

Psychotherapeutic Possibilities of New Fantasy-Enhancing Drugs*

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I intend to speak here of two drugs, harmaline and ibogaine, which bear some resemblance to one another in chemical constitution and may be grouped together in terms of their effects.

Harmaline is the main alkaloid in the seeds of the Middle Eastern plant, *Peganum harmala*, and is also present in the bark of several species of South American climbers of the genus *Banisteriopsis*. This bark is the principal ingredient in the preparation of the drink used by the Indians along the headwaters of the Amazon, mainly in connection with ritual and divination, and we now know [1] that at least among some of the Indians it must have been the center of their culture since Paleolithic times.

Aside from these two plant sources of harmaline (and related alkaloids), this substance deserves special attention because of its close resemblance to another that is presumably a metabolite of the mammalian pineal gland. Both the pineal gland and the retina are unique in the presence of an enzyme, HIOMT, which permits the methylation of serotonin, a step to the

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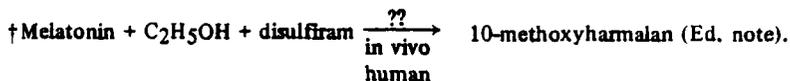
synthesis of melatonin. And we know that melatonin, in the presence of pineal tissue can itself turn by the loss of water into 10-methoxyharmalan [2], a positional isomer of harmaline.†

I have reported elsewhere [3] that a study carried out at the University of Chile demonstrated that 10-methoxyharmalan, when administered to humans, elicited subjective effects quite similar to those of harmaline. This naturally invites speculation as to the role of the pineal body in altered states of consciousness, desirable or undesirable. The similarity between harmaline and the pineal beta-carbelines suggests that the activity of the plant alkaloid may be understood in terms of its functional equivalence with a natural compound. If the latter is held under usual conditions in a state of chemical equilibrium, where it is responsible for the maintenance of the ordinary waking state, harmaline would disrupt such a state in a direction that already lies within the possibilities of the organism.

Ibogaine is probably the most important of the 12 alkaloids found in the root of the African plant *Tabernanthe iboga*, which grows mainly in the Congo and Gabon and we know much less of the native uses of iboga than we know of the plants containing harmala alkaloids.

Dybrowsky and Landrin [4], who were the first to extract the alkaloid, reported at the turn of the century that it was used as a stimulant, as an aphrodisiac, and as an inebriant, which would produce an effect identical to alcohol without interfering with thought processes. While the last part of the statement may be said to be true, the comparison with alcohol does not fit with what we now know of the drug. Ibogaine is not a CNS depressant but a stimulant [5] and the subjective effect brought about by large doses has more resemblance to those of the hallucinogens than those of the hypnotics. Such a resemblance still is very fragmentary, for the effects of both harmaline and ibogaine is quite unique among the psycho-active drugs. No better term can be found to describe these effects than that proposed some years ago by Dr. William Turner, one of the pioneer investigators of the South American Banisteriopsis drink.

That author [6] proposed to re-introducing the term oneirophrenia, first employed by Meduna, to designate drug-induced states that differ from the psychotomimetic by the absence of all symptoms of the psychotic range and yet share with the psychotic or psychotomimetic experience the prominence of primary process thinking. Harmaline [7] and ibogaine characteristically elicit such a state, for their psychological effect is one much



like the bringing about of dream phenomena without loss of consciousness, changes in the perception of the environment, delusions, or formal alterations of thinking and depersonalization. In short, we may speak of an enhancement of fantasy which, remarkable as it may be, does not interfere with ego functions. Such an enhancement of fantasy, as we will see, is in the nature of both an increase in vividness of visual imagery (which takes on an eidetic quality) and an increased spontaneity of content, which resembles that of true dreams more than that of ordinary daydreams.

In a way, neither harmaline nor iboga may be said to be new. Of course, each has been used for centuries by people in Asia, Africa, and South America, mostly as a part of rituals intended to bring the individual into contact with the realm of myth. But aside from such traditional uses, both alkaloids have been introduced into medical practice several decades ago. Iboga extract has been available in European drugstores for over thirty years as a tonic or stimulant, and we may well understand this empirically observed effect after the demonstration that the alkaloid is an inhibitor of monoamino oxidase (MAO). Harmaline, on the other hand, is a component of the alkaloid extract of *Banisteriopsis*, which, under the name "Banisterine," was reported by Lewin [7] and others as an anti-Parkinsonian agent and, in general, as an inhibitor of extrapyramidal hypertonus.

It was probably the one-sided emphasis of the times on the somatic aspects of medicine that accounted for a lack of any systematic investigation of the effects of these drugs which would be considered "toxic" from the standpoint of pure chemo-therapy. By contrast, it is the harmaline and ibogaine intoxications that are of greatest interest from the point of view of psychological exploration or of psychotherapeutic endeavor. At the dosage level of 4-5 mg/kg* both harmaline and ibogaine elicit subjective reactions such as will be described in the following pages, which last for approximately 6 hr. In addition to this, about 50% of the subjects receiving either drug experience dizziness, incoordination, nausea, and vomiting at some point or other in the session. This vomiting is central in origin, for it is no less frequent when the alkaloids are administered i.v., and it is greatly influenced by psychological factors. Some persons may feel nausea when dealing with specific topics, for instance, and in general there is an inverse relationship between the presence of physical symptoms and the richness of the psychological experience. This suggests that physical symptomatology may be in the nature of conversion phenomena arising as a substitution and defense in the face of the psychological expression of certain experiences.

*Or 25% of this dosage i.v.

Harmaline is a mild parasympathomimetic, causing a slight decrease in heart rate and blood pressure, and an overdose may also cause diarrhea. Both drugs most often elicit a state of drowsiness in which the patient does not want to move, open his eyes, or attend to the environment. Many are disturbed by lights and cover their closed eyes with their hands or ask for the lights to be turned off. Sounds or noises, too, can be disturbing, and this should be taken into account in choosing the appropriate place and time for a session. If the tendency to sleep is too pronounced, the patient's withdrawal may interfere with a meaningful communication, and this may be counteracted by other drugs. Many of my colleagues in Chile are now using associations of ibogaine or harmaline with methedrine or amphetamine derivatives with feeling-enhancing properties, like methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) [8]. Such associations have interesting effects of their own with which I will not deal on this occasion.

In a study on the psychological effects of harmaline that we carried out in Chile during 1963-4, we noticed that one of the most remarkable aspects of the fantasy reported by the experimental subjects was its content-constancy. Even though the volunteers to whom we were administering the drug were not informed of each other's experiences or of the Indian medicine men's experiences under its effects, we soon realized that certain themes or images kept reappearing in the sessions of many individuals, suggesting a typical world of harmaline, shared by our sophisticated subjects and the Indians. Some of the more frequent and at the same time more intriguing themes to us, for instance, were those of tigers and Negroes, neither of which are seen in Chile, but which were reported by about 30% of the volunteers [9].

By reflecting on images such as these with little apparent relevance to the subjects' personal lives but indicative of some shared domain of the psyche that harmaline was opening up to them, we soon realized that we were dealing with the same sort of psychological phenomena that Jung encountered in his study of dreams and active imagination, and for which he introduced the word "archetype" into psychological literature. Whatever our interpretation of these images and whatever our explanation of their repeated presentation among individuals of different interests and temperaments, they came to us as a fact. If a demonstration were required for the existence of archetypes, I believe that the content analysis of harmaline experiences is it. As far as I know, Jung did not speak of a "Negro" or "feline" archetype, but we need not be that surprised at their presentation in a drug experience. Exotic as a tiger or lion may be as a physical reality, the Western mind has needed their image to signify psychological realities in literature, heraldic emblems, or plain advertising, such as "Put a tiger in

your tank." And we see the effect of the Negro together with the big cat as a psychological trigger in both the universal appeal of "Little Black Sambo" and in the emotional involvement, much beyond politics and practicality, of the Black Panther movement today.

But the sphere of harmaline is archetypal beyond isolated images such as tigers or Negroes, prominent as they are.

To give you a more precise idea of the quality of a harmaline experience, and as an introduction to the question of a therapeutic significance as well, I think that nothing may be better than quoting from one particular session. This is from one of our experimental subjects, a professional of average standing in terms of adjustment to life, according to interviews, and average neuroticism as judged by Catell's 16 PF or estimated from the TAT. When questioned about his interest in volunteering, he expressed a feeling of incompleteness about his present life, which was too routine for him. This made him want to travel and also to know more about himself, about his real wants and possibilities.

Soon after the intravenous injection of 100 mg of harmaline, the subject reported a feeling of elation associated with the sensation of being suspended in empty space. Since nothing else developed spontaneously during 30 min, I decided to initiate a guided daydream in the standard fashion. Upon the suggestion of climbing a mountain he visualized and felt that he was doing so with a group of friends, and during the following half-hour uninterruptedly described the events and experiences of the ascension. This was a very realistic sequence, which he related with a warmth and enthusiasm that I had never known in him before.

"We go as if wanting to prolong this joy of friendship . . . people made of a same fiber . . . we all enjoy this communication . . ."

My notes of the climbing occupy several pages and end with the image of the group upon the summit, thirsty and sweating, surrounded by a magnificent landscape, enjoying the feeling of having conquered oneself and that of being among friends, in contact.

Then there came, at my suggestion, the fantasy of flying, that of diving into the sea (at first postponed as deadly) and sinking to the ocean floor. There is much feeling at each stage, from dread to delight, and now a fairy tale began to unfold with the subject as principal character.

". . . there could be a treasure here, as in the stories. I lie down. We'll see later . . . being measured by the sand . . . Yes, it could be a story . . . I might invent some reason for having gotten here: shipwreck, attempted suicide, and so on. I might walk, and find a coffer behind a rock. One story could be that a princess has the key hidden in her bosom; or,

alternatively, I may be able to open the padlock, and the Court of the Sea comes blaming me for the crime. Both are good. Let us start with the second alternative. I open it: pearls and stuff. There should be something else. What person that can fly wants pearls!

"But what is not in the coffer is next to it, with her father. *She* is what was missing.

"I am questioned. The old man speaks with a voice that conveys noble authority. Intrinsic nobility. A pausing, serene voice with authority, but sweetness too. He goes into things, into their essence. He does not get lost, he does not deceive himself. He shows cool passion. I believe he knows perfectly well why I am here. Not the others . . ."

The story goes on for 20 more pages in my fragmentary notes: walking into the city, receiving absolution from the king, sitting next to the princess at the royal table, further acquaintance, until "the jig-saw puzzle of myself is complete. Such is love: being whole, finding the missing piece."

There is tragedy in the knowledge that he is going to leave sometime, and fleeting guilt in face of the princess's father. But his eyes approve, and his smile. Marriage follows, in "a church that teaches an aesthetic dimension of religion . . . It is the Temple, purely so, without the surname of any religion. The place where communion is effected with the Highest, with Whatever it may be . . . Everything is as it must be . . . austere, yet regal." Then the altar, "like a pyramid; the priest, almost too human; and the music . . . just to hear this music, it would be worthwhile to marry 100 times." There follows a party, with the villagers, peasants, and their songs. The newlyweds go to their cabin. They live, they work. "What I always longed to see in work: each does what he wants and when he wants it." He wants to know more of the people of this kingdom since he knows that he is leaving in a week, and he will not see them again. Where do they come from? They do not know. They have a vague reminiscence of having once been somewhere else.

"They know themselves to be different from ordinary men and don't envy them. They have carried civilization to the point to which it served them. Not further, like us, to the point of being left with nothing . . . with nothing inside, for all the advancement of technology. Science applied to nothing . . . Not these people. They found their balance. They are there. They know that the energy which they did not spend in manufacturing they spend in something more essential: the perfecting of themselves. In a simple and clear manner, like a line. For love. In that they spend their energy, in loving quietly, in harmony, blissfully. And consciously happy, not happy like idiots."

The time for leaving comes, and he leaves without saying good-bye. The name of the princess enables him to trespass the city walls. He returns to the starting point of his adventure, realizing now how far he had walked. After emerging at the surface of the ocean he understands that there is no signal that he can leave to show him the way back. He is about to let go of the only chance of returning. And he does. He flies away. He feels as if he had been flying all day. In face of the beauty of sunset he opens his mouth, since his eyes are not enough to absorb so much. He finally rests on a beach, feeling intensely alive, as if every pore of his skin were a complete being.

How can we understand that the conception of this story may have been a life-changing experience? For the subject reports, after three years, that this has affected his work, his relationships, and his feeling of himself up to this date. The words in which he explains it are close to those used by the subject of the session previously commented upon. He says that he had never before felt so much *himself* as during the telling of the story, and never before had he *expressed* himself so fully. Feelings and conceptions that went into the building of the tale proceeded fluently and obviously from himself as his real feelings and point of view, which always had been in him and did not have to be "invented." Thus, he experienced himself as *creative*. The consequence of the experience was self-assuredness, self-trust, and self-acceptance, related to the notion that he had heretofore unsuspected inner riches. He felt more a person, with a place and function in the world.

I think that we must not understand the self-assurance and feeling of personal worth stemming from the session as merely the result of being able to say, "See what a nice story I can make up," "See how imaginative I am." From the subject's comments it is clear that his self-confidence stems from an intense *feeling of himself*, a contacting of his inner reality, of which the story is but an outward manifestation.

In fact, several fragments of the narrative are clear expressions of this experience: the openness to friendship and landscape while climbing, the ecstasy and freedom of flying, the combination of wholehearted participation and the knowledge that all is transitory during the adventure under water; the feeling of aliveness in every pore, all convey the peak-experience quality of the feeling of self.

In speaking of the "self" in connection with this session, I have been retaining the subject's use of the term, which was spontaneous and devoid of associations with psychological literature. Yet their experience might be adequately understood both in terms of Karen Horney's "true self" or what is called "Self" by Jung. Horney stressed the distinction between the

“true self” and the “idealized self,” pointing out that in a neurosis the person’s true urges, feelings, and thoughts are substituted by others which he only believes are his. These are compulsive desires, emotions, and ideas stemming from the need to live up to the image, which in turn is the opposite of living from one’s spontaneous motivations.

Jung, on the other hand, formulated the Self as the seat of consciousness in a state of psychic integration and completeness which entails contact with the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

It is reasonable to expect that the more a person develops awareness of his own being, the more he will partake of a common core of human experience.

The long dreamlike sequence quoted above, with its forbidden treasure, kings, and good life, is, of course, archetypal in every detail, and could illustrate many classical images, like the wise old man, the ideal woman, marriage, the cross, the pyramid, the guarded city, the ideal community, etc.

The mythical style of harmaline sessions is only one side of them, though, and by attending to another side I think that we may gain some insight into the nature of archetypes. This other side is as extremely instinctual as I have seen in fantasy, both in the domains of aggression (mostly predatory aggression) and sex. Just as some sessions appear to be the re-enacting of myths or fairy tales, others consist of a series of bloody scenes of all sorts, scenes of incest or other forms of sexual activity, or combinations thereof. These dreamlike sequences are in their spontaneity more extreme than anything normally reported by the subjects or patients in their free associations or dreams, and unlike the visions that some of them have reported under mescaline or LSD. In fact, the effects of both types of drugs seem to stand in polar opposition, those of the common hallucinogens being a lofty and “angelic” domain of aesthetic feelings, empathy, and a sense of oneness with all things, whereas the domain of the oneirophrenics is that Freudian underworld of animal impulse and regression.

In general, the more destructive the content of fantasy, the less archetypal or mythical it appears, so that one is tempted to believe that the archetypal expression proper (particularly when it involves images such as tigers, snakes, or dragons) corresponds to some kind of harmonious integration of instinctual forces, where they are still recognizable but not fragmenting the individual in their conflict. In some instances one can witness the transition between these two styles of expression, the instinctual and the mythical, and understand how myth is to passion as form is to content or like the skeleton to the flesh, and instinct may either animate myth by becoming its blood, so to say, or be complete chaos.

The session here reported is of a patient with a compulsive character

neurosis and various symptoms of anxiety and depression for which he had been in treatment for over five years. The fragment reported here constitutes about 75% of the total session after the intake of 300 mg of harmaline by mouth and consists of my notes of his continuous monolog from a time shortly after the onset of the drug's effect. Naturally, the succession of the images took place in a tempo much slower than that of the reading of this transcript.

"This is a dark cloister. There are white and red tiles. The sun filters through purple curtains. A nun appears. She has Christ's stigmata in her feet and hands. The mermaid appears and laughs. She says, 'I have never seen such a stupid woman.' The nun says, 'Only the spirit is of value.' The mermaid says, 'Only the body is of value.' Suddenly, the nun begins to be illuminated from above. It is celestial light. She begins to rise in a cloud. Several little angels are with her. She drifts on the cloud over the sea. The mermaid appears behind a rock. With her is the nurse, who kills babies to make sausage. 'See, my friend, how this nun travels on a cloud,' says the mermaid to her assistant. The nurse produces a broom, puts on her hat, and flies after the nun. She scratches the cloud with a pin, and it deflates. The nun is drowned, but she is in ecstasy so that she doesn't notice it. She reaches the bottom of the ocean. Her clothes are gone. She is naked. She doesn't look like a nun any more. The stigmata are gone. The fishes bring her a crown made of algae, and she becomes a mermaid with a fish's tail. She forgets what she has been, and sets out to travel along the ocean floor. A triton is now kissing her. They make love on a rock. (Subject feels nausea. Music in the room conveys 'repressed feeling' to him.)

He continues: "They had sex. This was the first time the nun had had intercourse. She became settled on a rock where she had a house made of jade. There was a large mahogany bed with a cherry-colored spread. She is nothing of what she used to be. She is stark naked and is wearing a coral necklace. Her hair is loose. She has a beautiful body with large breasts and wide hips. She is not a mermaid any more but has two legs. She is insatiable. Proserpina is her name. Silvery fish wait on her. The mermaid is desirous of sexual intercourse. She calls tritons to make love to her. In the evenings she wanders about with the attendant nurse, who is also naked. They look for dead sailors and bring them back to life. Proserpina makes love to them and kills them again. Now she goes to the beach and sleeps on the sand. Some fishermen come. She calls them. After making love with all of them, she is bored and she goes to the city. She dries her hair and wears stockings. She is a whore. She earns good money and buys herself a pretty house. She likes beautiful objects—silverware, ebony, jewelry,

antiques. She goes about in nightgowns, even in the street. But one day she passes in front of a poor church at the time of a funeral mass. Upon seeing the burning candles and smelling the incense she remembers what she had been. She sells all that she has and gives the money to the poor. She gives her house as an asylum. She goes about in poverty, barefoot. She walks for three days and three nights until she reaches a distant monastery. She becomes a nun once more. But she does not live long. She becomes ill and dies within a week. She rises to heaven with the angels. The mermaid tries to destroy her again, but it is impossible now, so she commits suicide. She leaves her jewelry to a friend and drowns herself."

I have quoted at length because this was one of the most remarkable sessions in terms of its beneficial effect. The patient had been in psychiatric treatment for five years—psychoanalysis, analytic group therapy, Schultz's autogenic training, and all of it—with poor results. At the time of the session he felt ineffectual and overly submissive, burdened by anxiety, depression, and interminable brooding, fearful of other people's opinions and of his own homosexual inclinations. The session with harmaline, as can be seen, was practically a monolog uninterrupted by interpretations, questions, or attempts to direct the development of the experience, and was, like the previous sessions reported here, like a fairy tale, quite unrelated (in its superficial appearance) to his life and problems.

The immediate effect of the session was a state of irritability with some impulsivity and assertiveness which the patient described as a tyrannical streak and took him by surprise more than it worried him. Still, within two months he felt stronger and more independent, capable of taking the authority needed in his work, but concerned with his excessive violence. His depression, anxiety, and fear of others had disappeared. His violence, too, diminished gradually within three more months, without further psychotherapeutic aid.

In considering this session I feel tempted to speak of an "archetypal catharsis," a mythical outlet for the instinctual, in contrast with the more personal types of abreaction that we come across more frequently in psychotherapy. The orgiastic fantasy described above was as opposite as it could be to this patient's life—unfree and compulsive in the literal sense of the term—and apparently served as a bridge between his ordinary lack of spontaneity and a type of behavior closer to the style of his fantasy. Just as the training of a behavior pattern through imaginary display serves as a bridge towards its enacting in real life in the practice of Behavior Therapy, it seems from sessions like those quoted above that the process of self-expression in the domain of imagery, made possible by this drug, can serve as a link towards further self-expression in life, in the case of persons that

are constricted in their spontaneity by peculiar personality patterns.

Compared to the effects of harmaline, those of ibogaine seem less exotic. Though archetypal contents are common, animals are prominent in the visions and, in general, man-the-animal is reflected therein, the quality of fantasy is in general more personal, involving the subject himself and his parents or significant others. At the same time the fantasy evoked by ibogaine is easier to manipulate by the subjects on their own initiative or that of the psychotherapist, so that more often than with any other drug that I know he can stop to contemplate a scene, go back to a previous one, explore an alternative to a given sequence, re-enact a previous dream, and so on. This ease with which the events in an ibogaine session can be handled and the experience channeled through a desired domain is probably part of the reason for the success observed by many psychotherapists using the drug as an adjunct. In my own experience, I have been more impressed by the enduring effects resulting from ibogaine sessions than by those from sessions conducted with any other drug. Time limitations will not permit much clinical illustration of the effects of ibogaine, indispensable as this material seems to me if the aim is to communicate more than a very abstract notion of the reactions to the drug. I will therefore not attempt to give you a detailed view of any complete session but rather focus on a few images and upon their significance in a psychotherapeutic context.

The following sequence was described by a young psychiatrist as soon as he decided to lie down and close his eyes, about 45 minutes after the onset of the drug's effects: At first he saw as in a closeup, the face of his father. He was making faces at the patient as if in a game, with a contented smile. He commented at this point that this is how his father must actually have appeared to him as a small boy. It was an "unfamiliar yet very familiar" sight, as something forgotten by him for many years. But suddenly, the expression on his father's face changed into a contortion of rage. As he was attending to this, the scene changed, and now he saw a naked woman hiding her face behind her arms in obvious fear. Next to this, he saw his father also naked, falling upon the woman in a sexual attack. He could sense controlled rage in the woman, whom he now identified as his mother.

At this point I asked the subject to have his father and mother talk to each other, as a means of bringing out the latent content of the images. "What does she say?" "Go away." "What does he feel?" He could not imagine that. "Maybe perplexity," he suggested. This was an appropriate moment to take another step in the direction of making the feelings involved in the scene conscious and explicit. "Be your father now." I said to him. "Become him to the best of your dramatic ability and hear what *she* has said to *you*." Now, impersonating his father, he felt, not perplexity, but great sorrow, suffering, and anger at being rejected.

Short as this episode was, it brought about a drastic change in this subject's view of his parents, and therefore in his feelings towards them. In the following days he commented that only now he saw how much he had been identifying with his mother and looking at things through her eyes. Part of such a view was the blaming of his father, and more than that, of man, which had interfered with his own assertiveness and masculinity. In contrast to his habitual idealization of his mother as fully loving and his perception of his father as a selfish brute, he now had a feeling of "knowing them as they really are." He wrote: "I see my mother as hard, with no affection and afraid, and I no longer regard my father as that insensitive being who has hurt her with his love affairs, but as somebody who wants to open the gates of her love, without succeeding. Yet I feel compassion towards my mother."

Compared to the dramatic quality of the psychedelic experiences, the episode under discussion might appear to be insignificant or trivial, and yet it was the key to a radical shift in attitudes. I think that this may be said of ibogaine experiences in general when compared to the effect of LSD-like drugs. The type of contact that is affected with unconscious material is here symbolic, rather than in the form of free-floating emotions, and therefore is articulate and possible to assimilate in the form of enduring insights. Such insights generally arise when a fantasy or assumption that was hitherto unconscious or implicit becomes consciously revealed with such clarity that the person's mature self cannot but see its deep-rooted fallacy.

One more instance may clarify this further.

I was showing a patient a photograph of his mother. At first he saw what he had always seen and what he wanted to see: his idealized mother, the mother that he needed to see to avoid an anxiety too great for him to cope with. She was shown there knitting and looking down fixedly at her yarn. For some time he saw her as he usually did—as a loving mother devoted to the things of the house—but by looking further there came a moment when he could see through his image. Once the habitual pattern was obvious and discussed, he was naturally free to go beyond it; to inquire whether the reality caught by the camera truly fitted the form of his automatic perception. Then he noticed hatred and hardness in his mother's glance. He writes: "I then realized that she had hated me, that in her hatred for my father she had included my sister and myself. I realized that she had utilized us, desecrating our feelings.

"I hated her and stimulated by the doctor I confronted her with her attitude, her lack of concern for our feelings and her battle with my father. I insulted her aloud with violence in all the frustration and withholding of a lifetime, calling her a witch, a hysteric, a monster." Since his voice still

didn't convey the violence that he said that he was feeling I had him repeat his utterances again and again until he could translate his emotion into the nonverbal aspect of his expression. Finally I asked him to beat his parents in fantasy. He pounded the pillow that stood for them until he felt physically tired. The patient's anger was something so alien to his everyday awareness that I was afraid that if he did not experience it now as fully as possible he might repress it once more. Much of the session was devoted to experiences such as this one confronting and impersonating different persons in his family and expressing much criticism in the process. The end result in terms of insight was a lasting one and can be illustrated by contrasting an autobiographical account written in the week prior to this session with what he wrote in the week following. Before the session he had written:

"The first eight years of my life I lived in the countryside. This was a magical time! In these years I knew the taste of dust in summer, of grass in spring, the river where I would go out bathing with Peter, my idol of that period, a young dark-skinned peasant with a mole near his mouth. My parents seem like cardboard figures in my memory. Peter eclipses all the rest. I don't remember feelings of guilt or frustration. I lived in a primitive way. Like a sponge I absorbed local superstitions, I searched for hidden treasures, and believed in God and the Devil with the same force as my peasant companions.

"I was a loved boy, and my mother was not the frustrated woman that she became later. She gave me the love that I needed and beat me when I deserved it. Nothing more."

And he ended the first chapter of this autobiography with the following over-all view:

"I was an ordinary boy who was lucky enough to be liked by everybody. Neither masturbation nor my love for Peter nor my amorous attempts with some girls had blurred that innocence that children have when they know no frustrations or traumas and who live in an atmosphere where things are given, not explained. There was something in me of that myth of the 'innocent savage uncorrupted by civilization.' And yet my mother was a civilized woman—or should I say balanced?—who provided me with reading and a wonderful, unforgettable Christmas.

"Yes, all that time was truly magic!"

Notice the contrast between this version and the following paragraphs written after the session:

"As a boy I was always hiding behind Mother's skirts. I went from one woman to another. My father seems so nonexistent. Maybe he was not there already . . . I was a rather timid boy, very prone to crying, very fearful. I had many fears, of a thousand things, supematural and natural.

"Many times I wished that my mother would die. I once attempted suicide to punish them. So that they would learn! In their reciprocal hatred, my mother forgot what she always displayed with pride: her capability of being a mother. And my father was hypocritical. I used to suffer very much in the beginning. According to my mother we *had to* hate my father. Neither of us wanted that at first, in spite of seeing that she was right in some of her complaints. But not in her yelling or her dramatic scenes. This lasted for about eight years. I thought I would go nuts, at first. When they had their fights we were helpless, used as weapons. 'This is your son,' they would say, to point out the negative qualities of the other. One was fighting against two sides without fighting. I used to cry, but later I took refuge in books. And I started to hate without saying it. I withdrew. They could not know what I thought or felt. The thing was to be invulnerable.

"After doing that for so long I cannot open up anymore. Perhaps the fear of that time is the same as today. If I felt hatred they would point at it as a defect and use it as a weapon."

The two cases presented thus far are similar in that they constitute a liberation from a mother identification and a breaking through to an independent view of the world. However, fantasy that can be exposed and re-examined with the help of ibogaine may be simpler than a parental image and still very important. I want to present you with one last example in order to give a broader perspective of the possibilities of the alkaloid and the exploration of unconscious fantasy.

This was the case of a woman in her late thirties who recalled very vividly at some point in her session an episode from her childhood. Her father had returned from a journey and was distributing gifts among the children. Before leaving, he had asked each one of them what he wanted. To that question our patient had answered that she did not want her father to spend more money, and would be quite content with anything unexpensive. In recalling this, it was obvious to the patient that she had wanted to be her father's favorite daughter in playing . . . a sweet considerate and understand-

ing role, in contrast to that of her achieving sister. In this she had succeeded.

As she attended to this memory, she became aware of how frustrated she had felt when her father actually carried out her suggestion, bringing her a gift that could not be compared to her sister's. This was a little brooch in the form of a dog, which she recalled putting inside a matchbox. But now she remembered something which felt like a discovery. She now saw very clearly that in her disappointment and anger she had imagined the little dog biting off her father's genitals. In recalling this, she felt that it was herself, greedily and revengefully castrating her father, using the image of the dog, and it seemed to her that not even at the time of this event had she allowed herself to become aware of this fantasy.

After remembering the scene, she also remembered feeling guilty for her imaginary action, and then she realized that she had been feeling guilty toward her father throughout her whole life. The transient mental event, or what appeared to be that, had radically altered her relationship with her father, to whom she was not close any more. After realizing, now, that up to this very moment in her life she had been feeling guilty for her childish fantasy, she could not fail to evaluate the situation with more mature eyes. Upon the suggestion of looking at the situation from her father's point of view, it was clear to her that he could forgive her, and she could forgive herself too. Her relationship to her father was actually re-established with joy to both of them during the last months of his life.

I think that the therapeutic event just described may be understood in at least two ways. One is that of taking the patient's words literally, in which case we must accept that an imaginary action and even an unacknowledged one may weigh as much as an overt action, and be treated as such by the unconscious mind. The other alternative is thinking that the patient did not actually have the fantasy of castration at the moment evoked, but this is in the nature of a screen memory and the projection in symbolic terms of feelings of chronic grief and anger which were triggered by such an incident. That is to say, the translation of such feelings into a visual display would be only part of the ibogaine experience. If this were so, it is evident that this may be of crucial importance for the process of becoming aware of such feelings, for merely feeling them throughout a lifetime, in this case, had not been sufficient to understand them.

I would not like to leave the impression that I am regarding ibogaine like a psychiatric panacea bringing about changes by itself. I believe that many drugs may be utilized for the purpose of psychological exploration, but that drugs can be no more than an instrument. Just as the hypnotic state may be used either for theatrical demonstrations and entertainment or

for therapy, and in the latter case the ways of utilizing it can range from overt suggestion to hypnoanalysis or hypnosynthesis, also drug-induced states may be used or not, and if used, there may be room for many approaches.

I doubt that there is anything that can be achieved with a drug that is not possible without it. Still, drugs may be psychological catalysts or facilitators that can compress a long psychotherapeutic process into a shorter time and may alter the prognostic picture in a given case. If ibogaine does not open a door by itself, it might be likened to the oil on the hinges.

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