non-human language. It's like an object from another dimension which just, you know, here it is. It cannot be decoded because, uh, the bridge is too great. But I- another possible problem is: perhaps modern people, modern cryptographers who deal with codes are over confident of their ability to break any code. Perhaps there is just some weird, quirky, way in which this code is composed that it would

forever elude your effort to decoding. I mean, for instance, what if, somewhere there exists a set of grids which, if laid over the pages in a certain way, caused the part of the Voynich script which could then be subjected to normal methods of, uh, decoding and would quickly reveal its, uh grammar...

FB: [unintelligible] and it's um...?

TM: Yeah...

BW: What does it look like?

TM: What does the Voynich Manuscript look like? it's a small book, ten by seven inches and probably about two and a half inches thick. These, uh, these water color drawings are extraordinarily, uh, peculiar. I mean especially for that period because all herbals, of which there only about 50 or so in existence at that time, were, uh, a, uh, drew from a common pool of imagery which went back to the herbals of Dioscorides and that kind of thing. There was a very limited pool of images in the European mind at this point in time, and yet the Voynich Manuscript is utterly unique. it's completely peculiar. And the way-

FB: What are the ingredients of the inks and the...?

TM: Ah, well, none of this has been looked at and should be looked at. This is another thing: Chemical-, a chemical attack on the manuscript itself should be mounted. See, Newberry [sic: 'Newbold'], the guy who advanced, uh, a, uh, decipherment in the 20's, he believed, because a letter accompanied it, that said it was a Bacon manuscript, Roger Bacon, and this also points at Dee because Dee was under the patronage of the Earl of Northumberland, and he, uh, looted a number of monasteries where there were large Baconian libraries, and in fact Dee had 53 Baconian manuscripts in his possession, in- cataloged in his library at Mortlake. Only 41 of those texts are known to exist in any form at all today. His library was burned while he was in Europe. It was burned by a mob incited against this wizard, and, uh, uh... hi- so it may-, but-, so Newberry [sic: 'Newbold'] believed, then, that it was a Baconian manuscript, but-

FB: Boy, Bacon gets in there everywhere-

TM: -but when you look at it it's obviously 16th century. Everything about it marks it, and Bacon, of course, was 13th century, so it's clearly... It- There are many other angles, I mean like, Dee is implicated-

BW: [Unintelligible]

TM: -in the Rosicrucian conspiracy. He was definitely involved at the very beginning. His book, 'The Hieroglyphic Monad', served as a model for the two primary Rosicrucian documents, the *Fama* and the *Confessio*, which were released secretly, uh, in the early 17th century. And uh, it all was coming from central Europe, from Bohemia, and uh, Prague, uh, the court of Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, and this guy Rudolf the Second of Bohe-, of uh, of Bohemia.

This court- these were the alchemical courts, these were where the alchemical presses were operating and the uh, this Protestant alchemical enlightenment was taking place that the coming of the Thirty Years' War and the collapse of the Winter King and Queen obliterated this hope. This is a very complicated moment

in, uh, European history.

FB: Collapse of the Winter King and Queen?

TM: Yes. This is an incident- you see Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, who was the patron of all these alchemical presses and alchemists, wedded, uh, the daughter of James the First of England, whose name was Elizabeth, and he, uh- this was around 1615, and he thought that by wedding the daughter of the king of England that he was getting a nod from the king of England to go forward with this, uh, protestant alchemical revolt. Actually, James' plan was to wed one of his sons to a, uh, Hapsburg Spanish Catholic empress to balance it out, and he was appalled when, uh, when, uh, Frederick the Elector began to move on this alchemical revolution.

Well, then, when Rudolf of Bohemia, the guy who bought the Voynich Manuscript, when he died, uh, there, he, there was actually a set of German princes who, by election, would choose his successor, and they chose Frederick, and his queen Elizabeth, the daughter of James, and they moved from Heidelberg into Prague and ruled in the Winter of 1619 and 20, but by May of 1620, uh, uh, the Hapsburgs had mounted an army and they lay siege to Prague, and uh, Frederick was killed, she fled, it was actually an amazing moment in European history. Michael Maier, who is one of the great alchemists of that period, died in the streets of Prague in that siege, and one of the young French soldiers in this Hapsburg army was the 18-year-old Rene Descartes, off soldiering and sowing his wild oats.

This is the period out of which this manuscript emerges: a period when secret societies were rife across Europe; when John Dee was spying for the throne of England and, at the same time, pursuing his own peculiar interests in angel communication and astrology and Kabbalah and, uh, all these things. And, um... the Voynich Manuscript is indicative of this paradoxical state of mind and of the, uh, the uh, really peculiar and now nearly incomprehensible sort of world view that these people had. And it would be very interesting to know what it says. I mean it looks very promising. After all John Dee was, uh, definitely the preeminent intellect of his time and the fact that he may have faked this to pay the bills, uh, I would bet that even at that there is sense embedded in it somewhere. But the key is Dee, and Dee and the lines of research which study of his life would suggest, the Welsh angle, the diary codes, all of this.

FB: Are you pursuing it?

TM: I'm advising a group of people in Santa Cruz. Computer people, and just interested people, and my voice is one of, uh, several. But, uh, definitely it's one of the great oddities of human thought, and not much heard of because it simply is, uh, an elegant enigma.

FB: And so concludes the interview with Terence McKenna in 1983. Since that time, a book composed of interviews by Terence and various other people, including this one, called "The Archaic Revival" has been put out by Harper Collins, and in that book he continues on with the, um, research that's been done about the Voynich Manuscript, and he writes, on page 182, of that book, The Archaic Revival:

"And there the matter rested until 1987. It might have rested forever but for the questing curiosity of one man. Enter Dr Leo Levitov, author of "Solution of the Voynich Manuscript", a man who claims a complete understanding of the dynamics of Voynich and translation of the manuscript. He gives us good news in his subtitle: "A Liturgical Manual for the Endura Rite of the Cathari Heresy, the Cult of Isis." Levitov's thesis

is that the Voynich is nothing less than the only surviving primary doctri-..., document of the great heresy that arose in Italy and flourished in the Languedoc until was ruthlessly exterminated by the Albigensian Crusade in the 12-13th, no: in the, uh, 1230s. Very little is known about the beliefs of the Catharite faith and all the knowledge that we do have of it is secondhand, obtained from the records of the inquisition, whose task was the destruction of the Cathar society. Levitov's translation, if substantiated, would throw new light on the puzzling rise and extermination of the greatest here- heretical challenge that the Roman church ever faced.

There are a number of problems with Levitov's notions, but there are also triumphs. He makes several startling claims that he supports very well. The little women in the baths who puzzled so many are, for Levitov, a Cathar sacrament: the Endura, or death by venisection, cutting a vein in order to bleed to death in a warm bath. The plant drawings that refuse to resolve themselves into botanically identifiable species are no problem for Levitov, actually there is not a single so-called botanical illustration that does not contain some Cathari symbol or Isis symbol, he quotes. The astrological drawings are likewise easy to deal with: the innumerable stars are representative of the stars in Isis' mantle.

Levitov's strong hand is translation. He asserts that the reason it has been so difficult to decipher the Voynich Manuscript is that "it is not encrypted at all, but merely written in a special script, and is an adaptation of a polyglot oral tongue into a literary language that would be understandable to people who did not understand Latin and to whom this language could be read." That is a quote. Specifically a highly polyglot form of the medieval Flemish with a large number of old French and old High German loan words. Good, so now we know.

Where there's a danger for Levitov is the contents of the translated material. Levitov freely admits from his translation that Catharism is a religion of Isis, is a religion of the great goddess. Apparently he is alone in his belief, although A. E. Waite says in his discussion of the Cathars in 'The Holy Grail' (1961), "the grail mythos is, like the veil of Isis, which no man can rise, rather than tolerate the suggestion that this nightmare fates are behind it." Save for the Waite's lucky turn of phrase, no commentator, ancient or modern, has ever breathed a word concerning Isis in connection with the Cathars. At one point the Cathars became the focus of latter-day occultists, but not even their literature mentioned Isis.

Levitov is almost casual in his presentation of his work, questioning at one point whether now that he has figured out how to translate the manuscript it is worth actually doing. A complete translation of more than 200 pages waits in the wings, a "long, arduous, and possibly unrewarding task." For Levitov, the problem seemed to be one of the solving of the language problem, the larger problems are now raised, if in fact the Voynich is to be seen as a primary source showing the Cathars to be not at all what we have come to think of them. Students of Gnosticism, Paganism, and the Goddess will have to digest this new slant on the role of the Cathars.

As for what the manuscript actually says, it is a gloomy and repetitive work, made partly so by Levitov's decision to present it in a rather raw state, as it's sense requires scholarly interpretation. At its most lyric-, lyrical the translation is quite interesting. So here it is, presented in this book by Terence. "The person who is knowledgeable about aid knows there is only one way to treat agonizing pain, he treats each one by putting them through the Endura, it is the one way that helps death. Not everyone knows how to assist the one with pain. The one who is with death and does not die will have pain but those who have such pain of death need his help. he understands the need, he is also aware that the person who needs help does not

know that he needs it. We all know that every one of them needs help and each of us will be available to help." End of passage.

The passage refers to the Cathar sacrament for the dying, a form of euthanasia in which pious Cathars were helped to die by specially trained *perfecti*. Levitov mentions extensive personal research into the Cathar material but cites none of it. I cannot tell if he was aware of H.J. Werner's 'The Albigensian Heresy', or W. L. Wakefield's 'Heresy, Crusade and the Inquisition in Southern France'. He states that the Voynich Manuscript is the only primary Catharite document in existence; however, A. E. Waite-... his 'Groly-', 'Holy Grail', mentions, quote: "There is fortunately one fragmentary record of Albigensian belief which has survived, I refer to the Cathar ritual of Lyon which is now well known having been published in 1898 by Mr. F. C. Coinbert." End of quote.

Waite goes on to mention that part of the Lyon codex contains, quote: "certain prayers for the dying", unquote. The codex is in Langua...doct [sic: Languedoc]; does it resemble the Voynich manner--, material? We are not told. If Levitov is right we moderns simply overrate the sophistication of our code-breaking machinery and overlook the possibility that the manuscript was not in code at all. Levitov fails to mention the physical manuscript, yet it seems obvious that one of the first steps that should be taken would be to attempt-, let's see... would be to attempt to confirm the 13th-century origin date for the manuscript. If the manuscript was written before 1250, then it is older than was claimed by even the adherents to the 'Roger Bacon' theory of its authorship. Surely it would be possible to determine whether the manuscript was written in the 13th or the 16th century. If it was a product of the 13th century, then my own efforts to see the hand of John Dee in its composition are immediately rendered futile, although it is still quite possible that Dee was involved in the manuscript's finding its way to Rudolf's court.

Until Levitov, most scho-, scholars have been confident in placing the origin of the manuscript in the early 15th century; therefore, Leo Levitov is to be congratulated: he has made a persuasive case and remains modest doing it. Now we need to hear from the experts: the medievalists, the linguists, and the scholars of heresy; for it will be through the consensus and judgement of the community of scholars that Levitov's claim to be translated-, to have translated the world's most mysterious manuscript will stand or fall. So ends this piece on the Voynich Manuscript, page 184 of Terence's book "The Archaic Revival," put out by Harper Collins. This is Faustin Brey for Sound Photosynthesis finishing the Voynich Manuscript tape as we have the information to this day of September 16, 1994. Thank you for listening. If you want to have a copy of this tape, contact Sound Photosynthesis: PO Box 2111 Mill Valley, 94942 in California, or the phone number is 415-383-6712. Thank you very much.

[10 minutes of forest noises]

Unknown Voice: Oh, okay.

Original Transcription by: John C

Review 1 by: wjaynay

Review 2 by [admin only]: epetakovic

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The Winter King (aka Shamanism, Alchemy, and the Twentieth Century)

Day Month 1996

Location, Mannheim, Germany

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

I was here about five years ago with Tim Leary one raucous evening. Maybe some of you managed to catch that event. This is a little more thoughtful and reflective. I'm not here to talk, speak, or promote my books as I have been in the past. This is the only public event that I'm doing in these ten days and I'm very grateful to David and Petrif for inviting me. This is a wonderful facility and bringing you plants, books and information. It's great to see that the freak community is alive and well in Mannheim.

What I'm in Europe to do is to be part of a film-making effort and I want to describe the project to you a little bit simply because it's what's on my mind, naturally, and to discuss the politics behind the making of this kind of a film. It's not a film about rave culture. It's not a film about Albert Hoffmann. It's not a film about body piercing or any of these things that great films need to be done about and have been done about. It's about one of your local heroes, who is a great hero of mine and should be a great hero to all freaks in Germany and everywhere. I'm talking about Frederick the Fifth, Elector Palatine, Prince of Heidelberg, King of Bohemia. Are you all familiar with this guy? No? Well - this is your guy! This is the prototypic freak of this area. A freak that was not content to sit back and let things happen but was willing to launch a grand, alchemical dream of a reformation of human society.

So just to lay in the background of those who are not familiar with the historical incident that we're here to recreate, here and later in Prague, has to do with Prince Palatine of Heidelberg. A protestant who wedded the granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth the 1st of England, Elizabeth Stuart, the daughter of James the 1st of England. This was arranged wedding. They were both sixteen years old at the time. Frederick went to England, the wedding was held in England and then he returned with his very English bride to Heidelberg. They were the center of a movement of alchemical reformation and revolution, that sought to take the Protestant Reformation an enormous leap forward into a new world of spiritual freedom, and to my mind, a very sort of psychedelic world. They were the heirs and the inheritors of the entire medieval worldview. It was folded into this pair of sixteen year olds who were ruling the Palatinate of Heidelberg, and Frederick was an Elector, meaning he was one of the seven princes who could choose the Emperor of what remained of the Holy Roman Empire at that time. He also conspired to become the King of Bohemia.

[Tape Skip] Visionaries moved the entire court from Heidelberg, from the small-time scene of a

principality, to Prague, to reoccupy the office of the Holy Roman Empire. They would do this with an Emperor friendly to magic and alchemy, and who was the inheritor of a generation old plan - to create an alchemical reformation that had been hatched in the mind of the English alchemist and mathematician, John Dee.

The ending of the story is not a happy ending, or perhaps it is, and we can talk about that. On a superficial level, this alchemical dream, this Rosicrucian Enlightenment, ended badly because the Habsburgs back in Madrid quickly got wind of what was going on and got an army together and sent it to Prague, laid siege to Prague, and caused Elizabeth to flee to the Netherlands with her children. Frederick was defeated at the Battle of the White Mountain and the alchemical dream died. This was really in some sense the beginning of the Thirty Years War. As you know - going into the Thirty Years War, Europe was a place of Popes and Kings. At the end of the Thirty Years War, it was a place ruled by parliaments and peoples and the entire medieval world was swept away. Out of the new political dispensation of the situation at the end of the Thirty Years War, especially in England, modern science took hold and was born, and these angel-dealing, horoscope casting, alchemy pursuing visionaries of this Rosicrucian renaissance became simply objects of historical curiosity. These people were completely incomprehensible to the people who followed them generation after generation after generation, until, I submit to you, the present.

In the present moment, we like they, inherit a world whose ideologies are exhausted and can only be refreshed from the margins. That was what this whole alchemical revolt was about. It was about a suppressed, marginal minority of deeply pietistic original thinkers, but heterodox - non-Christian - keeping together a tradition that I think has been reborn, or rediscovered in our own time.

It's the tradition that Nature is a great distillery of complexity: alchemical gold, novelty, and connection, whatever you want to call it. In our own time, through integrative sciences, like ecology, animal behavior and psychology, we have re-understood what was forgotten during the reductionist centuries of modern science. We've re-understood that the world is one thing and it's a living thing. It's a thing with an intent and a spirit within it, and this is the key concept. It is this concept that the alchemists, the hermetic dreamers and the occultists of the alchemical and northern European Renaissance, were trying to strengthen, condense, distill, and make actual this sense of community. This Spiritus. Then with the rise of modern science, all of that is anathema. Rational analysis tells us that matter is simply atoms flinging themselves through space, obedient to certain mathematical laws that are invariant, and all the creativity, all the sense of connectedness that we experience as living beings, as members of a society, as human beings in contemplation of nature - all of that was denied. It reaches its ultimate culmination, just as an example, in the kind of statement such as was made by Jean-Paul Sartre - the French Existentialist, that said, "Nature is mute." Nature gives no clue, he tells you. Man is alone in the cosmos, with his complexes and his obsessions. He confers meaning. There is no *a priori* reality, to which ethics or intent can be attached. I reject this. I think the entire message of the psychedelic experience, which is basically the *sine qua non* of the rebirth of alchemical understanding; the very basis of that understanding is that nature seeks to communicate. All being is pregnant with language. All reality wants to include the human side of nature in its ongoing intent. The problem lies not with nature, but with ourselves. We believe that we are somehow paralyzed, disempowered, doubting, or cut from the meat of the thing.

Well, so, I'm a great believer in propaganda, obviously. My whole life is about propaganda. It is my goal to take an incident like the career of Frederick the Elector Palatine of Heidelberg and

his bride and make of it a kind of exemplar, a parable. A myth if you will - the myth of the alchemical marriage, a myth that takes innocence, naïveté and belief in the power of ideas, to make a new world. Then tell that story again in film, backing it with these tremendously powerful alchemical images that Jung and others showed work inexorably on the psyche, whether you wish to be part of the process or not.

To merely gaze upon the images of alchemy is to, in a sense, enter into a kind of psychoanalytical process because what alchemy was, and I should stress this or the rap makes no sense at all - alchemy was not the vulgar pursuit of the transmutation of lesser metals into gold or silver. That was the charlatan's game played in every market in Europe for centuries among the simple people. Alchemy is the body of symbols and of literature that accreted around the effort to extract a universal medicine out of Nature for the transformation of societies and human beings – and comes to us from the times of what we call epistemological naïveté, meaning that the people then did not have the strong sense of objective and subjective reality which we inherit from science. So during those eras of epistemological naïveté - what was someone's idea of how matter behaves, what was someone's myth of how psyche behaves - could become entangled in a projective experience with material in a chemical vessel. The processes which we call melting, crystallization, purification, and calcination, processes now well understood through a soulless molecular model of matter, were for them, the birth of the red lion, the coming of the double-headed queen, the murder of the hermaphrodite dog, and so forth and so on.

They had these outlandish images and this outlandish vocabulary because they were trying to create powerful symbols. Powerful mnemonic hooks on which to hold the details, and there are many of them. This extremely complex worldview, were it not for people like Carl Jung, the Swedish depth psychologist, would have remained completely inexplicable to modern people.

It is not chemistry and it is not myth building per se, as we inherit from the Greeks. It is a very complicated amalgamation, a good alchemical word, of psyche and matter. The reason, I think, it is so resonant with our own times is because our generation and generations of people confined with twentieth century, have in a sense and by an oblique path, recovered that universal medicine that the alchemist's dreamed of by going strangely enough, to some of the most aboriginal and least culturally assimilated to European and American values people in the world. Shamanism, is essentially a living tradition of alchemy that is not seeking the stone, but has found the stone!

These shamans, Jivaro, Witoto, Cubeo, notice that they have this same epistemic naïveté. It is this inability to distinguish between subjective and objective world, through the intercession of Newton and Descartes, that Frederick the Elector and the alchemists around him and the alchemists the preceded them through the centuries had. In other words, within the context of the alchemical vocabulary, the psychedelic experience as brought to us through plants - long in the possession of aboriginal people - appears to be the identical phenomenon.

The Jivaro shaman, the Cubeo shaman, does not use a glass retort with cycling sulfur and mercury inside it. The shamans of the Amazon have obtained a sufficient sophistication to explicitly understand that the vessel of alchemical transformation is the body and the head of the experient. This is the alchemical vessel! This is where you will encounter the three-headed dog, the queen dissolving in her bath, and the incestuous couple that combine Sol and Luna to

produce the white essence of the panacea of the universal medicine. These are 'psycho-mental' processes and Jung mapped this. He must have been an extraordinary person because he could approach this without psychedelics, through a very careful inspection of the dreams and the symbol-producing processes of his patients. Over decades, he produced a kind of skeletal map of the psyche. I maintain that map doesn't fill itself in, doesn't become a living experience, until we undergo what is rightly perceived as the alchemical process of dissolution.

Dissolution of what? Of the lumpen prima materia of the ego. This is the shit, the tar, the coal, the dark earth of Egypt, the starting material, the loam, the manure, the night soil, the lowest matter; we start with that, the ego and dissolve it through the intercession of the spirit. Spirit is a complicated concept. It's not naive. It's phenomenologically difficult to define. Somehow through the dissolving spirit of the plants, the plants lift the imprisoning structures of the ego and allow the ego to flow out into the world. For some people this process produces panic. "Pan"-ic, comes from the god Pan, whose screams caused people to go mad. Panic.

For other people, this process is an enormous liberation. It is an influx of material previously hidden in the unconscious, laden with symbolic meaning, and is not to be sustained in this acidic, dissolving, roiling liquid state. That's part of the process, but it is eventually to be recombined, coagulatio, the recombining. The coagulation. It is the coming together at a higher level - usually through the process of an application analogous to heat, but psychic heat which drives off the dross of false assumptions and false attachments.

All of you who have been through high-dose psychedelic experiences know that it's very hard to carry stupid baggage through that keyhole. In fact, your lucky if you just get your soul and yourself through and intact. So, what we have here through the psychedelics - among certain marginal populations in the twentieth century, freaks of all sorts, in all times and in places, within the twentieth century - a kind of almost accidental rediscovery of these alchemical truths.

That's one level. We can do self-directed psychotherapy on ourselves with psychedelic substances out of plants and we can use alchemical symbolism to guide this process, and that's all very interesting but so what? What's so great about it? Well - One of the most famous of all alchemical axioms is, "as above, so below", meaning always, that in every small part of reality, there is a tiny reflection of the great over structure of reality. In the largest structures are hidden the secrets of the smallest, and vice versa. We also have rediscovered this principle in the 20th century through fractal mathematics. The psychedelics have brought us back to this alchemical mystery, shorn of any vocabulary for dealing with it, and shorn of any real living notion of the spirit. So, we have sought as far afield as the Tibetan Book of the Dead, or Freudianism, or there have been various efforts to cast the psychedelic experience one way or another.

The hot one now, of course, is shamanism. I relate to that because I spent a lot of time in the Amazon, with these kinds of people and with these kinds of concerns. Shamanism and alchemy are a seamless enterprise. In alchemy, the connecting figure if you're interested in this, between the shaman and the alchemist, is the smith, the worker of metal. The shaman and the smith, in primitive cultures, are always associated as brother figures. They both work in metals.

What does all this mean for us beyond the commitment to our own sort of ordering the

wunderkammer of our own private imagination? What it means is important because if you look around you, you will see the entire global civilization is undergoing some kind of meltdown. The planet itself is now to be seen as a kind of alchemical retort. The prima materia to be transformed are: the nuclear stockpiles, the toxic waste dumps, the industrial wastelands, the populations devoid of hope, and the populations at threat of fatal and epidemic disease. There is a great deal of prima materia to be worked on at the historical level of the alchemical process. Trying to manage this rationally with some political 'ism'; fascism, Marxism, capitalism, goes nowhere. It just digs us deeper into the mire and the muck.

At the fringes, people like you, people like myself, people I associate with, offer endless solutions. We offer recycling, restraint in child bearing, and increased sexual toleration of unusual sexual styles. Many, many things are suggested but nothing happens because the primary agenda of society has not yet been dissolved. It has not yet come into a state of fluidity sufficient where a new imprint can be put upon in.

In the 1960s, we thought that all that had to happen was - everybody would take LSD and the obvious right things to do would be done. We expected no opposition to this because it's rightness was so obvious. We didn't realize that every righteous crusade in history has marched into the waiting jaws of its oppressors. But the spirit doesn't die. It's interesting but in America, we refer to, and have always referred to freaks as Bohemians. I assumed, you always hear about the left bank Bohemia of Paris in the 1920s - but why Bohemia? What does Bohemia have to do with Paris? Why are freaks called Bohemians? It's because of Frederick the Elector and the alchemical renaissance that he plotted with his wife. Since that time to now, 'Bohemian' has meant a marginal political position involved with bizarre sexual practices, strange drug use and 'funny' ideas.

In the 1960s, LSD was not sufficient even coupled with rock & roll. It only brought oppression. It was like a failed alchemy. Instead of the dissolving and recrystallizing at a higher and more angelic level, thousands of prisons were built and the entire thing failed. But this spirit is the spirit, the spirit of life itself, the spirit of novelty itself, and it will not be suppressed for long in any time or place. So now again it comes.

After thirty years and after many changes, it's among us again. I assume, looking at all of you, that to some degree you represent this or act it out, because it's a spirit of dissent that says we will not serve the values of materialism. We will not serve the values of the ego and the values that separate and breakdown the community.

So here it is again. What is different this time that we might have some greater hope of actually coming through to the beginning of the third millennium without having to hang our heads when we tell the story to our grandchildren? I will submit to you this evening that the difference between then - 1965 through 1970 - and now to the turn of the century, is the following. We have that experience under our belt. We shall not be so stupid again. The I Ching says, "Never confront evil directly and never name it directly because it finds weapons to defend itself."

We are not an army; this is what Frederick didn't understand. He was a king, but he was not an army when it came to the White Mountain. We are not an army, so our strategy must be stealth.

It's an alchemical strategy. What do I mean by stealth? I mean the house of constipated reason must be infiltrated by art, by dreamers, and by vision. What is new? There are massive technologies available to us, not available in the 1960s. They were not designed for us, they were not intended for us, and it was never ever thought that such power should flow into the hands of freaks such as ourselves. Nevertheless, through the perverse nature of the unfolding of the world, we have such tools. I'm referring, as you probably anticipate to the World Wide Web and the Internet.

No gay kind in Montana, no Chinese scholar in Botswana, and no person anywhere with a specialized interest or predilection now need feel alone. There is no aloneness. You can find your people. One of the things Tim Leary said in the 1960s that I always remembered but I never heard anybody talk about or ever really heard him quote. It was a great rallying cry. It was much better than Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out; and it was this: "find the others." "Find the others, and then you will know what to do." Well now you can find the others. You don't have to stick a flower in your hair and go to San Francisco. You just go to the web.

Find the others! We all need to create affinity groups which are subsets of the much larger community that we're part of. Then using this technology, which was designed to keep track of us, to pick our pockets and to sell us junk we don't want, use this technology to produce art. We must produce massive amounts of subversive art, and all art is subversive. I'm not calling for an ideological agenda. All truth which springs from the individual is subversive, because, and this is a theme of mine that I'm getting more and more into the longer I live – Culture is not your friend. This is an odd message for the late 1990s because we're all being told, you knew you were Jewish but your forgot you Sicilian grandmother – you have to honor all of your family. Romanian bring it forward, the dances of this that and the other. I hate all of this stuff. I'm Irish. It's a weird thing to be. It's a haunted, twisted people, as a people. All peoples, meaning tribes, have horrible stories to tell about who they did under and who they screwed over. When you're asked to identify with your culture, you're asked to take this on. I reject it.

My brother years ago invented this term. He called it extra-environmental. He said, this is what we want to be. We don't want to be Americans, or Germans, or English – we want to be extra-environmentalists. Always feel wherever you go that you are a stranger, the outsider, and the one looking in. This is the viewpoint that makes all places the same to you. There's a wonderful English poet and writer, Rudyard Kipling, and he wrote a children's short story called The Cat Who Walked By Himself. It's a story of how the dog came to the cave of man and would lay at the man's feet, but the cat would never come. When the woman asked the cat why it would never come, it said, "I am the cat who walks by himself and all places are alike to me."

I think transcending our cultures is going to be extraordinarily necessary for our survival. I don't think that we can carry our cultures through the keyhole of the stretch of the next millennium. How do you shed your culture? How do you transcend your culture? By digging into your soul with the tools that have been given to you to make art. This is how cultures are transformed. By art, which flows up and actually submerges the previous cultural forms. The Baroque gave way to later periods simply out of exhaustion, but notice, a style can exhaust itself and still continue. Mannerism did this out of the renaissance, for example. When these exhaustive styles are allowed to continue, they become toxic, they become moribund. It's like keeping a corpse around the house. There is an obligation to overthrow that. We are to produce the new, to produce the novel, and by the novel, I don't mean the literary form, I mean all things new.

It is not the function of the artist to be the critic. The winnowing out, the deciding what is good from what is bad, comes later. That is a community process. The community decides what is good and bad art. But the individual should pour this forth. This is what you are: you are some kind of a mystery suspended between two eternities. In that moment, when a mind looks out at a world and asks the question, what is it? In that moment, art can be created. It is the only form of immortality that I have any certainty of and it's available to everyone.

At the present moment – I make no distinction between art and 'techne.' To my mind, these things are the same thing. A great turning point is in the offing. The world is changing; it's changed before but not for a long time in our lives. Not since before our lives, but now it's changing, and there are many, many possibilities. The English biologist, Dawkins, invented the word meme. Do you all know what a meme is? It's the smallest unit of an idea. It's like what a gene is to biology, a meme is to ideology. Our task is to create memes. Madonna is a meme, Catholicism is a meme, Marxism is a meme, and yellow sweaters are a meme. Create memes! Rainbow colored dreadlocks are a meme.

Launch your meme boldly and see if it will replicate, just like genes replicate. See if your meme can infect and move into the organism of society, and believing as I do that society operates on a kind of biological economy, I believe these memes are the key to societal evolution. However, unless the memes are released to play the game, there can be no progress. So I think the obligation on people such as ourselves, and I assume probably without exception, everybody in this room falls into the upper 5% of the Earth's population in terms of wealth, education and freedom. Even if you're some poor pierced metal-head from the dark side of Manheim, you have a better situation than most people on this planet. You have a better chance at actually reaching out toward the machinery that shapes reality and having an impact.

So then the question becomes for some: "but I have nothing to say, or I have nothing to paint, or I have nothing to communicate." Clearly you're not taking enough drugs then – those excuses simply will not be tolerated. If someone finds that decadent, flippant or destructive - then they don't understand what these psychedelic substances are. They open the doorway to creativity. They cleanse the doors of perception, then as Blake said, "reality is perceived as it truly is, as infinite."

Part of what is wrong with our society, and hence, with ourselves, is that we consume images. We don't produce them. We need to produce and not consume media. Media is a huge issue. You can't escape it, so what are you going to do about it? The only solution is to drive it, to take charge, or otherwise you will be poisoned by it. As more and more people are waking up to this – essentially we are seeing I think, a huge artistic revolution. A revolution in values that reaches into science, into politics, and into every aspect of life, but that is coming from the imagination thoroughly stimulated and activated by the discovery of all these natural and synthetic substances that perturb the mind. I'm also not denying that a certain amount of social chaos goes along with this. On the other hand, I can point to pretty psychedelically pure centuries, like the 13th in Europe, and there was still plenty of social chaos going on. I don't think that you can lay social chaos at the feet of psychedelics. I think that social chaos is an inimical part of the system. What psychedelics do is give a direction to that chaos. They give a dimension of

vertical ascent, because inevitably, out of the psychedelic situation emerges, not despair, not self-indulgence, but wild-eyed idealism. That's the inevitable product of any psychedelically driven social process. How well that idealistic idea then brokers its way to the throne, if it does, is another issue.

I don't know if I've hit this technological thing hard enough. I hope that you all avail yourselves of the power of the Internet. In years past, in speaking to audiences in America, it was maddening to me to find that the environmentalists, the feminists, the gays, the psychedelic people, the space people, and the colonization people – none of these people had anything to say to each other. They didn't seem to realize that their marginality united them far more than any difference they might perceive in their positions. They didn't seem to realize that their political disempowerment was a product of their inability to make common cause with people similarly motivated, or similarly motivated toward social change. It's very important to build an inclusive community and a community that has a sense of direction and I think the Internet empowers this far more than any other tool that has been handed to us, except psychedelics. If you take psychedelics, the Internet, music and put all of that together – you have the basis for a new community that is wider and deeper than you know. The people who are building the new machines, who are designing the new circuitry, who are writing the new code – they are all freaks. They work for capitalist dogs of course, because we all do but the creative thrust of these technologies is being driven by people just like you and me. I think this is all tremendously positive.

Finally, I'll close on this. The alchemical return.

All culture is some kind of myth. All cultural stories then have a kind of psychic dynamic to them, which is not suspected by the civilization as it lives these myths. It has to be seen from outside. There is a consistent myth in Western civilization. In the early Jews, you get it as the idea that God will enter history. With Christianity, you get it with the idea that Man and God can be consubstantial. It appears again in Islam with the insistence that God will enter history. Modern science, strangely enough, dumps all of this theology but maintains the idea that Man can become as a God. In other words, the myth that is consistent throughout the entire Western experience is the myth of some kind of defining progressive experience.

Well now we have the power to realize this myth in some kind of, for want of a better word, an alchemical utopia. I think its very interesting that at this very high tech moment in our adventure, the plants return; the humblest of all biology. The plants return and almost stand before us as a beacon and a promise. Have you noticed that plants do all their business with dirt and air? This is something we only wish we could do. Build an industrial society based on nothing more than the ambient dirt and the air flowing past; building sugars and carbohydrates out of gaseous oxygen. This is quite a trick. The plants stand, both in the psychedelic sense but then in the larger sense of the vegetable kingdom, for absolute Tao. They stand for the correct way for life to relate to its environment. They are effortlessly recycling, vegetatively propagating when necessary, sexually propagating when necessary, immune to pain, patient to the tune of centuries. They are always building up structure and always maintaining a leavening effect upon the land.

All of these qualities of care giving and, notice for example, that all the processes of biology occur below the boiling point of water. If only we could build societies that did that. We work in the range of hundreds of degrees, thousands of degrees; fusing metals and creating toxicity. So I think the psychedelic plant revolution is leading towards the nano-technological revolution. This is, in other words, the imitating of nature at the atomic level in the building of machines and the management of processes. What all of this is leading toward is a rarefaction, good alchemical word, a rarefaction of the human imprint on this planet. This means a spiritualization of humanity and a new order of mind; part machine and part human.

Notice that the Internet and the computers that it serves are actually made of the materials of the earth. They're largely metals: silicon, glass, copper, gold, and silver – these are the products of demonic artifice. These are the things that the alchemist dreamed of. They transform space and time, they allow us to speak at a distance, and they allow us to wander through libraries thousands of miles distant. They make it so that no fact is too obscure and no person so hidden that you can't reach them. It is, in a way, the perfection of the magical ideal that was developed and unfortunately, prematurely launched by Frederick the Elector and his wife here nearby at Heidelberg.

So I'm involved, as I've said, in a process of bringing this story to many people who haven't heard it. It's a great story, it's a great myth that the underground community should make it's own. I used it evening just as the scaffold for this talk but I tried to hit the things that are important to me; which are: psychedelics, recovery of archaic lifestyles, use of media to subvert existing paradigms, empowerment of the individual through dissolving the ego through psychedelics, and whatever else! Thank you for your patience and indulgence!

Original Transcription by: [dominatorculture](#)

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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The World and Its Double

11 September 1993

Nature Friends Lodge, Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Description

- [Audio Link \(youtube\)](#)
- [Scribd Transcript](#)

Well, um, 'The World and Its Double' is how we styled this. Uh, this is simply uh-a high-visibility, flashy way of reminding people whose eyes fall upon that text that, uh, the world has a double. The world is not entirely or completely what it seems to be. Culture – and by culture, I mean any culture, anywhere, any time – um, gives you the message that, uh, everything is humdrum, everything is normal. In other words, culture denies experience. You know, we all have had, and even a population of non-psychedelic people have had, uh, prophetic dreams, intimations, unlikely strings of coincidences, uh, all of these sort of things. These are experiences which cultures deny. Cultures put in place –uh, I'm sure you've heard this word – a paradigm, and then what fits within the cultural paradigm is, uh, accentuated, uh, stressed, and what doesn't fit inside the cultural paradigm is denied, marginalized, argued against; and we live at the end of a thousand-year binge, uh, on the philosophical position known as materialism in its many guises. And the basic message of materialism is that the world is what it appears to be: a thing of-composed of matter, and, uh, pretty much confined to its surface. The world is what it appears to be.

Now, this, on the face of it, is a tremendously naïve position, because what it says is the animal body that you inhabit, the eyes you look through, the fingers you feel through, are somehow the ultimate instruments of metaphysical conjecture... which is- is highly improbable. It seems to me, metaphysical conjecture begins with, uh, the logic of the situation, and then proceeds in whatever direction that logic will carry you. Well, if logic is true to experience, then, uh, we have to make room in any theory for invisible connectedness between people; anticipation of a future that has not yet occurred; uh, uh, shared dreaming; all kinds of possibilities that materialism has denied. For approximately 500 years, the great era of the triumph of modern science, materialism has had it's a- the field all to itself; and its argument for its preeminence was the beautiful toys that it could create: aircraft, railroads, global economies, television, spacecraft. But that isn't- that is a fool's argument for truth! I mean, that's after all how a medicine show operates, you know: the juggler is so good, the medicine must be even better!

Uh, this is not an entirely rational way to proceed. And now, at the end of 500 years of the practice of “rational” scientific culture, we are literally at the end of our rope! Reason, and, uh, science, and, uh, the practice of unbridled capitalism, have not delivered us into an angelic realm. Quite the contrary: they've delivered 3% of us into an angelic realm, completely overshadowed by guilt about what's happening to the other 97% of us who are eating it!

Uh, it's not a pretty picture, modern civilization. Most people in the world today are quite miserable, actually. Uh, they have very little hope; their religions, their traditional value systems, are being eroded by, uh, Dallas and Hawaii 5-0, which are on the village television every night. Uh, lifespans are being shortened by pesticides, chemicals, all kinds of things in the environment; and, uh, and there is very little political light on the horizon. So I believe that it's reasonable, looking at this situation, to say that history failed; and that the grand dream of Western civilization has in fact failed. And now we are attempting, with basically a carved wooden oar, to turn a battleship around. And it's a very frustrating undertaking. Uh, the momentum for catastrophe is enormous in this situation. Uh, now what- but it's not 100% certain that catastrophe is what we're headed for, because we are not 100% unconscious. There are people struggling to figure out how to control population, struggling to figure out how to balance the relationship between the masculine and the feminine, uh, struggling to bring, uh, amelioration of hunger and disease to various parts of the world. So we're in essentially a tragic situation. A tragic situation is a catastrophe when you know it, you see. And, uh, part of the Western impulse has been to subjugate all other cultural styles to our own. And this has taken the form of actually swallowing and digesting Native American culture; uh, the ethnicity of European culture has been replaced by the mega culture of Nouveau Europa, whatever that means; cultures are melted down in the belly of the Western scientific beast and then they become structural members in an ever-expanding edifice of Western scientism.

However, the psychedelic experience, as practiced by shamans in many, many parts of the world, is, uh, apparently a bite too large to swallow. Psychedelics arrived on the Western, uh, agenda only about 100 years ago, when, uh, German chemists, uh, brought peyote to Berlin and extracted mescaline; and for the next 50 years, up until about 1945 (55 years, make it), very little happened. Uh, uh, mescaline did not – though it was taken by Havelock Ellis and, and William James, and F. Weir Mitchell, and – it did not spawn a craze; it did not influence large numbers of intellectuals particularly. Then in the 1- in the 40s, LSD was discovered; in the 50s, DMT and psilocybin were discovered; and then, in 1966, all these things were made illegal. There was no real opportunity for Western science to grapple with these things before they were decided to be too hot to handle- made not only unavailable to people such as you and I, ordinary people, but taken off the agenda of scientific research.

In the Middle Ages, the church forbade dissection of human bodies, and medical students would visit battlefields and the gallows at night, and steal the bodies of victims of war and executed prisoners in order to learn human physiology. Where that spirit of scientific courage has gone, I don't know; but there is very

little of it left. Now, people feed at the trough of government grants and enormous corporate research budgets, and the idea of actually pursuing truth, or attempting to understand the phenomenon in an unbiased fashion, divorced from its commercial, social and political dimensions, is unheard of.

...if you look at thousands of these experiences, is: they dissolve boundaries. They dissolve boundaries between you and your past; you and the part of your unconscious you don't want to look at; between you and your partner; between you and the feminine, if you're masculine, and vice versa; between you and the world; all the boundaries that we put up to keep ourselves from feeling our circumstance are dissolved, and boundary dissolution is the most threatening activity that can go on in a society. People – meaning government institutions – become very nervous when people begin to talk to each other. [input from audience] – Yes. The whole name of the Western game is to create boundaries and maintain them. The Church and the State; the poor and the wealthy; the black and the white; the male and the female; the young and the old; the gay and the straight; the living and the dead; the foreign and the familiar... all of these categorical divisions allow a kind of thinking that is completely cockamamie. After all, reality is in fact a seamless, unspeakable something; and we understand that to perceive it separately is a necessary adjunct to the act of understanding, but it is not the end of the program of understanding! Particulate data has to be recombined in a paradigm, a seamless overview of what is happening; and the drugs that Western society has traditionally favored have either been drugs which maintain boundaries or drugs which promote mindless repetitious physical activity on the assembly line, in the slave galley, on the latifundi of the slave-driven agricultural project... whatever it is. In the corporate office.

This is why every labor contract on this planet – at least, in Western civilization – contains a provision that all workers shall be allowed to use drugs twice a day at designated times; but the drug shall be caffeine. Now, the reason why caffeine is so welcome in the workplace is because the last three hours of the workday are utterly unproductive unless you goose everybody with two cups of coffee, and then they can go back to the word processor, the widget-tightening machine, or whatever they're doing, and mindlessly and happily carry on. If it were to be suggested that there be a pot break twice a day [laughter], you know, you would think that civilization was striking the iceberg or something! And alcohol... our society is an alcohol, red meat, sugar and tobacco culture. And all of these are forms of speed, basically, in the way that we use them. I mean, yes, you can tranquilize yourself on alcohol, but you're pushing toward levels where a lifetime of tranquilizing yourself on alcohol will be a short lifetime, if you use it that way.

So there's a lot of tension in society between the great exploring soul and the assembly-line citizen. The citizen is defined by obligation, and by the boundaries that define, you know, the next citizen – either because it's a neighbor, or a worker, or an employer, or something like that; and the grand exploring soul is marginalized as an eccentric or, if necessary, more seriously marginalized as mad in some way. I mean, madness basically – up until the level of physical violence – means “You are behaving in a way which makes me feel uncomfortable, therefore there's something wrong with you.” Yes...

So – Now, it's interesting, and this is one of the points that's dear to me – I mean, they arrive in different orders each time, but – I think of history as a kind of mass psychedelic experience; and the drug is technology. And as technology gets more and more perfected as a mirror of the human mind, the cultural experience becomes more and more hallucinatory. And for at least the past couple of hundred years, boundary dissolution has been underway at every level of Western civilization. I mean, you could push it further back: the Magna Carta, the fact that princes and lords of the realm would actually attempt to force the king's signature on a document defining their privileges – they are, after all, ordinary human beings;

the king is the divine appointed regent of God in Heaven! So this was a severe boundary dissolution, within the context of the age in which it was taking place. They were actually saying, “You, as Christ’s representative on Earth, should seed some of this omnipotence to us mere mortals, suspended in the political process” – well, that leads then to broader demands for human rights: for the idea that a permanent and large segment of society kept in permanent poverty is unacceptable... we got rid of debtors’ prisons, and things like this.

As the collectivity of our humanness becomes an intellectual legacy for all of us, there is a dissolving of boundaries of race, class, status, language, so forth and so on; and the whole of the 20th century has seen a massive acceleration of this. The breakdown of the Soviet Union was in fact simply – it was even so described: the lifting of the Iron Curtain – meaning a membrane has suddenly disappeared; and more and more of these membranes are disappearing, and what is emerging then is a more and more psychedelic experience – meaning a sense of acceleration of information flow; a sense of rising ambiguity about what it all means; everything seems to carry both a good facet and a detrimental facet; the ambiguity of everything is increasing; the connectedness of everything is increasing; and I will argue, later in the day, that this is a general tendency of the time and space in which we are embedded, and that we ourselves are a reflection of this.

Where is life carrying us? What is this all about? Is it carrying us toward extinction, so that the rest of Nature can heave an enormous sigh of relief and then get back to the business of nest-building, mating flights and overposturing, and whatever it is that they’re doing out there? – or is it carrying us toward some kind of a transition? If you look back through the history of life – which is a long history, I mean it reaches back a billion years – it’s... every advance happens suddenly, unpredictably, and in a very short period of time. Some of you who stay tuned to the scientific literature may have noticed this series of articles that were around last week, about what they’re calling the Big Bang of Biology: that there was a period of time – incredibly brief, perhaps between a million and ten million years – when all the phyla of life on this planet radiated into existence: some time between 525 and 535 million years ago – just, it all snapped into existence. The episode in which life left the sea is a similar highly confined transition event. People recently have written about what they call punctuated evolution; evolution is not, apparently, a slow curve of unfoldment – it is instead a series of equilibrium states punctuated by violent fluctuations in between, and then a new equilibrium state.

So history, I believe, is not an aberration, any more than leaving the sea could be called an aberration of marine existence. I mean, obviously it is not marine existence, and obviously we are not living in the same world as groundhogs and hummingbirds, psychologically; but leaving the sea did not represent an ontological transition. It represented an extremely dramatic shift of modality, and this is what history is. History is characterized by its brevity, for one thing. I mean, we have packed more change into the last ten thousand years than the billion years which preceded it. And yet, as entities, as animals, meat, we have not changed at all in ten thousand years. If you were to go back to that era, the people would be exactly like people we see today. They wouldn’t be so racially heterogeneous, because the great gene streamings and migrations that characterize history had not yet taken place; but essentially, perfectly modern people. Well, then history is apparently – if we view it as a process that Nature tolerates, if not encourages – then history is essentially apparently important enough to place into... jeopardize the stability of all the rest of the natural ecosystemic world.

It’s as though Nature is saying, “We are willing to place the entire planetary ecology in danger for 50,000

years in order for the opportunity to be explored of language-using, technological-expressing, intelligence carrying all of life to the next level". And it's a terrifying enterprise, because apparently to carry life to the next level, tremendous intellectual sophistication is required about the release and control of energy. The problem is, energy can be used to destroy as well as build. So as the human enterprise has moved toward greater and greater power, and ability to manipulate the environment, the stakes in the cosmic game have risen. And now what we have is approximately \$100 billion sitting in the centre of the crap table, and one roll of the dice more and we're going to either win it or lose everything. Because intelligence, if we fail, will never again reach the kind of levels on this planet that we have reached.

Why? Because we have extracted all the available metals near the surface of the Earth; an evolving species following after us will find the Earth strangely depleted of usable materials, down to the 1500-foot level; and so intelligence coming beyond us will find it just does not have the resources to make the leap to technical civilization. So it's beginning to look like a one-shot deal. And the psychedelics are in there for two reasons. First of all, because they allow us, as individuals, to break out of the flat cultural illusion and to rise up and look at this situation, so it's for us a tool to understand our predicament; but the psychedelics are also what has driven this circumstance to arise in part, because what psychedelics do – and I think this isn't too challengeable – is they catalyze imagination. They drive you to think what you would not think otherwise. Well, notice that the enterprise of human history is nothing more than the fall-out created by strange ideas! You know: Let's build a pyramid! Let's build a windmill! Let's build a water wheel! – you know – and then empires, philosophies, religions, arise, in the wake of these situations.

I've argued in the past – and I'm going to try not to repeat it here today, because I think you've all heard it, but I will just mention it in a sentence or two – that the critical catalyst propelling us out of the slowly evolving hominid line and caused us to take an orthogonal right-hand turn into culture, language, art, yearning... probably was the inclusion of psychedelic plants in our diet during that episodic moment when we went from being fruititarian canopy-dwellers to omnivorous pack-hunting creatures of the grassland. And it was the inclusion of psilocybin in our grassland diet that caused us to discover that there is a mind! And you can perturb it!

I mean, think about... and I don't think you could discover consciousness if you didn't perturb it, because as Marshall McLuhan said, "whoever discovered water, it certainly wasn't a fish". Well, we are fish swimming in consciousness; and yet we know it's there. Well, the reason we know it's there is because if you perturb it, then you see it; and you perturb it by perturbing the engine which generates it, which is the mind/brain system resting behind your eyebrows. If you swap out the ordinary chemicals that are running that system in an invisible fashion, then you see: it's like dropping ink into a bowl of clear water – suddenly the convection currents operating in the clear water become visible, because you see the particles of ink tracing out the previously invisible dynamics of the standing water. The mind is precisely like that, and the psychedelic is like a dye-marker being dropped into this aqueous system. And then you say, "Oh, I see – it works like this... and like this."

Well, if psychedelics are a catalyst for the imagination, and if history is driven by the imagination, it is driven through the fall-out from the imagination, which is technology and culture. Technology and culture are the consequences, the derivatives, of the ratiocination of the mind. And technology has – like biological life, but on a much faster, accelerated timeframe – technology has this weird tendency to transcend itself; to bootstrap itself. You know, if you have a cart, then it implies better wheels, better bearings, better structure, and then higher speed, more control, more feedback from the machine; it means

we need gas gauges, RPM readouts, so forth and so on. Technology, strangely enough, created by a biological creature, has itself this self-transcending quality.

But ever-accelerating; this is the important point – because the ever-accelerating accretion of technology means that history is strangely foreshortened at the future end, because it happens faster and faster. It's like a process that begins very slowly, but once started has the quality of a cascade – or, you know, the rate at which falling bodies move: 32.5 feet per second, per second! Each second, it accelerates to twice the rate of infall that was occurring in the previous second. Technology is like this; and we now are in a domain where, if we attempt to propagate technological development forward 50 years, it becomes unmanageable as an intellectual task. We can talk about the automobile, what it might look like 50 years from now: it would float, it would go 500 miles an hour, it would be guided by your mind, so forth and so on... these kinds of ideas. But when you think that every artefact of our world will undergo that kind of transformation, and that the synergy among these transformed objects will create phenomena and situations that we can't anticipate – that's the key thing: our inability to anticipate the synergies between our technologies. I mean, the computer, LSD, spacecraft, holograms, organic superconductivity – those are just six areas where the integration of those concerns will produce unimaginable consequences! The ultimate boundary dissolution is the dissolution of ego. I mean, we hope – we straight people – hope that they never meet it except at death; of course, they don't realize that going to sleep at night is a kind of ego dissolution. But the government is expressive of this dominator culture that we're living in. The ego is a very recent invention, and its hold on reality is very tenuous. And consequently it walks around imbued with fear: I mean, it feels itself to be a mouse in a world of dinosaurs. That's because it's a very recent development.

I guess I have to go back to this scenario of human development, and say, just very briefly: here's how I think this worked. I'm not going to run through the whole evolutionary scenario, but this thing about ego... All primates have what are called dominance hierarchies. That simply means that the hard-bodied, long-fanged, young males kick everybody else around. They control the females, the children, homosexuals, the elderly... everybody is taking orders from this dominance hierarchy. And this is true clear back into squirrel monkeys; it's a generalized feature of primate behavior. And it's an aspect of our behavior, as we sit here: women – the feminine – is not honored; the elderly are marginalized; homosexuals, that whole issue; many of our social and political ills stem from this attitude. Well, but you see I believe that when we left the trees, and admitted psilocybin into our diet, that it has the effect of dissolving boundaries, and making this maintenance of a dominance hierarchy very very difficult.

First of all, the key on one level to maintaining the dominance hierarchy is monogamous pair-bonding. That's where it begins. In a society taking a lot of psilocybin, monogamous pair-bonding breaks down, because of the CNS activation, and sexual arousal. So in a psilocybin-using culture, there will be a tendency to orgiastic sexual behavior, rather than monogamous pair-bonding. What that does is it causes an incredible social cohesion, because in an orgiastic society men cannot trace lines of male paternity. So men's attitude toward children is, "These children are all ours. We the group"... it's a glue that we, in our paranoid social style, with everybody having the deed to their property and their 11-foot-high fence, can hardly imagine. But psilocybin was artificially suppressing this dominator behavior style in the primate, the evolving protohominid, now human being.

When psilocybin was taken out of the diet, the old, old primate program was still there. It had not been bred out; the genes were always there; it's just that for 50,000 or 100,000 years, we medicated ourselves –

literally, religiously – we religiously medicated ourselves every new and full moon, perhaps oftener; these orgies were happening, creating social cohesion, propagating everybody forward... the problem was, when the psilocybin was taken away, we had been under its influence for perhaps half a million years. We had evolved language, rudimentary abstract philosophy, a sense of religion. We had invented technology in the form of using fire and chipping flint, and all that. The psilocybin goes away, and suddenly these skills, these tools, these technologies, are in the hands of marauding apes – not any more cohesive caring human social groups, but marauding territorial apes, driven by the desire to control all weaker members of the social group.

And that's our circumstance! We have, you know, the tools that would allow us to sculpt paradise, but we have the reflexes and value systems of anthropoid apes of some sort – so the split between our conscious hopes, our best foot, and the bottom of the human scale, is appalling. I mean, look at the spread! It's a spread from – well, from Mother Teresa to serial killers! – I mean, you don't get serial killers in the chipmunk population, or the grasshopper population – I mean, these animals are not so set at variance with their basic nature that these kinds of pathologies can erupt. We, on the other hand, are half angel, half pack-hunting killer ape. I mean, we are an object-fetish society – I mean, our entire psychology is characterized by a profound discontent. That's what we're about. It doesn't matter – no matter what's going on, after a little while we get restless and move on; other animal species are embedded in a kind of world of endless genetic cycling. No fox grows bored with hunting, you know?! – and yet our thing is a profound dis-ease.

And I believe it's because – and slowly you've forced me to do this whole rap, which I swore I wouldn't do – I believe it's because the psilocybin led us halfway toward a kind of godhead, but then it disappeared, and we are left in this very peculiar situation. This is the myth of the Fall; you know, we are half angel, half beast – and these two natures are united in every one of us. And when you take psilocybin, you feel generally a great sense of community, an ascent to a higher level. If you completely restrict your intake of intoxicants of any sort, then you get the teetotaler type personality, which is characterized by incredible smugness, limited intellectual horizons, and an unbearable aura of self-congratulation that makes it pretty hard for the rest of us to put up with.

See, here is the final piece of this evolutionary key. Psilocybin, in small amounts, increases visual acuity. This is not an arguable point; I mean, you can just give people psilocybin and give them eye tests, and people with astigmatisms see better; your edge-detection ability is greatly increased. Well, you can see that an animal like our remote ancestors, in a hunting environment in the grassland, if there is an item of diet that will make you a better and more efficient hunter, the equivalent of chemical binoculars lying around on the grassland, those animals that avail themselves of this technology will be more successful hunters. And so it was: animals using psilocybin were more successful at raising their offspring to reproductive age. Well, then at slightly higher doses you get this CNS arousal, which in highly sexed animals such as primates, arousal means sexual arousal – an erection in the male – so then there is, without the overwhelming influence of Christian ethics to guide their behaviors, I'm sure these organisms simply flopped in a heap, and – you know, sorted it all out later! So that's the middle range of the dosage. Low dose: success in hunting. Medium dose: social cohesion achieved through ego dissolution and orgiastic sexuality.

Yet higher doses, 5 grams and up: hunting is out of the question; sex is out of the question; you're just nailed to the ground by the campfire, and in the course of the evening you discover religion! [laughter] Philosophy! Art! – and, you know, all of that. So here is a unique chemical that, at every dose level,

synergizes activity that leads to greater coherency and self-expression. The driving of the imagination – yes, in the question back here you said you can't create what you can't conceive of; this is why what the psychedelic experience does, really, is it stretches the envelope of the imaginable. I mean, what can be imagined can be created; what cannot be imagined is not part of the play. So psilocybin really was a stimulant for the production of intellectual product in the form of songs, rituals, dances, body painting, abstract ideas. All of these things are what we are most unique.

Well, that's how it seemed to me. It seemed to me, culture is a shabby lie – or at least, this culture is a shabby lie. I mean, if you work like a dog, you get 260 channels of bad television and a German automobile! What kind of perfection is that?! We have our secular society – religion is completely devalued – and consumer object fetishism is the only kind of worth that we collectively recognize. I'm sure you've all seen the T-shirt that says "He" – notice, he – "who dies with the most toys, wins". That is in fact the banner under which we're flying here. And the level of unhappiness is immense. I mean, the level of unhappiness among the poor, they've always been miserable; but we've managed to create something entirely new in human history – an utterly miserable ruling class! I mean, there seems no excuse for that!

Well, I guess this leads us to a subject worth talking about, which is, it's very important to talk to the state or the substance or...if you don't talk to it, it won't talk to you. It follows the rules of ordinary etiquette, and it does not speak to strangers. But if you will say to it the simplest thing like "Hello?" then it will say, "Hello", and you say "is someone there?" it says "Yes..ready and willing, what's up?" But if you don't speak to it, it won't do that. That is to me the strangest property of psilocybin, is this speaking in English business. I mean, LSD doesn't do that. Ayahuasca doesn't do that. Psilocybin does for some reason. This is not my illusion. Nearly everybody who's spent time with it has commented on this. On DMT you see who you hear on the mushrooms. On the mushrooms you almost never encounter something that you can see. You see hallucinations, but you do not see the author of the data stream that's saying "did you know? I'll bet you did know!" The standard form of address. But on DMT, they come bounding out of the woodwork. The strangest things happen on DMT. The most intense, and you can remember them. DMT is not like a psychedelic drug in the sense that you're getting into the contents of your hopes, memories, fears and dreams. It's much more like a parallel continuum. It's much more as though you've broken through to some alien data space. One of the most puzzling things about DMT is it does not affect your mind, you know? It simply replaces the world one hundred percent with something completely unexpected. But your relationship to that unexpected thing is not one of exaggerated fear or exaggerated acceptance as in 'oh great, the world has just been replaced by elf machinery!' Your reaction is exactly what it would be if it happened to you without DMT. You're appalled!

Because you don't feel your mind moving. You just see that the world has been replaced by something that you could not have even conceived of or imagined before, and these entities, these things which look like dribbling, you know, self-dribbling jeweled basketballs, something that the NBA might take an interest in, you see them and they present themselves to you, they use language to condense visible objects out of the air. Now, I don't know why they're doing that, I mean, perhaps, on one level, I assume that they're trying to teach you to do that. On another level, they seem to be giving a demonstration of the fact that reality is made of language. They're saying, you know, if you don't believe reality is made of language, here, I'll make you one! And then blibbledy blibbledy blip~ there it is! And they hand it to you to be passed around in slack-jawed amazement among the human beings. This technology that they possess of these objects made of gold and emerald and chalcedony [?? -INSERT TIME] and agate that are morphing themselves

even as you look at them are, you know, technological dream come true. I mean, the lapis as elf excrescence, or something like that. And why they're there? I don't know? And, you know, many many questions? Where are they when you're not stoned? You know? Do they have an autonomous existence somewhere, or do they spring into existence a microsecond before you encounter them? Are they rooted in the dynamics of your psyche, or are they no more rooted in the dynamics of your psyche than the World Trade Center? It's not clear.

I mean, I think I mentioned at some point, just briefly, that the archetype of DMT is the circus. These things are clowns, at one level, they're clowns. I mean, when you think of the circus, it's a very complex archetype. A circus is for children, it's a delight, and you take a child to a circus, and there are three rings and absurd clown antics going on, but then you lift your eyes up to the top of the tent and there the lady in the tiny spangled costume is hanging by her teeth, working without nets. It's about eros and death. My first awareness of eros was being 3 or 4 and these women in these tiny costumes spinning around, and realizing, you know, if she falls, she dies. And then, away from the center ring and all this action, there are the sideshows, the goat-faced boy, the thing in the bottle, the siamese twins, and fuzzy Charley. All of that is also very DMT-like. It really is the archetype of the circus. I can remember when I was a kid in this small town in Colorado, every year at the 4th of July, the carnival would come to town for a week and set up. And we anticipated it throughout the year, but as soon as the carnival came to town, then you couldn't play outside after 9 o'clock at night because 'carny people are different', we were told. And, you know, their means of support, sexual proclivities, and choice of intoxicants might have run counter to this Midwestern Catholic mining town I was in. And so then, there's this sense of the disruption, the danger, the drama, the interest, the fun, and then they go away and life is as if they had never been there at all. And that's what DMT is like. I mean, it's a secret of such magnitude that it's inconceivable how it has ever been kept because in a world where information was fairly weighted, we would spend as much time talking about DMT as we spend talking about, I don't know, the West Bank or something. And as you see by studying our newspapers, DMT is rarely, if ever, mentioned. I mean, never would be a good rule of thumb. The Western mind is very queasy around these experiences that cast into doubt its cherished illusions about how reality is put together, and when you get to DMT, you have hit the main vein. I mean, I hold it in reserve as the ultimate convincer. I mean, there are these people running around, you know, who say 'oh, you people who are into drugs, haha! Give me a good branch whiskey and a little TV, I think you're deluding yourself!' Say, oh, do you? Well if you've got 5 minutes to invest in this proposition, my cheerful friend? Because if you do, have I got news for you! It also seems to me, you know, considering the fact that DMT is a naturally occurring neurotransmitter, that you return to the baseline of consciousness in 15 minutes, that it's utterly harmless. What's the matter with our critics? Why are they so phobic of it? You know, what is it? Are you tainted forever if you know the position of your enemy? Why are they so afraid to give it a chance? Well, I think I can answer my own question. Quoting a wonderful thing, Tim Leary said years ago. He said "LSD occasionally causes psychotic behavior in people who have not taken it." Right! That is the problem, I believe! That these drugs are causing outbreaks of psychosis among people who won't get near them! And they are turned into frightened, paranoid, order-freaks reaching for extra-legal and extra-constitutional means to make your life hell. Obviously their minds have been severely bent by the absence of this drug. However, the knowledge of it seemed to practically undo them.

Next Terence discusses the potential teachings of DMT

Yeah, I mean the first teaching is priceless. It's that the world is beyond your ability to conceive or imagine. So, give up any short-term plan to conceive or imagine. I think, really, the worth in these

psychedelics is simply that they allow you to triangulate upon reality. I mean, in other words, if all you've got is awake and asleep, you can't go far with that. But if you've got awake, asleep, and DMT as points, you can build a much more dimensionally rich model of consciousness. I think that it has to do with your own intelligence. Truly stupid people aren't interested in psychedelics because they can't figure out what the point of it is. It feeds off intelligence. It's a consciousness-expanding drug. If you don't have any consciousness, it can't expand it. I've met people who say "Yeah well all this stuff and big bugs talk to you and say strange stuff!" You say, yeah, well, you should have paid a little attention! I mean, it's amazing to me how people don't seem to, like the less intelligent you are, the less challenging the psychedelic experience becomes because the less capable [clears throat] of entertaining the implications you are. Because you just say "well yeah, a lot of bright lights, and there's some talking bugs and spaceships and I don't know, uh I don't know." Well, you know, I guess it's because those people are so ingrained in cultural values that they assume it's not real. They just, they assume it's a trip, whatever that means. It means you have permission not to take this experience seriously. It's a trip. But what I've noticed is that based on quantum mechanics' need for an observer as part of any system, that's big news for our field of study because what it means is hallucinations are as real as anything else. I mean, a hallucination is not like a Chevrolet, but on the other hand a Chevrolet is not like a hallucination. Why should we demand that these things co-map over each other? A hallucination is a species of reality as capable as teaching you as a videotape about Kilimanjaro or anything else that falls through your life.

The question is, does DMT talk to you the way um, psilocybin does. It's interesting that these two compounds, so closely related to each other, both have something to say about language, but they say it in precisely opposite ways. Psilocybin, it's a teaching voice that speaks to you in your language. I had a very interesting experience that was an example of this to me. When I first started growing mushrooms I had to do a lot of batch testing, and so I was taking mushrooms a lot. And I would get into these places with it where it would say "ta-tada-ta-tada-ta-tada-ta-ta says, ta-tada-ta-tada-ta-tada-ta-ta says." It would make these declarative statements and it would always put the word 'says' on the end of uh, the, the, the sentence. I thought, you know, weird, but what do you expect of a talking vegetable? What's weird and what isn't? And then I, I heard Wasson's publication called Maria Sabina and her mushroom ballada. It's a set of six tapes of a mushroom session that Maria Sabina did in 1956. So, so here is Maria Sabina raving in Mazatec and it's going along like this "tada-ta-tada -da su, tada-ta su!" And I look in the inter-linear translation, 'su' means 'says' in Mazatec. So she's, she's hearing it Mazatec, I'm hearing it in English. So that's what psilocybin is capable of. What happens with DMT is it doesn't speak to you in English. It speaks to you in elvish, and you understand. And su- under sufficiently hyped-up conditions you are able to reply. In other words, psilocybin pushes your brain state towards some kind of spontaneous glossalalia, and I think that this probably is mixed up with the generation of language itself because what happens on DMT, on high-dose DMT, is these machine elves, these dribbling basketball things, they use this musical sing-sang-song language to make objects, which they then show you. They're like machines or animals or crystals or crosses between, I don't know, consomme and something else. They have these opalescent depths. They're neither matter, nor mind, neither solid nor liquid, but they make these things and set them loose in this environment. And these things themselves are emitting language and making other things. So they make machines which make machines. Everybody's chattering, squeaking, crawling over each other, clamoring for your attention. And what they're trying to you is get you to produce this glossalalia for some reason which I cannot imagine why. When you're stoned and you do the glossalalia, it's an incredibly pleasurable experience, but so might be eating an orange or having sex if you were to do it at that moment. You can't tell, but you can make this funny pseudo-linguistic stream of syllables that's very very satisfying. And, you know, it has a bit of art in it. I think probably we invented language long before meaning, and that it was

some very practical person who got the idea that uh, the music could have words, and that before that it was simply verbal amusement, uh. After all, the most readily at hand musical instrument is the human voice.

I think that language as we practice it this afternoon in this room is an uncompleted enterprise, that la- the tho that language wants to be visual. It is in transition. Remember, it's from the silence of prehistory to the visual language beyond the Eschaton, and the overlapping of silence and visual language gives you audial language. The more perfect Logos would be beheld. This is what Phylojudeus taught. And considering that many of these psychedelic compounds involved in the language phenomena, like DMT and harmine and harmaline, these all occur as part of human metabolism ordinarily. And I think that it's possible that we are on the cusp of an evolutionary transformation of language having to do with an actual change in our physique, in our genetic output, because why is it that monoaminoxidase-inhibiting compounds like harmaline, specifically 5-methoxy-tetrahydroharmalan, occurs in the pineal gland and is, uh. The pineal gland has always been thought of as somehow connected to the soul. It was the seat of the soul for Descartes, and I think that maybe what history is is the rather muddled situation that occurs in an animal species while it perfects a true language, and that we ha- we're not there yet, folks because a true language is beheld.

I think that the real nub of what we're trying to get at here is that the world is mental in some way that we do not yet understand, but that which we're edging toward understanding. And the, the world is made of language. I can't say that enough, and uh, and so uh, whenever we get into these discussions about reality or effects in space and time, we are operating outside this assumption that the world is made of language. If the world is made of language it's very hard to figure out just where the edge of it is. I mean, do we really need to believe in the existence of distant galaxies like NGC-245 if, in fact, the world is being produced in the human cerebellum as a, as a phenomenon of language? What exactly is the ontological status of these distant parts of the universe that register only as the faint tracings on our instruments, then interpreted through the fishy fiat of a bunch of stacked up theories and formulas. I mean, did you know that the entire universe of radioteloscopy- uh, radio telescopes were invented around 1950, they've been used to develop our entire picture of the universe. Did you know that if you took all the energy that has fallen on all the radio telescopes on this planet since the invention of radio teloscopy that it would be less energy than is generated by a cigarette ash falling a distance of two feet? So that's where your data sample is coming from that you've built up this model of exploding galaxies and colliding quasars and mega-this and mega-that. I mean, it's pretty flimsy stuff, folks, compared to the meat of the moment in which we find ourselves.

Now, magical philosophies which are uh- have about 50 to 100 thousand years under their belt as opposed to science, which goes back to the Renaissance, magical philosophies have always claimed that the world is made of language, that you, the, the world is a thing of words, and if you know these words, you can take it apart and put it together any old way you wish. Our entire Western religious tradition begins with the incredibly cryptic statement "in principio et verbum, et verbo caro factum est." It's fairly obscure even in English. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was made flesh." What is this making the word into flesh, and does it not imply then that eventually the flesh will become word? As I descend into mental disintegration and madness, I become more and more convinced that reality is more like a novel than a series of integrated tensor equations of the third degree, which is what physics would have us believe. The world is like a novel. It's a novel in which you are a character, and there's dramatic tension, plot, resolution, tragedy, nobility, betrayal, the whole gamut of emotions and human possibilities. And what we

tend to do is always to marginalize first our own experience and then all human experience. So we- our model of reality is that the universe is a zillion somethings that direction and a trillion somethings that direction, we are tiny and insignificant, our star is typical, our galaxy is typical, everything is utterly humdrum and there's nothing going on here at all.

Well, this is an incredibly dreary and disempowering model of reality. I would rather believe that if, in fact, what the universe is is a novelty producing and conserving engine, and if we define novelty as density of connectedness, then guess what? The human neocortex becomes the center of the cosmic drama, because the human neocortex is the most densely ramified and connected material object known to exist in the universe. So after a thousand years of human marginalization, suddenly, through the injection of science, there is permission to believe that the cosmic drama really is about us, that we really do carry uh, the, the load in this play, that this is a play about the career and preservation of novelty and complexity, and thus we are central actors in that drama. And hence, if something were to happen to us and our enterprise, the universe would be vastly impoverished by that loss.

Well now we're on the brink of decoding the human genome. We will use computers to do this because we're going to have to keep absolute track of millions of units of strings of characters. But the end result of it is, I think, is that the flesh will be made word, and that we are textualizing our reality. And this may be what all these French people are screaming about that we can't understand, the so-called deconstructionists. Because they keep saying reality, it should be dealt with as a text. If you don't treat it as a text, you will entirely miss the point of it.

Well, I've been thinking about this for a while, and first of all, my life is very strange because when I hit the mushroom at La Chorrera in 1971, Interpol was looking for me, I had a price on my head, I had no money, I had blown my college education, I had no job skills. I had nothing. And that is, of course, as all folklorists know, uh, the precondition for exaltation. If you're not poor and humble, I mean, what's the point, you know? So, I was poor and humble, and then I got crossed up with this mushroom, and immediately life became art. Life became i- uh, freakishly ordered, and plot elements began to unfold, and I have in my mind a picture of the curve of my mission, if you want to call it that, and weirdly enough, reality has not yet departed from the curve. Now, the curve is getting steeper and steeper, and at some point, surely, reality and the curve will depart. Otherwise, um, decency forbids that I carry that thought further, but you do see what I mean, I think. And all of us are beginning to take textual control of our lives, and be able to write the plot. You see, if what we're embedded in is a novel or some work of art like a novel, then what you want to do is figure out who in the novel you are. I mean, if your name is Joe Blow, is the name of this novel 'The Lives and Worlds of Joe Blow?' or do you get to draw a bath for someone on page 230 and never be seen again? Now, as a character, the more conscious you become, the more you have free will within the context of the plot. I never understood this, and I'm not sure most people understand it.

Like, like I grew up in Berkeley in the 1960- i- you know I was in Berkeley from 65' to 70', the Golden Age. I was so unconvinced of my own uniqueness that I never understood that the great drama that was unfolding around me, all I had to do was join, and I never joined. I thought it was spectator sport. I mean, I marched in the marches, I took acid, I got laid, I did all of those things, but what I mean by "I didn't join" is I didn't realize that The Grateful Dead were a bus ride away that I could probably walk into that scene and make a place for myself. Or The Doors, or the Stones or The Beatles, you pick it. In other words, I defined myself as a spectator rather than an actor, and we are all doing that far too much.

You can get a get a lot rowdier than you are. You can make a lot more waves. There's been too much politeness and uh, too much parlor etiquette exercise recently by uh, the counterculture. It's perfectly alright to mix things up. It's perfectly alright to try and accelerate the plot. This will move your character nearer and nearer to the center of the action, and people have asked me then, is the goal to make yourself, the novel, about you. Is the goal to make the novel about yourself? I don't think so. The goal is to become the author of the novel. Then, you can write any damn ending you want for your character or any other. And this 'becoming the author' is this psychedelic detachment, and suddenly you go from being a chessman, a chessman on the board to the chess master looking at the board. It's empowering, it's self-control.

Now, people who don't know this are like made of denser stuff than the rest of us. You can just part them like wheat and move through them because they have no sense of the nature of the game. They are still embedded in the old Newtonian paradigm and, and are completely powerless to control their own lives. That's what happens to you in the Newtonian game. All the power flows to, I don't know, the White House, the UN, Madison Avenue? It's not clear, but it certainly doesn't reside with you.

More and more, I think, we need to de-condition. That's what I mean by following the plot as written. If you never de-condition, you're, you're just a character in somebody else's story, but if you decondition, you can begin to move your life the way you want, and miracles happen. Miracles do happen. They happen even to ordinary people in the realm of, of falling in love because there's something about where the genes go that is very compelling to the universal Logos that's watching over us all. So, you know, the stable boy can marry the princess if his heart is pure and the winds of the Logos are at his back. That's why we love those fairy tales of the stable boy who inherits the kingdom, because we sense that as our story.

The question is how can you bring back the psychedelic experience, or what can you bring it. I know of two techniques, neither very satisfying, both in combination moderately effective, but crude. The first is a voice-operated tape recorder. They sell these for a couple of hundred bucks. I've produced some amazing tapes with these. I have one voice-activated tape where you hear me clear my throat two hundred times in the course of an evening because each time I would clear my throat, half way through the throat clearing, it's voice activated, the tape records, so it would catch the last half of "uhmmhmm! hhmhmm! hmmm!" [Terence chuckles] Um, however, if you have presence of mind sufficient to speak English, this would be a more informative record of your experience. (voice from the audience) Yes.

And then the other technique, which is less technically dependent is uh, if you have an insight at a certain level of the experience, you have to repeat it to yourself at another level of the experience, and then another level, and by this incremental bucketing method, you can carry almost any insight out into the, into the realm of the world. These insights often don't stand up to scrutiny. I had a really interesting experience just a week ago. I'm sure you've all had most of this experience, but I finally had it all. It's the experience of having a dream, a very very complicated dream, the subject of which is the universal secret which if told would transform everything. It's the "I've got it!" phenomenon, and usually what happens is you, you wake up and it's gone, just before you get consciousness. And you say, my God, I understood everything. I had it down to a single statement. If I could articulate it the world would never be the same. Well, this happened to me about a week ago and by some miracle, I actually was able to hang on to the statement into consciousness, and I woke up and yelled this thing. My son was appalled, I mean it was six thirty in the morning and I was able to get it out. I hope you're ready, I sat straight up in bed and said "A song is a song!" Profound stuff! I mean maybe it is profound stuff. The profound stuff usually has that "an X is an

X" construct because essentially what it's telling you is silence would have been an acceptable substitute for this statement.

Well, let me say one more thing here just sort of to wind this up. The metaphor that makes sense for what we're going through because it gets the biology of it, it gets the drama of it, it gets the risk of it, it gets the fun and the joy of it, is the metaphor of birth. We are about to decant from three dimensional space and time. Yes, the earth is the cradle of mankind, but you can't live in the cradle forever, and we're not in this cradle alone. We are squashing and trampling on hundreds of other species that have as much right to be here as we are. So through technology, which means pharmacology, art, and the engineering sciences, we are trying to find a doorway into a new world for the spirit, and it is going to come out of human-machine interfacing, pharmacological redesign of the human brain-mind system, possibly digitalizing and downloading into the microphysical realm, we don't know. I mean if it makes your hair stand on end to think of being downloaded into the digital realm. There was once a fish who had a great deal of doubts about this plan to conquer the land, and tried to urge everyone to think again, that no good could possibly come of it. But in fact, the forward thrust of evolution is toward higher dimensions, greater complexity, more information, greater connectedness, and a deeper and deeper uh, sense of the all-pervasiveness of love and meaning.

That's what it's really about. All these disparate physical elements come to nothing if they don't add up to more than the sum of their parts. And the more than the sum of their parts is this transcendental element which we call love. That is the part of the eschaton that has never left us, that accompanied us across the African grassland and into history. I mean, granted, bloodied and battered by the experiences of sexism and racism, and so forth, but never lost as an ideal, never lost as a guiding light and an experience. And I really think that when we dissolve all the boundaries this is what we will discover, is an unconditional caring, an unconditional affection that flows through all life and all matter and gives it meaning. And you don't have to wait for the end of the world to get this news, you can just short-circuit the collective march toward that realization by accelerating your own microcosm of spirituality through the use of these hallucinogens. They are the doorways that the Gaian mind has installed in the historical process to let anybody out any time they want to, provided they have the courage to turn the knob and walk through the door.

Thank you very very much. [Applause] Thanks.

I don't like the part of what I do that is a cult of personality. I don't like it that a white guy sits at the front of the room and pontificates and I don't know if you've figured out this shuffle, but I have and I know that I don't know anything more than you know, really. And that it's just a funny circumstance of fate that you sit and listen and I speak, because there are no experts, and there is only uh, you know, the integrity of doing and having done, and really if you get the message, you, you will be able to transcend the need for any more of this, because it's really a message of self-trust and self-empowerment and then what I'm also trying to create is a community of shared associations about these weird states so that we don't have to all privately think we're losing our marbles, you know. Let those who talk to the elves find each other and band together. I am basically a scientist without portfolio because no academic institution would ever trust me with a portfolio, but I, I move in the domain of the gurus that channelers, the pontificators, and those with secret revealed knowledge from Atlantis and Lemuria, but I have contempt for all of that, whether its true or not, because they got there the wrong way, you know, you have to come through the rules of

evidence and reason. Reason is not science, don't confuse them. I'm very much a critic of science and the scientific method, but I don't think reason can be tossed out with that bathwater. What is being proposed here is that we're on the brink of the discovery of another world, a world as potentially transforming of our world as the discovery of the Western hemisphere transformed European civilization in the 1500s. But the world that we're about to discover is inside the mind. It's mental real estate. We who have made consciousness our game by building cities, elaborating literatures, tossing up religions, and setting armies marching, we who have made consciousness our game have barely scratched the surface of human consciousness. And it's not like we haven't had a crack at it.

[1:29:35 REVIEW IN PROGRESS]

I mean, these Yogans have been over there digging away for millenia; Egyptian religion, Kabbalism, Alchemy, Western traditions of mysticism. And I am a connoisseur of all that, don't get me wrong, but what astonishes me is how embryonic it all is. We are not the tired inheritors of an ancient and sophisticated civilization in its twilight, which is what they're all telling us. We are the know-nothing, fresh-scrubbed babes who are the new kids on the block, who haven't got a clue as to what the human enterprise could be about. And we are coming now through a very narrow historical neck where the accumulated stupidity of the last 5,000 years—the dues have to be paid. It ain't fair, we didn't do it. You know, we didn't bring the slaves from Africa, we didn't invent oligarchy, we didn't do all these things. Nobody is interested in our whining about how we didn't do it—it's in your face. And, it's clearly a crisis of two things: of consciousness and of conditioning. These are the two things that the psychedelics attack. We have the technological power, the engineering skills to save our planet, to cure disease, to feed the hungry, to end war; But we lack the intellectual vision, the ability to change our minds. We must decondition ourselves from 10,000 years of bad behavior. And, it's not easy. I mean, imagine, I don't know how many of you have ever confronted the fact that you were addicted to something, and some addictions are really serious. If you've ever been addicted to tobacco or heroin, i'm sure you know what I mean. Well then, imagine a global population addicted to a drug the use of which is killing us, but we can't, there's no doctor saying you should, there's no rehab clinic to go to when you're a species. We are on an absolutely destructive bender that will end with the death of the earth, the impoverishment of its animal and plant population, and the collapse of our civilization into scarcity unless, unless, we can somehow restructure our psychology and get hold of ourselves. And psychedelics are the only thing I've ever seen work on an individual level to do that.

You know, in the early 60's, they were curing 75% of chronic alcoholism cases that they treated with LSD. They were curing with one dose of LSD. One 500 microgram dose. Well now, obviously LSD is not a magic bullet for alcoholism. That's a preposterous idea. It's simply that you take LSD and if you're a chronic alcoholic, you review your life and you notice that you're killing yourself, and then you say "my god, I am killing myself. If I don't stop what I'm doing, I will be dead!" That's the strongest motivation to character rehabilitation there is. And that's what we have to carry into the domain of public debate. I can't believe how constipated American institutions are. I mean here we are, under the aegis of a great crusading reformer from Arkansas, a new order in human affairs has dawned, but they suggest closing an airbase out

at Sacramento and their editorial says to whether we can survive the shock of this massive change. Well I've got news for you, you better do your change-related calisthenics if that was heavy lifting, because what you've got coming at you is something very very different. We are now in a position to actually make something of ourselves- extend the design process to human destiny and produce something that will redeem ten thousand years of pogroms and migrations and attempted genocides and pointless wars and stupid religions that make people hate themselves and all the rest of it. If we're going to redeem that legacy, then we have to do something quite spectacular.

Ok, now, I will talk a little bit about what I've learned from psychedelics. I feel self-conscious doing it, but on the other hand, wouldn't it be stupid for me to talk about what you've learned from psychedelics. That would add presumption to the sins already arrayed here. There are different models about what the psychedelic experience is. Here's a couple. Building on Western psychotherapy as elaborated by Freud and Jung, one view of what psychedelics are is it's the part of your mind that you'd rather not do business with. It's the memories of childhood neglect or abuse. It's repressed kinky fantasies. It's in other words, the Freudian idea of the unconscious that somehow these are drugs which dissolve the boundary between conscious and unconscious mind and then you can do accelerated psychotherapy because resistances have been pharmacologically overcome. That's one model. It's good as far as it goes, it just doesn't go far enough. Then there's another model which I would call the traditional or shamanic model, and it says the cosmos is a series of levels, and these levels are connected by vertical routes of access which can be thought of as simply flights through space or magical trees or magical ladders. Anyway, there's an image of ascent, and ordinary people exist on only one of these levels, but a shaman is not an ordinary person. A shaman is a super-human person who has the power of animal allies behind them and they can go up and down in these elevators that move between levels and they can therefore recover lost souls, see social hanky-panky, theft and adultery, see the causes behind that, see the causes behind disease, so forth and so on. That would be the traditional one.

What I have concluded after 25 years of fiddling with this is that both of those ideas have a certain something to recommend them, but that they don't go far enough and that we get more to the meat of this if we leave off psychological, the first explanation, or sociological, the second explanation, and actually go for something a little more formal. To wit- a mathematical model of what shamanism is, and what I mean by that is let's think about what shamans do. They cure disease, and another way of putting that is they have a remarkable facility for choosing patients who will recover, they predict weather, very important, they tell where game has gone, the movement of game, and they seem to have a paranormal ability to look into questions as I mentioned, who's sleeping with who, who stole the chicken, you know, social transgressions are an open book to them. Well, thinking about this from a mathematician's point of view, an all-encompassing explanation that would explain how all these magical feats are done is simply to suppose that the shaman is somehow able to project his consciousness, his or her consciousness, into a higher dimension, not metaphorically, as in Sylvester Stallone has many dimensions, not metaphorically, but literally, as in 1 dimension, 2 dimensions, 3 dimensions, and four because if you could move into the 4th dimension, the dimension orthogonal to Newtonian spacetime, seeing what the weather is going to be next week is easy as seeing what the weather is now. Seeing where the game went is as easy as seeing where the game are. Knowing who stole the chicken is simply defined by looking to see who stole the chicken. And I have noticed that all of biology, not simply shamanism within the context of human society, but all of biology is in a sense a conquest of dimensionality. That as we ascend the phylogeny of organic life, what animals are are a strategy for conquering spacetime, and complex animals do it better than simpler animals, and we do it better than any complex animal, and we 20th century people do it better than

any people in any previous century because we combined data in so many ways that they couldn't electronically on film, on tape, so forth and so on. So, the progress of organic life is deeper and deeper into dimensional conquest. Well, from that point of view then, the shaman begin to look like the advance guard of a new kind of human being, a human being that is as advanced over where we are as we are advanced over people a million years ago because we have, you know, very elaborate strategies for coding the past. It's a dimensional conquest.

So that's part of what I learned about psychedelics, and I could have left it there but I never do. I always want to bring more in under the umbrella of whatever metaphor it is that's being pushed, and what I have discerned is that time is actually speeding up, that the universe is not what physics tells us it is. Physics tells us that the universe is a physical system, an entropic system, that was born in immense energy and chaos and will run down with a bang, I mean with a whimper, not a bang, run down into heat entropy and dissipation. The psychedelic data on this is completely different. The psychedelic data says what that model left out was biology and mind. Now, biology, you might imagine, is a fairly ephemeral, recent, fragile phenomenon. It is not. The average star in this galaxy gutters out after about seven hundred million years. Not our star! We happen to have the good fortune to be around a very stable, slow-burning star. But there has been biology on the planet at least 2 billion years. Three times the average life of a star. So biology is not some Johnny-come-lately epiphenomena. Biology is a phenomenon more persistent than the life of the stars themselves, and biology is not a static thing. I mean, a star evolving now is not greatly different from a star evolving a billion years ago. Biology doesn't work that way. Biology constantly changes the context in which evolution occurs. The way I have downloaded this into a phrase is "the universe is -the biological universe at least- is a novelty-conserving engine". Upon simple molecules are built complex molecules. Upon complex molecules are built complex polymers. Upon complex polymers come DNA. Out of DNA comes the whole machinery of the cell. Out of cells comes simple aggregate colony animals like hydra and that sort of thing. Out of that, true animals. Out of that, ever more complex animals, organs of locomotion, organs of sight, organs of smell, complex mental machinery for the coordinating of data in time and space. This is the whole story of the advancement of life, and in our species it reaches its culmination and it crosses over into a new domain where change no longer occurs in the atomic and biological machinery of existence. It begins to take place in this world which we call mental. It's called epigenetic change, change which cannot be traced back to mutation of the arrangements of molecules inside long-chain polymers, but change taking place in syntactical structures that are linguistically-based, and people have probably been using language with considerable facility for probably 50,000 years, possibly more. In our own time, we have created ever-more elaborate languages, ever more elaborate technologies for transforming, storing, and retrieving language, so that we are actually on the brink of being able to give every single one of you the complete cultural inventory, the complete database of human beings' experience on this planet. That's what these data-highways and networks are all about, the nervous system is being hard-wired. But what I wanted to draw your attention to about this is, it is not only an advance deeper and deeper into novelty, but it's an advance in which each successive stage occurs more quickly than the stage which preceded it. So, you know, once you get the big bang, then nothing much happens for a long long time, i mean, there's plasma streaming through the universe, the universe is slowly cooling, but that's the most dramatic complex process in the universe, this cooling. Then, after a certain point, more complex processes come in, complexification begins to build, and as it builds, it begins to happen faster and faster and faster. And the great puzzle in the biological record is the suddenness of our own emergence, of our emergence, human emergence out of primate, out of the primate line. It happened with enormous suddenness. Lumholtz calls it the most explosive reorganization of a major organ of a higher animal in the entire fossil record, and that's, you know, a great embarrassment to the theory of

evolution because this is the organ which generated the theory of evolution. We're not talking an appendix or an eyebrow, here. We're talking the very organ which generated it. I think that we have taken far too much responsibility for what is happening, and that what we took to be a staircase we were climbing is actually an up-escalator. And if you will stop climbing you will notice that it does not impede your upward progress because the ground you're standing on is moving you toward the goal. And I think that this idea which may be the proof that I'm bonkers requires a fairly radical reorganization of consciousness, because what I'm saying is the universe was not born in a fiery explosion from which it has been being blasted outward ever since. The universe is not being pushed like that from behind. The universe is being pulled from the future toward a goal that is as inevitable as a marble reaching the bottom of a bowl when you release it up near the rim. You know, if you do that, the marble will roll down the side of the bowl, down, down, down, and eventually it will come to rest in the lowest energy state which is the bottom of the bowl. That is precisely my model of human history.

Now, bear in mind what the competition is peddling. The competition is peddling the idea that the universe sprang from nothing in a single moment for no reason. Now whatever you think about that, notice that it's the limit case for credulity. Do you understand what I mean? I mean, if you can believe that, it's hard for me to imagine what you would balk at. If we were to sit down and say, "let's see who can think of the most unlikely thing that could possibly happen," I submit to you nobody could top the big bang. It is the improbability of improbabilities. It is the mother of all improbabilities right there.

So I'm suggesting something different. I'm suggesting that the universe is pulled toward a complex attractor that exists ahead of us in time and that our ever-accelerating speed through the phenomenal world of connectivity and novelty is based on the fact that we are now very very close to the attractor. All Western religions have insisted that God would come tangential to history, but they all lose their nerve when you ask 'when', which is the only interesting question about that hypothesis. I mean, if it's not now, then what the hell difference does it make. It's just pissing in the wind as far as I can see. I think that the very real social crisis that is upon us, the crisis of population, of resource depletion, of atmospheric degradation, of epidemic disease, all these crises indicate that we are now down to the short epochs of this process of universal ingress into novelty, and that in fact it makes no sense whatsoever to speak of a human future. There is no human future. It's inconceivable, given where we are today, that to speak of the human world a thousand years from now or five hundred years from now, it is literally, it either doesn't exist, or it's beyond our power of imagining. It isn't simply going to be non-polluting cars and smaller hi-fi speakers. I mean, that's an idiot's notion.

Q: Better pictures than today.

Yeah, clearer TV pictures. It isn't like that at all. I mentioned this this morning, how when you look at only one line of technological development, automobiles or computers, it looks like you can rationally anticipate what's gonna happen. But when you realize that there are thousands of these lines of development, all transforming themselves, all moving towards some kind of omega point, then you realize that we are in the grip of what I call a conrescence, and I maintain that you don't have to believe me on this. You can see it from here. You just have to climb a high hill. There's one, it's called psilocybin, there's one, it's called ayahuasca. The view from the tops of these hills is of the conrescence. It lies now closer to us than the Johnson administration, for gods sake, in time. And, you know, I have an elaborate mathematical theory to back this up, which you should gratefully learn you are not going to be flayed with this afternoon. But I think it's going to become more and more important for people to delinearize their

view of time. Decondition yourself from the lie of history. After all, you know, if time were space, history would be a spider web. So bear that in mind.

Q: [???

Ah, concrescence. Concrescence is a word that I cribbed from the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, and in fact much of what I say Whitehead provides the foundation for. He, like myself, had the idea that history grows toward what he called a nexus of completion. And these nexii of completion themselves grow together into what he called the concrescence, so, a concrescence is a domain of extremely high novelty in comparison to whatever its embedded in. So, for instance, you walking in the wilderness, you are a concrescence because you are more complex than the medium you're moving through. A raisin embedded in a cornmeal muffin is a concrescence. It is more complex than the muffin-matrix in which it finds itself. So, a concrescence is a local state of unusually high complexity. And a concrescence exerts a kind of attraction, let's call it the detemporal equivalent of gravity, so that all objects in the universe are drawn through time, not space- gravity draws you through space, time draws you toward the concrescence. This is why the universe is seem to be becoming more and more complex faster and faster. The idea being, you see, that each epoch, being shorter than the one that preceded it, this generates an asymptotic curve of approach, and it's become a cliché of our culture that time is speeding up. It actually is speeding up. It's not that it seems like it's speeding up, it looks like it's speeding up, it *is* speeding up. We in our entire world are being drawn into confrontation with something that at this level is lost below the event horizon of rational apprehension. That's a fancy way of saying you can't know jack shit about it at this point in time. There will come a moment when it will rise above the horizon of rational apprehension. And I think that history is a set of nested resonances. This is what I mean when I say 'nothing is unannounced'. Nothing can take you by surprise if you've really been paying attention, because everything is preceded by its harbingers and heralds. And we are living in an era now where there is a great deal of apocalyptic expectation, anticipation and hysteria for several reasons. First of all, because Christianity just is hysterical in all times and places. Second of all, there's a built-in goose in the calendar because we're approaching a millennial year, and that always exacerbates this Christian thing outrageously because of the promise made, you know, amen amen, I say to you this generation shall not pass away before I return to, you know, clean your plough or whatever it is. And there is the physical evidence all around us that we are the witnesses to a planetary crisis that we cannot control or manage. I mean, it's very hard to believe that we could manage ourselves back into a steady state. I mean, yeah the Jews are talking to the Arabs and they're trying to get things straightened out in South Africa, but what about the global population curve? What about the degrading atmosphere? I mean, you know, you're just as dead even if you're not killed by a racist or a fascist, so we can get certain problems under control, but it seems certain problems are beyond our control. Also, there's another level to all this, which is when you take cores from the Greenland ice or make side-ranging radar maps of the Canadian shield, you discover that we are not the only force for disruption and chaos wandering around the universe looking for trouble. The universe is an incredibly chaotic and unstable place. Planetesimal impacts on the earth have reset the biological clock at least three times in the last billion years. What we have been living through for the past fifty thousand years is an unusual era of meta stability and it has allowed us to create a global civilization, but we can't assume that we have fifty thousand years of stability ahead of us or even a hundred thousand years of stability ahead of us. And finally, you know, this curious resistance to idea of the end of the world always amuses me because maybe the world will end and maybe it won't end, but have you ever noticed that the end of your world is an absolute certainty. You're going to go into the yawning grave, and rather soon, I should suspect, and possibly sooner than you're prepared for, so a quibbling over the end of other peoples'

world seems like a philosophical argument compared to the certainty of your own finality, and I've been thinking that the question is out of Stephen Hawking's book about parallel worlds and black holes and stuff, how can these physical oddities or anomalies be related to what I'm talking about. Well, first of all, we don't know what a black hole is. A black hole has at the center of it a singularity. The definition of singularity is, you don't know what it is! This is a fishy way of making theories by the way. Uh, Stephen Hawking is a prime example. At one point in his career he was very keen on what were called mini black holes and these were black holes that were under a centimeter in size, and a certain reading of his theory required 10^{16} of these things in the universe. Well, when you realize that there's a singularity at the center of each one of them, you say hell, what kind of physics are you doing if you have a physical theory that has 10^{16} exceptions to whatever rules it lays down? This isn't a theory, this is a sieve that you're waving around in the air. Uh, however, the black hole does bear on this because um, imagine an observer standing outside the event horizon of a black hole, watching an object approach the black hole. What you see, and this is similar to the argument or the example I gave a few minutes ago of the marble on the edge of the bowl. What you see is this, let's make it a spacecraft, this spacecraft that approaches the event horizon of the black hole, and then it's caught in the gravitational tidal forces of the black hole and it begins to go faster and faster, around and around, faster and faster. And at a certain point it disappears into the singularity. This is from the point of view of an observer outside the system. Now we flash to the stalwart captain and crew on the bridge of this starship. What happens to- from their point of view, what happens is as they sink below the event horizon of the black hole and start the descent toward the singularity, time and space are dilated so dramatically that the singularity recedes to an infinite distance and you fall forever toward it.

Well, what I would like to suggest based on, uh, well, here's what I'd like to suggest. This is one way of thinking about it, that our planet is on a collision course with something which we actually at our present state of knowledge don't have a word for. A black hole is simply a gravitationally massive object so massive that no light can leave it. What I'm talking about is something like that, except that it isn't so much gravitationally massive as temporally massive. We are being sucked into the body of eternity, and I think it's going to happen very soon. Now, an obvious objection that someone would make to this, it's a probabilistic objection, is they would say "don't you find it rather unusual that your own very minute and finite life should occur so close to this moment of universal dramatic climax? Doesn't that clue you to the fact that you might be slightly deluded?" To which I reply, not at all! Because I think of this event-horizon as a series of like ghost-horizons and once you enter into history, what history is is the outer shell of the gravitational field of the attractor of the conrescence. In other words, history is the disturbance in nature which precedes the conrescence. It precedes it by only 50,000 years. A microsecond, so a geological microsecond before all life is melted down in the presence of the singularity, there is a curious interface zone that is not the singularity and not the absence of the singularity. It's the singularity in the act of becoming, and it only lasts, as I say, a geological microsecond, 50,000 years. But if you happen to be born inside that microsecond, then you have a very curious perspective on the phenomenon indeed because you observe it from within the shell of the historical vehicle.

Here's the point I want to make. If you have a universe like that, 72 billion years in duration, it will undergo half of its evolution in the last 30 seconds of its existence. Can you imagine? Now, this is what the scientists do, except they spin it around and that's why, I can't remember who wrote it, but the book called "The First Three Minutes." Stephen Weinberg's book, *The First Three Minutes*, a book about the first three minutes in the life of the universe, where he leads you through all this complex physics as matter is crystalizing out of hyperspace and all this stuff. All I'm saying is let's put the complexity in the more likely

end of the cycle. Let's put it at the end when after billions of years of evolution and all kinds of complexity and that sort of thing, everything comes together. So this kind of a cycle, if we were actually living in a universe like this, could completely unfold itself according to its natural laws, and yet provide a miracle, the miracle of the concrescence. That's why I'm so keen on boundary dissolution. The more boundaries that have dissolved, the closer to concrescence we are, and when you finally reach it, there are no boundaries. You are eternity, you are all space and time, you are alive and dead, here and there before and after. The singularity is a *coincidentia oppositorum*, it can simultaneously coexist in states which are contradictory. It is Thomas Aquinas's vision of God. It's something which transcends rational apprehension, but it gives the universe meaning because all process then can be seen to be a seeking and a moving and an effort to approximate, connect with and attend to this transcendental object at the end of time. One way of thinking of it is like those bar balls that they hand in discos that send out thousands of reflections off everybody and everything in the room. Well, think of the transcendental object at the end of time as that bar ball, and then those reflective twinkling refractive lights are religions, scientific theories, gurus, works of art, poetry, great orgasms, great souffles, great paintings. In other words, and we use this phrase, anything which has this spark of divinity in it is in fact referent to the original source of sparks of all divinity, which is the concresced, compressed, experience of life and mind after billions and billions of years of unfolding itself within the confines of three dimensional space. And you can make this vision your friend through psychedelics, because as I said at the beginning of this rave, you can see it from here! Of course, not if you have your face plunged in your stock portfolio, you're not going to see it, no! But if you will go up on the mountain and take 5 dried grams in silent darkness and pray through the night, you will absolutely guaranteed come into a sense of this thing. And it's real. And history is simply a perturbation on the surface of the waters of time as we approach the lip of this cascade into concrescence, novelty, and completion. And the psychedelics raise you out of the historical matrix and give you a sense of participation in this transcendental reality. It's the essence of religion, it's the essence of psychic balance, it's the source of shamanic power and mental health.

(2:11:30) break

...thousands of these molecules are arriving at the synaptic site of activity, elbowing aside the local population of the endogenous neurotransmitters, getting them out of the way, plugging themselves in to the receptor site, and beginning to lift the electron spin resonance level as in push them in new directions, and you can almost hear it doing this. And then beyond the hypnogogia there is the actual trip, and it usually is encountered, you have to go through what Merceiadé called "the rupture of the mundane plane." This means that the world has to, it like falls apart or explodes or settles down on you. There's a sense of a rupture of plane and then visually coherent, emotionally laden, information laden, high content hallucinations occur and many people have taken psychedelic drugs and never gotten past the hypnogogia. They don't know that there's something out there besides dancing mice and spinning geometric wheels and stuff like that, but beyond that you cross over. That's the typical model of a trip. Now, what happens with all of these things to greater and lesser degrees, LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, ayahuasca, and I've never actually heard an explanation for this. For some reason the experience comes in waves. There's the first wave, that makes sense, that's the drug taking hold. But why then, after 20 minutes of unbelievably outlandish hallucination will it like all stop? You know, and it's like a moment ago you were screaming for mercy, now you look around, you say "I'm down...am I down? I seem to be down." You know, sometimes you seem to come all the way down like on LSD, it's like it totally turns off something. And then about 5 minutes later it comes again and you get another wave. And if you've taken a really dedicated hit of

ayahuasca for example, you will get as many of 5 or 6 of these waves throughout the evening, and the first one is usually the strongest. If you take an effective but not strong dose of ayahuasca, you will get one pass and often, and then if you take slightly less, you'll get one pass and it will be weak. So if you take ayahuasca, at all times pay attention, because you may be looking at something thinking 'well this is not so interesting, i'm sure it's going to be much better in an hour', and actually you may be looking at as good as it's gonna get this evening. And psilocybin also comes in waves like this. LSD, very dramatically, DMT, not because DMT is one enormous brief wave. I mean DMT sort of brings all the issues together, and the way I think of these psychedelics experientially is as a series of concentric circles. Maybe like the outer circle is mescaline and the next circle in is LSD, and the next circle in is psilocybin, and the next circle in is DMT. It's almost as though the psychedelic experience is whatever drug or whatever substance you take, it leads you deeper and deeper in the same direction. And of course, with DMT you not only hear the aliens, you see the aliens, you not only see the aliens, you become an alien. It seems to be the most radical of all of these things in terms of the experience. It's also the most natural of all of these things. It also is the safest. It stands the ordinary standards of courage and risk on their head because here it is, it's the most terrifying, the most spectacular, and the safest. None of us, including myself, have fully come to grips with this paradox. We would rather do less safe less scary drugs I think. DMT is pretty impressive in most situations.

Woman's voice: Next, Terence responds to a question comparing meditation and the use of hallucinogens.

TM: Well no, I think they are completely different realms of human activity. I can't, I mean, meditation, you don't hallucinate, you don't... they say you do, but they aren't very convincing. And plus the monks then rush over and explain that you're doing it wrong! So, you know, what's the deal? Um, I think, i- i- if by meditation you mean lying down and closing your eyes or sitting up and closing your eyes a lot, I do that a lot and I like it. But I-I would never confuse it with the psychedelic enterprise.

Q: [???

TM: Pardon me?

Q: [??]

TM: I- It's only my opinion, but I really don't. I think that it's, that, that all of these spiritual techniques are not um, substitutions for the psychedelic experience but tradeoffs, you know? I mean organized religion is as concerned with controlling social groups as organized politics is and the, the uh, the visionary or ecstatic experience is unsettling to the religious mentality. You know, even among fundamentalist Christians uh, if you're not one they all seem more or less alike, but if you move into that world you discover that they are very strongly polarized in two directions: those who are scripturalists and those who are experientialists, the glossolalias, the speaking in tongues, the holy rollers, that sort of thing, and the scripturalists are very uncomfortable around the experientialists cuz to them it looks like demonic possession, and they get really agitated about that. Yeah, well I think that all of these techniques, like mantra, yantra, tantra, whatever, they work incredibly well in the presence of psychedelics leading me to suppose that what these are are tools that were developed in the paleolithic world of psychedelic magic and all we have now are these tools, but we don't have the original engine that drove them. Yes, I, I am very bored by spiritual practice unless I've taken a psychedelic, and then, you know, mantric chanting is beyond the power of mind to encompass or describe. Sex isn't bad either. [audience laughter] and uh, you know. It seems to be a general

functional enhancer, is what it is. Acoustical driving is also a tried and true tradition. But see, it's not about the exclusivity of method, but the combination of method. I mean, what you want to do is beat your drum while sitting in yab-yum while stoned on X while at the holy mountain while the astrological configuration is correct. [audience laughter] and then you know, you know, line it all up and then push it through. That's the way to do it I think.

Karen on creativity and hallucinogens.

TM: Well, it's again, it goes back to this function of boundary dissolution. Creativity, if you analyze what do, what do we mean when we're saying that it basically means being able to transcend the ordinary. You see it in a way nobody else ever saw it, whatever it is, so that's creativity. Uh, psychedelics by dissolving the boundaries of cultural expectation uh, let you see things in new ways. I was in a situation recently where it was evening and uh, silhouetted against the sky were flame cypress trees, but they were all black. And I was looking at them- I've seen flame cypress trees against twilight skys many times. You all have as well, and suddenly it was like there was this shift, and I didn't see it as a flame cypress tree anymore. I saw it as black dust pouring out of a certain point of the sky and cascading like a waterfall, and I was looking at three waterfalls of micro-fine black powder pouring out of points about 60 feet above the ground. Well, I was, I didn't even mention it to the person I was with, but I, I just noticed this psychedelic uh, perception. Uh, the other night, this was really interesting to me, the other night just as I was falling asleep a phrase came into my mind that I, I liked, but I didn't understand it. In fact, I didn't think it meant anything. I just thought it was an interesting phrase and, and I thought about it for about a minute and then it did the same thing that the flame cypress tree did. It went 'ploink' and this other dimension sprouted out of it, and I understood it and I thought this is a very interesting idea, and I've never thought it before. The thought was uh, if time were space, then history is a cobweb. That was all it was, but I don't take these leaps very often, so I was delighted uh, and because I knew a moment would come when I could lay it on a group of people like I've just done. [audience chuckles, Terence chuckles]

So it's a catalyst for cognitive activity. That's what the mushroom is. Dance, drum, song, painting, body expression, creativity and simply the passive act of understanding. It- this is what it does for us, and this is what we love to do. I mean we are creatures of the mind. You know, they talk about virtual reality as some future technology that's going to change everything. We've been living in a virtual reality for the past 6,000 years. I mean, look at cities like New York and London and Los Angeles. I mean, every- nature has disappeared. Everything you see is a human idea, downloaded into material existence. It's entirely virtual. It doesn't disappear at the punch of a dial, but it is as virtual as the virtual realities that will eventually be made out of, uh, out of light behind goggles.

Culture uh, the whole thing is that culture and language tend to become traps, and yet they can be the platforms for enormous freedom if you understand what it's all about, and what it's all about is you. You are the center of the mandala. You are not marginalized in any way, and the message that the culture gives us is that we are marginal. It doesn't matter whether you- if you've got a hundred million dollars. Fortune Magazine will inform you that so do ten thousand other people on the North American continent. There's nothing special about you, and so we are constantly- this is part of the democratic legacy. We are constantly told you're not special. Special isn't special. Anybody could do it. What the psychedeli- and so then when you look for guidance, direction, mentorship. We always look toward institutions. Well, I'll go to the university, or I'll go to the army or I'll do something. Somebody will tell me, will give me a larger purpose, but it's really yourself that is uh, the final arbiter, and if you keep yourself as the final arbiter, you

will be less susceptible to infection by cultural illusion. Now, the problem with this is that it makes you feel bad to not be infected by cultural illusion because it's called alienation. You know? But this is- I can't solve all problems. The reason we feel alienated is because the society is infantile, trivial and stupid, so uh, the cost of sanity in this society is a certain level of alienation. I grapple with this because I'm a parent, and I think anybody who has children, you come to this realization you know, what'll it be? Alienated cynical intellectual, or slack-jawed half-wit consumer of the horse shit being handed down from on high? There is not much choice in there, you see? And, and we all want our children to be well-adjusted. It's- unfortunately there's nothing to be well-adjusted to, so uh, that's a real problem.

And I really believe that extra-environmentalism, which is a nicer, though longer, word for alienation, is defensible and shouldn't be thought of as pathological. What I noticed in going to the Amazon and Indonesia and these places is that the person you want to get to is the shaman, and that the shaman is different from everybody else, like when you go in to an Amazonian tribe that's way up river or something the people behave the way you would expect naive, untraveled people to behave. They want to touch your Gore-Tex shoes and you know, look at your camera and look through your binoculars, and fiddle with the can-opener and all this. No shaman would ever stoop to such uh, behavior. A shaman is not- knows that cultures are provisional, and is interested in you as a person. The other people don't even see you as a person because you're huge, white, strange-smelling and incomprehensible. The shaman sees you as a person and it's because he is alienated. The reason shamans can do their magic is because they are outside the belief system. I really think that that's true. Everyone else believes, you know, that the guy in the other village can send the mojo and mess with you. The shaman knows that that's not quite how it works, and so then he as it were can go behind the board and fix the cultural TV that everybody else is just watching. So I think alienation, extra-environmentalism, shamanism, whatever you want to call it is simply individualism in the context of cultures that don't value individualism, and cultures don't. You know, it's said "nature acts to preserve the species, cultures act to preserve the illusions of the population." They're not interested in you if you're an Einstein or a Jackson Pollock or- unless they can fit you into the preestablished systems of commerce and canons of aesthetic order and so forth and so on, and then that's called 'being civilized.'

Uh, the question is "What's with licking frogs?" [clears throat] I'm not sure I got it right. Well, you know, you kiss a lot of frogs before you find a prince, you know. You probably lick a lot more. Toads, not frogs. Let's give the devil his due here. Toads of certain species produce a relative of DMT in large glands in their necks. Why this is is not clear uh, considering that this uh, exudate, or this um, material will kill a dog if a dog picks up a toad like that in his mouth. Within minutes. It's pretty spectacular. It's reasonable to suppose that then this is just a defense that has been evolved. Some of you may have seen the dinosaur in Jurassic Park that spits poison in your face. We're talking something like that. Uh, the toad creates this DM- or this 5-methoxy-DMT in this gland, and when glands are squeezed uh, it comes out on the surface of the toad's skin. It's a near-relative of DMT. My- speaking from my personal battery of many prejudices, I would say I don't care for it. It complicates my job enormously because people do this stuff and they think A, that it is DMT, or B, if they're slightly better informed, that it's just like DMT. IT is in fact chemically called 5-methoxy-DMT. However it is nothing like DMT. It's as much like DMT as radio is like uh, television, and that's where the difference lies. The 5-MEO does not trigger the most spectacular effect associated with DMT, which is these 3-dimensional crawling hallucinations that come out of the woodwork and reveal the true nature of reality to you. When you take 5-MEO DMT you have all of the physical presentation of DMT. There's a sense of uh, a kind of light anaesthesia through the limbs. There's a sense of falling forward into a void. There's a sense of losing body boundary. Now, at that point in DMT those symptoms would give way to the trip. At that point in 5-MEO DMT those symptoms give way to the

beginning of the comedown. And if you- people who have never taken DMT sometimes rave about 5-MEO and say, you know, this is the most astonishing thing I've ever had. People who are familiar with DMT can yawn their way all the way through it because you're braced for the DMT thing. I mean, you think "Oh my god, it feels just like it. It's gonna be upon me. Five, four, three, two, one...plus one, plus two, plus three, plus four, plus five. It's not coming in. It doesn't come in. And so uh, and then uh, 5-MEO is fatal in sheep as well as dogs. Spectacularly fatal in sheep, and so I guess if you're a sheep it's counterindicated. Uh, doesn't seem to be harmful in human beings, but with so little data available, I think maybe we should uh, you know, there are old psychedelicists and bold psychedelicists, but there are no old, bold psychedelicists.

Have I had any contact with the government? Uh, not exact- well, up until a week ago the answer to this question was yes, I mean no. When I got home from Esalen the last time there was a really funny letter which I haven't quite figured out how to respond to. Dear Mr. McKenna. I'm an officer of the California State Police fascinated with DMT and recently read your interview with you in the San Francisco Chronicle. I wonder if you would be willing to meet with me and have coffee and discuss this at your earliest convenience. So [clears throat] I- what I did was fairly chickenshit actually. I, I found a copy of Food of the Gods and I sent it off, and I said "This is my latest book" or "this is a book of mine. It deals in part with DMT" uh "give it a quick read and if you're still interested in a get-together, call me." So uh, I, I think- I don't know exactly how to interpret this. I've always felt that the reason the government left me alone was because I'm an intellectual, and in the United States that is the most pathetic, ineffective, and-form of non-entity known to exist.

I think that the, you know, the greatest period of American creativity in literature and in other areas too arguably was the- uh, in the 20th century was the 20's, and that's because an expatriate community conducted a critique of American society from a foreign vantage point. In that case Paris. And I think that in spite of the Clinton Hiatus, that the politics of light have not yet come to settle on the land of Jefferson, and that we should be prepared uh, on a moment's notice basically to, yes, to decamp to Prague and uh, and conduct all this from there. Also, you know, Prague was the capital of European civilization before the Thirty Years War, before the rise of modern science. Uh, it's an Italianate city untouched by either world war. It's uh, it's a b- a beautiful place.

[End of this recording. It does not seem to include the whole talk.]

Original Transcription by:Eva Petakovic

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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The World Could be Anything

July 1990

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Psychedelic Salon](#)

We closed last night, or we discussed yesterday, a bumper sticker that I saw driving down here, and the bumper sticker said, uh, "Man thinks. God knows." And, then, someone had bought a second copy of the bumper sticker and cut it apart and reversed it and put it under it, so it said, "Man thinks. God knows. God knows Man thinks." [Audience laughs]

Now, it seemed to me there was a lot going on in [audience laughter] what was attempting [Terence chuckles] to be expressed here. First of all, something about God, that God knows, that God exists in a superior state of intellection. Plato said, "Time is the moving image of eternity." My notion of God's cognition is simply the regarding of all points in the spacetime continuum with equal clarity. God *knows*. The limited program of knowing is thought, cognition. Man *thinks*. This is what man can do in imitation of the all-knowing and omniscient example of God. But, implicit is that this is somehow in a- a limited undertaking, this thinking of man. And some of you may recall the famous comment of Pascal that, "Man is a reed bent by the wind." And then, Pascal added, "But a thinking reed."

So, then, the second half of the conundrum was that, "God knows. man thinks." Now this, I thought, was very interesting, because it seems to imply a relationship between the limited project of knowing, which is human thought, and the completed project of knowing, which is omniscience. *God knows Man thinks*. In a way, what this is saying, is that God knows that man is making his way toward God. God knows man thinks. God knows that man is participating in the same project of being, that God regards from this higher dimensional space. And, so, then, this meditation on these four lines closes with a *recurso* which returns you then to this realization that what we are talking about is 'the project of knowing', Heidegger called it, carried out on two levels: on the level of omniscience and on the level of limited being.

So, then I th-- meditated on this after we discussed it yesterday, and I thought tonight it might be interesting, then, to [takes drink] talk about the thinking project of-- that is the essence of humaneness on one level -- the thinking project which has as its vector, um, I call it 'concrecence' following Whitehead's Neoplatonism or one could call it "God." Teilhard de Chardin called it "the Omega point." But, the, the, the, um, process by which knowing transforms itself from, uh, some kind of k- aboriginal, uh, apperception of the possibility of God into union with God, and the process that lies between these two points, is the story of the evolution of human consciousness, or more properly speaking, human history.

And, the interesting thing, I think, about, uh, the Western religions, generally, is their insistence on, um, the tangentiality of God and history, that God was something to be realized in the life of each individual, but that there was also somehow a collective drama of redemption, that was stretched out over a very large period of time, and history then becomes the theater, you see, of the struggle between good and evil, for the redemption of the human soul. And, from the modern point of view, or – let's be more frank, from *my* point of view [Terence laughs; audience laughs] – this is, uh, primarily something to be analyzed within the context of language, and our myths about it, and its evolution, and its potential future evolution.

So, I -- and this is in my personal life, the, the great mystery to me, because I feel that I'm -- my intellectual style is that of a scientist, and I take very seriously science, and yet my – not only my faith, but my, uh, experience – has led me to believe that the world is not a construction of space and time and matter and energy. That that mapping is, uh, insufficient. That the world is instead some kind of a, uh, linguistic construct. It is more in the nature of a sentence, or a novel, or a work of art, than it is in the nature of these machine models of interlocking law that we inherit out of a thousand years of rational reductionism. That the world only behaves as science says it should when we confine our engagement with it to information that is at a great distance from us, like reading the New York Times every day.

If you read the New York Times every day, few miracles will occur while you are engaged in that activity. Essentially, what is happening is you are getting your cultural programming for the day, all your switches, if any need being- need to be reset by cultural values, are reset at that point, but when we recede into what I call 'the primacy of immediate experience', the, the rules and models that we've been handed by science, and, uh, what's called, common sense, are just totally found to be inadequate.

And, I don't mean when we perturb ordinary consciousness with psychedelic drugs. I'll speak about that in a moment. But, I simply mean when we go into solitude, when we go into wilderness, when we endure great travail in our lives, or when we put ourselves in extraordinary, alien circumstances, then, it's as though the membrane between the ego, and... something else, which we could call our guardian angel, or the Jungian unconscious, or the Overmind, something like that, the membrane grows thin, and the world loses its, um, – [snaps] what do I want to say? – its mundane character. And, instead, things previously mundane, begin to become charged with psychic energy. They become carriers of meaning. *They become carriers of meaning.*

This is very peculiar. A- At a low level, it's not so astonishing. It's a kind of a generalized opening to the world, because everything is imbued with significance. That tree, that person, that greeting, that conversation, is imbued with a kind of depth and significance that is satisfying. It's like living deeply. Living deeply. But, this phenomenon can proceed to a deeper level of introspection and relationship to the exterior. And, in that case, then, this significance which everything was previously seen to have, begins to concreate or densify, and the world begins to dissolve into animate intelligence.

Now, at this point, um, if you didn't bargain for this, you're probably very concerned about your mental condition, and if you aren't, your friends are, because what you're saying at this point is, *the rivers talk to me, the trees whisper in my ear*. What you're recovering is the meaning, that's all. The meaning that is self-evident in nature, but that we blocked. The meaning is so pregnant in everything that it can actually articulate itself in your native English tongue.

And, uh, you know, talking rocks, talking trees, talking boulders, we define this as, uh, pathology. It

means, uh, in technical jargon, a severely diminished ego is in danger of overwhelm-ment by, uh, material from the inchoate and disorganized unconscious. Well, but what's actually happening, is that, for the first time in somebody's life or experience, they are *meeting* the resident meaning in reality, with its force unblunted by, uh, conditioning and denial.

And, um, this is some kind of a linguistic process. We and all nature, I think, swims in some kind of sea of signification of which we are in the same way that the amphibians were able to drag themselves out of the primitive oceans of this planet on- into air and exist in a completely different dimension; *we*, whether grandly or perversely - the verdict is not yet in - we dragged ourselves out of the sea of telepathic interconnected signification that united all life, and we exist, panting and pop-eyed, in this other dimension called History.

Ego awareness, presence of self, sense of loss, anticipation of gain, all of these, uh, dimensions of experience, really, have been added to what was previously the animal Tao - just the howling at the moon Tao of animal existence. And to this, we have added, you know, a dimension of future anticipation: a dimension of regret, a dimension of: how do I make choices? and so forth and so on.

Um, there is not a -- I don't put a- a moral, uh, judgment on this, but it has to be said, that in the tradition of the West, this has been viewed classically as the "Fall." This is the Fall into names instead of realities, into, uh, constructs of reality rather than reality itself. And this has now been, uh, inculcated into each and every one of us, as, you know, both the glory and the, and the trauma of human existence which is our extraordinary ability to reside in and be in language. [Takes drink]

So, for instance, you know, I've made this example before: a child lying in a crib and a hummingbird comes into the room and the child is ecstatic because this shimmering iridescence of movement and sound and attention, it's just *wonderful*. I mean, it is an instantaneous miracle when placed against the background of the dull wallpaper of the nursery and so forth. But, then, mother or nanny or someone comes in and says, "It's a bird, baby. Bird. Bird!" And, this takes this linguistic piece of mosaic tile, and o-places it over the miracle, and glues it down with the epoxy of syntactical momentum, and, from now on, the miracle is confined within the meaning of the word. And, by the time a child is four or five or six, there- no light shines through. They're- they have tiled over every aspect of reality with a linguistic association that blunts it, limits it, and confines it within cultural expectation.

But, this doesn't mean, that this world of signification is not *outside*, still existent, beyond the horizons, the foreshortened horizons of a culturally validated language. Well, so then, classically, the path through this has been through use of psychedelic plants, or, uh, some form of ascetic practice, or fasting, or prayer and meditation... whatever, some way of breaking through. And, it is literally presented as a breaking through, a penetration to another level, that culture is an imprisoning bubble of interlocking assumptions, that are like, a, um, a collective hallucination. I mean, I hate to say it because it's a recursive metaphor, but culture is like a delusion of some sort. Because, it isn't true, of course. It isn't true, if you're, uh, a Witoto. It isn't true that you came from the piss of the anaconda god when he had to get out of his canoe at the first waterfall. That's not really *true*. But, that's your cultural myth and you live inside it.

Our cultural myths, that the world is made of things called mu mesons and anti-protons is, of course, not true either, but it's a linguistic construct that we culturally validate and live inside, and these cultural myths give permission for certain things. F- Basically, they give permission to ignore certain kinds of realities.

So, our language is uniquely set up to ignore, for example, the suppression of femininity. It's also uniquely set up to suppress the statistically, um, uh, infrequent. We really have no patience with that. We have an assembly mind mentality. What we're interested in is that things run smoothly. One can imagine a completely different mentality that cared nothing for statistical norms and *only* pursued the miraculous. I mean, India, in a way, is that society. They don't give a hoot for, you know, how it works on the humdrum level, but the alien, the peculiar, the other, the unexpected is revered, adored even.

So, these kinds of cultural values shift. But, now, *now*, we are in a global culture with the combined understandings of five, six, seven hundred language groups and half that many literatures being poured into a global database where *some people* are assimilating enough of this to begin to play their part in the creation of, uh, a kind of global meta-program for language. And, uh, I think it's interesting to talk about the form that this may take, because I see this as our, uh -- this is not our salvation, but, this is the angel of our salvation. If we can transform and remake language, then we can have the conversation that we must have in order to save ourselves. But, we cannot save ourselves until we have a language adequate to the problem that we're facing. And, uh, English just won't do it because English is a language of subject opposite, uh, subject/object opposition. It's a language of a past, present, and future, and the kind of world we're living in is not that kind of world.

Now, toiling in the background, misunderstood and, uh, unnoticed for centuries, have been mathematicians, laboring to create, what they call, meta-language of de- of description, that seem to them very satisfying, to the rest of us, very bewildering. And, a question worth asking is: why is it that this language, mathematics, which we have so much trouble understanding, seems so *tremendously* powerful when it comes to the description of nature? This is not a trivial question. Why should numbers, in a sense the most abstract quintessence of the human mind, have anything whatsoever to say about the topology of three dimensional space and time? It isn't clear.

What I believe is happening - and we talked about this last night, generally, in the form of a conservation of novelty throughout the history of the universe, but I tended, last night, to present the universe as a material thing. I spoke of atoms compressing into molecules into organic creatures into thinking beings with civilizations and so forth. But, another way to think of this is a kind of take a spiritual x-ray of the material universe, and then say, "If matter is merely the vehicle of the transformations that we call the life of the universe, well then what is the inner dynamic composed of, *what is it* that is striving, what is it that bootstraps itself forward, what is it that self reflects?"

Well, I think what it is is it's actually information. Information is some kind of, um, ontological modality that is capable of organizing *any* system, in which it inhabits, into self-reflection. So, you pour information into matter and you get back DNA capable of making life. But, you know, there is a persistent spiritual tradition backed up by psychedelic and shamanic experience that says that there are also hierarchies of incorporeal and disincarnate intelligence that is nevertheless highly organized.

Well, until the advent of the computer, I think we were just pretty much at loss to form any conception, whatsoever, of how you could have consciousness without, uh, a body. But, e- the computer shows us that you *can* have large scale systems which have degrees, and then, you know, there's a long philosophical wrangle which we can just stamp as 'for another time', degrees of sentience in operating systems. So, then, it seems to mean that information is the thing which uses matter, uses light, uses spirit, uses whatever it can put its hands on to organize itself into higher and higher levels of self-reflection.

Well, then, to what end? I mean, what is all this? Is it just an innate drive toward totality? Or, is it a process which exists completed in some higher dimensional space and *we* are somehow *trapped* in a lower dimensional matrix and we have to go, uh- we have to endure the illusion that it is incomplete? I mean, I don't have answers for these things; this is the business of theologians, basically, to tell us where we are in this universal machine. But, I think that, uh, what *we* can do to enrich our, uh, experience and to feed data into our heuristic models, is to begin to think in terms of language as the material that we need to work with instead of, uh, public opinion or matter or even energy. It's *meaning* that we need to coax into our lives, number one.

As meaning enters our lives individually, we became- we become more capable of raising our voices, both in joyous song, and in political protest, if necessary. My whole shtick, and the whole shtick of the psychedelic experience, I think, is: *reclaim immediate experience*. Realize that *you* out-vote all parliaments, police forces, and major newspapers on the planet, because, who knows, they may be illusions. Complicated phenomenological forms of analysis can be carried out to show that their existence is in considerable doubt. But, if you carry out this phenomenological reduction, you will discover that it reinforces the notion that *you* must actually exist and be real. So, therefore, you start from *that* -- that nub of immediate experience and real being -- and extrapolation outward should be very provisional.

I mean, I don't know, uh, how Buddhism handles this, my- I, I, um, I grant you all a strong possibility of existing, but I'm not nearly as sure about you as I am about me. [audience laughs] And, I don't think any of you should be any sure- more sure of the rest of us than yourself. I mean, the world could be anything, you know? It could be a solid state matrix of some sort. It could be an illusion. It could be a dream. I mean, it *really could be a dream* ...

So it, uh, it pays to stay on your toes, I think. In practical terms, what does all this come down to, besides that we should speak from the heart, clearly, and with our minds engaged? Well, I th- I think that, remember I said we should see language as the stuff with which we work, rather than matter, and that means, uh, creating a technology of the say-able, making the complete understanding of new puns a national priority on a par with weapons development, it means exploring, uh, the real implications of substituting *Finnegans Wake* for the Constitution, this sort of thing. Because, what we're doing, you see, is-is-is pulling the beard of the linear print-heads, who really believe all of this stuff, who really are lost in the labyrinth of the political errors of the last 500 years. It isn't going- we can't, uh, overwhelm them by the force of arms, nor should we wish to. Uh, they can actually be *teased* out of existence, because they themselves feel their position to be so ridiculous.

It's very interesting how, uh, the way the collapse of our enemy in the Soviet Union has exposed the absurdity of our previous positions. All our previous positions are now exposed as absurd, but n- people don't draw the obvious conclusion. It must also mean, then, that our present position is absurd [audience laughs]. And, so, it's tremendously liberating. Our culture is ruined. It's, uh, it's a disgrace from which we can now simply walk away. Well, then, the question is: into what? And, I believe that our persistent fascination with psychedelic states of mind since prehistory forward has been because, in the psychedelic state, from the, you know, from the very beginning, there was an anticipation of the very end. And the very end still lies ahead of us.

What it is is that our nervous system is in the process of evolving us through a linguistic transformation

where language, which at the beginning of the process was something that you heard, at the end of the process becomes something that you actually *see*. And, this simple shift from seeing to hearing is the key to our being able to finally recognize each other and communicate.

Print and linearity and what's called 'ear bias' for language is what has shattered our sense of ourselves as a collectivity. A positive way of putting it is to say, it's also what created the idea of democracy, individual freedom, labor unions, the vote, all of these atomized notions of human obligation and political participation arise out of print. But, so do ideas like that we're all alike, because letters from printing presses on pages are all alike. The idea that products should be mass-produced out of mass-produced sub-units. This is a print-head notion. It could never have occurred to anyone outside of a printing press culture and never has. These ideas have imparted to our existence a tremendous material opulence and intellectual poverty and spiritual uniformity. And, now, *literally*, we have to illuminate our civilization. We have to take its shoddy, spiritually-empty, Bauhaus skeleton and illuminate it, psychedelice it, let a thousand paisleys bloom [*Audience laughs*]. Uh, in other words, release the design process from a commitment to material values. Well, how can you do that, because the bottom line of material values *is* the bottom line? It costs.

The reason we build in the Bauhaus style, for whatever reason we got into it, we now build in that style, because it's the cheapest around. And, once you start adding filigrees and changing things, costs soar. How can you do that in a civilization with a cult of democratic values, individualism, and print-created linear uniformity? Well, the only way you can do it is, you have to drop design costs to *zero*. The only way you can do that is if you build virtually.

This means, you build in an electronic dimension that is added on to ordinary cultural space like an orthogonal dimension. In other words, it's like a TV that you walk into; it's called cyberspace. And, in cyberspace things are built out of light. So, it costs as much to build Versailles as it costs to build a hamburger stand, because Versailles and the hamburger stand are just two programs that, uh, look exactly the same on disk. So, what this means is that the previous set of class-created values, based on the acquisition and control of matter, begin to break down. This is already happening in America, on one level, where, you know, to live as a middle-class person is to live on a better level than the mogul emperors ever dreamed of. I mean, what mogul emperor could stride to his refrigerator and see cases of French mineral water [*audience laughs*], juices from the South Seas, pomegranates from South America. Eat your heart out, Mogul-deli! No chance!

So, um, in a sense we're beginning to create this leveling, but we have created them by looting the material resources of the rest of the world. Conceivably, it can be created in a virtual space, where we would all, uh, live, in *this* world, a rather monkish existence. But, you know, there's that wonderful passage in *Finnegans Wake* where he says (he's speaking of the red light district in Dublin which is called Moicane), and he says: "Here in Moy Kain we flop on the seemy side, but upmeyant Prospector you sprout all your worth and you woof your wings. If you want to be phoenixed, come and be parked." Well, he was advocating death as a solution for life's problems, so if you want to be phoenixed, come and be parked. Uh, my solution is not so radical. I think if you want to be phoenixed, come and be parked at your local virtual reality arcade. And, then, you can be phoenixed in, in several ways.

Well, some of what I'm saying here, is, uh, is facetious. We talked last night about Stan Tenen's "wonderful object." For those of you who weren't here, this is a man, a cabalistic scholar, who has

developed a piece of sculpture such that when you illuminate it from a certain angle, the Hebrew letter *aleph* appears as a shadow. And, then you move the light slightly and *aleph* turns into *bet* and then you move the light slightly, and so on. *In order*, his sculpture produces all of the Hebrew letters as shadows from this beautiful form, which he calls "the lily." And, uh, uh, it ties in with, uh, an experience I had, but, well, first let me talk a little bit more about this "lily" thing that Tenen has discovered.

He also made one for Demotic Greek, which, you know, for those of us who thought it was proof positive that Hebrew was the language of God, this was a real blow to the chest. But, because he did one for demotic Greek, too, and it works just as well -- implying, and, uh, he's working on Arabic -- implying that perhaps such forms exist for all alphabets. And, so then I was thinking about this last night, and I said, "Well, if there's a sculpture in four dimen- in three dimensions that throws the two dimensional alphabets, then obviously, in a higher dimension, there must be a form which throws into lower dimensions the sculptures that make the alphabet."

So, that means all alphabets, all letters, lead back to a hyper-dimensional surface of some sort which can probably then be described with some kind of weird fractal algorithm. And, so then I thought, 'Wow! This is a pretty Hebraic vision of what's going on here'. We have the alphabets of local languages being generated from higher dimensional objects that are three dimensional that are then referent to still higher dimensional objects that- through which the light of God's love passes, scattering out into the radiance of what can be said. And, uh, in a way, this is sort of my vision of the millennium, that we will be re-soared into the Word. You know, the whole story begins *in principio et Verbum, et Verbo caro factum est* – *in princip-* in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh. The *whole cosmic drama* is the mystery of what it is for the Word to be made flesh. *Language* is seeking to birth itself into the domain of concrete existence. That's, *obviously*, what "the Word made flesh" means! And, uh, it seems to me, that if the Word can be made flesh, this implies a reciprocity; It implies that the flesh can be made Word.

And, this brings us back to, what I was talking about at the very beginning of this evening, which is the curiously literary nature of reality. That it's much more like a- a novel by Thomas Pynchon than it is like an equation by Ilya Prigogine. And, why is that? Is it because, in fact, the flesh *is* Word? And that understanding this, is the real task of uncovering our spirituality? Somehow, it's a riddle, it's a conundrum, it's a koan. If we could correctly understand this, if the world did not disappear immediately, at least it would roll around in a palm of your hand like a spinning marble as the I Ching promises. It's something about the recognition of the primacy of the Word, that history is the process of the descent of the Word into concrete expression - I didn't say matter - and that our relation to this retro-flexive process is an ascent into the Word, a going toward the approaching mystery, and a meeting there, in a domain of unknowability, essentially. I mean, this is the 'casting into being' that Heidegger talked about, this is the 'going to meet the stranger'. This is 'the flight of the alone to the alone', that is the driving force of Plotinus' mysticism.

Well, that's really all I have to say about that, so [audience laughs], uh, let me see what time it is. How am I doing? [Other voice: Ques- Question and Answer] Yes, let's take some questions, if there are any.

Question: Do you know how to use *Amanita muscaria* medicinally and shamanistically without killing yourself? [audience laughter]

Terence: I can tell you were following my argument with bated breath [clears throat]. Carefully!

Because, it's dangerous. It's dangerous because it's seasonally variable, geographically variable, and genetically variable, and that's enough variables that you should be very careful with what you're doing.

Uh, generally, I don't recommend it. It's v- the attention that has been given to that mushroom is, to my mind, entirely out of proportion to its cultural importance. This is because Gordon Wasson fastened in on it with a tenacious will as *soma*. He decided that it was *soma*. Are you all up to speed on what we're talking about here? *Soma* was this mysterious, ecstatic, hallucinogenic plant that the Rig-Vedas were basically composed about. The major subject of the Rig-Vedas is *soma*. The ninth mandala of the Rig-Vedas is a paean of praise to *soma* that exalts it above all the other gods, and no one knows what *soma* was. And, the descriptions are puzzling. It seems to have been -- it's didn't have leaves; it had yellow flowers. It grew in mountains. And, they speak of pressing it. It was prepared some way. It was pressed, it was filtered, and then they talk about this golden liquid which they drank.

And, Gordon Wasson, because of the importance of the Indo-Aryan people who wrote the Vedas for connecting up all of the history of what archeologists call Old Europe with the Neolithic middle-east and India, it was very important to try and understand what *soma* was. But, the problem that has bedeviled everyone who was an enthusiast for *Amanita muscaria* as *soma* is that it's a bad trip. It is not *reliably* an ecstatic intoxicant. In fact, it's fairly reliably a bellyache. And, uh, people have pounded it with milk curd. There was a whole school of thought which said that the enzymes active in raw milk will decarboxylate *muscarine*, the poison, into *muscimol*, the hallucinogen. But, you know, this didn't stand the test of human trials. It didn't appear to be true.

Then, other people said you have to dry them for months or smoke them over a fire. Again, this is- doesn't seem to be reliable. So, Wasson went to the grave. He, in his last book, *Persephone's Quest*, he referred to *Amanita muscaria* as the supreme entheogen of all time, which was just a completely wrong-headed judgment, I believe. And, this was from the man who discovered the true psilocybin mushroom cult in Mexico! There was an angle on all this which Wasson completely overlooked because of his bias towards certain languages, and *that is* that along with all this Indo-European Vedic Hindu material, there was a Zend Avestan literature, based around *haoma*, the same stuff, same word. And, from there, Flattery argues that, uh, it was *Peganum harmala*, that it was harmaline, that it was not a mushroom, that it was a higher plant in the, uh, *Zygophyllaceae*. And, uh, I think, probably, he's right, actually. It's a very interesting book. Apparently, uh, w-uh, in the Avestan classical period, no one would have dreamed of having a spiritual experience without resort to drugs. They just put it very plainly. They're the most 'matter-of-fact' people. These texts are fascinating! And -- but, they don't devalue it. They say, you know, "Here's our map of the spirit world entirely based on our drug experiences. And, here are the drugs we use. And, to see these angels, you must use this drug. And, to see these angels, this drug," and so forth.

We don't really know what these drugs were, because the-the etymologies are lost, but harmaline figures very strongly in all of this. And, of course, harmaline is a, uh, neurotransmitter present in human metabolism. In fact, I didn't get into it tonight because I was trying to keep it off the biochemistry and that sort of thing, but, this transformation of language from something heard to seen that I was talking about, I believe, is a one or two gene mutation. That's all it would take.

Because, in the human pineal gland, there is a compound called adeneroglumerotropine [sic--adrenoglomerulotropin), that's what the enzymologists call it. But, when you show it to, uh, a plant

biochemist, he says it's 6-methoxy-tetrahydro-harmaline. And, so it is! Adeneroglomerotropine [Adrenoglomerulotropin] and 6-methoxy-tetrahydro-harmaline are the same thing. Well, it's a psychedelic harmine alkaloid similar to what's in *Peganum harmala*. It, uh, could be converted to DMT by a simple methylation! Well, a one gene mutation would make a methylation possible!

Attention, consciousness, cultural values, we don't know how many times *since* the invention of language there have been significant mutations in the n- in the, uh, chemistry of the nervous system that have created significant changes in cultural programming. I mean, doesn't anyone find it a little odd that the laws of perspective were discovered less than 400 years ago? I mean, what the hell was wrong with people before that? How can you *discover* the laws of perspective? I mean, I find that not credible for somebody to say that the laws of perspective were *discovered*. It's always seemed weird to me! It's as though, uh, you know, there was a shift, a very subtle tweaking of the processing of visual space itself necessary to be able to do that. Yeah?

Q: Um, you had spoken about the Word, and the Word made flesh, and, um, Dorothy Sayers wrote a book called *The Mind of the Maker*, in which she discusses the Trinity, as, uhm, really an image of what the creator process is all about. And, where the father is having, like, a great idea for a play. He's the Father. The Son is making the thing happen on the stage, bringing it into the world, and having it 'made flesh'. And, then the Spirit is the response that you have to that completed product, and how all three of them really beget one another and they nurture one another. Um, and she talks about people who have these problems with scalene trinities where there is someone who, let's say, may have only the Father, only have a *great* idea, but be unable to make it into something that's physically real on a stage. And, I wondered if you could pick that up, uh, that story.

Terence: Well, yeah. I mean speaking to it, generally, I think if you think of history, as this kind of a process, Western history, as the manifestation of, uh, the demiourgos, Ialdabaoth, Jehovah, and then you get this middle-declension in the Christos, and then this peculiar and misunderstood promise of the redemption by the Holy Ghost. Uh, McLuhan, who's a very interesting figure, a-as, you know, a radical thinker in communications theory and a devout Catholic, believed that, uh, the Holy -- the manifestation of the Holy Ghost was electricity. And, and to him the ringing of the planet by electronic media was the unfolding arms of an archangel.

I mean, he literally saw electricity as God's love made manifest, and-and he may not -- he hasn't been proven wrong yet. I mean [woman laughs], it may yet knit us all together, and make us one, and lift us off and send us to the stars. It's a wonderful stuff, electricity. You know, for, uh, I-I like to talk about it, because for *thousands of years*, electricity was this stuff which some people knew about, and what they *knew* was that you skinned a cat, and you--and you dried its skin in the wind, and then you got an amber rod, and you -- a polished rod of amber, and then you would go into a dark room with your cat skin and your amber rod, and you would rub it back and forth like this, and then you would pull the amber rod away from the fur, and you would see miniature lightning storms of static electricity. And, that was *it*; for thousands of years that was it.

And, then, in the 17th century, make it the 18th century, uh, people invented what we called Leyden jars,

which were this tricky way of storing this stuff, so that you could store up a lot of it, and then in a dark room you could discharge it across a gap with this snap, and from *that*, you know, I mean, you talk about a shamanic invocation [some laughter], from *that*, you know, we light cities, we smelt steel, we sink shafts miles into the earth, and it's just this little elemental, that we were able to coax into becoming our friend! Well, who knows how much of this sort of thing there is.

According to McLuhan, *that's the major thing*, and 'the electrification of the body', you know, this is a theme you get as early as Whitman: '*I sing the body electric*'. You get it in Steven Vincent Benét in his poem 'John Brown's Body' where he says, '*I see the human body cold electric rage*', and he pictures it as a superstructure. Uh, electricity as information, as the Logos, as the freeing and re-ef--rarefaction of thought. It all, uh, it's credible. It's credible. I mean, when you think about electricity, *in and of itself*, uh, as modern inventions go, it must be the most benign there is, because other than seating criminals in electric-wired chairs, it is not a weapon of mass destruction. You cannot rain it down on your enemy's cities. Uh, it's, uh, pure energy in the service of light, one thing, and information. And, it's generated--I don't know how many of you know this, but it's generated out, uh, stable magnetic fields.

When--when we were in the 5th grade, we made engines by wrapping, uh, nails with wires and setting them, delicately balanced between permanent magnets, and, you know, you coax this stuff into being. *We* take it for granted, because *we* don't understand it, but if you're down close to where it's coming into being, it's like coaxing some kind of demon out of the matrix and into the service of thought and light. *Very psychedelic*.

Q: So, how do you see the body being coaxed back into the Word?

Terence: Well, I don't know, It's a hard thing to picture, isn't it? Um.

Q: Well, maybe it's like those Tibetan letters that start becoming real and vibrating...I don't know.

Terence: Well, there are a number of -- I think we have like pieces of the puzzle, but we don't know quite how to arrange them. One is, Virtual Reality. Do you all understand this concept? Because, I've mentioned it and it's quickly becoming central to my references. Virtual reality is this technology now being developed where they give you a helmet and a body glove, and when you look in the helmet, you see another world, and you're in it. And, you can walk around and pick things up and open doors and -- and it's all sustained by computers, but the illusion is very real, and they're only at the beginning of the process of creating this illusion.

Okay, so that's a technology sitting off there with a potential application. Another is nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is making things very small. And, there's a whole enthusiasm for this. And, people who, uh, you know -- I talked yesterday about, uh, being down at the *baz*, and watching the stratocumulus clouds move over the ocean, the number of water droplets in a stratocumulus cloud exceeds the number of people in the world! Therefore, if we were the size of water droplets, we could simply exist in that kind of a, of a cloudscape! Well then, okay, so that's another technology that's sitting there.

Another is,uh, this wonderful fantasy that I told you, some of you about a few days ago, where we see a man walking on a beach, and the man -- his planet is perfect. Its oceans and its atmosphere and its glaciers

and its -- and its equatorial forests are all in balance. And this man is naked, except for a thread, like a Hindu thread that crosses him. And on this thread, there's sufficient space for as much as a thousand or more small beads. Each bead is a doorway into a technological potentiality that is entirely suppressed in three dimensional space. In three dimensional space, there is just man and nature. But, when this man closes his eyes, there are menus. And, these menus lead to other menus. In other words, the culture, the entire culture, has become virtual.

This is one possibility, that the culture be made virtual. Another possibility, which is sort of the reverse of that, and there's a company on the peninsula trying to do this, is to place a textual reality behind apparent reality. So that everything is a button, you know. It's, it is what it is, but it's also a button. So, I look at this, the question forms in my mind: 'What is this?' The 'What' pushes a button, and textual accompaniment informs me that this is cypress wood, cut three years ago. [Audience laughs]. Do you see how -- what this would do to the world? Now, we're well on our way in the project of making the Word flesh, and the flesh Word. We, at least, have them lined up with the Word behind the flesh, and in some cases, the flesh behind the Word. Embedded. Embedded. Ontologically arranged in a situation of mutual reinforcement.

Oh, okay, another, uh, technology is, um, some kind of, uh, some kind of, uh, severing from the physical connection. And, then there's a lot of debate about is this possible: the old consciousness without an object riffraff? Well, it has to be explored. It can't be known. The other thing is, the persistence of the intuition of non-material worlds inhabited by self-organizing entelechies of one sort or another seems to imply that some kind of dematerialization is, at least, theoretically, possible.

Uh, I've talked a lot in these circles about the-the questions raised by the ecstasis that comes with DMT, where you actually break into a world where there are, what I call, 'autonomous self-transforming machine elves', but what we have discussed in terms of are these the 'sprites' of classical European mythology? Are they dwellers in some parallel continuum, unsuspected by any of our sciences or ontologies? And, then, still more unsettling possibility, are these--is this somehow an ecology of souls? Is the eerie connectedness to the human dimension that these thing have, because, in fact, this is a stage of some sort, in human existence? If, what God coming[?] tangential to history *means* is human beings unraveling the mystery of physical death, then, I think that would be a sufficient fulfillment of the, uh, sort of dramaturgical [sic] demands of a dénouement: that *we* stride towards the mystery, the mystery strides towards us, and everything is resolved in a revelation of the understanding and meaning of death.

I--this kind of thing makes me very uncomfortable, uh, perhaps because it's fairly feeling-toned and emotion-laden. Uh, I can ima--I- it doesn't trouble me to imagine contacting, uh, informational beings in a parallel continuum. But, the notion of encountering an ecology of souls, I think, is hair-raising if you take it seriously, because, uh, even the most spiritual of us are so deeply programmed by the assumptions of scientific materialism that I think something like that on the short term here and now really gives us pause.

Brother David ...

Q: Yes. In this process of, uh, great return to the Word in flesh, where do you see the function of the poets?

Terence: Well, you know, people have talked, Robert Graves and others, about what he called an *Ursprache*, an original speech, and Celtic poetics somewhat assumes this. I think this

language that is seen, is the project that the poets should take very seriously. We need to not simply make better poetry; we need to make poetry of an entirely different order, and we will recognize it when we see it - not when we hear it. It will not be heard. It will be seen. To carry language from three -- from two dimensions into three is the task of the poet and the rebel in the 20th century.

And, there is a model for this which I will explain to you so that it doesn't seem so outlandish and so we can see that nature once again has sanctioned this move, and that is: A long time ago, 700 million years ago, more or less, the great Tree of Life made a primary division between the vertebrates, the creatures with backbones, and the invertebrates. Evolving along the invertebrate line and reaching the greatest, uh, brain size and complexity of nervous system on the invertebrate side of things, were the cephalopods. These are the squids, and the benthic octopi, the eight-armed ones and the ten-armed ones. You may not realize that that they were actually mollusks, related to escargot. So, they are an extremely primitive creature from the point of view of those of us with backbones and binocular vision and frontal lobes, and so forth and so on

Nevertheless, the interesting thing about benthic octopi is that they can change their color over a wide range. Now, you may have heard this fact and assumed that it had to do with camouflage against their surroundings so that they can avoid predators. This is not what it's about at all! Octopi change color, and they can also change the shape of their skin from smooth to rugose and wrinkled, and then what's called pileate, little points all over it. They can go through all of these color changes and texture changes. And, octopi have extremely well-evolved eyes. In fact, evolutionary biologists always compare the eyes of octopi to human eyes, as an example of what is called 'parallel non-convergent evolution' because clearly the two are not related. But, the argument is made. You see, they solved the problem the same way in two different places, so it's a very neat example of convergent -- non-convergent evolution.

Um, but what's interesting for our discussion is the mode of communication of these things. They become their linguistic intent. This repertoire of blushes, dots, stripes, traveling fields, color changes, and then, because they are soft bodied, they can quickly reveal and conceal all parts of their body very quickly. So, if you watch an octopus in communication, its surface texture is changing, its color is changing, and it is hiding and revealing, it's dancing! And it's a dance of pure meaning perceived visually by the object of its intention which is other octopi. So, compare this for a moment to our method of communication. We use rapidly modulated small mouth noises. As primates, we have an incredible ability to make small mouth noises. We can do this for up to six hours at a stretch without tiring. [*Audience laughs*].

No other thing that we can do approaches the level of variation with low energy investment that the small mouth noises do. A person using a deaf and dumb language is exhausted after 45 minutes. But, the problem with the small mouth noises form of communication is: I have a thought. I look in a dictionary that I have created out of my life experience, I map the thought onto the dictionary, I make the requisite small mouth noises, they cross physical space, they enter your ear, you look in your dictionary which is different from my dictionary, [*audience laughs*] but, if we speak what we call 'the same language', it will be close enough, that you will, sort of, understand what I mean.

Now, if I don't say to you, "What do I mean?," you and I will go gaily off in the assumption that we understand each other. But, if I say to you, "Did you understand what I said then?" You say: "Yes. You meant that you don't want to sit with Harry and Sally because their pending divorce makes you uncomfortable." So, "No, that's not what I meant ." So there's a misunderstanding because the dictionaries are not matched.

Now, notice what's happening with the octopi – there is no dictionary. Both parties are seeing the same thing because my body is my meaning. I become my meaning, and you behold the meaning I have become. I am like a naked thought. Not even a naked nervous system. More naked than that! I am like a naked thought, in aqueous space, unfolding in time. I maintain, this is why octopi eject clouds of ink, it's so they can have private thoughts! [Audience laughs]. Because, if you can be seen, you can be understood! Well, uh, this is a perfect model, uh, condoned by nature for the kind of transformation that we want to lead our culture toward. And I don't think it's that outlandish.

Our previous animal totems were chosen unconsciously, and were rather unfortunate, I think. I take the totem of the 19th century to be, um, the horse, expressed as the steam engine. And the totemic animal of the 20th century is the raptor, the bird of prey, expressed as supersonic high performance fighter aircraft, which is just, you know, the leanest, meanest machine you can get together these days. But these, uh, mammalian and avian images are too close to the rapacious heart of the primate inside us. Embracing an image of the soul, like that of the octopi, is a permission for a strange and alien kind of beauty to be led into our lives, and these things are strange and alien, let me tell you.

The situation I describe with these octopi was, uh, coastal, shallow water octopi. So called circolittoral octopi. But, they have also evolved into the depths. The so-called abyssal octopi that exist below 1500 meters in the sea where there is absolute darkness. And to carry their intention to communicate into that darkness over the past 700 million years, they have evolved phosphorescent organs, and have covered themselves with lights, with eyelid-like membranes that can be rapidly blinked and flickered, so that when you descend into the abyss, you then see pure linguistic intentionality among the cephalopodia because they have become what we aim to become under the wise leadership and stewardship of George Bush; namely, a thousand points of light! [Audience laughs] [Terence laughs]

Is this guy for real? Was it Flanders Fields, armies clash by night and that whole business?

Q: Was it only beholding one another, or is there, maybe, a mechanism at work, like when yawning is contagious, that it's not only watching, but actually, perhaps what happens to your body has transmitted it to mine?

Terence: Well, this is fascinating stuff to study. The biologists who are studying these things are actually creating a grammar, and a syntax, and they are beginning to understand what certain things mean. And the level of meaning. There's a wonderful book called "Communication and Non-communication Among the Cephalopods", and it makes the point that, communication is a very double edged thing. You want to communicate to somebody, but usually, you -- your message, it's also important that your message not be picked up by other somebodies. So, there can't be just a full-on drive toward apprehend ability.

There also is a counter-veiling force toward concealment, obscurantism, double entendre, so forth. You

know someone said that language is invented to lie. Well, in a way, that's true, because of the problem of non-communication. As soon as you have something to communicate, there are places that you don't want the message to go. And so this creates a very interesting problem. If I were 20 years old, I'd go back into marine biology just to spend time with these things. They're quite amazing and they have very large brain capacity. I'm -- could be -- I think John Lilly was all mixed up to look for a mind in the water in that it was mammalian chauvinism, that drove them to dolphins and, and whales. That, maybe they are intelligent, but the language feats, when you see videotape of these cephalopods, you realize you are in the presence of an opera!

Q: What kinds of things are they communicating, besides maybe fear, or...

Terence: Well, they are communicating -- they have elaborate sexual displays, and it's a very tricky thing, sexuality among cephalopods because the male usually doesn't survive the encounter. So, a lot of time is spent getting it right, before you commit yourself [*Audience laughs*]. So, they have very complicated courtship thing, and, and one of the things that's always said about them, is that, uh, you know, I mean, every child's book will tell you this about octopi -- they're shy creatures. Well, guess why! It's because they wear their heart on their sleeve! Everywhere they go, other octopi can tell exactly what they're thinking and feeling, so they live alone, and they only get together on special occasions - for communication, basically. And, uh, and the repertoire is as complex as human language. So that they could be discussing the equivalent of, uh, Spencer's epithalamium or something. I mean, we don't know what they're talking about!

Q: Do we have a sort of Rosetta Stone you know about?

Terence: We have a primitive grammar, but, uh, it's only for one species. And, uh, I'm not really interested in what they're saying, because I think it would only make sense if you were an octopus. But I'll be that, uh, -- you see it's a model for us. Wouldn't we like to dance for each other and be perfectly understood, and we -- wouldn't we like to see someone dance and to know that this was their mind and their body, somehow at one? In a way -- God, does everything go back to everything? -- in a way, this is the theme of skinny legs and all! This is the theme of the Dance of the Seven Veils! Octopi do it. Nubile Hebrew princesses do it. Everybody dances toward the truth, dropping veils as they go, and then, of course, the 'nakedness of truth' is a cliché.

Q: You mentioned, um, bringing it to a practical level. [*Terence: Do that, yes!*] You mentioned the hallucinogenic experiences, in one, in one way, that um, I don't think I accelerated anything in my life; I feel that I just have just aligned with it, moving a freer way, so, I wouldn't -- I wouldn't seek out a kind of hallucinogenic experience in order to accelerate or to get more transforming; I do it because it's enjoyable. It's, um, it's truly exciting and passionate, and I do seem to transform in the process and grow. Are there any ways, or other ways, that you might suggest? And also, I'm interested in sound which is -- you're talking about going from sound to light. [*Terence: Mmhmm*]

And I have a way of starting to where I am or, again, following my excitement which happens to be making tones. And I've reproduced experiences such as, uh, very simply, like a hot tub, where I make a tone and another person has an experience of being in a hot tub. They go from being very cold, to being very comfortable, very vulnerable, very open, very loving. And, uh, it occurred to me that I can reproduce a mushroom experience or, um, you know, somebody's drugs you mentioned earlier in the Amazon ... [

Terence: 'That you could reproduce it with sound?'] I could make tones and, such as in Tibet, they can, you know -- tones are, you know -- can bring physical objects into being, and move energy and such... That's my exploration, I was wondering if you had any ideas on them.

Terence: Well, something sort of along that line, um, that I've worked with for years and observed for years, and I find very interesting is, you know, in South America there is this drug, plant-drug of shamanic tradition of great age, called ayahuasca, or yagé. And what seems -- it's -- it's chemically a little different from anything we've discussed, and so, consequently, neurologically a little different. When this -- when this drug was first discovered in the 20's, they called, uh, they isolated a white crystal from it, and called it *telepathine*. Because they believed that these deep forest Indians were having some kind of state of group-mindedness behind this. Well then, and that was all very exciting that there was a drug called telepathine, but then later they found out that the drug had already been discovered in another plant, in the *Peganum harmala*, the *soma* plant I mentioned, and had been named harmine, so that the rules of nomenclature went back to precedent.

But, persistently, since then there have been reports of group states of mind caused by this drug. So we explored this in the 70's fairly thoroughly. In '71, '72, again in '76, and again in '81. And, um, different things were going on. First of all, the people down there who take this drug, are into what they call, *icaros*. Icaros are magical songs, i.c.a.r.o.s., icaro, and the accomplishment of a shaman is judged by how many of these magical songs he has. And they're taught to you by the spirits, they say. But the interesting thing is, is that the icaro, within the culture, is criticized as a work of visual art. It is not thought of as a song. It is not listened to. It is looked at. And when people criticize it, they criticize its form and its color. And in taking this drug, we discovered that there is something about it, it -- it seems to dissolve the cultural barrier between the synesthesia of sound and light. So that you can make a tone, like mmmmmmm and it emerges as a streak of cyan blue, that just stands there in space as long as you... and it clearly, this stripe is related to the sound. When you stop the sound, the stripe disappears. Well then you discover that when you modulate the sound, the color is modulated. Well, then you begin breaking it up and you discover that voice has become transformed into an instrument for manipulating light.

And, again, it has to do with these drugs which are very close to neuro-transmitters, just one gene away from being naturally produced. It's as though, this is a biochemical place where, what we experience as the evolution of language and our abilities, our cognitive abilities to integrate and express language are happening. So that, uh, you know, I think this should be looked at. I think maybe the path to the to the kind of visual lang -- visually beheld form of communication that I talk about, is to look at shamanic cultures where this may have been happening all along, and people assume it. It is true. When you go up these jungle rivers to the really bare-assed people, that um, they, the elders really do get together and take this stuff. And they do have a collective, complex collective image of what should be done for the good of the group! It's not exactly a vision of the future. It's more complicated than that. Because they also have a vision -- a three dimensional vision of the kinship structure of the village, of a whole bunch of clan and sib-group associations to the plants and animals in the forest which are hidden from the eyes of the casual visitor.

They are -- it isn't that so much that they predict the future as that they go into the higher dimension of their own cultural information space, and from there they make decisions. Where should we hunt? Who should we make war on, or not make war on? Where should we move? Um, you know, and even decisions about triage of children, and that sort of thing, since that does go on. So, uh, you know, how much of

human navigation through history has been done by processing ordinary cultural information on a higher dimensional level by perturbing neurological functioning? I mean, if there is any angle that would have given us an edge, we would have found it, and we would have used it. And I've discussed in other lectures, the way in which small doses of psilocybin improve vision, and how this would have fit back into primitive hunter-gatherer system. Very simply, they would have just outbred everybody not using mushrooms because a pair of chemical binoculars, in a hunting environment is an adaptive advantage that could not be ignored! And so forth, and so on. Yeah.

Q: By, copying your hand movements, it helps me see what you were talking about like in a virtual reality, and that's what they do in neuro-linguistic programming and the people who've made fire-walking popular, like, Tony Robinson's country where neuro-linguistic programmers...

Terence: Maybe neuro-linguistic programmers could study octopi? If I had eight hands I could really get gestural. I, I... a funny experience involving octopi. I know a woman, I'm sure she would not begrudge me this description of her. She's a very frank exhibitionist. I mean, this is the woman who at every party takes her clothes off and dances on the table tops and so forth. She's an inveterate exhibitionist and she's totally frank about it. And I, uh, I had been to the Monterey aquarium, and seen the octopus there. They have a giant octopus. Well, most of the time this guy just hunkers low, and he's a sort of off in the corner, one beady eye checking you out. But, of course, because octopi have this mode of communication, uh, they're very set up to respond to visual display. So, this woman walked pass this tank and this octopus practically leaped into the air. It came down out of the tunnel. It was pressing against the glass. It was beating against the glass and what it was, was one exhibitionist recognizing another [*Audience laughs*]. I mean, it was just clear across the species' lines. The power of neurosis knows no barrier [*Terence and audience laugh together*].

Q: But she also had almost orange hair, very red, bright hair that the sunlight ...

Terence: That's true, it was probably sending a message to this octopus that was, uh, obscene, in the very least.

Q: Was she dancing?

Terence: No, she was just trying to be unobtrusive, but this woman being unobtrusive is a show stopper.

Q: Terence, when you talk about language, or the word use in the way people talk, to me that sounds like a whole body language. And, and when you go into print, I'm making all these unconscious assumption values of what you're saying is true partly based on your body language?

Terence: True, but body language is probably, is --, has really faded for us. Probably because of the telephone. And the telephone really staunches that. And, uh, yes, it would be... there... we probably were much more linguistically rich in the past. We muted ourselves.

Q: Terence, just to let you know what happens when you discover sparks nowadays. When I was a kid, I was a science buff, and I made a Tesla coil and so on. Before that, I accidentally induced a spark in a transformer. Unexpectedly, the spark jumped and it was sort of my first religious experience. I saw this spark and all sorts of things burst loose in my ten year old head. Two years later the F.C.C. triangulated my

house for admitting a spurious radiation because, you know, you have to regulate that sort of thing. And, I felt sort of like someone put a big pot lid over my head, and between that and being suckered into that moody vital institute with their big Tesla coil movie, [Terence: Yeah, right?] just left a bad taste in my mouth. I'm glad we're onto other things now besides sparks and amber. [Terence: Oh, okay!] A bitter experience.

Terence: There is a notion, you know, in Latin spark is as, is *scintilla*. This word exists only in English in the legal phrase 'there was not a scintilla of evidence against him'. But in alchemy, this idea lived on for a long, long time, and there's a whole literature of causing the scintilla and seeing it like you did, so you were unconsciously caught up in an alchemical archetype.

Well, why don't we knock off, I think that's enough for this evening ...

Original Transcription by: [Nenad Djordjevic aka junglewizz]

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]: Kevin Whitesides

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The World Wide Web and the Millennium (w/ Ralph Abraham)

1 August 1998

Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, New York

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Time and Mind

May 1990

Location, City, New Mexico

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Scribd transcription](#)
- [Erowid transcription \(used here\)](#)
- [Other links](#)

The Tykes...

Well, I suppose it's an invitation do describe a DMT trip, which is never to be passed up. Because I think, I think what we're talking about here is a continuum, I'm talking about a very narrow band of experience. A continuum of experience that comes through tryptamine hallucinogens: DMT, Psilocybin, and the DMT-Harmine combination... and that's it... Mescaline doesn't, isn't what I'm talking about. Ketamine certainly isn't what I'm talking about. Datura certainly isn't what I'm talking about. And some of these are plants, and some of them are synthetic drugs, but it's a very narrow spectrum of these highly visionary ones, and then the most visionary, the quintessence is DMT. I mean, I think that DMT is as intense as any drug should ever get; I don't ever want to be more loaded than that. I don't think you can be more loaded than that and come back. You know? What happens on DMT for me, and this is based on, you know, composite image of many experiences, and I've confirmed it to some degree with other people, but I was talking to somebody the other day, somebody who had just done it, and I said, "what did you think?" and they said: "It's the most idiosyncratic thing there is." and I thought, what a wonderful description, that's exactly what it is - it's pure idiosyncraticness. It's so idiosyncratic that's all there's there - it's like idiosyncrasy without an object, is what DMT is.

When you smoke this, the onset is very rapid. 30-45 seconds, you know? There's this feeling which comes over your body - half arousal, half anaesthesia. The air appears to suddenly have been sucked out of the room because all the colors brighten visibly, as though some intervening medium has been removed. And then there's a sound, like a piece of bread wrapper or cellophane being scrunched up and thrown away. A friend of mine says this is radio-entelechy leaving the anterior fontanelle at the top of your head. [laughter] I'm not sure I want to line up with that... but a membrane is being ripped; something is being torn. And then there is a total (what Mircea Eliade called in a wonderful phrase) "a complete rupture of the mundane plane". [laughter] You know? That's like a hit and run accident except the car came from hyperspace, you know? A complete rupture of the mundane plane. And you fall back into this hallucinogenic space, and what you see is a slowly rotating red and orange kind of thing, which, over the years we've nicknamed, uh, 'The Chrysanthemum'. And it's.. this represents some kind of disequilibrium state that has its roots in the synapses. What's happening as you're watching this Chrysanthemum is that millions and then hundreds of millions of DMT molecules are rushing into these serotonin bond sites in the synaptic cleft and disrupting

the serotonin and switching the electron spin resonance signature of these neural junctions in this 'other' direction. And this is taking, you know, 30 or 40 seconds, and there's this rising hum, this nnnmmmmMMMMMMMMMM^^^ that rising tone; the flying saucer tone of Hollywood B movies... you actually hear this thing.

And then, if you've taken enough DMT (and it has to do entirely with physical capacity: Did you take, did you cross the threshold?) something happens [clap] which... for which there are no words. A membrane is rent, and you are propelled into this 'place'. And language cannot describe it - accurately. Therefore I will inaccurately describe it.

The rest is now lies. [laughter] When you break into this space, you have several impressions simultaneously that are a kind of gestalt: First of all (and why, I don't know) you have the impression that you are underground - far underground - you can't say why, but there's just this feeling of immense weight above you but you're in a large space, a vaulted dome. People even call it 'The DMT dome' I have said, had people say to me, "Have you been under the dome?" and I knew exactly what they meant. So you burst into this space. It's lit, soft lighting, some kind of indirect lighting you can't quite locate it. But what is astonishing and immediately riveting is that in this place there are entities - there are these things, which I call 'self transforming machine elves', I also call them self-dribbling basketballs. [laughter] They are, but they are none of these things. I mean you have to understand: these are metaphors in the truest sense, meaning they're lies! Uh, it's a jeweled self-transforming basketball, a machine elf. I name them 'Tykes' because tyke is a word that means to me a small child, and I was fascinated by the 54th fragment of Heraclitus, where he says: "The Aeon is a child at play with colored balls" ... and when you burst into the DMT space this is the Aeon - it's a child, and it's at play with colored balls, and I am in eternity, apparently, in the presence of this thing.

There are many of these things, but the main thing that's happening is that they are engaged in a linguistic activity of some sort, which we do not have words for, but it's visible language. They are doing the visible language trip. When you break into the space, they actually cheer! The first thing you hear when you pass across is this 'hhhyeaaaaayyy' - you know the Pink Floyd song? "The Gnomes have Learned a New Way to Say Hoo-Ray"? This has gotta be what these guys were talking about; how else could it be? It doesn't make any sense otherwise.

[laughter]

You break into this space... the gnomes say hoo-ray! And they come rushing forward and they, and, and the thing then that happens is... and people say "is there risk, to DMT? it sounds so intense. Is it dangerous?".

The answer is: yes, it's tremendously dangerous; the danger is the possibility of death by astonishment. [laughter] And you must prepare yourself for this eventuality, because you are so amazed. Amazement seems to be the emotion that has torn loose and swamped everything else - I mean astounded? When was the last time you were genuinely 'ASTOUNDED'? I mean, I think you can go your whole damned life without being 'ASTOUNDED'... and this is astonishment, you know, raised to the N-th degree to the point that your jaw hangs...

I mean you're like this:

And it raises issues: like you say, "Jesus, ah, huhh ... I must be dead!" And you, and the weird thing about DMT is it does not effect what we ordinarily call the mind. The part that you call "you" - nothing happens

to it. You're just like you were before, but the World has been radically replaced - 100% - it's all gone, and you're sitting there, and you're saying, "Jesus, a minute ago I was in a room with some people, and they were pushing some weird drug on me, and, and now, what's happened? s s is this the Drug? Did we do it? Is this it?" And meanwhile, these things are saying: "Do not give way to amazement; Control your wonder." In other words, they try to bring you down. They say, "Don't just goof out on this; pay attention. PAY ATTENTION... to what we're doing." "OK, what're you doing?..."

[laughter]

Say this is what we're doing, and then they proceed to sing objects into existence. Amazing objects. Objects that are Faberge Eggs, things made of pearl, and metal, and glass, and gel, and you, when you're shown one of these things, a single one of them, you look at it and you know, without a shadow of a doubt, in the moment of looking at this thing, that if it were right here, right now, this world would go mad. It's like something from another dimension. It's like an artifact from a flying saucer. It's like something falling out of the mind of God - such objects DO not exist in this universe, and yet, you're looking at it. And they're clamoring for your attention. " 'k at this! 'ook at This! Look at THIS!" and they pull these things... and each one, you look into it and it begins to open into this wonder that you must fight. You say "No, don't look at it, look AWAY from it!" because it's so wonderful that it's swamping my objectivity and destroying my ability to function in this space. Well, then they say "do"...

And the objects that they make have the peculiar ability to themselves generate this linguistic 'stuff' which condenses as other objects. So beings are making objects, showing you objects, the objects are turning into beings and making other objects, these beings and objects, they jump into your chest - and then they jump back out. They jump into your body and disappear into your body, and then they jump back out, waving these things, just throwing this stuff in all directions. They are - the word that comes to mind is: they are Zany. It's like a Bugs Bunny cartoon, uh, gone mad. And all of this energy - they are elves. This is what elves are. It's this wierd thing, where they love you - or they like you a lot, but you can tell that their sense of humor is Weird. And that you must be very careful of the deals you cut with these things. and in fact I've spent so much time trying to understand what is this. It has different kinds of feelings about it. One is (and this really threw me for a loop when I figured this out) after many many of these trips, and analyzing this place I kept going to, I finally realized: "this place is... somebody very weird... it's their idea of a reassuring environment for a human being! It's like a playpen. It's this warm. well lit, secure, womblike environment, and when I break into it they these things, the elves and the toys, are toys! These are things to amuse me. The way you would hang, uh, cubes and blocks above a crad... a playpen, you know? Because children are supposed to coordinate shapes and bright colors. That's what these things are: they are toys to try and get me to coordinate my perception in this place. It's a holding area of some sort - someone's created this and is watching me.

OK - that's one metaphor for what it is. Another metaphor is... I took this stuff to Tibetans, to the Amazon. I gave it to Tibetans, they said "this is the lesser lights, the lesser lights of the Bardo. You cannot go further into the Bardo and return. This takes you as far as you can go." When I gave it to shamans in the Amazon, they said "It's strong - but this is, these are the ancestors. These are the spirits that we work with. These are ancestor souls. We know this place." Well then, the third and final metaphor, because when you're in that place you have such complex emotions - very complex emotions - something weird is going on with time, because you perceive your body image as infantile. You seem to have a very large head, and a very body, and very short limbs. And, you know, I dunno what that's about.

But they're, uh, this...

Then the last facet of it that I want to mention is: there is this 'you must be on your toes' thing - don't let these guys get behind you. They are tricky. And their elfin humor may not be your idea of a good time. [laughter]

And I said to myself, where have I had, before, this feeling that I'm having now. It's a feeling of being with people that I can't trust, but who want to help me, and who seem to be trying to, uh, cut a deal. That was the word that gave me the clue: "deal". And then I remembered, "I know where I felt like this - I felt like this in the Crawford Market in Bombay when I had a kilo of Gold in my pocket and I was trying to trade it for hashish, and I was surrounded by all these Arab hash traders, and they were saying "we're your friend, just wait, don't worry..." And say "yes, I KNOW you're my friend and I'm NOT worrying, but, you know, brbrbrrr... perform!" And so then I said: "Aha the creatures in the DMT flash are Traders..." They're Traders. And that's what this weird feeling is - it's a business environment in there. [laughter] We're having a business meeting. They're saying... and then the objects! Then I remembered- the objects... they're trade goods! They're saying: "How about thissss! How about This!".

What do they want? What do I have that they want?... They're meme traders, is what it is. And I think that what they wanted, and got, and took - without bothering to even say a word about it - was everything I knew about the "I Ching". And they're like art collectors. They say "well, the idea is primitive, and primitive in its execution, but with a certain kind of internal integrity that one really must respect..." So they're primitive art collectors, and what they left me with, then, was, uh, my own, you know, their model of time. Which is the closest thing to one of these hyperdimensional objects. The objects themselves cannot exist in this world. But the blueprints of them can. And this afternoon, if the computers are up and running, I will run through this 'time idea' with you.

And I think I will be able to convince you that it has a weirdly crafted patina to it, that, the feeling is it didn't spring from human minds, it, it is a creature of another kind of mental universe. And I think, you know, aside from the crisis on this planet and our own personal difficulties this is the real challenge of the psychedelic thing; is to meet the inhabitants and trade with them. And set up a relationship. The notion traders. They can trade hyperspacial notions from across the cosmos. And this may be all the extraterrestrial contact that we're, uh, going to be vouch-safed, you know?

Original Transcription by:

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Time and the I Ching (on 'Thinking Allowed' w/ Jeffrey Mishlove)

Day Month 1988

Location, City, State

Description

- [Youtube Video](#)
- [Original Transcription](#)

[Intro Music]

[Opening Text]:

Thinking Allowed Productions Presents

Inner Work Videotape

Time and the I Ching with Terence McKenna

Jeffrey Mishlove: Hello and welcome, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we are going to examine the nature of time and the relationship between time and the human mind. With me in the studio is Terence McKenna, a specialist in shamanistic traditions and also hallucinogens. Terence is the co-author, with his brother Dennis, of *Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide*, and also *The Invisible Landscape: Time, Hallucinogens, and The I Ching*. In addition, he is the developer of a computer software program called Timewave Zero and is the founder of Botanical Dimensions, a non-profit organization devoted to preserving hallucinogenic plants as used by native peoples throughout the world. Welcome, Terence.

Terence McKenna: It's a pleasure to be here.

JM: It's a pleasure to be with you again. You know, shamanistic peoples and, uh, early peoples throughout the entire world have all been involved in systems of what we call divination. It could be throwing bones, or using the I Ching, or looking at the end trails of animals, or clouds of smoke, but each system seemed to involve some sort of a unique way of linking the human mind with-with the very nature of time itself in order to understand cycles of time and understand, perhaps even to predict, the future.

TM: Yes, well it's certainly true that, uh, preliterate and aboriginal peoples have had an obsession with time, however it's an obsession shared by the historical societies as well. Time seems to be the dimension about which we have the greatest anxiety, perhaps because it's the dimension into which we see with the least clarity. Uh, numerous peoples throughout the world have dealt with this lack of clarity, uh, as far as time is concerned, by developing various methods of divination or sortilege, as it's called. The Maya, to

this day, practice sortilege of a very complicated sort in the highlands of Guatemala. Uh, African peoples have complex divinatory systems ...

JM: We don't even have to mention the enormous sales of the I Ching and tarot decks and astrology products here in the United States.

TM: Yes, the I Ching is the divinatory system *ne plus ultra*. It seems to, very early, uh, have captured the imagination of western orientalists James Legge and Richard Wilhelm. Their translations made it available to the Western world, and the psychologist Carl Jung, in inventing and discussing the phenomenon that he called synchronicity popularized the I Ching by using it as an example of this particular phenomenon.

JM: And, I know in the literature today, especially in trans-personal psychology, there are many psychotherapists who use the I Ching as a regular part of their practice. And, parapsychologists have, have found striking evidence that the [stutters] coincidences of tossing the coins in the I Ching do have, uh, psychological validity.

TM: Yes, well the thing which amazed me about the I Ching and caused me to become so deeply involved with it is this fact that it seems to *work*, against all rational expectation. The carrying out of this, uh, random ritualistic activity seems then to give a reading which is, in fact, applicable to the unique situation. Now, Jung's explanation of this was what he called, uh, acausal connected or synchronicity. This was simply the idea that it was possible for there to be a coincidence of, uh, congruence between an internal state--a psychological state--and an exterior event. Uh, an obvious example of this would be: you think of someone you haven't thought of for years and an hour later, in the mail, a letter arrives from them. Jung was fascinated by these kinds of apparent, uh, coordinations of the interiorized psychic sphere and the exterior, three-dimensional, objective world.

My approach was, uh, went somewhat deeper than Jung's in that I felt that, eh, uh, I had looked at many divinatory systems with the notion that I was looking at, uh, artifacts of *culture*, uh, productions of the human mind that were to a large degree arbitrary. My involvement with the I Ching led me very slowly and reluctantly to the conclusion that this was not simply a product of a cultural mentality or the stance of a particular people in a time and a place, but rather that the ancient Chinese had somehow gotten a leg up, even on modern physics, and had produced a theory about time that was in fact objectively, uh, possible to correlate with our own experience. In other words, a theory of time much more akin to a physicist's, uh, description of it than a shaman's description of it. And, uh, you mentioned in your introduction this Timewave Zero software that we've developed. We, what we've done is simply to formalize the notion of the Tao to make a deep study of the mathematics inherent in the structure of the sequence of the I Ching.

See, most people are quite familiar with the fact that the I Ching is composed of hexagrams; hexagrams have six lines; they may be broken, they may be unbroken. Less well known is the fact that there is a very ancient tradition, even before the Han dynasty, of a particular sequence being *the* correct sequence. It's called the King Wen sequence. And, while it has been agreed upon by all scholars commenting on the matter that the King Wen sequence is somehow primary, no one had ever explained how it was ordered.

JM: You mean, the order of hexagrams from 1 to 64.

TM: That's correct. *Why* is the first one the hexagram with all solid lines? *Why* is the second one the

hexagram with all broken lines? And so forth, and so on. I carried out, uh, an exhaustive mathematical analysis of the properties of the King Wen sequence and reached a number of conclusions, uh, such as, it is not a random sequence; it was very, very carefully constructed, uh, to conserve certain mathematical goals. For instance, uh, the number of lines that break as you transit from one hexagram to another is arranged and controlled in such a way that when you're all done you have a ratio of even to odd of three to four. Uh, yet this is achieved without any breakages, uh, first order of different breakages, of magnitude five.

JM: Now, you're beginning to lose me a little bit.

TM: Yes, well what, eh, what this all means very simply is that the King Wen sequence was, uh, constructed by minds the equal of research mathematicians working in the world today.

JM: It sort of reminds me of the, uh-uh, builders of the great Greek temples who used the, uh, mystical rectangle.

TM: Proportion and symmetry [JM: Mmmhm] seems to be the central concern here. You see, we have in-inherited from our fascination with Eastern philosophy the idea of Tao. And Tao, in the East, is a concept which antedates the introduction of Buddhism into China by many, many centuries. Tao is the notion of a flux, which comes and goes, a transient medium which builds structures up and pulls them apart according to *its* internal dynamic. Now, because these notions were introduced to the West by mystics and philosophers and people with an interest in metaphysics, it wasn't immediately grasped that a philosophy of this sort *could be* a mathematical formalism. That, if we're talking about a medium which comes and goes, we're talking about a wave-mechanical phenomenon. Well, science in the West for the past 150 years has developed a powerful set of techniques for dealing with wave phenomenon.

JM: They--and, you seem to be suggesting, then, that the 64 hexagrams of the I Ching, in their mathematical relationship one to the other as you go through the sequence, describes a waveform.

TM: A waveform which is experienced in the world by human beings as time and history. You see, it's almost a though, uh, in Western science, uh, we're pretty confident that there are approximately 100 elements, physical elements, to matter.

JM: That's right, different atoms.

TM: That's right, that are incommensurable, they are somehow primary. The Chinese looked not at the world of matter, energy and space, but the world of *time* and carried out a very rigorous analysis of their own perception and discovered to their amazement that *time* is actually composed of elements.

JM: And, as we have then, if I can extrapolate from what you are saying, the periodic table of-of elements in Western chemistry which defined not just 100 elements but a relationship between them, cycles and patterns ...

TM: Bonding relationships, that's right.

JM: Families of chemicals [TM: That's right], so we have in other words families of ways of looking at time.

TM: Well, the hexagrams *are* the elements in the Chinese physics of time. They, uh, created a science that reinforces primary perceptions that we all have but for which we have no science. For instance, I'm sure you've noticed that every day is rather like every other day. Nevertheless, I'm sure you've also noticed that some days are radically different than others. Well, this sameness-but-different rule applies on all levels in a temporal hierarchy. Centuries are rather like each other, and yet occasionally a century will come along that is quite anomalous. We call this sameness-and-difference nesting fractal. This is a new branch of mathematics, and quite simply what the Chinese discovered circa 3,000 B.C. was the fractal nature of time, that the rules of expression of temporal elements which govern the rise and fall of dynasties also govern the rise and fall of love affairs and moods.

JM: Now, you're describing this in mathematical terms, and I'd like to come back and ask you to define the term fractal in a moment, but I-I'm also curious about how you seem to be going back and forth between something purely quantitative and something qualitative.

TM: Well, that's the interesting thing, you see. The Chinese understood that these temporal elements were, in, in a sense, uh, creating interference patterns with each other, much in the way that pure tones struck out on a keyboard will, through their interference with each other, create a melody. So that, for instance, uh, if I find myself sitting in Hadrian's hamburger joint enjoying a burger, by this theory, there would actually *be* a relationship between *that act* and the emperor Hadrian's campaigns in Britain, uh, before the fall of the Roman Empire. This is the amazing thing which James Joyce used and understood in the construction of his literary works, that a man, leaving his home in Dublin on a day in 1905 to buy kidneys to fry for breakfast is, in some mysterious way, actually repeating the peregrinations of the hero Odysseus around the Mediterranean in his campaign to destroy Troy and return to his faithful wife. Allegory is what we're talking about, but allegory has never been taken seriously by science; analogical reasoning is definitely *déclassé* in the better laboratories. But, in this ancient Chinese way of looking at things, everything was caused by its analogical resonances with past and future events which had the same temporal elements embedded in them. Now, it's difficult to go into this without resorting to, uh, at least charts and diagrams if not puzzling equations with sigmas embedded in them.

JM: Well, let me step back for a moment, uh, because we've been talking very intensively about the I Ching, which is *one* system, a very popular and profound and highly respected system of this type, but there are other comparable systems; for example, there is astrology.

TM: That's right. Astrology is another one of these systems that seeks to define pre-potent relationships in nature that can be known by man in order to ease movement into the future. Uh, the success of astrology, I think, i-is, uh, born out by its persistence; it is, after all one of the most persistent of human intellectual tools. It was developed four or five thousand years ago. Um, but it--I think what troubles modern human beings about astrology is that it is a mechanistic system, it's like a group of cogs and wheels which all can turn at given rates and therefore their end states can be predicted.

JM: But, then we're dealing again with the nature of [stutters] nested cycles.

TM: Well, we have a strong intuition [JM: Mmhm] of free will [JM: Yes], and this is why I think quantum physics, with its probabilistic notion of, uh, of determinacy, has been so attractive to the modern mind. My conclusions looking at the I Ching have been that it is not possible to know the future, for if it were

possible to know if life would be a determinism and thinking would be divorced from meaning, and we would be out of business. Uh, but what is possible to know about the future is levels of novelty which future states will fulfill by the happenstance of unpredictable events. Now, this is a formal way of saying, uh, 'we know where the road goes, but we don't know what the scenery looks like'. I think, where the future is concerned, we can know where the road goes [JM: Mmhm], but we cannot know what the f-what the scenery will look like. People who have looked at my theory have said 'Well, these time maps that your computer draws, you're trying to get rid of the future'. And, as a matter of fact, a map of time no more eliminates the future than a map of South America eliminates the need to go there. It simply gives one a better handle on one's destination.

JM: Now, you mentioned quantum physics a moment ago [TM: Yes], and, in-in quantum physics there are a number of different notions related to the future. One is a notion of multiple universes, another [the Wheeler notion]--yes--and, another is a notion of-of pro-everything is probabilistic and while we can't know with any certainty what will happen, we can state with various probabilities what-what the possibilities are. Uh, how does this relate to-to your view of time and the future?

TM: Well, I think that at the macro-physical level things are rather rigidly determined with the exception of living organisms. So, my interpretation of what biology is and how it relates to quantum physics and time is really biological systems are, uh, amplifiers of quantum-mechanical indeterminacies. They are a way of taking the smidgen of indeterminacy that exists at the mac- at the micro-physical level and coaxing it into a kind of macro-physical cascade which is life, consciousness, and self-reflection.

JM: And, you see this described in the I Ching?

TM: Yes, I think the I Ching is an abstract modeling system for breaking this down to its simplest elements and then seeing how it works. Now, we're accustomed to thinking of science as linear progress from the distant past to the present. What I'm suggesting is that, at least in the matter of time, uh, the Chinese of the pre-Han period had a much more *true* and formally, uh, applicable notion of time than we ourselves do [JM: Mmhm]. We have failed in our effort to assimilate time into our physics, because of our obsession with matter and the release of energy.

JM: Now, there are some scholars who suggest that the African, uh, Yoruba people which their system of divination called Ifa, which-which has a cycle, I think, of 244 or 264 various myths and stories is even more sophisticated than the I Ching which has only 64. Do you- have you looked into that?

TM: I have looked into it. What makes the I Ching so powerful, in my mind, is that it appears to be an exact analogy to the mechanism of DNA [JM: Ahh]. There are 64 codons which code for amino acids in DNA, uh, there are 64 hexagrams, there are 8 primary hexagrams, there are 8 indispensable amino acids. I felt that, uh, really, the I Ching is like mankind's best shot at this, because it has this reflection in the biological matrix out of which consciousness emerged.

JM: In-In other words, the various ancient divination systems may all reflect a-a striving of human beings towards this, this intuitive understanding of the cyclical nature of time and the relationship between mind and-and the flow of time, and yet the I Ching may have hit the nail on the head better than the others.

TM: Well, it's looking- it's like looking at a 17th century description of the motion of the planets or a 20th

century description; these are basically refinements, but, yes, I think that the I Ching represents a primary perception of the organization of mind, time, and matter. And, I'll even tell you how I think they got a leg up. I think, basically, there is a tradition in central Asia of the so-called 'stilling the heart' techniques, vis-à-vis yoga. These are techniques where vital functions are suppressed: breathing becomes very minimal, all exterior inputs are suspended, and eventually I think the Chinese sages who practiced, uh, this form of meditation noticed a flux at the center of the stillness, which they called Tao, and which they set out to phenomenologically describe not knowing whether it was physics, organism, or deity. And they did not pre-judge, uh, this question. They simply gave a phenomenological description of the transcendental flux that they encountered in states of deep yogic ecstasy. And, lo and behold, it turns out that this is the perfect technique for studying time. Time is not a phenomenon where you build machines with 8 kilometer diameters that cost trillions of dollars. Time is a phenomenon to be studied by attending dinner parties, perhaps, or, uh, pursuing love affairs, or watching the passing of the seasons, activities much more commiserate with our vision of the Taoist sage than the white coated, uh, scientist of the present world religion of science. So, uh, really I think it was an involvement in organism and in the human experience.

JM: In other words, the laboratory for studying time would not so much be our observatories or our systems of quartz clocks but rather looking inside of ourselves, observing our own organism.

TM: That's exactly precise, and the workings of our own psychology--to my mind, uh, the greatest commentator on time in the 20th century, after Albert Einstein, would certainly have to be Marcel Proust. Uh, Proust understood more about the time we experience, and was able to communicate it, than any other person who has ever lived. And, that's within the confines of what most people consider, uh, a fairly effete, high-brow literary project.

JM: *Swann's Way*?

TM: Well, the entirety of t-of, uh, *Remembrance of Things Past*.

JM: Mm, yes, well, I haven't read that, so you've got me, a-buh, a bit in the dark here, we have about five minutes left, so could you summarize that point or amplify it a bit.

TM: Well, I think the point we're trying to make here, that I have been involved with over the past few years, is that a revisioning of time would, uh, assuage much of what is called modern anxiety. And, that we have limited our-- the categories we were willing to entertain in dealing with this problem, and that we must genuflect to the ancient Chinese and take a page from their notebook in this matter. The I Ching, as a divinatory system of great age, reflecting the dynamics of our own genetic material, and also, though I didn't mention this this evening, it also has deep calendrical properties, can be used to keep track of time, lays a basis for an understanding of this curious phenomenon called synchronicity: the coincidental meshing of interior psychic events and exterior events in the real world. It lays a basis for us to understand the unity of ourselves with the real world that our present approach makes difficult to discern.

JM: So, whereas Carl Jung, the great Swiss psychiatrist who wrote, incidentally, the preface to Richard Wilhelm's *Book of the I Ching* and postulated this theory of synchronicity, well, well, Jung didn't really provide any mechanism for synchronicity. He-he simply said it works this way, that the mind seems to be related to these events, and he found enormous therapeutic benefit from that understanding. What you're suggesting is that the potential mechanism behind the Jungian notion of synchronicity has to do with the

structure of time itself, and [TM: That's right], and, and, you must be suggesting therefore that the human mind, at this very deep level that the sages discovered from stilling their organism, that the mind has a parallel structure, an isomorphic structure.

TM: That's exactly the central point: the mind arises out of matter. This is why the I Ching works in both worlds; one is the reflection of the other. The key to healing the apparent dualism lies in studying the temporal mechanics indicated by the I Ching. And, I believe we've done this, uh, formally, mathematically.

JM: Terence McKenna, you're taking the provocative position that the I Ching, which some people view as religion and other people dismiss as superstition, is actually a science. And, I gather that your computer software package Timewave Zero proposes to be the demonstration of that.

TM: We believe it does demonstrate it. Of course, ultimately it will be up to our colleagues to judge the worth of our, uh, case.

JM: Terence it's been a pleasure. Thank you very much for being with me.

TM: Well, it's been a pleasure to be here Jeffrey and discuss this with you. It's *not* an easy subject, believe me.

JM: And thank you, very much, for being with us.

[Outro Music]

[Ending text]:

Inner Work

For a complete catalog of videotapes, please write to: THINKING ALLOWED, 5966 Zinn Drive, Oakland
CA 94611 (415) 339-0466

Series hosted by: Jeffrey Mishlove

Produced and directed by: Arthur Bloch

Production Crew: Don Anderson, Stacy Bailey, Julie Barker, Monica Caldwell, Laura Chariton, Giselle Kappus

Theme music: Joseph Marc

Title animation: Video Arts

Thinking Allowed Productions (C) 1988

Original Transcription by: Mac Deprey

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic

Review 2 by [admin only]: Kevin Whitesides

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Time Travel, Psychedelics, and Physics

August, 1991

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link \(Matrixmasters\)](#)
- [Original Transcription by DominatorCulture.com](#)
- [Other links](#)

An elf told me that – now, there's a fine thing for a scientist to say – an elf told me that time travel is possible, but it is constrained in ways which are not normally part of our expectation of time travel. The way in which it's constrained is, once time travel is discovered, you can travel as far into the future as you wish, but you can't travel into the past any further than the, uh, moment of the invention of the first time machine. The reason for this is: that before the invention of the first time machine, there were no time machines and how can you take a time machine into a domain where there aren't any? [Audience laughs] You see, it's just to preserve logical consistency.

[Audience] – That's like saying that you can't drive a car where there hasn't been a car driven before.

That's right. You can't take a car where there are no roads. When cars were first invented, the main objection to them was, "What are you going to do with this thing? It can't go where a horse can go, so what good is it?" Um, so here's a fantasy scenario which, for a while, I liked very much. It's that quantum physics and nanotechnology, and all this malarkey is, uh, refined and focused towards the notion of building a time machine, so that then on the morning of December 22nd, 2012, at the World Time Institute in the Amazon, the first time journey is about to be taken. And, the whole world is watching on holographic television as the Lady Temponaut is strapped into the machinery that will hurl her centuries into the future. And, there's a countdown and a button is pushed, and off she goes. Now, most people's interest would be to follow this woman wherever she's going, but let's forget her for a moment. The point has been made. She disappears. We assume she went off into the future, but what happens right there, right then?

It seems to me in the very next millisecond, thousands of time machines would begin arriving from the future simply because they had driven to the end of the road. They had come back in time to witness the first journey into the future. It's as though you could take your Piper Cub and fly it to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in 1906 to see the Wright Flyer take off. You see? Are you all with me so far? Oh yeah, right! [Audience laughs]

Now, there is a problem with this which some of you, I'm sure of, are thinking, I hope, anyway. Uh, it's what is called, "the grandfather paradox," which is the old conundrum that haunts all time travel schemes which is: if time travel were possible, you could go back in time and kill your own grandfather. Well then you wouldn't exist. Well, so then this sets up a logical impossibility. Either you exist or you don't exist, and some science fiction authors have assumed that somehow massive influxes of synchronicity would preserve your grandfather. You know, you would approach him with your Saturday night special, but it would blow up in your hand or it would ricochet off the St. Christopher medal he always wore [audience laughs] or something like that because he cannot be killed by you because, in that case, you wouldn't exist, in which case, he couldn't be killed by you.

And this troubled me for a long time. What exactly would happen in this situation because, according to Hans Moravec of the Robotics Institute of Carnegie Mellon University, I mean, time travel is no big deal? The first paragraph, uh, of this paper, "The last few years have been good for time machines," Kip Thorne, from the renowned General Relativity Group at Cal Tech, invented a new quantum gravitational approach to building a time gate. And, an international collaboration gave a convincing rebuttal of the grandfather paradox arguments. Another respected group suggested time machines that exploit quantum mechanical time uncertainty. The technical requirements for these suggestions exceed our present capabilities, but each new approach seems less onerous than the last. There is hope yet that time travel will eventually become possible, even cheap.

So, I then saw another possibility and this is the way we can fulfill the expectation of Christian hermeneutics, but not require the second coming of Christ or the intercession of God Almighty into history or all these other extreme unlikelyhoods. And, to understand it, we have to have recourse to, uh, physical model in a very simple realm of chemistry and physics, which is the Bernoulli gas laws. Some of you, I'm sure, are familiar with these and they're very intuitive and easy to understand. Uh, we have a cylinder and it's a vac -- it contains a vacuum. At one end of the cylinder, we have a valve and the valve is connected to a line, which is connected to a tank of some inert gas -- say, nitrogen. So, we open the valve to let the nitrogen rush into the cylinder, uh, that previously was a vacuum. Now, what happens inside that cylinder, I think, is intuitively obvious to all of us. The pressure equalizes over all points equally. In other words, you can't have 50 pounds of pressure at one end of the cylinder and five pounds of pressure at the other. We understand that, in a gas, pressure distributes itself evenly in order to achieve equilibrium. Okay. Hold that notion in your mind.

Now, think of our world in the late 1990s, uh, as a, uh, sphere or a cylinder of that sort and think of cultures as gasses at various pressures. And, let's assign low pressures to the bare-assed folks in the Amazon and eastern Indonesia and let's assign high pressures to the folks in Manhattan and at Cal Tech and Cambridge and Los Angeles and London. Well then we can predict, correctly, in fact, what is happening sociologically on this planet. What is happening is that the high tech cultures are totally overwhelming the traditional cultures. The values of Manhattan and Los Angeles are flooding everywhere, and in spite of the tiny lip service we give to shamanism and body painting, the truth of the matter is Amazon cultures are not really, uh, making a major contribution at this point to the evolution of high tech, global, information-dense, electronic culture.

Okay. That's the second level of this Bernoulli metaphor. So, now, lets go back to situation where we send the Lady Temponaut off into the future. I'm not familiar with how they overcame the grandfather paradox, so we'll pretend that the grandfather paradox is very strong.

[Audience] -- I want to say something about the grandfather paradox.

Okay. Let me -- I'm close to question time. Let me press forward relentlessly here because the coffee is running out. I can feel it. *[Audience laughs]* The equilibrium density is dropping.

Okay. So, we send the Lady Temponaut into the future, but now with what we know about the equalization of high cultures vs. low in a temporal medium, what happens from our point of view is that the rest of the history of the universe happens instantly. That, even if it's billions of years of, uh, of human culture and downloading into machines and claiming star system after star system and so forth and so on, somehow that -- the state vector of all those event systems collapses. I call this, "The God-whistle principle." It's that we can actually call God into history. We can summon the end state of human evolution to appear a millisecond after we successfully achieve the implementation of this technology of time travel in order to avoid all the paradoxes that would prevail if there were any extension to the post time travel era beyond the moment of its inception.

So, uh, this is a -- this is a way of, in a sense, forcing the evolution of, uh, the universe and it creates the phase transition of the eschaton. And, uh, is, to my mind -- it creates the basin of attraction within the domain of our own lives. Now, is there any kind of precedent for something like this, even metaphorically, in our own experience? Well, it turns out, yes, there is, in a kind of bizarre anecdote, which should sober us considerably as we think about these things. When the first atomic weapon was built by the Manhattan Project in the desert of New Mexico, Fermi and Oppenheimer and all these people got together the night before the test at Trinity, and Fermi had, uh, a pad like this on which he had scrawled some equations. And, he had reached the conclusion in the week before that they were not sure how high the temperature would go when they triggered this device and Fermi had some back-of-the-envelope calculations which caused him to believe that the nitrogen in the atmosphere of the planet would begin to burn if they tested this thing.

And, they would, in effect, ignite the atmosphere of the planet and the whole -- the fireball would spread around the entire planet and destroy everything. And, they spent half the night going over these things and they finally decided that the information necessary to make the decision was not available and so, they said, "Well, Hell! Throw the switch! You know, at least, it'll show those 'Japs' and Germans that we mean business!" *[Audience laughs]* Of course, the test was carried out, the nitrogen did not burn and, instead, we were ushered into the glorious era of weapons of mass destruction.

So, let me see if I've got some notes here. I think I've covered everything. What's interesting about this is, for the first time... In this article by Frank Tipler called, "The Omega Point as Eschaton," he seems -- and this is why Paul is here and I couldn't really get into it 'cause it's crazy to repeat what you can't understand *[audience laughs]* -- but by an analysis and interpretation of quantum mechanics, Tipler reaches the conclusion that there is an omega point and it does represent the funneling together of all the, what are called world lines. And, he, for purposes of mental comfort, sets it far in the future, but in principle, there is no reason to do that. Uh, 12 or 13 years ago, the Swedish cosmologist Hannes Alfvén wrote a wonderful little book called, "Worlds and Anti-worlds" in which he, uh, made the suggestion that, um, that the, uh, entire universe is what's called a vacuum fluctuation *ex nihilo*, literally out of nothingness. However, there's a caveat which is -- this creation *ex nihilo* can only occur if what's called parity is conserved. Now, what this means is that, um, these particles, uh, which come into being out of nothingness must come into existence paired with their anti-particle. And, so it comes into being, let's say, an electron and an anti-electron and they divide on separate trajectories and then they reconnect, and collide with each other and parity is conserved. In other words, nothing really happened. No laws of physics were violated because they annihilated each other.

Now, for a long time, a while, this was thought to be entirely a kind of a theoretical construct. But, then it was noticed that the theoretical models of black holes, which we referred to a few days ago, seem to imply that no radiation could leave a black hole and yet certain kinds of black holes were observed to be giving off hard radiation in the form of x-rays. And, it was realized, uh, that what was happening was, uh, vacuum fluctuations were taking place in the vicinity of the black hole and, because one particle went one way and one the other, the black hole interfered with the conservation of parity, and one of the particles was being sucked into the black hole and the other particle was flying off into the ordinary universe and being seen by astronomers as hard radiation. So, the fact that this process goes on has now been confirmed.

Well, now, an interesting thing about these vacuum fluctuations is that quantum physics places no upper limit on the size of a vacuum fluctuation. What it says is that the smaller the vacuum fluctuation, the fewer particles that are involved, the more likely the vacuum fluctuation is. And, obviously, from observing black holes, we can see that very small vacuum fluctuations occur quite frequently. Well, Alfvén took all this and said, well then is it not possible that the entire universe, our entire universe, is simply a very large vacuum fluctuation? A vacuum fluctuation involving something like 10-high-50 particles and they have poured into, uh, the manifold in which we find ourselves and an anti-matter universe, invisible to us because it's in another dimension, was born at the same time. And, so, one universe went off into a higher dimensional manifold this way and the other one went off in the other direction, and what this sets us up for is the possibility allowed by this interpretation of quantum physics that the entire universe could disappear instantly; not gradually. You wouldn't see the stars going out, but the -- because this is all happening in a hyperspace of some sort which treats this manifold as a point-like entity.

So, what you would have is just "click" and all particles in the universe would disappear and the original unflawed nothingness would be restored. Actually, no, there's a further caveat to all this, which is: all particles have their anti-matter, anti-particle twin, except -- except the photon. The photon is this mysterious particle which is different from all other particles. It either has no anti-particle or somehow it has its own anti-particle embedded within it. So, what would happen in the case of a universe which was a vacuum fluctuation which encountered its ghost image and conserved parity and cancelled all particles except photons is that you would suddenly have a universe made of nothing but light. Nothing but light! We then have to model the physics of a universe where the only kinds of particles that exist are light. Well, it's interesting that all these human traditions of transcendentalism make a big deal about light. I mean, light is the metaphor for spirit. And, the supposition is that the rarefaction of matter and of the flesh releases us into a realm of light.

And, I am not physicist enough by a long shot to say what the behavior of a universe made of light would be, but I do know enough to say that, if you or I were made of light, uh, our subjective experience of the universe would be ruled by relativistic physics. And, we would have the impression that we could go anywhere instantly and we would have the impression that the universe was aging around us at a tremendous rate because, you see, the time dilation of the general theory of relativity, um, says that as you approach the speed of light, time slows down. Now, it's assumed that you can't reach the speed of light because as you approach the speed of light, your mass asymptotically increases, so that to push a single atom to the speed of light would require more energy than there is in the entire universe because this particle would have become so massive that there isn't enough energy to propel it. But, a photon never moves slower than the speed of light. It never moves faster than the speed of light either. So, the photon -- if you were made of photons and you went from here to Zubenegeubi, let's say, a star in our galaxy with a wonderful name, uh, your impression of the travel time would be zero. You wouldn't and so -- again, here is a way without invoking God Almighty where physics seems to lay into our hands, uh, metaphors for the anticipation of the, uh, eschaton. Paul do you want to say something at this point?

[Audience] -- It's fascinating. You're playing with physics. Um, you know, everything has to be conserved; it's not just parity in the vacuum fluctuation. I mean, matter and antimatter are just one of the dozens of the conservations that has to be conserved in those phenomenon. And, um, they're happening all the time from the point of view of physics. Inside our body there are trillions of these virtual, um, reactions occurring all the time and they can be intercepted. I mean, you can have a -- a gamma ray break into a particle and an anti-particle, and you can intercept before they come back together again. And, that's how they detect them on photographic plates on cloud changes. But, everything you say is right. One thing, I don't think this notion of the big bang -- and I'm not sure whether I subscribe to the big bang model -- but, it sounds so far fetched because if, uh, if there were something in the universe then we'd have a real problem explaining how it got here. So, the simplest thing to us humans is nothing here.

You mean that we are in a vacuum fluctuation?

[Audience] -- No, it's just that there's nothing here. I mean, there is nothing before the big bang and there's nothing after.

This sounds like Buddhism.

[Audience] -- A vacuum fluctuation includes everything; good/evil, male/female, the whole thing added together like a zero. Just like it always was.

Well, then what are the complex appearances that impinge upon our senses and what are we then?

[Audience] -- Because we choose to pay attention to only half of the situation. But, if we could -- if we would let ourselves be and experience the whole, then it's all unified.

It cancels.

[Audience] -- It all cancels to zero.

Well, this refers back to something you and I were talking about at, at, uh, dinner. We all assume that there is one past and one future, but it's not clear why we assume that. I mean, think about it for a moment. We're all here gathered in this room, sharing this moment, but we all have different pasts. Not one of us has the past of another and so what we have in this room is a convergence of pasts. And, when this meeting is over, we will go our separate ways into a variety of futures. So, the assumption that there is one past and one future is just some kind of convenient mental bookkeeping.

Uh, we could -- and we are tremendously under the spell of this illusion. I mean, we worry about 'the' future all the time. Well, notice that you could just move to an island somewhere and get a brown-skinned girl and then you wouldn't have to worry about anybody else's future because you would have made your own future. We can step out of the assumption of a universal history in which we're trapped. And, I think realizing this is the beginning of a kind of liberation. Our assumptions, uh, are the edges of our worlds and this is one of our strongest assumptions. The assumptions that there is a past and a future and our destinies are all caught up in that. But, actually you can -- a word that rarely passes my lips -- you can deconstruct that assumption and, uh, and then you're given back a-a whole different way of looking at the experience of being, which is empowering. Because, somehow when we are embedded in *the* future, we feel we have no

control whatsoever. We're like corks in a raging river. But, in fact, that's a false model, I think. Anybody want to get in on this?

[Audience] - Sometimes when I'm listening to you, um, I have sort of the troubling thought that Terence hasn't done enough psychedelics. Or, I think that you're too straight in some way. When you get onto some of your scientific tracks, and as you put it, you're a rationalist, I start thinking, um, why get lost? I start thinking -- I start referring to experiences I have had of being altered where a lot of this seems, um, incidental to the experience to one experience of eternity, which I know you had. And, how do you reckon with yourself sometimes and think when you doubt yourself and think this is just my ego, um, concocting things to make me feel good, etc., etc. whatever would be the worst-case scenario for you? It's hard for me to express this sort of well, but there's something about the way you often refer to what seems to be a scientific model that's, um, very linear even as you talk, you know....

Well, I would certainly say that I haven't taken enough psychedelics. [Audience laughs] Um, reading these people, it seems like, uh -- I mean, I doubt these guys are real psychedelic heads and they're much further out than I am. Um, the real truth -- the real truth is and I've said it many times that the world is not only stranger than we suppose, it's stranger than we can suppose. And, in a way, that's either permission to suppose anything you want or to just stop supposing, you know. Um, these things are models. The real -- nowhere is it writ large that bipedal apes should be able to understand how the universe works. Still less likely is it written anywhere that Terence McKenna should be able to understand how the universe works. Were you here the other night when we talked, uh, about the black hole theory of enlightenment? It was two nights ago?

[Audience] -- I was here. [Audience laughs]

Well, that's the idea - that the real truth can't be told. I'm very aware, uh, that all of this is just stuff to support me, to make a living, in other words [audience laughs], you know. Um, that, in fact, what's really going on defies rational apprehension. I hope! [Audience laughs] I mean, I would hate to think -- I would hate to think that we could understand what's going on. Nevertheless, there's something to be said for this modeling process and I agree. I think I'm getting old. Uh, you can only push yourself so far. I mean, when I read one of these things today and he was off on some tear, and I just realized, you know. It struck fear in my heart. And, I said, "My God! You know and I actually did a, mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the weirdest one of all?" And, it said, "Hans Moravec is the weirdest one of all." I said, "Shit!" I should bring him here and sit at his feet! I don't know. Am I talking about what you're talking about? Oh good!

[Audience] -- I find a fantastic parallel between psychedelic experience and physics. I mean, I haven't found anything in the psychedelic experience that would be any problem to relate to the point of view of the physicist. And, actually, I think that all the stuff in physics got out of the bag because of the psychedelic, you know, breakthroughs in the '60s. Fritz Capra and others had psychedelic experiences and then started to ferret it out. I mean, in the 1920s, people were puzzling about these things and having the spiritual crises and throwing away all of their assumptions about reality and having these types of breakthroughs, and then it got lost because we started to bag physics to use for the military. It was all an environment that opened up because of the psychedelics.

But, I don't think that science -- that the purpose of science is to understand reality. This may go to what you saying. I think the purpose of science is to advance technology, which is a heresy. I don't think reality can be understood and that it's absolute hubris for science to, you know, cloak itself in the mantle of philosophy. All it's for is to make better toys or, if you're nuts, better weapons. And, um, ultimately there's not going to be any closure in the effort to understand and I think that the real -- the thing that you take away from psychedelics finally is that all models are provisional. That there is no truth.

We talked at one point in here about Wittgenstein's phrase, "true enough" -- true enough to get you to the gas station -- true enough to get your taxes paid. But, uh, there'll be no, uh -- there'll be no closure on this stuff. We have to live in the light of the mystery. But, I think we also said in here, you know, it's the death of conversation, if we glorify the mystery too much cause then I'll be just like everyone else here and I'll announce that we're now going to have a meditation, which I've never done to you, I want to point out! [Audience laughs, applause] Somebody wanted to say something?

[Audience] -- With that in mind, I wonder how you can project an end to eternity at a certain time?

Well, I didn't mean to imply a nothingness beyond. It isn't like that. I think it's an everythingness. That when I talk about what I envision it as - as boundary dissolution. If all boundaries dissolve then, you know, I am you, and you are me, and we are all together. [Audience laughs] It's a -- it's an exfoliation of the human experience. The great boundaries are -- no, the small boundaries are man/woman, self/world. And then the big boundaries are life/death, uh, past/future. All of these will be dissolved into something like William Blake's Divine Imagination. And, we will become, you know, our, our, our grandest dreams. And, so, the whole challenge is to dream a dream worthy of that dimension. I mean, it's a very interesting exercise. I don't know if you've ever done it. God! It comes close to being a visualization, I'm sorry to notice, but have you ever played the game, uh, "What would I do if I could do anything?"

First of all, you have to wrap your mind around the concept "anything." What would I do if I could do anything? And, I used to think about it in terms and for some reason for me it takes the form of an architectural fantasy. You know, first of all, I just locate myself in the house featured in last month's *Architectural Digest*. Then from there, I begin to work it out. Well, if you could do anything within a few minutes of entering into that exercise, you're unrecognizable to yourself. I mean, you don't even have to exist in a forward flowing casuistry of three dimensions. Uh, you can be a number of species and all possible sexes. You can be translocated at many points in time. Uh, you begin to realize that you are tremendously limited by your assumptions. And that, this is sort of what I imagine death is: It's release into the divine imagination and if you're, you know, blown up in an airliner, then immediately after dying, you're just a dead person, but then you begin to unfold and test the boundaries.

And, you know, as James Joyce says in *Finnegans Wake*, uh, "up n'ent prospector, you sprout all your worth and woof your wings." And that's just in the first 30 seconds that you woof your wings. And then you're able to assume to divide your consciousness to assume any form, to be any place, to know anything. Anything recognizable as human, I think, would quickly drop away or would just become a tiny and familiar touchstone that you would occasionally return to, to touch. And, somehow the dying, which occurs to each one of us, that's the microcosm of the planetary and historical process that we're caught up in. It's the thing that we hate most of all. We fear it. We really get agitated when death is raised as an issue. James Joyce called it, "The Grim Reaper" -- a blessing in disguise. "If you want to be Phoenixed, come and be parked." Meaning: You know, you have to die to fully exfoliate into this dimension.

And, sometimes I think -- and I don't often say it to groups because I fear I'm misunderstood and I don't want people to go out of here depressed -- but, sometimes, I think that what human history pushes for is the extermination of all life on the planet for the simple reason that we'll never be free till then. That we are in some kind of hell world and we are locked in a world of matter and energy and space and time, and that it is not -- you know, my God! This sounds like, you know, Southern Baptists -- [audience laughs] but, we are living death at this moment and that we must die in order to be born again. In other words, that somehow what we are has become trapped in a lower dimensional matrix and our greatest delusion is to cling to this most tenaciously.

Jorge Luis Borges, in one of his stories, has this idea that, uh, the species, uh, any species, is somehow not completed in eternity until the last member of that species dies. And, it is interesting that if you think about biology, 95 per cent of all species that have ever lived on this planet are extinct. This is what happens to species: they go extinct. And yet, we're driven to pursue immortality. It pains us greatly to imagine the death of all life on this planet, and particularly, the death of our individual selves or our species. But, the fact of the matter is, we don't know what death is. I mean, one of the puzzling things about the DMT trance is, you know, these creatures, made of light, in the mind, that are so different from us, but have such affection and love for us, they seem like relatives. They seem like -- dare we whisper the word -- they seem like ancestors. And yet, you know, we would rather believe that they were aliens from Zeta Reticuli or elves in a parallel continuum than apply Occam's Razor to the phenomenon, and say -- since we are the only intelligent entities that we have ever contacted in this universe -- these things which we contact in our minds in the center of the DMT flash, they must be human beings of some sort, but they don't look like human beings. But, they love us so much and understand us so well!

Well, is it possible that the kind of human being that they are is a dead human being? That we're actually breaking through into an ecology of souls. I mean, if we say that the psychedelic experience is an experience of boundary dissolution and, if we say that DMT is the strongest of all psychedelics, then may it not be that it is dissolving the most resistant of all barriers, which is the barrier between the living and the dead? And that what you actually come into is the antechambers of eternity for a brief glimpse. If you were to take that rap and properly translate it into Witoto or Munangi, or something like that, and go to the Amazon and query those folks, they'd say, "Of course. I mean, your own Mircea Eliade tells you that shamanism depends on the spirit ancestors." And, for all the credit we give shamanism, we've never actually come to grips with the possibility that, uh, shamans really do work with the spirit ancestors, that there really is an ecology of trans- trans-material human beings in a nearby continuum that can be approached by a boundary-dissolving drug.

And, it's because, you know, we and certainly I -- and certainly proven by this rap tonight -- are obsessed with technological explanations of it and how it's going to be the flying saucers, or it's going to be the time machine, or the collapse of the quantum vector or something like that. But, because the forward thrust of our technology is toward immortality. I mean, that's what gnawing at the back of our minds. And yet, what may actually be coming towards us, orthogonal -- meaning at right angles to the historical process -- is the dissolving of the barrier between the living and the dead, which is so unsettling and mind boggling to us that we'd take a flying saucer invasion any day over having that happen to us! [Audience laughs] And yet, it's very, very late in the game. You know, human nature is going to have to undergo a radical, vertical translation of some sort, if we are to avoid, um, the extinction of ourselves and all life on the planet. Well, so then, you know, uh, maybe that's what it was for. If we believe that we were always embedded in the machinery of nature - that we could never act outside the purposes of nature - then this must be what it's for.

It's very interesting in embryology. I think most people think, you know, of a fetus in the womb, um, as you all know -- we begin as very fish like creatures in the womb and then out of what are essentially little paddle mitts, the human hand appears. I think most people think that the tissue retracts tightly and that the human being emerges, but if you've seen fetal stages in bottles in medical schools, what's actually going on is that cells die off. And, massive amount of dying goes on in the womb in order that the human form may emerge out of the fetal form. The webbing between the fingers doesn't retract. Those cells die and are released into the amniotic fluid. The growth of the fetus involves the death of millions and millions and millions of cells. So, we are born, we are -- you could almost say sculpted into life by the hand of death. I mean, I feel as nervous about all this as you must, uh, but, you know, this is what we're here for, right? -- to stretch the envelope. Yeah.

[Audience] -- Terence, I would like to go back to something you said about the beings of light and the shamanic capacity to see and interact with these beings, and they could be the ancestors. Thinking in terms of those individuals who refined their senses to being able to see more than the average ability to see and to hear more than just the normal ability to hear; where there's a growing awareness of inner-penetrating planes of beings that are actually co-existing with us, but we can't hear them or see them because we haven't refined those senses enough. And, the more psychically sensitivity individuals have an increasing ability in a non-drug state to be aware. It's just that they can see more and hear more, and I haven't heard you say that.

Well yeah, I mean, that's a very good point. The perfect example of it in terms of a cultural tradition is, uh, uh, Fairyland. Fairyland, I mean, uh -- the pre-Christian Celtic peoples believed that dead souls stayed around in the immediate vicinity and that there were thousands of them all around. The accumulated dead, very much in the way that when you smoke DMT, then there are thousands of these things and it raises the question -- were they always there or what's going on? Saint Patrick, who, uh, brought Christianity to Ireland, found this belief (and also Anita makes the point about sensitivity). In Irish folklore, there's the idea that if you have the eye, you can see these things, uh, and no drugs are required. It's a psychic ability which the country Celtic people have sometimes claimed. So, when Patrick came to Ireland on his mission of conversion, he found this belief in Fairyland so powerfully entrenched in these people that he invented purgatory. Purgatory was invented by St. Patrick to convert the Irish. And then when word was carried back to Rome that Patrick, who was this great bishop of the early Church, that he had made this doctrinal concession to Celtic folk thinking -- the Pope thought it was such a fine idea that they just wrote it into dogma.

So, uh, purgatory, which as you all know is neither heaven or hell, but a place where you expiate your sins for some amount of time before you pass on to heaven, is nothing less than a cleaned-up version of Fairyland written in to Christian theology. Now, I don't know why the Celtic people had, not a monopoly but a firm grip on this. I mean, it may be their innate gloominess, their obsession with death, their, uh, uh -- it's called the "Ayenbite of Inwyt": it's that, we just chew on ourselves until we dissolve -- but, there was something about that character that set it up for perceiving, uh, these entities. Although, in all traditions all over the world, uh, if you dig deep enough, you can usually find a tradition of small people that live in the hills or under the hills -- meaning graves, right? -- under the hills and they are the ancestors. And, the best that straight folklorists can tell is they have some weird law that as a people recedes into time, they shrink, which seems to me preposterous. I mean, I just don't understand that.

I think the evidence is pretty good that this is going on. The fact that DMT is, uh, a naturally occurring neuro transmitter is very suggestive. Rupert Sheldrake has made the suggestion that dying is a unique chemical experience and he calls DMT a necrotic hallucinogen. That, that you actually -- if you are truly dying, your brain will be flooded with DMT and then you will see the ecology of souls waiting to receive you. I once questioned a very well known Tibetan teacher, uh, about what was going on in DMT, and he said, "Yes, these are the lesser lights." He said, "You can't -- if you go further than that, you will break the thread of connection and be unable to return." And, so, you know, I think this is the most

challenging idea to us on the conscious and unconscious level because we may, you know -- I mean, I'm only speaking for myself, but it seems to me true that we really have, at a profound level, accepted the scientific lie that death is non-
entity, you know. And it gives us -- it's a permanently weakening idea because it makes us each such a finite being. I mean, it means that no matter what you do, eventually, you know, it will all end in the cold, cold ground.

You know, "But at my back I always hear / Times winged chariot hurrying near." "This coyness, lady, were no crime." "Had we but world enough and time." "The grave's a (fine) and private place / But none, I think, do there embrace." Well, maybe Andrew Marvell was wrong. Maybe there's more fun on the, uh, other side than, uh, you might wish to be congealed. Anybody? Save me from myself! [Audience laughs]

[Audience] -- What I'm wondering, I have the impression of what comes to mind is a world that you project where everybody is schizophrenic. So that today I can be Napoleon, tomorrow Jesus, and then I can meet somebody else who also believes that he is Napoleon, Jesus, Buddha or whatever, and back and forth in time. I'm just wondering what kind of a place that's going to be.

Well, I would buy into that. I think schizophrenia is the absence of cultural expectation, you know. In the most profound sense. I mean, the casuistry doesn't even apply. I mean, I consider myself schizophrenic and I have observed schizophrenia in other members of my family at close up and in great detail. And, what it is, is simply the breakdown of casuistry and then ordinary people - imprisoned in the hallucination of culture, language and linear time - lock you up and put you away because, uh, you're reporting from outside the cultural envelope and carrying information that terrifies, alarms, disturbs and just... You drive other people crazy is what it is! [Audience laughs]

I'm talking now about process schizophrenia, which is the spectacular kind: where you bring back information that is absolutely incommensurate with the models of your culture. No, I think -- It's been said that the world is becoming more schizophrenic. Well, that's just because they didn't have the word "psychedelic." Psychedelic experience is essentially a kind of schizophrenia and the people who, in the early phase of psychedelic research -- they wanted to call it a psychomimetic, meaning it mimics psychosis. It doesn't mimic psychosis; it's a schizomimetic of some sort. Psychosis is a whole different pathology. But, uh, schizophrenia is simply a, uh, category for, uh, behavior and insight that the rest of society is unable to do anything with, I think. Yeah. No, that doesn't trouble me at all. I like talking about how I'm schizophrenic. Maybe this answers your, uh, criticism that I'm linear and running down and old. I can always go nuts. [Audience laughs] You know, if all else fails, you can go bananas, I suppose. [Audience laughs]

The schizophrenics return with the great aesthetic visions and the scientific breakthroughs and the poetic understandings, I mean, uh, and, it's almost as though they have been aided by the demon artificers. They have taken into their, uh, retinue, uh, supernatural helpers and a shaman would say, of course, allies. And, I'm sure you all know the way in which schizophrenia and shamanism map together. I mean, our own Julian Silverman is the great pioneer in the one-to-one mapping of shamanism and schizophrenia. And years ago, when I was completely bananas, every time they would approach from three sides with nets, I had Julian's paper called, "Shamans and Schizophrenia," and I could quote it chapter and verse and back them off [audience laughter] because, uh, what is called the initiatory crisis in shamanism is nothing more than a schizophrenic break with ordinary reality.

The problem is, we freak out completely and rush to drug people and give them electroshock and tie them down and slap them around. Well, so then the, uh, unfolding of the process is interrupted and it's as though you were to, you know, perform surgery on a fetus or something and then be amazed when it turns out a monstrosity. When, if you would have just left it alone, for crying out loud, it was unfolding along its own cryodes of morphological development. This is why people like R. D. Laing seem to me to be the ones who thought most deeply and correctly about schizophrenia.

To become schizophrenic is a wonderful, wonderful opportunity. The trick is to make sure that you're nowhere where straight people can get at you. [Audience laughs] And, uh, my schizophrenic episode occurred in the Amazon basin and, you know, it was five days march to just a mission. And, I've always felt that evading modern mental health care facilities saved my mind. Absolutely! And, in a traditional society, it's supported, you know. If someone shows signs, uh, because their dreamy or they hallucinate or they're epileptic or something like that then this is encouraged and they're put under the care of shamans, and drugs are used to initiate the crisis in some cases. And, it's a cause for great rejoicing to have these personalities because -- in the culture -- because they're the antennas of culture that are contacting the, uh, raw stuff of real being and transducing it down into, uh, cultural artifacts and institutions that then are useful. Anything else?

[Audience] -- The grandfather paradox.

Oh, yeah What did you want to say?

[Audience] -- I don't think, I mean -- your idea of the end point makes perfect sense to me and I don't think the grandfather paradox is an objection. It's not really a paradox.

No, I don't think it's a paradox.

[Audience] -- It's a self-consistent universe. You're here so you didn't kill your... If you killed your grandfather, you wouldn't be here to ask us the question.

I think that's the way to handle that. I think that when we finally really understand time travel, we may find out that it's common as dirt and has been going on all around us in all kinds of physical processes.

[Audience] -- We make up stories. I mean, the human mind likes to make up stories. So, if you came back and killed your grandfather and you're still here then we'd have to make up a story. Like somebody else got -- even your grandmother.

But, since that isn't how it works.

[Audience] -- Well, it may be working that way. I mean, people disappear mysteriously and all sorts of things happen and we just fit them into a framework that makes sense to us. When we're in the realm of time travel, then maybe we'll have to reinterpret all that weird stuff that occurred in history.

That's an excellent point. That all kinds of stuff goes on around us that may be, in fact, the collapse of paradoxical situations that we don't understand. Like, you know, all these well-documented cases of spontaneous human combustion and stuff like that. I mean, unless you just flat out deny that this goes on, which is a kind of cop out, I think, because it just means that you don't believe large bodies of evidence. I mean, not everything weird that's claimed goes on, but on the other hand, I don't think God is a republican. I think that there's plenty of weird shit flying around and as I said, nowhere is it writ that anthropoid apes should understand reality. And, every culture that's ever existed has operated under the illusion that it understood 95 per cent of reality and that the other five per cent would be delivered in the next 18 months.

And, from Egypt forward, they've been running around believing they had a perfect grip on things. Yet, we look back at every society that has preceded us with great smugness at how naive they all were. Well, it never occurs to us that then maybe we're whistling in the dark, too. That the universe is stranger than you can suppose. And that that openness that that perception imparts is a great joy, a great blessing because then you can live your life not in service to some fascistic metaphor, but in service to the living mystery. The fact that you're not going to understand it. It is not going to yield to logic or magic or any other technique that's been developed. It's bigger -- you know, the novelist John Crowley has this wonderful aphorism: The further in you go, the bigger it gets. And, I think this is true of most things.

That's all, folks! [Audience laughs] We got through another one of these. [Applause]

Okay. Thank you all for coming. I do not understand why you put up with this [audience laughs], but I appreciate it. I do appreciate it!

Original transcript by: dominatorculture.com

Review 1 by: P.C. Lansdown

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Touched by the Tremendum

March 27 1990

Location, New York City, New York

Description

- [Video Link](#) Q&A audio missing
- [Original Transcription from Edge.org](#) only includes main lecture, not Q&A
- [Other links](#)

First of all, I am delighted to be here. The great thing about being here in New York is you don't have to worry if you're the smartest person in the room. [audience chuckles] What uh, impels me to talk to groups like this is uh, the conviction that uh, a major aspect of what it means to be a human being has received short shrift in our civilization for at least a couple of millennia. And that, to some degree, the solution to the uh, mega-crisis that is bearing down on Western institutions is to be found in a revivifying of uh, the archaic. And this takes many different kinds of forms. It's nothing to do with what is popularly presented as the New Age. It's, to my mind, a much larger and deeper and persistent phenomenon than that. In fact, the entire intellectual tone of the 20th century can be seen as a groping toward a recapturing of this archaic mentality. This is what psychoanalysis was about. This is what cubism, surrealism, and uh—in the political s- uh, zone—negative phenomena, such as national socialism. All of these various intellectual concerns, to my mind, can be traced back to a kind of unconscious nostalgia for the archaic.

Now, when a society feels itself to be in crisis, the unconscious response is to look back into time to attempt to find a previous model that seemed to work and then to crystallize energy around that model in a def- in an effort to reorient society. The last time this happened was with the breakup of the medieval stasis of the pseudo-eschatology of Christianity, and out of that chaos, of that sense of disconnectedness, came classicism.

In other words, people were looking back into time for a serviceable model that could step in to the vacated shoes of the discredited medieval church. And what they came up with was, uh, platonic philosophy, Roman law, the aesthetics that ruled Periclean Athens, and so forth. And to a degree we are still living in the twilight of that return to classicism, but it no longer serves. And in its place is this inchoate groping for a- uh, yet another historical paradigm that can somehow be contextualized in the late 20th century and give meaning to the experience that is coming, is sweeping over the world.

Now, to my mind uh, the Freudian breakthrough, what the surrealists were doing, what the abstract expressionists were doing, the replacement of phonetic alphabet linear print culture by electronic media that has happened over the last 25 years, these things are all well and good, but they are insufficient because once you begin to zero in on the notion of the archaic mentality and what it really means, you discover that at the center of it is, God forbid, the psychedelic experience.

Now, the psychedelic experience is as much a part of life as birth, death, making love, eating, conniving, so forth and so on except in this particular kind of culture that has evolved out of Western European traditions. Why this is is a very complicated question; many factors bear on it. But what I would like to talk about this evening is just offer you a model of history, how we got into the dilemma that we're in, and what we might be able to do about it. So I will tell, uh, my version of the story of human emergence. And it goes like this:

At some time in the past—experts vary, but the numbers are in millions of years—the adaptation of advanced primates to the canopy uh, ecosystems of the climaxed rain forests of the African continent was disrupted by the cycles of desertification that periodically affect the planet, and this had the effect of forcing these primates out of their arboreal niche and into evolving grasslands.

Now, to my mind, the important point in the argument that I'm about to put forward is the idea that the previously unidentified factor impinging on human evolution and shaping the evolution of our species was tertiary mutagenic constituents of the human diet as we made the shift from a specialized fruit eating diet to an omnivorous diet that included meat. Most animal species have a very limited repertoire of acceptable foods. This is reasonable because it's a strategy for avoiding contact with mutagenic tertiary compounds that may be elaborated by plants. But when a species comes under pressure it has to expand what it considers acceptable dietary constituents. And at that point the organism uh, is subject to mutagenic influence because testing in the diet is bringing the body in contact with all kinds of toxic compounds—tumor producing compounds, compounds which interfere with the endocrine system, compounds which are neuroactive, compounds which, uh, uh affect fertility. This has never really been discussed by evolutionary biologists as perhaps a critical factor in the emergence of the human species. My scenario goes something like this:

These pack- these primates already had a fairly complex linguistic repertoire because they had developed a pack signaling system in the treetops. They transposed this system into, uh, hunting bands, or carrion-gathering bands that were following along behind the large herds of ungulate mammals that were simultaneously evolving in this African environment. And in that situation, they came upon, uh, coprophytic —means dung-loving— fungi that were occurring coincidentally- coincidentally with the presence of these evolving ungulate animals.

Now, at that point the stage was set for what I believe is the greatest leap that organic organization has made probably in the last hundred million years, and there was nothing miraculous about it. Psilocybin, which is the psychoactive amine that occurs in these mushrooms, was studied by Roland Fischer in the 1950s, and the first thing he learned was that small doses of psilocybin—doses so small as to be undetectable as an actual, s- uh, experience—nevertheless uh, confer improved visual acuity. And he did elaborate tests on thousands of graduate students. In other words, you see better if you take small amounts of this drug. And Fisher said to me in his wonderful Viennese accent, "You see, this is a situation in which you actually have a better picture of reality if you take a drug than if you don't take a drug." And he had the data to back him up. Well, you don't have to be an evolutionary biologist to realize that a constituent of the diet which improves visual acuity in an animal that is surviving through its hunting skills is quickly going to be inculcated as an extremely favorable adaptation.

Now, when you- when slightly larger doses of psilocybin are uh, ingested accidentally or deliberately the immediate effect is increased arousal, this i- and that includes sexual arousal. And this is typical for the

bioactive amines. So what you begin to see is, here is a constituent of the diet whose, whose first effect is to make those who use it more effective hunters, whose second effect is to uh, increase instances of what primatologists call successful copulations.

Q: Is that what they call it?

TM: Oh yes, indubitably.

And the combination of increased sexual activity on the part of those animals admitting this constituent into their diet becomes a kind of reciprocal feedback loop.

Now, at yet higher doses, uh, psilocybin flowers out into a profound hallucinogenic experience, uh, so profound that, in truth, it is utterly confounding to 20th century human beings. We have no metaphors for this; we can't take its measure; we prefer to turn away from it. This is our cultural response to the presence of this dimension. But the idea that it is any- in any way understood, or uh, its implications have been assimilated, is absurd.

Now I believe that what we have here, is, in this pre- uh, historical situation, is an incipient symbiosis. I want to make clear what I mean here: I am not suggesting that there was a true symbiosis between human beings and mushrooms, uh because a true symbiosis requires millions of years to be established and is actually almost a genetic bonding of two species. But it was an incipient symbiosis. Given enough time it might have turned into a true symbiotic relationship. Unfortunately, it was disrupted by the very forces which had created it, which was a further exacerbation of this climatological aridity which was overtaking the African continent.

So the notion is that these biogenically active amines acted as a kind of catalyst on the evolving uh, neurophysiological organization of these primates. One of the most interesting effects of psilocybin is that it seems to stimulate the language forming capacity. This has been remarked upon by writers such as Henry Munn and Gordon Wasson. I mean, it is literally true that the mushroom shaman is a man of language. It is- it seems to facilitate a kind of release of the Logos and this linguistic facility, which marks- which is the great watershed in the evolution of our species out of animal organization has never been satisfactorily explained. There had to be a catalyst for it. And I am suggesting that in this early situation this catalyst was this self-reinforcing cycle where uh, uh, group sexuality, visual acuity, frequent copulation, and a devotion to ecstatic trance all combined to create an entirely different psychology, a psychology in which the ego barely existed. The- it's almost as though you could say psychedelic drugs are an inoculation against the formation of the narcissistic ego.

Now, why should this be? It's because, operationally speaking, what these psychoactive compounds do, not if you look at one trip, but if you look at thousands of peoples' trips, and say, "What is the common denominator of these experiences?" what they do is, they dissolve boundaries. And this is what gives them their power, and it's what makes them so controversial because the dissolution of boundaries is something around which we have profound anxiety both as individuals and our institutions are even more anxious about this. Any uh, compound or dietary constituent which dissolves the boundaries between human beings poses a profound problem for the kinds of social organization that we have been familiar with throughout recorded history.

As the drying of the African continent continued, the- this orgiastic communal use of the mushroom, uh, became less and less frequent simply because the mushroom itself was less and less available. Ultimately, I believe, there's evidence to suggest that honey was discovered as a method for preserving mushrooms through periods of scarcity. It's still done this way in Mexico; however, there's a profound problem here. Honey itself, can serve- after it has gone through chemical changes involving fermentation, it itself becomes a psychoactive compound; it becomes crude alcohol. And if your mushroom supply fades slowly enough and there isn't sufficient attention paid to what's going on, over a couple of millennia a- an egoless, ecstatic mushroom-using cult can turn into essentially a cult of alcohol. And the, the psychology of an alcohol cult is entirely different from the cult- the, the psychology of the psilocybin cult.

Around 12,000 years ago people began moving out of Africa and, uh, settling in the Middle East, in Palestine. Before that time, the stratigraphic record in Palestine indicates that it was very uh, sparsely populated. But these new people appeared called Natufians, and there's considerable argument about where they came from. The general assumption is that they came from the area that Marija Gimbutas calls "Old Europe." But this is really based simply on the belief that they were so advanced that they couldn't possibly have come from anywhere else, when in fact, an analysis of the, of the wall paintings of these people and an analysis of, uh, the pottery, seems to indicate that they came from Africa; that these were African peoples.

Uh, they at-at first they settled the lips up, you know, under rock escarpments. This is exactly the settlement pattern that we see in the Tassili n'Ajjer Plateau in Algeria where there are actually paintings on the rock walls dated 7,000-8,000 BC where we see shamans with mushrooms sprouting out of their bodies, thousands of them. Now, this mushroom-using uh, culture established itself in Palestine at Jericho. And Jericho, at its triumph, was the most advanced civilization in the world. The tower at Jericho was by all measures the most sophisticated culture of its time.

Later these same people tr- uh, settled into Çatalhöyük in Southern Turkey. Çatalhöyük is 3,500 years in advance of any other civilization on Earth at that time. The chief investigator of the site, James Mellaart, called it a premature flash of complexity and brilliance. And it disappeared. Mysteriously. The motifs may have been transferred to, to Crete, but as far as we can tell that was the last vestige of this psychedelically motivated partnership society. And it was destroyed by the Kurgan invaders, the wheeled chariot people who came from north of the Black Sea with an entirely different psychology. You see, their psychology was shaped by the domestication of the horse, which was a permission for a, um, a raiding psychology, a psychology of nomadic plunder, while the domestication of cattle in Africa some 5,000 years before had created the opportunity for this goddess/mushroom/cattle kind of psychology to evolve.

Now, these people were living- the, the, the mushroom-using peoples of the ancient Middle East and of pre-desert Africa were living in a dynamic equilibrium with the environment; this was the edenic state. I mean if you, f you read the story of Genesis carefully it is clearly the story of a drug bust. It is clearly the story of a woman's transgressions, and Yahweh, walking in the garden, says to himself, "If they eat of the tree they will become as we are." There's no shillyshallying about about this. What was at stake here was whether or not human beings should claim a stake of, in godhead, and the decision was made that they should not. And they were cast out of Eden. And an angel was set at the gate of Eden with a burning sword so that they cold not find their way back. This is the story of continual- centuries of continual drought, shattering the back of a partnership civilization that was at equilibrium in central Africa 15 to 25,000 years ago.

Now, we are the sad inheritors of this situation. The mysteries survived in a very attenuated form for several millennia in Crete. And Crete then became the bastion of the mystical impulse in Hellenic in Hellenistic religion, at the mysteries at Eleusis for example. What the ancient authors said, what was practiced secretly at Eleusis was practiced openly at Gnosis. And there's considerable evidence that the mushroom cult may have persisted a long time in Crete. These puzzling so-called aniconic pillars that are, uh, erected in the center of many of the rooms of the palace at Gnosis seem very much to argue that there was a memory of this ancient religion, that the linear-B tallies on opium use yielded such high numbers when translated that the early assumption was that the glyph for opium must be the glyph for wheat. Now it's understood that this is not the case. And it is true that the twilight of Minoan religion was an opiated twilight.

My belief is, you see, that our proclivity for drug use—this itch that we can never scratch—which really places us in a completely different category from the rest of animal organization, and I am perfectly aware that elephants intoxicate themselves on papayas and all that malarkey, but those animals that have intoxication preference for intoxicants usually prefer one or two. We have scoured the biosphere for drugs of all sorts. And a drug that was used 200 years ago by 5 or 6,000 people can probably be bought within minutes if you walk out of this building because the news spreads.

We have an absolute obsession with the alteration of consciousness. And I believe it's because we are in a state of um, I don't know ... call it trauma, denial. We, as a species, are the victims of a dysfunctional childhood. We were torn from that which gave life meaning by climatological and cultural factors which forced us then into the nightmare of history. And it is from that nightmare that we must awaken, or the lethal momentum of egocentrism is going to shove us right over the edge.

The ego is like a calcareous tumor on the personality of each of us. This tumor must be psycholytically removed. It must be dissolved. Not that we must have no ego. After all, when you take someone to dinner you want to know whose mouth to put food in. The big ego that flowers out beyond the operational need to identify with a single body is an entirely maladaptive response, and we're sick with it, through, through and through. No less a bastion of conservative and establishment thinking than Arthur Koestler in his book, *The Ghost In the Machine*, finally concludes, you know, we have to have a drug which inhibits the territorial impulse. That was when the territorial impulse was a big buzzword. But what he meant was, we have to interfere with the ego; It's completely unnecessary; It's a burden to everyone who has it, and the collective impact of it is absolutely thanatopic.

The archaic revival is an impassioned and unconsciously driven reaching back into time: nope, the Renaissance won't do it; nope, the Greek ideals are not sufficient; no, Pharaonic Egypt isn't enough, no, no, no, until finally we reach the brink of the last glaciation and there we find people who are functioning. Their fertility levels, their, uh, supply and demand relationship with their environment—all this is working.

Now, it's easy to object to the notion that an adaptation that worked for nomadic herders 15,000 years ago has any relevance to today's problem. The fact of the matter is it is the psycholytic effect on ego that makes it necessary to take the psychedelic experience extremely seriously because we want to live. We want to turn off the series of lethal, uh, cascades that seem to be leading toward a very heart-stopping conclusion, which is that this is a sinking submarine and that we cannot get out unless we change our minds. There's no question that we have the resources, the intelligence, the infrastructure to save our neck.

But do we have the sense to change our mind? It is the mind that is intractable, and into our hands has then been placed this tremendously powerful tool, which our institutions immediately leap upon and attempt to stigmatize, drive under ground, criminalize, and discredit. But they have a vested interest in the continuing momentum of all of this insanity.

Ok, so that's uh, a kind of political argument for why this is a very good thing, and I trust I've convinced you all. Now I want to say something different about it which appeals more, I think, to us, not as political animals, but as dreamers, and uh, philosophers, and that is that people have not been straight with each other about how weird these psychedelic experiences are. Uh, this stuff is absolutely confounding. Uh, it is not sensory distortion; it is not a delusion of reference; it is not recovery of traumatic material from the personal past. All of these psychoanalytic models fail utterly because ultimately the psychedelic experience hardly seems to be addressing the personality of the individual, rather it is some kind of insight into a tremendum before which we are as helpless as the herders of Africa of 35 millennia ago. We don't understand what it is. We haven't got a clue. We believe in matter, causality, the here and now, the discreteness of objects, the unknowability of the future and so forth and so on. I mean, it's just a laundry list of wrongheaded notions that you can immediately disabuse yourself with- of with five grams of dried mushrooms. I mean, it is the Gordian knot of all of these, or it is the sword of Damocles cutting the Gordian Knot of these philosophical, uh conundrums. Um, so then we line up on two sides. People who say well it's not natural and it's psycho- that it induces psychosis and so forth and so on. This is all nonsense.

This is our birthright. It is profoundly our birthright in the same way that our sexuality is our birthright. The notion that a person would call themselves intelligent and aware and present in the world and that they would go from the cradle to the grave without ever having a psychedelic experience is nothing short of obscene; it's absurd. It makes my flesh crawl in the same way that celibacy and virginity make my flesh crawl. What a horrible, horrible waste of a human life.

You know, the Muslims used to say of the city, Isfahan, in Iran at its architectural height, that it was half the world—Isfahan is half the world. The psychedelic experience is half the world. If you don't have this under your belt, you don't know what's going on, you haven't got a clue about what's going on. And uh, it's not a big deal, you don't have to sweep up around my ashram for 15 years before I'm going to put the whammy on you. It requires nothing more than a personal act of courage to discover whether or not what I'm saying is true or horseshit. You know, you just have to go and look. And people want to talk about it, they want to argue about it. This is not a philosophy, or a theory, or a position, this is an experience; it's an experience. And, you know, talking to people who have not taken psychedelics and trying to convince them of the worth of it is like trying to talk a 9 year old boy out of his aversion to sexuality. He knows that it's a bad thing and should be stayed away from. But we, uh, who have found ourselves, by hook or by crook, in positions of prominence and influence cannot have the luxury of this kind of "know-nothing" attitude. If the expansion of consciousness does not loom large in the history of the human species then -in the future of the human species- then what kind of future is it going to be?

Now these compounds were originally just given a phenomenological description. They were called "consciousness-expanding drugs." We must investigate this possibility. If there were only a thousand to one chance that it was so, it would still merit intense investigation by the scientific community and everyone else with an interest in it. And yet it's fairly clear that these things do expand consciousness; that they do promote insight; that they do catalyze the release of ideas into society; that they do diminish the ego; that they do provide real insight into the functioning of things that then allows everything to move more

smoothly toward a reasonable conclusion. So, it's incumbent upon anyone who is concerned about the fate of the earth, their own well-being, so forth and so on, to investigate these things. We cannot allow a frightened and constipated establishment to control this agenda.

And I am perfectly aware that there is a drug problem. There is a terrible drug problem. Uh, but it's a different problem. It's not a problem caused by people who are seeking expanded or higher consciousness, it is caused by people who are blotting out how the consequences of living in this kind of civilization make them feel.

And we need a mature dialogue in which each drug is dealt with on a case by case basis, and we examine the social consequences, the risk benefit picture, and then commit ourselves to those uh, compounds and courses of action that seem promising. It is an absolute disgrace that science has tolerated the intrusion of small-minded politicians into what is traditionally its bailiwick. Doctors are allowing the government to tell them what compounds they may or may not investigate? Where is the AMA on this? How can we tolerate the least informed among us controlling the agenda, when the agenda deals with the question of planetary survival?

Now, I see myself- I used to think of myself as simply a cunning linguist, but now I realize that I am actually a meme replicator. A meme, as I'm sure you all have been told many times, is the smallest unit of an idea that still has coherency. Memes are to ideas what genes are to proteins. And my notion in coming here tonight is to replicate the meme, to give permission to discuss this. And what I think should be kept center stage in thinking about this is the depth of the mystery, the mysteriousness of it, how confounding it is. I mean, there are psychoactive drugs in use in shamanic contexts, which, when purified and- and smoked for instance, give experiences the duration of which is only minutes. And yet these experiences are such a profound, uh, dissolution into another dimension that they seem to imply that we have moved hardly off the dime in terms of getting a grip on the real nature of reality.

Uh, one of the things that I find very interesting, I said in the early part of this talk, that psilocybin synergized language, and I described how it synergized consciousness in this early African situation, but it continues to act; it's acting even as we speak. And what it seems to be holding out to those who have explored it at depth are things like, uh, an ontological transformation of the basis of language. For instance, uh, language seems to become something visible. You know, Philo Judaeus writing about the Logos, said he- he was concerned with what he called the more perfect logos. As you all know, the Logos was an informing voice that was, uh, the *sine qua non* of Hellenistic spirituality. And when you got right with the world, this voice opened in your head, and informed you and guided your actions.

So, Philo Judaeus was talking about the more perfect Logos, and he says, "The more perfect Logos would go from being heard to being beheld without ever crossing over a qu- a quantized moment of transition." This actually happens on psilocybin. The project of communication which in ordinary reality devolves down into the generation of small mouth noises which move across space to be decoded inside private minds using what we hope are congruent dictionaries, can potentially be replaced by a Logos beheld—a thing seen.

The clue to this is that in our own language our notion of linguistic facility is always backed up by visual metaphors. We say, "he spoke clearly", "I see what you mean", "she painted a picture." This is saying that at unconscious levels our notion of truth is rooted in the visual. I believe that the evolu- in a sense, history

is a psychedelic experience. We are unfolding endlessly into the consequences of the contact with the tremendum that raised us to self-reflection 25- or 30,000 years ago. And the question then becomes, how do we make sense of this in the future? What kind of world incorporates these kinds of insights?

Well, I believe that the place to lean is on a new modality for language, that syntax, properly understood, is beheld. It's very interesting to me that the most powerful of these hallucinogens are also endogenous neurotransmitters. DMT, without contest, is the most terrifyingly powerful hallucinogen that exists in nature, and it occurs in the human brain as a normal part of human metabolism. The fact that the experience only lasts a few minutes is a profound statement about the brain's ability to identify and, and uh, render inactive these compounds. I mean, the brain is hit by a wave of DMT and it says, I know what this is. And we can shunt this to indoleacetic acid and excrete it in a matter of minutes. So this, this state is not far away from us. It could be as little as a one or two gene mutation away. The pineal gland is generating adrenoglomerulotropin [???]. This is an MAO inhibitor of the beta-carboline class, very similar to the compounds that occur in ayahuasca and yage. It appears that the chemistry of thought and the chemistry of shamanic ecstasis are simply points on a continuous spectrum.

So, to my mind, this is the great untold secret of our civilization. To not know about this is to be absolutely in the dark about what is going on. And how many people do know? Some of you may know a story by the Argentine poet, uh, Jorge Luis Borges, a story called *The Cult Of The Phoenix*. And he says that there is a cult; its practitioners have suffered in every pogrom in history; its practitioners have participated in every pogrom in history; it honors no class, no race, no place, no time; one child may initiate another; ruins are propitious places. The initiate do not speak of it, and to some it seems absurd. What he is describing is the fact that in this world of ours, there is in fact an umbilical knot. There is in fact a blind spot that we have all overlooked, or many people have overlooked. The people in this room, I assume, are an exception.

But the fact of the matter is that if you search far enough, if you look at the oldest places the densest jungles, if you talk to the least assimilated tribes, sooner or later you are going to confront the psychedelic experience. And at that point your relationship to reality becomes very different from that of everyone around you because everyone around you is searching for the answers. The task of the person who by one means or another has found their way to the psychedelic experience is to face the answer. The answer is found.

We have arrived at the end of the road in terms of a powerful tool for inducting us into what Wittgenstein called the realms of the unspeakable. We need no more powerful tools than what we've inherited from these shamanic cultures. It's a question, pure and simple, of courage, of having the guts to use it, of surrender. And of course it had to be that because surrender requires the abandonment of the ego. And it is the ego's house of cards that is entirely at risk if we begin to look more deeply, uh, at the psychedelic experience. So it is a challenge for the society. It is a challenge for the individual. It is, it- you are not an ingénue if you have arrived at this place in the spiritual quest. Now the tools and the information are put into our hands and it's up to us to decide what we're going to do with it and how we're going to apply it.

And, uh, the evidence that this is our birthright, that this is what we came from and yearn to return to, is all around us. But it has been suppressed by a male dominated phonetic alphabet, yack-yack-yack kind of culture, which we are all unquestionably embedded in. But I can't stress enough that the consequences of not taking this seriously, are, I believe, the death of the planet. I don't think that through exhortation and preaching, and legislation, and manipulation through propaganda, that we're going to get people to do what

must be done in order to set this ship right. They are going to have to be touched by the tremendum.

And I scoured India, and sat with these roshis and rishis and geishas, and gurus, and went through the whole nine yards. And as far as I'm concerned it's a skin game. They're standing in for the real thing. The real thing is the felt presence of immediate experience and that's what this is giving back to us. It is putting you back into your place, and your time, with the knowledge, now, that there is a goal, there is reason to hope, there is something to save.

The inner richness of the human being causes everything else to pale by comparison. I could loot Madison Avenue to my heart's content and furnish my apartment, and it would be as garbage compared to the inner richness of the mind of one of these Mexican or Amazonian shaman. We have to find our way back to the authenticity of the body and to the connection to the vegetable matrix of the planet.

We are not apart from nature, but are if we cut off our channels of communication to it, and I don't mean this in some airy-fairy way. I mean that if you are not embedded in the use of a plant hallucinogen, there is no way for you to get your instructions in the larger dance of what is happening because the Gaian mind, the over soul, whatever you want to call it, this is how it controls the global mega system, through the shedding and release of chemical messengers of all sorts that move all kinds of organisms around, including self-reflecting higher organisms.

Well, I think you get the drift. [audience chuckles] So why don't we knock off. Now you can bring out the knives.

—
Q:Bravo

Q: Bravo

TM: Thank you.

JB: Terence, what's this "inside" stuff? You know, you, you, you talk about Whitehead, and then you insist upon this notion of interiority. I object to your attack on "Harry Winston".

TM: Well, is he here?

JB: I don't see the difference between "Harry Winston" and the inside your "soul". If you want to talk about language preeminence, or the idea of language as de-creation, which I think you are getting at- that languages strips something away and reveals, then, as Wallace Stevens noted, it's the "to be said" is what do I want to strive for, and then you can't differentiate between "gems" or "inside the mushroom", inside the "soul". I mean, you have this real interiority thing, this idea of depth, when language is surface. Language doesn't go inside. It doesn't go outside.

TM: Yes, you're right. The trick is to operationally realize that, see. And that's very hard to get from here to there in the present situation.

JB: But that's accretion, going from a to b, from here to there. That's the same as interiority.

TM: Yes. This is true. But if everybody had a devotion to Harry Winston the politics of South Africa would be much more complex. Uh, and it's funny, this Harry Winston argument goes clear back to *The Doors of Perception*. You probably all remember where Aldous Huxley says, we like gems because they remind us of the things glimpsed in interior worlds. So he's saying really that the material world at its best is a poor simulacrum of this, uh, of this other place. And culture strives for it. Design is clearly this effort to drag ideas into matter. And yet for them to retain their quintessential aura as nonmaterial things, it seems to be the most successful ones are that.

JB: But I, I mean, aren't you saying that we're talking about something that can't be talked about? And aren't all these phrases we throw around merely comfort words?

TM: Oh, absolutely.

JB: And straw horses?

TM: Oh yes, you know, this is a con.

JB: So why don't we have some coffee.

Q & A [NOT INCLUDED IN CURRENT AUDIO]

Q: Is it essential to your argument, Terence, to establish that there were in fact more or less egoless societies, partnership societies, pre-patriarchal?

TM: Is it necessary to establish it? I'm sure you recognize this as Riane Eisler's notion. Her word. She and I have worked together. She doesn't care to publicly embrace my conclusions, but she does say, you're right, there is something going on where pastoralism emerged. And the emerging of pastoralism and the discovery of the mushroom would be very much intertwined. I don't see how a society could use psilocybin orgiastically without being egoless. I believe the concern with paternity, with tracing the paternal line, which could have only arisen post ego was what then shut down these orgiastic religions, because men were more concerned with determining paternity than they were with having a good time, in fact.

Q: They were getting egos that needed to be defended that way.

TM: They needed to know who their sons were and they wanted to pass on their property, their cattle, their

cash, affluence, or whatever it was.

Q: Do you think the evidence for these more or less egoless societies is pretty strong?

TM: No, I would say that I wish it were a lot stronger. How in the world, through archaeology, are you going to establish the egoless nature of a society? What I would like to see done would be someone to go into southern Algeria, to the Tassili n'Ajjer Plateau, and carry out a serious archaeological project.

To my mind, if you could find a Çatalhöyük-style site in Algeria that was 3- or 4,000 years older than Çatal, it would be perfectly reasonable to headline it as Eden dug up. In other words, that would prove that this high civilization was flourishing in Africa and that it was disrupted by desertification. And that would pretty much make it circumstantially fall into place.

Q: The archaeologists in Budiš, as you know, have presented something that looks like evidence. Whether it's conclusive or not is another question. Cities without walls, for example, burials without battle-mutilated bodies, burials without the typical trophies that are found in patriarch suit. And heroes, too.

TM: Around 10,000 BC we get what's called the ten point techno complex, meaning the sudden accumulation of pointed flints at village sites rather than in hunting areas, indicating that there were large concentrations of arrows fired near habitation sites. This was not hunting. The indirect evidence for this kind of egoless society, to my mind, is in the Amazon today. I've spent a lot of time down there taking ayahuasca, for example, with these up-river folks. Harmine before it was found to become specific with an alkaloid taken from a cereal plant, was called telepathine.

It is literally true that these Amazonian small hunting-gathering societies achieve a state of profound group-mindedness under this drug. And it's in those situations that they decide whether to go to war or whether to move the village, what crops should be planted, whether to take slaves. It's a state of group-mindedness. I have participated in these states and if you want anecdotal evidence I can give anecdotal evidence that very odd things are going on in these sessions. What you think are your own private hallucinations can suddenly begin to be critiqued by the guy sitting at your elbow. This is very impressive.

Q: One last thing, a speculative kind of thing. Do you think that if you allow that there are things that should be salvaged from our ego and scientific culture, do you think the best of our culture might be salvaged in a synthesis culture?

TM: Oh, yes. I'm not an anti-science person or anything like that. I think everything went toward a purpose. I look at western man through the metaphor of the prodigal son. We are the prodigal son. We wandered from the family hearth into history. And then we returned to the way of our fathers. But we have made the peregrination of the history that descended into a Faustian relationship with matter. Now, knowing what we know about matter, those techniques in the hands of a shamanically inspired society will create the global solution that we're seeking. But in our own hands we can seem only to use these techniques to destroy our enemies and poison ourselves.

Q: It seems to some extent that you're preaching to the choir in this particular group.

TM: Well, what a relief.

Q: There's an attitude you have towards the establishment in some way as if they object to this. I don't think they have an objection. The mega hospitals are filling up with narcissistic personalities and borderline personalities, and hysterical personalities. Do any of you know roughly what I'm talking about? Now, we could very easily, if you tell me the dose, send a grant in. Or the makers of leading drugs would be happy to find something for this group of people. It has nothing to do with objecting. If you have the right dose of psilocybin, which will, theoretically, these people are a narcissistic personality, is the extreme of it. If you set it up in a scientific way, they'll buy it.

TM: I'm very close to efforts to do this kind of thing and I can tell you it's an absolute nightmare. A drug as innocuous as MDMA is a schedule one drug. That means it's to be treated like heroin.

Q: No, no, no. For prescribing. But you can use a lot of drugs in the research. So you get special numbers and things like that.

TM: There are no protocols for human administration of psychedelic drugs in this country, nor have there been for 15 years.

Q: This was Humphrey Osmond and other peoples' agenda many years ago but it was shut down fully.

Q: It starts with Timothy Leary. What you're saying gives me deja vu of Timothy 20 years ago.

TM: Only because you misremember what he said. He never said anything like this. The rhetoric of the '60s was entirely devoid of any sensitivity to shamanism, of any awareness that these things had ever been done in the human past. They thought it was a miracle drug that had come out of a Swiss laboratory. They didn't realize that it was the way religion has always been practiced except for the last 2,000 years.

Q: Can you comment on the ways of triggering these experiences, psychedelic experiences, electromagnetically? You know, Persinger's work in Canada?

TM: For those of you who don't know, Persinger believes that UFO encounters are caused by geomagnetism in the earth, which then can be sufficiently strong to actually disrupt neurological functioning. But the general answer to your question is, no, I don't believe you can do this any other way. I mean, theoretically perhaps electromagnetism or something like that, but practically speaking, nothing works like this does. Yoga is futile. It's absolutely pointless.

A DMT trip lasts seven minutes. And five minutes after you come down you cannot tell that you have taken a drug, you don't have a headache, you're not trembling, you don't even have a dry mouth. It is the most profound psychedelic experience a human being can have this side of the grave. So what's holding everybody up?

Q: Terence, you don't want to admit that some people don't want to have an experience that they'll never forget.

TM: Well, you're right.

Q: Will you talk about the relationship between psychedelics and the materialization of objects or the ability to transmute matter?

TM: Well, this is a very fringy sort of thing. It has to be anecdotal. You know, Whitehead, who I base a lot of what I think and feel on Whitehead, and he enshrined in the English language the phrase, the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness." This means believing that that's there, and this is here—the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. The most puzzling aspect of the psychedelic experience, and I'm loathe to even raise it because I don't want to defend it, is, if you do it enough and you watch it enough, you come to the conclusion that there are no boundaries; that the world is some kind of linguistic structure. It is not made of quarks or electromagnetic fields or mu-mesons. It's made of language. And the objection always brought against this point of view is, okay, so say something and make it come to be. And of course this is quite a challenge.

But on the other hand, perhaps that's not a fair approach. After all, everything around us as we sit in this room, for miles and miles in all directions, is an exudate of the human imagination. There is nothing that didn't come out of human minds. We have surrounded ourselves with a self-generated hallucination. We are like coral animals and we excrete ideas. We take matter and we lay into it platonic forms of tremendous complexity. So I think I'm fearful of this area because I think that you can sail off the edge. I'm fearful of it all. I am impressed by the awesome power of it. I think all of these things should be studied with an absolutely unbiased mind. And in no other area do I think this is possible.

Q: Let me ask you this question. You're very persuasive that at some period in time if the shamanistic culture had not changed very much the world might be a rather peaceful and glorious society today without much population growth, without much technology and so forth. But take the world as it is today, which I guess you have to do, and assuming, let us say, that because of the tremendous power of this little group, the day after tomorrow your message has gotten across and we are back in the shamanistic world. Could you sketch in your own mind what the society that we now have, which is hugely overpopulated and highly over technologically-encrusted and so forth, give us five or six minutes of your wonderful words as to what you see the society coming to.

TM: The thrust of history is toward the imagination. This was Blake's position—that our destiny was in what he called the divine imagination. Now, I know that virtual reality was slammed up one wall and down the other, so I don't want to clutch it to my breast this evening. But I do think that some combination, that the difference between computers and drugs is going to migrate toward the vanishing point, that the computers of the future will be drugs, and the drugs of the future will be computers. In other words, they're both information processing systems. Obviously microminiaturization and greater insight into the functioning of these compounds and so forth ... everything is syncing toward the microphysical realm. My fantasy of an implementation of a psychedelic future is a world that looks very much like the world of 25,000 years ago, except that if you are a person in that world, when you close your eyes, there are menus, there are choices, there is an invisible interface. In other words, the imagination has become hardwired as the cultural dimension in which we all live.

By referring to New York as an excrescence of the imagination, but New York has tremendous solidity, a tremendous lump in momentum because it is made of matter. But if the implementation of design ideas were nothing more than the pushing of a button and skyscrapers a thousand stories high could spring up in virtual reality, then design will become the leading edge of culture. This is our future. Our future is in art.

Our future is in realizing the imagination. And then, inhabiting it. And I grant you, in five minutes I cannot explain to you exactly how do we back out from 5 billion people, how do we feed everybody while this is going on.

The politics of the psychedelic experience are such that you introduce people to the idea of inner riches. Why bother with Harry Winston? Because the better stuff is inside. The better stuff costs nothing. The stuff cult, which is sweeping the planet and emptying the earth of its metals and polluting the rivers could be chalked off in a world where the imagination was the value that was being maximized. The short answer to your question is, a radical mentalization of culture to pull back from resource extraction and toxification of the environment.

Once you unleash psychedelics in the population the dreams that will be dreamed are large dreams, indeed. It's very clear that within the next 50 years we will understand the human genome to sufficient depth to probably take control of the human form, we will become who we want to be. We will design ourselves into being the kind of organism that is consonant with our politics. Strangely enough, the only kind of organism I can think of that is congruent with our politics would be something like a mushroom.

A mushroom is a mycelial network through the soil. It has as many connections as a neuro network. If it's a psilocybin mushroom it's a network filled with neurotransmitters, yet it's as fine as a cobweb. Look at how delicately the mushroom touches the earth; it lives only on decaying matter. But if it has menus inside of itself, then it may be living in situ, a fuller, deeper, richer, more feeling filled existence than we can imagine. So I don't think we should cling to the monkey form. Shedding the monkey is a real potential possibility. Techno freaks will want to download us into a solid state cube on the dark side of the moon. I would rather download us into planktonic life and put us into the oceans.

I was recently in Mexico and these huge stratocumulus clouds float over the Yucatan Peninsula. And I was looking and thinking, you know, if a person were the size of a water droplet every one of us could fit into one of these clouds. And look how non-destructive these stratocumulus clouds are. They just drift around, and around.

Q: Terence, do you suggest that civilization or whatever the form is, to change from the forest to the grasslands goes back about 30,000 years? Two questions: First, with that you suggest that Africa is where the cradle of civilization is. Are you also suggesting that civilizations don't go back anywhere in the world farther than that? And what about South America?

TM: Oh, yes. I accept all ordinary dates. I am no friend of Atlantis.

Q: Unlike Thor Heyerdahl?

TM: What I've done here this evening is just create a string of metaphors to try and pique your interest. Not once did I do justice to the truth of the situation or the depth of the psychedelic experience, because it cannot be told. It cannot be told. My technique is to tell the wildest, strangest story I can think of, claim that's the psychedelic experience, and leave it at that. But you should all know that the journey begins where the words stop.

Q: I want to go back historically for a minute. If we can. The shift of psilocybe, obsidian versus what appears to be a later shift to copper and amanita. Do you see a relationship with the shift from psilocybe to

amanita in the ego context?

TM: I'm not sure I accept your premise. Were these two mushrooms ever overlapping in their range? Amanita is a creature of the arctic, generally, the arctic.

And psilocybin, in the *stropharia cubensis*, which is the worldwide one associated with cattle, was a lowland tropical mushroom. Gordon Wasson, who was a wonderful man, spread a lot of confusion about amanita muscaria, and it would take an evening to sort that all out.

Q: On the Pacific coast of the northwest amanita and psilocybes grow virtually side-by-side.

TM: Although there is no proof that the people of the northwest coast ever were aware of those mushrooms.

Q: I have an answer to that. I was in a place called Magadan, Soviet Far East, in the fall. I had a conversation with a Soviet scientist, who showed me a photograph that they had of a man, which they discovered on Kamchatka, which had a mushroom on his head. And that same exact figure was found in Mayan culture. So it seemed when people came across, they worked their way down and they brought the mushroom culture with it.

TM: Well, that's a theory that doesn't give much credit to the mushroom. You don't require cultural diffusion theories if you believe that the mushroom simply speaks.

Q: But you have a DMT experience that ...the one that you will never forget. . .

TM: Well, it depends on your personality. I've seen people smoke DMT and give an entirely convincing display while they were on it, and then come down and say, number one, "I will never do that again," number two, "I don't remember anything," number three, "please leave."

Q: Could you trigger this without mushrooms?

TM: It's a very interesting question. Once a person has smoked DMT it's possible to have a dream in which the subject is raised, the pipe is produced, and it happens. I find this profoundly interesting because it's absolute proof that all the machinery necessary is present in the unstoned natural brain.

At one point, in grappling with the UFO problem, I tried to think in terms of perhaps DMT was loading into adipose tissue and some kind of stimulus could suddenly cause all this stuff to drop out into your system and you would have this sense of hackle-raising strangeness and a rising sense of energy, then a descent into hallucinogenesis.

When DMT was first discovered people were jumping up and down. They thought they had found the schizogen—the chemical key to psychosis. The current thinking about DMT coming out of this University of Alabama, is that probably DMT mediates attention. They believe that when you scan a room, lock on to a face, and grock it, that something is happening with DMT there. It's very useful, these compounds which can be activated and deactivated so quickly. And this is what the body needs to make use of. And many neurotransmitters have this spiking ability where they can shift from one catalytic state to another very

rapidly.

There's a generation of hard science that needs to be done here. You can think up great experiments and find projects forever. None of it has ever been done because it's forbidden. It's taboo.

Q: Let's go back to the issue of menu. This is more of a technical question for you. You've been emphasizing psilocybin and mushroom-based psychedelics. How would you, for instance, compare them with mescaline or lysergic acid, or ketamine, or ibogaine, or yage, the same thing, all appear to address some portion of this opening, this ascending door. Now, if we have a collectivistic culture, that is, to say the least, and we are fusing, would you produce a hierarchy of availability? Would you produce a kind of synthetic mix of all these sources, or would you recommend a kind of graduated measurement of intake? How would you appropriate each of these substances with specific forms of psychedelic insight?

TM: I don't want to talk as though I would make social policy because I think people should be free to do what they want. What I would tell you, though, is to my mind the word psychedelic has been used far, far too broadly, and that where we need to concentrate is on the tryptamine hallucinogens. Specifically psilocybin, DMT, DET, DPT. Then secondarily, the indole hallucinogens including LSD and ibogaine. Mescaline, I consider to be a visually active amphetamine. And not nearly so interesting.

Q: So you would produce a hierarchy?

TM: Let me tell you my rules. If you're going to take a drug, here are the three questions you should ask yourself about this drug, to my mind. Number one, does it occur in nature as a metabolite in some organism? This tells you already that it's not pernicious to life. The next question is, does it have a history of human usage? This makes it even more acceptable. If you have a plant or a drug that has a history of human usage over thousands of years, you don't have to worry about tumors, blindness, infertility, anything weird like that. You've got your human data in hand in the form of the anthropological record. The third and most difficult test for a compound to pass is, does it occur as a constituent of normal human metabolism? The only drugs which can pass all three of these filters are tryptamine hallucinogens, specifically DMT.

You see, serotonin is 5-hydroxytryptamine, this major neurotransmitter system in the brain. Psilocybin, 4-phosphoryloxy and N-dimethyltryptamine. DMT, dimethyltryptamine. I prefer thinking of these things not as drugs really, but as diddling with levels of endogenous neurotransmitters.

Q: It's interesting that you excluded ketamine from your hierarchy.

TM: Oh, no, that stuff is ... I found it very interesting, I have played with it too, but it's not in this ballpark.

Q: What is the natural form of DMT?

TM: Dimethyltryptamine occurs in the human brain and certain deep sea fish, in many generative plants. In fact, interestingly enough, DMT is the most widely distributed hallucinogen in organic nature.

Q: What is the most common one? Or the most optimally used by traditional cultures?

TM: It's used in ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is a combinatory drug where, if you take an MAO inhibitor, and that causes the DMT to become active if taken orally, if you don't back DMT with an MAO inhibitor you take it orally, it will be destroyed. So ordinarily it's smoked. In terms of a shamanic religion that is regularly accessing DMT for sure it's these banisteriopsis cults in the Peruvian, Ecuadorian Amazon.

Q: And is there a tradition similar to that going on in another culture, in another part of the world?

TM: One of the puzzles of psychedelic botany that has never been successfully dealt with is the tremendous concentration of these plants in South America. The Asian tropics are almost devoid of hallucinogens and the South American tropics have like up to 53 species. No one has ever created a satisfactory model for how evolutionary forces could end you up in a hemispheric segregation of drug molecules.

Q: Based upon what you said earlier, might that not leave you to believe that South America could be the cradle of civilization rather than Africa?

TM: No, because I see ample evidence in Africa, and there's a mountain of paleontological evidence that you would have to go against to move the human origin point to South America. I have enough troubles of my own without taking on somebody else's battle.

Q: Why do you need the notion that we are in a bad moment in time? Why do you need for your argument the notion that, you know, you are going to go and rediscover your roots, and this will solve the problem? I have a problem with anybody's talking with the crisis in order to explain a viewpoint that can be valid or not valid without a crisis.

Q: Could I put a rider on this one? You took us down one side of the view, this stereoscopic view is, you have you and history, and that which you didn't get to say tonight, which was that software and that reading of the pattern of the evolution of what's going on. This is where the crisis moment and the chaos moments come in. I was just wondering if you would, as you respond to this, tell us a little bit about that.

TM: I attempted to compartmentalize my intellectual life to make it easy for you. When John asked me here, I said, "Okay, I'll talk about my theory of time." And John said, "Oh, no, if there's a computer involved nobody will come." So I said, "Okay, I'll drop that." Well, next time, if you ever get a next time with the Reality Club. It seems to me that cultures do not create new paradigms except under pressure of crisis. Because if there's no crisis there's, you know, if it ain't broke, why fix it?

My view of history is that time is a kind of variable. Novelty is a previously unrecognized constant in the universe, and novelty ebbs and flows; it's the force which builds up and tears down—empires, love affairs, species, investments—it operates on all scales. Out of a deep inspection of the functioning of our own nervous system we can extrapolate maps of a fractal nature and a mathematically formal nature that, lo and behold, can be overlaid over the whole of reality. Again, feeding back into my conclusion that reality is made of language.

It would be fairly disingenuous in any context to argue that we're not facing crisis. And then, in terms of the politics of this position it's necessary to remind people that they're facing a crisis because otherwise there is no impetus to an act of courage. In other words, who's going to jump out of a fourth floor window? But everybody will jump out of a fourth floor window if the building behind them is on fire. You

have to get people aware of what's going on.

Part of the ego sickness of our society is our incredible ability to deny what's going on. It's all around us. This is a dying planet. It's been dying for 10,000 years. The species count is falling exponentially. What does it take to get people off the dime?

Q: We're not facing a crisis, we're facing thousands of crises, all different kinds of crises and they're very different in nature. I find your talk very problematic, because I'm in favor of taking psychedelics into adulthood. I like the drugs, but there's something about the way in which you argue for it. You propose an evolutionary and very globalizing model instead of an ideological model. It's as if something inevitably will happen through the use of these drugs rather than a sensitivity to the many different kinds of things which will happen through the use of substances like this, depending upon the culture into which they fall.

There's been quite a similar debate in anthropology in terms of literacy, where, in the '70s people like Goody in England, and Havelock, thought that literacy inevitably produced certain kinds of phenomena in society, and then a spate of evidence showing that that's not the case. Literacy is used in many different ways. It's in favor of both secrecy and the free dissemination of information, in abstract thought and non-abstract thought. And the differences are not available.

TM: I don't agree with your premise that we have thousands and thousands of problems. We have one problem; it's the ego. And the retraction of the ego, it will all fall into place. You know? Humility: the ability to defer to the other person; the ability to forestall gratification; the ability to assess consequences. If we can get a hold on the ego, all the rest will fall into place. And I think if we can get a hold on the ego, the best-intentioned programs will come a cropper.

Q: Terence has spoken a lot this evening about the shrinking of the ego. Okay. And I'm curious, and it's a bit rhetorical question, but when your ego shrinks and when your personality shrinks, what do you find beyond the veil of the personality? Because your denial of, let's say, an Akashic record or something like that, a membrane of life that one can visibly turn to and view, presupposes an understanding reincarnation is not possible, that perhaps the empathy within different life forms, where a human and a plant can communicate, or an animal can communicate. I wonder, Jimi Hendrix put it, "Are you experienced?"

TM: As I understand your question, it is, what do I feel when I shrink my ego? The felt presence of immediate experience. That's what the ego dams from reaching the self.

Q: Have you passed into a place where the colors disappear, a void appeared before you? A pure void of consciousness where perhaps the bubble of the personal self breaks and you will then open up into a sea of consciousness that was much higher than you are personally?

TM: Well, you have those kinds of experiences, but you can't navigate through the world like that.

Q: Isn't that what tribal cultures do? They're synesthetic cultures. From what I've heard the only place that happens in western civilization is when people like us are on psychedelics.

Q: What do you think you're going to get, and don't get, when you get it? When you get rid of the ego, then, what happens to all of us in our endeavors?

TM: We mis-define it. We can all keep doing a lot of what we're doing. You just feel differently about it. Probably most of the people in this room, powerful as they are, have their ego under control because when you have your ego under control you don't take yourself seriously. That's all. You know, it's provisional. You know, it's all a game. But the people who take it seriously, my God, they're like another species.

Q: Are you sure that it's not excessive testosterone?

TM: No, I have stayed very clear of gender-specific denigration or association.

Q: There are theories that anything with testosterone climbs hierarchies and is very egotistical, even if it is raised as a woman and has some organ producing testosterone that's not we're not aware of.

TM: Stoned men don't participate to the same degree in those kinds of monkey games. I don't mean us. We probably do. I mean, in pre-history. This was while it was being taken. Imagine a culture where, at every new and full moon, let us say, everybody took a strong hit of mushrooms and made love in a heap. Well, how are you going to come out of that talking about my cattle, my hut, my land because you don't even know who your children are. And it's a different head.

Q: Is your experience of South America, that any isolated tribes such as these people are devoid of ego?

TM: Yes, there are tribes for whom all they know is cooperation. How about the Machiguenga?

Q: I've been with the Machiguenga, in Peru and I noticed among them a very warlike tendency. They said that we don't like those people up the river. I was on the Manú River. We don't like those people up there. They had bows and arrows. I have them at home. They're very violent people.

TM: Within the group.

Q: But that's essential. Part of its essential. Then your group is always localized, always provincial.

TM: But we have a global tribe. We know that.

Q: I'm really curious, because at one time in Africa you painted a picture, at least from the impression that I got, that these cultures which existed were devoid of aggressive tendencies through the mushrooms. Got rid of our ego. And we do not worry about our children, about copping somebody else's cows. Now, am I to believe that these two isolated cultures still exist in some place in the Amazon?

TM: No, because a number of factors that were present aren't present.

Q: Is it possible that they could be? Because as you all know there are still cultures down there we cannot get in contact with.

TM: Almost. Yes. Theoretically there's nothing against it but there's going to be 20 people who are probably nomadic and who flee at even the sound of an outboard motor. You're not going to get a lot of satisfying interaction with these folks.

Q: It's very idealistic and I accept everything you say. But what about the fallout? Do you think everybody can react this way, this wonderful way and ... a shaman, to see the world wonderfully, lose their egos, good, nice, clean, and interact? We'd have chaos.

TM: Chaos.

Q: In the '60s, when LSD came out, there was no stigma. Everybody was roaring and ready to do research on that. I was doing research; I was injecting it into patients with focal cerebral disease. I had all sorts of phenomena, and I wrote it up and it was great. Then you start carrying the people in who overdosed and did too much of it and so on and it became a real mess. I'm from the standard society that says no drugs or anything like that. I'd give drugs to everybody, legalize the whole damn thing. But to envision an idealistic world coming out the way you picture it, is absurd. It ain't gonna happen.

Original Transcription by: Edge.org

Review 1 by: Eva Petakovic IN PROGRESS

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Dialogues at the Edge of the Millennium

May 6, 1998

Location, City, State

Description

- [Sheldrake Audio](#)

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True Hallucinations (Audio Book)

20 June 1993

Phoenix Book Store

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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True Hallucinations Missing Chapter 20: The Oversoul as Saucer

Day Month Year

Description

- [Scribd text](#)

There is building in global society an increasingly intense expectation of the intervention into human history by UFOs. It is very similar in tone to the buildup of messianic expectation in the Hellenistic world in the several centuries preceding the birth of Christ. The leaders of Roman society may have been caught off guard by the appearance of Christ, but they had no one to blame but themselves since millions of people in the ancient world were expectantly awaiting some kind of messiah. So today, science and government koo-koo the idea of world contact with the UFOs, while the contact cults grow ever larger and more insistent that contact is about to occur.

Imagine, therefore, what you may never have seriously imagined before. Imagine what would happen if the UFOs were to appear. Imagine a spaceship of the close encounters of the third kind variety suddenly appearing in orbit around the Earth. Television and mass media would carry its image to every man, woman and child on the planet. Governments would be paralyzed. Science would be helpless to explain where it came from or how it got there. Millenarian hysteria would break out everywhere. The UFO would be hailed as savior and denounced as antichrist. The end of the world would appear imminent, and all this would occur before the contact was more than a visual image. Then the UFO would begin its revelation. Vast displays of beneficent power can be expected. Perhaps it would mysteriously neutralize all weapons of mass destruction, or it might use some sort of ray to cure all terrestrial cancer. Whatever it does one may be sure that its actions will be impressive. Its actions will convert millions to the UFO religion in a space of hours. Indeed, its actions will be specifically designed to overwhelm us with the reality of its power and presence. That will close the first stage of the revelation.

The second stage will be the teachings. Telepathically imparted, the specifics of the teachings cannot be anticipated, but they will urge love, voluntary simplicity, concern for one another, renunciation of war, perhaps renunciation of the destructive application of science. Whatever the teachings, the UFO will promise immense reward to those who follow them and dire consequences for those who do not. And the teachings will be delivered in so poetically perfect a way, so rich in understanding and appealing nuances that no one will doubt their origin in a being wise and good and immensely superior to ourselves. The delivery of the teachings will set the stage for the third and last and most shocking phase of the revelation: the departure.

The saucer, promising vaguely to return, will simply disappear. The entire process could take less than a month. If this seems a short time recall that the entire public career of Christ lasted only three years. Christ's career occurred in a world where information could move no faster than a horse's gallop. Yet three years in one small part of the world was all that was necessary to launch a world religion that was vital for 1500 years. In a world of electronic communication the impact of the saucer's arrival, miracles, teaching

and departure would be incalculable - even if it all occurred within a month. The saucer would leave in its wake a science utterly unable to provide any answers to the important questions concerning what had gone on. The vast majority of people would be fanatical converts to the teachings of the saucer, and any institution in opposition to those teachings could expect to be swept away almost overnight. The departure of the UFO would create a sense of abandonment, the agony of which could be expected to echo in the human psyche for centuries. The only panacea would be the religion of the saucer, the religion left behind. Science would be discredited and soon abandoned in favor of a thousand or more years of exegesis of the saucerian message. Is it not a familiar pattern in the light of our discussion of Christ and Rome?

What will never be said in the wake of such an event and so must be said now while there is still time for all of the above to occur and yet still be deception. A benign deception designed to save us from our advanced science and infantile ethics, but a deception nevertheless. The saucer, no matter how alien it appears, no matter how advanced its demonstrations of power, is NOT a vehicle from some other star system, it is the oversoul of humanity up to its oldest trick. If one knows this one can live through the revelation and the destruction of our scientific world and yet evade the immense power of this most powerful of all transference phenomenon and thereby maintain the integrity of one's own soul and spirit. Remember, I am not a debunker of flying saucers or a defender of science, I am a contactee, and this book is the painstakingly told story of my own involvement with the UFOs. I am one of those Vallee has pinpointed as being a carrier of ideas that pave the way for the scenario I have just described. Yet from it all I have learned that there is no religious revelation more satisfying than the hard won fruits of simple understanding. And there is no liberation to compare with freeing oneself from the illusions and delusions of the age in which one lives.

I reach these conclusions through my use and familiarity with psilocybin and other psychedelic drugs. They immerse their user in the world of the oversoul and make one privileged to at least a part of its mechanics of operation. They allow a private dialogue with the oversoul that is outside the context of the struggle between science and revelation that leaves no choice between the alienation of the rationalist and the tired formulas of the fanatic believer. Psychedelic drugs hold out the possibility of healing the breach between science and morality at the level of the individual, thus freeing one to evolve independent of the chaos and transformation the UFOs may soon bring to humanity. Vallee's recent book 'Messengers of Deception' vibrates with fear of the unconscious and alienation from the matrix of the larger psyche out of which rational thought has emerged. He fears the destruction of rationalism and scientific thought, yet never once does he mention the potential world wrecking crisis that the undirected development of science and technology has brought into being. He paints himself as an open-minded investigator of UFOs, yet never questions the motives of the retired and unnamed intelligence officers in which he places so much faith. It is impossible that the CIA is unaware of the social impact belief in UFOs is having? If they were unaware of it before then surely the recent writings of Vallee himself must have alerted them to the potential challenge UFO beliefs pose to orthodox institutions. Based on Vallee's own ideas of an informational struggle between rational and irrational elements, how was he able to ignore the possibility that the mutilations which he is so eager to connect with UFOs are nothing more than a government agency's clumsy attempt to discredit the genuine UFO phenomenon? It is a typical method of the intelligence community to discredit human groups it opposes by faking atrocities in such a way that they appear to have been committed by the group whose discrediting is sought. Vallee gives examples of this but never suspects that some government agency might be using this technique to impede the transfer of loyalties from political institutions to the UFOs. He mentions the proximity of animal mutilations to high-security government installations but never suggests this might be because such installations are the source

of these mutilations. Few UFO sightings involve confusion among witnesses over whether or not what they saw was a UFO or a helicopter. Yet in the animal mutilation cases many witnesses insist a helicopter was involved. Vallee is at pains to say no physical evidence of a UFO has ever been collected. Yet later he passes over the fact that a quite ordinary surgical scalpel was found at one cattle mutilation site. It seems possible to me that some people in government have read Vallee and are familiar with his theories regarding UFOs as a factor introducing shifts in belief systems and institutional loyalties on a global scale. Without knowing what UFOs really are these persons and agencies have launched smokescreen operations designed to cast doubt on the motives and harmlessness of UFOs and so to retard or halt the shift of loyalties and beliefs now reaching epidemic proportions. I suspect that Vallee's book may be the opening shot in a media war whose purpose will be to connect the occult, right-wing fanaticism, and animal mutilations to the UFO, all in an effort to cast doubt on the vast power and benign intent of the saucer phenomenon. Vallee's title 'Messengers of Deception' bears a curious resemblance to J. Edgar Hoover's 'Masters of Deceit'. There the boogey man was communism. In Vallee's book we are told the new boogeyman is UFO phenomenon. Who chose the title for Vallee's book? Was it Vallee or the mysterious major who was so helpful in guiding Vallee down these new avenues of speculation? I believe that Vallee whether wittingly or unwittingly is himself a messenger of deception and has become the spearhead of a conscious effort to sow even deeper confusion in society regarding UFOs.

We might say it is an effort foredoomed to failure. The collective overmind of our species is the source of the UFO and its designs cannot be deflected or turned aside. Its viewpoint is one of thousands of years and its means visionary and charismatic belief systems which act to restore the balance between understanding of and reverence for the universe is a message more powerful than any offered by the profane materialist societies that have grown so foolish as to imagine themselves the stewards of human destiny. Humanity alone and each of us individually is the steward of human destiny. This is the real meaning of the UFOs and the experiment at La Chorrera.

Original Transcription by: galaxy511 on Scribd

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Lecture Name

Day Month Year

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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[Update: Never mind, found a workaround for the problem I was having linking to several of the items in the Written Work Timeline - this page can be deleted.]

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Tryptamine Hallucinogens and Consciousness

December 1982

Lilly/Goswami Conference, Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California

Description

- [Audio](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other](#)

Well, perhaps this morning's session will be a difficult, uh, act to top; I'm not sure. It was a little rough getting here. I want to call your attention this morning to a very circumscribed place in organic nature that has, I think, an implication for what's been discussed here, uh, not in the general sense of the--some of the theories that we've heard, but in the more particular and experiential sense [clears throat], and that area is, uh, a family of hallucinogenic drugs that are--have not been mentioned particularly, which are the tryptophan-derived hallucinogens: uh, dimethyltryptamine, psilocybin, and, uh, a hybrid drug which is an aboriginal drug used in the rainforests of South America, called ayahuasca, which is dimethyltryptamine but made orally active by being taken in the presence of a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. And, the reason it seems to me appropriate to talk about these drugs in a conference devoted, not only to consciousness, where its appropriateness is obvious, but devoted to quantum physics, is because, uh, it's my interpretation that the major quantum mechanical phenomenon that we all experience, aside from life itself, uh, is dream and hallucination, because, uh, these states, at least in the restricted sense that I'm using it, take place when the large amounts of, uh, radiation of various sorts that are conveyed into the body by the senses are restricted. And, instead we see interior images, interior processes, which are mental. And, uh, these things definitely arise at the quantum mechanical level. Uh, it's been shown by John Smythies and others that there are quantum mechanical correlates to hallucinogenesis of one mol--of one atom. In other words, a compound will be inactive and one atom is moved on the ring and then the compound becomes highly active. And, to me this is a perfect proof of the dynamic linkage at the formative level between matter, quantum mechanically described, and mind, as experienced.

So far what I've said is true generally of hallucinogens and of the, uh, the anesthetics that John is interested and of other drugs and experience as, uh, as well. In other words, ordeals, dieting, this sort of thing can elucid--can elicit hallucination. But, what makes this tryptamine family of drugs interesting is the intensity of the hallucination and the concentration in the visual cortex of the activity, so that, uh, there is an immense vividness to these interiorized landscapes. It is as if information were being presented three-dimensionally and fourth-dimensionally deployed as light, as surfaces which have information coded into them. And, when you confront these dimensions, the--the dynamic relationship that, uh, is evolved is one of you relating to it, trying to decode what it is saying. And, uh, this phenomenon is, uh, not new - people have been talking to gods and demons for millennia. In fact, people have been talking to gods and demons for far more of human history than they have not.

It is only the conceit of post-industrial society's science and technology that allows us to even propound

some of the questions that, uh, we take to be so important. For instance, the--the question of contact with extraterrestrials is, uh, a complete red herring, because it is hedged about with a number of assumptions which a moment's reflection will tell you are completely false. In other words, the search for, uh, a radio signal from an extraterrestrial source is probably as culture-bound an assumption as to search the galaxy for a good Italian restaurant [audience laughter]. That is just, uh, not going to happen. And yet, this has been ruled [audience laughter] as the means by which it is going to happen. Meanwhile, people all over the world - psychics, shaman, mystics, schizophrenics - are--their heads are filled with information, but it has been ruled *a priori*, uh, irrelevant, incoherent, or mad. Only, uh, that which is consensually validated through these certain instrumentalities will be accepted as a signal. The other problem is that we are actually so inundated by these signals from these other dimensions that there is a great deal of noise in the circuit.

This is what I say to John if he were here: that, uh, it is no great accomplishment to hear a voice in the head. The accomplishment is to make sure that it's telling you the truth [audience laughter], because, uh, "the demons are of many kinds: Some are made of ions, some of mind; the ones of ketamine, you'll find, stutter often and are blind." [audience member: "Alright!"] And, of all the others, I might say as well; It is not that you kneel in genuflection before a god, because you will be like Dorothy before Oz. There is no dignity in the universe unless you meet these things, uh, on your feet, and that means that you have an I/Thou relationship, and you say, "Okay, well, you say you're omniscient, omnipresent, or you say you are from Zeta Reticuli, or you say, you say; you're long on talk, but what can you show me?" And, uh, magicians, people who invoke these things, have always understood that you go into it with your wits about you.

Well, what does it--all this have to do with this family of drugs that I was talking about? Simply this: that *this* family of drugs has been overlooked. Eh, whenever you--psilocybin is the one that most people have some experience with. Psilocybin, legally, and in people's assumptions about it, is lumped with LSD. They say, "psilocybin, LSD, mescaline, da da da da." It is, uhm, each one of these things is a phenomenologically defined universe unto itself. And, uh, psilocybin and DMT, although DMT is more intense and briefer in its action--these things invoke the Logos, which means they work directly on the language centers, so that the important, uh, aspect of the experience is the dialogue. And, as soon as you discover this about psilocybin, about tryptamines, you have to decide whether or not to enter into the dialogue, to try and make sense of the incoming signal. And, uh, this is what I've done.

I don't call myself a scientist; I call myself an explorer, because the area that I'm looking at, there is not enough data to dream of a science. We're at the stage where people map one river and indicate other rivers flowed into it, but they didn't ascend those rivers and so nothing is known about that. And, this Baconian collecting of data, with no assumptions about what it has yielded--what it will yield, has pushed me to a number of conclusions that, uh, I didn't anticipate. I, uh, maybe by chronologically going through it I can explain to you what I mean, and describing these trips raises all of the issues.

I first took DMT in 1965, and a friend of mind came to me with this substance--how many of you have smoked DMT? [audience: "by injection"] By injection [audience member: "Yea. Wow!"] Yea [laughs]. Well, it's surprising so few have, because we live in a society that is absolutely obsessed with sensation; every kind of thing you can imagine: every therapy, every drug, every sexual configuration, all forms of media overload, all of these things are adored in this society. And, yet, here is something that actually, uh, hedonists that we are, pursuers of the bizarre that we are, this thing, uh, is too much. Or, at least as they say

in Spanish, *bastante*, "it's enough!" - so much enough that it's too much. Uh, you smoke it, and it comes on in about fifteen seconds. You essentially fall back unconscious; your eyes are closed, and you hear a sound like ripping cellophane, like someone crumbling up, uh, Saran Wrap or something like that and throwing it away. A friend of mine says this is your radio entelexy ripping out of the organic matrix. And, you hear a tone, one of these ascending [makes ascending tone], this kind of thing. And, then, there is the normal hallucinogenic drug modality, which is a shifting geometric surface of migrating and, uh, changing colored forms. And, then, you come up against this; it's like the [clears throat]--well, there must be some analogy in the--at the site of activity. All the bond sites are being occupied and you're actually seeing the state begin to come into being over a period of about thirty seconds. And, then you are in a place, which is, uh--well, I haven't taken all drugs. I think if someone tells you they have taken every drug, you know they're confessing they're a dilettante. It's, uh, much better to lean hard on a few. But, I've taken most of the ones that would reflect or give, uh, uh, a measure against this experience--and you find yourself in a space, uh, it has a feeling of being underground or somehow insulated and domed. It's what, in *Finnegans Wake* is called the "merry go raum," from the German word *raum*, for "space." And, you actually--the room is going around, and in that space you feel--and Amit brushed this this morning--you feel like a child; you feel that you have come out somewhere in eternity. And, it always reminds me of the fifty-third, uh, fragment of Heraclitus, which is: "The Aeon is a child at play with colored balls." And, you not only become the Aeon at play with colored balls, but there are entities, which are, in my book, *The Invisible Landscape*, I describe them as, uh, self-transforming machine elves, but--and this is sort of what they are; they're, um, dynamically contorting topological modules that are somehow distinct from the surrounding background, which is itself undergoing this continuous transformation. They al--I always think of the scene in, uh, *The Wizard of Oz* after the house knocks the witch down and she's in Munchkin Land and the head of the Munchkins comes with a scroll, and they all have very squeaky voices and they sing a little song about [in high pitch voice] "you are absolutely and completely dead" and they're marching around her [audience laughter]. So, the Munchkins come, these hyperdimensional machine-elf entities, and they bathe you in, uh, love, which is spelled L-U-V. It's a kind of, um--well, it's not erotic and it's not heartfelt, but it *sure feels good* [audience laughter]. And, what they are saying is "don't be alarmed. Remember. And, do what we are doing." Now, another [stutters] and one of the interesting characteristics of DMT, and another reason that I would prefer it over something like ketamine. With ketamine, you are not afraid. You go unafraid. I think one of the interesting things about judging a drug is to see how eager people are to do it the second time. If they're eager to do it the second time, it's probably not worth bothering about, because what is necessary to have validity in these experience is, uh, the terror. The terror is the stamp of validity on the experience, because it means, you know, *this is real*. We are in the balance, and, uh, in these states with these tryptamine drugs, we read the literature, we know what the maximum doses are, the LD-50, this and that. But, so great is one's faith in mind that, when you are out there, you *know* that the rules of pharmacology do not really apply and that control of existence on the plane is a matter of decision and luck and the roll of the dice. With ketamine you don't get this.

Uh, so they are reassuring you, these little entities, and saying, "don't worry, don't worry, do this, look at this." Meanwhile, eh-uh, you are completely there. Your ego is intact. Your fear reflexes are intact. You are not fuzzed out at all. And, consequently, your reaction is this.....[silent].....you know, and it persists, and it persists, and you breathe, and it persists, and they're saying, you know, "don't, don't get some loop of wonder going that quenches your ability to understand; just try not to be so amazed; try to hang in and look at what we're doing." And, what they're doing is, um, emitting sounds, like music, like language, and these sounds, uh, pass, as Philo Judaeus said that the Logos would when it became perfect, pass from being heard, without ever going over a quantized, uh, moment of distinction, into things beheld. And, so what

you--you hear and behold a language of alien meaning, which is taking place right in front of you and it is conveying alien, uh, information, which cannot be Englished.

Now, being a monkey, there is a--there is, uh, a kind of cognitive dissonance that is set up in our hindbrain when you a--encounter an unenglishable object, because you try to pour mind over it and it just sheds it like water off a duck's back. And, then you try again and you are looking at it, and this cognitive dissonance, this "wow" or "flutter" that is building off this object, uh, causes wonder or awe, awe at the brink of terror. So, you have to keep controlling that. And the way to control it is to do what they're telling you to do, which is "do what we are doing," and then you begin to experiment with your voice, and, uh, I've, uh--a phenomenon is possible. And, uh, by the way, I give this lecture in this way to invite the attention of experimentalists, whether they be shaman or laboratory people or tank people or whatever. Because, I'm telling you: there's something going on in this, uh--with these drugs that is, uh, not part of the normal spectrum of hallucinogenic drug experience as its, uh, known to be. So, you begin--you begin this glossolalia-like phenomenon, although it isn't classical glossolalia, which has been studied. In classical glossolalia, pools of saliva eighteen inches across have been measured on the floors of these South American churches after these, uh--where people have been kneeling. And, people always ask, after the glossolalia has happened; they turn to the people next to them and say, "Did I do it? Did I do it? Did I speak in tongues?" This isn't like that. This is simply a brain state which allows a--either the assembly language which lies behind language, or a primal language of the sort that Robert Graves was talking about in *The White Goddess*, or a Kabbalistic language of the sort that is described in the *Zohar*, a primitive, primal, proto-*Ursprache* that comes out of you, and you discover *you* can make the extraterrestrial objects - the feeling-toned, meaning-toned, three-dimensional rotating complexes of light and color in transformation...and you feel like a child. And, you are playing with colored balls; you have become the Aeon.

So, this happened to me twenty seconds after I did this drug, uh, on this day in 1965. And, I was, uh, appalled. I mean, I thought that I had my ontological categories intact, and I had taken LSD, and, just, it was all going forward, and this thing came upon me like a bolt from the blue. And, I came down and I said (and I said it many times while I was coming down), "I *cannot* believe it; this is *impossible*, this is *completely* impossible." Because, it was not, you know, that I was kneeling at the feet of some rishi or roshi or geshe or one of those guys; it was not, that it was--there was a declension of gnosis. It was that, friends, right here and now, one quanta away, there is raging a universe of active, uh, intelligence that is transhuman, hyperdimensional, and--but extremely alien. The god that John Lilly talks to, that they play these games with about moral values and setting the constraints of the universe is not like this god at all. The chief thing about the 'god of tryptamine', if we can use that; I call it the Logos; that's what I think it is--and I make no judgements about it. I constantly engage it in dialogue, saying, "Well, what are you? Are you some kind of diffuse consciousness which is in the ecosystem of the Earth? Are you, uh--and the problem with it is that it is just full of answers to these questions [audience laughter], you know. It's--it's the *true* history of the galaxy over the last four and half billion years is, uh, trivial to it. And, it can show you. You know, you can tune these images. And, of course, the question always is: independent validation, at least for a time, for me, the question was...but, as I attended more and more conferences like this and realized that the structure of the Western intellectual enterprise is so flimsy at the center that apparently no one knows anything, I became less, uh, reluctant to talk about these experiences. Because, they *are* experiences. They are primary datum for being. It is, uh, this is, uh, not remote, and yet it is *so* unspeakably bizarre that it casts into doubt *all* of man's historical assumptions. And, any of you who are familiar with the books I've written, I've entertained various ideas about it. When we first discovered the

mushrooms in South America, and, uh, it does these same things that DMT does, although it builds up over an hour and is sustained for a couple of hours and then comes down. But, there is the same confrontation with an alien intelligence, and, um, these extremely bizarre unEnglishable information complexes and the hint, the hint that's--that these drugs suggest that there is something that you can do with your body that you have never done, that no one has ever done, and that, yet, once it is done, it will be so obvious that it will fall right into the mainstream of cultural evolution. And, I suggest that, uh, language either is the shadow of what I'm talking or that what I'm talking about is a further extension of language. Perhaps, uh, you know, I mean *perhaps* a language, a human language is possible where there--actually the intent of meaning is beheld in three-dimensional space. If this can happen on DMT, it means it is at least, under some circumstances, accessible to human beings. Well, given ten thousand years and a high pressure technology looking at that, does anyone doubt for a moment that it could become, uh, just a cultural convenience in the same way that mathematics has become a cultural convenience or language has become a cultural convenience?

But, anyway, in confrontation with this organized entelechy on the other side, I--many theories were elaborated. Uh, the theory that we wrote about in the book on psilocybin, that teaches you how to grow it, was, uh, that it was in fact an extraterrestrial; that, in fact, the physical body of the mushroom was the flesh of a species that did not evolve on Earth; that, uh...and it, it--it said this; it had a whole rap. It said, "yes, well, once a culture takes control of its, uh, has complete understanding of its genetic, uh, information, it reengineers itself for survival. And, our version of that is a mycelial network strategy when in contact with the planetary surface and a spore dispersion strategy, uh, in terms of--as a means of--of radiating through the galaxy." And, uh, though I am troubled with how freely Bell's non-locality theorem is thrown around, nevertheless, my friends on the other side do seem to be in possession of a--a huge body of information drawn from the history of the galaxy. And they say that there is nothing unusual about this, that man's conceptions of, uh, organized intelligence and the dispersion of life in the galaxy and this sort of thing are just hopelessly culture-bound, and that the galaxy has been a, uh, an organized system for billions of years. And, that, and that life evolves under so many different regimens of temperature and pressure that searching for an extraterrestrial who will sit down and have a conversation with you is like searching for a good Italian restaurant out in the galaxy. The main problem with extraterrestrials is to *recognize* them. Because, time is so vast and evolutionary strategies so varied and environments so varied that, uh, the trick is to know that contact is being made at all. The mushroom, uh, if one can believe what it says in one of its moods, is a symbiote, and it desires symbiosis with the human species. It achieved it early, ah, by associating itself with the domesticated cattle that people keep. In other words, like the plants man grows and the animals he, uh, husbands, the mushroom sought to inculcate it into--self into that family, because it's very clear that where human genes, those genes will be carried. It's the old 'develop, uh, burrs so you can attach yourself to the fur of an animal and it c--will carry you with it wherever it goes'. The mushroom, by being domesticated by human beings, has become a part of the human family. But, this is all just beginning, in terms--speaking for a moment in terms of the classic mushroom cults of Mexico, they were destroyed by the coming of the conquest. The--the Franciscans had an absolute monopoly on theophagia [sic--theophagy], which is eating God; and when they came upon these people calling a mushroom *teonanacatl*, the flesh of the gods, they set to work. The Inquisition were able to push this thing into the mountains of Oaxaca so that it only survived in a few villages until Valentina and Gordon Wasson went, in the 1950s and found it there.

And, I--the metaphor I like, uh, for that, another metaphor; you see, you balance these explanations: now I'm going to sound like I don't think it's an extraterrestrial. It may be, it may not be. It may be what I've

recently come to suspect - that the human soul is so alienated from us in our present culture that, uh, we treat it as an extraterrestrial. The most alien thing in the cosmos is, uh, the human soul. That's why these movies like 'E.T.', or even 'Alien', uh, those guys could come tomorrow and, uh, the DMT trance is weirder [some audience laughter] and holds more promise for, uh, for information for the human future. Uh, it is--it is that intense a kind of thing. But, what I was saying was, um, they burned the mushroom cult, they forced it into repression, they burned the libraries of Greece at an earlier period, they dispersed the ancient knowledge, they shattered the stellar and astrological machinery that had been built (and, by "they," I mean the Greco-Hellenistic-Christian-Judaic tradition), and they build a triumph of mechanism; they realize the alchemical dreams of the 15th and 16th century and the 20th century with the transformation of elements, the discovery of, uh, gene transplant, and this kind of thing. But then, having conquered the New World, having driven its people into cultural fragmentation and diaspora, in the mountains of Mexico, they came upon the body of Osiris - the condensed body of Eros - where it had retreated at the coming of the Christos. And, this thing is now unleashed.

If any of you read, Phil K. Dick's--one of his last novels, *Valis*, where he talks about, uh, about the Logos, how it went into the ground. It was a creature of pure information, and it went into the ground at Nag Hammadi at the burying of the Chenoboskion Library in 270. But, it was information, and it existed there until 1947, and then the texts were translated, people read them, and as soon as people had the information in their minds, the symbiote came alive, because it is a thing of pure information. And, this is the same sort of thing. The mushroom consciousness *is* the consciousness of the Other, both in hyperspace, which means in dream and in the drug trance, at the quantum foundation of being, and in the human future, and after death. And, all of these places which were thought to be discrete and separate parts are seen to be part of a single continuum. The--what history is is the dash, over ten to fifteen thousand years, from monkeyhood to flying saucer, without ripping the envelope of the species so badly that the borth [sic]--that the birth is aborted and, uh, and, uh, fails, and we remain in physes.

[32:38] - BREAK IN REVIEW 1 (KW)

And, um, history essentially then is the shockwave of eschatology. Something is at the end of time and it is casting an enormous shadow over human history, drawing all human becoming toward it so that all the wars of history, the philosophies, the rapes, the pillaging, the migrations, the cities, the civilizations - all of this is occupying a microsecond of geological, planetary, and uh galactic time as the monkeys react to the symbiote, which is in the environment, which is feeding the information from the true- about the historical situation and the galaxy. And it is not [clears throat] I don't belong to the school of people who say 'well, we couldn't have done it if they hadn't taught us writing' and that sort of thing, this 'they came from the stars and aught us to measure' rap. What I'm saying is something I hope is more profound than that.

It's that as nervous systems evolve to higher and higher levels, they come more and more to understand the true situation in which they are embedded. And the true situation in which we are embedded is an organism, an organization of active intelligence that is on a galactic scale. And uh, science may be culture-bound, mathematics may be culture-bound. People can argue about these things but no one knows because we have never dealt with an alien mathematics or an alien culture except in this limited area that is ruled out of bounds by the guardians of the truth. In other words, shamanic experience, drug experience, this is ruled out of bounds and it is because it is the source of novelty, the cutting edge of the ingression of the

novel into the plenum of being is happening there.

I mean think about it for a moment: if the human mind does not loom large in the history, in the coming history of the human race, then what is to become of us? The people who worry about getting the epistemological and ontological bases of these things nailed down say that that the mathematics is in good order. What the problem is is that the mathematics does not map well into English or any other natural language, and so people have violent disagreements in English when they are completely in agreement over the mathematical foundation of it. So I am saying, uh, we are at the beginning of human thought. This is uh, the birth crisis of intelligence, and intelligence is something which is moving through the higher primates now at greater and greater speed. We know that the primate species, that were not human, that chipped tools and made fire and drilled beads. So, uh, the question 'are we unique' it has already been answered by the physical anthropologists. There have been other intelligent monkeys walking this planet. We exterminated them, and so now we are unique, but uh, what is loose on this planet is language, self-replicating information systems. Uh, it may be a further rarefication or a further hyposthetization of what is happening in DNA, in other words, learning, coding, templating, recoding, testing, re-testing, re-coding. It may be- and the immune system does that too- it may be an extension of that or it may be a quality of an entirely different order. But whatever it is, it is in the monkeys now and moving through them and moving out their hands and into the *techne* with which we have surrounded ourselves.

The end state that this pushes toward tryptamine state seems to be in that sense transtemporal; it is an anticipation of the future, it's, it's [clears throat] as though Plato's metaphor were true. Plato said "time is the moving image of eternity." The tryptamine state is as though you've stepped out of the moving image and into eternity, into the *nunc stans*, the standing now, the nunc stans of Thomas Aquinas. In that state, all of human history is seen to lead toward this culminating moment. Acceleration is visible in all the processes around us: the fact that fire was discovered several million years ago; language came perhaps thirty-five thousand years ago; measurement, five thousand; Galileo, four hundred; then Watson-Crick and DNA. What is obviously happening is that everything is being drawn together. On the other hand, the description our physicists are giving us of the universe - that it has lasted billions of years and will last billions of years into the future - is a dualistic conception, an inductive projection that is very unsophisticated when applied to the nature of consciousness and language. Consciousness is somehow able to collapse the state vector and thereby cause the stuff of being to undergo what Alfred North Whitehead called "the formality of actually occurring." Here is the beginning of an understanding of the centrality of human beings. Western societies have been on a decentralizing bender for five hundred years, concluding that the Earth is not the center of the universe and man is not the beloved of God. We have moved ourselves out toward the edge of the galaxy, when the fact is that the most richly organized material in the universe is the human cerebral cortex, and the densest and richest experience in the universe is the experience you are having right now. Everything should be constellated outward from the perceiving self. That is the primary datum.

The perceiving self under the influence of these hallucinogenic plants gives information that is totally at variance with the models that we inherit from our past, yet these dimensions exist. One one level, this information is a matter of no great consequence, for many cultures have understood this for millennia. But we moderns are so grotesquely alienated and taken out of what life is about that to us it comes as a revelation. Without psychedelics the closest we can get to the Mystery is to try to feel in some abstract mode the power of myth or ritual. This grasping is a very overintellectualized and unsatisfying sort of process.

As I said, I am an explorer, not a scientist. If I were unique, then none of my conclusions would have any meaning outside the context of myself. My experiences, like yours, have to be more or less part of the human condition. Some may have more facility for such exploration than others, and these states may be difficult to achieve, but they are part of the human condition. There are few clues that these extradimensional places exist. If art carries images out of the Other from the Logos to the world - drawing ideas down into matter - why is human art history so devoid of what psychedelic voyagers have experienced so totally? Perhaps the flying saucer or UFO is the central motif to be understood in order to get a handle on reality here and now. We are alienated, so alienated that the self must disguise itself as an extraterrestrial in order not to alarm us with the truly bizarre dimensions that it encompasses. When we can love the alien, then we will have begun to heal the psychic discontinuity that has plagued us since at least the sixteenth century, possibly earlier.

My testimony is that magic is alive in hyperspace. It is not necessary to believe me, only to form a relationship with these hallucinogenic plants. The fact is that the gnosis comes from plants. There is some certainty that one is dealing with a creature of integrity if one deals with a plant, but the creatures born in the demonic artifice of laboratories have to be dealt with very, very carefully. DMT is an endogenous hallucinogen. It is present in small amounts in the human brain. Also it is important that psilocybin is 4-phosphoralkoxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine and that serotonin, the major neurotransmitter in the human brain, found in all life and most concentrated in humans, is 5-hydroxytryptamine. The very fact that the onset of DMT is so rapid, coming on in forty-five seconds and lasting five minutes, means that the brain is absolutely at home with this compound. On the other hand, a hallucinogen like LSD is retained in the body for some time.

I will add a cautionary note. I always feel odd telling people to verify my observations since the sine qua non is the hallucinogenic plant. Experimenters should be very careful. One must build up to the experience. These are bizarre dimensions of extraordinary power and beauty. There is no set rule to avoid being overwhelmed, but move carefully, reflect a great deal, and always try to map experiences back onto the history of the race and the philosophical and religious accomplishments of the species. All the compounds are potentially dangerous, and all compounds, at sufficient doses or repeated over time, involve risks. The library is the first place to go when looking into taking a new compound.

We need all the information available to navigate dimensions that are profoundly strange and alien. I have been to Konarak and visited Bhubaneswar. I'm familiar with Hindu iconography and have collected thankas. I saw similarities between my LSD experiences and the iconography of Mahayana Buddhism. In fact, it was LSD experiences that drove me to collect Mahayana art. But what amazed me was the total absence of the motifs of DMT. It is not there; it is not there in any tradition familiar to me.

There is a very interesting story by Jorge Luis Borges called "The Sect of the Phoenix." Allow me to recapitulate. Borges starts out by writing: "There is no human group in which members of the sect do not appear. It is also true that there is no persecution or rigor they have not suffered and perpetrated." He continues,

- ...the rite is the only religious practice observed by the sectarians. The rite constitutes the Secret.

This Secret...is transmitted from generation to generation. ...The act in itself is trivial, momentary, and requires no description. ...The Secret is sacred, but is always somewhat ridiculous; its performance is furtive and even clandestine and the adept do not speak of it. There are no decent words to name it, but it is understood that all words name it or, rather, inevitably allude to it.

Borges never explicitly says what the Secret is, but if one knows his other story, "The Aleph," one can put these two together and realize that the Aleph is the experience of the Secret of the Cult of the Phoenix.

In the Amazon, when the mushroom was revealing its information and deputizing us to do various things, we asked, "Why us? Why should we be the ambassadors of an alien species into human culture?" And it answered, "Because you did not believe in anything. Because you have never given over your belief to anyone." The sect of the phoenix, the cult of this experience, is perhaps millennia old, but it has not yet been brought to light where the historical threads may run. The prehistoric use of ecstatic plants on this planet is not well understood. Until recently, psilocybin mushroom taking was confined to the central isthmus of Mexico. The psilocybin-containing species *Stropharia cubensis* is not known to be in archaic use in a shamanic rite anywhere in the world. DMT is used in the Amazon and has been for millennia, but by cultures quite primitive - usually nomadic hunter-gatherers.

I am baffled by what I call "the black hole effect" that seems to surround DMT. A black hole causes a curvature of space such that no light can leave it, and, since no signal can leave it, no information can leave it. Let us leave aside the issue of whether this is true in practice of spinning black holes. Think of it as a metaphor. Metaphorically, DMT is like an intellectual black hole in that once one knows about it, it is very hard for others to understand what one is talking about. One cannot be heard. The more one is able to articulate what it is, the less others are able to understand. This is why I think people who attain enlightenment, if we may for a moment compare these two things, are silent. They are silent because we cannot understand them. Why the phenomenon of tryptamine ecstasy has not been looked at by scientists, thrill seekers, or anyone else, I am not sure, but I recommend it to your attention.

The tragedy of our cultural situation is that we have no shamanic tradition. Shamanism is primarily techniques, not ritual. It is a set of techniques that have been worked out over millennia that make it possible, though perhaps not for everyone, to explore these areas. People of predilection are noticed and encouraged.

In archaic societies where shamanism is a thriving institution, the signs are fairly easy to recognize: oddness or uniqueness in an individual. Epilepsy is often a signature in preliterate societies, or survival of an unusual ordeal in an unexpected way. For instance, people who are struck by lightning and live are thought to make excellent shamans. People who nearly die of a disease and fight their way back to health after weeks and weeks of an indeterminate zone are thought to have strength of soul. Among aspiring shamans there must be some sign of inner strength or a hypersensitivity to trance states. In traveling around the world and dealing with shamans, I find the distinguishing characteristic is an extraordinary centeredness. Usually the shaman is an intellectual and is alienated from society. A good shaman sees exactly who you are and says, "Ah, here's somebody to have a conversation with." The anthropological literature always presents shamans as embedded in a tradition, but once one gets to know them they are always very sophisticated about what they are doing. They are the true phenomenologists of this world; they know plant chemistry, yet they call these energy fields "spirits." We hear the word "spirits" through a series of narrowing declensions of meaning that are worse almost than not understanding. Shamans speak

of "spirit" the way a quantum physicist might speak of "charm"; it is a technical gloss for a very complicated concept.

It is possible that there are shamanic family lines, at least in the case of hallucinogen-using shamans, because shamanic ability is to some degree determined by how many active receptor sites occur in the brain, thus facilitating these experiences. Some claim to have these experiences naturally, but I am underwhelmed by the evidence that this is so. What it comes down to for me is "What can you show me?"

I always ask that question; finally in the Amazon, informants said, "Let's take our machetes and hike out here half a mile and get some vine and boil it up and we will show you what we can show you."

Let us be clear. People die in these societies that I'm talking about all the time and for all kinds of reasons. Death is really much more among them than it is in our society. Those who have epilepsy who don't die are brought to the attention of the shaman and trained in breathing and plant usage and other things - the fact is that we don't really know all of what goes on. These secret information systems have not been well studied. Shamanism is not, in these traditional societies, a terribly pleasant office. Shamans are not normally allowed to have any political power, because they are sacred. The shaman is to be found sitting at the headman's side in the council meetings, but after the council meeting he returns to his hut at the edge of the village. Shamans are peripheral to society's goings on in ordinary social life in every sense of the word. They are called on in crisis, and the crisis can be someone dying or ill, a psychological difficulty, a marital quarrel, a theft, or weather that must be predicted.

We do not live in that kind of society, so when I explore these plants' effects and try to call your attention to them, it is as a phenomenon. I don't know what we can do with this phenomenon, but I have a feeling that the potential is great. The mind-set that I always bring to it is simply exploratory and Baconian - the mapping and gathering of facts.

Herbert Guenther talks about human uniqueness and says one must come to terms with one's uniqueness. We are naive about the role of language and being as the primary facts of experience. What good is a theory of how the universe works if it's a series of tensor equations that, even when understood, come nowhere tangential to experience? The only intellectual or noetic or spiritual path worth following is one that builds on personal experience.

What the mushroom says about itself is this: that it is an extraterrestrial organism, that spores can survive the conditions of interstellar space. They are deep, deep purple - the color that they would have to be to absorb the deep ultraviolet end of the spectrum. The casing of a spore is one of the hardest organic substances known. The electron density approaches that of a metal.

Is it possible that these mushrooms never evolved on earth? That is what the *Stropharia cubensis* itself suggests. Global currents may form on the outside of the spore. The spores are very light and by Brownian motion are capable of percolation to the edge of the planet's atmosphere. Then, through interaction with energetic particles, some small number could actually escape into space. Understand that this is an evolutionary strategy where only one in many billions of spores actually makes the transition between the stars - a biological strategy for radiating throughout the galaxy without a technology. Of course this happens over very long periods of time. But if you think that the galaxy is roughly 100,000 light-years from edge to edge, if something were moving only one one-hundredth the speed of light - now that's not a

tremendous speed that presents problems to any advanced technology - it could cross the galaxy in one hundred million years. There's life on this planet 1.8 billion years old; that's eighteen times longer than one hundred million years. So, looking at the galaxy on those time scales, one sees that the percolation of spores between the stars is a perfectly viable strategy for biology. It might take millions of years, but it's the same principle by which plants migrate into a desert or across an ocean.

There are no fungi in the fossil record older than forty million years. The orthodox explanation is that fungi are soft-bodied and do not fossilize well, but on the other hand we have fossilized soft-bodied worms and other benthic marine invertebrates from South African gunflint chert that is dated to over a billion years.

I don't necessarily believe what the mushroom tells me; rather we have a dialogue. It is a very strange person and has many bizarre opinions. I entertain it the way I would any eccentric friend. I say, "Well, so that's what you think." When the mushroom began saying it was an extraterrestrial, I felt that I was placed in the dilemma of a child who wishes to destroy a radio to see if there are little people inside. I couldn't figure out whether the mushroom is the alien or the mushroom is some kind of technological artifact allowing me to hear the alien when the alien is actually light-years away, using some kind of Bell non-locality principle to communicate.

The mushroom states its own position very clearly. It says, "I require the nervous system of a mammal. Do you have one handy?"

Revision History <#>

- v1.0 - Dec 1982 - Dolphin Tapes - From a talk given at the Lilly/Goswami Conference on Consciousness and Quantum Physics at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. This was the first of many lectures that Terence gave at Esalen. A transcription of his talk appears in Terence's 1991 book *The Archaic Revival*, wherein the incorrect year of 1983 is given for the talk.
- v1.1 - Oct 1999 - Hosted by Erowid. Text taken from the Hyperreal Drug Archives, which used *The Archaic Revival* as its source.
- Erowid Note: The audio recording of this talk was republished in 1986 by Lux Natura, and has [recently been posted online](#). In addition to appearing in the 1991 book *The Archaic Revival*, a longer transcription of the recording that includes some of the audience question-and-answer session was published in 1993 in the *Jahrbuch für Ethnomedizin und Bewußtseinsforschung/Yearbook for Ethnomedicine and the Study of Consciousness* Nummer/Issue 2, 1992. Versions of this talk also appeared in the 1996 magazine *Towards 2012, Part II* and in the 2003 *Book of Lies: The Disinformation Guide to Magick and the Occult*.

Original Transcription by: Erowid.org

Review 1 by: Kevin Whitesides (In Progress)

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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Understanding and the Imagination in the Light of Nature

17 October 1987 (Potentially incorrect)

Philosophical Research Society, Los Angeles, California(Potentially incorrect)

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- Transcription
- Scribd Transcript
- Other links

(THIS TALK WAS CONFUSED FOR "THE [LIGHT IN NATURE](#)" TALK, PART 2. WHICH IS NOW FULLY TRANSCRIBED.)

A Transcription used to be here from that talk (Part 2, and it was incorrect. So it was deleted... See edits) - Jonathan L.

Original Transcription by:

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

Terence's ideas are free, but his words and works belong to his children and legal heirs. People who wish to use Terence's words must seek permission through [Lux Natura](#)

Unfolding the Stone: Making and Unmaking History and Language

2 June 1991

Wilshire Ebell Theater, Los Angeles, California

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

[Introduction of Timothy Leary]: He's an old friend of all of ours, so, I'd like you all to welcome, uh, Timothy Leary [audience applause and cheers].

[Introduction by Timothy Leary]: Yea.....[laughs] I for one am overjoyed to be here [audience applause].....
[LEARY INTRODUCTION NOT FULLY TRANSCRIBED]

This has not been an easy ten months for the people of this planet or the planet itself. I want to reach back tonight and invoke a vanished tradition, get to the heart of it and try to show how we can bring this forward in our lives to empower hope in the most dark of situations and even make these dark situations the raw material of a clearer, stronger hope than might ordinarily be the case. A few days ago I was talking to a friend of mine and he wanted to tell me the story of sitting in the presence of a 104 year old Vietnamese monk. The guy had basically kept his mouth shut, the monk, and hadn't said much around the monastery where he just sort of cleans up. Then he announced he wanted to talk about meditation and he opened his remarks by saying, "we are all luminous beings, why then do we not appear before each other radiant in our lumination?"

This is the conundrum of life. This is the problem. It was T.S. Eliot who said, "Between the idea and the reality, between the motion and the act, falls the shadow." Why is that? As psychedelic people, this is the problem that we grapple with in our own lives and when we look out at the world. You've heard me say many times, we have the vision, we have the money, we have the technology but why can we not then appear before each other as radiantly luminous beings and why cannot we reclaim our planet from toxification, disease, overpopulation and bonehead politics. You know the list. What is the hang up here? What is the problem? Why is perfection so distant?

Well what I've learned from life, vegetables, travels and books can be summed up in two Greek words. It's the central message of the philosopher Heraclites. He was always my favorite philosopher but whenever I would read about him, he was called the crying philosopher. I had to live to be 44 years old to understand the poignancy of Heraclites' message. He said in a nutshell, *Panta rhei*. All flows. Nothing lasts. Nothing is permanent. This is the hardest message life has to teach because what it says is: your joy is transient, your anguish is transient, your fortune, your home, your dream, your moments of great ecstasy, your moments of great insight and your moments of great empowerment. Everything is flowing through your hands at the

moment that you are aware of it.

William Blake, who in a way set this engine going a couple of centuries ago said, "What is the price of experience? Is it bought for a song or wisdom for a dance in the street? No, it is bought with all that a man hath. His wife, his home, his children." Now this is not a pessimistic message and William Blake was not a pessimistic guy. He was the same guy who told us that if we could but cleanse the doors of perception, we would perceive the world as it is: infinite in a grain of sand. How can we take this poignancy, this sense of impermanence, and weld it into something that is paradoxically indestructible and has meaning in our lives and gives us not only the strength to carry on but also the power to be exemplars. The power to stand up before other people and let them feel the power of vision in the paradox of permanence in the face of the need for indestructibility.

To answer that question, I felt that we had to leave the narrow confines of 20th century thinking and we had to reach back into the byways of human thought that have been, by most of us, somewhat passed over and forgotten. After all, modern life makes great demands on us. It's enough just to keep your checkbook balanced and your insurance paid. We can't all spend our time delving in the libraries of noetic, Gnostic, Hermetic and magical traditions. But I thought it was worthwhile to talk to you about this tonight because we have been through such a difficult ten months.

It was also Heraclites, the all flows guy, who said 'all is war.' All is war. What he meant was, everything occurs in the presence of it's opposite and out of that, there is generated the friction, the heat and the light that all comes together in an indissoluble package as part of life. So what I want to talk to you about tonight and how it relates to unfolding the stone is the notion of alchemy of all things. Alchemy as I'm sure many of you know, is really the secret tradition of the redemption of spirit from matter. Many of you may imagine that alchemy is simply a discredited pre-scientific obsession of unbalanced minds interested in changing base metals into gold; lead into the stuff of commerce. This is the beknighted reputation that alchemy has acquired in the century so given over to the literal, the material and the non-spiritual that it lost all touch with the adumbrations of meaning that vibrate behind the perceptions of the alchemist.

The central conception of alchemy is the conception of the philosopher's stone. What is it? It's the universal panacea at the end of time. It's the chocolate cake that your mother made once a week when you were a child. It is the *pana supersubstantialis*. It's all things to all men and all women. If you're hungry, you eat it. If you're dirty, you shower under it. If you need to go somewhere, you sit on it and you fly there. If you have a question, it answers it. It's something that the human mind senses in itself and is related to, invoked and worshipped over centuries, before the slow rise of the patriarchy, rationalism and materialism turned it into a myth and a fairy tale.

It is not a myth or a fairy tale. It is the burning primary reality that lies behind the dross of appearances. Alchemy is based on a philosophy called Hermeticism that was developed in the first and second centuries by Gnostic thinkers, Greeks, Jews and people inside the Roman Empire as it was beginning to show the first signs of degradation and decay that felt a profound disaffection with their world. A disaffection that on the scale of those times was as profound as our own existential disaffection. The Hermetic philosophers drew back from the rise of Christianity with its doctrine of the fall of man, original sin and the stain of Adam and Eve. These hermeticists took a different tact and made two points that I think we need to recover and live out for ourselves.

The first point was that 'man,' which means men and women - human beings - are divine beings. Not lower than the angels but higher than the angels. The message of the alchemical and hermetic thinkers and the corpus hermeticum actually uses the phrase; "Man is God's brother." We have no idea what it would mean in our own lives if we could throw off the notion of ourselves as fallen beings. We are not fallen beings. When you take into your life the gnosis of the light filled vegetables, the psychedelic plants that have stabilized the same societies of this world for millennia, the first message that comes to you is that you are

a divine being. You matter. You count. You come from realms of unimaginable power and light and you will return to those realms.

The second point that these philosophers wanted to make was that fate can be overcome. Fate can be overcome! Now for the Greco-Hellenic world, what that meant was the starry engines of the machinery of fate that they saw strewn across the night sky. They were intensely aware of the power of the zodiac, the stellar shells inhabited by demons that extended out to the unimaginable imperium of the all father that was beyond fate. Into that world of astrological fatedness, which is such a strong idea for the Greek mind, the hermeticist announced that fate can be overcome and they have a novel answer for how this could be done. It can be done through magic. A word not often enough heard in the present world.

The overcoming of fate is achieved through magic and then the stellar machinery becomes not an invasive force into one's life but an empowering force. Now, some of us may believe in astrology and some of us may not, but we are all strongly influenced by the notion that fate and of our powerlessness in an existential world. John Paul Sartre said that nature is mute and we, embedded in the media dense, message dense and programming dense matrix of these hyper societies that we have created – often feel like hapless atoms running endlessly according to the blueprints and programs of unseen masters. Whether it's the banking industry, Madison Avenue, whoever, we tend to disempower ourselves. We tend to believe that we don't matter and in the act of taking that idea to ourselves, we give everything away to somebody else and to something else. So the rebirth of the sense of the stone and its possibility within each of us entails these two ideas - our divinity and our power to overcome fate. There is no inevitability in our lives unless we submit to the idea of inevitability and then give ourselves over to it.

I wish there were more jokes but it's just been such a tough go. It's been a tough go, I have to tell you. Where can we look in the world to see some confirmation of what I'm saying? How can we draw it down from being an airy-fairy rap of a bardic Irishman? Well, I think the place to look is history. If you go to the academies, those Ivory towers that Tim Leary was talking about and ask, what is history? They will tell you that it is a random walk. They will tell you it's an endlessly pointless fluctuation. Empires rise and fall. Migrations of people come and go. It is essentially meaningless. I don't believe this. I don't even think there is strong evidence for it because what I perceive when I look at the world, not only the world of history but the world of nature out of which history has emerged, I see novelty. I see something wonderful, maddening, paradoxical, ever increasing and ever more conserved. Every iota of novelty that comes into existence is somehow saved and passed on. That's why when we walk or drive down Melrose, we see Egyptian fashion motifs and we see fashion statements drawn from the 14th century, the 2nd century, Assyria, Egypt and Angkor Wat. All of the novelty of history coalesces in the living moment. It's always been that way. Every society in the moment of its existence has lived as a resonance, a completion and a distillation - a good alchemical word - of what has proceeded before.

The alchemy idea that spirit can be redeemed from matter begins to get teeth when you connect the idea of spirit to the idea of novelty, which has not ordinarily be done. Novelty is the life of the party and the life of the party is to be high-spirited. This is what we need to focus on as the thread of the dark labyrinth of the prison of the material world that can lead us back to the light. The universe is an engine for the production of novelty. It always has been since the first moment of the big bang, 20 to 25 billion years ago. Simpler states have been replaced by more complex states, which have then set the stage for greater complexity.

The drift of this then is the emergence of language, tools, culture and higher ideals, like courage and love and self-sacrifice. These ideas are not flukes, sports or mistakes. These are further steps along the way in the process of the great alchemical furnace of being – heating and casting, dissolving and recasting, purifying and recasting alchemical gold. So, hard as the world may appear, dark as the hour may appear, in reality we exist in a dimension of greater opportunity, greater freedom and greater possibility than has ever

been. The challenge is to not drop the ball. The challenge is to know this, to act on it and to slough off all the leeches, back handlers, weasels and crypto-fascists who want to deny that and turn man into a machine for their own purposes.

Alchemy has always perceived this and has delineated stages in the transformational process. These stages are worth talking about, not in the details, but in the two bipolar states that define this. They used a bastard Latin and they called them the Nigredo and the Albedo. The Nigredo is the precondition for transformation and what is it? It's shit. It's detritus. It's flotsam. It's debris. It's being HIV positive. It's being deep into your 4th marriage and sinking fast. It's bankruptcy. It's serum hepatitis. It's the inevitable dark night of the soul that comes upon us, and these dark nights of the soul come on all of us. Nobody gets through this world without a little dung raining down on them. Believe me, you may evade it for decades but then there'll be a knock on the door. It's said that the millstones of fate grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine.

So what do we do with that? The answer is, we welcome it. This is what the alchemists awaited: the Nigredo, the prima materia, the dark matter and the chaos that is the precondition then for redemption. And God knows, we've got lots of chaos right now. We have war, famine, and revolution, millions of homeless people on the move. The nation state is dissolving. The relief agencies of the world can't keep up. The various secret societies, mafias and cabals that have always tried to tie us into chains, they're all working overtime. We are in the nigredo condition. Hallelujah. This means that the kissing has to stop but the fun can begin; the real fun.

The other end of this bipolar condition in alchemy was called the albedo. The albedo, the whitening, and that means out of the chaos can come a new beginning, a new reality, and a new hope. These alchemists existed in a philosophically more naïve, quote "more naïve" world than we do - so they actually projected onto the processes of matter their own interior psychic condition. They did work with matter, fire, furnaces and retorts and what they would do is - they would take the prima materia, lead or excrement or something else, and then they would heat it. They would turn it to ash and then calcinate the ash, or pour solvents through the ash and get an extract, and then heat that and sublime it. Out of this, almost as a footnote, came modern chemistry, but that was not the important side of it. The important side of it was that they were projecting mental states onto the swirling retorts of their laboratory. It was like a magical mirror for them. It was in fact, dare we say the P word; it was psychedelic. What psychedelic means is getting your mind out in front of you by whatever means necessary so that you can relate to it as a thing in the world and then work upon it.

So from the nigredo to the albedo, there were a series of these stages. Now I said a few minutes ago that magic was the key and by magic I mean, the reclaiming and the reconstruction of language to a sufficient degree that it becomes at first possible, then probable, then inevitable to each one of us, that miracles can happen. Miracles can happen! The Grateful Dead have a song, "we need a miracle everyday." We do need a miracle everyday. Well is that too tall an order? I don't think so.

Years ago, one of these talking vegetables said to me, "mind conjures miracles out of time." Out of time! Time is the prima materia on which the alchemical process works. The alchemist, again in their 'naïve' way, believed that precious metals, diamonds, gold and sapphires actually grew in the earth because from the alchemical point of view, everything was alive. My friend Rupert Sheldrake is leading the charge to create a new birth of that perception inside science. The idea that nature, all of nature, is alive. Not simply organic cellular nature but that the earth itself is a living being. So mind conjures miracles out of time. The proof that this can be done and it's an incontrovertible truth - and I defy any naysayer or bring-down to overcome it - is ourselves. We are the proof that mind can conjure miracles out of time. If it weren't for us, there would just be birds, foxes, coral reefs, and glaciers, but nature was not content with that level of novelty. A million years ago; 100,000 years ago, nature grew discontented. It said, let's raise the ante. Let's

go to higher stakes poker in this planetary game. Let the monkeys speak. Let them build fires. Let them elaborate tools. Let them march forward onto the stage of creation. And remember I said that Hermetic faith was that humankind could act as the brothers and sisters of God. Not moats in God's creation, but co-partners in the invocation out of being of yet greater novelty. Why? It is for play, for fun, just the cosmic madness of it all, and the pure cussedness of it all to raise the stakes higher and higher and higher. Now, I keep going back to this thing of 'can it be done?' I want to convince you because I'm so certain.

I love Herman Melville and his rhetoric, and friend's of the whale, bear with me. For Herman Melville, the whale was not the endangered creature it is today. It was the dark cosmic God of Christianity that haunts us and tries to pull us down. There's a wonderful speech in Moby Dick where Starbuck, the first mate - you remember wimpy little Starbuck, he stood for Christian right reason - he says to Captain Ahab, "to seek revenge on a dumb brute seems blasphemy." Ahab says, "Blasphemy Starbuck? Speak not to me of blasphemy; I would strike out the sun if it insulted me. For could it do that, then could I do the other? For there is ever a sort of fair play." That's the point of that rap. There is a sort of fair play. You've been told from the cradle that the deck was stacked against you with the fall of man, original sin and so forth and so on. It's bullshit! It's absolute bullshit. There is a sort of fair play and if you can get in touch with that in your life.

When Mohammed wouldn't come to the mountain, the mountain came to Mohammed. That's fair play! If you can have that perception, the world will begin to work for you. It will begin to move towards you as the mountain moved to Mohammed. The mushrooms said to me once, nature loves courage. Nature loves courage and I said - what's the payoff on that? It said, it shows you that it loves courage because it will remove obstacles. You make the commitment and nature will respond to that commitment by removing impossible obstacles. Dream the impossible dream and the world will not grind you up. It will lift you up. This is the trick. This is what all these teachers and philosophers, the one's who really counted, who really touched the alchemical gold - this is what they understood. This is the shamanic dance in the waterfall. This is how magic is done. It's done by hurling yourself into the abyss and discovering that it's a feather bed. There's no other way to do it. This is why I have always taken the position, that as modern people we can't go out and set arms marching or launch religions - who would want to anyhow - but to the people who say adventure has fled, that it's all humdrum, I just know that they have forgotten the 5 grams of psilocybin in their refrigerator.

Magellan may have had excitement rounding the horn but you in your living room later tonight can put him in the shade if you have the courage to do the things that are necessary to do, and we know what they are. The first thing to do is to tell society to fuck off because they don't know what's going on. This is a matter between the person and the planet. It is a matter between the person and the planet. All the detritus of history and all the games that people have tried to lay on you; know that they just want to get you down in the ditch they're in. We know this because aboriginal societies have never broken the faith. The living gnosis is still there and not only for people who paint themselves blue and dance around buck-naked but for us as well. It takes an act of courage - not a weekend at Esalen and not a trip to the ashram where they tell you that if you sweep up for a dozen years then they'll hand on a whammy. No, the speed with which you can reach depth is under 45 seconds if you know where the elevator shaft is, and you do. I don't have to tell you, I've been telling you.

There's one more alchemical metaphor, or stage, that I want to mention here because I think it refers to this psychedelic possibility. Not all the alchemists included this stage in their recensions of the work, but for me, I think it's central. Again in their church of bastardized church Latin, they called it the *cauda pavonis*, the peacock's tail. Now the physical basis of this, if you ever played around with metal and fire, there are certain metals when they pass to a certain temperature range, iridescent colors play across the surface and sometimes even freeze. In the glazing of pottery at low temperatures, like in Raku, what these

pottery masters are aiming for are these wonderful iridescent surfaces that play across the glaze and then can be frozen into it.

This is the peacock's tail and in alchemy, this was thought to precede the final whitening. This is the passage into the pure and the goal really. Rather than see the present world as exclusively a veil of tears and a black prison - none of these metaphors are mutually exclusive - the great strength of alchemical thinking and the way in which it is completely antithetical to science and in fact why science has so much contempt for it, it's because the alchemist had the wisdom to see that everything occurs in the presence of it's opposite. It's not either-or, it's both-and. They called this the *coincidentia oppositorum*. This is the coincidence of opposites, the union of opposites.

This is a great truth because I think all of us live under the rubrics of, "am I good or am I bad? Am I lazy or am I obsessed?" The answer is that it is never one or the other. It does a tremendous injustice to being to ignore the union of opposites. Now science in order to do it's work, which is essentially a technological work and not a deep philosophical work - it's a minor art, science, that's all it is - it's the art of the physically possible. But it has presumed to be the arbiter of all thoughts, all feelings and all work. My God, the hubris of Rene Descartes to divide the world into the primary and secondary qualities, and what are the primary qualities? They are motion, mass, spin and momentum. What are the secondary qualities? They are color, feeling, taste and tactility. This tells you that you're nothing. You never touch reality; you live in that world of sense. Therefore can only aspire to the real world through some kind of mathematical disembowelment of what your own body and what your own feelings are telling you.

In the *cauda pavonis*, the peacock's tail, this is where the contradictions meet. This is where they generate heat and light, and an excruciating sense of poignancy, meaning and identity. Our world, as we experience it tonight, is quintessentially - another good alchemical word - quintessentially that *coincidentia oppositorum*. Where do we meet this most dramatically in our lives? I think we meet it in the phenomenon of birth. If you had just parked your flying saucer in the bushes and came from a world where sexuality was unknown and people were grown in vats and you came upon a woman in the act of giving birth, it would appear to be a catastrophe in progress, a tragedy at the limits of tragedy. Blood is being shed, anguish is on the surface, real agony pervades the situation, and yet - nature in her wisdom, has bound pain and ecstasy, death and completion, regeneration and dissolution into that experience in such an indissoluble fashion that no woman can miss the point. No *woman* can miss the point.

Unfortunately men have traditionally averted their eyes and this has gone on in the hut at the edge of the village. Nobody wanted to be there. Maybe the shaman would be there, but he was loaded in order to be there, and the mystery of mysteries goes on outside the site of men.

Now in our world, we are caught in this kind of metaphor. A cosmic birth, a birth of planetary scale is underway. There is agony; there is no doubt about it. I remember an embryologist, who once taught me that the fetus in the womb is literally sculpted by the hand of death. The immature hand of the fetal organism is a webbed claw and that it isn't that the flesh retracts to form the human hand, it's that the cells in between die and slough off into the amniotic fluid and are carried away. The fetal child is literally sculpted into life by the hand of death. Our world is in this kind of circumstance. There are no rational solutions at this point. We are now in the hands of the miracle makers - the shamans, the mind of the planet, the life of the ocean and the atmosphere. It's going to get tougher so we have to forge the indestructible adamantine stone of alchemical hope because heavier challenges lie ahead.

One hundred years from now, two hundred years from now, I cannot but imagine that this planet will be empty of human beings. Not because we have become extinct but because we have gone to our fate. It's unimaginable at this moment because we are in the planetary birth canal. We are at the peak of transition right now and the walls are literally closing in. We are being suffocated. We are fighting like a strangled man to try and save ourselves. Yet we have to believe, and I invite you to educate yourself about the

history of the planet, there is no reason not to believe that we will come through. We will come through! There is light at the end of the tunnel. There is a meaning to history, but it's an alchemical meaning. History is a vast alchemical engine for the forging of an alchemical humanity.

I don't have the answers, believe me. I don't know whether we go to another star or whether we become eight angstroms high and all live in a block of metal underneath Mt. Everest, or whether we march off to the heart of the sun. The scenarios are endless because the human imagination has such a power to bootstrap itself to higher and higher levels. What would Paleolithic man have made of the religion of Pharaonic Egypt? What would the Pharaohs have made of the engines of war and hydraulic machinery created by the Romans? What would the Gothic Scholastic Enlightenment have made of the age of cybernetics, psychedelics and virtual reality? The imagination is the alchemical Deus Ex Machina that can lift us out of time, out of the nigredo of history and into higher and higher states of being.

Now there is no reason to simply ride along in this process, because another perception of the alchemist that is central to getting this all lined up so that it works, is the idea of the macrocosm and the microcosm. What does that mean? It means that the world truly is fractal in the most profound sense. Meaning that what is going on, on some very large scale, is condensed, intensified and recapitulated on smaller scales. So the dynamics of a love affair are the dynamics of an empire. Both are the dynamics of the evolution, expansion and extinction of a species. There is only one way that things can happen and whether we're talking about microphysical events or the life of an entire solar system, the curve of binding energy is going to be the same. That means that this redemption of spirit from matter, which is the historical process that we are embedded in, we can do our part by working on our small section of this - which is ourselves. This is why alchemy was so fascinating to the Jungian psychologists. They saw that this work of redeeming spirit from matter is nothing more than the work of redeeming the self from the contaminated dross of the traumatized and damaged psyche that we each inherit from our passage through the parental shit pile. We each have that gift to deal with. That nigredo is within ourselves. This is why we're in therapy, why we take psychedelics or why we meditate. We do this because we all have this dross within us, and this is a great gift. It means that we can begin consciously the process of distillation and sublimation, and casting of ourselves into that golden being, that luminous creature that this 104 year Vietnamese monk sensed and evoked to my friend. But it's more than that.

We do that alchemical work to perfect our own sense of the union of opposites and our own sense of the presence of the living alchemical stone within, in order that we may then participate, act in and be part of the transformation of the planet. It is an immense transformation and there is no reason to doubt it because the emergence of organic life from what preceded it is as dramatic a miracle as anyone could imagine. The emergence of language from mute bestiality, which is only 100,000 years in the past, is as dramatic a miracle as anyone could imagine. The emergence of a planet instantaneously unified by electricity and media is - and this is only 50 or 60 years in our past and it's still going on - as dramatic a miracle as anyone could imagine.

It's absolutely irrational to not be filled with the fire of consuming hope. You just have to overcome the leveling that we inherit from these empty, existential scientific ideas. When we do that and lift our eyes to the real, living spiritually empowered reality that exists in nature, in society, in our lover and in ourselves, then you see that the peacock's tail, the cauda pavonis, is a transcendental object at the end of time. An enormous unspeakable something that beckons across the historical landscape and that casts an enormous shadow that reaches clear back to the earliest moments of the universe. We have always been in the grip of that iridescent, strange attractor. It has propelled our poetry and our art. Our best moments have always been when a tiny scintilla - another good alchemical word - a tiny spark of that alchemical completion burned for a moment in our mind, in our life and in our perception.

We occupy a special position in regard to this. Millions of people, thousands of generations of human

beings have come and gone and could only glimpse this in the ecstasy of eroticism, psychedelic empowerment and ritual magic. But we are the last people. Beyond us lies the mystery, if we have but the courage to move forward into that abyss. To believe that nature will reward the dreamer, then we can complete that wonderful Irish toast, which says, "May you be alive at the end of the world."

It's that close, it cannot wander much longer. All of the preconditions have been met and the peacock's tail grows daily, whiter, more radiant and more brilliant, as we sense it now, breaking into our dreams, breaking into our waking lives, the presence of this attractor. It has always given people meaning but we are the privileged inheritors of that meaning. We have then, the privilege of putting it all together in one piece and standing ready at the end of history to go into the mystery and be completed.

That's the end of my song.

OK – let's have some questions here:

[Question]: Once one has acquired the bundle weed, how does he consume it?

Technical questions here. Detail freaks and recipe mongers. For the benefit of those not initiated into this, it's interesting. Aboriginal human beings have searched the world for psychedelic sources, and have been, such as in the Amazon, very successful but not exhaustively successful. So it's recently become known in the phytochemical literature that a plant, *Desmanthus illinoensis*, the Illinois bundle weed, appears to have one of the highest concentrations of DMT of any plant that has been looked at and it has no history of aboriginal usage.

The question is, how to activate this into a useable psychedelic. Probably the way to do it would be to attempt to create an analog to the South American drug/plant drug Ayahuasca by combining the bundle weed with a North American source of a beta-carboline, such as Harmine, which is what is in Ayahuasca. That would activate it and the obvious candidate for that would be a succulent plant that grows in the desert of New Mexico and Nevada, *Peganum harmala*.

Peganum harmala combined with *Desmanthus illinoensis* in the correct proportions would probably deliver a stunning psychedelic experience.

[Question]: Would you eat it or smoke it?

You would drink it. You would boil them together. Smoking, you can't, it's too diffuse in these things. No, you would perform an alchemy. You would boil the two for many hours in a large volume of water, pour off the wash, add new water, boil more hours, pour off the wash – and then combine the two fractions, get rid of the physical material and drive it down until it looks like thick coffee. But don't be consumed by your alchemical investigations. Proceed carefully with this stuff because it's going to work if you get it right.

[Question]: In the absence of a scale, how might one measure 5 grams of dried psilocybin.

Spring for the scale!

[Question]: Unknown Question.

I don't like these big events because I don't like sitting up here in the light and looking out over the sea of faces. I'm against guru-ism and leader trips. The whole point of this message has to be that it's for everybody. Nobody is special. If it can only happen to some kind of an elect, then it has no impact and no ability to save the planet. It's a human mystery. It doesn't belong to the intelligentsia or to the wealthy. It doesn't belong to the Irish regardless of how we kid around about that. It's got to be for everybody, so take this man [himself] seriously.

Here he is, the second year in a row, pleading for unity. The community is the backbone of the thing. When I first started doing this, one of the most empowering experiences that I could have after talking to a crowd like this is someone would come up afterwards and say to me, I thought I was crazy until I talked to you; until I heard you talk. What they meant was, they had done psychedelics in the 1960s and they had

seen the elves and the machinery of joy – but then other people had turned to market analysis and international banking and it all seemed to flow away. People need to find like minded people.

[Question]: I was interested in your concept of fate. It reminded me a quote by Jung where he said “fate is doing willingly that which I must do.” I was wondering about this concept of fate. You were talking about the Greeks and how they thought of fate as the one thing that you couldn’t go beyond; even Zeus himself was terrified of the fates, the moirai. The idea of not being able to pass beyond the physical body, not being able to pass beyond boundaries and that we are bounded by fate even the gods themselves. And yet – you were talking about the concept of the alchemist believing about going beyond ones fate. I find this idea very delicious. I thought maybe you could elaborate about going beyond ones fate and this type of freedom.

Yes, so the way they did it, as I briefly indicated but didn’t get into, was through magic. The kind of magic was the following: it was the style of renaissance magic that developed in the wake of the translation of this hermetic corpus. Previously magic had been sort of as the cartoon image we have of it - the lonely wizard off in the woods grinding up his potions and toads or that sort of thing. But in the renaissance, in the courts of the Medici court, people like Marsilio Ficino and Tommaso Campanella; these people took the idea of astrological associations.

In other words, plants, minerals, and odors could all be associated to given zodiacal signs and they created a theatrical style of magic. A ceremonial magic where, say you wanted to counteract a Saturn aspect of some sort – by choosing the opposite - the ergs, jams and perfumes associated with the opposite sort of situation and gathering them to you – you could make a new model of the universe. They did this in round rooms and built orreries, and practiced a kind of ceremonial magic that then made them the companions of princes. The dark figure of the lonely magician in the woods was replaced by the renaissance Magus, who was manipulating political realities, counseling Popes and taking magical power into his hands specifically for the purpose of counteracting the machinery of fate.

It had to do with this idea. If fate is decreed by God’s cosmos but man is the co-creator with God, then by setting up a magical microcosm, the ordinary asterisms - the ordinary influences of astrology - can be deflected. If you’re interested in this sort of thing, Dame Francis Yates wrote a wonderful book called, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. There is another book by D.P. Walker called, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella*. These are not easy books to find. If they were easy to find, what fun would it be? Part of the quest is getting this stuff together. That’s the basic theory of renaissance magic, to create a microcosm to counter the fatalistic machinery of the macrocosm.

I just want to leave you with one story because it sort of fills out the theme and shows how peculiarly the spirit moves and how the coincidentia oppositorum is present in so many unexpected situations. I think somewhere in the body of my talk, I got a dig in at Cartesian logic or Cartesian rationalism. As you know, Rene Descartes, a French philosopher of the 17th century; founded modern scientific materialism but what the historians of science have been at great pains to keep from view is the following story. This story is attested to in Descartes own journal.

When he was a young man of about twenty-two years old, he decided to go soldiering and wenching around Europe, which is something that young men of that era did. He joined a Habsburg army, which was on a mission to lay siege to the city of Prague in Bohemia to suppress what was essentially an alchemical revival. I won’t go into the details but a young prince of the northern leagues and his queen, who was the daughter of James of England, and was named Elizabeth after her grandmother, had managed to gain control of the empire. He had been elected in fact. He was called Frederick the Elector Palatine and this Habsburg army was sent to destroy this protestant alchemical reformation and it did so. It laid siege to the city and killed this young man and his queen fled to The Hague.

Then, the army retreated across Germany. I believe it was the 17th of August of that year, which was 1619, the beginning year of the Thirty Years’ War – they made camp at Ulm in Southern Germany. Just as

an aside, Ulm was the birthplace of Albert Einstein. That night, Descartes had a dream. In the dream, a radiant angel appeared to him and said, "The conquest of nature is to be achieved through number and measure." In that moment, Rene Descartes went from being a nobody to being the founder of modern science. Modern science was founded at the direction of an angel and the angel showed how it was. To this day, modern science has made all of its strides through the application of number, mathematical analysis, and measure. That is the secret of the scientific conquest of nature and it was a secret that was imparted to Rene Descartes by an angelic entity. So I'd like you to leave this evening wondering: who do we work for and how does it work?

Thank you very, very much!

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Vertigo at History's Edge

29 April 1994

New York City, MA

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

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Video Lecture Timeline

Unknown date

[Forms and Mysteries, morphogenetic fields & psychedelic experience](#) @ Unknown (Needs transcription)

1984

[Psychedelic Society](#) @ Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized)
[Locked]

1987

[Shamanic Approaches to the UFO](#)

@ Angels, Aliens, and Archetypes 1987 Symposium, San Francisco, CA (Partially transcribed; Needs further transcription)

[Psychedelics Before and After History](#) @ CIIS, San Francisco (Needs transcription)

1988

[Hallucinogens & Culture](#) on Thinking Allowed (Transcribed; Review 2 complete; Finalized; Needs date)
[Locked]

[Time and the I Ching](#) on Thinking Allowed (Transcribed, Review 2 complete; Finalized; Needs date)
[Locked]

[Aliens and Archetypes on Thinking Allowed](#) (Transcribed; Needs Review 2 [admin only]) [Locked]

1989

[Shamanology of the Amazon](#)

@ Ojai, CA (Needs transcription)

1990

[Opening the Doors of Creativity](#) @ Port Heuneme, CA (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Kevin Whitesides)

[Touched by The Tremendum](#) (Transcribed; Review 1 in progress- Eva Petakovic)

1991

[Seeking the Stone: Mind & Time, Spirit & Matter](#) (Needs transcription)

[Sacred Plants as Guides: New Dimensions of the Soul - aka Address to the Jung Society](#) @ Claremont, CA (Transcribed; Review 1 in Progress- Spencer Barrett)

1992

[The future of humanity with Abraham and Sheldrake](#) @ Esalen (Needs transcription)

[A report on crop circles with Abraham and Sheldrake](#) @ Esalen (Needs transcription)

[Psychedelics and Mathematical Vision with Abraham and Sheldrake](#) @ Esalen (Needs transcription)

[A Conversation with Terence McKenna and Ram Dass](#) (Needs transcription)

1993

[Taxonomy of Illusion](#) @ UC Santa Cruz (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

[Visiting Terence's home with Thomas Norm Daniela Barry](#) @ Hawaii, Occidental (Needs transcription)

[The World And Its Double](#) @ Nature Friends Lodge, Sierra Madre, CA 91024 (Transcribed; Needs Review 1)

1994

[Axiom Production](#) @ Maui Hawaii (Needs Transcription)

[Language About the Unspeakable](#) @ Maui, HI (Needs transcription)

1995

[Chaos, Creativity and Imagination with Abraham and Sheldrake](#) @ Esalen (Needs transcription)

[Evolving Times](#) @ Sacramento, CA (Needs transcription)

1996

[A Better World - Toward The End Of History](#) (Needs transcription)

1998

[The Evolutionary Mind with Abraham and Sheldrake](#) @ Santa Cruz (Needs transcription)

[Dreaming Awake at the End of Time](#) @ San Francisco, CA (Needs transcription)

[Interview Hawaii](#) @ (Needs transcription)

1999

[Shamans Among the Machines](#) @ Unknown (Needs transcription)

[Psychedelics In The Age Of Intelligent Machines](#) @ Seattle (Needs transcription; Needs formatting/Review 1)

Vision Plants: The Transpersonal Challenge (Non-Ordinary States of Reality Through Vision Plants)

Day Month 1988

International Transpersonal Conference, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
- [Transcription](#)
- [Other links](#)

TM: This presentation will explore the models that shamanic use of vision plants provide for transpersonal psychology, particular attention given to the role such plants play in personal integration, deeper implications of shamanic use of plants, role of mind in the natural order and the planetary future. Basically for myself, my involvement with shamanism has been a deepening meditation over now about 20 years, and it seems to me very fruitful because it continues to change and integrate itself ever more deeply into the meaning of reality at large so that, uh, for me shamanism has become a kind of overarching metaphor for not only personal being in the world, but the historical adventure, the being of the species in the world.

So I want to talk about it today and, and as an advocate, I want to make it seem indispensable to living a life of rife reason in the world. I want to show that without shamanism, the notion of humanism itself is in a kind of jeopardy. And probably most of us can find ourselves in agreement with that. But then I want to leave most of us behind and go further [audience chuckles] and the jest that this humanness rooted in shamanism is a humanist, ultimately rooted in very complex symbiotic relationships with plants and chemicals in the environment.

I want to argue, in fact, that, uh, people without plants are in a state of potential neurosis, a state of existential wanting, and that- and that in fact part of the Western dilemma is the sense of abandonment that followed the breaking off of these symbiotic relations with vision-producing plants, uh, that characterized the rise of Western modern monotheism and even more characterized the rise of modern society, but let me return, then, to the origin because this is where I think the case can be made. My interpretation of the time we're living through and this amorphous movement which we are all somehow in some way are a part of which calls itself the New Age or what have you. I call it the Archaic Revival, and the reason that I call it the Archaic Revival is rooted in my conviction. Models and energy forms of Archaism, and shamanism then is suddenly centrally highlighted. Shamanism was the profession *ne plus ultra* of the upper neolithic era. And what was this profession precisely about? Well, it was about exploring the envelope of cognition. Pushing against the linguistic membrane of what it was possible to say, symbolize, conceive, and communicate. But why should one species out of all those competing on the earth attain somehow a kind of mega-adaptive ability that causes a kind of compression of biological time into the phenomenon that we call history.

Is it simply, as our theologians have always been forced to conceive, that divine agency entered in to the mechanism of the world and somehow set a spark in motion that kindled and grew into humanity? Or is it, as the 19th century explored so exhaustively, the possibility that incremental change can eventually initiate, uh, and insinuate into a situation new states of higher order, including even possibly the state of higher order we call self-reflecting consciousness. That somehow this is no more than a gradual refinement out of previous states of nature. Well, what I want to suggest is that it is a bit of both of these points of view- the divine intervention and the evolutionary.

I think what evolutionary biologists have missed in looking at the emergence of human beings out of the primate phylogeny is, generally speaking, the mutagenic influence of foods. The fact that a fruit-eating, arboreal primate, because of a situation of spreading dryness in the environment, evolved into a pack-hunting creature of the grassland with an omnivorous diet, and omnivores by their very nature expose themselves to a very large number of mutagenic influences. I'm speaking alchemically. Mutagenic influences that interfered with the correct copying of protein, interfere with, uh, spacing of children, lactation, uh, interfere with mentation, psychoactive compounds in the food chain. And it's very interesting that as human beings transform themselves into omnivorous, pack-hunting omnivores, you begin to see the first faint stirrings of self-reflection. you begin to get the fire pit and laser the chipped flint leavings of earliest neolithic toolmaking. What this to me is that there was a unique confluence of factors present in the evolutionary situation that were capable of kindling this ontological transformation of what had previously been the animal mind. And what I suggest this factor is, or was... Psychoactive plants in the environment, specifically psychoactive plants in the grassland environment in which human pastoralism evolved in Africa over a million years ago. The plants must be African. It must be extraordinarily noticeable in the environment. It must not be a deep-forest endemic because this is not where human evolution was taking place. The only plant which fits this, uh, description is, uh, a mushroom of the psilocybin-containing variety. And it's very easy to see, I think, that the presence, then, of, uh, psychoactive compounds of this sort in the early human diet set the stage for a number of structural and psychological changes.

Psilocybin, ingested in low doses increases visual acuity. Now, it's not difficult to see that in an animal en- under evolutionary pressure in a pack-hunting environment increased visual acuity will mean a more successful reproductive strategy. This means that those animals not including the psychoactive substance in their diet will be mitigated against and fade from the scene. And by this process a steady bootstrapping process, self-reflection was born in our species. How do we get from visual acuity to self-reflection? Low doses of psilocybin give increased visual acuity. Medium-range doses of psilocybin give an increased interest in erotic activities. [audience laughter] You should laugh. There may not be too many laughs with this one. [Terence laughs] Slightly higher doses of psilocybin, uh, give an experience of the numinosum. An actual contact with a mystery in the human psyche which is no less mysterious to us today than it was to our ancestors when the last glaciation was retreating against Canada. I mean, don't kid yourself, in the face of this- the content of this symbiotic relationship, modernism, rationalism, positivism- all is exposed as just whistling past the graveyard because the numinous death of the mystery that seems to have called us out of the animal mind is, uh, completely impenetrable to modern analysis. That's why even discussing its presence is mitigated against so intensely.

So, I don't want to spend much time on this early facet of the emergence thing. I want to move ahead and show that as pastoralism developed, as the domestic relationship between cattle, human beings and mushrooms settled down into a self-reinforcing cycle of consciousness, language arose, religion arose of

the goddess oriented variety, and the connection of the cow to the goddess is there at the dawn-time. There is no question about it.

Language seems to have been the particular prerogative of women in the early emergent phases. This is uh, uh, possibly because men were involved in hunting activities where great premium was placed on silent stealthiness. So women were engaged in- as gatherers in the hunting-gathering phase, women were engaged in gathering plants, and as all botanists can tell you, gathering plants involves an extensive taxonomic language so that the difference- the minute differences between cereal grains and insects and all of these things need to be linguistically defined and characterized, and to this day a taxonomic description of a plant is, uh, a Joyceian thrill to read because, you know, "sub-apically glaborous with lanceolate trifolium" and so on for many many lines, uh, but in a strange way that is a law repeated over and over again through history, each advance somehow outsmarts itself, and the wonderful linguistic depth which women attained as gatherers through the production of folk taxonomy eventually lead them to a terrible discovery. The discovery of agriculture. Because they learned that rather than maintain this vast library of shifting information about seasonal plants randomly distributed according to the whims of nature, they could in fact focus on a very small number of plants, learn how to grow these plants, learn their needs alone, and at that point the retreat was on, and the dualism was fully in place and there was that which was domesticated, that which was of the hearth, and that which was of the ausland, 'the howling unknown', that which was 'beyond the pale'. I think it was Weston LaBarre, great old anthropologist who felt, he said, uh, hallucinogens can only be used in hunting and gathering cultures because when agriculturalists use them it makes it impossible to get up at down and go hoe the field. And so suddenly the gods become the Corn God and the Wheat god, gods of- symbolizing domesticity and hard labor and, uh, and that sort of thing.

And at this moment of agriculture which lead to overproduction which lead to trade which lead to cities and so forth, there is a beginning of the breaking away of this symbiotic relationship which had bound human beings to nature, to this time. And I don't mean this metaphorically, I mean I want to be taken seriously as proposing that the all-we modernity is the consequences of a disruptive symbiotic relationship between ourselves and vegetable nature, and that, uh, only a restoration of this in some form is going to carry us into a full inheritance of our birthright as human beings.

Now what did this symbiotic relationship consist of? What was the effect of this psychedelic use, this embeddedness of language-using, cognition-using, but stoned primates in the natural order? Well I submit to you that what it was or how it acted operationally was as a, uh, feminizing pheromone, that the continuous exposure to the tremendum represented by the hallucinogenically- induced ecstasy acted to continuously dissolve that portion of the psyche which, as moderns, we call the male ego. And I don't mean that it only works on men. I mean that wherever in human personality this certain catch began to form and build like a calcareous tumor in the personality, the psycholytic presence of the undeniable fact of the tremendum tended to dissolve this back in to Tao, psychic health, however you wish to style it. And that the evolution of language, then, setting up this movement off into specialization and a movement away from nature set up the consequences of the all-we which permeates Western civilization. It is only in Western civilization that you get this steady focus on this monotheistic ideal and working out the implications of what is essentially a pathological personality pattern, the pattern of the omniscient, omnipresent, all-knowing, wrathful male deity- no one you would invite to your garden party. [audience laughter]

It's very interesting that this ideal is the- the only instance, the only hypothestization of deity that I know of

that has no congress with woman at any point in the theological myth- the God of Western civilization has nothing to do with women, and the presence of the Sophia, and the presence of the mater de la rosa and all of these things have only been tolerated as heresies, uh, in the Western tradition. And it is the Western tradition that has the most continuous break with this symbiotic relationship. In other words, we have wandered into a state of prolonged neurosis because of the absence of a direct pipeline to the unconscious. And we have then fallen victim to priestcraft of every conceivable sort. A similar situation, which may give us some objective perspective on our own, haunts the fates of those portions of Indo-European humanity that went east instead of west. In other words, the whole story of Indian civilization is the story of, uh, a masculine, static, hierarchically organized, uh, system coming into place in the wake of the loss of the secret of soma, the loss of the portal to another kind of vegetable gnosis.

Well, so, provided then that I have made my case and convinced you that this is all gospel [audience chuckles]. Uh, what kind of options are there to someone who believes this? Well, uh, what that means is a brief survey of the anthropological opportunities to explore hallucinogenesis presently afforded by societies living throughout the world. There are of course the psilocybin complex discovered by Gordon Wasson, the magic mushrooms of central Mexico which may have played a role in the Mayan and Toltec civilizations, and the wider-ranging pan-tropical *stropharia cubensis*, *solosopy* [??] *cubensis* which originated in Thailand but is distributed throughout the warm tropics. Interesting, all of these, uh, shamanically sanctioned hallucinogens are in the indole family, a very narrow family of compounds with the exception- I- I almost blew it- with the exception of mescaline, which is in a different family, a kind of amphetamine. But all the others, including the morning glory complex with its LSD-like alkaloids, chenoclazine and, uh, ergonamine, uh, the psilocybin complex which involves, as I said, several pandemic species and many highly indennicized species, especially in the Pacific Northwest, the iboga cults of Gabon and Western Africa, which is sort of the exotic cousin of all these things, but nevertheless structurally, uh, uh, an indole, and then the short-acting tryptamines and the beta-carbolines. The short-acting tryptamines can be used separately. The beta-carbolines, though hallucinogenic in themselves, are usually used as monoamineoxidase inhibitors to enhance the effect of short-acting tryptamines. This is a highly evolved pharmacology and shamanic complex in South America.

One of the peculiar puzzles of shamanic anthropology and ethnobotany is the clustering of hallucinogenic plants in South America. Why are the old-world tropics, the tropics of the Mollucas and Indonesia, not equally rich in hallucinogenic flora? No one can answer this question, but certainly Mesoamerica and the New World seem to be the great home of these things.

You notice that I don't mention any synthetics in the list. This is because I would sort of like to keel away the vision-producing plants from the whole strom and dang of the, uh, of the drug problem and the drug issue, which is a whole other kettle of fish and has to do with the fates of nations and trillion-dollar scamola and,uh, who knows what else. I prefer the, uh, organic hallucinogens and recommend them to other people because I think their long history of shamanic usage is the first feel of approval that you must look for. I mean, if these things have been used for thousands of years, then you can be fairly confident that they do not cause tumors or micscarrages or - because nature is far richer in exotic and poisonous and mutagenic and psychoactive chemicals than the human pharmacopoeia. I mean, many things are avoided. There are many potential hallucinogens that are not utilized by human beings, so there has been a certain trial and selectivity applied to these things.

I think it's important to confine one's self to uh, to compounds which are least insulting to the physical

brain, not because the physical brain has anything to do with the mind particularly, but because it certainly has to do with the metabolic end-state of indoles. And so things which are alien to the human brain should probably not be introduced into it. One way of judging how long a relationship between a human population and a plant has been in place is to see how benign the compound is in human metabolism. I mean, if you take some plant and your knees are feeling rubbery three days later, or your eyes aren't in focus, uh, 48 hours later, then this is not a benign compound- this is not a compound where there has been a smooth hand-in-glove fit with the human user. This is why, to my mind, the tryptamines are so interesting and why, another reason why- one I just thought of- that I argue for the mushroom as the primary hallucinogen involved in human origins because these things bear a weird resemblance to human neurochemistry. Uh, the human brain and indeed all nervous systems run on 5-hydroxytryptamine, serotonin. Uh, n-n-dymethyltryptamine is- the hallucinogenic compound of this Amazonian complex is the most powerful of all hallucinogens in the human system and yet clears your system in a matter of minutes. This argues for a great antiquity of the relationship, uh, between these things.

So, so then having discussed options it would remain, it seems, to discuss techniques since it's almost what Huxley called a gratuitous grace. All conditions for success can be present and one can still fail, although not if all conditions for success are present and one does it over and over again. Maybe there's a temporal variable there, I'm not sure. But, technique, to me, is a kind of a- I'm reluctant to talk about it because it seems so obvious to me what good technique is. I mean, you sit down, you shut up and you pay attention is basically the good technique. And then the footnotes add on an empty stomach in a dark room feeling comfortable, and then sit down, shut up and pay attention. It's something which happens behind the eyelids. It is not eidetic hallucination although it begins like eidetic hallucination.

I've been talking about this kind of stuff now for about 10 years publicly like this, and one of the major things, the major conceptual and linguistic problem to get over is to actually convey to people what is being talked about because probably I would assume 95% of people in this room have something under their belt which they call drug experience. But did you know that yours is different from everybody else's, and these things range from, you know, mild tingling in the feet to, uh, language fails. And, and, the thing to put across is the reality of the presence of this thing, and this is the important thing talking to a group of people interested in transpersonal psychology. The situation that we now reside in is not one of seeing the answer, but facing the answer. The answer has been found, it just happens to lie on the wrong side of the fence of social toleration and legality. And so we're just forced into this strange little war dance where everybody knows that psychedelics are the most powerful instruments for the study of the mind conceivable and yet, uh, you know, a lot of people are still ratomorphically involved in the academic and university system trying to ignore the fact that the tool has been put in our hands. Like the 16th century when the telescope was invented, we have proven that we are not large enough to take the tool into our own hands without a social and intellectual transformation, and I think it must begin in the field of psychology by acknowledging that if- if what we are involved in, if what this paradigm transform is is the archaic revival, and that we really can create a caring, re-feminized, eco-sensitive, global world by going back to these very very old models, then it isn't going to be possible to do it on the strength of political exhortation and wrath alone. It's going to have to rest on an experience that just shakes you to your root, that is real, that is generalized, and that can then be talked about and dissected. We need to acknowledge, uh, the depth of our dilemma and the real truth, I think, that we know about our options out. I mean, we're playing with half a deck as long as we tolerate, uh, that the cardinals of government and science should dictate where human curiosity can legitimately send its attention and where it cannot.

I mean, it's a- it's a, uh, essentially preposterous situation. It is essentially a civil rights issue, because what we're talking about here is the repression of a religious sensibility- in fact not *a* religious sensibility, *the* religious sensibility! Not built on some con game spun out by eunuchs [audience chuckle] but based on the symbiotic relationship that was in place for our species for fifty-thousand years before the advent of history, writing, priestcraft, and propaganda. So, it's a clarion call to recover a birthright, however uncomfortable that may make us. A call to realize that life lived in the absence of the psychedelic experience that primordial shamanism is based on is life trivialized, life denied, life enslaved to the ego and its fear of dissolution in this mysterious mama-matrix which is all around us and which apparently extends into infinity, and where our historical future actually lays. This is the other thing. It is now very clear that techniques of mind, human, interfacing, pharmacology of the synthetic variety, all kinds of manipulative techniques, all kinds of data storage, imaging and retrieval techniques- all of this is coalescing toward the potential of a truly demonic or angelic kind of self imaging of our culture. And the people who are on the demonic side are fully aware of this and hurrying full tilt forward with their plans to capture everyone as a 100% believing consumer ins- inside some kind of beige furnished fascism that won't even raise a ripple! So... [audience claps]

So the shamanic response in this situation I think is to push the art pedal through the floor. This is again one of the primary functions of shamanism and the function that is tremendously synergized by the psychedelics. They are, in fact, if, as I spoke of them earlier, pheromones which dissolve the male ego, then they are also pheromones which synergize the human imagination, cause us to connect and reconnect the contents of the collective mind in ever more architectonic, implausible, and yet self-fulfilling ways. The- I really think that the only escape from the trap which post-industrial male dominated, politically manipulative, drug-running urban technocracy has in store for us. The only escape is a forward escape- the kind of rushing past it and brushing it aside by virtue of an immense expansion of unpredictable creativity. That what shamanizing means in the ordinary folkloric level is healing, and the art function is somewhat in the shadows, but in the face of a need for planetary healing the art-making function of the shaman is going to stand front and center because what this art making function is is generating a new guiding image of ourselves. This is why it relates so fundamentally to psychology. We need a new paradigmatic image that will take us forward through the narrow neck of historical forces that we can feel impeding and resisting this more expansive, more at ease, more caring dimension that is insisting on being born. And so in terms of political obligation in terms of reforming and trying to save the soul of psychology, in terms of trying to goose along, connecting up the end of history with the beginning of history...all of this impels us, I think, to look at shamanism as the paradigmatic model, to take its techniques seriously, even those which challenge, uh, the divinely ordained covenants of the constabulary [audience chuckle]. Because if- if we don't do that, as I said, we're not playing with a full deck.

You know, years and years ago before the term 'psychedelic' was settled on, uh, it was just a phenomenological description, these things were called 'consciousness-expanding drugs.' So I think that's a very good term. Think about our dilemma on this planet. If the expansion of consciousness does not loom large in the human future, what kind of future is it going to be? Now, to my mind the psychedelic position is most fundamentally threatening when fully thought out because it is an anti-drug position and make no mistake about it, the issue is drugs. How drugged shall you be? Or, to put it another way, consciousness. How conscious shall you be? Who shall be conscious? Who shall be unconscious? And, uh, imagine if the Japanese had won World War II, taken over America, and introduced an insidious drug which caused the average American to spend six and a half hours a day consuming enemy propaganda? But this is what was done, not by Japanese, by ourselves. This is television. Six and a half hours a day, average! That's the

average. So there must be people out there hooked on 24 hours a day. Or, I visit people in LA who have one set on in every room, so they're racking up a lot of time for the rest of us.

Uh, you see, what is needed is an operational awareness of what we mean by drug. A drug is something which causes unexamined, obsessive, habituated behavior. You don't examine your behavior, you just do it. You do it obsessively, you let nothing get in the way of it. This is the kind of life we are being sold on every level; to watch, to consume, to buy. The psychedelic thing is off in this tiny corner, never mentioned. And yet it represents the only counter flow toward a tendency to just leave people in designer states of consciousness. Not their designers, but the designers of Madison Avenue, the pentagon and so forth and so on. This is really happening. I mean, it's only a matter of how tight you draw the metaphor, that you realize you know- I've been coming and going from Los Angeles recently a lot, and when the plane swings out over the, uh, Eastern part of the city, looking down it's looking like a printed circuit- all these curved driveways and col-de-sacs with the same little modules installed on each end of them, and you realize, you know, that as long as the Readers' Digest stays subscribed to and the TV stays on, these are all interchangeable parts. The- this is this nightmarish thing which McLuhan and Windham Lewis and others foresaw- the creation of the public. The public has no history, has no future, lives in a golden moment created by credit which binds them ineluctably to a fascist system that is never criticized.

This is an ultimate consequence [audience claps] this is the ultimate consequence of having broken off this symbiotic relationship with the vegetable, feminine, maternal, matrix of the planet. This is what ended partnership, this is what ended balance between the sexes, this is what set us on the long slide. We can now examine the options available and put in place archaic options which will restore this balance. And to the good credit of people like Dick Schultes and Gordon Wasson and Albert Hoffman, we have in this century taken into our hands the tools, the information, and the means to do this. But psychology- there had better not be a Nuremberg because not enough people have stood up for this. People have contented themselves with ratomorphism [sp?] for 25 years when they knew in their hearts it was wrong! Feeling guilty out there? [Terence & audience laugh]

You could cheer to show that it wasn't you. [laughter, clears throat]. So now, I think, uh, you know the culture crisis grows ever more, uh, intense. The stakes rise ever higher. If there were ever a time to be heard and be counted and try and c- clarify thinking on these issues, you know, it would be now because, uh, you know there is a major attack on the bill of rights underway in the guise of a so-called drug bill and somehow the drug issue is even more frightening than Communism. Even more insidious. McCarthy told America that communism was under the bed. He was wrong. Ronald Reagan and George Bush told America that drugs are in the living room, and they are right. It is here, it is real, it is the hydrogen bomb of the 3rd world. And the quality of rhetoric, the quality of rhetoric emanating from, uh, therapists and psychologists, and psychoanalysts is going to have to radically improve or we're going to have happen to us what happened to genetics in the Soviet Union. We're going to be like sanchoized [???], we're going to be made lily-white and all opportunity for exploring this dimension is going to be closed off. Almost as a footnote to the suppression of these synthetic poisonous narcotics which are mostly dealt by governments anyway. But the psychedelic issue, as I said, it's a civil rights issue, it's a civil liberties issue. The reason women couldn't be given the vote in the 19th century- there was a very simple, overpowering reason that was always given. It would destroy society. And that's the reason given- this was also the reason why the king could not give up a divine right, the right of consequence- chaos would result. And this is why we're told drugs cannot be legalized. Because society would disintegrate. This is just nonsense. Most societies have always operated in the light of various habits based on plants. The whole history of mankind could be

written as a series of made and broken relationships with plants. Think about the influence of tobacco on mercantilism in 17th and 18th century Europe. Think about the influence of coffee on the modern office worker, or the way the British influenced opium policy in the far East to rule China, or the way the CIA used heroin in the American ghettos in the 1960's to choke off black dissent and black dissatisfaction with the war. History is about these plant relationships. They can be raised into consciousness, integrated into social policy and used to create a more caring, meaningful world, or they can be denied the way sexuality was denied until the force of the work of Freud and others just made it impossible to maintain the fiction any longer. This choice of how quickly we develop into a mature community able to address this issue is entirely with us, I think. And certainly, people like Sam Gross and others have worked valiantly to keep this thing alive, but my god, you could count them on the fingers of one hand!

So, that's really all I wanted to say. Uh, [audience chuckle] I left a- I left a half an hour for questions...

Announcer: At this point, Vision Plants: Transpersonal Challenge continues with an informal question and answer period. To make it easier for you the listener to follow along with this segment SoundsTrue[??] will repeat the questions from the audience. The first question: Why don't you mention that DMT is an endogenous neurotransmitter and a schedule 1 drug?

TM: Yes, DMT, the most powerful of all hallucinogens occurs in the human brain as a normal part of metabolism. Uh, it also is a schedule 1 drug- when, uh, so you are all holding- and, uh, this might be the basis for some kind of, uh, case to- to just show what absolute poppycock all this nonsense is. Uh, people have been made illegal. Probably they should have thought of that sooner as a solution to the drug problem.

A: It seems to me that often psychedelic insights are co-opted by the larger society and perverted. Don't you think that this is what happened in the 1960's? And my other question: Does ??? say anything about people who experience difficulties with mushrooms in terms of electrical storms and seizures?

TM: You know, understanding passes everywhere. The information is really neutral. These things, how they work, the information they carry back to us, how we apply it, sort of depends on the moral order that we're embedded in. To a large degree I think the 60's were, uh, probably misplayed, but uh on the other hand it seems to be the last decade when anything happened. The, the lid has been utterly on ever since. It's an illusion, all this change. There is no change. I mean, we're living in some kind of weird eschatological hiatus while the people who rigged the game try to send out for new batteries or something. I don't know what's going on. There's a sense of an immense, uh, there's energy for change, change-building. When it comes, uh, which i don't think will be before this election. but when it ultimately comes I think it will probably be fairly spectacular. It's astonishing actually the way in which change has been halted. Everyone is running around saying change, change, change, but on the other hand there, uh, is a curious sense in which things have become eerily dreamlike and still while we just teeter on the edge of the end of history. And the same personalities, the same design elements, everything has looked the same in the galleries for 20 years, uh, there is an eerie suspension. Perhaps because the, the 60's did anticipate so much that it took 20 years to live them out.

As for your other question about difficulties with mushrooms. Um, the literature is not large. It's generally considered fairly safe. That doesn't mean it isn't strange and it doesn't mean that people don't become alarmed. A friend of mine recently thought he was having a heart attack, and, uh, after he'd been taken to the emergency room and put on 10 machines and all this stuff, he said to the doctor on duty, he said: "is

the mushroom doing this to me?" and he said "no no, you're having an anxiety attack. We get these all the time from people who haven't taken mushrooms. " This is an oasis of liberalism I didn't expect to find. [audience laughter] Sir?

A: How would you explain widespread use of sacred substances as party drugs in our culture? Why doesn't this occur in native cultures, this use of sacred substances as party drugs?

TM: Well I think it took place in our culture because there was no one to guide us. And that the real truth about it is, the real experience is so deep and so boundary dissolving that it's frightening, and a lot of people took these things only in order to be able to say that they'd done so. And if they had a light trip, they just said to themselves "thank god it didn't work for me, and now I can say I know about it and pretend to be an expert but I saved my ass." Uh, the feeling I got in the 60's from people who didn't want to take it was they knew damn well they were crazy. You know, you just mention to them accessing the unconscious and they just froze in mid-step.

In the, in the traditional shamanic situation there are elder shamans who know what you're shooting for, and they won't let you out of the box until they're satisfied that you've gotten the whammy. So there's no evading it. So yes, I think that's a good point. The way it should be taken is reverently in a calm, quiet, empty, clear situation. And then the question of the sitter, certainly there should be no more than one other person there. And, you know, I outrage people and give probably bad medical advice by saying it is very good to do it by yourself. But, you know it just can't be beat because then there's no game, you know, there is no surface, there is nothing to maintain. But that's not for the beginner, I think. But nobody should do therapy who hasn't had these experiences because this is where you see the full spectrum of what the human organism is capable of. And it's astonishing. I mean, yeah, sir.

A: Do you feel the awareness or enlightenment of the sitter is a powerful factor in the nature of a psychedelic session?

TM: Absolutely. That's why having a sitter is no casual decision. It would almost be better not to have a sitter than to have a bad one, you know, because then they are going to become your problem. Here..

A: Would you comment on the difference between having a psychedelic session in a dark room compared to being in a natural outdoor setting?

TM: To me this really revolves around pharmacological issues. I have a- I guess it's a prejudice. It's so strong in me I think it's a piece of revealed gnosis, but I have a prejudice in favor of outlandish visual hallucinations. To me that is the *sine qua non* of the experience. That for me always defines success. Well, the kind of hallucinations that I'm talking about require silent darkness in order to form. Now, if you take psilocybin or one of these that I've mentioned out in nature, nature is, you know, wonderful, filled with light, extremely affirmative, complex, and you can dissolve into it. I guess- there's something of the scientist in me, I guess, and I, I wanted to see what it was, the [??] the thing in itself. With no music, no pretty scenery, no tactile sensation, just what can it do with pure velvet darkness behind closed eyelids, and the reward is that's where it works best because then there is nothing for it to interfere with it or to, uh, set it thematically in one direction or another. Finally you can see what is this bird on its own, you know. And, and so that's why I recommend darkness and, uh, isolation.

A: As a person who's never taken psychedelics, could you describe for me what a typical psychedelic trip is like?

TM: Let me begin by saying each one is different, but I won't stop there. Uh, in the case of psilocybin, like most of these indoles, they vary, but you take it on an empty stomach. I do not fast elaborately. Maybe 6 hours of not eating. And then you take it on an empty stomach in silent darkness. And I always basically calm down and ritualize the space as soon as I've taken whatever it is. I mean, we were amazed in South America with these ayahuasceros. They would stop everybody talking, everybody would knock back their hit of ayahuasca, and then the party would continue as though nothing had happened for 30 minutes and then they would call the meeting to order, and then it would happen 10 minutes later. But the way I do it is I sit for the hour, hour 20 minutes leading up to it. And I carry out what catholics call an "examination of conscience". This is where you think of the commandments, whatever they may be, one by one, and decide if you've violated any of them since the last time you did this. And I do this not, uh, in a planned fashion or out of piety, but more out of fear [audience laughs]. Bec-[Terence laughs] because if I were to discover a huge violation, I, I might, well, I don't know what I would do. The purpose seems to be to anticipate any bad trip in the hour and 20 minutes before it actually comes on. And then at about the hour, hour and 20 minute mark with your eyes closed you begin to see what is called streaming. Just streaming lights, and it's sort of what you see when you press on your eyelids, these things you see when you press on your eyelids- don't do it if you're wearing contact lenses- uh, are called phosphene imagery. And, uh, and there can be a wave of that, and then there's a feeling, a full-body feeling as these- you can almost see thousands of these drug molecules fitting into their receptors in the synaptic cleft and the electrical energy beginning to rise and then there is, uh, what Mircea Eliade brilliantly named the "rupture of plane". And the rupture of plane is fairly rapid. Well, then once the plane is ruptured you're in some other plane. And it is then- then it is what it is, and this is what you don't find out 'til you get there. It is some kind of x-ray of yourself, but you're unrecognizable to yourself and there is information. The most startling thing about these indole hallucinogens is the information. But we're not talking here about geometric patterns and, and whirling fizzgigs and stuff like that. We're talking about scenes, songs, strings of imagery, bursts of poetic flight that hover between being felt, seen and tasted that go on for minutes on end as though meaning itself has somehow taken on a self-replicatory light in the visible surface of the mind. And then it's all about, you know, how you come to terms with this. If you are ver- have always been a very tight-assed, denying, rational, fearful sort of person, well then you're just completely, completely appalled because boundary has dissolved, you don't know whether you're Agnes or Angus [audience laughter]. You don't know whether it's up or down and, uh, you know, it looks to you- it's like the E. B. White cartoon "it looks like melagomania- megalomania to me Martha!" [audience laughter]. So, uh, and you know, the old-style model was that you're supposed to swing from heaven-states to hell states and that the Tibetans have something to say about this. Well, I don't know, I think it's pretty much up for grabs. It's- I don't know, it, it builds in a fugue of images and meaning that finally leaves the realm of the sayable. And then it just goes off into what Wittgenstein called 'the unspeakable', and there, you know, it's the peace that passeth understanding and all things are made right, but you can't say very much about that when you come down.

A: Could you comment on your experience with the personality of the mushroom, with the mushroom as an entity.

TM: Oh yeah, how could I have gotten this far. Yes. I would have been remiss not to mention it because I think it's the central conundrum, at least for me personally and I think for any rational person dealing with these things. We're not just talking about passive agents of transformation and slideshows of alien worlds

and stuff like that. The central mystery is that the thing is animate, that, that there is at the center of these experiences an organized entelechy- an ally, a spirit, an other, and an I-thou relationship is possible. And this is just...now this leads us to the, to the edge of simply wild hyperbole and out into the realm of the utterly improbable. We have no place in our worldview for something like this. I mean, is it an extraterrestrial, is it Gaia, is it, uh, as some Jungians have said merely autonomous fragments of the personality that have slipped from the reins of the ego's control and now return to haunt us as gnomes, qabiri, water spirits, and silks of the air? Well, I don't know, [audience laughter] but, but the uh, who does know, you know? [chuckles]

That- the point not to be lost sight of is that, again, this is real. This is not rare. This is common on psilocybin. What the- what you don't get with- I don't believe anyway- but what you don't get with yoga, what you certainly don't get with mystical experience is any degree of on-command repeatability of these bizarre mental and physical states. And yet with something like DMT if you get somebody who is transported into a realm of self-transforming chattering machine elves. Chances are they will get elves every time. Well, imagine the impact of this on the rational mind. That you can be swept into a space where you, you have to entertain the possibility that- is this a UFO abduction, or am I dead, or am I just simply god forbid totally insane now, or what is happening? The animate entelechy at the center of the experience is I think the greatest challenge for psychology for historical assimilation of this phenomenon generally. Because what is it? I mean, our science is trained to allow the slim possibility of extraterrestrials, and so our electro- I mean our radio telescopes point to the stars shifting millions of signals at a time, searching for a radio civilization, but what is it going to do to the forward thrust of historical continuity if right next door in the human mind there is an other so other that it cannot be assimilated and yet so accessible that it's only a matter of choice to stand it its awesome presence. Uh, I don't have the answer to this question. I think it's amazing that I am able articulate the question [audience laughter] because it is [clears throat] you know, it is against 500 years of expectation and programming that we are finally able to wake up almost as from a fever and say "my god, nature is alive! It's talking to us, it's alive!" No, you know, this is not a metaphor, I am not a Romantic, this is not an artistic or aesthetic stance. Nature is alive. Someone is on the line [audience laughs]. As far as who, I- I don't rush in to say. I mean, I'm very wary of anyone who claims to know who, because the- the problem seems to me one of great subtlety and depth. How can we know who is the other until we know who is the self? And perhaps one problem will cast, uh, significance on the other.

A: Speaking of the self. Isn't any discipline or spiritual path ultimately the threshold looking into the light of the one who sees? And if one can do that without physical substances influencing the body look through that window and experience that luminous beingness isn't that sufficient without the use of physical substances?

TM: Well, I think that's the challenge that the temporary encounter with this thing sets us, that yes, if we can encounter it temporarily through these shamanic means, then must it not become the historical arrow of our becoming? Must we not then recognize that this numinosum must rise into history as a fact of realizing the eschaton? That's what I think, that actually the shamans are seeing and have always seen some kind of trans-historical object, some kind of vast hyposthetization of our selves as deity that is casting a shadow back through time, and that all magic, all religion, all vision is an anticipation of this future state. What excites me is the notion that we may have reached the point in this process where we can consciously know that that is what we are doing, that that is what we are about, that our task is the architectonic expression of the divine other, and then set about it without any more haggling and, uh, tail-dragging. In

other words, to realize what our destiny is will cause us to move toward it with much greater, uh, facility and smoothness. This woman at the door.

A: I have a son who was in a fog for 2 years using dope. What do we say to our children about this?

TM: Well, this, this is a real problem I think it goes to the general state of the drug problem, which is it is one of utter ignorance and victimization. I mean the government whines and yaps about education. But they're not doing any education. I mean the- what do you mean by dope? They have so linguistically impoverished us that we can't even make a distinction between marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, LSD, what have you. A whole new vocabulary of consequences has to be created. That's what I said earlier. What we don't want is habitual, obsessive, unexamined activity. We don't want it in commerce, we don't want it in drug use, we don't want it in social relations. We don't want unexamined, habitual forms of activity that are obsessively expressed. What we do want is conscious, caring, self-examining, inquisitive, uh, thinking people and institutions. So whatever mitigates against that has to be seen as a drug. And things like television, money, propaganda, all of these things then are seen as great evil, which they may not have been seen that way before. We have to get smart. You have to be smart to use drugs. You have to be smart to survive a planetary catastrophe. Now, our ancestors were smart. They got us this far. It wasn't easy. Five times the ice moved south from the poles. Five times the human family was islanded and divided by moving ice. It hasn't been easy all the way along. Until a hundred years ago there were no inoculations for infectious diseases. Most women died in childbirth. Many children died in childbirth. The average lifespan, even in Western society, was 35 years old. So, it- you know, it's going to be tough until we get to heaven. There has to be, uh, intelligence. And, you know, one way to be intelligent is to be conditioned. Our lives are not going to make sense if we tolerate propaganda in our lives. You cannot be half- slave and half free. You cannot be half hip and half yup [audience chuckle] you know.

So, uh, the main thing with the drug thing is to get smart, get real smart fast. So you will lose your children, and your mind, and your freedom because all this is at stake. This audience is- has supposedly a stake in psychology, in transpersonal psychology, which means the destiny and fate of the human mind. So, getting smart about the natures and opportunities of chemistry, archaic and modern, should be right at the top of the agenda.

We're going to have to end this. Thank you for your tolerance!

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Vision Quest Through Sacred Plants

(9-14) October 1988

International Transpersonal Conference, Santa Rosa, California

Description

- [Audio Link Needed](#)
- [Transcription](#)
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Visiting Terence's home with Thomad Norm Daniela Barry

1993

Occidental, Hawaii

Description

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We are at the Cutting Edge

August 1991

Location, City, State

Description

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Consensus on a virtual but it does raise some fairly s if you can put let's say a lavishly furnished mansion if you go through emerge through the kitchen

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What's so Great About Mushrooms?

Day Month 1987

Location, City, State

Description

- [Audio Link](#)
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- [Psychedelic Salon](#)

There is no scientific truth or new paradigm ----- in a vacuum ----- the opinions of the general informed public. If it doesn't fly with the general informed public, it doesn't matter what degree of internal ----- it has. An idea is probably doomed to a kind of obsolescence or a kind of obscurity. So this idea that I want to put forth, which is the product of many people's thought on the subject, not the least of which is my brother Dennis, and I've developed the idea in conversations with Rupert ----- and Kat, and Ralph Metzner, and other people over the years, is basically an extension of orthodox evolutionary theory as it applies to the question of human origins, and then, having once established that part of the theory, going forward to try and see what kind of implications this revisioning of evolutionary mechanisms might have on contemporary life and the way in which we relate to ourselves and each other. The orthodox theory of human origins takes the position that the evolution of human beings from higher primates was an evolutionary process no different than the evolutionary processes which have refined the mammalian forms which preceded the primates, nor is it thought to be different from any other evolutionary process. There is no --- logical difference hypothesized. However, I think that, uh, using the language of the evolutionary biologists, we can show that there were factors present in the pre-human and early human environment that, constelated a unique concatenation of events and genetic filtration devices which created the phenomenon of self-reflecting language-using culture-creating animals on this planet. Orthodox evolutionary theory takes the position that as the African continent became subject to an increasing period of dryness, which may have initially begun as early as 2000000 to 25000000 years ago that the general tropical forests which cover the continent began to retreat in certain areas where water was a constraint, and grasslands arose the arboreal primates which where occupying a kind of climaxed evolutionary ----- in the tropical forests before this eridity began, suddenly found themselves under pressure because the forest was disappearing. By changing their gate and learning to walk on the surface, by changing their diet and learning to include meat, and they, and by refining the symbol-processing capability, the transformed themselves from tribes of arboreal monkeys into creatures much more like the modern ----- . In other words, they became omnivorous pack-hunting animals capable of moving over the ground at high speed and capable of exchanging a large number of vocal signals that related to, uh, exchange of information about hunting strategies, -----, because as I neglected to mention, simultaneous to these evolutionary changes in the higher primates, other mammals were evolving in an opportunistic situation -----, the grasslands, into the many forms of ----- animals which grace on the grasslands of Africa, not only cattle but --- and jiraffes, and many forms which are now extinct. These... the primates and the higher mammals then came into a relationship where both were competing for the grassland, and one became the primary

predator on the other. Now... the cu..., one of the curious and unexplained things about the nature psychotropic ----- that occurred on this planet is that several of them are remarkably involved with, uh, human culture and the domestication of plants. I'm thinking, uh, of the ergotized rye which figures in the hallucenium mysteries. Rye was a domesticated grass that through selection had been bred into this large ----- serial brain. Similarly, the psychedelic mushrooms which are most noticeable in nature are the so-called coprophilic ones, the ones which grow on ----- . In the Pacific Northwest, there are numerous species of ----- mushrooms, which grow in the ----- of the forest floor, but as far as we know, the northwest coast indians never noticed them sufficiently to utilize them as a shamanic vehicle; however, the coprophilic mushrooms are extremely noticeable in any environment because here you have this golden or silvery or golden yellow anomalous object standing from 4 to 7 inches high in the grassland, and because of this coprophilic or ----- loving, they invariably aggregate in the droppings of these ----- animals. Well, its very clear that they could hardly choose a situation more opportune for their being encountered by, uh, these omnivorous primates who are preying on these hords of animals. So that, and I should mention that there is, its assumed that there was considerable pressure on the availability of protein in this grassland situation. In other words, everybody was running hungry and if youve ever seen films or actually observed the behavior of baboons in the wild, they are, they pick things up and look at them, and they sniff the ground, and this is their main behavior pattern, its sniffing the ground and picking things up and ----- and testing them to eat them. Well, uh, vary, almost I would say, coincident upon these factors all converging on the African belt, the mushroom would then become included as part of this omnivoric diet of these primates. Now I mention, uh, when I talk on the radio today, this very important series of experiments by Roland Fisher, who is one of the great and really, he isnt given the credit he deserves one of the greatest researches of altered states, hes retired now and live in ----- but he did a series of experiments which were a model of behaviorist rigour, he had an apparatus which had two ----- bars, which could be deformed by ----- a ----- which would impart mechanical pressure to one of the bubbles so it would be tored and slowly parrallelism would be lost between these two bars and he gave psilocybin in small amounts to hundreds of people and sat them down in front of this apparatus and told them to watch the situation with the two parallel bars and to press the buzzer when they felt that the two bars were no longer parallel and he did it with hundreds and hundreds of controls all of this work was done in ----- Maryland in the early 70s and he showed to the satisfaction of everyone I think that the people who were given the, uh, subthreshold doses of psilocybin were able to pick up this deformation faster than the controls the unstoned ordinary subjects and he said to me jokingly "this proves you see that drugs give a truer picture of reality than being straight" but it was quite so what he... he didnt then make the leap to ask the question, well then what impact would this increased visual acuity have had on an animal which was including this mushroom in its diet? and the answer is if you were as a matter course where you were eating all protein available in your diet including this vision acuity improving compound you would gain an adaptive advantage over individuals of your species which were not including this vitamin in their diet and this, this is just, a straight an exposition of the evolutionary mechanism as could ever be given theres nothing wild eyed about it and the conclusion is that very quickly any primate not including this item if its diet would be ----- of the picture by being maladaptive. Well thats what happens when you take psilocybin in subacute dose but obviously it would be explored at all dosage levels now it has another curious property which a number of researches have, uh, noted a property of the mushrooms which is that they seem to activate or stimulate the languageforming center of the brain whether thats a physical location or simply a name for a set of functions it seems clear that psilocybin by its ability to inspire glossolalia inner voices spontaneous shamanic singing etc operates on the symbolic, uh, processing parts of the brain. These were ----- pack hunting animals which had already evolved a complex set of signals arising first out of their arboreal existence and then transfered into this pack hunting mode. So its reasonable I think to suggest that

psilocybin can be seen in that situation as a catalyst for language it is a catalyst for greater visual acuity and enhanced hunting ----- and its a catalyst for greater hunting ----- its ----- through a greater facility for the processing of symbols at a still higher level this gives away of course to the shamanic experience that we associate with psilocybin which is the visionary state that does not have any obvious evolutionary efficacy they simply because you lie down and close your eyes and dont move around it seems to be an actor on the stage of, uh, of, uh, Darwinian competition so i think its reasonable to suggest that,uh, the development of language and the dominance of this particular adaptation of the primates can be put down to the fact that there was a catalitic ----- diet which

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?? = Included in *The Archaic Revival*

1986 [The Great Timestream Bifurcation](#)

1989 [Plan Plant Planet](#) ??

1990 [True Hallucinations Missing Chapter 20: Oversoul as Saucer](#)

1990 [True Hallucinations Missing Chapter 21: Open Ending](#)

1991 [I Understand Philip K. Dick](#)

1992 [High Times Interview](#) [Included in *The Archaic Revival* as "Critique Interview"] ??

1992 [Is Terence McKenna the Brave Prophet of the Next Psychedelic Revolution, or is His Cosmic Egg Just a Little Bit Cracked?](#) [Esquire Interview]

1993 [Terence McKenna Talks to the Psychozoic Press](#)

1993 [Mondo2k Gracie and Zarkov Interview](#)

1996 [Robert Hunter Emails](#)

1996 [The Inner Elf: Terence McKenna's Trip](#)

1997 [The Mushroom Apocalypse of Terence McKenna: Further Weirdness](#)

1999 [Terence McKenna: An Interview By James Kent](#)

[Virtual Reality and Electronic Highs](#) ??

[Derivation of the Timewave from the King Wen Sequence of Hexagrams](#)

[Ordinary Language, Visible Language & Virtual Reality](#)

[Outfront: On Drugs](#) [Interview]

[Unnamed Q&A](#)

Alien Dreamtime

27 February 1993

Transmission theater, San Francisco

Alien Dreamtime was a multimedia event recorded live on February 27th 1993

All right. Tonight for your edification and amusement, three raves, two interregnums. Visions by Rose-X. Didgeridoo: Steven Kent, and sound by Spacetime. Words and ideas by Terence McKenna.

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Rap 1.

The Archaic Revival. History is ending because the dominator culture has led the human species into a blind alley, and as the inevitable chaotrophic approaches, people look for metaphors and answers. Every time a culture gets into trouble it casts itself back into the past looking for the last sane moment it ever knew. And the last sane moment we ever knew was on the plains of Africa 15,000 years ago rocked in the cradle of the Great Horned Mushroom Goddess before history, before standing armies, before slavery and property, before warfare and phonetic alphabets and monotheism, before, before, before. And this is where the future is taking us because the secret faith of the twentieth century is not modernism, the secret faith of the twentieth century is nostalgia for the archaic, nostalgia for the paleolithic, and that gives us body piercing, abstract expressionism, surrealism, jazz, rock-n-roll and catastrophe theory. The 20th century mind is nostalgic for the paradise that once existed on the mushroom dotted plains of Africa where the plant-human symbiosis occurred that pulled us out of the animal body and into the tool-using, culture-making, imagination-exploring creature that we are. And why does this matter? It matters because it shows that the way out is back and that the future is a forward escape into the past. This is what the psychedelic experience means. Its a doorway out of history and into the wiring under the board in eternity. And I tell you this because if the community understands what it is that holds it together the community will be better able to streamline itself for flight into hyperspace because what we need is a new myth, what we need is a new true story that tells us where we're going in the universe and that true story is that the ego is a product of pathology, and when psilocybin is regularly part of the human experience the ego is suppressed and the suppression of the ego means the defeat of the dominators, the materialists, the product peddlers. Psychedelics return us to the inner worth of the self, to the importance of the feeling of immediate experience - and nobody can sell that to you and nobody can buy it from you, so the dominator culture is not interested in the felt presence of immediate experience, but that's what holds the community together. And as we break out of the silly myths of science, and the infantile obsessions of the marketplace what we discover through the psychedelic experience is that in the body, IN THE BODY, there are Niagaras of beauty, alien beauty, alien dimensions that are part of the self, the richest part of life. I think of going to the grave without having a psychedelic experience like going to the grave without ever having sex. It means that you never figured out what it is all about. The mystery is in the body and the way the body works itself into nature. What the Archaic Revival means is shamanism, ecstasy, orgasmic sexuality, and the defeat of the three enemies of the people. And the three enemies of the people are hegemony, monogamy and monotony! And if you get them on the run you have the dominators sweating folks, because that means your getting it all reconnected, and getting it all reconnected means putting aside the idea of separateness and self-definition through thing-fetish. Getting it all connected means tapping into the Gaian mind, and the Gaian mind is what we're calling the psychedelic experience. Its an experience of the living fact of the entelechy of the planet. And without that experience we wander in a desert of bogus ideologies. But with that experience the compass of the self can be set, and that's the idea; figuring out how to reset the compass of the self through community, through ecstatic dance, through psychedelics, sexuality, intelligence, Intelligence. This is what we have to

have to make the forward escape into hyperspace.

Rap 2.

Alien Love Hello... So that was like an introduction, now for some preaching to the choir on the subject of how come it is that the further in you go the bigger it gets. I remember the very, very first time that I smoked DMT. It was sort of a benchmark you might say, and I remember that this friend of mine that always got there first visited me with this little glass pipe and this stuff which looked like orange mothballs. And since I was a graduate of Dr. Hoffman's I figured there were no surprises. So the only question I asked is, 'How long does it last?' and he said, 'About five minutes.' So I did it and... there was something, like a flower, like a chrysanthemum in orange and yellow that was sort of spinning, spinning, and then it was like I was pushed from behind and I fell through the chrysanthemum into another place that didn't seem like a state of mind, it seemed like another place. And what was going on in this place aside from the tastefully soffited indirect lighting, and the crawling geometric hallucinations along the domed walls, what was happening was that there were a lot of beings in there, what I call self-transforming machine elves. Sort of like jeweled basketballs all dribbling their way toward me. And if they'd had faces they would have been grinning, but they didn't have faces. And they assured me that they loved me and they told me not to be amazed; not to give way to astonishment. And so I watched them, even though I wondered if maybe I hadn't really done it this time, and what they were doing was they were making objects come into existence by singing them into existence. Objects which looked like Faberge eggs from Mars morphing them - selves with Mandrian alphabetical structures. They looked like the consecration of linguistic intentionality put through a kind of hyper-dimensional transform into three-dimensional space. And these little machines offered themselves to me. And I realized when I looked at them that if I could bring just one of these little trinkets back, nothing would ever be quite the same again. And I wondered, Where Am I? And What Is Going On? It occurred to me that these must be holographic viral projections from an autonomous continuum that was somehow intersecting my own, and then I thought a more elegant explanation would be to take it at face value and realize that I had broken into an ecology of souls. And that somehow I was getting a peek over the other side. Somehow I was finding out that thing that you cheerfully assume you can't find out. But it felt like I was finding out. And it felt... and then I can't remember what it felt like because the little self-transforming tykes interrupted me and said, 'Don't think about it. Don't think about who you

are. Think about doing what we're doing. Do it. Do it now. Do it!!!'

Rap 3.

Speaking in Tongues And what they meant was use your voice to make an object. And as I understood, I felt a bubble kind of grow inside of me. And I watched these little elf tykes jumping in and out of my chest; they like to do that to reassure you. And they said, 'Do it.' And I felt language rise up in me that was unhooked from English, and I began to speak... like this, 'Eyo ca dema fla gwa si pipi eng...' or words to that effect. And I wondered then what it all meant and why it felt so good if it didn't mean anything. And I thought about it, a few years actually, and I decided that meaning and language are two different things. And that what the alien voice in the psychedelic experience wants to reveal is the syntactical nature of reality. That the real secret of magic is that the world is made of words, and that if you know the words that the world is made of you can make of it whatever you wish. And one of the things that I learned about DMT was that if you've ever had it, even just once, then you can have a dream, and in this dream somebody will pull out a little glass pipe, and then it will happen! It will happen just like the real thing. Because there's a button somewhere inside each and every one of us that gives you a look into the other side. And that's the button that resets the compass that tells you where you want to sail. Good luck... Rap 4. Timewave Zero Hello... alright. Have you ever noticed how there's this quality to reality which comes and goes, and kind of ebbs and flows and nobody ever mentions it or has a name for it except some people call it a 'bad hair day' or some people say 'Things are really weird recently.' And I think we never notice it and we never talk about it because we're embedded in a culture that expects us to believe that all times are the same, and that your bank account doesn't fluctuate except according to the vicissitudes of your own existence. In other words, every moment is expected to be the same and yet this isn't what we experience. And so what I noticed was that running through reality is the ebb and flow of novelty. And some days, and some years, and some centuries are very novel indeed, and some ain't. And they come and go on all scales differently, interweaving, resonating. And this is what time seems to be. And Science has overlooked this, this most salient of facts about nature: that nature is a novelty conserving engine. And that from the very first moments of that most improbable big bang, novelty has been conserved because in the very beginning there was only an ocean of energy pouring into the universe. There were no planets, no stars, no molecules, no atoms, no magnetic fields; there was only an ocean of free electrons. And then time passed and the universe cooled and novel structures crystallized out of disorder. First, atoms; atoms of hydrogen and helium aggregating into stars. And at the center of those stars the temperature and the pressure created something which had never been seen before which was fusion. And fusion cooking in the hearts of stars brought forth more novelty; heavy elements - iron, carbon, four-valent carbon. And as time passed there were not only then elementary systems but because of the presence of carbon and the lower temperatures in the universe, molecular structures. And out of molecules come simple subsets of organism. The genetic machinery for transcribing information, aggregating into membranes, always binding novelty, always condensing time, always building and conserving upon complexity, and always faster and faster. And then we come to ourselves. And where do WE fit into all of this. Five million years ago we were an animal of some sort. Where will we be five million years from tonight? What we represent is not a sideshow, or an epiphenomenon, or an ancillary something-or-other on the edge of nowhere. What WE represent is the nexus of crescent novelty that has been moving itself together, complexifying itself, folding itself in upon itself for billions and billions of years. There is, so far as we know, nothing more advanced than what is sitting behind your eyes. The human neo cortex is the most densely ramified complexified structure in the known universe. We are the cutting edge of organismic transformation of matter in this cosmos. And this has been going on for a while; since the discovery of fire, since the discovery of language. But now, and by now I mean in the last 10,000 years, we've been into something new. Not genetic information, not genetic mutation, not natural selection, but epigenetic activity; writing, theater, poetry, dance, art, tattooing, body piercing and philosophy. And these things have accelerated the ingression into novelty so that we have become an idea excreting force in nature that builds temples, builds cities, builds machines, social engines, plans, and spreads over the Earth, into space, into the micro-physical domain, into the micro-physical domain. We, who five million years ago were animals, can kindle in our deserts and if necessary upon the cities of our enemies the very energy which lights the stars at night. Now, something peculiar is going on here. Something is calling us out of nature and sculpting us in it's own image. And the confrontation with this something is now not so far away. This is what the impending apparent end of everything actually means. It means that the de-no-ma of human history is about to occur and is about to be revealed as a universal process of compressing and expressing novelty that is now going to become so intensified that it is going to flow over into another dimension. You can feel it. You can feel it in your own dreams. You can feel it in your own trips. You can feel that we're approaching the cusp of a catastrophe, and that beyond that cusp we are unrecognizable to ourselves. The wave of novelty that has rolled unbroken since the birth of the universe has now focused and coalesced itself in our species. And if it seems unlikely to you that the world is about to transform itself, then think of it this way: think of a pond, and think of how if the surface of the pond begins to boil - that's the signal that some enormous protean form is about to break the surface of the pond and reveal itself. Human history IS the boiling of the pond surface of ordinary biology. We are flesh which has been caught in the grip of some kind of an attractor that lies ahead of us in time, and that is sculpting us to its ends; speaking to us through psychedelics, through visions, through culture, and technology, consciousness. The language forming capacity in our species is propelling itself forward as though it were going to shed the monkey body and leap into some extra-surreal space that surrounds us, but that we can not currently see. Even the people who run the planet, the World Bank, the IMF, you name it, they know that history is ending. They know by the reports which cross their desks: the disappearance of the ozone hole [?!], the toxicification of the ocean, the clearing of the rain forests. What this means is that the womb of the planet has reached its finite limits, and that the human species has now, without choice, begun the decent down the birth canal of collective transformation toward something right around the corner and nearly completely unimaginable. And this is where the psychedelic shaman comes in because I believe that what we really contact through psychedelics is a kind of hyperspace. And from that hyperspace we look down on... we look down on both the past and the future, and we anticipate the end. And a shaman is someone who has seen the end, and therefore is a strikebreaker, because you don't worry if you've seen the end. If you know how it comes out you go back and you take your place in the play, and you let it all roll on without anxiety. This is what boundary dissolution means. It means nothing less than the anticipation of the end state of human history. A return to the archaic mode. A rediscovery of the orgasmic freedom of the African grasslands of 20,000 years ago. A techno-escape forward into a future that looks more like the past than the future because materialism, consumerism, product-fetishism, all of these things will be eliminated and technology will become nanotechnology and disappear from our physical presence. If we have the dream, if we allow the wave of novelty to propel us toward the creativity that is inimitable to the human condition. That's what we're talking about here: psychedelics as a catalyst to the human imagination, psychedelics as a catalyst for language; because what cannot be said, cannot be created by the community. So what we need then is the forced evolution of language. And the way to do that is to go back to the agents that created language in the very first place. And that means the psychedelic plants, the Gaian Logos, and the mysterious, beckoning, extraterrestrial minds beyond. Hooking ourselves back up in to the Chakras of the hierarchy of nature, turning ourselves over to the mind of the total other that created us and brought us forth out of animal organization. We are somehow part of the planetary destiny. How will we do determines how well the experiment of life on Earth does, because we have become the cutting edge of

that experiment, we define it, and we hold in our hands the power to make or to break it. This is not a dress rehearsal for the apocalypse. This is not a pseudo-millennium. This is the real thing folks. This is not a test. This is the last chance before things become so dissipated that there is no chance for cohesiveness. We can use the calendar as a club. We can make the millennium an occasion for establishing an authentic human civilization, overcoming the dominator paradigm, dissolving boundaries through psychedelics, recreating a sexuality not based on monotheism, monogamy and monotony. We. All these things are possible if we can understand the overarching metaphor which holds it together which is the celebration of mind as play, the celebration of love as a genuine social value in the community. This is what they have suppressed so long. This is why they are so afraid of the psychedelics, because they understand that once you touch the inner core of your own and someone else's being you can't be led into thing-fetishes and consumerism. The message of psychedelics is that culture can be re-engineered as a set of emotional values rather than products. This is terrifying news. And if we are able to make this point then we can pull back, we can pull back and we can transcend. Nine times in the last million years the ice has ground south from the poles pushing human populations ahead of it and those people didn't fuck up. Why should we then? We are all survivors. We are the inheritors of a million years of striving for the unspeakable. And now with the engines of technology in our hands we ought to be able to reach out and actually exteriorize the human soul at the end of time, invoke it into existence like a UFO and open the violet doorway into hyperspace and walk through it, out of profane history and into the world beyond the grave, beyond shamanism, beyond the end of history, into the galactic millennium that has beckoned to us for millions of years across space and time. This is the moment. A planet brings forth an opportunity like this only once in its lifetime, and we are ready, and we are poised. And as a community we are ready to move into it, to

claim it, to make it our own. It's there. Go for it, and thank you.

Original Transcription by: [++? Jonathanlal]

Review 1 by:

Review 2 by [admin only]:

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