

from measure and restriction, in a delirium of vastness. The mental mechanism, following the body's delirium, is also repeatedly drawn to the infinite: "an impression familiar to dozens and hundreds of unsuspecting, dumbfounded mescaline experimenters, which has its equivalents in several mental illnesses and ranges far into unreality and megalomania." (MO 117) The razor of impermanence is the most cutting blade of all the micro-operations within the infinitizing machinery.

Overbearing metaphysical convictions abound. In the second state he is in a chasm of reaching for divinity (a "theomania" as Michaux calls it) and he claims direct contact with a palpable infinite. *Everything* leads him to it:

a certain metaphysical banality consisting of the common human basis of thought that instantly transmutes itself into beliefs bearing on Immensity, Eternity, Immortality. The Absolute. Immanence. What is beyond Time, Space, the accidental, the phenomenal. (MO 117)

It must never be forgotten, Michaux warns, that all these disorders occurring to someone in the second state are the results of "innumerable little internal ambushes," which only later become visible to others. Even when he is delirious, said Michaux, "he creates and manifests a disorder much less acute than the multiple minute disorders that hack him, shake him, unbalance him from all sides." (LD 158)

Michaux expressed this further in his poetry:

Firing
Firing in the head
firing which doesn't stop.

Collapse
Outside became too strong

A man standing in a corner of the room
suddenly there
suddenly disappeared

Sabotages
innumerable little sabotages
(Vers)

The critical factor for being able to protect one's mind during madness is the recognition of impermanence. Madness is a violent lesson in impermanence. The basic fact of the inevitable decay and death of every aspect of life is terrifyingly highlighted during the second state. If recognition of this is resisted, denied, and repressed, it causes tremendous psychological tension and a recurring escalation in the wildness of mind.¹⁵ A final chasm-situation might evolve: "The infinitization, the perpetuation, the atomization, the undifferentiated fragmentation, aggravated by the antagonistic and conflicting agitation which reduces everything to absurdity, permits nothing but ambivalence, reiterations, obstinacy, refusal, and an inhuman detachment." (MO 120) Detachment may be the result, becoming "chronic" psychosis, the psychosis of *arrest*, where many simply "let go," and live and mean to live on the "other side."

One wonders how many sufferers are able to learn this. After all, said Michaux, "Rare indeed are the madmen equal to madness." But it is possible, it has been done: "In the huge organism that a human being is, there always remains a waking zone, which collects, which amasses, which has learned, which now knows, which knows *differently*." (MO 42)

Mastering Mental Speed

For the one who harbors the poison, mental speed is the great unbalancer. His problem becomes *how* to relate directly to mental speed *while experiencing it*, and while lacking the customary reflexes which provide braking power. The important

point is that the waking zone be safeguarded from the speed. What follows are suggestions of how one could care for himself when living in the great speed, and how others around him (who now know his ordeals) could be a source of encouragement.

The ones who are "under the influence" of a drug or of a psychosis, need to learn how to best take care of themselves. Much information about how to train himself may come from his own prior experience with madness. For example, he learns quite quickly that *he needs rest*. If he doesn't learn this from the first episode, then surely he might from the second or the third recycling, that trying to remain too long at the controls of his accelerated mind will exhaust him, weaken him, and make him increasingly vulnerable to the excesses. He must take his rest, for however long it lasts, even if it is only for a moment.

This kind of learning requires that he have a certain sympathy for himself. But such sympathy or the kindness to care for himself is notoriously absent in the person about to enter madness. It is more likely that someone entering psychosis is abusing himself and is struggling with self-aggression. This is why so much attention has been given to the painful details of his mental commotion: to arouse his kindness toward himself and that of others for him. He suffers enormously and his true ordeals have not been recognized and appreciated enough by others, or even himself. The more we know about his true ordeals and become familiar with the problems of mental speed, the more we can help him.

But to a large extent he is alone. Like Perceval, he is alone and feeling abandoned in an asylum. Like Custance, he wanders alone in inner cities. Like Crowhurst, he is cut off and isolated on his boat or in his apartment. He will experience seizures of fear which come and go. Because of that he may also learn more about the nature of courage than he could ever have imagined.

He is alone but he is also uniquely equipped. The waking zone is always available to him. He is capable of tremendous precision, observation and concentration in spite of the dislocations. Still, he needs to *recollect* the existence of this wakefulness and, at the same time, he needs to protect it from being overwhelmed. This zone of attentiveness should not be relinquished, it should always be remembered by himself and others. He is often unaware, or he easily forgets, that there are a variety of means by which he can recognize and protect it. There are a number of things that he might learn in the following recommendations and which he might even remember when he is alone. It is a time of being “wounded” and the stakes are high, yet there are many antidotes that can be applied.

Emergency Instructions

I offer the following in the form of direct address to someone in the second state, as possible methods of maintaining awareness during this difficult situation.

Distraction is everywhere. You feel that you will even become distracted from your *body*. Too hastily, you think that you are losing contact with it. Body sensibility is your gravity, your contact with earth, and it is urgent that you be alert to it. It may be filled with restlessness and energy but it is still under your control. You are able to move it with intention, even though you might forget what that intention was in the next moment. You have the power to prevent the scattered discharge of bodily energy by remembering or being reminded to hold still and relax. You can adjust your posture and experience its profound effect on your mind. You can feel your body and its sensations, a sense of weight and presence. This mindfulness of the body has the effect of slowing your thoughts.

You are continually breathing but you have a strong tendency to ignore this function. When you are entranced by an inner world, you tend to hold your breath, or it is too shallow and only in the upper chest, or you breathe only intermittently. You will need to remember to breathe and even to take some delight in the changing textures of breathing, especially the filling and emptying of the lungs while inhaling and exhaling—the freedom and the luxury of breathing. When you focus your awareness on the sensations of breathing you also generate your power of attention. Perceval spontaneously discovered this while locked in seclusion: after some minutes of practicing deep breathing—in one nostril and out the other (an “alternate nostril breathing,” as it is known in the practice of yoga)—he found that he would become more relaxed and mindful.

Your mind is infinitely distracted by its “contents” which both awe you and overburden you. But this is no time to indulge in contents, in wonder or analysis of intense images and pictures, and dramatic scenarios. More importantly, behind the contents are the infinitizing activities of the micro-operations. They are the real threat. Even while your awareness is distracted in a “babel of sensations,” as thoughts and images move like meteoric showers across your visual screen, you are still able to *recognize and identify* each of the micro-operations and their ruthless activities. There is a certain *strength of non-distraction* that comes from this recognition.

Non-distraction is your key to mastering mental speed. To do this Michaux said: “I must *observe* at all costs. Hold my ground. Not yield.” This close watching refers to a special kind of attention, that of not following the preposterous, extravagant false ideas, and illuminated impressions and associations that constantly lead down the “path of the fantastic.” When healers used the drugs in ancient Mexico and put themselves on the verge of madness they took great precautions against distraction. Their message can be condensed: “Don’t

get stuck. Don't elaborate on what is happening. Especially, don't get caught in the visuals. Don't dwell anywhere."

A certain resistance is necessary. But it is not the resistance of taking flight, or of refusal, or of digging in the heels, or of avoidance; they only create furious escalations of speed. There is no choice but to go through it. There is no way to go back to the beginning of a dream once you are in it. (Although, even Michaux sometimes took a minor tranquilizer when he felt he could no longer bear it.) It is possible to allow the mad mechanism to pass through at its inhuman speed—and not miss a beat! Abstain from being caught on the hook of fascination. Keep observing the events as they arise...the next event, then the next, and the next. Ceaseless dissolutions. Impermanence is now the ally, the only reference point, the most poignant reminder of wakefulness that you will have. Now that you have come face-to-face with the quick circuit of fascination, of mental indulgence in microcosm, this is the opportunity to *cut fascination* at its roots. See, but don't investigate. Non-clinging to phantasmagoria, abstaining from fascination. Disengagements by "lightning divorces."

Don't force thoughts and don't try to repress thoughts. Don't pursue them as being either a personal confirmation or a threat. Don't cling to words which in the next instant will spring to life in riveting theatricalization. Don't struggle against the speed, let it be as it is. This can relax and quiet you. The repetitions will lose power. The oscillating oppositions will dissolve each other. In regard to the continual expansion, the maximization, always going toward the extreme, the superlative: don't take it personally, don't attach to what can only end in megalomania. "Enough," said Michaux, "I've understood. Don't think! Don't think at all. Vacuity, lie low! Don't give It ideas. Don't give the mad mechanism spare parts." (MM 10)

There is however, a thought which *is* safe, which in fact, is very helpful to declare: "Infinitezation." It simply describes

what is happening and it acknowledges the mechanics of confusion, without judgement or blaming oneself. It is a thought that arises from our critical intelligence and which labels and names the reality of the infinitizing machinery. It could be thought deliberately, "In.fin.it.i.za.tion." It allows for a moment of cessation of activity, and a moment of rest.

In this crucible of velocity, while feeling vulnerable and helpless to control your world of thoughts and images, you may discover a certain softness, an almost abstract tenderness toward everything and everyone. With that comes a moment of relief and of physical and mental relaxation. It is a feeling of sympathy and warmth toward everything outside of oneself along with the dropping away of an intensified self-consciousness. You are hardly alone in having had this experience. Almost universally, the one in the second state calls it Love or Compassion. But remember, you are still living in the great speed and this too can "run wild." For a moment, sometimes a flashing moment, it brings you out beyond yourself, transcending your mental turmoil. It first stirred in you when you realized that you could be neutral; you could accommodate both intense pain and pleasure without attachment, without preference. You now may find that you are capable of experiencing wonderfully compassionate urges, and that this, more than anything else, is nuclear to your being. If ever there is an antidote to madness, it is here, in an *opening out*.

V. WORKING MODEL

What follows is a working model of psychosis, that is to say, a model that can be worked with in a practical way, which has "clinical implications," and which can be used in designs for treatment. Briefly, the model has these stages:

"The Cocktail," is the mixture of causes and conditions necessary for,

“Imbalance” to occur, consisting of a wounding rearrangement between the body, neurotransmitters, and the mind, giving access to,

“The Second State” of mental functioning, and the micro-operations, which differentiates into multiple “zones of consciousness,” one of which is “manic consciousness.”

Thus, a functional psychosis *evolves*. (See Figure 4: Schematic Diagram.)

A. *The Cocktail*

“I have my cocktail,” he told me over the phone. “I can turn it on and off whenever I please. I’ve gotten that expert at it.” He was referring to his series of manic episodes and his ability to enter mania at will. He was calling from an Arkansas jail after he had been arrested for possession of illegal drugs. He desperately wanted to escape from conditions at the jail. Two days later he had a psychotic “attack” and required emergency psychiatric care. “Was it like a hallucinogen?” I later asked him. “Yes, but much worse in intensity, like a fire up the spine!” This disruption lasted for months. Of course, he said, it’s not like simply pushing a button. The conditions have to be right. All the right ingredients need to come together. Always, when he is able to do this there is serious trouble in his life, a “predicament.”

A woman capable of “turning on” (but, as usual not off!) her psychotic symptoms, lived in this way in intermittent cohabitation with her delusional lover, a sort of cosmic hero who she invoked when she felt particularly lonely or abused. She could initiate his longed-for appearance into her life by taking off her clothes and dancing wildly in the moonlight. To this were often added loud incantations, that turned into a bellowing. Sometimes it also required amphetamine-like “diet pills” to bring him forward.

Is there any wonder that there should be such “prodigies” of psychosis, since there are prodigies of just about anything else in the human experience? Besides the well-known prodigies of music, chess, mathematics, and other mental manipulations, there are the sensory wizards, those who can “tune” a sensory organ to the virtuoso performance of “perfect pitch”; the eidetic imagers, those who can “bring alive” and feel an idea or memory; the “idiot savants,” who might be masters of memory, lightning calculators, and so on. But there have also been those who by spontaneous or accidental achievement, have practiced every mind-body interaction imaginable. They have stopped their breath, their heart, immobilized their body, produced profound anesthetics, created meditative states of trance, of ecstasy, of detachment, of “god-intoxicated” states, states of mental fixations, mental states that have been catalogued in the hundreds. All through diligence!

Similarly, in the backward museums of mental hospitals are such prodigies. Particularly, they specialize in mind states. Out of imbalance, loneliness and frantic ambition they have developed arcane disciplines. They demonstrate that any mind and body connection can be put together, if only one plugs into the right wiring. That wiring is relatively easy to “hook up”: anatomically, you can get to anywhere from anywhere within the brain and body in nine neurons or less!¹⁶ It is this possibility of great “plasticity”, or re-circuiting, which allows some people with severe brain wounds to recover lost functions by circumventing a damaged area.¹⁷ Even without any actual re-circuiting of that incomparable wiring network, there are certain chemicals that can open up any of its possible connections.¹⁸ Just as the dream state does. Just as the second state does.

Thus, it is easy to understand that someone can engender in themselves, without any causes other than their own bizarre and esoteric drills, what is commonly called a pure or “functional psychosis” (the psychosis of “unknown cause,”

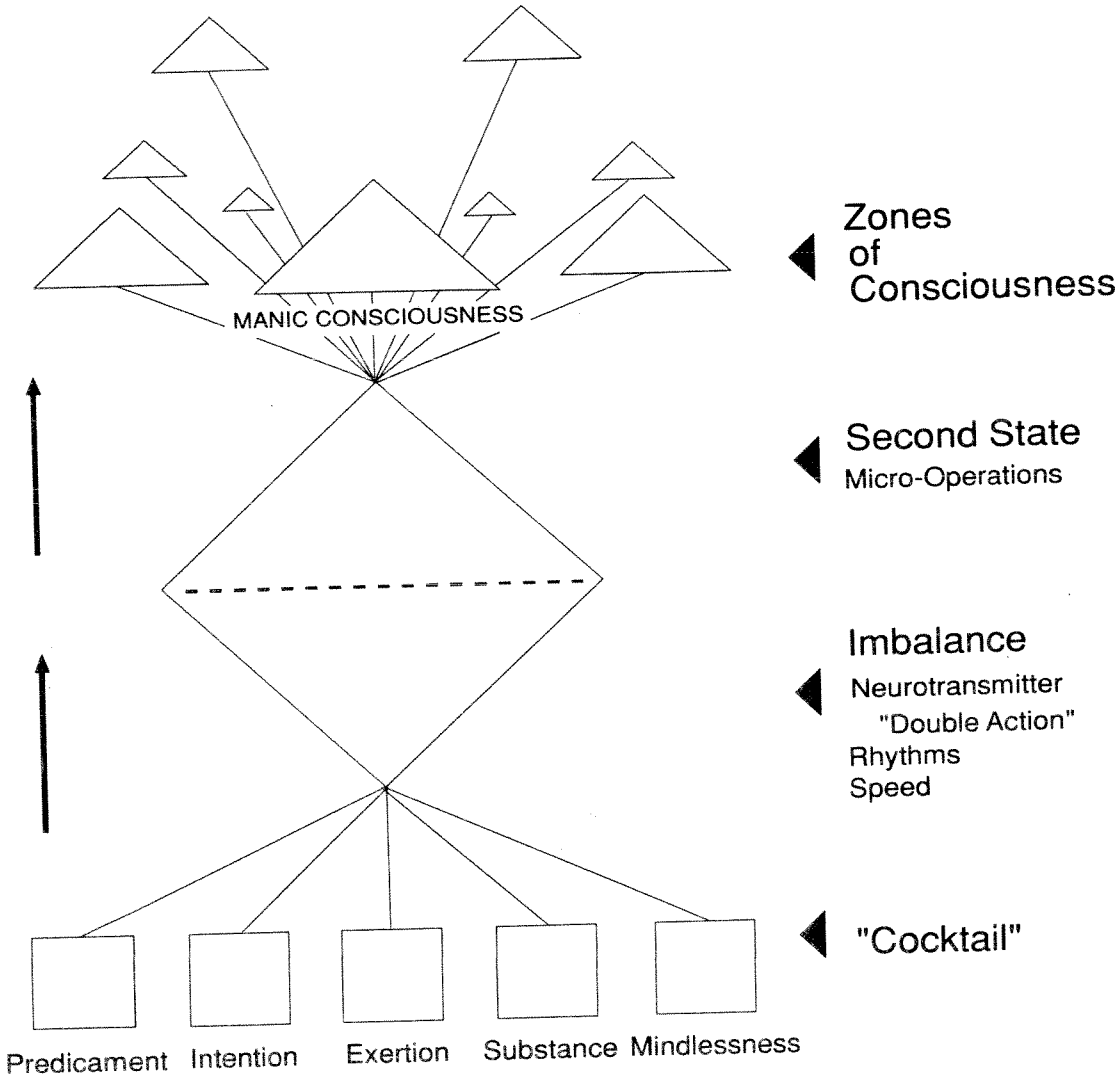


Figure 4: Schematic Diagram

“idiopathic” psychosis, seemingly spontaneous and unrelated to material disease.) Of course, something in the body is always involved, if only secondarily. Even the pure conception of lust, when “imagined,” when fixed upon, visualized, animated and rehearsed, will lead to a strong physical reaction, mediated by the brain, via chemicals, into bodily tension and orgiastic excitement. That model of mind-brain-body connection is already well-established.

The “Cocktail” for a psychosis consists of a Predicament, an Intention, Exertion, a Substance, and Mindlessness. Usually, all of these ingredients can be found to one degree or other in the production of a psychosis.

Predicament

More men and women, and especially adolescents, have become insane in the wake of unrequited love affairs than those driven mad by toxins, defective genes, and other abnormalities put together. It is a clinical commonplace that the phenomenon of unrequited love is a fertile occasion for madness, and this probably has been so since prehistoric times. Perhaps, this is why it is said the world over in pre-technological healing traditions that excessive passion is a “poison” which makes one’s system “toxic,” and then endangers the mind.

The humiliated lover is involved in a predicament. From rejection, or from a real or imagined loss, the lover suffers the crushing disappointment of an intense conviction. His “conviction” might be of his destined place in another’s life, or of his sexual irresistibility, or of having found an ultimate mate, or of living only the shadow of a life when not with the other, and so on in countless variety. He has re-constructed a “self” that can only exist in the presence of the other. When this self is rejected the “groundlessness” or emptiness of his existence can be similar to (and feel like) the “tearing-down” experiences of the drug-induced state. But he sometimes rises

up from that experience and "switches out," traversing the psychotic "cycle-of-transformation,"¹⁹ into an existence of magic and power. A new passion emerges, one of Infinite nature, a celestial version, as the predicament comes to completion.

Intention

Groundlessness is the occasion for transformation. The urge to transform has usually been a motivating factor long before a predicament arises. This desire to become someone else has been "cooking" since an early age. An ordinarily hidden hope and conviction grows that a transformation might come upon one suddenly, as can happen when falling in love. Who has not experienced this alchemical transformation, or this urge in fantasies or in dreams? William James has said that this capability for sudden transformation, which comes in so many varieties and intensities, is perhaps the most curious of all man's capacities. The intention to transform awaits its catalyst. In the case of the lover, the idealized object of love is the agent for transformation.

John Perceval had longed since adolescence to molt from his personality, which had gradually rigidified within the excessive formalism and hypocrisy of his family culture. And he did accomplish that, like a phoenix. John Custance, accustomed to rebounding from depression by manic transformation, travelled to post-war Berlin, divided by paranoia, in order to court and win a final manic liberation. Michaux engaged in an ageless poetic tradition or practice of a "deliberate derangement of the senses" to rescue the imagination from its conventional restraints.

"Freedom" is the issue: freedom is always the hoped-for fruit of transformation. Crowhurst virtually demanded his freedom, which meant a supernatural removal from the scene. Intention becomes an ambition, an attitude based on es-

cape—just waiting for an opportunity. Even the one who experiences a dislocation through brain damage begins to talk obsessively about freedom.

Exertion

Work or effort is required to bring this intention about. All of the characters of this book worked very hard at manipulating their body and mind. Custance worked around the clock at practices (mistakenly called empty “rituals” by some) to unbalance or dysynchronize his mind and body: by struggling against sleeping and eating, automatic writing, endurance walking, throwing himself into risks, and into the *speed* of risk and wakeful danger. John Perceval fasted and sealed his mind in prayer and tried to “speak in tongues.” Others have found the key in rapid non-stop talking. And others have found it in the great effort it takes to enter a “vow of silence.” Some stare into candles or street-lights all night long. There is a metaphor for this kind of exertion in a short story by D.H. Lawrence called, “The Rocking Horse Winner.” An unusual child “drives” himself by frantically riding his wooden rocking horse, in order to work himself up into a clairvoyant state in which he can predict the winner of horse races in the future. All of these are efforts to bring something about, to force the issue, to deliver from one’s mind a transformative experience.

“Substance”

Usually, a substance is found that will fuel the momentum of the coming transformation. Preferably, it is an “excitant,” an accelerator. Alcohol and marijuana are the most popular (and the cheapest) these days. But every other kind of “street-drug” is also used, the hallucinogens obviously being the most powerful. Very high dosages of caffeine even works when nothing else is available. So does nicotine. Perhaps, food can also be

considered an accelerating substance, as it is during fasting or during bulimia with forced vomiting. Increasingly, one hears about patients using their prescribed medications (“anti-psychotic” or “anti-depressant” drugs) in toxic amounts to imbalance the system and create “altered states.” I have recently seen a woman do this with Artane, a medication used along with major tranquilizers to suppress their side-effects of muscular spasms. Other medications that have this potential are reported almost monthly in the psychiatric literature.

Mindlessness

To be *mindful* means to be precise, accurate, “in touch” with, and able to track the phenomena taking place inside and outside oneself, to be in direct contact. To be *mindless* is to forfeit that contact and sense of presence, by an inversion and perversion of mindfulness. Mindlessness comes in several varieties: “blanking out,” becoming “numb,” fixating on particular sensations to the exclusion of all others, being absorbed in a narrow band of concentration with the loss of a larger vista. In the *Ion*, Plato refers to a madman as “a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below.” The unrequited and idealizing lover—the one desperate to become *another, through* another—fixes his mind on his beloved. He attempts to avoid the natural flow of perceptions and ideas that might distract his thoughts from her, as if by such one-pointed concentration he could be in communion with her, not lose her, or “bring her back.” In the second state the mindless one may indulge in conjuring her back by symbolic words, acts, or gestures.

The destructive effects of mindlessness are seen clearly in the condition of little children, known as “autism.” Who knows what the dire predicament of such children really are, although occasionally, there is no doubt, it is the direct result of extreme conditions of environmental neglect or malice.²⁰ Typically,

these children become “lost” in hallucinated states or in “blank,” automaton-like states, from which they cannot be shaken or “awakened.” Grotesquely, they can be seen to be at work at this, to actually “crank it up.” They work at developing movements, usually involving rapidly rotating movements of a hand around the mouth, or a “tapping” with a seemingly inhuman speed. What infernal vibrations, rhythms and waves do they invoke or provoke within themselves? But the result is clear:

the autistic child, through his own efforts, *achieves* a state of nonattentiveness to stimuli which has all the appearances of a state of dysfunction of the system serving arousal...This he does, for example, by his monotonous, continuous self-stimulation which arises, in part, from his motor behavior. In a sense, any stimulus from the outside is then lost, either by being blotted out, or in the concentration on inner sensations alone.²¹

Imbalance

The entire “cocktail” (or even any combination of its ingredients), has a traumatizing effect on one’s total physiology and chemistry. The dramatist August Strindberg said about the onset of his psychosis: “Then I feel, at first only faintly, something like an inrush of electric fluid. I look at my compass, but it shows no sign of wavering. It is not electricity, then. But the tension increases; my heart beats violently; I offer resistance, but as if by a flash of lightning my body is charged with a fluid which chokes me and depletes my blood.”²² The function of every internal system is altered. Chemicals, energies, impulses and reflexes, normally held in a delicate balance, are disrupted. The early investigators of psychosis often said that it was an illness of “disharmony.” But it is a unique disharmony. The poet Gerard de Nerval said of his own psychosis: “I do not know why I use the word ‘illness,’ for as far as my physical self was concerned, I never felt better. Sometimes I thought my strength and energy were doubled, I

seemed to know everything, understand everything. My imagination gave me infinite delight. In recovering what men call reason, do I have to regret the loss of those joys?" (*Aurelia*)

There are a number of different ways in which this imbalance can be seen. In the speculations of both Perceval and Custance, what is unbalanced are two kinds of "nervous systems," a gross or outer nervous system, and a subtle or inner nervous system. This is not an unusual idea. Many people who have experienced the ravages and exaltations of the second state have also wondered about the existence of such parallel systems. In a similar but much more developed manner, medical practitioners of Tibet, India, China, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere, for many centuries have seen madness as a serious imbalance of the energies of a "subtle" system. They each describe and work with energies, channels and energy focal points that are not acknowledged to exist in modern neurology.²³

On first taking a hallucinogenic drug, Michaux was inevitably drawn to ideas about a chemical instigator of madness:

Certain sentiments...manufacture certain nervous poisons capable of damaging the controls, like that of the diencephalon, the great regulator and master of sleep, and other controls besides, and, *through the non-resistance of the controls*, start a new acceleration of ideas, over and above the first, thus breaking through all restraint, all self-control. [*italics mine*](MM 88)

Neurotransmitters

It is safe to say that knowledge of the hallucinogens has changed the history of madness. Yet, the hypotheses are endless. In the Western medical tradition, one or another "toxin theory" of psychosis has had supporters for at least 200 years. What was being looked for was sometimes called a "toxin X." This theory states that the body begins to produce noxious chemicals by some wild and aberrant synthesis. Consequently,

this theory has come to involve consideration of enzymes and genes. The psychiatrist who introduced Aldous Huxley to mescaline came to believe that a supposedly "weak" hallucinogenic chemical (which he called "adrenochrome"), ordinarily a minor intermediary metabolite of the important neurotransmitter adrenaline, somehow accumulates to toxic proportions. Now, there are many species of such toxin theories.

Can there be some "generic" shock-substance, flowing in the veins of unfortunately "marked" people, which acts as a natural neurotransmitter of the second state?

It remains a haunting fact that the most potent of the natural hallucinogens are homologous to the neurotransmitters. That is, the organic hallucinogens and the neurotransmitters are of the same chemical family, and of the same origin. With only minute changes of atoms on the basic, fixed structure, a neurotransmitter may become a hallucinogen. In this way the essential neurotransmitter Serotonin can become the hallucinogen Psilocybine. Much of the recent manufacture of underground "designer drugs," is based on chemical rearrangements of the neurotransmitter structures.

Oddly, it seems, our mandatory and precious neurotransmitters, in some variation or other, are also "out there," in the earth in mushrooms, cactuses, and vines.

In current research, the greatest attention is being paid to the role of the neurotransmitters within us. It is they that seem to be principally affected by the class of medications which at times is helpful to people in psychosis, the "phenothiazines." Many of these medications implicate a particular neurotransmitter, dopamine, as having a major role in the activation of psychosis. Dopamine itself is, along with mescaline, one of the alkaloids of the peyote cactus. But the role of dopamine, with its various molecular actions and reactions at the junction of nerve cells, has turned out to be far more complicated than originally suspected. Also, dopamine is only one of a dozen other neurotransmitters that can be shown to have tremendous

power in effecting neural transmission, the wiring of the brain. The best estimates indicate that there are as many as 200 such substances residing in the brain and elsewhere in the body. We are swimming in neurotransmitters.

However, dopamine has been given a special place through the astonishing research of Dr. Oliver Sacks.²⁴ His patients demonstrated that dopamine itself, without any metabolic change, is as powerful as any hallucinogen. He worked with people whose original disease (encephalitis lethargica, stemming from the infamous flu epidemic of 1918) had selectively destroyed the ability of their brain cells to produce or store the neurotransmitter dopamine. This is also the pathology of Parkinsonism, with which these patients suffered to extreme degrees. People who for twenty, thirty, or more years had been frozen in time, arrested at the moment of their fall into "sleeping sickness" and occupied only by dream-like states, who were seemingly inert to the world around them, could suddenly spring to life and come back "into time," when the neurotransmitter dopamine (via its precursor, L-DOPA) was given to them.

Even though the story of these "awakenings" has been told many times in the past decade, its great psychological significance has yet to be fully appreciated. These findings, Dr. Sacks rightly claims, are not only of "profound therapeutic interest, but of momentous physiological and epistemological interest." (Sacks 211)

When L-DOPA is first given, the accumulation of dopamine in the brain acts like a "reverse hallucinogen," a transmitter capable of awakening one from a most extreme chasm situation (in this case a cataclysm), of mental and physical "arrest." These patients describe transformations that are as dramatic as any seen in the human experience. However, when L-DOPA continues to be given it has an opposite effect: one may be overwhelmed in an hallucinogenic ordeal, with nightmare speed, "attacks of possession," and manic con-

sciousness. Thus, under the conditions of large dosages, or of a developing supersensitivity, or other conditions of cocktail-induced imbalance, dopamine has all the qualities of a "drug." Depending on the conditions, dopamine is either a wakeful energizer or a "psychotomimetic."

This is how it happens. After several days of L-DOPA administration, one patient, Mrs Y, who had for decades lived almost immobilized in a crippling state of extreme Parkinsonism and catatonia, "exploded...and before incredulous eyes walked the length of the ward." She began to talk of "freedom," a liberation far greater for her than simply the release from her bodily torture. About her new-found freedom she delightedly and repeatedly exclaimed: "I'm a new person, I feel it, I feel it inside, I'm a brand-new person. I feel so much, I can't tell you what I feel. Everything's changed, it's going to be a new life now." Another patient on L-DOPA felt himself to be a messiah "called on" to do battle with demonic forces. Patients in their mid-seventies began to talk of L-DOPA as filling them with health, energy, and with "grace." They called it a "miracle drug," a "blessed drug," and they went around proclaiming "the gospel of life according to L-DOPA," all of which must have sounded disturbingly similar to the way the hallucinogen LSD was being talked about.

However, within a month, Mrs. Y was noted to become over-excited quite easily, even by her own clapping:

Her movements were extraordinarily quick and forceful, and her speech seemed two or three times quicker than normal speech; if she had previously resembled a slow-motion film, or a persistent film-frame stuck in the projector, she now gave the impression of a speeded-up film...Her threshold of reaction was now almost zero, and all her actions were instantaneous, precipitate and excessively forceful. (Sacks 93)

Once again, we find *speed* to be the energy that drives the system. Usually, it comes in "*waves*" of energy and strength: "each wave rising high and higher towards some limitless climax." (50) Many of these patients talked of "waves running through them, or of being tossed up and down like a boat in

heavy seas. These undulant images seem entirely appropriate, if one departs from the notion of simple, sinusoidal waves, and instead visualizes torrential excitements which *surge hyperbolically*, getting steeper and steeper, as they get higher and higher, and thus have the potential of infinite height.”(314) With this “continual proliferation of new excitations,” Sacks believes the brain is “*lit up*.”

It is not surprising that these patients who for so long had lived with bodily inhibition, spasm, and rigidity would experience the energy of speed to be bizarrely exaggerated in their bodies. As one of them said after being “switched on,” by L-DOPA, “Before I was galvanized, but now I am vivified.” All their “tics” and other sudden automatic movements, including new ones, were maddeningly accelerated. Explosive movements which were like “streaks of lightning,” were caught on film and playback revealed them to be hundreds of times faster than normal. The pure analogue of the micro-operations was being expressed through the body, via the “derailed” motor system.

At the same time, speed drives and propels the thinking process. Mrs Y would episodically experience “a kinematic ‘delirium’ in which a variety of perceptions or hallucinations or hallucinatory patterns may succeed one another with vertiginous speed, several a second.”(Sacks 103) In other patients there was also a similar rapidity of speech and a startling ability at mathematical calculation. Several patients passed from a “gentle amorousness to an enraged and thwarted erotomania.” All their needs and desires were marked by a speed-intensifying continuum of ambition, greed, and voracity.

These patients became caricatures of manic pressure. They were now “overflowing” with the administered neurotransmitter dopamine, after having been so long deprived of it, and they entered the domain of manic and psychotic energy: “Our patients, then, ascend higher and higher into heights of exorbitance, becoming more active, excited, impatient, increas-

ingly restless, choreic, akathisic, more driven by tics and urges and itches, continually more hectic, fervid and ardent, flaming into manias, passions and greeds, into climactic voracities, surges and frenzies...until the crash comes at last.”(Sacks 224)

Most of them also experienced the “tearing down” phenomena, the personally shattering experiences of the hallucinogenic second state. Of one, Dr. Sacks writes

certain violent appetites and passions, and certain obsessive ideas and images—could not be dismissed by her as ‘purely physical’ or completely ‘alien’ to her ‘real self’, but, on the contrary, were felt to be in some sense releases or exposures or disclosures or confessions of very deep and ancient parts of herself, monstrous creatures from her unconscious and from unimaginable physiological depths below the unconscious, pre-historic and perhaps pre-human landscapes whose features were at once utterly strange to her, yet mysteriously familiar, in the manner of certain dreams. And she could not look at these suddenly exposed parts of herself with detachment; they called to her with Siren voices, they enticed her, they thrilled her, they terrified her, they filled her with feelings of guilt and punishment, they possessed her with the consuming, ravishing power of nightmare. (Sacks 53)

They also developed their own “demonologies.” They talked of “possession” by “presences,” who would sometimes visit during the night, erotic or satanic spirits who transformed and controlled them. Like Michaux (and also William James) who spoke of a demonic self, composed of all the agglutinated negatives of oneself which rises to the surface; and like Perceval’s “perverse self,” or Custance’s demons composed of the “return of the rejected opposites,” Dr. Sacks talks of “opposed forms of being [who] fight to possess us, to dispossess each other, and to perpetuate themselves.”

Regulating the dosage for people being maintained on L-DOPA (and thus the amount of dopamine in the brain) became, without fail, a terrible problem. When it was stopped completely, or sometimes merely reduced, patients would revert to a depressed state which was far more distressing and disabling than the original “pre-L-DOPA” state. It became impossible in most cases, to find the increasingly elusive precise dosage which was neither too little nor too much: “they needed L-DOPA, but could not tolerate it.”(56)

This is exactly the situation of the tens of thousands of chronic mentally ill people currently being “maintained” for long periods of time on the “anti-psychotic medications.” The ultimate site of action of these medications is on the neurotransmitters. Typically, and increasingly, one hears the dilemma of psychiatrists who are futilely attempting to regulate the knife-edge dosage of their patient’s medications: “*He can’t live with it and he can’t live without it!*” That is, too great a dosage of the neurotransmitter blocker stupefies him; too small a dosage permits the cycle of excitation and agitation to begin. There usually comes a time when there is no middle ground, when the distance between too much and too little is only a fulcrum flipping one into excitement or depression. What happens with the “chronic” use of anti-psychotic medication is the same as is seen in every patient maintained on L-DOPA: “his tolerance for the drug becomes less and less, while his need for the drug becomes greater and greater: in short, that he gets caught in the irresolvable vicious cycle of ‘addiction’.” (223)

What one is witnessing in these patients is the bimodal, paradoxical, or “double-action,” of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dr. Sacks summarizes the experience of his patients, but he might just as well be speaking of the experience of the person who takes an overdose of an hallucinogen, or the person who enters psychosis by means of the “cocktail”:

For a brief time, then, the patient on L-DOPA enjoys a perfection of being, an ease of movement and feeling and thought, a harmony of relation within and without. Then his happy state—his world—starts to crack, slip, break down, and crumble; he lapses from his happy state, and moves toward perversion and decay. (Sacks 220)

This is probably the case for many other neurotransmitters as well. Since the mid-1950s, the same “double-action” has been suspected of the neurotransmitter serotonin (structurally related to the hallucinogen psilocybine and LSD). Other neurotransmitters, related to the amphetamine family, also seem to work in a “paradoxical” way. There is also a host of synthetic drugs that are created by substitutions on the am-

phetamine nucleus which act paradoxically. Such a drug is Ketamine, a respected pediatric and veterinary drug, which acts as an anesthetic at one dosage but is a potent hallucinogen at one tenth that dosage.

However, the situation is far more complex than a single neurotransmitter being at fault. All the neurotransmitters work *in concert*, in a network of other neurotransmitters. No one in particular is to be "blamed." When any one of them is in either excess or deficit, many of the others rearrange, and different patterns or "profiles" of neurotransmitters are created. The various neurotransmitter systems are in a precarious balance with each other; interference with one neurotransmitter system affects the functioning of others and imbalances the whole network.

For a person entering psychosis, the "cocktail" is an alchemical event that imbalances the network and turns naturally existing neurochemical "awakeners," medicines, into "poisons."

Just how the neurotransmitters affect the mind itself is unknown. But everything indicates that they affect the *rhythms* of the brain and the rest of the body. Molecules of dopamine and other neurotransmitters in the brain do only one thing: they excite or inhibit nerve cells, and thus they control the "firing pattern" of nervous tissue. There are thousands of different patterns of such firings within the brain and elsewhere. Everywhere there are patterns and rhythms of activity. There are menstrual cycles, breathing rhythms, heart beats, cellular oscillations, and even the micro-particles (known as "organelles") inside each cell have been found to be rotating and vibrating. Every particle of human life is involved in the "musical" activity of producing rhythmic waves of energy.

More obviously, the firing patterns within the brain can be driven by sensations coming from the "outside." Flashes of light, or pulses of sound, or of touch, or of odors, or of taste are well-known for their ability to capture and "drive," or

“entrain” rhythmic neural activity. For instance, repetitive drumming, sometimes known as “trance drumming”—found in great variety in every corner of the world—is ritually used to implant new rhythms, by subduing and “taking over” personal rhythms. It does not take long in listening to classical Indian music to realize that such music, through intricate and interlocking beats, tones, and rhythms, actually operates on our neural codes, and thereby work on our emotions. Literally hundreds of different vocal practices of chanting, singing and recitation have been discovered to affect different regions of the body and to musically excite or calm the mind through harmonic manipulations and resonances.

Is it not possible that thoughts, obsessive and imperious thoughts, spinning and drumming thoughts, intensified and ponderous thoughts, could also pulse the neural pathways and thereby influence the physiological rhythms of the body?

There are, as well, many different “background” rhythms of spontaneous firing in every area of the brain. Even tissue cultures of cells isolated from the brain show spontaneous rhythmic firing. Such activity appears to be the inherent nature of the appropriately labelled “nervous” tissue. Brain cell rhythms are usually observed to have “cycles” of activity. Some cycles are related to day and night, light and dark, known as “circadian rhythms.” Those rhythms are also connected with the rhythm of the seasons. Some cycles occur hourly, or over minutes, or seconds, or microseconds. Many of these cycles are suspected to be “driven” by the periodic “pulsing” of neurotransmitter substances, or neural “messenger” proteins, or by pulsing hormonal secretions in what seems to be infinitely complex feedback loops or self-regulating mechanisms. And all of these have some relation to the cycles and tempos of the organs in the body.

When a hallucinogen enters the body, or when the psychosis-inducing “cocktail” produces a neuro-chemical-electrical im-

balance, it commandeers and it plunders, the intrinsic and “unconscious” rhythms of the body. The imbalance brings rhythms to the surface: it accentuates hidden rhythms; it synchronizes and hyper-synchronizes archaic phylogenetic rhythms; it “recruits”²⁵ and gathers weak and insensible vibrations into swelling waves and undulations, which then readily drive and pulse the tempo of “thinking.” New and accelerated neural “pacemakers” become dominant, and it is now these to which thinking has to conform. The ordinary “stream of thought”—the “streaming” of ideas, mental images, thoughts, apparitions, daydreams—is disrupted by unprecedented rhythms. It is these new waves and their tempestuous frequencies that overrun the normal frequencies and “open up” the nervous system to speeds of activity which, until then, had remained only latent. This speed reverberates within the nervous system and it becomes directly palpable as waves and undulations throughout the body and the mind.

For Michaux, the “temporary madman” (intoxicated by a hallucinogen) and the involuntary madman stunned by psychosis, are both changed:

But, whether they are for one hour or ten thousand hours, both of them are present in the throes of the same evil: in the same inexplicable sea, an omnipresent agitated sea, from which they cannot escape, with waves everywhere, a way of being themselves a sea as much as in the seas or traversed by seas, a sea of things, of time, of space, a new world with too many variables, in which the idea is in the wave, in which observation and judgement are in the wave, in which things and coordinates are in the wave, and simultaneously in tiny and almost imperceptible, imprecise variation-undulations which abound, which superabound, which harass the mind, prevent it from getting away from the ‘waves’ phenomenon in which everything vacillates, oscillates, is fantastic tumult, without frontiers, without delimitation, invading everything, but which remains secret and imponderable, jolts producing jolts, a tumult which makes everything tumultuous and stirs up and provokes agitation, agitation for its own sake, and makes the mind skid and slip in incessant false turns. (LD 138)

Thus, enraptured and entrapped by waves, a second state of mental functioning is accessed.

The Second State

In the second state micro-operations are at liberty and without opposition. The increasing speed has both released them and unveiled them. In the normal state they functioned under the surface of the comparatively laborious progression of macro-operational thinking. But under the conditions of imbalance and acceleration the ordinarily hidden fabric of the micro-operations begins to surface. They make their appearance one by one: first comes the speed, then the repetitions, then multiplications, and so on. Soon, these are all operating at the same time. The result is complete dislocation, outside of time, in a foreign place, where one is utterly alone, except, that is, for the uncanny presences caused by infernal animation.

Michaux called this another "zone" of consciousness. Basically, it is a neutral zone where *pure impermanence* is the only governing law: indifferent and dispassionate toward the meteoric appearances and disappearances of thoughts and images. This has previously been referred to as the "waking zone," where all mental activity can be seen with tremendous clarity and precision. But this experience of the fundamental state of intelligence is also "unstable" and does not usually last for very long.

The neutral zone almost inevitably becomes colored by "fascination." Michaux said: "If madness is physical and biological, it is also fascination." Everyone knows of the possibility within oneself to become fascinated, like not being able to "get it out of my mind" (call "it," a melody, a person, an image, a premonition, a fear, an impulse). It can occur in varying intensities. But in the second state one may experience the most extreme sense of "absorption" in an object: a feeling of being irresistibly drawn to, captured and held by a real or imagined object, feeling powerless, or even bewitched. Concentration may become riveted. When the apparition of a naked woman appeared before John Perceval, beseeching him

to follow her, it took all his strength and willpower to violently tear his attention away from her. Michaux encountered "presences" from whom it was seemingly impossible to escape. When they "caught" his attention, "fixed" him in their gaze to the point that he became them, he no longer felt he had any volition of his own.

Patients transformed by L-DOPA talk of a *crisis of fascination*. They often displayed an "uncontrollable watching"; visually grabbing and grasping the object of gaze and "unable to relinquish it till it passed from [the] field of vision." One said, "It was uncanny. My eyes were spellbound. I felt like I was bewitched or something, like a rabbit with a snake." Another patient, "would find that his entire attention had to be concentrated upon whatever object compelled his gaze: and this phenomenon was called 'fascination', 'being spellbound' or 'witch-craft'." Ideas, images, or memories would repeat themselves in an "inner litany" that "could not be banished from mind during the crisis: they were reiterative, peremptory, overwhelming, and would exclude all other thoughts from her mind." Some were compelled to count. Some were absorbed in "nothingness." Sacks tells of one woman patient, in a state of "great inner stillness and of 'acquiescence'; her attention would dwell for hours on whatever object or thought entered its field; she would feel herself completely 'absorbed' and 'engrossed' by all of her postures, perceptions and thoughts," and would "spend hours and days and even weeks reliving peaceful scenes from her own childhood." (Sacks 153)

As always, whatever happens in the mind is also intensely paralleled in motor behavior: "grasp-reflexes...became exaggerated, and caused forced grasping and groping of the hands, and a strong tendency for them to 'stick' to whatever they happened to touch." (Sacks 222)

By "fascination" (as if becoming "fastened-to") the neutral zone is "split up" into multiple consciousnesses; into sub-zones, or sub-consciousnesses. It can occur by fixation on a

sight, sound, taste, smell, body feeling, or a mind sensation. Each is capable of becoming an "entranced" consciousness—a "trance" zone. These trance zones are usually experienced in fluctuation from one to the other. The seemingly unitary consciousness of the "normal" state is torn apart at the seams within the second state, and each part can independently become fixed and entranced. Every one of these fixated states of consciousness can clearly be seen in the phenomenon of psychosis, where one might stare "into space" for hours, or listen intently for far-off commands, or feel locked into a body part, or be unable to escape from a body odor.

Absorption in the consciousness of thoughts and ideas can produce a unique form of rapture. Donald Crowhurst, crushed between the sea and the sky in his lonely machinations of calculation and deception, became intoxicated with "turning" thoughts and revolving ideas just as fixedly and hypnotically as any autistic child is "lost" in repetitive tappings and twirlings (called "twiddling"). "Lost" in this sense refers to a stupefied experience of mind-watching-mind, which watches mind-watching-mind, which watches....

But it is a fascination or absorption in particular ideas which leads to the zone of consciousness called manic consciousness. These ideas usually expand on virtues of one's SELF. It seems to be a most popular zone. The one in the second state is under the pressure of the micro-operations, with his world expanding, to the maximum, to the immense, to the Infinite. He cannot "control" it as Michaux said, "Immense is around him, is in him, is on him. Immense traverses him." His nervous system seems to be built on the principle of hyperbole, a "going to the limit." "But look," says Michaux,

he is going to spoil everything...He is going to create a personal relation with that. (He can hardly be blamed. He is pretty much forced to.) He tries to find a suitable place for this excess and to live with it. How to find a suitable place for excess? An essential excess. Work suddenly appears to him petty (as do other people). He is in a reigning place. Sovereignty is in him...A little longer (how can he resist?), and finally, unable any longer to leave unfixed, impersonal, anonymous this prodigious monopolizing and supreme greatness, the

secret which is choking him, being a simple man who believes in simplifying and who believes he has understood, he declares himself to be Napoleon.(LD 178)

Or a saint, or a messiah, or the “greatest” of anything. He feels he must call himself something! This invasion of sovereignty, which fills him with such excellence, could not long remain unemployed.

In a cascading expansion, without stopping or being able to stop, he dilates to the maximum into every notion of himself, “not one of which he can let pass without pouring himself into, without stretching out in it perfectly.” Every student of human nature has commented upon a dormant and potential “omnipotence” within us, a space for Napoleon to fill. It isn’t difficult to find out how this space—now energized by manic consciousness—came to be. As for Michaux:

His childhood, too, like that of so many others, gave free rein to his ideas of grandeur. What does the child want? To be everything, to possess everything, to attract everything, to taste everything, to overcome everything, to know everything, to run everything. To be loved by all, recognized by all. No less. Such is the child of man. Enough to produce dozens of deliria of grandeur and thousands of megalomaniacs. Humanity will always have a plentiful supply.(LD 180)

Consider one poor woman who lives on the streets. She is juggling assorted bags filled with remnants of possessions. She calls them “objects of power.” She is destitute yet she parades her self-sufficiency. Impudently, she asks for money to support her “holy cause.” She has an “urgent mission to fulfill,” and an “emergency message” which only she can deliver, a message which “affects the WORLD,” which swells in her, with which she is bursting. Going to a shelter is beneath her, she says. The woman has gone to an extremity of satisfaction and pride in having joined a venerable tradition of wandering ascetics. She enjoys and perhaps flaunts her “freedom of the streets.” She berates the authorities and will sacrifice even her life to expose their abuse of power. In doing this, she declares herself a “maiden warrior.” It is simply inadequate and even misleading to speak of her “grandiosity” or of her “folly of

greatness.” Instead, she suffers from the folly of the enormous, an abounding energy, dilating to the maximum, where everything is caught in surges of delirious expansion.

VI. THE AUTISTIC ORDEAL

Michaux, the writer, painter, musician and scientist of unique talent, has often been called a “genius.” But there was always something “different” about him. He avoided notoriety as if it were a disease. In an age when artists are required to publicize themselves, he did just the opposite. Even as he was becoming well-known in the Parisian art world he gave very few interviews, restricted the publication of photographs of himself, and was often unreachable except by his closest friends. For many years he lived in a little room in a modest hotel. He rarely visited the cafes, avoided intellectual gatherings, and when he was finally and belatedly awarded one of France’s highest literary honors (the Grand Prix National des Lettres in 1965), he rejected it. Many thought he was simply eccentric. Others wondered about a deep-rooted pathology. But few people really knew him except for his almost legendary tendency toward asceticism. In short, he lived like a recluse in the very heart of Paris.

Yet everyone who met Henri Michaux was struck by his dignified presence and the uprightness of a judge. Younger poets who consulted with him spoke of his humility and courteousness. When the young Allen Ginsberg stopped in Paris on his way to India—thirty years after Michaux had done the same—he managed to meet with Michaux who he later described being “like all geniuses a man full of natural sympathy who could be trusted to approve enthusiasm, heart, common humor or any humane crankiness as long as it was unaffected...he was a benevolent presence on the planet.”(Sur)

Michaux developed great compassion and was deeply dedicated to people in extreme mental suffering. He called them

the "unfortunate ones" and "brothers, brothers without knowing it, no longer anybody's brothers." He seems to have easily identified with them. Mescaline had opened his mind to madness. This allowed him to "exchange" with the experience of those who must dwell in psychosis, to experience their ordeals. In almost every book he wrote after beginning his drug research, Michaux throws some light on the nature of psychosis. During the years of his hallucinogenic explorations he realized that he was becoming a translator for those in psychosis and at times he seemed to feel this to be his mission. Michaux says "I will speak in their name." Perceval says "I open my mouth for the dumb, who simply cannot speak for themselves." This compassionate action to offer one's own shattering experiences as knowledge to others is shared by every character in this book.

Michaux himself was not unfamiliar with psychological anguish. His childhood was filled with mental pain and he sometimes wrote sorrowfully about it: "from the abdomen of memory, from the depth of my being, from the depths of my childhood that never received its due and which three centuries of life could not satiate, so great were its needs." (Vel 8)

He entered the world in the small Belgian town of Namur, in a household which was simply and starkly inhospitable to him. He said that he was an "untouchable" to both his parents and that he experienced a coldness and emotional withdrawal all around him. In fact his mother told him, "I wish rather you had never been born." He recoiled and withdrew: "From the age of six months, I was all refusal...I gritted my teeth in the face of life." (Vel 5) He said that he "rolled himself up into a ball," turned away from eye contact and deeply into himself, and dreamed deliriously of a "perfection" accessible only within himself. As best he could at the age of five, he strove for perfect self-sufficiency.

His personal and secret discipline as a child was to reject intimate contact with the world. He became the personification

of what he called "refusal": "The thick lips of Buddha closed to bread and speech." "The more I look back upon my childhood, the stronger is the feeling that I was a stranger in the home of my parents. My first words were to cry out that I was a foundling." (Vel 5) His parents did not know what to do with him. They consulted physicians who recommended that he be sent away from home, to a small country school where the ruggedness of life might stimulate him. There, in fact, his world was penetrated and he allowed himself to become domesticated: "Perfection gone, nutrition and comprehension came. At the age of seven he learned the alphabet and ate." (Vel 6)

In his pre-mescaline days Michaux often wrote stories about himself (as well as "everyman") through his imaginary characters. Two of them talk poignantly about refusal:

Until he reached the threshold of adolescence he was a hermetic, self-sufficient little ball, a dense and troubled universe, closed to everything: to parents, to affection, to objects, their reflection, to their existence—unless they were turned violently against him. For 'they' hated him; 'they' said he would never be a man... (Vel 4)

The end-result of that way of being is described by another character:

I am so weak (I used to be extremely so), that if I was able to coincide in mind with anybody at all, I would immediately be subjugated and swallowed up by him and entirely dependent on him; but I am keeping a sharp lookout, for I am dead set on being always very exclusively myself. Because of this discipline I now have a better and better chance of never coinciding with any mind at all and of being able to move about freely in the world. (SW 193)

Years later, this pain of human confrontation is in full display under mescaline:

The effulgence of gazing eyes (of people in good health) hurts me like the pulverizations of a shower. I should like to unburden myself of their gaze, and yet it is not particularly inquisitive, reproachful or evil. What disturbs me is that I no longer possess what is necessary to stand up to the pressure of a normal gaze, and from this I suddenly understand in a different way the necessity, when one is weak or ill, of having gentle and pliant nurses. (IT 38)

All of the qualities that Michaux assigns to his early years—a fear of encounter, a dread of reliance on others, a kind of vow

of solitude, refusal, anonymity, and a stubborn self-sufficiency—are the dominant phenomena of what is known as infantile or childhood “autism.” In conventional diagnostic psychiatry autism refers to a relatively rare disease process of children and it is now heatedly debated as to whether or not this is caused by a brain or genetic or psychological abnormality. The medical researchers, geneticists, biochemists, behaviorists, and the statisticians seem to agree among themselves that the autistic disorder is a reflection of a brain dysfunction already present at birth.

Currently, there is a great deal of misunderstanding in regard to the origins and treatment of childhood autism. Autism has become one of those diseases in which there is hot pursuit for a genetic “marker,” and the highest awards of science could be given for such a discovery.

But there is something suspicious about this claim of genetic determination, one which is increasingly being made also about psychosis, panic disorders, many addictions and compulsions, depression, even loneliness. The great strides that have apparently been made in genetic technology might intimidate any researcher who holds a determining view other than a genetic one. Also intimidating are the predictable bitter reactions from the parents of autistic children, who feel that any view other than the genetic one will once again be used to “blame” them. Because of the competition for limited research funding and scientific prestige there are many political overtones to this debate on the nature of autism.

The “politics” of this situation becomes clear when one considers the work of the Nobel laureate Niko Tinbergen. It is the most impressive and meticulous observation ever made of autistic children and demonstrates that recovery is possible through intimate human care. Despite this, his work has been completely dismissed by the experts, and references to this work in the large literature on autism are almost non-existent.²⁶

What is really at stake, of course, is the treatment and care of autistic children. Those who hold the genetic view cannot help but feel that autistic children are basically incurable unless their genetic and biochemical code can be cracked, and that medication is the only hope for easing their pain. Those who do not hold the genetic or brain damage view feel that they have seen autistic children fully recover even to the point of brilliance, and that intimate human contact is what makes it happen. These researchers generally feel that relying on medications for the treatment of autistic children may obstruct the process of recovery.

When the term "autism" was first introduced to the world of psychology by Eugen Bleuler early in this century, it was used to describe the fundamental dynamic of adult "schizophrenic" existence and the primary mechanism to which all other symptoms are secondary results. However, Bleuler always believed that autistic mechanisms were a universal feature of human nature and that normal and ill people differed only in the degree to which they manifested; in illness, a normal human mechanism had simply reached a pathological degree.²⁷

More recently, the ethologist Niko Tinbergen and his wife Elisabeth have made precisely detailed observations of both normal and autistic children.²⁸ They too conclude that autism is a common human dilemma, a pathological exaggeration of inherent and ordinary human tendencies. Normal children may have episodes of "temporary autism" when they are ill or abused or are involved in a paralyzing "motivational conflict" of whether to approach or escape. More subtly, at the very start of each new encounter with a new person or an unfamiliar situation, the ordinary child fleetingly displays at low intensity the same tendency to withdraw as does an autistic child. But with the ordinary child this response is soon "replaced by a less and less inhibited social or exploratory approach." (66) With autistic children, the withdrawal remains dominant and

they live in an almost continuous state of aversion, of keeping their distance: "It looks as if this distance-keeping is indeed their main concern in life; a thing to which they give constant priority." (67) These observations by the Tinbergens point to, "a *continuum*, all the way from normal, through merely 'shy' or 'timid' or 'apprehensive' children, through very mildly and less mildly autistic children, to severe autists." (119)

The autistic child can take the tendency of withdrawal or refusal to its excess, to the point of a "cut-off" (the childhood, or elementary form of "switch-out"):

the child often fails to respond to stimuli that normally would make him approach but which his anxiety prevents him from actually acting on. Closing the eyes [gaze aversion] or (equally common) putting the hands over the ears is a mechanical means of achieving this 'cut-off', but these children also protect themselves by a central nervous cut-off, by simply refusing to see or hear (without showing overt withdrawal) and perhaps even by actually not seeing or hearing. (67)²⁹

From what Michaux tells us of his childhood he had an intimate appreciation and understanding of autistic withdrawal and he became extremely sensitive to this state of mind in himself, and also in others. His studies with mescaline greatly increased this sensitivity and they add yet another dimension and meaning to the autistic process. Even in one of his last works, a study of the drawings of very young children, Michaux believed he could see the "marks," or the footprints, of their struggle with autism. From the beginning of life, Michaux implied, we have at our disposal the ability "to refuse," to withdraw our body, our senses, our emotions, or our awareness. Many children are secretly aware of this as a sense of "power." And many children, for one reason or another, cultivate their power of refusal to unusual degrees. The ones who become typically autistic are virtuosos of refusal. The autistic child develops an immense repertoire of means to avoid human contact. This begins with his gaze, his only protection he feels, against the possible enslavement by another. Even in the little language he will allow himself to use, the autistically derailed

child will refuse to use the pronoun “I”, refuse to be pinned down and captured in an “I”. Michaux believed he could find the embryonic forms of autistic withdrawal in the drawings of even the youngest normal children:

Refusal. No to participation, to eating, to speaking, to walking, even to games...More strongly than one thinks, the child knows the temptation of stopping himself, of no longer letting himself be dragged along the developmental route down which he is being lead, efforts which don't finish, does he continue? where does he stop? (Com 43)

Like Bleuler and Tinbergen, Michaux saw autism not as a specific clinical disease, but rather as a “trait,” which may be activated and make its appearance in many, if not most children to one degree of intensity or another. In this view it is possible to think of a continuous spectrum of autism, from the “soft core” to the “hard core;” perhaps *everyone* shows the marks or scars of having been through a battle with autism.³⁰

The crises that autistic children experience (terror, violence, and extreme fixation in another world) show all the signs and marks of their terrible struggle with the deranging micro-operations of the second state. Autistic children too, have their own unique predicament, intention, exertion, substances, and mindlessness. They have recurrent periods of imbalance, when *with a child's mind* they attempt to cope or come to some equilibrium with the second state and manic consciousness.

Mescaline makes the autistic trait glaringly apparent. Enamored by an inner fascination with the excesses of the second state and magnetized by its micro-operations, one's autistic trait is exaggerated. It may appear to be an extreme introversion, but actually it is verging on an autistic “cut-off”. Ordinarily, we are protected from such excess but, “if memories were not both fantastically rapid and almost unperceived, we would spend all our lives in them.”(MO 21) In the second state, eventually withdrawal and silence descend on one from the “excess of everything that one presently sees and feels, that one could never express. Autism through honesty.”(LD 45)

From the work of Bleuler, the Tinbergens and Michaux, if geneticists ever do isolate the gene which makes one vulnerable to autism, they will probably find it in all of us.

Michaux appears to have struggled with the residuals of a childhood scarred by an autistic disposition until well into his adult life. His recovery was gradual and painful. Eventually, writing and painting became vehicles through which he believed he could heal himself. "Readers trouble me," he said, "I write, if you like, for the unknown reader...I write to wander over myself...to travel through myself. To paint, to compose, to write, to travel through myself—that is the adventure of being alive." Yet there were doubts: "I hesitated about continuing to write. What I wanted was to be cured, as completely as possible, and to learn what is, in the last analysis, incurable." But it would not be until he began his work with mescaline that Michaux would discover what was truly "incurable." In this way he struggled against the universal roots of autism which he found in himself.

At the age of twenty Michaux abandoned his medical studies, and left his home in Belgium to work for two years as a seaman shipping coal in the North and South Atlantic. In 1928 he was trekking in the mountains and jungles of Ecuador. By the next year he was travelling in Turkey, Italy and North Africa. A few years later, after both his parents died (within ten days of each other), he began to travel in earnest. For a year he travelled in India, staying in Calcutta and southern India, and then to Nepal; after that to Ceylon, China, and Japan.

It was India that changed his life. In India he studied true spiritual disciplines, not simply the creative ones he was forging for himself, but ancient ways. He travelled alone. In northern India he studied hatha yoga and breath control (pranayama) with a teacher he referred to as "my yogi guru." He wrote about this man who perhaps had some of the qualities of Michaux himself: "This extraordinary man, whose su-

perb chest swallowed up quarts of air, which he then distributed into his soul, who seemed rather young in spite of his eighty years, had nothing of the saint about him either. He was above human misery, inaccessible rather than indifferent, with a kindness that was almost invisible, and also perhaps a slightly pained look like those persons who are suffering from gigantism, or who possess more talent than personality.” (Barb 57)

In southern India, among the Tamils, Michaux learned from another who would lastingly affect his life, whose teachings would continue to permeate all his own writings and his psychology, perhaps more than he would ever realize. This person was Ramana Maharshi: a retreatant like himself, who at the age of sixteen entered life-long seclusion and meditation and by middle age was renowned as a Hindu saint. At this time the seeds of the practice of meditation decisively entered Michaux’s life.

Even at the age of seventy-three Michaux would say of India:

“far away by now, comes back, absorbs me for moments, for long moments. The lands where ‘Profound Peace’ had its sovereign value have not left me. Profound invasion. Delayed invasion. Resurfacing.”(Vel 106)

On returning from Asia he settled in Paris where he began to work with what he called his personal “weakness” in a new way. His writings took on a further mystical dimension: he wrote accounts of magical lands, cultures which were like personalities, and of people who were the embodiments of civilizations. His travels had aroused a global view of life: “Man needs a far-sighted aim, extending beyond his lifetime. A training rather than a hindrance for the coming planetary civilization.”(Barb vi)

He married in his early forties. His whole world “opened up”; a new dimension of existence was revealed, a lightness and playfulness which, he had increasingly come to believe, was to be congenitally unavailable to him. He was unreservedly happy with his young wife. But during the food short-

age of occupied France during the second World War, she became ill with tuberculosis. Later, they travelled together in Egypt while she was convalescing. Then, after seven years of marriage, she died from the burns caused by a fire. A complication of the burns lead to a minute but lethal blood clot. He had lost his only real companion. After the tragedy, he once again withdrew and "wrote less and less and painted more." What he did write were clearly songs of mourning. Several years later, at the age of fifty-six, mescaline entered his life.

In some ways, he was an unlikely person to take hallucinogenic drugs. He was temperate in his habits, which verged on asceticism. He said that he was "more the water-drinking type. Never alcohol. No excitants, and for years no coffee, tobacco, or tea. From time to time wine, a little. All my life, in the matter of food or drink, moderate. I can take or abstain. Particularly, abstain."(MM 89)

Soon after Michaux began his explorations with mescaline and other hallucinogens, his experience of life and his own outlook on the world began to change once again. The change continued long after he ceased his drug "trials" and persisted and matured over the next thirty years of his life. Very few of Henri Michaux's readers realized (then, as now) the extent to which he had entered what can be called a journey of recovery from autism. In order to make this journey, Michaux became something of a "healer"; that is, in the original sense of the word, one whose intention and energy was to "give voice" to suffering people. He turned his whole life to the task of unveiling the nature of mind, which meant exposing both the madness and wisdom within "disoriented" mind, mind dislocated from its usual place. Historically, those who worked with and for mad people were called "Alienists." Henri Michaux became an alienist and few have appreciated the alienated mind as well as he.

From within drug consciousness Michaux stood "on the bridge" that overlooked both the operations of madness and

those of rationality. His particular intelligence was in his ability to accurately mirror and discriminate events and apparitions even when deeply shaken by the drug. From his painstaking self-observations he gives us the opportunity to exchange or identify with both the ordeals and brilliance of people in psychosis.

How did the drug experiences contribute to Michaux's recovery from an overly strong autistic trait? It happened in stages. What he learned, he said, he learned like a beginner, little by little, and by the end it surpassed anything he thought he would learn. He took varying dosages of mescaline under a variety of different conditions which he set for himself: sometimes in the mountains, or while reading, or in a research laboratory, or just lying in bed; even when physically ill.

At first, there was what he called a "great opening." In the days following his third experiment with mescaline he found that he was more talkative, less reserved, and less protective of his treasured anonymity: "for the first time in my life [I] preferred telling a secret to keeping it. Even worse. I could hardly wait to divulge secrets which I had promised myself never to reveal. Releasing them was like a sort of ejaculation...I approached people wide open, enjoying laying myself open, of seeing them open." (MM 43)

The autistic imprint and residual with which Michaux had lived until then was one in which he had come to take some satisfaction and pride: not giving of himself fully, of "keeping a certain margin of security," or what he called, a "refusal to make the gift." It was not that his "social opening" was simply an after-effect of the drug. It was the result of events that took place *during* the drug experience, when he practiced the *means* which allows "opening" to occur. In the throes of the drug Michaux discovered just how desperately he would cling to his familiar position of observer, tracker, and impartial recorder. From his earliest years, this had been his customary "position" in life. But it was being broken down, he was being

dislodged, "thrown out of my dugout." When he tried to take notes they were clearly the words of a madman. The more he tried to hold his identity of scientist-observer, the more the drug seemed to tear him apart, mock him. Michaux, in his identity as the impeccable drug traveller, the chronicler, was exposed in his deeply entrenched position of safety. It was a sophisticated "cover story" of aloofness and non-engagement, for what he called his "refusal." He realized that clinging to this niche was the source of his agony not only under the influence of the drug but also in the rest of his life. How painful it was for this humble man to face this hidden reservoir of arrogance.

By his fifth experiment with mescaline Michaux understood what was being required of him: "to let go, to let go of myself." Only some kind of "surrender," he felt, would allow him to go beyond his stubborn stronghold. The drugs, he found, gave him multiple invitations and even instructions of a sort, to learn how to let go. What Michaux was learning and trying to put into practice during his drug experiences has been previously described in the section called "Mastering Mental Speed."

He learned how thoughts, images, and emotions can pass with the rapidity of a bird in flight across the window of awareness. And he learned how to "let go" of them, as they arose and began to repeat, then multiply and proliferate. He learned not to attach to either side of a micro-opposition. He learned how the power of infernal animation might trick him into false convictions. He learned to abandon ever-proliferating new identities. He learned the mechanisms of "fascination" and how to relinquish his grip; how not to yield to the onslaught of temptations; how not to believe in each new insight and enlightenment. He came to trust in the existence of a waking zone in his depths. In all, he learned that he must cultivate his strength of non-distraction and that this alone could prevent his being blown about like a leaf in the winds of

mind during the second state. This was Michaux's education in the fundamentals of "letting go."

"The screen of current realities, there was no longer anything upon it.
 The screen of history, there was no longer anything upon it.
 The screen of territorial survey, of calculations, of goals, there was no longer anything upon it.
 Liberated from all hatred, from all animosity from all relationship.
 Above decisions and indecisions
 beyond appearances
 here where there are neither two nor several
 but litany, litany of Truth
 of *That* of which no sign may be given
 beyond antipathy, beyond denial, beyond refusal
 BEYOND ALL PREFERENCE
 in the enchantment of absolute purity
 here where impurity can be neither conceived, nor felt,
 nor have any sense
 I heard the admirable, grandiose poem,
 the poem interminable
 the poem of the ideally beautiful verses
 without rhyme, without music, without words
 which unceasingly scans the Universe." (IT 65)

Even long after he ceased his hallucinogenic explorations, Michaux's poetry bore the mark of his experiences with the drugs—both the tribulations and the ecstasies. In spite of experiences of "illumination", or "illimitation", he did not cling to them; in fact, he remained somewhat suspicious of them: "all the same, how strange it is, taking these short cuts! Infinity undeserved." (IT 163) And by the time Michaux was sixty-two years old, he said "I am less interested in the visions that people have with the drugs, now I am more interested in how they manifest their experiences after-ward, what they do with it later." (Sur xvi)

After several years of experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs, Michaux abandoned them. He had "tracked" himself down to his core and he also realized how dangerous and "unmanageable" the drugs could be. He attended to his own slogan: "Rare indeed are the madmen equal to madness." Yet, he could not help but wonder whether small doses of psilocybine under the right conditions might not be of great benefit to severely autistic people, the "shut-ins," or those in

the "psychosis of arrest." If such attempts at treatment have ever been made their results have gone unreported.

The hallucinogenic drugs have already swept through a generation. By 1975 an estimated seven and a half million people had "experimented" with these drugs,³¹ and by now it is many times more than that. Of course, for Michaux "the drugs" meant only a very special class of intoxicants: either the organic "hallucinogens" (as they are called, because of the energy and power which they release in the nervous system and the mind), or their essential chemical extracts, some of which have been synthesized in the laboratory (mescaline, psilocybine, lysergic acid). Now, the open enthusiasm is over. The drugs have been illegal for almost thirty years and even though they are common in many high schools, hardly anyone makes great claims for them.

Journalists and scientists of all kinds are still attempting to document the cultural and individual psychological effects of the earlier excitement. The history of the usage of hallucinogenic drugs has been told many times from anthropological, sociological, pharmacological, psychological, even political, points of view.

It would seem that the waves of interest in these drugs should have affected our culture's understanding of madness. But the effect has been paradoxical. Of those that took hallucinogenic drugs, many became curious about the nature of mind, and many others actually became frightened about their minds. Some were led to "spiritual" interests and became curious about meditation and other practices. Some people felt wounded by the drugs, experiencing an unknown and dreaded depth of paranoia in themselves. Millions of people have tasted their own madness and have glimpsed the possible horrors of their own egomania in countless "bad trips." Yet, many of the same people have felt they glimpsed a vast and indestructible sanity within themselves. After taking these drugs, some people experienced a curious sense of depression and impoverish-

ment: a painful comparison and contrast between one's conventional, everyday state of mind, and the nakedness and intensity of the drug experience. They were left with a vague apprehension that something was missing in ordinary life, a nostalgia for the drug, and eventually, a distant longing.

There were some who came to a new appreciation and empathy for people enmeshed in psychotic states and many of these have turned out to be especially skillful in working with the chronic mentally ill.

Today, psychiatrists and psychologists hardly ever refer to these particular drugs. These are the same drugs that are referred to as "medicine" among the native healing societies, in recognition of their "magic" and their power to heal, as well as their power to destroy if used improperly.

Times have changed. The ancient hallucinogens have become associated with an international trade of humankind's great addicts, the "opiates", heroine, cocaine, etc., that necessarily involve traffic in armaments and the struggle for control of many Third World countries. Each year there are new reports of clandestine drug experiments by certain governments, of secret experiments in which people have died, of chemical-warfare plans, of military stockpiling, drug wars, and cover-ups³². The hallucinogens have become associated in people's minds with international crime, squalor, misery and an insidious pandering to addictive societies.

And yet, these drugs are truly hazardous in ways which people have still to fully understand. The world of the drugs *is* a dangerous world. It has always been a dangerous world. Even in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, when drug usage was ritualized among the Aztec people, the drugs were restricted, their usage controlled, and illegitimate usage was punishable by torture. With the coming of the Conquistadors the drugs were seen as demonic and their use was prohibited and driven underground³³. More recently, in the same regions, the covert use of the drugs by healers, curendaros, and sorcerers, has

been fraught with jealousies, bitter rivalries and murderous family feuds.³⁴

Even now, or especially now, it is risky to talk about the meaning of hallucinogens, except in the most trivial of ways. It was the risk that Michaux took upon himself. By saying that there is something vitally important to learn from the drugs, one may be charged with defending them, or promoting their popular usage, and ultimately, their trade! This kind of stigma has contributed to Michaux's unpopularity and relative obscurity, and to the threat of censure that he faced through the last thirty years of his life.

Compared to the methods of Henri Michaux, the current usage of these drugs is often promiscuous and haphazard, motivated by a particular restlessness (a "call to fragmentation," said Michaux) as well as by psychological and spiritual greed. The historical records predict that just such degraded usage would be the end result of the ancient tradition of hallucinogenic healing when it became exposed to a materialistic culture.³⁵

Psychosis is, as well, a risky and dangerous world and, just like the drugs, if investigated intimately it may have consequences that are deeply personal, and political, and can affect your health. Henri Michaux dared to explore these drugs and to learn from them—as in ancient days when they were used to educate and instruct—and he knew that they were gradually changing the course of his life. He reported his findings faithfully and periodically in a series of documentations that are unparalleled in the history of the drugs.

At the age of eighty-four, a year before he died, Michaux made his last report on the hallucinogens. He was alone at home and found a packet of a hallucinogen left for him years ago by a young woman whose name he couldn't remember. What could have possessed him to do it? Almost a quarter of a century after having abandoned the drugs, he swallowed it! And then it was upon him again, "mysteriously thrown into

gear": the waves, the dislocation, the ravages, the fear of insanity, the need for surrender, and also the "great gift" of another world: "A magnetized world, where even if nothing more of it remains one still feels the dense absence." (Sur 108)

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

- Books by and about Henri Michaux. () refers to the date of the first French edition.
- Barb = *A Barbarian in Asia*. (1945); New Directions: New York, 1949.
- Com = *Les Commencements*. Fata Morgana: Montpellier, 1983.
- IT = *Infinite Turbulence*. (1957, 1964); Calder and Boyars: London, 1975.
- LD = *Light Through Darkness*. (1961); The Orion Press: New York, 1963.
- MM = *Miserable Miracle*. (1956, 1972); City Lights: San Francisco, 1956.
- MO = *Major Ordeals of the Mind and Countless Minor Ones*. (1966); Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, 1974.
- Sur = *By Surprise*. (1983); Hanuman Books: Madras, 1987.
- SW = *Henri Michaux, Selected Writings*. Translated by Richard Ellman. New Directions: New York, 1968.
- Vers = *Vers la completude*. Editions G.L.M.: Paris, 1967.
- Vel = *Henri Michaux*. By L.A. Velinsky. Vantage Press: New York, 1977.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Described in Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962.
- ² Sited in Henri Michaux, *Miserable Miracle*, p.89.
- ³ Antonin Artaud, *The Peyote Dance*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1976.
- ⁴ *Ecuador*, by Henri Michaux, University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1970.
- ⁵ R. Gordon Wasson, *Maria Sabina and Her Mazatec Mushroom Velada*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, 1974.
- ⁶ John Perceval (1803-1876) is the subject of the first chapter of this book. After recovering from insanity he became one of England's most outspoken asylum reformers. His work has been summarized in this Journal. See, Edward Podvoll, "Introduction," to John Perceval's, "The Case of Dr. Peithman," *Journal of Contemplative Psychotherapy*, Volume 3, 1985.
- ⁷ William James, *Exceptional Mental States*. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1982.
- ⁸ John Custance is the subject of the second chapter of this book. A version of that chapter appeared in *Journal of Contemplative Psychotherapy*, Volume 4, 1987.

- ⁹ Donald Crowhurst is the subject of the third chapter of this book. A version of that chapter appeared in *Journal of Contemplative Psychotherapy*, Volume 2, 1983.
- ¹⁰ See, Yogacara psychology: Hsuan Tsang, *Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*.
- ¹¹ Hervey de Saint-Denys, *Dreams and How to Guide Them*, (1867); Duckworth: London, 1982.
- ¹² See, Sally Clay, "Stigma." *Journal, of Contemplative Psychotherapy*, Volume 4, 1987.
- ¹³ See, Oliver Sacks, *Awakenings*. (page 306) E.P. Dutton: New York, 1983.
- ¹⁴ Jeremy Hayward, *Perceiving Ordinary Magic*. Shambhala Publications: Boston, 1985.
- ¹⁵ Terry Clifford, *Tibetan Buddhist Medicine and Psychiatry*. Samuel Weiser: York Beach, 1984.
- ¹⁶ Technically, this has been stated to be so by the neuropsychologist Dr. Karl Pribram. After some scepticism, the famous neuroanatomist Dr. Walle Nauta agreed that it was probably correct.
- ¹⁷ Two remarkable examples of this, among many, are A.R. Luria's *The Man with a Shattered World*, Henry Regnery: Chicago, 1968; and Helen Wulf's *Aphasia, My Life Alone*, Wayne State University Press: Detroit, 1973.
- ¹⁸ Anaesthetics: Chloralose, Ketamine.
- ¹⁹ See, Edward Podvoll, "Megalomania: Phases of Psychotic Transformation." *Journal of Contemplative Psychotherapy*, Volume 2, 1983.
- ²⁰ Richard D'Ambrosio, *No Language but a Cry*, Doubleday: New York, 1970.
- ²¹ Bruno Bettelheim, *The Empty Fortress*. The Free Press: New York, 1967.
- ²² August Strindberg, *Inferno/From an Occult Diary*, Penguin Books: New York, 1979, p.92.
- ²³ Later in his work with mescaline, Michaux gave a remarkable account of the inseparable functioning of both systems. He described the personal reality of hallucinogens working through a subtle nervous system, one which recapitulates the physiology of the Buddhist and Hindu yoga tantras. (See, "The Four Worlds" in MO)
- ²⁴ Oliver Sacks, *Ibid*.
- ²⁵ The "recruiting response," as it is known in classical neurophysiology, is an interesting example. When you "drive" (via electric pulsing) the great ascending system that leads to the cerebral cortex, the cortex responds with a gathering of electrical waves, becoming "recruited" into synchrony, and producing larger and larger wave forms. This response can only occur when the pulsing is applied within a narrow frequency band. It is also greatly facilitated by barbiturate anesthesia.
- ²⁶ Niko Tinbergen and Elisabeth Tinbergen, "Autistic" Children, *new hope for a cure*. George Allen and Unwin: London, 1983.
- ²⁷ Erik Stromgren, *European Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol.1, No.2 (45-52), April-June, 1987.
- ²⁸ Tinbergen. *Ibid*.
- ²⁹ One woman who was recovering from autism (and there are many who have made partial or complete recoveries) spoke of her supersensitivity to criticism: "For me it is so that when I am in a group and one of the others says something which shows that this person has totally misjudged me, then suddenly I cannot at all hear what that person is saying. I can hear what the others say, but not what that person is saying." (quoted from ftn.27)
- ³⁰ The psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott has suggested that a remnant of autism might even be discovered in the phenomenon of "momentary withdrawal."
- ³¹ Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven*. Harper and Row: New York, 1987.
- ³² See, for example, "Barrett versus United States," *New York Law Journal*, May 1987.
- ³³ R. Gordon Wasson, *The Wondrous Mushroom: Mycolatry in Mesoamerica*. McGraw-Hill: New York, 1980.
- ³⁴ Alvaro Estrada, *Maria Sabina: Her Life and Chants*, Ross-Erikson: Santa Barbara, 1981.
- ³⁵ Alvaro Estrado, *Ibid*.