

Article

A Longitudinal History of Self-Transformation Psychedelics, Spirituality, Activism and Transformation

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Abstract: *A longitudinal historical approach for portraying and examining personal transformation is presented along with a proposed instrument—the Transformational Codex—for cataloging that history and the elements that compose it. One element, psychedelic transformation, is then discussed in depth along with a schema for viewing transformations that may occur related to psychedelic use and practice.*

Key Words: transformation, psychedelics, spirituality, consciousness, dreams, Buddhism, empathogens

A Longitudinal View of Personal Transformation

I am 67 rapidly approaching 68. Aging is transforming my physical capacities, my desires—fewer of them; my interests—perhaps more of them; my sense of time—moving faster and less of it; and the immediacy of death itself—close by, inevitable. My mental abilities have yet to atrophy—so I am told—for how would I know if I lacked them? I have spent my life transforming. I am certainly not with the consciousness I can remember from its inception. Nor from my teenage years. Nor even from my thirties and forties. Yet I have a sensation of continuity and that commences with my first memories at about 3 and includes a sense, a feeling, of me-ness. I seem still to be enough of the *me* that arose that I recognize a strand.

Life is truly a dream and my experience seems more and more a mediation between me and my past, and me and the world outside. It is this sense from which more profound psychological states of dissociation arise. I am fortunate in that I have dreamt the entire night, every night, so long as I can remember. If sleep architecture with its discontinuities and non-dreaming states is to be believed, it does not correspond to my own uninterrupted experience of constant nightly movies. The usual marking of day and night is more of a slippery transition for me and while I have no trouble discerning the two consciousnesses from each other, I have virtually no experience of being fully unconscious. My three surgeries with general anesthesia gave me the most pertinent information on ceasing to be—complete darkness being the sensation from which arising consciousness emanated. Before that sensation of darkness, I had no prior sensation of existence whatsoever.

All of this convinces me and highlights my sensation of a stream of consciousness that begins for me at about 3 years of age, also emanating from

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darkness, and continues unbroken, like a moving river, a dream state, during each 24 hours, part of the time in contact—more or less—with a mediated reality outside of me, and part of the time just with me, an interiority, that also has an awake interiority that is more cognitive, less imaginal than night dreaming, but with many of the same elements, sensations and removal from direct sensory contact.¹

If personal life is a moving, shifting stream dream, how then to view transformation? There is that classical argument in Zen schools between gradual and saltatory transformations, getting to Kensho and Satori. The same dualism occurs in Vajrayana Buddhism with schools making differing claims on the means for transformation, the prerequisites, the rapidity and the immanency. If I have learned anything, it is that there are as many schools as there are humans. Even my dogs have their views and requests, which they espouse in their own ways, according to their capabilities of reaching my awareness, and my capabilities of understanding their communication—some of that an empathic mutual understanding

What many do agree upon is that they experience transformation of consciousness and life behavior both gradually and also in sudden spurts of fierce energy and realization. And the direction is not always pleasant. Transformation can go either way, through unpleasant experience and chosen unpleasant means, and through pleasant, even ecstatic states. Transformation can be courted, seduced, planned, practiced for over time, induced, and can be involuntary, unplanned, damaging, life-threatening, grievous and disabling. Since conscious life is an experience related to a seamless existential dreaming, transformation is a constant moving thing. Peak experiences, as per Maslow, may entail transformation—or not, whereas transformation may contain or entail peak experiences—or not. Historically, discussion of transformation has focused on mystical and sudden transformations that are often only partially integrated and are experienced as 'stand alone' experiences, unclassifiable and ineffable.² While such significant events are unforgettable and momentous, they tend to be overemphasized and obscure other more prolonged experiences of fundamental change and the effects of deliberate practices aimed at transformation.

Here is my definition of *transformation*: *A change in one's core conceptual and even physical structure that interrupts the prior sense of self and induces an altered, at least partially different sense of self immediately and/or over time with some degree of persistence.* Transformation is a reset of the old software with at least some new programming.

So, my experience of "me" over time is that I have changed and that this has been reflected in my contexts, connections and behavior. I am unable to isolate a single experience as *The Transformational Transcendent Singular Event* (TTSE). I am unlike Saint Augustine for example. Rather, as I look back over time, there have been numerous transformational moments and processes, a catalog of which would

¹ Wm James (*A World of Pure Experience*, in *William James Writings 1902-1910*, Library of America, 1987, pp. 1180-82) explicates interestingly on his experience of seamless mind.

² Cf. Berenbaaum, Kerns and Raghavan, *Anomalous Experiences, Peculiarity and Psychopathology*, pp. 30-31, in Cardena, Lynn and Krippner, *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, APA, 2000.

be voluminous and necessarily incomplete because of faulty memory and inadequate retrieval—too much time and too many events. If this seems too mundane, not sufficiently spectacular, one factor is that of time, which blunts immediacy and tall peaks. Nonetheless, it appears to me to be a truthful representation of my experience that goes back as far as I am able to remember. If transformation is not restricted to peak experiences, but rather to an awareness of change over some time scale, it is clear that transformation is not discrete, has long slow waves and sudden lurches, and things in between.

Some transformation is clearly developmental but still contingent. For example, I recall falling in love (FIL) at 3 to 5 years of age. After we moved away when I was seven, I never saw any of the three girls with whom I played in my early Manhattan apartment house culture. Yet, I was permanently altered by an awareness of attraction at that age that made me scan for them as I went about my days and made me miss and think on them. Dreams of them occur even now—their names affixed to imagined representations of them as adult women who come in and out of my dream life on occasion. The integration was my experience of love and arousal for girl strangers with whom I bonded at a high level—non-sexual but aroused intimacy. In that same early period I made close friendships (FNDS) with boys and had a very different, but complex and loving set of feelings for them—friendship as a mode arose in me—clearly both of these kinds of affection transformational and not inevitable. Thereafter, I sought out both experiences throughout my life. When we left for Queens and a small, isolating private house, I grieved and was depressed for quite some time. That too was poignantly transformational as I learned of loneliness and the inability to rectify my heartbreak, and the arbitrariness of adult authority—out of touch with my love and need for my companions. Transformational indeed. In childhood, transformations are a frequent part of life and development, but from the adult vantage point we forget that we were incredibly mutable and affected—by love, trauma, and the vectors of growth and mastery. Nevertheless, the notice internally of the occurrence of a transformational experience is set-up during childhood.

A taxonomy can be developed for transformational experiences:

Time scale: *sudden, short-term, or prolonged*. Volition: *deliberate and just as planned, or not at all as planned, or inadvertent*. Integration: *integrated, partially integrated, or stands alone*. Quality: (increasingly positive) *Ah ha; Aah haa; Aaah haa!* Or (increasingly negative) *Oy, Oy vey, and Ouuuy veeey*. Validated: *you are different, or not different*. Self-validated over time: *I am different* — my consciousness, choices, and actions are different. Duration: *a lasting change, absorbed*—fully or partially, overridden, or *deleted*. Awareness: *immediately conscious, semi-conscious, or unconscious* (became aware downstream from the event). Clearly these are continua and capable of being placed in a matrix: *The Transformation Codex*. I use *codex* deliberately to represent the book of changes, which can be compiled for any of us, at virtually any stage of life.

The Transformation Codex

EVENT	AGE--WHEN	TIME SCALE	VOLI-TION	INTEGRA-TION	QUALI-TY	VALI-DATED	SELF VAL-IDATED	DURA-TION	AWARE-NESS
Early Love FIL	3 on	P	IA	I	AH	V+/-	SV+	ALC+	SCs, UCs
Friend-Ship FNDS	3 on	P	IA, then D+/-	I	3AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	SCs, UCs
Leaving Home LHC	16	S	D+	I	2AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs
First Psychoth FPE	17-18	ST	D+	I	3AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, SCs, UCs
Mature Love FMLS	17-18	ST	D+/-	I	3AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	CS
College CIGA	17-20	P	D+/-	I	AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, UCs
Trip LSDT	21	S	D-	I	3AH	V-	SV+	ALC+	Cs, UCs
Sixties SM	20--	S, P	D+/-	I	3AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, UCs
Family FB	27--	P	D+/-	I	3AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, SCs, UCs
Loss LOAC	44	S, P	IA	PI	OV2	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, SCs, UCs
Buddha BP	52---	P	D+/-	PI	2AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, SCs, UCs
Psyche-delic PP	40---	S, P	D+/-	PI	2AH	V+	SV+	ALC+	Cs, UCs

Key:

Transformation Event Time Scale—sudden, short-term, prolonged: S, ST, P

Volition—deliberate-just as planned, somewhat, not at all as planned: D+, D+/-, D- or—inadvertent: IA

Integration—integrated, partially integrated, stands alone: I, PI, SA

Quality—positive-Ah ha, Aah haa, Aaah haaa: AH, 2AH, 3AH—negative-Oy, Oy vey, Ouuy, vey: O, OV, OV2

Validated—V+, V- Others concur or give evidence of my change.

Self-Validated: —I am different and my consciousness, choices and actions are different: totally, somewhat, not at all: SV+, SV+/-, SV-

Duration—A lasting change: fully, partially overridden, deleted: ALC+. ALC +/-, ALC- Awareness of the occurrence and nature of Transformation—immediately conscious, semi-conscious, unconscious: Cs, SCs, UCs

For translation of the event abbreviations, see below.

To play with this classificatory schema, I will share with you a partial temporal review of some of my transformational experiences, with the classification as above—to validate the instrument and to tweak your own sense of history and its partial correspondences:

- Leaving home for college (LHC)—transformation—partial independence and autonomy.
- First psychotherapy experience (FPE), at college—transformation—reduction of tyrannous super-ego influences, finding my own mind and speaking it.
- First mature love and sexuality (FMLS)—transformation—being loved by another fully (or as much as possible under those circumstances), less self-conscious and negative.
- College intellectual growth and assurance (CIGA)—transformation— independent thinking possibility enhanced social capacity.
- LSD trip (LSDT)—transformation—loss of fear of incipient madness, access to another realm of mind, enhanced imagination and creativity, unique experience.
- Sixties Movement (SM)—transformation—citizen of the world, brotherhood/sisterhood, loss of fear of confronting authority, physical trauma, enhanced creativity and empowering sensation of freedom.
- Family building (FB)—transformation—experience of the absolute love of children, new sense of wider responsibilities and larger sense of self, enhancement of the child consciousness within.
- Loss of a child after prolonged illness (LOAC)—transformation—loss of orientation and meaning, permanent grief, dissolution of marriage, extraordinary anxiety, greater coping skills, awareness of my own imperative to stay alive.
- Buddhist practice (BP)—transformation—explicit meditative states and freedom occasionally from grasping and attachment, valuing that experience and seeking it.
- Psychedelic practice (PP)—transformation—sudden dissolution of my self and reconstitution—deliberately sought for its transformative power; experience of group mind and being out of my own particular body experience; improvisation and intuitive mindfulness and creativity.

Examining my chart indicates the variety of powerful transformational events spread over a lifetime, their different experiential time frames, my tendency to focus on events that resulted in what I regard as long term and integrated changes, and the mix of inadvertent and deliberately sought for experiences. The list is suggestive and not meant to be exhaustive by any means. I hope it provides an encouragement for others to look at their history.

Some limiting factors: To reach significance, a transformative experience has to be at the level of an *Ah* or an *Oy*. The duration of an experience can be prolonged and over years of time. Aging tends to diminish former peaks and there is an

undoubtedly *besotted with change*—a change tolerance factor—that alters the drama of change to some incalculable effect. Finally, this is an almost entirely subjective method, save for the subjective awareness of others' views of our sense of transformation, which has some verifiability attached.

Psychedelics and Transformation: A Personal Overview

One set of the transformative experiences I have sought over a major portion of my personal history has been with the non-compulsive and deliberate use of psychedelic substances. As with most people who repeat, an initial powerful experience oriented me to the possibility for inner work and alternative experiences—that I would be different as a result of use and these differences would be sufficiently beneficial to explore additional trips and different mind-altering substances. I will present a schema for looking at the allure of these substances and their transformative powers.

First, a bit of background to situate the presentation of subjective states.

Psychoactive substance-induced alteration of consciousness is ages old, the specific history dependent on humans' particular geographic location and corresponding native plant habitats. Differentiating between our equally ancient propensity to get high with those particular substances that induce intoxicated states and, in contrast, the often difficult journey of the psychonautical pioneer is an imperative for clarity about psychedelic use—although there is certainly a mid-region of experience where recreational use meets transformation, and the inadvertent is always a potentiality. The remarkable discovery, perpetuation, refinement of use, and sacralization of psychoactive substances in early and stone age cultures testifies to the timeless power of human interest in transcending “ordinary” historical and cultural realities and the enduring strength of human mind exploration. Marijuana use dates at least to 4000 years BCE, the earliest plant remains known having been dated to that time. Humans and marijuana have co-evolved, influencing each other reciprocally in terms of cultivation and culture. Mushroom and other psychoactive plant use in Mesoamerica is undoubtedly thousands of years old and was ineradicable despite the deliberate murder of practitioners by the Inquisition and genocidal suppression of indigenous cultures by the colonizing Europeans. In fact, Europe was desperately poor in psychedelics these being limited to the toxic tropane alkaloids contained in such plants as mandrake and henbane with their datura like effects. European consciousness developed its particular distortions in concert with the addictive and easily manufactured toxin known as ethanol—of limited value for mental and spiritual transformation. Most remarkable is the Amazonian creation of ayahuasca, or yage, the admixture of two separate plants that had to be bundled to create the remarkable oral DMT based experience that was practiced as divination and personal transformation by native shamans. Ayahuasca use has recently spread to North America culminating in the US Supreme Court's recognition of the União do Vegetal (UDV) with *hoasca* as an acceptable sacrament and indispensable part of the UDV Church's ceremonial life, much as peyote for the Native American Church—

deliberate uses of mind altering substances for the purpose of transformation within bounded social and religious frameworks.

As to the allure of psychedelics, the most potent explanation is that they offer the possibility of a transformation of consciousness. That may occur as an intimate acute experience or a form-shaking permanent alteration; it is a spectrum of effect and affect that has incalculable personal and social consequences. The introduction of psychedelic substance use to masses of people in the sixties was a major influence on the immense cultural change that occurred. Liberation from the suppressive, repressive yoke of McCarthyism that had penetrated darkly into the family culture of the late 40s and 50s was in part due to the mind expansion of psychedelic use that blew up restrictive mental fetters and fear of the personal imagination. This was transmuted reciprocally to and from new cultural and political formations. If the entire New Left didn't succumb to rigid and dogmatic Leninism, it was to a great extent protected from that by personal mind-expanded experiences that escaped control by all ideologies and false consciousness. But it is not a perfect record and psychedelics were also used to corrupt and control humans. For example, from opposite perspectives, there was the final catastrophic period of the Weather Underground; and the CIA has had a compulsive interest in using psychedelics adversely to extract information or to create group and personal confusion, even madness.

Some aficionados of the pure psychedelic experience argue that the unmitigated experience itself is sufficient to deliver transformation. There are others such as me, who find that the transformative influence of the psychedelic experience makes a quantum leap when integrated with spiritual practice, such as Buddhist contemplation and with liberating psychotherapy. Unsupported psychedelic experience is unpredictably transformative and integrations from the spirit side with ordinary lived reality are more difficult without recognizing that psychedelic transformation is but one prong of conscious intent to transform ourselves from the capture of the corporate materialist culture. That is not a simple or straightforward task.

To convey the varieties of psychedelic experience is to have the experience of words faltering as descriptive. Hopefully, without intending to reify, or circumscribe, I will present a taxonomy of experience that reflects my personal history and observations over 47 years time, since I and a small group of new friends just commencing medical school in New York City dropped acid, i.e, LSD. With this I am attempting to convey the psychedelic allure and am using *states* rather than some hierarchical notion based on *levels* since all such states have value for transformation.

The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience

1. *The Mundane State*: Conventional allure flows from curiosity, a desire to change oneself, temptation for forbidden fruit, and emulation of others.

2. *The Personal/Psychotherapeutic State*: In 1964, I was a young, awkward, and self-conscious male, repressed and having just finished a psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapeutic experience that had helped me to alleviate some of the pain of my hypercritical feuding parents that I had introjected. I was beginning to find my own voice and guidance. In the flash dance of a few hours, my inner structure rocked and shifted. LSD and I met and I passed through great fear to feel alleviated of self-hate; my imagination was freed to inform a creative new consciousness. Art came alive, as did every day experience. After I came down from the LSD trip, integration included a deliberate determination to hold onto that freedom informed by a structural psychological awareness that had been obtained in the intensity of my earlier psychotherapy experience. Subsequent introduction to marijuana freed me of physical and sexual awkwardness, turned me onto intimate discourse, a heightened closeness in friendship, and furthered my sense of being a creative person. This was not completely linear—there were ups and downs—and took place with absorption in the growing *Movement*, a sense of being in a community of progressive people worldwide. Psychedelic use in that formative period increased my self-confidence and sensuality. It did not prevent me from making all manner of errors in personal and political life, but I was much better at discernment, moving on, kindness and forgiveness.

Psychedelic use invariably affects the personal/psychological matrix. Starting a journey forces an encounter with fear—of the unknown, of the lurking dangers believed hidden in one's own mind—of *losing it* or going too far into the irrational and unknown, of coming back madly altered. In the encounter the first period is generally absorbed with the personal—relationships, guilt, love, longing, grief, attachments, self-concepts. This encounter opens the possibility of examination, release, and change, of reframing and heightened awareness of self and the other(s). A bad trip—usually in an uncomfortable setting under stressful circumstances—can result in fear, paranoia, and recoil from the opened space that is perceived as threatening. Some folks never use psychedelics again. Occasional, too, young people and others—I know personally of several 12 and 13 year olds—suffer with mental effects that damage and may last far too long. *Set*—the mind's orientation—and *setting*—the circumstances of use—always affect the quality of significant psychedelic experiences. Conscious preparation, good location, presence of support and friends benefit experiences and outcomes.

3. *The Empathic State*: Generally any psychedelic experience may heighten empathy and empathic awareness—as love and affection; as the ability to see another's point of view and put oneself in the other person's shoes; as deep respect and regard; as elimination of barriers that separate; as communion with nature; as a transcendent feeling of warmth for all things. In the eighties, the potency of MDMA was recognized as a means, a tool, for heightening the quality of communication between people and for fairly reliably producing a state of warmth, affection and usually non-sexual sensuality. Many therapists including myself introduced MDMA psychotherapy within couples, family, and group contexts. Because the experience was fairly replicable, generally positive, and without much in the way of distortion and

hallucination, a new name was coined for a cluster of substances for which MDMA—Ecstasy—was the exemplar: *Empathogens*. Before the DEA's own administrative law judge, those of us who saw MDMA's potential for positive impact were able to demonstrate its medical utility. Despite the judge's ruling, which would have placed MDMA in an accessible Schedule II classification, the DEA went against its own judge's finding and placed it in the highly criminalized and inaccessible Schedule I group of substances that included heroin, and other banned psychedelics. In the years that followed the 1986 ruling, MDMA use soared and the *rave* phenomena began—again a testimony to the power of the substance to facilitate loving, intimate, sensual experience, even with huge numbers of people. MDMA's appeal continues to be based on the facilitation of a state of communion and community larger than the personal self's usual strictures allow. MDMA consciousness can be learned and generated without the drug on board as part of an expansive, loving daily life. Much of the concern about brain damage due to serotonin depletion was based on phony research that was retracted from the literature when it was exposed. After almost 30 years of use, 24 of it in this continuing prohibition era with an unimagined scale of use, 100s of millions of doses consumed, my informal census of other therapists and friends who were there from the start fails to reveal names and numbers of MDMA brain damaged individuals.

4. *The Egotytic State*. For the most part the psychedelic experience exerts a damper on egotism and ego centrality. A sense of smallness and particulate being in the universe may be a fundamental part, i.e., *I am truly insignificant*. A reduced sense of attachment to material goods, awed with life and the psychic ground, spaciousness of mind, a situating of the self as but a speck in the cosmos, and a sense of ease at being free of self-inflated importance may compose much of the trip. For some, this can be difficult and disorienting as a loss of the centrality of self and confusion as to how to manifest and re-integrate. For most this state provides a welcome relief from the tension of being a particular totalization in the personal world and the competitive, demanding outer life.

5. *The Transcendent Transpersonal State* [TTP]. Stripped of ego, personal psychology and investments, the psychedelic traveler enters the ground state from which thought, feeling, form and formlessness emanate. It is as if the source of mind becomes the mind experience itself. This is certainly not restricted to psychedelic states. In the unadorned meditative experience, this too is highlighted for periods of time. An apocryphal story from those who travel in both the spiritual and psychedelic realms is that the great guru drops a bizillion micrograms of LSD and stays beaming and untouched the entire trip time and is in his nature so spiritually elevated that the drug is not altering or transformative: he is the ground state itself. Ram Dass amongst others is fond of this tale. I have my doubts. In the psychedelic state is the flux, the movement, of stimulated consciousness, there to be experienced at a heightened level of manifestation. Some psychedelic experiences are difficult to recall and/or difficult in which to maintain a self-observational awareness. However, most experiences include intense observational awareness. Dose is a

factor—generally, the more you take, the more self-observational awareness tends to diminish, and the more the trip proceeds like a roller coaster to which you hang on. It is my view that psychedelics tend to make mind and the origination of mental phenomena more available for experience and non-judgmental scrutiny by amplifying the phenomena coming into being. This state is what Tibetans refer to as *Dzogchen* or *primordial awareness* as it is commonly translated, the *sunyata* state in Sanskrit, and in the less developed Western explication, the state of awe. By learning to reside in a non-dualistic state of mind, by choosing to enter that state, by having experiences that create faith in the goodness of that state, then spaciousness, creativity, and compassion can arise from non-attachment, from living in the flow, from not grasping at every object that comes to mind and attracts our attention.

Within the *Transcendent Transpersonal State*, a multiplicity of experiences and views will arise and are generally not pre-programmable, but have some degree of specificity depending on the substance ingested—different substances tend to produce a quality of experience specific to those substances—and state of mind. I will mention a few by description that I class as *Vistas*. This is certainly not meant to be exhaustive:

5a. *The Sensual Universe Vista*: traveling through space as on a rocket ship, or being that rocket ship, I encounter extraordinary forms and shapes. Neon colored blazing fractal worlds open. Forms emerge—animals, beings from other galaxies, lovers and forgotten friends. I morph to meet them and my morphing morphs. I am eaten and eat, am absorbed and absorb. Sexual encounters may occur. Love spills everywhere. Or fear brings on its own forms and monsters. Psychological themes come from my everyday life and are given forms, often allowing for a working through of trapped emotional energies. There is a sense of great exploration and great bliss, and at other times of the terror of being alive and vulnerable.

5b. *The Entheogenic Vista*: A personal experience of being a god or deepening a relationship to the personally held notion of god may occur. One may have a sense of traveling in the starry cosmos freed from all constraint, or being part of a newly created and unique universe. Buddhists are told that they have, as do all sentient beings, *Buddha Nature*. In the psychedelic realm, I became the Buddha and felt that meaning and that responsibility. I moved about as the Buddha. I have tried to maintain that sense of awesome responsibility in my usual unenhanced state, with modest success and awareness of the difficulty. At other times, there can be the sense of the devil within, of the play of evil and the hunter/murderer, which we also contain and constrain. In mind travelling, there is no risk in exploring this aspect of us, knowing and accepting of what we are capable yet explicitly reject.

5c. *The Connection Vista*: The experience of connection and interdependency gives rise to feelings of gratitude, love, humility, and the desire to benefit others. Our personal lifeline extends backwards through a near infinite

unbroken number of progenitors to the unformed stuff of the great earthly soup from which first life forms emerge—this may be experienced—and forward to the future as well. I have felt myself to be much as a mushroom sprouts from the great mycelial mass, its myriad threads stretching underground in all directions, sprouting beings who as their time ends return to the rich mulch while new sprouts, *humans*, emerge—a sense of vibrant biological immortality. Or, in contrast, the direct experience of the human mass as itself a cancer, having all of those characteristics: unrestrained expansionism, proliferation in all directions, lack of concern for others' needs and requirements, eating everything in its path, out of control. Or as group mind, the experience of sensation outside the confines of the personal body/mind, in resonance with the others with whom one is travelling as a new assemblage of the multiple consciousnesses present in which one's mind is experienced as intrapersonal and transpersonal.

5d. *The Solipsistic Vista*: I am the source of all that I experience. I create it. The outside realm—all of it—is a manifestation of my mind. This passes before me as I scan all of my creations from scientific texts to great vistas and friends and my partner. I am the author of life and death. Moving about within this perspective, I am able to revise what exists and what will be—for a time—until I am drawn back to the usual perspective of subject and object. That experience, while a false consciousness, increases the sensitivity to the difficulty of being an interpreter, removed from direct experience consciousness with only mediated awareness of the external and personal awareness of the interior. While in this inflated state, I am god and master of the universe, prophet, seer, enlightened being. And then there is the crash, and hopefully great humility.

Integration

In the post psychedelic condition, integration is the key to maintaining transformation. Integration is a function of intentionality—conscious and unconsciously maintained, or incorporated. Integration occurs both without effort, as a redesign of the central processor of our minds, and voluntarily as a deliberate effort to understand, find meaning, and as rectification of our behavior towards others and towards ourselves. The psychedelic experience in and of itself may be transformative of our consciousness, but support for change by deliberate and disciplined absorption in the myriad spiritual/emotional/psychological/activist opportunities for increasing clarity and breadth most probably results in a more long term and positive transformation of self. The human mind while extraordinarily plastic, adaptable, and mutable is also built with a great rubber band that returns us to our dominant character. This serves both as preserver of the integrity of the self and as a block to transformation—holding onto deluded Self.

Grounding in the world of the interior and the external world—finding balance—is a prerequisite for successful psychonautical voyaging and for a mind expansion that is in essence kind, creative, and loosens the spell of the propaganda-

filled social world we inhabit that tells us what to think and feel and especially what to desire and purchase.

To conclude, psychedelic exploration has been an intense part of this culture for several decades and part of the human world since its beginnings. Both inadvertent change from recreational use of mind-altering substances and the deliberate pursuit of a transformative path have occurred for many millions of people, yet, as a result of the illegal status of psychedelics, there has been a restricted discussion and sharing of experience, despite the extraordinary numbers involved. I have presented one schema among many possibilities for sharing and conveying transformations that occur with psychedelics and hope this inspires both research and sharing by others of the qualities of mind and behavior that result from psychedelic use as transformations of self.