On Hashish

Walter Benjamin

INTRODUCTION BY MARCUS BOON
EDITED BY HOWARD EILAND

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Walter Benjamin

Translated by Howard Eiland and Others

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY MARCUS BOON

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Translator's Foreword

THE DRUG EXPERIMENTS documented in this volume took place in the years 1927 to 1934 in Berlin, Marseilles, and Ibiza. Along with Walter Benjamin, the participants included, at various times, the philosopher Ernst Bloch, the writer Jean Selz, the physicians Ernst Joël, Fritz Fränkel, and Egon Wissing, and Egon's wife Gert Wissing. Originally recruited as a test subject by Joël and Fränkel, who were doing research on narcotics, Benjamin experimented with several different drugs: he ate hashish, smoked opium, and allowed himself to be injected subcutaneously with mescaline and the opiate eucodal. Records of the experiments—they were very loosely organized—were kept in the form of drug "protocols." Some of these accounts were written down in the course of the experiments, while others seem to have been compiled afterward on the basis of notes and personal recollection. Benjamin also took hashish in solitude, as witness the three accounts of an intoxicated evening in Marseilles. He took these drugs, which he looked on as "poison," for the sake of the knowledge to be gained from their use. As he said to his friend Gershom Scholem in a letter of January 30, 1928, "The notes I made [concerning the first two experiments with hashish] . . . may well turn out to be a very worthwhile supplement to my philosophical observations, with which they are most intimately related, as are to a

certain extent even my experiences under the influence of the drug." As an initiation into what he called "profane illumination," the drug experiments were part of his lifelong effort to broaden the concept of experience.

During those last years of the Weimar Republic, Benjamin was meditating a book on hashish—a "truly exceptional" study, he tells Scholem—which, however, remained unrealized, and which he came to consider one of his large-scale defeats. No doubt this book would have differed from the loose collection of drug protocols and feuilleton pieces published posthumously in 1972 under the title *Über Haschisch,* and reprinted in 1985, slightly emended and expanded, in Volume 6 of Benjamin's *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Writings), source of the present translation. Although we have nothing to indicate specific plans in this regard, it is tempting to think of the drug protocols as a detailed blueprint for the construction of the projected volume; despite their fragmentary character, they articulate the gamut of motifs with which the book might well have been concerned. They are in fact highly readable texts, those by Benjamin's colleagues—in which he is described and quoted—no less than his own, and their documentary notebook quality is not unrelated to the "literary montage" of some of Benjamin's more important later works, such as *The Arcades Project* (into which he incorporated passages from the protocols) and "Central Park." The notational style, moreover, is a reflection of the discontinuous and as it were pointillistic character of the drug experiences themselves, which Benjamin likens to a "toe dance of reason."

The philosophical immersion that intoxicants afforded Walter Benjamin was not Symbolist derangement of the senses, then, but

transformation of reason. Which is to say: transformation of the traditional logic of noncontradiction and the traditional principle of identity. Like the Surrealists, with whose works he was critically engaged during the 1920s, Benjamin sought to infuse thinking with the energies of dream—but in the interests of a *waking* dream. In a state of intoxication, the thread of ratiocination is loosened, unraveled, not dissolved; with the emptying out of personality, there is a diffusion of perspective. Thinking is sensualized. A mimetic power holds sway in the realm of perception, the realm of image space, in all its plasticity. The intoxicated man takes the part of things around him, becoming, like the physiognomic flâneur or the child at play, a virtuoso of empathy (another dangerous drug), and at the same time, with utter detachment, drawing objects and events into his thickening web. The drug weaves time and space together in a manifold resonant fabric, an interpenetrating and superposed transparency of (historical) moments: what Benjamin, with a touch of the humor that is integral to hashish, terms "the colportage phenomenon of space." This involves the disclosure of unexpected stations in a familiar milieu, of many places in one place.

> The feeling of loneliness is very quickly lost. My walking stick begins to give me a special pleasure. The handle of a coffeepot used here suddenly looks very large and moreover remains so. (One becomes so tender, fears that a shadow falling on the paper might hurt it. . . . One reads the notices on the urinals.)
>
> I immersed myself in intimate contemplation of the sidewalk before me, which, through a kind of unguent (a magic unguent)

> which I spread over it, could have been—precisely *as* these very stones—also the sidewalk of Paris.
>
> As she danced, I drank in every line she set in motion. . . . Many identities passed over her back like fog over the night sky. When she danced with Egon, she was a slender, black-caparisoned youth; they both executed extravagant figures there in the room. . . . The window at her back was black and empty; through its frame the centuries entered by jolts, while with each of her movements—so I told her—she took up a destiny or let it fall.

There is an analogy here to what the flâneur experiences (and the colportage phenomenon of space is said to be the flâneur's basic experience) when he sees the ghost of a barricade on a modern Paris street—that is, when far-off times and places interpenetrate the urban landscape and the present moment, creating for him a kind of historical palimpsest. And there is a further analogy to the way the film camera reveals heretofore unknown corners of the commonplace, in a room, an object, or a face. In the metamorphic masquerade-world of hashish, its moods recurrently intimating the nearness of death, each particularity wears a face, or rather several faces, and through the reigning ambiguity everything becomes a matter of nuance, multivalence.

A defining feature of the drug experiences, which are always represented in terms of phases, is the fleeting character of the individual moments. "All sensations have a steeper gradient." One consequence of this heightened velocity of thought is a certain inevitable resignation on the part of the test subject, an automatic displacement of attention and a necessary obliquity. The subject can never say what has

really moved him during the experiment. Yet, according to Benjamin, there is a hashish effect only when one *speaks* about the hashish. In the rush of intoxication, the attention of the subject is deflected from the main object of his experience, which is inexpressible, to some incidental object, which, though truncated, may prove more profound than what he would have liked to say at first. In this way, the intoxicated subject is carried along in the punctuated flow of perceptions, one image suddenly merging into the next, as in a film, and the sense of immense oceanic dimensions of time and space opening out is countered by the constantly changing focus on the smallest and most random contingencies. Hence, in his 1929 essay "Surrealism," Benjamin can speak of the dialectical nature of intoxication, of a disciplined, illuminated intoxication conducing to a deepened sobriety, at once concentrated and expansive. In the "dialectics of intoxication," the threshold between waking and sleeping is worn away. ("Every image is a sleep in itself," reads one of the undated notes on hashish.) At issue here, as everywhere in Benjamin, is a new way of seeing, a new concreteness in relation to history and the everyday—perception "more stratified and richer in spaces" (*Arcades Project*, P1a,2). The Surrealism essay goes on to ask about the conditions under which such liberated experience can be the basis for political liberation.

A word about Benjamin's central term in the drug writings. *Rausch* is an important concept in the later philosophy of Nietzsche, where it designates that Dionysian knowledge which was crucial for the young Benjamin and his whole generation. The idea of "the consuming intoxication of creation," *Rausch* as a state of transport embodying the highest intellectual clarity, plays a role in Benjamin's dialogue on aesthetics, "The Rainbow," of 1915. The term is rendered in this

volume mainly as "intoxication" or "trance," neither an entirely satisfactory translation. The noun *Rausch* comes from the onomatopoeic verb *rauschen,* "to rustle; rush; roar; thunder; murmur." The English word "rush," cognate with *rauschen,* actually brings out a significant aspect of the German concept (the relevance of velocity touched on above), not to mention its usage in the argot of the 1960s drug culture, where it meant an intensification of intoxication. The French term *ivresse,* with its literary associations in Symbolism (particularly Baudelaire, whose *Artificial Paradises* was instrumental in Benjamin's taking up hashish), may have certain advantages here, though as a translation it is perhaps too lyrical, just as "intoxication" is too clinical and "trance" too mystical. In addition to its philosophical usage, concerned with a complex existential state, the term *Rausch* is used in the drug protocols to refer to the particular drug experience in question, the drug trip. Benjamin makes fine distinctions in regard to the character of the drug high, often complaining of what seemed to him a weak dose.

Thanks are due Maria Ascher for her incisive editing of the present volume. In addition, the translator would like to acknowledge the help received from consulting an earlier translation of *Über Haschisch* by Scott J. Thompson, who performed an important service in first presenting this eccentric and fascinating text to an English-language audience.

Abbreviations and a Note on the Texts

The following abbreviations are used for works by Walter Benjamin:

GS *Gesammelte Schriften,* 7 vols., suppl., ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Hermann Schweppenhäuser, et al. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972–1989)

GB *Gesammelte Briefe,* 6 vols., ed. Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995–2000)

SW *Selected Writings,* 4 vols., ed. Michael W. Jennings et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996–2003)

AP *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999)

CWB *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin,* trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Translations in this book are by Howard Eiland, unless otherwise indicated. Protocols by Benjamin's colleagues are printed in italics.

On Hashish

Walter Benjamin and Drug Literature

MARCUS BOON

"Always the same world—yet one has patience."
—Walter Benjamin,
On Hashish, Protocol 12

IF EVER THERE was someone who took drugs because of reading books about them, then that person was Walter Benjamin. As early as 1919, he noted à propos of Baudelaire's key text on hashish, *Artificial Paradises,* which he had just finished reading, that "it will be necessary to repeat this attempt independently of this book."[1] In his notes on his first experiment with hashish in 1927, he claimed a "feeling of understanding Poe much better now." Indeed, despite the scientific trappings of the "protocols" in this book, Benjamin's orientation in examining hashish was similar to that found in his exploration of the Parisian arcades, which were to form the basis for a new kind of archeology/history of the nineteenth century. While Louis Armstrong and his sidekick Mezz Mezzrow were making pot-smok-

1. Walter Benjamin, September 19, 1919, to Ernst Schoen, "From the Letters," in this volume.

ing fashionable in New York City, and Commissioner of Narcotics Harry Anslinger was beginning his congressional campaign against the evils of smoking weed, Benjamin, ever the connoisseur of the "recently outmoded," lay in a hotel bed in Marseilles eating hashish in the style of the great *littérateurs* of the nineteenth century.

The word "hashish" has at least two different meanings: historically, it has been a general term for psychotropic preparations made from the cannabis plant (Alice B. Toklas' "hashish fudge" was in fact made with pulverized cannabis leaves); more commonly today, it refers to the resin, which is removed from the buds (flowers and surrounding leaves) of the plant and pressed into beige, brown, or black cakes.[2] Knowledge of the psychotropic effects of cannabis probably dates back to the Neolithic, while literary references to the drug started with a variety of mystical and polemical poems published in North Africa and the Middle East in medieval times, when debates raged as to whether or not cannabis was prohibited to Muslims.[3] Although extracts of the cannabis plant may have been part of folk remedies in Europe for centuries, hashish became well known in Europe only in the nineteenth century, as part of the orientalism that was fashionable at the time. It was said that Napoleon's armies had brought hashish to Europe when they returned from the Egyptian

2. See Paul Bowles, "Kif: Prologue and Compendium of Terms," in George Andrews and Simon Vinkenoog, eds., *The Book of Grass* (New York: Grove, 1967), 108–114.

3. On neolithic cannabis use, see Paul Devereux, *The Long Trip: A Prehistory of Psychedelia* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 39–44; and Richard Rudgley, *Essential Substances: A Cultural History of Intoxicants in Society* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), 28–31. On medieval Islamic cannabis use, see Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb: Hashish versus Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1971); and Hakim Bey, "The Bhang Nama," in Hakim Bey and Abel Zug, eds., *Orgies of the Hemp Eaters* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004).

campaigns of 1798–1801. In 1809 the great French orientalist Sylvestre de Sacy presented a memorandum in Paris concerning the use of hashish by the medieval Assassins, a radical Ismaeli group who lived on what is now the Turkish-Iranian border.[4] Although the etymology that links "hashish" to "assassin" is probably false, this link stirred the imaginations of Parisian bohemia, eventually leading to the formation of the Club des Haschischins in Paris in 1845, a salon in an old hotel on the Ile Saint-Louis at which a number of key Parisian writers and artists, including Baudelaire, Balzac, Gautier, Delacroix, Daumier, and others, ate hashish in the form of a paste, mixed with almonds, and washed down with a little soup and the sounds of a string quartet. The club was immortalized in Gautier's charmingly gothic short story "Le Club des Hachischins" (the spellings of the word "hashish" and its cognates have been as diverse as the effects claimed for the drug). The cascade of hallucinations found in this story, and in other works such as the extravagant *Hashish Eater* (1857), by the American writer Fitz Hugh Ludlow, may seem improbable to contemporary readers who have inhaled. It was not only the literary conventions of the gothic that were responsible for this excess; the doses of hashish ingested by nineteenth-century writers also appear to have been potent enough for the drug to function more like a hallucinogen than an after-dinner joint.

Baudelaire wrote two texts concerning hashish, each of which is caustic, verging on hostile. In an 1851 essay, he compared hashish unfavorably to the "wine of the people," which he linked to revolu-

4. The text was published in 1818 as "Mémoire sur la dynastie des Assassins et sur l'étymologie de leur nom," *Mémoires de l'Institut Royal de France,* in *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres,* 4 (1818), 1–84.

tionary consciousness.[5] In 1860 he devoted half of his book *Artificial Paradises* to a discussion of hashish—the other half being devoted to a loose translation of Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater,* generally considered the first literary discussion of drugs, and for Baudelaire the last word on the subject. Although Baudelaire pronounced hashish "veritably satanic," it's hard to know how to take this comment, coming from the author of the "Litanies of Satan." If Baudelaire linked hashish to evil, then this evil might be seen as a passage out of the horrors and torpors of nineteenth-century bourgeois Europe. If this passage proved to be a dead end, and if Baudelaire dutifully pointed out that fact, it did not stop generations of French and other European youth—Decadents, Symbolists, and others—from discovering and rediscovering the drug, as a potential catalyst for triggering Baudelairean visions.[6] And Benjamin too, from the variety of references found in *The Arcades Project,* clearly thought that hashish provided a key to understanding Baudelaire, particularly his early insight into the commodity form as a drug-like hallucination.

The situation surrounding drugs was changing rapidly during the period in which Benjamin was writing. Around the time of World War I, the first national and international conventions regulating drug use were ratified, and the more or less free circulation of substances, which prevailed throughout the nineteenth century, was replaced by an increasingly complex system of regulation which has continued to this day. At first, these regulations were aimed princi-

5. "Du vin et du hachish," in Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres completes,* vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 397.
6. Some of the key nineteenth-century texts on hashish have been collected in Andrew C. Kimmens, ed., *Tales of Hashish: A Literary Look at the Hashish Experience* (New York: Morrow, 1977); and in Bey and Zug, *Orgies of the Hemp Eaters.*

pally at opium-related substances (opium, morphine and heroin), but in Germany "Indian hemp" was one of the substances whose use was regulated by the drug law passed on December 10, 1929.[7] Referring to his hashish experiment of April 18, 1931, Benjamin says that "Merck and Company may be depended upon" (Protocol 9), so we can assume that he had access to research-grade pharmaceuticals—the German drug company also being a producer of mescaline.

Legal or not, drug use was hardly seen as something worthy of celebration in Benjamin's intellectual milieu. Despite Benjamin's desire to write a book about these substances, he was apparently concerned enough about his reputation to urge his friend and correspondent Gerhard Scholem to be discrete about his book plans.[8] The use of the word "crock" to signify "opium" in Benjamin's notes on the experiments he conducted with Jean Selz on Ibiza in 1933 also suggests a concern with discretion. At the same time, Benjamin's level of concern can't have been that great, since he did publish a first-person account of his hashish experience in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1932. In fact, Benjamin's candor stands in marked contrast to that of fellow German drug flâneur Ernst Jünger, who prudently waited until 1970 to publish his own thoughts on a lifetime of drug experimentation, by which point the climate for such publications was considerably altered.

After World War I, the situation surrounding drugs also changed in *literary* terms. Although a number of the Surrealists used drugs, contrary to popular belief André Breton was staunchly against drugs and the exploration of consciousness using chemicals—and he expelled from the group any members who took drugs. Those writers

7. Werner Pieper, ed., *Nazis on Speed: Drogen im Dritten Reich*, vol. 2, 475 (Löhrbach: Pieper and The Grüne Kraft, n.d. [2002]).
8. Letter to Gershom Scholem, July 26, 1932, "From the Letters," in this volume.

who were interested in drug use in the interwar period—Antonin Artaud, Polish modernist Stanislaw Witkiewicz, René Daumal, Benjamin—were an untimely group, their writings largely ignored or unpublished until they were discovered by the Beats and the 1960s radical movements. In a sense, Benjamin's project for a left-wing politics of intoxication (a project which links him to figures such as Bataille and the French College of Sociology writers) failed, and after World War II drugs became associated with libertarian or right-wing writers: with Jünger, William Burroughs, R. Gordon Wasson, and Aldous Huxley, or with other untimely fellow travelers, such as Henri Michaux. To this day, any rapprochement between Marxism and intoxication, beyond the time-honored proletarian pleasures of alcohol, is rare.[9] Philosopher Ernst Bloch, who collaborated on Benjamin's second drug protocol, claimed that he experienced no effects when he took hashish.[10]

Since I've linked Benjamin so firmly to literature, I should point

9. Scott J. Thompson argues that this aspect of Benjamin's own work has been neglected; see Thompson, "From Rausch to Rebellion: Walter Benjamin on Hashish," in Pieper, *Nazis on Speed,* vol. 2, 59–69). For Marxist texts that discuss intoxication, see Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), a study of yage healers in the Colombian Putumayo; Herbert Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation,* whose comments on 1960s youth movements are cited in Thompson, "From Rausch to Rebellion," 64–65; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), which discusses carnival; and Georges Bataille, "L'Ivresse des tavernes et la religion," *Critique,* 25 (1948): 531–539. Note also the dismissal of psychedelics in the proto-Situationist journal *Potlatch: 1954–1957* (Paris: Editions Allia, 1996), 127–128.

10. See Ernst Bloch, *Briefe, 1903–1975,* vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), 310. In his magnum opus *Das Prinzip Hoffnung,* however, Bloch devotes several paragraphs to the power of hashish to produce a waking dream state. See *The Principle of Hope,* trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 89–90.

out that what he really intended to do with the notes he collected is highly unclear; and if we apply the term "literature" to this jumble of apparently scientific drug protocols, psychological fragments, philosophical observations, essays, short stories, and other generic oddities, this is in part because literature is where we place that which does not fit within the boundaries of traditional disciplines. The words "drugs" and "literature" in their modern senses emerge around the same time (circa 1800, with the Romantics). Both are concerned with the full manifestation of the power of the human imagination, with consciousness in its expanded sense, at a time of increasingly relentless utilitarianism. And both become conceptual garbage dumps where the apparently dangerous excesses of the imagination are shunted for disposal—places filled with an allure that is all the more intense because of the sense of the forbidden, of transgression, with which they are invested. What gets disposed of in these sites is not always treated with great discrimination. Although hashish, opium, and mescaline differ in their effects, this montage of texts and observations tends to blur the boundaries between these drugs—as do Benjamin's readily apparent personality, and his gorgeous writing style.

Benjamin was certainly not the first writer to plan a great philosophical tome under the influence of drugs—both De Quincey and Coleridge had plans which came to nothing—but *On Hashish* exists only as a series of fragments. It is hard not to link this apprehension of a profound unity or work—and the jumble of unfinished fragments that is left in its wake—with intoxication itself, and with the failure of drug-induced insights and experiences to sustain themselves in coherent form when the intoxication is over. Perhaps Benjamin preferred it that way. The fact that it was the right-wing German writer Ernst Jünger who, through sheer determination,

finally "succeeded" in writing a vast, apparently orderly book on the topic hardly leaves one feeling optimistic or indeed enthusiastic about the project. Part of the charm of the texts collected here stems from the profound confusion concerning subjectivity (not to mention objectivity) they display: as you read through these "protocols" sometimes written by the user, sometimes by an observer, sometimes both, or through Benjamin's "own" writings, in which he laces together a montage of quotes from other authors, it becomes increasingly difficult to remember who is writing and who is being written about. This, too, may be an effect of hashish. Cannabis literature is full of strange doublings, barely visible collectives, conspiracies, and groups.[11]

If we take Benjamin at his word, then his writings on hashish and other drugs form part of a rather small corpus of works devoted to first-person philosophical exploration of the effects and meanings of psychoactive drug experiences (Sartre, Jünger, Flynt, McKenna, and Taussig are the other notable figures).[12] As Scott Thompson has shown, Benjamin had been interested in reworking the Kantian concept of experience ever since writing his 1917 essay "On the Program of the Coming Philosophy," seeking a way to recognize religious and mythical experience within the structures of Kantian philosophy.[13] If there were no takers for such an undertaking—with or without the Kantian perspective—at the time, perhaps the first-person

11. See Marcus Boon, "The Time of the Assassins: Cannabis and Literature," in Boon, *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 123–169.
12. See Jean Paul Sartre, *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie-phénoménologique de l'imagination* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940); Ernst Jünger, *Annäherungen: Drogen und Rausch* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1970); Henry A. Flynt Jr., "The Psychedelic State" (1992), at www.henryflynt.org, accessed December 2005; Terence McKenna, *True Hallucinations* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).
13. Thompson, "From Rausch to Rebellion."

phenomenological approaches developed recently by neuroscientist Francisco Varela or Flynt's work on "personhood theory" offer some hope.[14] As Avital Ronell has noted, the attempt to locate the question of intoxicated experience within philosophy or psychology or any other discipline appears doomed to failure.[15] Which is one reason there is such a slippage in all of the above examples, from philosophy to literature, or "depth psychology" or New Age spirituality or some other barely legitimated no-man's-land of inquiry.

The protocols that form the first part of this book contain notes taken during experiments in which Benjamin was a participant, either as observer or research subject, under the auspices of physician Ernst Joël and neurologist Fritz Fränkel in Berlin. Benjamin had known Joël when they were in college in Berlin, where they had headed rival student organizations. Joël became a doctor during World War I, in the course of which he became addicted to morphine; after the war he returned to Berlin to set up a psychiatric clinic, where he treated the poor and formulated what he called "social psychiatry." With Fränkel, he was the author of a monograph on the effects of cocaine, as well as other drug studies.[16] Like Benjamin, he committed suicide through an overdose of morphine.

14. Francisco J. Varela and Jonathan Shear, eds., *The View from Within: First-Person Approaches to the Study of Consciousness* (Thorverton: Imprint Academic, 1999); Flynt, selected papers on personhood theory, at www.henryflynt.org.
15. Avital Ronell, *Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).
16. Ernst Joël and Fritz Fränkel, *Der Cocainismus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Psychopathologie der Rauschgifte* (Berlin: Springer, 1924). See also their "Beiträge zu einer experimentellen Psychopathologie der Haschischrausch," in *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* (Berlin, 1927), III, 84–106. For more on Ernst Joël, see Scott J. Thompson, "Walter Benjamin, Dr. Ernst Joël and Hashish," at www.wbenjamin.org/joel_frankel.html#wbjf_hash (accessed December 2005).

While many of the early key advances in biochemistry—such as the first discovery of an alkaloid, morphine in opium—occurred in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Germany played a crucial role in the discovery and exploration of the properties of psychoactive drugs. The modern pharmaceutical industry developed in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, and many of the most important twentieth-century psychoactive drugs were developed by German researchers or companies. As the recent book *Nazis on Speed* amply demonstrates, there was a flourishing research community devoted to studying the effects of psychoactive drugs in Germany after World War I. This research ranged from an interest in using drugs to imitate or model a variety of "abnormal" psychological states in order to better understand and treat them (the goal that motivated the research of Joël and Fränkel and others), to the experiments with mescaline that were conducted at Dachau and that aimed at finding methods of mind control or discovering a truth serum. This research formed the basis for much of the experimentation with psychedelics conducted in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, not to mention the CIA's keen interest in pharmacological warfare.[17]

Benjamin's own notes stand in marked contrast to the writings of Joël and Fränkel, particularly in the relative absence of psychological and psychoanalytic models. For Benjamin, hashish, mescaline, and opium open doorways to aesthetic, philosophical, and potentially political experience; Aldous Huxley's ruminations on patterns and folds in *The Doors of Perception* are perhaps the closest analog, though

17. See Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD, and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove, 1985).

there are also key differences between the two writers. Like Huxley, Benjamin is fascinated by the reconfiguration of the subject-object relationship which hashish and mescaline can trigger. Benjamin's key concept of "aura," which he defined as the historical presence or authenticity of the object outside the reproducible signs of its existence, was developed after he began his experiments with hashish.[18] The notions that objects or environments radiate a secret, invisible meaning and that one's perception of time and space can be altered are commonplace in drug literature, but Benjamin's unique contribution was that he saw this perception as being both the revelation of an object's historical being (its aura) and, beneath all the "veils" and "masks" which everyday objects wear, the apprehension of a "sameness" indicating the presence within history of secret transcendental forces. And this phenomenon of sameness—at once the precondition and manifestation of the mimetic faculty that for Benjamin informs all of man's higher functions—gives rise to a feeling of joy. Still, if Huxley and a variety of other writers from Madame Blavatsky to Aleister Crowley were eager to make the claim that drugs could provide a direct transcendental revelation, for Benjamin the wink from nirvana was "ambiguous": any "illumination" provided was "profane." Like Benjamin's celebrated Angel of History, blown along by a wind from paradise as he tries to redeem the mounting garbage heap of history that piles up before him, there is no easy passage for the drug user beyond the dialectical entwining of mind and matter, spirit and history. Death looms in the labyrinth in which the hashish user ec-

18. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Third Version)," trans. Harry Zohn and Edmund Jephcott, in SW4, 253–256. On "aura," see Protocol 5, note 2, below.

statically unravels Ariadne's thread—and it cannot be regarded as entirely coincidental that Benjamin killed himself using drugs.[19]

There is no reason to make grandiose claims that drugs caused this or that insight or event. Rather, one can observe that various ideas and motifs that appear in Benjamin's better-known works also appear in his notes on his drug experiences, and that these experiences—the effect of a drug on Benjamin's thought, the effect of Benjamin's thought on the particular manifestation of the drug—constitute part of his history and evolution as much as other experiences and events. Like Bataille, Daumal, and Huxley, Benjamin was looking for some kind of materialist magic that would provide a key tool in the transfiguration of modernity—a transfiguration that he achieved in his writing, and that provides the basis for my writing about Benjamin in the way that I do. Above all, these drugs illuminated and catalyzed the powers of language, and his experiences with them left a literary residue or precipitate—not just "an enumeration of impressions," as Benjamin remarks in "Hashish in Marseilles," but "a kind of figure" which "takes on the form of a flower," a crystallization of his experiences which continues to resonate today.

19. For a discussion of Benjamin's use of the labyrinth motif in his writings on drugs and other topics, see Gary Shapiro, "Ariadne's Thread," in Anna Alexander and Mark S. Roberts, eds., *High Culture: Reflections on Addiction and Modernity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003).

Editorial Note

TILLMAN REXROTH

Tillman Rexroth's "Editorische Notiz" appears at the end of his edition of Über Haschisch (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), pp. 147–149. It is this volume that Rexroth refers to below.

THIS VOLUME CONTAINS Benjamin's writings on drug intoxication, together with protocols (records) of drug experiments in which Benjamin took part. Only two of the texts were published by Benjamin himself. The short story "Myslowitz—Braunschweig—Marseille" [Myslovice—Braunschweig—Marseilles] appeared in the journal *Uhu* in November 1930; the personal account "Haschisch in Marseille" [Hashish in Marseilles]—which, although it repeats verbatim certain passages of the short story, is actually closer to the original drug protocol that forms the basis of both texts—was published December 4, 1932, in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and reprinted in 1961 in the volume of selected writings entitled *Illuminationen.* These two previously published pieces deserve a place in a volume that brings together all available texts documenting Benjamin's engagement with intoxicating drugs. A French translation of "Haschisch in Marseille," which appeared in the *Cahiers du Sud* in January 1935 with the title "Hachich à Marseille," was excluded, however, because this transla-

tion was not prepared by Benjamin. None of the other texts in this volume have been published before. The manuscripts and typescripts of the records written by Benjamin and by the other authors are housed in the Theodor W. Adorno Benjamin-Archiv in Frankfurt am Main.

Although Benjamin planned to write a book about hashish, the fragmentary "Crocknotizen" [Crock Notes] is the only one of the transmitted texts in which theoretical reflection outweighs descriptive notation. To be sure, the "Crocknotizen" cannot be regarded as a general résumé of Benjamin's drug experiments; rather, they refer in all likelihood to a particular experiment that took place at the home of Jean Selz on Ibiza in 1932.[1] It is this experiment, presumably, that is being described in the following passage from a letter written by Benjamin to Gretel Adorno:

> At the start of the evening, I was feeling very sad. But I was conscious of that rare state in which the inner and the outer worries balance each other very precisely, giving rise to what is perhaps the only mood in which one really finds solace. We took this as practically a sign, and after making all the ingenious little arrangements that free one from having to stir during the night, we set to work around two o'clock. It was not the first time in terms of chronology—though in terms of success, it was. The role of assistant, which requires great care, was divided between us, in such a way that each of us was at the same time server and beneficiary of the service, and the conversation was interwoven with the acts of as-

1. The date was actually 1933. See Jean Selz, "An Experiment by Walter Benjamin," included in this volume. [H.E.]

sistance in the same way that the threads which color the sky in a Gobelin tapestry are interwoven with the battle represented in the foreground.

What this conversation was headed toward, what it sometimes verged on, is something I can scarcely convey to you. But if the notes which I'll soon draft on the subject of these hours attain the requisite degree of precision, so as to be assembled with others in a dossier which you know about, then the day may come when I will have the pleasure of reading one or another of these things to you. Today I've obtained significant results in my study of curtains—for a curtain separated us from the balcony that looked out on the city and the sea.[2]

The protocols are arranged chronologically. Texts by Benjamin thus appear alongside accounts written by Ernst Bloch, Ernst Joël, and Fritz Fränkel. The authors of some of the protocols could not be determined with certainty.

All of the drug records are reproduced in their entirety. Readers should make allowance for overlapping of the texts, such as occurs with the three versions of the hashish experiment in Marseilles, or with Bloch's protocol of the "second hashish impression" and Benjamin's supplementary transcript of this protocol. Readers should likewise note that this volume omits a manuscript which is in the possession of Gershom Scholem and which is the basis of the type-

2. This letter, written from Ibiza on or around May 26, 1933, is printed in full and annotated in GB4, 216–220. Just prior to the passage quoted by Rexroth, Benjamin writes: "Hardly any clouds [of opium smoke] rise to the ceiling, so deeply do I understand how to draw them out of the long bamboo tube into my insides" (217). [H.E.]

script printed here with the title "Saturday, September 29, [1928]; Marseilles," and two handwritten notes which Benjamin incorporated into "Myslowitz—Braunschweig—Marseille" and into the protocol of May 11, 1928. Undated notes by Benjamin that do not belong with any of the complete protocols have been printed to the extent they can be deciphered.

The express wish of one of the participants in the experiments induced the editor, in one case, to alter some proper names.[3] The peculiarities of the protocols—which for the most part comprise notes written in a state of intoxication or dictated for transcription by typewriter and in part left uncorrected—have been largely preserved.

3. In question are the names of Gustav Glück and Erich Unger in "Hashish in Marseilles." See Protocol 4, note 12. [H.E.]

Protocols of Drug Experiments

Protocols of Drug Experiments

CHAPTER I

Main Features of My First Impression of Hashish

Written December 18, [1927], at 3:30 A.M.

1. Spirits hover (vignette style) over my right shoulder. Coldness in that shoulder. In connection with this: "I have the feeling there are four others in the room besides me." (Bypassing the necessity of including myself in the count.)
2. Elucidation of the Potemkin anecdote with the explanation or rather suggestion: show someone the mask (the mask of one's own face, that is, the displayer's face).[1]
3. Convoluted utterance on an ether mask, which (it goes without saying) would also have mouth, nose, and so on.
4. The two coordinates in the apartment: cellar—floor / the horizontal. Great horizontal extension of the apartment. Suite of rooms, from which music is coming. But perhaps also dread of the corridor.
5. Boundless goodwill. Falling away of neurotic-obsessive anxiety complexes. The sphere of "character" opens up. All those present take on hues of the comic. At the same time, one steeps oneself in their aura.
6. The comic is elicited not just from faces but from incidents. One *seeks* occasions for laughter. And perhaps it is only for

this reason that so much of what one sees presents itself as "arranged," as "experiment"—so that one can laugh about it.

7. Poetic evidence in the phonetic: at one point I maintain that, in answering a question a little earlier, I had used the expression "for a long time" purely as a result (so to speak) of my perception of a long time in the sounding of the words of the question and answer. I experience this as poetic evidence.
8. Connection; distinction. In smiling, one feels oneself growing small wings. Smiling and fluttering are related. You feel distinguished because, among other things, it seems to you that fundamentally you enter into nothing too deeply: that, no matter how deeply you penetrate, you are always moving on the threshold. A sort of toe dance of reason.
9. One is very much struck by how long one's sentences are. This, too, connected with horizontal extension and (probably) with laughter. The arcade is also a phenomenon of long horizontal extension, perhaps combined with vistas receding into distant, fleeting, tiny perspectives. The element of the diminutive would serve to link the idea of the arcade to laughter. (Compare the Trauerspiel book: miniaturizing power of reflection.)[2]
10. There arises, quite fleetingly, in a moment of introversion, something like an inclination [*words illegible*] to stylize oneself, to stylize one's body.
11. Aversion to information. Rudiments of a state of rapture. Great sensitivity to open doors, loud talk, music.
12. Feeling of understanding Poe much better now. The gates to a world of grotesquerie seem to be opening. Only, I don't wish to enter.

13. Oven turns into cat. The word "ginger" is uttered and suddenly in place of the desk there is a fruit stand, in which I immediately recognize the desk. The *Thousand and One Nights* came to mind.
14. Reluctant (and slow) to follow the thoughts of others.
15. One's hold on the place one occupies in the room is not so firm as at other times. It can suddenly appear—to me it appeared so quite fleetingly—that the room is full of people.
16. The people I'm with (in particular, Joël and Fränkel)[3] are very much disposed to transform themselves in some degree. They do not, I would say, become strange, nor do they remain familiar; rather, they simulate strangers.
17. For me, it was like this: pronounced antipathy to conversing about matters of practical life, the future, dates, politics. You are fixated on the intellectual sphere as a man possessed may be fixated on the sexual: under its spell, sucked into it.
18. Afterward, in the café with Hessel, a brief farewell to the spirit world.[4] Signaling.
19. Mistrust of food. A particular and highly accentuated instance of the feeling one has about many things: "You can't really mean to look that way!"
20. F's [Fränkel's; or H's (Hessel's)? *manuscript unclear*] desk is transformed for a second—while he's talking about "ginger"—into a fruit stand.
21. I would draw a connection between the laughter and the extraordinary mental vacillation. Stated more precisely: the laughter is connected with, among other things, the great detachment. Moreover, this irresolution—which contains a

potential for affectation—is, to a certain extent, an external projection of the sensation of internal ticklishness.

22. It is remarkable that one speaks freely and rather impulsively—without strong resistance—about sources of inhibition that lie in superstition and other such things, sources that as a rule are not readily named. An elegy by Schiller contains the phrase: "the hesitant wing of the butterfly."[5] This in regard to the coexistence of wingedness with the feeling of indecision.
23. You follow the same paths of thought as before. Only, they appear strewn with roses.

CHAPTER 2

Main Features of My Second Impression of Hashish

Written January 15, 1928, at 3:30 P.M.

THE MEMORIES ARE less rich, even though the immersion was less profound than it was the previous time. To put this more precisely, I was less immersed, but more profoundly inside it.

Moreover, it is the murky, alien, exotic aspects of the intoxication that remain in my memory, rather than the bright ones.

I recollect a satanic phase. The red of the walls was the deciding factor for me. My smile assumed satanic features, though it was the expression of satanic knowing, satanic contentment, and satanic calm, rather than satanic destructiveness. The people became more deeply entrenched in the room. The room itself became more velvety, more aflame, darker. I uttered the name of Delacroix.[1]

The second powerful perception was the game with the next room. You start to play around with spaces in general. You start to experience seductions with your sense of orientation. In a waking state, we are familiar with the sort of unpleasant shift we can voluntarily provoke when we are traveling in the back of a train at night and imagine that we are sitting in the front—or vice versa. When this is translated from a dynamic situation into a static one, as here, it can be thought of as a seduction.

The room dons a disguise before our eyes, assumes the costume of each different mood, like some alluring creature. I experience the feeling that in the next room events such as the coronation of Charlemagne, the assassination of Henri IV, the signing of the Treaty of Verdun, and the murder of Egmont might have taken place.[2] The objects are only mannequins; even the great moments of world history are merely costumes beneath which they exchange understanding looks with nothingness, the base, and the commonplace. They reply to the ambiguous wink from nirvana.

To refuse to be drawn into this understanding is what constitutes the "satanic satisfaction" of which I have spoken. Here also is the root of the mania for boundlessly deepening the collusion with nonbeing by increasing the dose.

It is perhaps no self-deception if I say that in this state you develop an aversion to the open air, the (so to speak) Uranian atmosphere, and that the thought of an "outside" becomes almost a torture. It is no longer, as it was the first time, a friendly, sociable lingering in a room, out of sheer pleasure in the situation as it is; rather, it is like being wrapped up, enclosed in a dense spider's web in which the events of the world are scattered around, suspended there like the bodies of dead insects sucked dry. You have no wish to leave this cave. Here, furthermore, the rudiments of an unfriendly attitude toward everyone present begin to take shape, as well as the fear that they might disturb you, drag you out into the open.

But this trance, too, has a cathartic outcome, despite its basically depressive nature, and even if it is not as ecstatic as the previous trance, it is at least resourceful and not without charm. Except that this charm emerges only as the drug wears off and the depressive na-

ture of the experience becomes clearer, leading one to conclude that the increase in the dose is after all partly responsible for this depressive character.

The dual structure of this depression: on the one hand, anxiety; on the other, an inability to make up one's mind on a related practical matter. I finally mastered the sense of indecision; suddenly tracked down a very deeply concealed aspect of a compulsive temptation, and thereby gained the ability to pursue it a certain distance, with the prospect of eliminating it.

Hunger as an oblique axis cutting through the system of the trance.

The great hope, desire, yearning to reach—in a state of intoxication—the new, the untouched, scarcely takes wing on this occasion; instead they are attained only in a weary, submerged, indolent, inert stroll downhill. In this act of strolling downhill, I thought I was still able to generate some friendliness, some attractive qualities, the ability to take friends along with a smile that had a dark edge to it, half Lucifer, half Hermes *transducens,*[3] very remote from the spirit and the man I was last time.

Less human being, more daemon and pathos in this trance.

The unpleasant feeling of wanting simultaneously to be alone and to be with others, a feeling that manifests itself in a deeper sense of fatigue and has to be acquiesced in: this feeling grows in intensity. You have the feeling of needing to be alone, so as to give yourself over in deeper peace of mind to this ambiguous wink from nirvana; and at the same time, you need the presence of others, like gently shifting relief-figures on the plinth of your own throne.

Hope as a pillow that—only now—lies under your head, with lasting effect.

Through the first trance, I became acquainted with the fluttering nature of doubt; the doubt lay in myself as a kind of creative indifference. The second trance, however, made *objects* appear dubious.

Operation on my tooth. Remarkable trick of memory. Even now I cannot rid myself of the idea that the operation was on the left side.

On my return home, when the chain on the bathroom door proved hard to fasten, the suspicion: an experiment was being set up.

You hear the "Tuba mirans sonans," but push against the tombstone in vain.[4]

It is well known that if you close your eyes and lightly press on them, you start to see ornamental figures whose shape you cannot control. The architectures and configurations of space you see under the influence of hashish are somewhat similar in origin. At what point and in what form they manifest themselves is at first uncontrolled, so swiftly and unexpectedly do they make their appearance. Then, once they are there, a more conscious play of the imagination takes over and they can be treated with greater freedom.

In general, it can be said that the sensation of "outside," of "beyond," is connected with a certain feeling of displeasure. But it is important to make a sharp distinction between the "outside" and a person's visual space, however extended it may be—a distinction that has the same significance for the person in a hashish trance as the relationship between the stage and the cold street outside has for the theatergoer. Yet, to extend the image, on occasion something rather like a proscenium stage intervenes between the intoxicated person and his visual space, and through this a quite different air is transmitted—from the outside.

A formula for the nearness of death came to me yesterday: death lies between me and my intoxication.

The image of automatic connections: certain intellectual things articulate themselves of their own accord—just like a violent toothache, for example. All sensations, especially mental ones, have a steeper gradient and drag the words along with them as they hurtle downward.

This "ambiguous wink from nirvana" has probably never been expressed more vividly than by Odilon Redon.[5]

The first serious sign of damage is probably the inability to deal with future time. When you look into this more closely, you realize how astonishing it is that we can exercise control over the night, or even individual nights—that is to say, over our usual dreams. It is very hard to control the dreams (or the intoxication) resulting from hashish.

Bloch wanted to touch my knee gently.[6] I could feel the contact long before it actually reached me. I felt it as a highly repugnant violation of my aura. In order to understand this, it is important to realize that this happens because, with hashish, all movements seem to gain in intensity and intentionality, and are therefore unpleasant.

Aftereffect: perhaps a certain weakening of the will. But the sense of elation gains the upper hand, though with diminishing effect. Despite my recurring depression, my handwriting has recently displayed an upward slant, something I have never before observed. Can this be connected with hashish? A further aftereffect: on returning home, I tried to fasten the chain, and when this proved difficult my first suspicion (quickly corrected) was that an experiment was being set up.

Even if the first trance stood on a higher plane morally than the second, the climax of intensity was on a rising curve. This should be understood roughly as follows: the first trance loosened objects, and lured them from their accustomed world; the second inserted them quite quickly into a new one—far inferior to this intermediate realm.

The constant digressions under the influence of hashish. To start with, the inability to listen. This seems incongruent with the boundless goodwill toward other people, but in reality they share the same roots. No sooner has the person you are talking to opened his mouth than you feel profoundly disillusioned. What he says is infinitely inferior to what we would have expected from him before he opened his mouth, and what we confidently, happily assumed him to be capable of. He painfully disappoints us through his failure to focus on that greatest object of interest: ourselves.

As for our own inability to focus, to concentrate on the subject under discussion, the feeling resembles an interrupted physical contact and has roughly the following features. What we are on the verge of talking about seems infinitely alluring; we stretch out our arms full of love, eager to embrace what we have in mind. Scarcely have we touched it, however, than it disillusions us completely. The object of our attention suddenly fades at the touch of language. It puts on years; our love wholly exhausts it in a single moment. So it pauses for a rest until it again appears attractive enough to lead us back to it once more.

To return to the colportage phenomenon of space: we simultaneously perceive all the events that might conceivably have taken place here. The room winks at us: What do you think may have happened here? Connection between this phenomenon and colportage. Colportage and captions. To be understood as follows: think of a kitschy oleograph on the wall, with a long strip cut out from the bottom of the picture frame. There is a tape running through the batten, and in the gap there is a succession of captions: "The Murder of Egmont," "The Coronation of Charlemagne," and so on.

In this experiment I often saw cathedral porches with Gothic windows and once said, "I can see Venice, but it looks like the upper part of the Kurfürstenstrasse."

"I feel weak" and "I know I am weak" imply fundamentally different meanings. Perhaps only the first statement has expressive validity. But in a hashish trance we can almost speak of the despotism of the second, and this may explain why, despite an intensified "inner life," facial expression is impoverished. The distinction between these two statements should be explored further.

Moreover, there is a functional displacement. I have borrowed this expression from Joël.[7] Following is the experience that led me to it. In my satanic phase someone gave me one of Kafka's books, *Betrachtung*.[8] I read the title. But then the book at once changed into the book-in-the-writer's-hand, which it becomes for the (perhaps somewhat academic) sculptor who confronts the task of sculpting that particular writer. It immediately became integrated into the sculptural form of my own body, hence far more absolutely and brutally subject to me than could have been achieved by the most derogatory criticism.

But there was also something else. It was as if I were in flight from Kafka's spirit, and now, at the moment he touched me, I was transformed into stone, like Daphne turning into ivy at Apollo's touch.[9]

The connection between colportage and the profoundest theological intentions. They reflect it through a glass darkly, transpose into the space of contemplation what holds only for the space of active life. Namely, that the world always remains the same (that all events could have taken place in the same space). Despite everything, that is rather a tired, faded truth in the realm of theory (for all the keen insight it contains); but it is spectacularly confirmed in the lives of the

pious, for whom all things turn out for the best, much as the space of the imagination here subserves the past. So deeply is the realm of theology sunk in that of colportage. We might even say that, far from having arisen from the dull, brutish side of mankind, the profoundest truths possess the great power of being able to adapt to the dull and commonplace, and even of being reflected in their own way in the irresponsible dreamer.[10]

[Translated by Rodney Livingstone]

Ernst Bloch: Protocol of the Same Experiment[11]

I eat nothing. Energy of silence remains. Energy of fasting is lost when you're full.

Today's intoxication compares to the one before as Calvin to Shakespeare. This is a Calvinist intoxication.

Now I'm in a state of sluggish longing, a sinking sort of longing. Always there's just this ambiguous wink from nirvana. Allegory of peace; arcadia surfaces gloomily. That's all that remained of Ariel.[12] *This is the purest measure of the relation between the two experiments.*

If even I—weighed down, feeling bad (depressed)—sense this winking, then it is evident what power it has. Yes, it's the smile. The smile is the veiled image of Sais.[13]

Now, it's as if something has taken me by the hand. To the sought-after crevice in the rock. But this becomes only a rain-drenched rendezvous with the spirits. A rain-drenched Venice, much like the Kurfürstenstrasse. But, at the same time, I take pleasure in this rainy atmosphere; look down from

the window, smoke my pipe. I intentionally say something flowery—you must be suspicious.

It is as if the words came to you phonetically. There is a self-annexation at issue here. Things find expression in words without first asking permission. This attains to very high spheres. There is a mute password with which certain things now pass through the gates.

But the mood of depression is deepened also. Fear of losing it is simultaneous with its deepening. I am capable of retaining only the emotional atmosphere of the depression, not its contents.

Strong feeling, once again, of being on the sea. The sequence of phases = ocean voyage, life in the cabin. It's quite clear, after all: it is the world seen through glass. A web is being spun now; everything joins together with the black background, as in bad engravings. The whole room is woven in hashish.

Interruption (I take Kafka's Betrachtung as a support).[14] *Benj[amin]: "That's the right sort of support." I: "A more distinguished could not be found." Benj[amin]: "None better oriented."*

Staircase in the studio: a structure habitable only by wax figures. I could do so much with it plastically; Piscator and company can just go pack.[15] *Would be possible for me to change the lighting scheme with tiny levers. I can transform the Goethe house into the London opera. Can read from it the whole of world history. I see, in this space, why I collect colportage images. Can see everything in this room—the sons of Richard III and what you will.*[16]

Objects thus participate in my depression = annulment of their matter. They become mannequins. Unclothed dress-up dolls, waiting to do my

bidding, they stand around in their nakedness, and everything about them teaches a lesson, as with an anatomical model. No, it's like this: they stand there without aura. By virtue of my smile. By virtue of my smile, all things are under glass.

Now, between easel and staircase, stretches a path, and the breath of death passes lightly over it. The death that stands between me and my intoxication. A snowy pathway to intoxication opens out. This pathway is death.

To Fränkel, who is descending the stairs: "You've become a lady. You're constantly getting a skirt, like webs, between your feet."

When W[alter] B[enjamin] was pressed [to eat something]: "No, I don't want anything. Even if you enlist iambs in your cause, I shall eat nothing."

At the end: I step outside into a May evening from my palace in Parma. My movements so free and easy, so tender. The ground is silk.

To me (at parting): "Remain identical a while longer!"[17]

Addendum. As Dr. Fränkel was going to write something down: "Ah, now I'm re-entering the palace grounds, where my every step is recorded."

Bloch's Protocol of the Experiment of [January 14, 1928][18]

The order is free.

Today's intoxication compares to the one before as Calvin to Shakespeare. This is a Calvinist intoxication.

Now I'm in a state of sluggish longing, a sinking sort of longing. Always there's just this ambiguous wink from nirvana. Allegory of peace; arcadia surfaces gloomily. That's all that remained of Ariel.

This is the purest measure of the relation between the two experiments.

If even I—weighed down, feeling bad (depressed)—sense this winking, then it is evident what power it has. Yes, it's the smile. The smile is the veiled image of Sais.

Now, it's as if something took me by the hand. To the sought-after crevice in the rock. But this becomes only a rain-drenched rendezvous with the spirits. A rain-drenched Venice, much like the Kurfürstenstrasse. But, at the same time, I take pleasure in this rainy atmosphere; looking down from the window and smoking my pipe, I see myself waiting there in vain. I intentionally say something flowery; you must be suspicious.

It is as if the words came to you phonetically. There is a self-annexation at issue here. Things find expression in words without first asking permission. This attains to very high spheres. There is a mute password with which certain things now pass through the gates.

Strong feeling, once again, of being on the sea. The sequence of phases = ocean voyage, life in the cabin. (Bloch asks: How so?) It's quite clear, after all: it is the world seen through glass. A web is being spun now; everything joins together with the black background, as in bad engravings. The whole room is woven in hashish.

Interruption. Bloch takes Kafka's *Betrachtung* as a support. I: "That's the right sort of support." Bloch: "A more distinguished could not be found." I: "None better oriented."

Staircase in the studio: a structure habitable only by wax figures. I could do so much with it plastically; Piscator and company can just

go pack. Would be possible for me to change the lighting scheme with tiny levers. I can transform the Goethe house into the London opera. Can read from it the whole of world history. I see, in this space, why I collect colportage images. Can see everything in this room—the sons of Richard III and what you will.

Objects thus participate in my depression = annulment of their matter. They become mannequins. Unclothed dress-up dolls, waiting to do my bidding, they stand around in their nakedness, and everything about them teaches a lesson, as with an anatomical model. No, it's like this: they stand there without aura. By virtue of my smile, all things are under glass.

A snowy pathway to intoxication opens out; this pathway is death.

To Fränkel, who is descending the stairs: "You've become a lady. You're constantly getting a skirt, like webs, between your feet."

When I was pressed to eat something: "No, I don't want anything. Even if you enlist iambs in your cause, I shall eat nothing."

End: I step outside into a May evening from my palace in Parma. My movements so free and easy, so tender. The ground is silk.

As Fränkel was going to write something down: "Ach, now I'm reentering the palace grounds, where my every step is recorded."

Also to Fränkel: "The punishment for your going away is starting: now that you're back, you're entirely transformed."

I keep bumping against the ceiling, which is exceedingly thin. And thus a spur to wakefulness.

Fall down the stairs again; full of merriment. Outside, it's getting light.

Now, fortunately, I lack nothing except what servant girls buy for twenty-five pfennigs in an Egyptian dream book.

Death as zone surrounding the intoxication.

State of intimate despondency.

What I have now is not an African phase but a Celtic phase. Grows ever brighter.

On being asked to say what it was I had earlier expounded on: "Now I am the teacher become student."

Something "washes over the state of depression." (The opposite of raise up [*aufheben*]: wash over.)

It can be seen very clearly from this what is lacking to make one happy. It is the evidence of sorrow. Yes, it's quite odd. Dying has an imperative character very different from the imperative character it had last time.

Vapors rising from the earth. Intermediate stage. Brightening of the intoxication.

More chthonic. Saw [us] going down a flight of stairs, so that it was as if we were sitting underground.

CHAPTER 3

Protocol of the Hashish Experiment of May 11, 1928[1]

Test subject: Joël.[2]
Joël took ____ g. cannabis ind[icae] at ____ o'clock.

J[oël] shows up around ten-thirty at Benjamin's. Has just—after taking the drug—conducted a meeting at the clinic and participated without difficulty in the discussion. As there is still no visible effect by eleven o'clock, he resigns himself to a very meager outcome. Feels himself to be altered, but does not appear so to the observer. The conversation takes its departure from works by B[enjamin], before turning spontaneously to questions relating to erotic or sexual-pathological documents (the collection of Magnus Hirschfeld).[3] B[enjamin] lays before the test subject an album with explicit illustrations. Effect: null. The conversation remains purely scientific.

On the other hand, curious mimetic anticipations, so to speak, on the part of B, who, in marked contrast to J, frequently loses the thread of the conversation, or offers a light when J picks up a wafer.

After eleven o'clock, a call to Fränkel, who promises to come.[4] To the observer, this phone conversation seems precisely the factor that releases the h[ashish] intoxication. On the telephone, first (moderate) fit of laughter. After the conversation ends, strong effect of the space. In connection with this, it should be noted that the telephone

is located not in B's room but in an adjoining apartment; to reach the latter, one must pass through a third room. J wishes to remain in the room where he telephoned, but is very indecisive, does not venture to lean against a cushion in the corner of the sofa but occupies the center of the sofa.

Even before this, when passing through the middle room, heightened powers of observation (relative to B's own, unchanged powers, which in this case constitute the only standard of comparison). This intervening room happens to be filled with framed specimens of handwriting. J quickly discovers a plaque revealing the arrangement to be part of a collection documenting the history of handwriting. B has never noticed this plaque. Still more remarkable, on the way back through this room: a violet-colored balloon is tied to the back of a chair. B doesn't see it at all, while J is startled. The light source located in front of the balloon appears to J to be inside it (violet lamp, which he refers to as "apparatus").

In B's room, with the transition to the new milieu, complete disorientation of the sense of time. The ten minutes that have elapsed since the phone conversation seem to him a half-hour. The following period is characterized by restless expectation of Fränkel's arrival. The phases are indicated by repeated deep sighs. Discussion of J's formulation, "My estimation of the time was off." Other formulations: "My watch is running backward." "I'd like to station myself between the double panes of the window." "Fränkel could be coming now little by little." Standing at the window, Joël sees two bicyclists: "Well, he's certainly not going to arrive on bicycle. Much less in company with another cyclist!"

Afterward, a phase of deep immersion, concerning which only a few details can be recorded here. Divagation on the word "colleague"

[*Kollege*]. Etymological reflections. Especially remarkable for B, who, on this same day, eight hours earlier, had himself been thinking about the etymology of this word.[5] He tries to communicate this to J, who will not hear of it: "I can't stand these mediumistic conversations among intellectuals."

Other formulations, whose context I can no longer reconstruct: "Shall I talk as a Malthusian on that?"[6] "Every mother with five children can say that." ("That's something you can say to every mother with five children"?) "Opponence." "Alimentance." Divagation on "wild men." "Symmetry with 'boorish men' [*Flegelmänner*, literally 'flail-men']." (Reference perhaps to titles like those in the *Vossische Zeitung*?)[7] Further divagation on "a thing intermediate between Kaiser and Kautsky."[8] (Referred to B.)

"Always a house with lines so, and in addition the figure of a candlestick" (deep sigh). "The figure of the candlestick always reminds me of something sexual. The sexual must be there as a matter of form." In connection with this, the word "secretorium." When I subscribe to one of his statements, he is drawn up, as he puts it, into a more lucid phase. "I've just come up with the elevator." Other reflections: "I know only what is altogether formal . . . and not even that anymore." Or: "Just as I said that, I was the church." Or: "Now that was something. . . . But, my God, these are incarnations of an inferior sort." Or: "You see the gold nuggets lying there, but you can't pick them up." He discourses now at some length on the fact that lifting and seeing are two entirely different actions. Treats this as a discovery.

Seizing an opportunity to offer encouragement, B observes that there's been no loss of contact between J and him. J's response is

extraordinarily violent: "loss of contact" is said to be a *contradictio in adjecto.* Then echolalia (conscious?): "contact, out-tact [*Austakt*], through tact, with tact in Spain." This divagation from an earlier stage in the experiment.

Other divagations: reaction to the word "parallels" used by B: "Parallels meet in infinity—yes, one sees that." But then lively doubt as to whether they meet or don't meet.

Fragment: ". . . Owing to this thing, which should have been a matter of steps, or was—what do I know?" Other variations: "I absolutely refuse to believe that you're making experiments with jokes. You're too unsure of yourself for that."

After a while, I retire to the rear of the room and take a seat on the sofa next to F[ränkel]. J is very pleased with this arrangement. F is unwell, rises from the sofa, and I accompany him out of the room. He stays away a long time. In his absence: J first assumed that we were outside discussing the setup of the experiment. But he dismissed that idea. Hears a rattling. Associates it with lighting a candle. Thinks he sees me holding a candlestick as I lead Fränkel to the bathroom. Then follow relatively objective explanations. Gradual enlightenment.

Further details from the deepest phase: A corner of my desk becomes, for J, a naval base, a coaling station, something between Wittenberg and Jüterbog. "But all in the age of Waldersee."[9] And then a very strange, beautiful poetic divagation on a never-experienced schooling in Myslovice.[10] Afternoon in the school; outside, the sun on the fields, and so on.

Then he becomes absorbed in other images: Berlin. "You have to travel to the Orient to understand Ackerstrasse."

From the phase during which he was expecting Fränkel: "Now I'd like to sit on the windowsill." Following this, a long divagation on the word "threaten." "Fränkel threatens to come." J himself calls attention to another piece of infantilism. On some occasion—it doesn't matter which—he has the feeling that F reneges on a promise he made him. Yet he'd "given me his hand on it" (just as two boys will "shake on" a matter).

End of the experiment around three o'clock.

Ernst Joël: Protocol of the Same Experiment[11]

Waiting for Fränkel

The telephone call completed, F[ränkel] could be expected in about twenty to thirty minutes. We left the telephone room, passing through the room with the display of writing samples. There was a child's blue balloon fastened to the back of a chair; the latter stood behind a table on which a lamp was set. For a moment, it seemed to me that the arrangement was reversed, insofar as the balloon appeared to be in front of the lamp and to be bathing the room in a blue light, like a sunlamp. I called the balloon apparatus.

Back in B[enjamin]'s room, the feeling of expectation intensified to a degree of oppressiveness that was sometimes torturous. Along with this, considerable miscalculation of the time—so impressive that at one point I thought my watch was running backward. The other things (double windowpanes, cyclists) are described in the protocol [immediately preceding]. Particularly strange is the heightened intensity coming with the mention, first, of the double panes and then of the metal outer sill of the window. In the matter of the windowsill, various infantile tendencies came into play. For example, it was clear to me that, in this position, I would take up very little space on the metal sill—in other words, that I was a small boy.

When, at one point, I said "das Raum"[12] for "outer space [Weltenraum]," I believed I was saying something stylistically new, insofar as the grammatical incoherences would heighten the meaning-character of things. I wondered whether Morgenstern, for example, would not have achieved much stronger effects if he had carried over the grotesquerie of his Palmström poems into his cosmic poems.[13]

My formulations appeared to me for the most part daring, to be sure, but nonetheless quite apt, and they afforded me some unusual perspectives. My doubt, however, was manifest almost continually in the questions I put to those around me, to see if what I was saying could withstand objective critique.

Vodka

I had the feeling I should serve something to F, and it is probably no accident that I pointed him toward various liqueurs that for me, on grounds of abstinence, were out of the question and, moreover, irrelevant to my hunger. It was remarkable that a bottle with the label "Vodka" captured my attention, so much so that I wished to test the accuracy of the claim being made, viz., that genuine vodka was contained therein, which I doubted. Since the Treaty of Versailles had forbidden the designation "cognac" for products made in Germany, I was convinced that in the Treaty of Rapallo the Russians had made provision for the protection of their vodka, and it gave me much pleasure to see that the rulings of the great international conferences and treaties apply essentially to questions concerning schnapps.[14] *Also playing a part in this was certainly the fact that, on this or my last visit, B had given me some genuine Russian cigarettes.*

Several times I had the feeling I should mediate between B and F, although I was not conscious of any sort of conflict.

The Medals

Fränkel gave me a shallow little rectangular cardboard box, half-filled with ginger. At the same time, Benj[amin] handed me a little oval dish of cookies. I accepted both and felt like someone to whom others are paying tribute. Then, the two objects made me think of medals—especially the dish (one could compare it to a large wound-stripe). To me, F and B seemed like prisoners who have voluntarily handed over their medals as souvenirs (as the English voluntarily did when captured). The curious thing was that both men at that moment lost their individuality and were nothing more than generic presences, so to speak, though as such they were extraordinarily distinct. There was a note of humiliation. Of enslavement.

None of these things ever condensed into anything like permanent realities. Just as in other experiments, there was at moments a short-lived hallucination, though no sooner would it appear than it would be immediately divested of its reality-character. This, however, never did anything to diminish the abundance of associations and the enormous vitality.

The Church

At some point, all the food I had in my hands was taken away. Then I recollected that lying to the right of my armchair, somewhat concealed from the others, was still a small bag of cookies. Gratified, I plunged in my hand and, at that moment, experienced such a peculiar mingling of emotions—as though I were simultaneously suffering martyrdom and living the good life—that I said: "Now I am the church." As soon as I had uttered these words, I felt myself sitting in my easy chair like a fat clerical prebendary, but with an expression of great seriousness, almost sorrow.

The Coaling Station

A tray of pastry was taken from me. I thought it would be set down on the protruding corner of the desk where B was sitting, but instead it was placed on the table at which F sat and which I couldn't reach. The corner of the desk—which I had hoped would serve as my designated sideboard, a base of operations for my army, as it were—became a promontory for me; the path traversed by the pastry tray on its way from me to the promontory, and from the promontory to the table lying in darkness like a dark continent, resembled the curve of a maritime route on the map of a great navigation company. I had been deprived of an important strategic point, a coaling station, and—sounding off to the tune of local petty-bourgeois political rags—I now expatiated on the importance of such coaling stations. I thought of my schoolfellow Thiele, who once exclaimed in the classroom: "Where is *the middle class?" and who, on Anhalter Strasse on the way home from school, remarked of some political personage (I believe it was the president of Venezuela) that he should be made shorter by a head—an expression which was quite new to me at the time and which I heard with a mixture of admiration and disapproval. In this regard, the topographic distribution of developmental stages is brought to light, insofar as I came to appreciate the importance of the coaling station in a milieu of my childhood, but then also later on the occasion of a conversation in a passenger train near Jüterbog. (Compare Myslovice, where recurrence to the past and geographical remoteness compete or combine with each other.)*

In Myslovice

In the course of the experiment, Benj[amin]—who most of the time sat only a couple of steps away from me—took on different appearances. For example, the form and the relative fullness of his face would change. His

eyeglasses, the cut of his hair, made him look one moment severe, the next moment genial. During the experiment, I was aware that objectively he could not change so quickly, but each momentary impression was so strong that it was accepted as true.

At one point, he was a schoolboy in a small town in the east. He had an attractive, tastefully furnished room to work in. I asked myself: Where has this young man managed to acquire so much culture? What does his father do? Draper, or corn merchant. At the moment, he appeared inattentive and I asked him to repeat. His attempt at repetition seemed very slow, and I took him to task about this. At that point, I saw a summer afternoon in the small eastern town, very hot; the sun shone down on the fields that lay before the town. And in the afternoon at the school—a mark of the small town or of the past: science lessons in the afternoon—the teacher would say: "Now, please hurry up. We really don't have much time." I couldn't help laughing, since one thing for which this hot summer afternoon seemed predestined was having time, and I could not imagine that anything else might ever go on in Myslovice at this hour.

I believe I next described how the pupils imitate their teacher. With that gift for caricature so natural to German students, extravagantly exaggerating: ". . . I really don't have any time."

Fränkel Is Accompanied Out by Benj[amin]

When this happened, I assumed that the two were going out into the hallway or the telephone room to discuss the experiment. This immediately grew into: They're going to talk about me, and in particular about my character. Then I heard footsteps receding and a faint clatter. And now I saw B, holding a candlestick with a burning candle, lead F to the door of the bathroom and then hand him the candlestick.

To my mind, this representation of the scene had something altogether

unforced and natural. If I'm not mistaken, the thought that we no longer live in the age of candlesticks came unbidden into my head. It was interesting that F at first simply could not imagine that twenty years ago the scene would in fact have played itself out the way I had seen it. In this insufficiency of memory I clearly recognized the powerful effect of hashish on retrospection. Following this, I had before my eyes very distinctly a small console, the kind that used to hang in bathrooms and held a white candlestick; well-provided households were never lacking in matches, and so forth.

While F was out of the room, I had all sorts of strange fears, and I asked B whether someone ought to go see about him. The scene reminds me strongly of an interlude in Wiesbaden, when I likewise considered transport to the hospital and other such things. (Consult the experiment in question.)[15]

Thing and Opposite Thing

In this experience with the drug, the to and fro of interpretation, the hesitation between meaning and meaninglessness, between the banal and the significant, played a prominent role. I have said that in ordinary life the phenomenon of doubt is less contoured, is feebler, more shadowy, whereas here thing and opposite thing stood out equally sharply and contested each other to the point of torment. This was made manifest to me in the image of two boats on the Wannsee. It would be wrong to ask which is the right one. What is curious about the image is that between the two boats there is no contradiction, and only the meaning that one attributes to each of them could create such opposition. For example, two enemy ships seen from a distance, as they make for each other without hoisting their colors, could be taken for friends. The image makes it clear that, in this case, the character of the ships' colors, the sign or insignia, was of importance, and this in turn suggests that in hashish intoxication the accent is more universally distrib-

uted than is ever the case at other times. The emptying out of personality (to speak very generally) enables an expansion of partisanship such as might be characteristic of a divine being, or else an absence of partiality such as perhaps defines the animals. If I'm not mistaken, B spoke of a "conciliation," a term that I found very illuminating.

I went on to try to describe how we arrive at these assimilations of a deeper sort by means of a ruse. It was approximately as follows: at first through confusions—possibly arising purely physiologically through the senses and then immediately corrected—affinities and identities establish themselves, as the lasting fruit of this error, in a more profound sphere, one to which the error was the bridge. (I see just now from F's protocol that B spoke of "conciliability.")[16]

Also in this context belongs the expression—to which I attached particular importance—"What you say is correct, but I am right." It was evident to me here that the phrase "is correct" was no casual concession but bespoke a clear insight into the correctness of a stated perspective, and this moreover indicated that, as concerns its meaning as a whole, the formulation "You are right, but I am also right" was necessarily, by virtue of the word "also," thrown into question.

Return Home

Around three in the morning, return home. First glimmerings of dawn on the Hansa-Ufer.[17] *Strong, extraordinarily jubilant feeling of continuity: follow these banks further south, and the Arno flows between them. It is the same water, only here it's called the Spree.*

It is possible that, after the fading of the acute state of the intoxication, with its isolations and restrictions, there is a state of stronger connection with the world and the human race. This emerges very clearly in the experiments of the Russians.

CHAPTER 4

Saturday, September 29 [1928]; Marseilles

TOOK HASHISH AT seven o'clock in the evening, after long hesitation.[1] During the day I had been in Aix.[2] I note down what follows only in order to determine whether or not effects set in, since my being alone allows for scarcely any other experimental controls. The crying of a small child nearby disturbs me. I think three-quarters of an hour have already passed. But it is only half an hour. Consequently. . . . For, aside from feeling a little dazed, I notice no effects. I lie on the bed, reading and smoking. Always opposite me, this view of the belly of Marseilles. (Now images are beginning to gain power over me.) The street I have seen so often is like a knife-cut.

A last impetus to taking hashish was provided by certain pages of *Steppenwolf* that I read this morning.[3]

I am definitely feeling the effects now. Chiefly negative, in that it's become difficult for me to read or write. A good three-quarters of an hour has passed. No—much seems unwilling to come.

It *would* have to be just now that the telegram from Speyer arrived: "Work on novel finally abandoned," and so on.[4] It's not good when an ultimately disappointing piece of news breaks into the mounting rush of intoxication like a hailstone. But only one interruption?

There was a moment of suspense when I thought it was Brion on the way up to my room.[5] I was quite agitated.

(Added in dictation. It went this way: I was in fact lying on the bed feeling absolutely certain that, in this city of hundreds of thousands where only one person knew me, I would not be disturbed, when there was a knock on my door. This was something that certainly had never happened to me here before now. I made no move to get up and go to the door, but rather asked who was there without altering my position in the slightest. The bellhop: "There's a gentleman who wishes to speak with you." "Have him come up." I stand leaning against the bedpost, my heart palpitating. Really, it would be altogether extraordinary to see Brion suddenly appear. The "gentleman," however, was the telegram boy.)[6]

The following written the next morning. Amid positively splendid, mild aftereffects, producing in me such lightheartedness that I may not entirely keep to the original sequence of events. Brion, to be sure, did not come. I finally left the hotel, the effects seeming nonexistent or so weak that the precaution of staying at home was unnecessary. My first port of call was the café on the corner of the Canebière and the cours Belsunce. Seen from the harbor, the one on the right; therefore not my usual café. What now? Only a certain benevolence, the expectation of being received by people in a kindly way. The feeling of loneliness is very quickly lost. My walking stick begins to give me a special pleasure. The handle of a coffeepot used here suddenly looks very large and moreover remains so. (One becomes so tender, fears that a shadow falling on the paper might hurt it. The nausea disappears. One reads the notices on the urinals.) It would not surprise me if this or that person came up to me. But when no one does I am not disappointed, either. But it's too noisy for me there.

Now the hashish eater's demands on time and space come into force. As is known, these are absolutely regal. Versailles, for one who has taken hashish, is not too large, or eternity too long. Against the background of these immense dimensions of inner experience, of absolute duration and immeasurable space, a wonderful, beatific humor dwells all the more fondly on the contingencies of the world of space and time. I feel this humor infinitely when I am told at Basso's that the kitchen and the entire upstairs have just been closed, while I have just sat down to feast into eternity. Afterward, despite this, the feeling that all this indeed remains always, perpetually bright, frequented, and animated. I must note how I found a seat at Basso's. What mattered to me was the view of the old port that one got from the upper floors. Walking past below, I had spied an empty table on the balcony of the second story. Yet in the end, I reached only the first. Most of the window tables were occupied, so I went up to a very large one that had apparently just been vacated. As I was sitting down, however, the disproportion of seating myself at so large a table caused me such shame that I walked across the entire floor to the opposite end to sit at a smaller table that became visible to me only as I reached it.

But the meal came later. First, the little bar on the harbor. I was again just on the point of retreating in confusion, for a concert—indeed, a brass band—seemed to be playing there. I only just managed to explain to myself that it was nothing more than the blaring of car horns. On the way to the Vieux Port, I already had this wonderful lightness and sureness of step that transformed the stony, irregular earth of the great square that I was crossing into the surface of a country road along which I strode at night like an energetic hiker. For at this time I was still avoiding the Canebière, not yet quite sure

of my regulatory functions. In that little harbor bar, the hashish then began to exert its canonical magic with a primitive sharpness that I had scarcely felt until then. For it began now to make me into a physiognomist, or at least a contemplator of physiognomies, and I underwent something unique in my experience: I positively fixed my gaze on the faces around me, some of which were of remarkable coarseness or ugliness. Faces that I would normally have avoided for a twofold reason: I would neither have wished to attract their gaze nor have endured their brutality. It was a very advanced post, this harbor tavern. (I believe it was the farthest accessible to me without danger—a circumstance I had gauged, in my intoxication, with the same accuracy with which, when utterly weary, one is able to fill a glass exactly to the brim without spilling a drop, something one can never do with sharp senses.) It was still sufficiently far from the rue Bouterie, yet no bourgeois sat there; at the most, besides the true port proletariat, a few petty-bourgeois families from the neighborhood. I now suddenly understood how, to a painter (hadn't it happened to Rembrandt and many others?), ugliness could appear as the true reservoir of beauty—or better, as its treasure chest: a jagged mountain with all the inner gold of beauty gleaming from the wrinkles, glances, features. I especially remember an infinitely bestial, vulgar male face in which the "line of renunciation" struck me with sudden violence. It was, above all, men's faces that had begun to interest me. Now, too, began the game, which I played for quite a while, of recognizing someone I knew in every new face. Often I knew the name, often not. The deception vanished as deceptions vanish in dreams: not in shame, not compromised, but peacefully and amiably, like a being who has performed his service. Under these circumstances, there was no question of loneliness. Was I my own company? Surely not so

undisguisedly. I doubt whether that would have made me so happy. More likely this: I became my own most skillful, fond, shameless procurer, gratifying myself with the ambiguous assurance of one who knows from profound study the wishes of his employer. Then it began to take half an eternity until the waiter reappeared. Or, rather, I could not wait for him to appear. I went into the barroom and paid at the counter. Whether tips are usual in such taverns I do not know. But under other circumstances, I should have given something in any case. Under the influence of hashish yesterday, however, I was on the stingy side; for fear of attracting attention by extravagance, I succeeded in making myself really conspicuous.

Similarly with the order at Basso's. First I ordered a dozen oysters. The man wanted me to order the next course at the same time. I named some standard dish. He came back with the news that none was left. I then pointed to a place on the menu in the vicinity of this dish, and was on the point of ordering each item, one after another, but then the name of the one above it caught my attention, and so on, until I finally reached the top of the list. This was not just from greed, however, but from an extreme politeness toward the dishes, which I did not wish to offend by a refusal. In short, I came to a stop at a pâté de Lyon. "Lion paste," I thought with a witty smile, when it lay clean on a plate before me; and then, contemptuously: "This tender rabbit or chicken meat—whatever it may be." To my lionish hunger, it would not have seemed inappropriate to satisfy itself on a lion. Moreover, I had tacitly decided that as soon as I had finished at Basso's (it was about half past ten) I would go to another restaurant and dine a second time.

But first, back to the walk to Basso's. I strolled along the quay and read, one after another, the names of the boats tied up there. As I did

so, an incomprehensible gaiety came over me, and I smiled in turn at all the Christian names of France. The love promised to these boats by their names seemed wonderfully beautiful and touching to me. Only one of them, Aero II, which reminded me of aerial warfare, I passed by without cordiality, exactly as, in the bar that I had just left, my gaze had been obliged to pass over certain excessively deformed countenances.

Upstairs at Basso's, when I looked down, the old games began for the first time. The square in front of the harbor—I can put it best this way—was like a palette, on which my imagination mixed the qualities of the place, trying them out now this way, now that—irresponsibly, if you like, but nonetheless much the way a great painter looks on his palette as an instrument. I hesitated mightily before ordering wine. It was a half bottle of Cassis, a dry wine. A piece of ice was floating in the glass. Yet it went excellently with my drug. I had chosen my seat on account of the open window, through which I could look down on the dark square. And when I did so from time to time, I noticed that it had a tendency to change with everyone who stepped onto it, as if it formed a figure about him that, clearly, had nothing to do with the square as he saw it but, rather, had to do with the view that the great portrait painters of the seventeenth century—in accordance with the character of the dignitary whom they placed before a colonnade or a window—threw into relief with this colonnade, this window.

Here I must observe in general: the solitude of such intoxication has its dark side. To speak only of the physical aspect, there was a moment in the harbor tavern when a violent pressure in my diaphragm sought relief through humming. And there is no doubt, furthermore, that truly beautiful and illuminating visions were not awakened. On

the other hand, solitude works in these states as a filter. What one writes down the following day is more than an enumeration of momentary experiences [*Erlebnis*]. In the night, the trance sets itself off from everyday experience [*Erfahrung*] with fine, prismatic edges. It forms a kind of figure, and is more than usually memorable. I would say: it shrinks[7] and thereby takes on the form of a flower.

To begin to solve the riddle of the ecstasy of trance [*Rauschglück*], one ought to meditate once again on Ariadne's thread.[8] What joy in the mere act of unrolling a ball of thread! And this joy is very deeply related to the joy of intoxication, just as it is to the joy of creation. We go forward; but in so doing, we not only discover the twists and turns of the cave into which we're venturing, but also enjoy this pleasure of discovery against the background of the other, rhythmic bliss of unwinding the thread. The certainty of unrolling an artfully wound skein—isn't that the joy of all productivity, at least in prose? And under the influence of hashish, we are enraptured prose-beings raised to the highest power. *De la poésie lyrique—pas pour un sou.*[9]

A deeply submerged feeling of happiness that came over me afterward, on a square off the Canebière where the rue Paradis opens onto a park, is more difficult to recall than everything that went before. Fortunately I find in my newspaper the sentence, "One should scoop sameness from reality with a spoon." Several weeks earlier I had noted a sentence by Johannes V. Jensen, which appeared to say something similar: "Richard was a young man with understanding for everything in the world that was of the same kind."[10] This sentence had pleased me very much. It enabled me now to bring the political, rational sense it had had for me earlier into juxtaposition with the individual, magical meaning of my experience the day before. Whereas Jensen's sentence amounted (as I had understood it) to saying that

things are, as we know them to be, thoroughly mechanized and rationalized, while the particular is confined today solely to the nuances, yesterday's insight was entirely different. For I saw only nuances, and they were the same. I immersed myself in intimate contemplation of the sidewalk before me, which, through a kind of unguent (a magic unguent) which I spread over it, could have been—precisely *as* these very stones—also the sidewalk of Paris. One often speaks of stones instead of bread.[11] These stones *were* the bread of my imagination, which was suddenly seized by a ravenous hunger to taste what is the same in all places and countries. During this phase, as I sat in the dark, my chair up against the wall of a house, there were rather isolated moments of mania. I thought with immense pride of sitting here on the street in Marseilles in a hashish trance; of who else might be sharing my intoxication this evening, and of how few actually were. Of how I was incapable of fearing future misfortune, future solitude, for hashish would always remain. The music from a nearby nightclub that I had been following played an extraordinary role in this wholly intermittent stage. It was strange how my ear persisted in not recognizing "Valencia" as "Valencia." Glück rode past me in a cab. It happened suddenly, and was comical, exactly as, earlier, from the shadows of the boats on the quay, Unger had suddenly detached himself in the form of a harbor loafer and pimp.[12] And when, at a neighboring table at Basso's, I again discovered some literary personage, I told myself I was now finally going to learn what literature was good for. But there were not only known faces. Here, while I was in the state of deepest intoxication, two figures (citizens, vagrants, what do I know?) passed me as "Dante and Petrarch."[13] "All men are brothers." So began a train of thought that I am no longer able to pursue. But its last link was certainly much less banal than its first,

and led on perhaps to images of animals. This, then, was a stage different from the one which I experienced at the port and concerning which I find the short note: "*Only* known faces and *only* beautiful ones"—namely, the passersby.

"Barnabé," read the sign on a streetcar that stopped briefly at the square where I was sitting. And the sad confused story of Barnabas seemed to me no bad destination for a streetcar going into the outskirts of Marseilles.[14] Something very beautiful was going on around the door of the dance hall. Now and then a Chinese man in blue silk trousers and a glowing pink silk jacket stepped outside. He was the doorman. Girls displayed themselves in the doorway. My mood was free of all desire. It was amusing to see a young man with a girl in a white dress coming toward me, and to be immediately obliged to think: "She got away from him in there in her shift, and now he is fetching her back. Well, well." I felt flattered by the thought of sitting here in a center of dissipation, and by "here" I meant not the town but the little, not-very-eventful spot where I sat. But events took place in such a way that the appearance of things touched me as though with a magic wand, and I sank into a dream about them. At such hours, people and things behave like those little stage sets and figurines made of elder pith in the glazed tin-foil box, which, when the glass is rubbed, become electrically charged and fall at every movement into the most unusual relationships.

The music, which meanwhile kept rising and falling, I called the "rush switches of jazz." I have forgotten on what grounds I permitted myself to mark the beat with my foot. This is against my education, and it did not happen without inner disputation. There were times when the intensity of acoustic impressions blotted out all others. In the little harbor bar, above all, everything was suddenly submerged in

the noise of voices, not of streets. What was most peculiar about this din of voices was that it sounded entirely like dialect. The people of Marseilles suddenly did not speak good enough French for me. They were stuck at the level of dialect. The phenomenon of alienation that may be involved in this—which Kraus has formulated in the fine dictum, "The more closely you look at a word, the more distantly it looks back"—appears here to comprehend objects as well.[15] At any rate, I find among my notes the surprised comment: "How objects withstand the gaze!"

The intoxication subsided as I crossed the Canebière and at last turned the corner to have a final ice cream at the little Café des Cours Belsunce. It was not far from the first café of the evening, in which, suddenly, the amorous joy dispensed by the contemplation of some fringes blowing in the wind had convinced me that the hashish had begun its work. And when I recall this state, I would like to believe that hashish possesses the power to persuade nature to repeat the great squandering of our own existence that we enjoy when we're in love. For if, when we first love, our existence runs through Nature's fingers like golden coins that she cannot hold and must squander so that they can thus purchase new being, new birth, she now throws us, without hoping or expecting anything, in ample handfuls toward existence.

[Translated by Edmund Jephcott and Howard Eiland]

CHAPTER 5

Hashish, Beginning of March 1930

A DIVIDED, contradictory experience. On the positive side: the presence of Gert, who, thanks to her apparently very extensive experiments of this kind (even though hashish was new to her), had the effect of intensifying the power of the poison.[1] More later on the extent of this. On the negative side: inadequate effect on her and Egon, perhaps because of the inferior quality of the preparation, which was different from the one I was taking. As if that were not enough, Egon's tiny room was far too small for my imagination, and it provided such poor sustenance for my dreams that for the first time I kept my eyes shut during almost the entire procedure. This led to experiences that were entirely new to me. If the contact with Egon was nil, or even negative, that with Gert was rather too sensual to make possible a purely distilled intellectual outcome.

Nevertheless, I see from certain subsequent statements of Gert's that the trance was so profound that the words and images of certain stages have escaped me. Since, in addition, contact with others is indispensable for the intoxicated person if he is to succeed in formulating his thoughts in language, it will be evident from what has been said that on this occasion the insights yielded bore no relation to the depth of the intoxication and, so to speak, of the enjoyment. All the

more reason to emphasize the core of this experiment as it appeared in Gert's statements and my own recollections. These statements concerned the nature of aura.[2] Everything I said on the subject was directed polemically against the theosophists, whose inexperience and ignorance I found highly repugnant. And I contrasted three aspects of genuine aura—though by no means schematically—with the conventional and banal ideas of the theosophists. First, genuine aura appears in all things, not just in certain kinds of things, as people imagine. Second, the aura undergoes changes, which can be quite fundamental, with every movement the aura-wreathed object makes. Third, genuine aura can in no sense be thought of as a spruced-up version of the magic rays beloved of spiritualists and described and illustrated in vulgar works of mysticism. On the contrary, the characteristic feature of genuine aura is ornament, an ornamental halo [*Umzirkung*], in which the object or being is enclosed as in a case. Perhaps nothing gives such a clear idea of aura as Van Gogh's late paintings, in which one could say that the aura appears to have been painted together with the various objects.[3]

From another stage: my first experience of *audition colorée.* I did not fully appreciate what Egon said to me, because my apprehension of his words was instantly converted into the perception of colored, metallic spangles that coalesced into patterns. I explained it to him by comparing it to the beautiful colored knitting patterns that we had liked so much as children in the *Herzblättchens Zeitvertreib* [Darling's Diversions].

Even more remarkable perhaps was a later phenomenon linked to the sound of Gert's voice. It came at the point when she herself had taken morphine, and I, who had no knowledge of the effects of this drug apart from what I had read, was able to give her an accurate and

penetrating account of her condition—on the evidence, as I myself remarked, of her intonation. Apart from that, this turn of events—Egon's and Gert's excursion into morphine—was in a certain sense the end of the experiment for me, although it was also the climax. It was the end because, given the enormous sensitivity induced by hashish, every moment of not being understood threatens to turn into acute unhappiness. How I suffered from the feeling that "our ways had parted." This was how I formulated it. The climax because, as Gert busied herself with the syringe (an instrument that gives me a certain feeling of revulsion), the subdued but constant sensual relationship I had with her seemed to me to be colored black, undoubtedly a result of the black pajamas she was wearing. Even without her frequent and persistent attempts to induce me to try morphine, she might easily have appeared to me as a kind of Medea, a poisoner from Colchis.[4]

Some attempt to characterize the image zone. An example: when we are conversing with someone and at the same time can see the person we are talking to smoking his cigar or walking around the room and so on, we feel no surprise that despite the effort we are making to speak to him, we are still able to follow his movements. The situation is quite different when the images we have before us while speaking to someone have their origin in ourselves. In a normal state of consciousness, this is of course quite impossible. Or rather, such images do arise—they may even arise constantly—but they remain unconscious. It is otherwise with hashish intoxication. As this very evening proved, there can be an absolutely blizzard-like production of images, independently of whether our attention is directed toward anyone or anything else. Whereas in our normal state free-floating images to which we pay no heed simply remain in the un-

conscious, under the influence of hashish images present themselves to us seemingly without requiring our attention. Of course, this process may result in the production of images that are so extraordinary, so fleeting, and so rapidly generated that we can do nothing but gaze at them simply because of their beauty and singularity. For example, as I was listening to Egon, every word he uttered deprived me of a long journey (I have now acquired a certain skill in imitating—even when my head is clear—the formulations that have arisen under the influence of hashish). About the images themselves I cannot really say very much here, because of the tremendous speed with which they arose and then vanished again; moreover, they were all on a very small scale. In the main, they were images of objects. Often, however, with strongly ornamental features. Objects in which such features are inherent are the best: masonry, for instance, or vaulting, or certain plants. Right at the start, I formed the term "knitting palms" to describe something I saw—palm trees with the sort of stitching you see in pullovers. But then also quite exotic, indecipherable images of the kind we know from Surrealist paintings. For example, a long gallery of suits of armor with no one in them. No heads, but only flames playing around the neck openings. My "Decline of the *pâtissier*'s art" unleashed a gale of laughter in the others. This had the following explanation. For a time I had visions of gigantic cakes, larger than life, cakes so huge that it was like standing in front of a mountain and being able to see only part of it. I went into detailed descriptions of how these cakes were so perfect that it wasn't necessary to eat them, because the mere sight of them was enough to still all appetite. And I called that "eyebread." I can no longer recollect how the previously mentioned coinage came about. But I may not be far off if I reconstruct it this way: the fact that we have to eat cakes nowadays is at-

tributable to the decline of the *pâtissier*'s art. I dealt analogously with the coffee I was given. I held the cup of coffee motionless in my hand for a good quarter of an hour, declared it beneath my dignity to drink it, and transformed it, as it were, into a scepter. In a hashish trance, you can certainly talk about the hand's need for a scepter. This trance was not very rich in great coinages. I remember *Haupelzwerg*, which I tried to explain to the others.[5] More comprehensible is my reply to a statement of Gert's that I received with my usual boundless contempt. The formula for this contempt was, "What you are saying is as much use to me as a Magdeburg roof."[6]

It was strange at the beginning, when I could just sense the coming intoxication and I compared objects to the instruments of an orchestra that was just tuning up before the start of the performance.

[Translated by Rodney Livingstone]

CHAPTER 6

[On the Experiment of June 7–8, 1930]

JUNE 7–8, 1930. Very deep hashish depression. Feeling of passionate love for Gert.[1] Utterly forsaken in my armchair; suffering from her being alone with Egon. And at the same time, strangely enough, he was also feeling jealous, was constantly threatening to throw himself out of the window if Gert should leave his side—which, however, she did not do. Doubtless there were already sufficient grounds for my sadness. A chance encounter two days ago, which made it clear just how much the circle of my activities has narrowed. And not long before that (a piano upstairs is bothering me) the memorable night with Margaret[h]e Köppke, who insisted so on my being a "child" that I could plainly hear how much this word of hers signified the opposite of "man," and who pressed me so to realize what was my own.[2] I found Bloch's formula—"poor, old, sick, and forsaken"—applicable to myself in at least three of its provisions.[3] I have my doubts whether things will turn out well for me. The future promises me only the most uncertain prospects, as regards country [*transcription uncertain*], place and position, manner of dwelling: many friends, but I go from hand to hand; many talents, but none I can live on and some a hindrance to my work. It was as though these thoughts aimed to take me captive, and this time were doing just that, practically ty-

ing me down—so much so that I was inclined to see, in all the insulting things Gert was saying, revelations of what she could read in my face, just as I was inclined to make room in myself for Köppke's riddles with facts and warnings. I'm so sad that in order to live, I must seek almost continually to please. But I was also very determined to let Gert please me. As she danced, I drank in every line she set in motion, and there is much I could say about the dance and about this night if Satan himself were not upstairs playing the piano. I talked while I watched her, conscious of borrowing many things from Altenberg—words and phrases of his, perhaps, such as I myself had never read in his works.[4] I tried to describe her dance for her while she was in the midst of it. What was magnificent above all was that I saw everything about this dance, or, better, so infinitely much that I realized clearly: everything—that would be inconceivable. What is the attachment of all historical ages, even of the Kafir, or of many words, thoughts, sounds—of Africa or of ornaments, for example—to hashish, compared with the red Ariadne-thread which the dance gives us [to find our way] through its labyrinth.[5] I allowed her every opportunity to transform herself in point of character, age, and sex; many identities passed over her back like fog over the night sky. When she danced with Egon, she was a slender, black-caparisoned youth; they both executed extravagant figures there in the room. Alone, she greatly admired herself in the mirror. The window at her back was black and empty; through its frame the centuries entered by jolts,[6] while with each of her movements—so I told her—she took up a destiny or let it fall, wound it about herself, becoming completely enmeshed, or strained after it, let it lie or looked kindly on it. What odalisques can do for pashas when they dance before them, Gert did for me. But suddenly there broke from her lips this torrent of abusive

language, which she appeared to check just before the last, most furious outpouring; I had the feeling she got control of herself, that she held the worst back, and I am not likely to be deceiving myself about this. Then came the time alone, and hours later the attempts at consolation with forehead and voice, but by that point the grief at the interior of my sofa bastion had risen too high, and I could no longer be saved. And in this way the most inexplicable visions were also drowned, with nothing, almost nothing, salvaged from the flood—nothing if not, floating on the surface of this black torrent, the steeple of a Gothic church tower made of wood, wooden steeple with stained-glass windows, dark green and red.

CHAPTER 7

Egon Wissing:
Protocol of the Experiment of March 7, 1931

W[alter] B[enjamin], one capsule at nine o'clock, first effect at eleven o'clock.[1]

LYING DOWN, *with eyes closed most of the time, completely calm. My notes concluded at one o'clock. About a quarter-hour after onset of effects, sticks the index finger of his left hand straight up into the air, maintaining this position unchanged for at least an hour.*

A depressive element and a euphoric element were continually struggling against each other. But presumably it was not just this conflict that was responsible for the difficulty or impossibility which the test subject experienced—and experienced negatively—whenever in the course of his intoxication he tried to follow through with real intellectual construction; the effects of the eucodal, which the subject took at ten thirty (0.02 subcutaneously), no doubt also played a role here.[2] *A further general characteristic of the experience was the continual recurrence to toys or color pictures for children.*

Subject makes several vain attempts to meet the intoxication halfway, and here the bedroom skylight played a part, even before the blue of the night sky, under the influence of the h[ashish], had assumed an unusual in-

tensity and sweetness—whence the explanation, later, that the window had "something of a heart. . . ."

"Cowering windmills from a children's book"; agricultural images came up again later too. There was an excursus on the "field roller," with ironic allusions to the Osthilfe.[3] *With its handle deeply hidden somewhere in the grain, the field roller is turned by a goblin, and brings about the ripening of the seed.*

The raised arm, or rather the hand, "masks itself," is covered over with glazed paper in different colors. The subject explains that his arm is a "lookout tower [Aussichtsturm], or rather an insight-tower [Einsichtsturm] —images go in and out—and it is none the worse for that."

At this point, I get a telephone call requiring me to go to a neighboring apartment on our floor where a woman needs to see me right away for medical reasons. I hastily put myself in some order and stand up, whereupon the test subject shows himself to be extremely unhappy and gives vent to these feelings: "Don't leave me alone," and so forth. I am gone for about ten minutes and then I return. Subject is lying in exactly the same position, the index finger still pointing upward, and he gives me to understand that I've missed a great deal.

Particularly impressive, according to the subject's later statements and recollections, was the image of a staircase, subsequently a "staircase of ice," a section of which appeared in the form of a miniature spiral staircase, on whose every step along the outer wall appeared—only to melt away—a very delicately colored, tiny puppet-like figure, which the test subject, conscious that he was trivializing the matter and rendering it crudely, called "little puppet man." There was talk later of "puppet women" also. Everything in miniature, all very playful.

Then came a period in which vegetable forms occupied the foreground. These representations were partly accompanied by an underlying sadistic

feeling. Playing the main role here were very tall, thin trees, strictly symmetrical in form. It was not long before these trees became metallic. Concerning one of them, the subject provided the following explanation: this tree was not originally rigid and unmoving but had once been something living, as was still apparent in the beating of the two great wings, to the right and to the left, beneath the crown. (Thus, to some extent, a variant of the Daphne motif.)[4] *According to the test subject, the trees make snapping movements; he refers to them as "snapping trees" and, in an earlier context, "hesitant little trees."*[5] *(Compare this to what was said about the little puppet man.)*

The leading motifs of the following series of representations are characterized by the test subject himself as "heraldic." Among them, there now appears for the first time the representation of rhythmically agitated surfaces of water, which then persists for a while. The visual mirror-relation of heraldic emblems, the displaced correspondence met with in the mirror images of water no less than on armorial bearings, is given expression by the subject in the verse "Wellen schwappen—Wappen schwellen" ["Waves splash—armorial bearings swell"]. This sequence of words was arrived at as a last, finally satisfying attempt after several others. The test subject accorded the greatest importance to this verse, convinced that here the same mirror symmetry which rules the images of waves and armorial bearings was manifest also in language—and not merely by imitation but in originary identity with the optical image. The subject holds forth in learned fashion: "Quod in imaginibus, est in lingua" ["Insofar as it is in images, it is in language"].

Water continues to dominate the image world, although the representation of the sea, which was the basis for the waves, now recedes before that of rivers. Their water, actually, appears nowhere. That is to say, it is completely covered over with fruit-like formations, later with fruit itself (pri-

marily berries) arranged in layers on tiny boats resembling tartlets, which press up against one another. The test subject speaks of "berry cradles," "onion cradles," and also of "garden fruit cradles." "All oceans and rivers filled with little fruit cradles." The vegetable forms finally evolved from fruit into garlands; at issue was a "science of garlands."

Next came what seemed to be a period of deeper absorption, from which the original protocol retains the sentence: "One hears not only with the ears but with the voice." The test subject provides an explanation of this: in a state of intoxication, the voice is not just a spontaneous organ, but a receptive one; in speaking, it explores, as it were, that of which it speaks. For example, in speaking of the stone steps of a staircase, it receives in its own sonority, through imitating, the hollow spaces in the porous stone.

An image that arises without an identifiable context: fishing nets. "Nets spread over the whole earth before the end of the world." The earth, here, completely deserted and gray.

There follows a brief phase of oriental images: "Elephants, wandering pagodas. The legs of the elephants sway like fir trees."

A forest appears to the subject. He comments, somewhat ironically, that people are always talking about the allure of the woods. But why exactly are the woods so alluring? The Mexicans have an answer to this question. "In Mexican, to enter the forest means to die. That's *the allure of the woods."*

The subject declares that his intoxication is "bad." He blames the morphine for his "demoralization," by which he means that the knowledge yielded by the intoxication is for him relatively scant. In the same spirit, he remarks somewhat later that he's experiencing "no proper intoxication at all, but a decorator intoxication and a réclame intoxication."[6]

"Grotto made of fretwork," "fretsaw nose," and, with consonantal inflection, "treadsaw play."[7]

In connection with this, the account of the field roller (see above).

"Good, well-trained playthings." Later, a new characterization of the intoxication: "pony intoxication, plaster intoxication," "affected, silly, and plastery"—"everything with filling like marzipan . . . Must one differentiate sweets according to various regions of the senses?" Here, evidently, was a serious start at finding out what makes it possible to talk of sweetness in the various regions of sensation and experience. Actually formulated, however, was only a single sentence, in which a position vis-à-vis this experiment in knowledge may be indicated: "Knowledge of the sweet is not sweet."

"Boxed state . . ." "The images want to enclose the man in an isolated chamber, where he must enter them."

New characterization of the intoxication: "Department store intoxication, everything having a mass character." (Compare the abovementioned rivers filled with masses of things of the same kind.) Linked with this: "One will have to put up with the fact that a great many people are like oneself." This statement had reference not only to the mental aspect but also, and perhaps above all, to the bodily.

"Snowflakes . . . shaggy heads . . . childish." The test subject describes in detail how the snow is poured from the sky out of "chests of cotton wool."

"Images want only their own flow—it's all the same to them."

"Memory is a bath."

Then came something said in reference, perhaps, to the seductive sweetness of the intoxication, particularly of the mo[rphine] intoxication: "To cast purposes to the winds is a properly sporting activity."

Later: "I'd like to write something that comes from things the way wine comes from grapes."

(Here a small lacuna in the protocol.)

Afterward, the test subject describes "an unbelievably high Venice, where

the sea can't be seen." The fact that here the sea is hidden, or, better, reserved, was asserted by the test subject with a feeling of triumph. He underscored this by citing the heraldic motto of the city: "Venetiani non monstrant marem" ["Venetians do not point to the sea"]. Subject lingers over Venice and speaks of "spurious, murky enchanted lagoons."

"Mill that lays a grievance as a hen lays an egg."

"City with gardens where people take a little hashish." (A kind of large public pleasure garden.) "The advantages of universal ha[shish] consumption ought to be weighed impartially."

Then comes a little fantasy whose kinship with Kubin's whimsies is noted by the test subject himself: "It's the story of the roof modiste, who designs roofs for the city according to the latest models."[8]

With the remark that "the Pope's Swiss Guard" come from "Saxon Switzerland," the protocol breaks off.

CHAPTER 8

Fritz Fränkel:
Protocol of the Experiment of April 12, 1931 [Fragment]

W[alter] B[enjamin] 0.4 gram, 10:15 P.M. (It later became apparent that the dose was not sufficient to produce a deep intoxication.)[1]

A CERTAIN MINIMAL EFFECT made itself felt after three-quarters of an hour, although doubtless it was greatly helped along by the test subject. Particularly interesting, in the context of the following protocol, is a remark having to do with a "competition between yellow and green." The remark was occasioned by prolonged contemplation of a piece of tinfoil.

"Halos are highland health resorts for the angels." "The heavenly Jerusalem is a highland health resort." That's important. Inversely: "Health resort is a religious concept."

"If Freud were to do a psychoanalysis of creation, the fjords would come off badly."

"City of armaments: old city made of discarded arms and armor, built for the sunset. The name of the city can be Rauhenbein [Roughneck]."

A dog barks. Test subject speaks of a jagged dog and explains barking as an acoustic serration. The jagged dog is contrasted with the polished dog—that is, the quiet dog. (The underlying idea, presumably, is that the dog must be unpolished if it barks.)

"Ornaments are colonies of spirits."

CHAPTER 9

Fritz Fränkel: Protocol of April 18, 1931

11 P.M., W[alter] B[enjamin] 1.0 gram[1]

12 A.M.: SUDDEN LAUGHTER, repeated short bursts of laughter.

"I'd like to be transformed into a mouse mountain." (Naturally: "Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.")[2]

"This is more simulin than hashish." This remark made especially clear how much the test subject was at first prey to mistrust in the quality of the preparation.

"We'll make this Enoch the nonpaying spectator at this event." When I laugh at this, the subject comments: "One can't talk with amarazzim."[3]

The subject suddenly calls out in a stridently military manner: "Attention! Present pens!" This manner of speaking recurs later on. Subject begins to show some confidence in the quality of the preparation. He says it's a preparation suitable for "seesawing." This formulation bespeaks a convergence of two distinct lines of thought: on the one hand, an accounting of the phase-character of the experience and, on the other hand, an expression of the continuing mistrust, in which there is a "seesawing" between sobriety and intoxication.

Subject notices a crumpled piece of paper lying next to a bottle on a little

table, and in a delighted tone he designates it "little monkey" and also "stereoscope monkey," "little stereoscope."

It is a sign of the very bright and friendly character of the intoxication that the subject's pleasurable relation to his own existence does not manifest itself here, as it usually does, in arrogance and distance. His exultation is put to use in an opposite direction—namely, as tenderness toward things and, above all, toward words. The subject employs a striking number of diminutives. The abovementioned play with the word "stereoscope monkey" is wholly characteristic of the way in which the hashish intoxication sets going a kind of volatilization of ideas into word aromas, so much so that here, for example, the proper ideational substance of the word—the root idea "monkey"—ends up completely evaporating.

The mistrust returns. The test subject declares that there's been "no effect at all." Then, in a military tone again: "At ease!" He looks once more at the ball of paper and calls toward it: "Come, little ape!" "The ape apes." "Aping, after-aping, fore-aping."[4]

A dog that has been barking on the street for some time is given the name "hashish hound" by the test subject.

Mistrust breaks through one last time. The subject says he has felt "no trace of an effect, though various objects are beginning to dispose themselves in such a way that I could *feel an effect." The room we're in is said to be "lacking charm." The subject explains that "oriental palaces belong here. I am not thinking of describing them, although that might suit the palaces." Then the subject says he would like "to see something beautiful."*

Subject picks up a newspaper and makes a serious attempt to read it—is therefore not really occupied with any inner visions brought on by intoxication. Of course, for whatever reason, physical or mental, the reading attempt fails. (Presumably, the cause is physical and *mental.) In any case, the perception of the letters on the page is disrupted by a scotoma,*[5] *which*

causes them to flicker. The subject finds himself inexplicably amused by the dullest political slogans. Ironic play with the names Frick and Munter. "Pu-pu-pu peace, respect and order."[6]

At this point, the test subject crosses the threshold of intoxication (properly speaking).

"All colors take their rise from the snow—you must have regard for the colors."

As in earlier experiments, the subject raises his right arm, supported at the elbow, to a vertical position, with the index finger pointing upward. "Perhaps my hand will slowly turn into a little branch." Now, it is to a high degree characteristic of the subject's way of thinking that this remark should be immediately followed—if not simultaneously accompanied—by the idea that the hand which has ramified into a branch will be covered with hoarfrost. But this idea absolutely did not *find expression in words during the period of the intoxication. Rather, it had its true function in being continually deferred, so that for long stretches of the drug experience one could speak of the technical operation of a frame narrative, a construction of stories within a story: two elements of an idea come apart, in such a way as to accommodate in the interval between them the full image complement of a new phase. It is as though one were dealing with an "Open Sesame" directed at the idea. The idea itself comes apart and opens the way to new stores of images. This constantly repeated mechanism is one of the most intensive sources of pleasure in the hashish intoxication.*

"Everything is tinged with a faint 'perhaps.'"

"Vermin, go home!"

"The cylinder is the elongation of the man."

Test subject occupies himself again with the room, this time in a friendlier spirit than before, calling it "little room" and addressing it in the familiar: "Little room, I'd like to say something beautiful to you."

At a particular point, in a context that is no longer reconstructable, the subject feels the need to characterize one of his observations as a digression. The expression "curving in the glaze" comes to him for this purpose. It was accompanied by an optical representation corresponding in full to the phrase.

Subject no longer has any doubts about the efficacy of the preparation now, and he exclaims: "Merck and Company may be depended upon."[7] *Subject has a "parade ground full of ideas," a "Tempelhofer Field full of ideas," and he then says: "The little room and the preparation make a Tempelhofer Field full of ideas."*[8] *The test subject turns to colors again, uttering the word "green" in a long, singing tone (held for about twenty seconds), and then he says: "Green is also yellow."*

So far as this last remark is concerned, it surely means what it says, but also presumably more than what it says. Fundamentally, there is the experience—simultaneous with the singing "ü" sound in "grün" [green])—of a representation of something yellow next to that of something green. These representations can be circumscribed most readily by the image of a luxuriant meadow whose border spills yellow sand.—Concerning the perseveration of the word "green": here, perhaps for the first time, is manifest the intensive pathic accent of the intoxication, which later comes into play more forcefully. The lengthened vowel implies in a certain sense that the voice is being drawn out *by the sound, just as the idea of green has appertaining to it something attractive, enticing, something that draws one ever further into the distance. "As clouds wander over the canopy of heaven," so, at this stage of the intoxication, the voice wanders in pursuit of the sound, and the inner eye in pursuit of things. When, therefore, it is averred that yellow is also green, this is as much as to say: the yellow that rises before the eyes of the intoxicated man at this point is carried by the gentle but irresistible current of green.*

"Thoughts of colors are delicate, and equally delicate are the people and flowers of Norway: delicate and very ardent." (This remark, involving as it does the working of the voluntary, associative memory, may be seen as a moment in a more lucid phase.)

The deepest stage of the intoxication begins, it would seem. Introduced with much ado, the proclamation of secrets begins—a proclamation continually deferred. Unfortunately, the second of these secrets cannot be recovered, since at this point the compiler of the protocol was very energetically prohibited from taking notes. This behavior speaks for the depth of the intoxication, for at shallower stages the vanity of the intoxicated man is gratified by the fact that his words are being noted down. The first of these secrets:

"It is a law: There is a hashish effect only when one speaks about the hashish."

The test subject urgently requests that the window be shut, no doubt because he is disturbed by the noises coming from outside. I close the window, and my action is greeted with a lively show of gratitude. In this context arises a speculation on "good deeds."

"When someone has done something good, then perhaps that good deed becomes the eye of a bird."

An observation is in order here. It is a characteristic as well as regular feature of hashish intoxication that the act of speaking is bound up with a sort of resignation; that from the beginning the intoxicated person has renounced the possibility of speaking about what really moves him; that he applies himself to the expression of something incidental, trifling, in place of the real but unsayable; that not infrequently, when he's speaking, he feels he's become guilty of insincerity; and that—what is remarkable and very much in need of elucidation—the utterance broken off and deflected, as it were, may be far more striking and profound than that which would correspond to the "intended meaning."

The movement of the pencil over the paper appears to the test subject "like a grazing over silk [Seide]," "a little grazing of the page [Seite]." The latter phrase is repeated several times.

The test subject claims to be feeling "an exceedingly strong effect, combined with the most powerful things I've ever felt with hashish." The character of the intoxication seems to him now "indescribably festive." At this point the compiler of the protocol was energetically prohibited from taking notes, and the second secret made its appearance. Dominating was the representation of a narrow little square, which was surrounded by very tall houses whose roofs practically closed over him like a vault. And in connection with this the feeling of unexampled solemn festivity given off by such comfortable, rundown, and at the same time uninhabited buildings; it was in reference to this deep stratum of imagery, which moreover emerged only fleetingly, that the following remark was made: "Everything is closed over me." (Compare the image sphere of funerary architecture.)

Test subject expresses the wish that the protocol-writer not address him in the familiar as "du." The reason for this: "I am not I; I am the hashish at certain moments." Physical manifestations are also particularly strong at this stage. "My legs as though tied together," "spasm," leading to "Spasmus Semper's Land of Youth," which the subject characterizes as "an epileptic novel."[9]

The following sentence—"Important thoughts must be put to sleep for a long time"—may relate to the previously mentioned process of deferment in the expression of a thought, that hesitation which can sometimes, as was said, lead to total suppression of the thought. There follows, in a "deep phase, in which I descend almost at will, and to a mighty depth," the third "great" secret. This is in fact a crystallization of the basic character of this particular intoxication. It is designated the "secret of wandering." What defines wandering is not purposeful movement, not a spontaneity, but a

mere, unfathomable being-drawn. Wandering is a pathic state; it may be understood in reference to the clouds, if one were prepared to follow their drift with the feeling that they are not moving on their own but are being drawn.

"Color needs only to shade."

"No one will be able to understand this intoxication; the will to awaken has died."

Some chocolate offered to the subject is declined with the words: "Eating belongs to another world." He is "separated from food by a glass wall."

"A veil as though before a face which is itself a veil. That is much too ethereal to be discussed any further; that is something only hashish knows about."

In this regard, it should be mentioned that the apparition of this veiled face which is itself only a veil was of a singular vividness, such that days later the test subject still had it clearly before him. It was a small, oval head; behind the veil were other veils, each strictly modeled in the form of a face, and these veils did not hang still but were lightly in motion, as though stirred by a breeze.

"All noises swell to form landscapes." I sigh, whereupon the test subject remarks: "A sigh is the same as a prospect; we've already sighed prospects." (The distance stretched before his eyes as though breathed forth. Distance approximates to breath in proportion as it is removed from the gaze.) The problem of the connectedness of the senses is posed here, the question of how far they extend in the same or in different layers.

The mood suddenly shifts. Test subject calls out abruptly: "New turn in the intoxication!" and, laughing repeatedly, says he's now "suddenly in an operetta mood." Moreover, the subject's consciousness of the strength of the intoxication continued unabated, as is demonstrated by his comment that "the intoxication could last thirty hours."

Arm and index finger are raised high in the air, without support. The raising of the arm is "the birth of the kingdom of Armenia."

Earlier, when lifting his arm: "Now then, let us turn to astrology." The upraised arm appears here as a telescope.

Test subject suddenly falls asleep (1:15 A.M.).

CHAPTER 10

Crock Notes

I

THERE IS NO MORE valid legitimation of crock than the consciousness of having suddenly penetrated, with its help, that most hidden, generally most inaccessible world of surfaces which is constituted by the ornament.[1] We know it surrounds us almost everywhere. Nevertheless, our power of comprehension fails before the ornament as it does before few other things. Ordinarily, we scarcely see it at all. In crock, however, its presence occupies us intensely. This goes so far that, with a feeling of profound well-being, we playfully draw on those experiences of ornament which marked themselves out to us in the years of childhood and in times of fever; they are formed of two distinct elements, which both attain to their highest working in crock. On the one hand, it is a question of the multivalence of the ornament. There is not one that cannot be considered from at least two different sides—namely, as surface structure or else as linear configuration. In most cases, however, the individual forms, which can be united in very different groupings, allow for a plurality of configurations. This experience in itself already points to one of the innermost characteristics of crock: its inexhaustible capacity for extracting from

one and the same state of affairs—for example, a certain décor or the picture of a landscape—a multiplicity of aspects, contents, meanings. It will be shown elsewhere that this manifold interpretability, the primal phenomenon of which is in the ornament, is only another side of the peculiar experience of identity disclosed by crock. The other feature with which the ornament confronts the imagination of crock resides in its perseveration. It is highly characteristic that the imagination tends to present objects to the smoker—and small objects especially—in series. The endless sequences, in which always the same utensils, little animals, or plant forms rise up before him, represent, we might say, inchoate, barely formed designs for a primitive ornament.

In addition to the ornament, there are certain other things of the observable world at its most commonplace which transmit their inherent meaning and significance only to crock. Among the things of this sort are curtains and lace. Curtains are interpreters of the language of the wind. They give to its every breath the form and sensuality of feminine forms. And they make it possible for the smoker who immerses himself in their play to taste all the joy that an accomplished dancer could give him. But if the curtain is filigreed, it can become the instrument of a still more curious play. For this lacework will in some measure supply the smoker with patterns, which he lays on the landscape in order to transform it in the oddest ways. The lace makes the landscape coming into view behind it subservient to fashion. There are old-fashioned picture postcards on which a "Greetings from Bad Ems" divides the city into promenade by the waters, railroad station, monument to Kaiser Wilhelm, school, and mountain view, each enclosed in its own separate little circle. Cards of this kind can best convey an idea of how the lace curtain exercises its dominion

in the image of the landscape. I tried to deduce the flag from the curtain, but I no longer remember the results.

Colors can have a very strong effect on the smoker. A corner of S[elz]'s room was decorated with shawls that hung on the wall. On a chest covered with a lace shawl were a couple of glasses with flowers. In the shawls and in the flowers the color red predominated—in the most diverse shades. I made the discovery of this corner late and quite suddenly, at an already advanced stage of the fête. Its effect on me was almost stupefying. For a moment, it seemed to me that my task was to discover the meaning of the color with the help of this absolutely incomparable instrument. I named this corner the "Laboratoire du Rouge." My first attempt to work in it did not succeed. But I came back to it later. All I remember of this undertaking at present is that the problematic for me had become displaced. It became more general and extended chiefly to colors. What distinguished them seemed to me to be, above all, that they possessed form, that they made themselves perfectly identical to the matter in which they appeared. Yet insofar as they looked quite alike on very different things—for example, a flower petal or a sheet of paper—they appeared as intermediaries or go-betweens in the realms of matter: only through them could the most widely divergent of these realms be wholly united with one another.

II

A moralizing attitude, which gets in the way of essential insights into the nature of crock, has also drawn attention away from a decisive side of intoxication. In question is the economic side. For it is not going too far to say that a principal motive for taking the drug is, in very

many cases, to augment the drug-taker's resources in the struggle for existence. And this goal is by no means a fictive one; on the contrary, in very many cases it is actually reached. This will surprise no one who has been able to observe the increased power of attraction which the poison very frequently confers on the person who takes it. The phenomenon is as undeniable as its causes are obscure. One can assume that, in the course of producing various changes in the individual, the poison does away with a series of phenomena which for the most part are a hindrance to him. Surliness, obstinacy, self-righteousness are traits rarely encountered among devotees of the drug. Contributing to this, so long as the intoxication lasts, is the poison's sedative effect, and a not insignificant component of this effect lies in the subject's conviction that, where meaning and value are concerned, nothing can possibly be a match for the poison. Now all this can give to even the most unassuming natures a sovereignty which they did not originally possess—and especially not in the practice of their professions. This frame of mind will be particularly valuable to the individual, because it announces itself not only to others—by the changes in character and, especially, in physiognomy—but also, and perhaps even in the first instance, to him, to the drug-taker himself. In fact, just as the mechanism of inhibitions tends to make itself felt in a shaky, hoarse, husky, or strained voice, whose altered features will be more readily apparent to the speaker than to the listener, so, inversely, the neutralization of this same mechanism manifests itself, at least to the senses of the subject, primarily through a surprising, precise, gratifying command of his own voice.

It is very likely that the relaxation fundamental to these processes is not always a direct effect of the drugs. Rather, in cases where several intoxicated persons come together, something different is added.

A number of drugs have in common the property of heightening to such an extraordinary degree the pleasure of being together with partners that, not infrequently, a sort of misanthropy arises among those involved. Associating with people who do not share in their practices seems to them as worthless as it is irksome. It goes without saying that the charm at issue here is by no means always attributable to the level of the conversation. On the other hand, that which makes these gatherings so special for many of those who regularly organize them is presumably more than a simple loss of inhibitions. What seems to occur here is something like a consolidation of the feelings of inferiority, the complexes and disorders, that have their seat in the different partners. The intoxicated suck out of one another, so to speak, the bad substances of their being; it is as though they have a cathartic effect on one another. Obviously, this entails extraordinary risks. On the other hand, this circumstance can explain the great, often irreplaceable value which this vice possesses for precisely the most familiar constellations of daily life.

The opium-smoker or hashish-eater experiences the power of the gaze to suck a hundred sites out of one place.

Morning sleep after smoking. It's as though, so I said, life had been sealed up like food preserved in a can. Sleep, however, [is] the liquid in which it lay, and which now, saturated with all the aromas of life, is poured off.

"For me, the handkerchiefs hanging on the wall occupy the space between 'torch' and 'torchon.'

"Red is like a butterfly alighting upon each shade of the color red."[2]

CHAPTER II

Fritz Fränkel: Protocol of the Mescaline Experiment of May 22, 1934

Walter Benjamin. May 22, 1934.[1]

At ten o'clock receives twenty milligrams of Merck mescaline subcutaneously in the upper thigh.

THE FIRST PERIOD *of the reaction is characterized initially in terms of the mood. After ten minutes, an alteration in mood, in the sense of a dissatisfaction, becomes evident. F[ränkel] briefly leaves the room, which has meanwhile grown dark, and W[alter] B[enjamin] remains alone by the open window.*

On F's return, B describes his impression of the window in the following words: "If a dead man were to feel longing for some object from his former life—this window, for example—then it would appear to him just as I see it now. The dead and present objects can awaken a longing such as we otherwise know only at the sight of someone we love."

In the period following, the ill humor is at first considerably aggravated. It is manifest outwardly in rather erratic motor phenomena, such as restless turning about, fidgety movements of the arms and legs. B crumples, begins lamenting his own state, the indignity of this state. He speaks of it as

an "impertinence." He attempts a psychological derivation of impertinence, characterizing it in terms of the "misty world of affects," by which he means to say that in an earlier stage of life the affects were not yet clearly differentiated, and what is later called ambivalence was the rule; he speaks of the wisdom of impertinence, and seeks an approach to this same phenomenon through the explanation that the true cause of impertinence lies in the child's chagrin at not being capable of magic. The first experience the child has of the world is not that adults are stronger but rather that he cannot make magic.

During this period, an enormous sensitivity to acoustic and optical stimuli develops by degrees. At the same time, the test subject comments critically that the conditions for the experiment are unfavorable. An experiment of this sort ought to take place in a palm grove. Moreover, the dose administered is for B much too weak; this train of thought recurs throughout the experiment and occasionally finds expression in bitter indignation.

While having his pulse checked, B shows himself to be extraordinarily sensitive to the slightest contact. (Pulse itself unchanged.) In a discussion of this sensitivity, or at least in connection with it, the phenomenon of tickling acquires great importance. Attempt to explain tickling as a thousandfold coming-at-you, laughter as defense.

A reflection dealing with other innervations and with a different world of objects shows clear signs of belonging to a deeper stage of intoxication; further, it undergoes continual transformation during the entire course of the experiment. This alteration in the mood of the test subject is revealed first of all in remarks on caressing, dawdling, and combing.[2] These activities are tied more or less closely to the being of the mother. Caressing: to make what is done come undone, to wash life in the flow of time. It is the true office of the mother. Combing: in the morning the comb first drives out

dreams from the hair. Combing is also a work of the mother. (The stepmother combs with a poisoned comb: Snow White.) In the comb, too, is a consolation and an undoing of what's done. Then dawdling [Säumen]: here the reflection passes from the mother to the child. The child's dawdling, his lolling about: he plucks the fringes of experiences, unravels them; therefore the child lolls. Being indolent and taking one's sweet time [Saumseligkeit]: no doubt, the best part of one's feeling of happiness could be thought of in this way.—As an antithesis to this world, the masculine element emerges occasionally, and is symbolized by, among other things, the railing. "For the hem [Saum] lies flat, and the railing stands."

Shutting his eyes tightly, B claims to see no colored images appear. Instead, he sees before him ornamental figures, which he describes as ornamentation fine as hair. It recalls somewhat the ornamentation found on Polynesian oars. Ornamental tendencies are manifest in words as well. The test subject provides some small samples of this. In this context, the refrain is described, for example, as the decorative border of the song.

B himself calls attention to the fact that, when he lights a match, his hand looks to him completely waxen.

The light is turned on and Rorschach inkblots laid out.[3] *At first, they are simply refused as unbearable. "It's the same ticklishness."*

Meanwhile, the peevishness, the mood of discontent, keeps returning. B himself now calls for the Rorschach images once again in order to get over the bad mood.

Image VII is interpreted as a seven standing on a zero. (Before this, the images had been declined yet again, with the remark: "I already refused that earlier.") VII is described as having aesthetic value. As F moves it a little closer, test subject says: "No closer! I may not touch it. If I touch it, I can say nothing more." To explain his interpretation of seven on zero, B takes a piece of paper and writes: "7 stands on the o*." Now, for an extended*

period, and independently from the Rorschach images, the test subject occupies himself with writing, having just made the observation that his handwriting is like a child's.

Image II is initially interpreted as Yakut women who are holding on to one another (?),[4] *and Image I as two poodles, of which the first, the one in front, disappears; now a third poodle develops.*

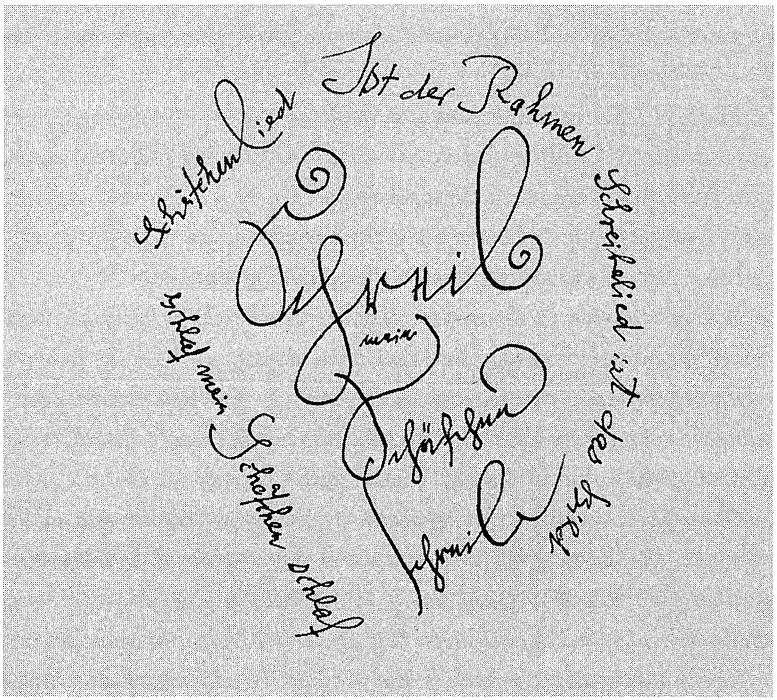
VII a r gray-blue: pelican-sheep, a little woolen sheep.

In connection with this interpretation, a lullaby-drawing.

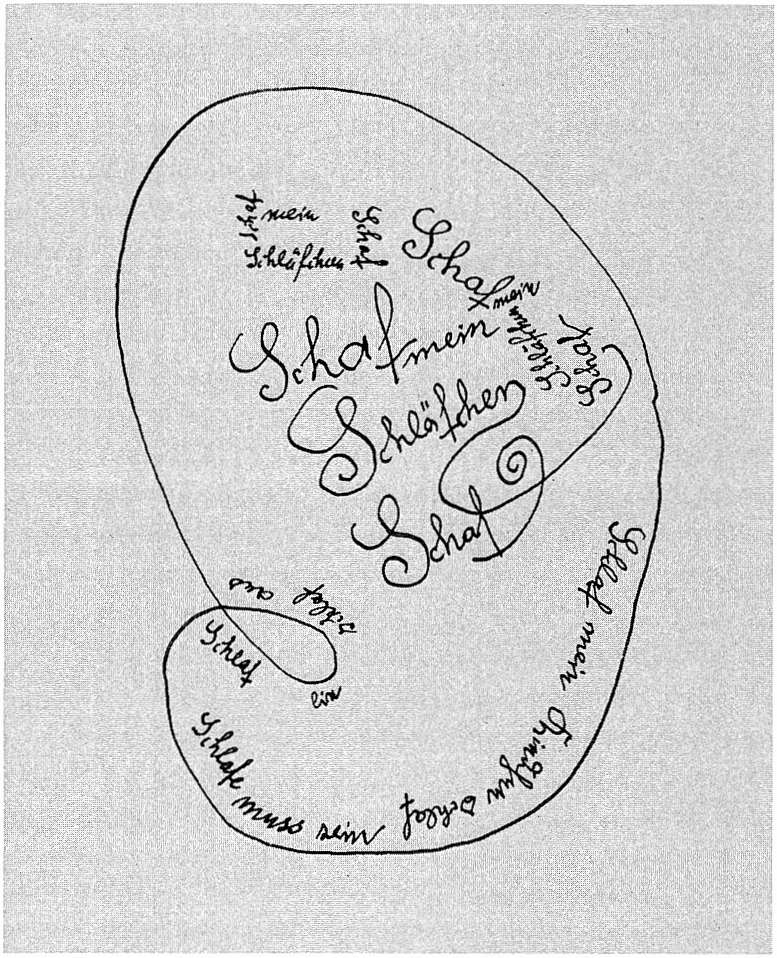
B calls attention to the embryo form. Several embryo forms are contained within the drawing. [See Figures 1 and 2.]

III interpreted as four Parcae.[5] *Accompanying the interpretation: a picture in writing, in which the character of the witches is supposed to be indicated by the individual words.* [See Figure 3.]

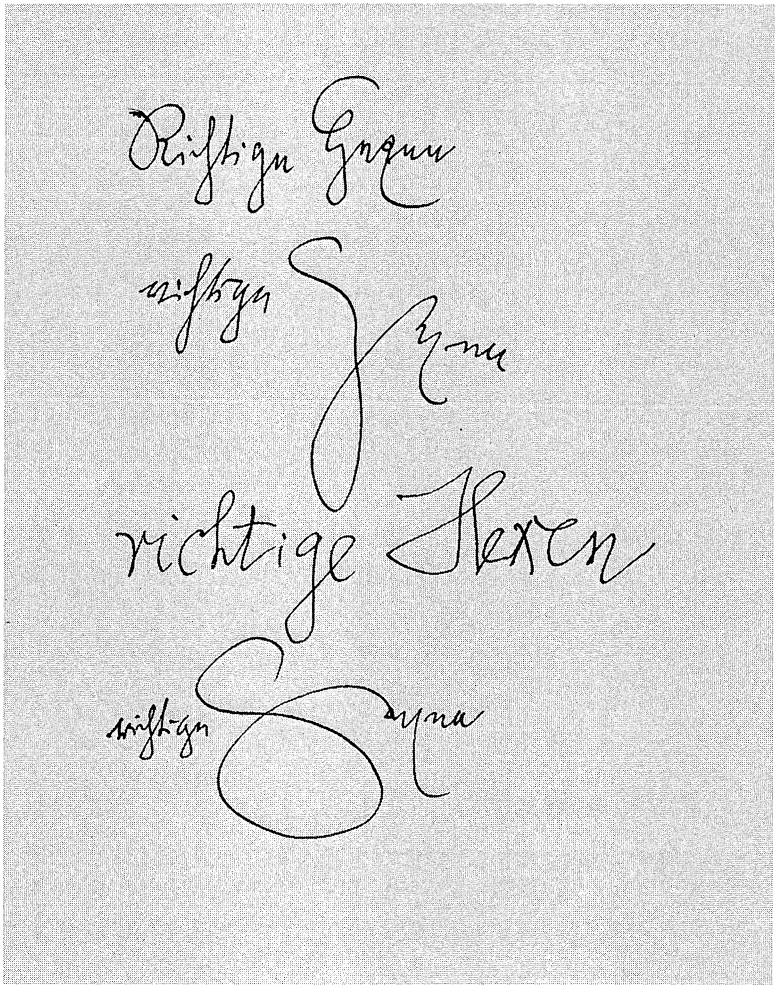
Once again, darkness. During the next phase in the experiment, which marks the deepest stage of the intoxication, the test subject's hands assume peculiar positions. While lying down, the subject stretches out his forearm, the hand held open and the fingers slightly curled. Now and again the position changes, so that the hand is held upright. The different positions are often held for a long time—up to ten minutes. B supplements the observation of this phenomenon with important commentaries on understanding catatonic behavior. The test subject interprets the essence of catatonia, while explaining it with reference each time to the particular sphere of ideas or representations reigning at that moment. He first draws attention to the fact that, on opening his eyes, he was able to determine, not without surprise, that his hands were actually in a position other than what he had supposed. To this remark he adds a very strange explanation of the more or less magical influence which his hands have on the test director. What he says is: "The actual position of my hands is entirely different from the position they have in my mind; the latter you can gather from my facial ex-



1. "The little sheep reads. Is the frame a writing-song is it an image. Sleep my little sheep sleep. Write my little sheep write."



2. "Sheep my little sleep sheep. Sheep. My little sleep sheep. Sleep my little child sleep. Sleep must be. Go to sleep sleep your fill [*Schlaf ein schlaf aus*]. Sheep my little sleep sheep."



3. "Veritable sorceresses," repeated four times.

pression. Accordingly, there is for you an enormous tension between my facial expression and the position of my body. This tension exerts a magic power over you." Then comes a brief example from the sphere of ideas about catatonia: "My hand," says the test subject, "is now no less a town fountain (?) than was the Queen of Sheba.[6] *It has a pedestal on which you can write what seems fitting for a monument: "Diese Hand ist allerhand. / Meine Hand ist sie genannt."*[7]

The interpretation of catatonia is now as follows: The test subject compares the fixed position of his hand to the outline of a drawing which a draftsman has set down once and for all. Just as it is now possible for the draftsman, by means of innumerable modifications in the hatching, to keep making changes or adding nuances to his picture, so also it is possible for the catatonic, through tiny modifications in innervation, to alter the sphere of ideas associated with the catatonic state. The extraordinary economy of this procedure makes for a gain in pleasure. This gain in pleasure is what matters to the person in a catatonic state.

A particular action performed by the test subject catches F's attention. The subject lets his raised hands, which are not touching, very slowly glide at a great distance from his face. The test director later tells of having had an irresistible idea of flying as he witnessed this. B explains it to him in the following manner: The hands were gathering a net, but it was not only a net over his head; it was a net over the whole of space. Hence F's idea of flying.

Elaborating on the net, B proposes a variation on Hamlet's rather anodyne question, "To be or not to be": Net or mantle—that is the question. He explains that the net stands for the nocturnal side of existence and for everything that makes us shudder in horror. "Horror," he remarks, "is the shadow of the net on the body. In shuddering, the skin imitates the mesh-

work of a net. This explanation comes after a shudder has traveled over the test subject's body.

When F asks if he can leave to go home, a condition of doubt and despair is produced in the subject. His breathing is quickened; there are frequent groans, and violent, jerky movements of the shoulders—manifestations which in fact had appeared earlier when he was in a similar state. F decides to remain, but that changes nothing so far as the inconsolable sorrow of the subject is concerned. He calls sorrow the veil that hangs unmoving and pines for a breeze that would rouse it.

Introduced with a witticism: Elisabeth will not rest until the Nietzsche Archive has been turned into a Förster-Haus.[8] *The image of the Förster House is vividly present to the test subject. In the course of his account, it appears now as a school, now as hell, now as a bordello. The test subject is a hardened, obdurate post in the wooden banister of the Förster House. What he has in mind is a sort of wood carving in which, among other ornamental figures, animal forms appear; these, he explains, are in effect degenerate scions of the totem pole. The Förster House has something of those red-brick structures that appeared resplendent on sheets of cutout patterns in an especially dark, bloody red. It also has something of the building-block structures one made as a child. From the cracks between the building stones grow tufts of hair.*

Together with the net, the Förster House was the most considerable image presentation. A chamois' foot in the Förster House: test subject refers with the greatest energy to Little Cock and Little Hen atop Nut Mountain and to the riffraff, since the Förster House would be found here too.[9]

Observed in passing: that children are best consoled with sweets. These sweets come up again when the subject describes his hands (which are in a catatonic position) as glazed with sugar. Following this is the revelation of

the secret of Struwwelpeter[10]*—a revelation which, after repeated solemn announcements, is repeatedly withheld from the test director. (Punishment for the insufficient dosage.)*

The secret of Struwwelpeter: these children are all naughty and impertinent only because no one gives them any presents. The child who reads about them, however, is well behaved because, already on the very first page, he has received so many presents. A little downpour of presents from the dark sky falls there on the first page. In showers like the rainshower, presents fall upon the child—presents which veil the world to him. A child must get presents, or else he will die or break into pieces or fly away, like the children in Struwwelpeter. *That is the secret of Struwwelpeter.*

Among other remarks: fringes are important. It's by the fringes that one recognizes the material. Stuff and nonsense.

[Notes on the Same Experiment][11]

Being of the mother: to make what is done come undone. To wash life in the flow of time.

Womanly works: hemming [*Säumen*], knotting, plaiting, weaving.

"Net or mantle—that is the question."

Horror—the shadow of the net on the body. In shuddering, the skin imitates the meshwork of a net. But the net is the world net: the whole universe is caught in it.

Dawdling [*Säumen*]—the dawdling of children, their lolling about: they draw out the fringes of experiences, unravel them. Therefore children loll. Being insolent and taking one's "sweet time"—no doubt the best part of this feeling of happiness could be thought of in such terms. It is with the Mothers that Faust first experiences horror; then

comes the moment when he begins to dally.[12] In the midst of his manly endeavors, the moment catches him by surprise. That's the moment when the Mother fetches him home.

Two sorts of material for weaving: vegetable, animal. Tufts of hair, tufts of grass. The secret of hair: on the boundary between plant and animal. From the cracks of the Förster House grow tufts of hair.

The Förster House: (she has turned the Nietzsche Archive into a Förster House) the Förster house is of red stone. I am a spindle in its banister: an obdurate, hardened post. But that is no longer the totem pole—only a wretched copy. Chamois' foot or horse's hoof of the devil: a vagina symbol.

Net, mantle, hem, and veil. Sorrow, the veil that hangs unmoving and pines for a breeze that would rouse it.

Ornaments fine as hair: these models, too, come from the world of weaving.

Poem on the hand: Diese Hand / ist aller Hand / meine Hand / ist sie genannt.[13] It has a pedestal on which you can write what seems fitting for a monument. It is somewhere other than where I think it is. The hand of a person in a catatonic state and his pleasure: he combines the minimum change in innervation with the maximum change in representations. This economy is his pleasure. It is like a draftsman who has fashioned the outline of his drawing once and for all, and now, through continually new hatchwork, makes ever-new pictures out of it.

Impertinence is the child's chagrin at not being capable of magic. His first experience of the world is not that adults are stronger but rather that he cannot make magic.

The pleasure that obtains despite all is in the coming: the feeling of phases.

The secret of Struwwelpeter: these children are all naughty and impertinent only because no one gives them any presents. Hence, the child who reads about them is well behaved because, already on the very first page, he receives so many presents. A little downpour of presents falls there from the dark night sky. Thus, it is always raining in the worlds of childhood. In veils like the veils of rain, presents fall upon the child—presents which veil the world to him. A child must get presents, or else he will die or break into pieces or fly away, like the children in *Struwwelpeter.* That is the secret of Struwwelpeter.

Wisdom of impertinence
Misty world of affects (the affects are at first undifferentiated)
In the case of tickling, laughter represents a lifesaving (defense)
The moment I touch the Rorschach images, I can say nothing more
Little pelican-sheep
Queen of Sheba and the fountain: the hand
Hand of wax
Demand for palm trees

CHAPTER 12

[Undated Notes]

FIRST, ABSOLUTELY inappreciable illusion at six o'clock on the dot.[1] A car passes by with a roar. Two pine trees together seem to jump.

A certain assuagement.

If I were to speak, everything would probably be clearer, since so much is awakened by self-love.

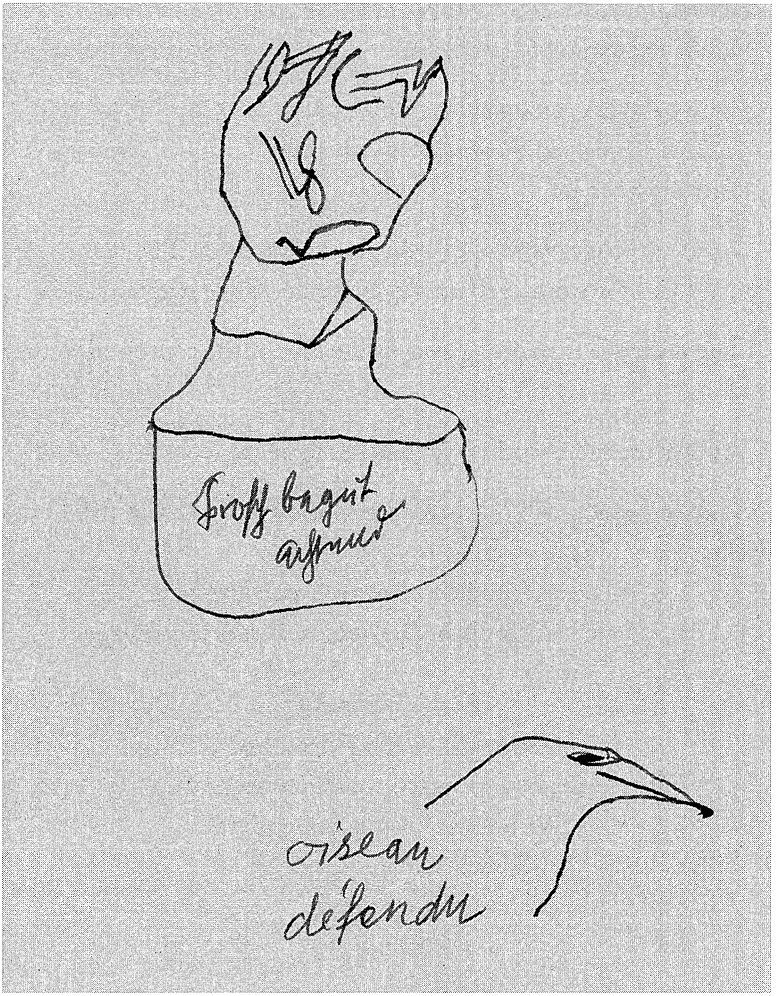
you once [*word illegible*] me something
every image is a sleep in itself[2]
only *one* way home, suddenly precipitous
je brousse les images [*words illegible*][3]

everything that is there becomes a landmark in the region [*transcription uncertain*]

Meanwhile the old woman has become young [*transcription uncertain*] again.

To what is the man attached.

Action is a means of
Dreaming
Reflection is a means of
Staying awake.



4. "Frog making a survey. Protected/forbidden bird."

What rest is
More magnanimous in rhythms

Tribunal: He comes and he annihilates Gimignano[4]
Images are already *dwelling* everywhere
dwelling not here

I was no longer [the one] who lived over there. But first so abstract. I had the world. [*Words illegible*] entered the marketplace?

The walk of a man going away is the soul of the conversation they had.

Always the same world—yet one has patience

I've seen why, when one is hiding in the grass, one can fish in the earth

The imagination comes to be civilizing—
Ah, if I could have again *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*[5]

Humorous Berlin
Servants

In the Berlin fog
Gottheil's *Berlin Fairy Tales.*[6]
Oh brown-baked column of victory
With sugar mist in winter days[7]
French cannons overrule
My question.
Barbarossa 1771[8]

Now, that was something, but, my God, these are incarnations of an inferior sort.[9]

Prisoners who voluntarily handed over to me their medals and badges of honor.

On hashish: The state of death is identical to that of sovereignty [*Herrschaft*].

Completed Texts

Myslovice—Braunschweig—Marseilles

The Story of a Hashish Trance

THIS STORY IS NOT MINE. Whether the painter Eduard Scherlinger (whom I saw for the first and last time the evening he told it) was a great storyteller or not is not a matter I wish to enter into, since in this age of plagiarism there are always listeners prepared to ascribe a story to you when you have insisted that you are only reporting it faithfully.[1] Nevertheless, this is a story I heard one evening at Lutter and Wegener's, one of Berlin's few classic locations for storytelling and listening. We were a small party, sitting comfortably at a round table, but the conversations had long since dried up and were carried on only fitfully, in an undertone, in groups of two or three that paid no attention to each other. At one point (I never learned in what context), my friend Ernst Bloch, the philosopher, let fall the remark that there was no one who had not at some point in his life just missed becoming a millionaire.[2] People laughed. They thought this was just one of his paradoxes. But then the conversation took a strange turn. The more we considered his remark, debating its pros and cons, the more each of us in turn began to take it seriously, until each person arrived at the point where he had come close to getting his hands on the millions. A number of curious stories then came to

light, among them this one by the late lamented Scherlinger. I reproduce it here, as far as possible in his own words.

"Following my father's death," he began, "I inherited a not insignificant sum of money, and hastened to make arrangements for my departure for France. I was particularly fortunate to be able to go to Marseilles before the end of the 1920s, since that was the home of Monticelli, to whom I owe everything in my art, not to mention all the other things that Marseilles symbolized to me at the time.[3] I had left my funds invested in a small private bank that had advised my father to his satisfaction for decades on end, and whose junior director was, if not a close friend, at any rate someone with whom I was very well acquainted. Furthermore, he was emphatic in agreeing to keep a watchful eye on my capital; should a favorable opportunity to invest it arise, he would notify me immediately. 'The only point to remember,' he said, 'is that you must leave us a code name.' I looked at him blankly. 'We can carry out instructions per telegram only if we are able to protect ourselves against fraud. Suppose that we wire you and the telegram falls into the wrong hands. We can protect ourselves against the consequences by agreeing on a secret name with you—a name you would use instead of your own for transmitting instructions by telegraph.' I understood, but was momentarily in some perplexity. It is not so easy to slip suddenly into a strange name as if it were a costume. There are countless thousands available; the realization that they are all arbitrary has a paralyzing effect, but even more paralyzing is the feeling—an almost unconscious feeling, scarcely capable of articulation—that the choice is irrational but may have grave consequences. Feeling like a chess player who is in a difficult situation and would rather not move at all, but who is finally forced to

make a move, I said, 'Braunschweiger.' I knew no one of this name, and had never been to the town from which it derives.

"Around noon on a sultry day in July, I arrived at Saint-Louis Station in Marseilles after a four-week interlude in Paris. Friends had recommended the Hotel Regina, close to the harbor. I left myself just enough time to make sure I obtained a room, tried out the bedside lamp and the taps, and set out to explore. Since this was my first visit to the town, I faithfully followed my old rule for travelers. Unlike average tourists—who, as soon as they arrive in a city, begin hanging awkwardly around the alien city center—I make it my policy to head straight for the suburbs so as to learn my way around the outskirts. I soon discovered the rightness of this principle in the case of Marseilles. Never had the first hour been as profitable as the one I spent in and among the inner port and dock installations, the warehouses, the poorer neighborhoods, the scattered refuges of the destitute. Outlying districts are, in fact, the town in a state of emergency; they are the terrain upon which the great decisive battles between town and country are continuously being fought out. These battles are nowhere more bitter than between Marseilles and the Provençal countryside. It is the hand-to-hand combat of telegraph poles with agaves, barbed wire with prickly palms, the stench of steamed-up corridors with the damp, sycamore-lined, brooding squares, short-winded flights of steps with overbearing hills. The long rue de Lyon is the road Marseilles blasted through the landscape, exploding it into Saint-Lazare, Saint-Antoine, Arenc, and Septèmes, burying it in the clouds of shrapnel created by the languages of every nation and business concern: Alimentation Moderne, Rue de Jamaïque, Comptoir de la Limite, Savon Abat-Jour, Minoterie de la Cam-

pagne, Bar du Gaz, Bar Facultatif. And over everything hang dust clouds comprising an amalgam of sea salt, lime, and mica. From there the road goes on to the most distant quays, which are used only by the largest oceangoing liners, beneath the piercing rays of the slowly setting sun, between the battlements of the Old Town on the left and the bare hills or quarries on the right, down to the towering Pont Transbordeur, which closes off the rectangular Old Port resembling a huge town square that the Phoenicians had reserved for the sea.[4] Up to now, I had followed my path quite alone amid the most densely populated suburbs. But from this point on, I found myself caught up in the procession of celebrating sailors, dockworkers returning home, and housewives out for a stroll, all interspersed with children, which wended its way past the bazaars and cafés, disappearing finally in the side streets, with only the occasional sailor or flâneur, such as myself, persevering to the great central artery, La Canebière, the center of commerce, the stock exchange, and tourism. Right through the bazaars, the mountain range of souvenirs extends from one end of the port to the other. Seismic forces have created this massif of paste, seashells, and enamel in which inkwells, steamers, anchors, mercury thermometers, and sirens are all jumbled together. To my mind, however, the pressure of a thousand atmospheres, beneath which this entire world of images crowds together and rears up and then arranges itself, appears to be the same force embodied in the sailors' calloused hands which fumble women's breasts and thighs after a long voyage; and the lust that brings forth a red or blue velvet heart from the geological world and fixes it to the little boxes made of seashells, so that it can be used as a pincushion, is the same force that reverberates through the streets on payday. Preoccupied with such thoughts, I had long since left La Canebière behind

me; without really noticing much, I found myself walking beneath the trees of the allée de Meilhan, past the barred windows of the cours Puget, until finally chance, which was still guiding my steps on my first visit to the town, led me to the passage de Lorette, the town mortuary, the narrow courtyard where in the sleepy presence of a number of men and women the whole world seemed to shrink into a single Sunday afternoon. I was overcome by a feeling of sadness, like the sadness I love to this day in the light in Monticelli's paintings. I believe that, at such moments, the stranger experiences something that normally only long-standing inhabitants can discern. For it is childhood that is able to seek out the sources of sadness; and to understand the mournful side of such celebrated and radiant cities, it is necessary to have lived in them as a child.

"It would be a fine piece of romantic embroidery," Scherlinger said with a smile, "if I were to go on and describe how I landed up in some disreputable harbor dive and obtained some hashish from an Arab who worked in the boiler room of a freighter, or who was perhaps a porter. But such embroidering would be of no use to me, since I was probably closer in spirit to those Arabs than to the tourists whose journeys led them to such dives. Closer in one respect at least, since I carried my own hashish with me on my travels. I do not believe that what induced me to take some hashish at around seven o'clock in the evening, upstairs in my room, was the unworthy desire to escape my depressed mood. It is more likely that this was an attempt to yield entirely to the magic hand with which the city had gently taken hold of me by the scruff of the neck. As I have said, I was not a novice when it came to using the poison; but whether it was my almost daily feelings of homesickness, or the paucity of human contact and the uncongenial localities, never before had I felt

myself so at home in the community of cognoscenti whose records of their experiences—from Baudelaire's *Paradis artificiels* to Hesse's *Steppenwolf*—were perfectly familiar to me.[5] I lay on my bed, read, and smoked. Through the window opposite me, far below, I could see one of the narrow black streets of the port district that intersect the body of the city like the marks of a knife. I was thus able to enjoy the absolute certainty that I could surrender to my dreams quite undisturbed in this city of hundreds of thousands in which not a single soul knew of my existence. But the expected effects failed to appear. Three-quarters of an hour had already passed, and I began to feel suspicious about the quality of the drug. Or had I been carrying it around for too long? Suddenly there was a loud knock at my door. This was truly baffling. I was frightened out of my wits, but made no attempt to open the door, and instead asked who it was, without altering my position in the slightest. The bellhop: 'A gentleman wishes to speak to you.' 'Have him come up,' I said; I did not have the courage, or perhaps just the presence of mind, to ask his name. I stood where I was, leaning against the bedpost with my heart palpitating, and stared at the open door until a uniform appeared. The 'gentleman' was a telegram boy.

"'Advise purchase of 1,000 Royal Dutch stop Friday opening price stop Wire approval.'

"I looked at my watch; it was eight o'clock. An urgent telegram would reach the Berlin branch of my bank first thing the following morning. I dismissed the messenger with a tip. I felt my mood alternate between anxiety and irritation. Fear of having to deal with a business matter, a chore, at precisely this time; irritation because the drug was still not working. The wisest course seemed to me to set out for the main post office at once, since I knew it was open until mid-

night for telegrams. In view of my adviser's reliability in the past, I had no doubt that I should agree to his suggestion. On the other hand, I was afraid that the hashish might start to work after all and that I might forget my code name. It was better to waste no time.

"As I went downstairs, I thought about the last time I had taken hashish—it had been several months previously—and how I had been unable to still the pangs of hunger that had suddenly overwhelmed me late one night in my room. It seemed advisable to buy a bar of chocolate. In the distance a shopwindow beckoned, with candy jars, shiny tinfoil wrapping, and piles of beautiful pâtisserie. I entered the shop and was pulled up short. There was no one to be seen. But I was less struck by this than by the very strange chair that compelled me to admit for good or ill that in Marseilles people drank chocolate while enthroned on high chairs that bore a remarkable resemblance to the chairs used to perform operations. At that moment the owner came running from across the street wearing a white coat, and I had just time enough to decline, with a loud laugh, his offer of a shave or a haircut. Only now did I realize that the hashish had begun to work, and if I had not been alerted by the way in which boxes of powder had changed into candy jars, nickel trays into chocolate bars, and wigs into cakes, my own loud laughter would have been warning enough. For the trance always begins with such laughter, or sometimes with a less noisy, more inward, but more joyful laugh. And now I recognized it by the infinite tenderness of the wind that was blowing the fringes of the curtains on the opposite side of the street.

"Then the hashish eater's demands on time and space came into force. As is known, these are absolutely regal. Versailles, for one who has taken hashish, is not too large, or eternity too long. Against the background of these immense dimensions of inner experience, of ab-

solute duration and immeasurable space, a wonderful beatific humor dwells all the more fondly on the infinite questionableness of everything in existence. Moreover, my steps became light and sure, so that the stony, uneven ground of the great square I was crossing seemed like the surface of a country road along which I strode at night, like an energetic hiker. At the end of this huge square, however, was an ugly, symmetrical hall-like building, with an illuminated clock over the door: the post office. I can say now that it is ugly; at the time, I would not have conceded this. Not just because we do not wish to hear of ugliness when we have taken hashish, but primarily because the post office aroused a profound feeling of gratitude in me—this gloomy building, waiting expectantly for me, its every nook and cranny ready to receive and transmit the priceless confirmation that would make me a rich man. I could not take my eyes off it; indeed, I felt how much would have escaped me if I had approached too closely and lost sight of the building as a whole and especially the welcoming beacon of its moon-like clock. At that moment I could hear the chairs and tables of a little bar, a truly disreputable one no doubt, being moved around in the darkness. I was still sufficiently far away from dangerous districts, but even so, there were no middle-class customers; at most, alongside the proletarians were a few local shopkeepers' families. I went and sat down in this little bar. It was, in this direction, the farthest point accessible to me without danger—a circumstance I had gauged, here in my intoxication, with the same accuracy with which, when utterly weary, one is able to fill a glass with water exactly to the brim without spilling a drop—something one can never do with sharp senses. But scarcely had the hashish felt me relax than its magic began to have an effect, with a primitive sharpness I have never experienced before or since. It turned me into

a physiognomist. I am normally quite unable to recognize people I know only slightly, or to retain people's features in my memory. But on this occasion I positively fixed my gaze on the faces around me, faces I would normally have had a twofold reason to avoid. On the one hand, I would not have wished to attract their gaze; and on the other, I would have been unable to endure the brutality of their expressions. I now suddenly understood how, to a painter (hadn't it happened to Leonardo and many others?) ugliness could appear as the true reservoir of beauty—or better, as its treasure chest: a jagged mountain with all the inner gold of beauty gleaming from the wrinkles, glances, features. I especially remember an infinitely bestial, vulgar male face in which the "line of renunciation" struck me with sudden violence. It was, above all, men's faces that had begun to interest me. Now began the game, which I played for quite a while, of recognizing someone I knew in every new face. Often I knew the name, often not. The deception vanished as deceptions vanish in dreams: not in shame, not compromised, but peacefully and amiably, like a being who has performed his service. The face of my neighbor, however—a petty bourgeois to judge by his appearance—kept changing in shape, expression, and fullness. His haircut and black-rimmed glasses gave him, by turns, a severe and a good-humored expression. Of course, I told myself that a man could not change so quickly, but it made no difference. And he had already experienced much of life when he suddenly changed into a schoolboy in a small town in the east. He had an attractive, tastefully furnished room to work in. I asked myself: Where has this young man managed to acquire so much culture? What does his father do? Draper or corn merchant? Suddenly, I realized that this was Myslovice.[6] I looked up. And then I saw, right at the end of the street—in fact, at the end of the town—

the high school in Myslovice; and the school clock (had it stopped? it didn't seem to be moving) pointed to shortly after eleven. Classes must have started again. I became completely immersed in this image, but couldn't find firm ground again. The people who had captured my attention just before (or was it two hours before?) seemed to have been completely erased. 'From century to century, things grow more estranged'—this thought passed through my mind. I hesitated mightily before tasting the wine. It was a half bottle of Cassis, a dry wine that I had ordered. A piece of ice was floating in the glass. I do not know how long I gazed at the images within it. But when I next looked up at the square, I saw that it tended to change with each person who stepped onto it, as if it formed a figure about him that, clearly, had nothing to do with the square as he saw it but, rather, had to do with the view that the great portrait painters of the seventeenth century—in accordance with the character of the dignitary whom they placed before a colonnade or a window—threw into relief with this colonnade, this window.

"I was suddenly roused with a start from the deepest contemplation. I was completely alert, and was conscious of only one thing: the telegram. It had to be sent off at once. To stay awake, I ordered black coffee. An eternity seemed to pass before the waiter appeared with the cup. I greedily seized it; I smelled the aroma; the cup was almost at my lips, when my hand stopped suddenly—Who could say whether it was automatic or from astonishment? I suddenly saw through the instinctive haste of my arm; I became aware of the beguiling scent of the coffee, and only now recollected what makes this drink the high point of pleasure for every hashish eater—namely, the fact that it intensifies the effect of the poison like nothing else. This is why I wanted to stop, and I did stop in time. The cup did not

touch my lips. Nor did it touch the tabletop. It remained suspended in mid-air before me, held by my arm, which began to go numb and clutched it in a rigid grip like an emblem, a sacred stone or bone. My gaze fell on the creases in my white beach trousers—I recognized them, the creases of a burnous. My gaze fell on my hand—I recognized it, a brown, Ethiopian hand. And while my lips stayed firmly sealed, refusing drink and speech in equal measure, from within me a smile rose up to them—a supercilious, African, Sardanapoline smile, the smile of a man about to see through the world and its destinies and for whom nothing remains a mystery anymore, either in objects or in names. Brown and silent, I saw myself sitting there. Braunschweiger.[7] The "Open Sesame" of this name, which was supposed to contain all the riches of the earth in its interior, had opened up. Smiling a smile of infinite compassion, I now began to think for the first time of the Braunschweigers who lived a wretched life in their little central German town, in complete ignorance of the magic powers they possess thanks to their name. At this moment, by way of confirmation, the bells of all the church towers of Marseilles rang out to signal midnight, like a solemn choir.

"It was now dark; the bar was closing. I strolled along the quay and read, one after another, the names of the boats tied up there. As I did so, an incomprehensible gaiety came over me, and I smiled in turn at all the names of the girls of France: Marguerite, Louise, Renée, Yvonne, Lucile. The love promised to these boats by their names seemed to me wonderful, beautiful, and touching. Next to the last one, there was a stone bench: 'Bank,' I said to myself, and felt disapproval that it too did not have its name in gold letters on a black background.[8] This was the last lucid thought I had that night. The next one came from the midday papers, which I read sitting on a

bench by the water in the hot noon sun: 'Sensational Rise in Royal Dutch.'

"Never," the narrator concluded, "have I felt so ebullient, clear, and festive after a hashish trance."

[Translated by Rodney Livingstone]

Hashish in Marseilles

Preliminary Remark:[1] One of the first signs that hashish is beginning to take effect is "a dull feeling of foreboding and uneasiness; something strange, ineluctable, is approaching. . . . Images and chains of images, long-submerged memories appear; whole scenes and situations are experienced. At first they arouse interest, now and then enjoyment, and finally, when there is no turning away from them, weariness and torment. By everything that happens, and by what he says and does, the subject is surprised and overwhelmed. His laughter, all his utterances, happen to him like external events. He also attains experiences that approach inspiration, illumination. . . . Space can expand, the ground tilt steeply, atmospheric sensations occur: vapor, an opaque heaviness of the air. Colors grow brighter, more luminous; objects more beautiful, or else lumpy and threatening. . . . All this does not occur in a continuous development; rather, it is typified by a continual alternation of dreaming and waking states, a constant and finally exhausting oscillation between totally different worlds of consciousness. In the middle of a sentence this sinking and rising to the surface can occur. . . . All this the subject reports in a form that usually diverges very widely from the norm. Connections become difficult to perceive, owing to the frequently sudden rupture of all

memory of past events; thought is not formed into words; the situation can become so compulsively hilarious that the hashish eater for minutes on end is capable of nothing except laughing. . . . The memory of the intoxication is surprisingly clear. . . . It is curious that hashish poisoning has not yet been experimentally studied. The most admirable description of the effects of hashish is by Baudelaire *(Les Paradis artificiels).*" From Joël and Fränkel, "Der Haschisch-Rausch," *Klinische Wochenschrift,* 5 (1926), 37.[2]

Marseilles, July 29. At seven o'clock in the evening, after long hesitation, I took hashish. During the day, I had been in Aix. With the absolute certainty (in this city of hundreds of thousands where no one knows me) of not being disturbed, I lie on the bed. Yet I am disturbed, by a little child crying. I think three-quarters of an hour have already passed. But it is only twenty minutes. . . . So I lie on the bed, reading and smoking. Opposite me always this view of the belly of Marseilles. The street I have seen so often is like a knife-cut.

At last I left the hotel, the effects seeming nonexistent or so weak that the precaution of staying at home was unnecessary. My first port of call was the café on the corner of the Canebière and the Cours Belsunce. Seen from the harbor, the one on the right; therefore not my usual café. What now? Only a certain benevolence, the expectation of being received by people in a kindly way. The feeling of loneliness is very quickly lost. My walking stick begins to give me a special pleasure. One becomes so tender, fears that a shadow falling on the paper might hurt it. The nausea disappears. One reads the notices on the urinals. It would not surprise me if this or that person came up to me. But when no one does I am not disappointed, either. But it's too noisy for me here.

Now the hashish eater's demands on time and space come into force. As is known, these are absolutely regal. Versailles, for one who has taken hashish, is not too large, or eternity too long. Against the background of these immense dimensions of inner experience, of absolute duration and immeasurable space, a wonderful, beatific humor dwells all the more fondly on the contingencies of the world of space and time. I feel this humor infinitely when I am told at the Restaurant Basso that the kitchen has just been closed, while I have just sat down to feast into eternity. Afterward, despite this, the feeling that all this is indeed bright, frequented, animated, and will remain so. I must note how I found my seat. What mattered to me was the view of the old port that one got from the upper floors. Walking past below, I had spied an empty table on the balcony of the second story. Yet in the end, I reached only the first. Most of the window tables were occupied, so I went up to a very large one that had just been vacated. As I was sitting down, however, the disproportion of seating myself at so large a table caused me such shame that I walked across the entire floor to the opposite end to sit at a smaller table that became visible to me only as I reached it.

But the meal came later. First, the little bar on the harbor. I was again just on the point of retreating in confusion, for a concert—indeed, a brass band—seemed to be playing there. I only just managed to explain to myself that it was nothing more than the blaring of car horns. On the way to the Vieux Port, I already had this wonderful lightness and sureness of step that transformed the stony, unarticulated earth of the great square that I was crossing into the surface of a country road along which I strode at night like an energetic hiker. For at this time I was still avoiding the Canebière, not yet quite sure of my regulatory functions. In that little harbor bar, the hashish

then began to exert its canonical magic with a primitive sharpness that I had scarcely felt until then. For it made me into a physiognomist, or at least a contemplator of physiognomies, and I underwent something unique in my experience: I positively fixed my gaze on the faces that I had around me, some of which were of remarkable coarseness or ugliness. Faces that I would normally have avoided for a twofold reason: I would neither have wished to attract their gaze nor have endured their brutality. It was a very advanced post, this harbor tavern. (I believe it was the farthest accessible to me without danger—a circumstance I had gauged, here in my intoxication, with the same accuracy with which, when utterly weary, one is able to fill a glass with water exactly to the brim without spilling a drop, something one can never do with sharp senses.) It was still sufficiently far from the rue Bouterie, yet no bourgeois sat there; at the most, besides the true port proletariat, a few petty-bourgeois families from the neighborhood. I now suddenly understood how, to a painter (hadn't it happened to Rembrandt and many others?), ugliness could appear as the true reservoir of beauty—or better, as its treasure chest: a jagged mountain with all the inner gold of beauty gleaming from the wrinkles, glances, features. I especially remember an infinitely bestial, vulgar male face in which the "line of renunciation" struck me with sudden violence. It was, above all, men's faces that had begun to interest me. Now began the game, which I played for quite a while, of recognizing someone I knew in every face. Often I knew the name, often not. The deception vanished as deceptions vanish in dreams: not in shame, not compromised, but peacefully and amiably, like a being who has performed his service. Under these circumstances, there was no question of loneliness. Was I my own company? Surely not so undisguisedly. I doubt whether that would have made me so

happy. More likely this: I became my own most skillful, fond, shameless procurer, gratifying myself with the ambiguous assurance of one who knows from profound study the wishes of his employer.—Then it began to take half an eternity until the waiter reappeared. Or, rather, I could not wait for him to appear. I went into the barroom and paid at the counter. Whether tips are usual in such taverns I do not know. But under other circumstances, I should have given something in any case. Under the influence of hashish yesterday, however, I was on the stingy side; for fear of attracting attention by extravagance, I succeeded in making myself really conspicuous.

Similarly at Basso's. First I ordered a dozen oysters. The man wanted me to order the next course at the same time. I named some local dish. He came back with the news that none was left. I then pointed to a place on the menu in the vicinity of this dish, and was on the point of ordering each item, one after another, but then the name of the one above it caught my attention, and so on, until I finally reached the top of the list. This was not just from greed, however, but from an extreme politeness toward the dishes, which I did not wish to offend by a refusal. In short, I came to a stop at a pâté de Lyon. "Lion paste," I thought with a witty smile, when it lay clean on a plate before me; and then, contemptuously: "This tender rabbit or chicken meat—whatever it may be." To my lionish hunger, it would not have seemed inappropriate to satisfy itself on a lion. Moreover, I had tacitly decided that as soon as I had finished at Basso's (it was about half past ten) I would go elsewhere and dine a second time.

But first, back to the walk to Basso's. I strolled along the quay and read, one after another, the names of the boats tied up there. As I did so, an incomprehensible gaiety came over me, and I smiled in turn at all the Christian names of France. The love promised to these boats

by their names seemed wonderfully beautiful and touching to me. Only one of them, Aero II, which reminded me of aerial warfare, I passed by without cordiality, exactly as, in the bar that I had just left, my gaze had been obliged to pass over certain excessively deformed countenances.

Upstairs at Basso's, when I looked down, the old games began again. The square in front of the harbor was my palette, on which my imagination mixed the qualities of the place, trying them out now this way, now that, without concern for the result, like a painter daydreaming on his palette. I hesitated before tasting the wine. It was a half bottle of Cassis. A piece of ice was floating in the glass. Yet it went excellently with my drug. I had chosen my seat on account of the open window, through which I could look down on the dark square. And when I did so from time to time, I noticed that it had a tendency to change with each person who stepped onto it, as if it formed a figure about him that, clearly, had nothing to do with the square as he saw it but, rather, had to do with the view that the great portrait painters of the seventeenth century—in accordance with the character of the dignitary whom they placed before a colonnade or a window—threw into relief with this colonnade, this window. Later I noted as I looked down, "From century to century, things grow more estranged."

Here I must observe in general: the solitude of such intoxication has its dark side. To speak only of the physical aspect, there was a moment in the harbor tavern when a violent pressure in my diaphragm sought relief through humming. And there is no doubt that truly beautiful, illuminating visions were not awakened. On the other hand, solitude works in these states as a filter. What one writes down the following day is more than an enumeration of impressions. In the

night, the trance sets itself off from everyday reality with fine, prismatic edges. It forms a kind of figure, and is more easily memorable. I would say: it shrinks and takes on the form of a flower.

To begin to solve the riddle of the ecstasy of trance, one ought to meditate on Ariadne's thread.[3] What joy in the mere act of unrolling a ball of thread! And this joy is very deeply related to the joy of intoxication, just as it is to the joy of creation. We go forward; but in so doing, we not only discover the twists and turns of the cave into which we're venturing, but also enjoy this pleasure of discovery against the background of the other, rhythmic bliss of unwinding the thread. The certainty of unrolling an artfully wound skein—isn't that the joy of all productivity, at least in prose? And under the influence of hashish, we are enraptured prose-beings raised to the highest power.

A deeply submerged feeling of happiness that came over me afterward, on a square off the Canebière where the rue Paradis opens onto a park, is more difficult to recall than everything that went before. Fortunately I find in my newspaper the sentence, "One should scoop sameness from reality with a spoon." Several weeks earlier I had noted another, by Johannes V. Jensen, which appeared to say something similar: "Richard was a young man with understanding for everything in the world that was of the same kind."[4] This sentence had pleased me very much. It enabled me now to bring the political, rational sense it had had for me earlier into juxtaposition with the individual, magical meaning of my experience the day before. Whereas Jensen's sentence (as I had understood it) amounted to saying that things are, as we know them to be, thoroughly mechanized and rationalized, while the particular is confined today solely to nuances, my new insight was entirely different. For I saw only nuances, yet these

were the same. I immersed myself in contemplation of the sidewalk before me, which, through a kind of unguent with which I glided over it, could have been—precisely *as* these very stones—also the sidewalk of Paris. One often speaks of stones instead of bread.[5] These stones were the bread of my imagination, which was suddenly seized by a ravenous hunger to taste what is the same in all places and countries. Yet I thought with immense pride of sitting here in Marseilles in a hashish trance; of who else might be sharing my intoxication this evening, and of how few actually were. Of how I was incapable of fearing future misfortune, future solitude, for hashish would always remain. The music from a nearby nightclub that I had been following played a part in this stage. G. rode past me in a cab. It happened suddenly, exactly as, earlier, from the shadows of the boats, U. had suddenly detached himself in the form of a harbor loafer and pimp.[6] But there were not only known faces. Here, while I was in the state of deepest intoxication, two figures (citizens, vagrants, what do I know?) passed me as "Dante and Petrarch." "All men are brothers." So began a train of thought that I am no longer able to pursue. But its last link was certainly much less banal than its first, and led on perhaps to images of animals.

"Barnabé," read the sign on a streetcar that stopped briefly at the square where I was sitting. And the sad, confused story of Barnabas seemed to me no bad destination for a streetcar going into the outskirts of Marseilles.[7] Something very beautiful was going on around the door of the dance hall. Now and then a Chinese man in blue silk trousers and a glowing pink silk jacket stepped outside. He was the doorman. Girls displayed themselves in the doorway. My mood was free of all desire. It was amusing to see a young man with a girl in a white dress coming toward me, and to be immediately obliged to

think: "She got away from him in there in her shift, and now he is fetching her back. Well, well." I felt flattered by the thought of sitting here in a center of dissipation, and by "here" I meant not the town but the little, not-very-eventful spot where I found myself. But events took place in such a way that the appearance of things touched me with a magic wand, and I sank into a dream of them. At such hours, people and things behave like those little stage sets and figurines made of elder pith in the glazed tin-foil box, which, when the glass is rubbed, become electrically charged and fall at every movement into the most unusual relationships.

The music, which meanwhile kept rising and falling, I called the "rush switches of jazz." I have forgotten on what grounds I permitted myself to mark the beat with my foot. This is against my education, and it did not happen without inner disputation. There were times when the intensity of acoustic impressions blotted out all others. In the little bar, above all, everything was suddenly submerged in the noise of voices, not of streets. What was most peculiar about this din of voices was that it sounded entirely like dialect. The people of Marseilles suddenly did not speak good enough French for me. They were stuck at the level of dialect. The phenomenon of alienation that may be involved in this—which Kraus has formulated in the fine dictum, "The more closely you look at a word, the more distantly it looks back"—appears to extend to the optical.[8] At any rate, I find among my notes the surprised comment: "How things withstand the gaze!"

The intoxication subsided as I crossed the Canebière and at last turned the corner to have a final ice cream at the little Café des Cours Belsunce. It was not far from the first café of the evening, in which, suddenly, the amorous joy dispensed by the contemplation of some

fringes blown by the wind had convinced me that the hashish had begun its work. And when I recall this state, I would like to believe that hashish persuades Nature to permit us—for less egoistic purposes—that squandering of our own existence that we know in love. For if, when we love, our existence runs through Nature's fingers like golden coins that she cannot hold and lets fall so that they can thus purchase new birth, she now throws us, without hoping or expecting anything, in ample handfuls toward existence.

[Translated by Edmund Jephcott]

Addenda

From *One-Way Street* (1923–1926)

To the Planetarium

IF ONE HAD TO EXPOUND the teachings of antiquity with utmost brevity while standing on one leg, as did Hillel that of the Jews, it could only be in this sentence: "They alone shall possess the earth who live from the powers of the cosmos."[1] Nothing distinguished the ancient from the modern man so much as the former's absorption in a cosmic experience scarcely known to later periods. Its waning is marked by the flowering of astronomy at the beginning of the modern age. Kepler, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe were certainly not driven by scientific impulses alone. All the same, the exclusive emphasis on an optical connection to the universe, to which astronomy very quickly led, contained a portent of what was to come. The ancients' intercourse with the cosmos had been different: the ecstatic trance [*Rausch*]. For it is in this experience alone that we assure ourselves of what is nearest to us and what is remotest from us, and never of one without the other. This means, however, that man can be in ecstatic contact with the cosmos only communally. It is the dangerous error of modern men to regard this experience as unimportant and avoidable, and to consign it to the individual as the

poetic rapture of starry nights. It is not; its hour strikes again and again, and then neither nations nor generations can escape it, as was made terribly clear by the last war, which was an attempt at new and unprecedented commingling with the cosmic powers. Human multitudes, gases, electrical forces were hurled into the open country, high-frequency currents coursed through the landscape, new constellations rose in the sky, aerial space and ocean depths thundered with propellers, and everywhere sacrificial shafts were dug in Mother Earth. This immense wooing of the cosmos was enacted for the first time on a planetary scale—that is, in the spirit of technology. But because the lust for profit of the ruling class sought satisfaction through it, technology betrayed man and turned the bridal bed into a bloodbath. The mastery of nature (so the imperialists teach) is the purpose of all technology. But who would trust a cane wielder who proclaimed the mastery of children by adults to be the purpose of education? Is not education, above all, the indispensable ordering of the relationship between generations and therefore mastery (if we are to use this term) of that relationship and not of children? And likewise technology is the mastery not of nature but of the relation between nature and man. Men as a species completed their development thousands of years ago; but mankind as a species is just beginning its development. In technology, a *physis* is being organized through which mankind's contact with the cosmos takes a new and different form from that which it had in nations and families. One need recall only the experience of velocities by virtue of which mankind is now preparing to embark on incalculable journeys into the interior of time, to encounter there rhythms from which the sick shall draw strength as they did earlier on high mountains or on the shores of southern seas. The "Lunaparks" are a prefiguration of sanatoria.[2]

The paroxysm of genuine cosmic experience is not tied to that tiny fragment of nature that we are accustomed to call "Nature." In the nights of annihilation of the last war, the frame of mankind was shaken by a feeling that resembled the bliss of the epileptic. And the revolts that followed it were the first attempt of mankind to bring the new body under its control. The power of the proletariat is the measure of its convalescence. If it is not gripped to the very marrow by the discipline of this power, no pacifist polemics will save it. Living substance conquers the frenzy of destruction only in the ecstasy of procreation [*Rausche der Zeugung*].

[Translated by Edmund Jephcott]

From "Surrealism" (1929)

Breton notes: "Quietly. I want to pass where no one has yet passed, quietly! After you, dearest language." Language takes precedence.[1]

Not only before meaning. Also before the self. In the world's structure, dream loosens individuality like a bad tooth. This loosening of the self by intoxication is, at the same time, precisely the fruitful, living experience that allowed these people to step outside the charmed space of intoxication. . . . The writings [of the Surrealists] are concerned literally with experiences, not with theories and still less with phantasms. And these experiences are by no means limited to dreams, hours of hashish eating, or opium smoking. It is a cardinal error to believe that, of "Surrealist experiences," we know only the religious ecstasies or the ecstasies of drugs. Lenin called religion the opiate of the masses, and brought the two things closer together than the Surrealists would have liked. I shall refer later to the bitter, passionate revolt against Catholicism in which Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and Apollinaire brought Surrealism into the world. But the true, creative overcoming of religious illumination certainly does not lie in narcotics. It resides in a *profane illumination,* a materialistic, anthropological inspiration, to which hashish, opium, or whatever else can

give an introductory lesson. (But a dangerous one; and the religious lesson is stricter.) This profane illumination did not always find the Surrealists equal to it, or to themselves. . . .

To win the energies of intoxication for revolution—this is the project on which Surrealism focuses in all its books and enterprises. This it may call its most characteristic task. For them it is not enough that, as we know, an intoxicating component lives in every revolutionary act. This component is identical with the anarchic. But to place the accent exclusively on it would be to subordinate the methodical and disciplinary preparation for revolution entirely to a praxis oscillating between fitness exercises and celebration in advance. Added to this is an inadequate, undialectical conception of the nature of intoxication. The aesthetic of the painter, the poet, *en état de surprise,* of art as the reaction of one surprised, is enmeshed in a number of ominous romantic prejudices. Any serious exploration of occult, surrealistic, phantasmagoric gifts and phenomena presupposes a dialectical intertwinement to which a romantic turn of mind is impervious. For histrionic or fanatical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious takes us no further; we penetrate the mystery only to the degree that we recognize it in the everyday world, by virtue of a dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday. The most passionate investigation of telepathic phenomena, for example, will not teach us half so much about reading (which is an eminently telepathic process) as the profane illumination of reading will teach us about telepathic phenomena. And the most passionate investigation of hashish intoxication will not teach us half so much about thinking (which is eminently narcotic) as the profane illumination of thinking will teach us about

hashish intoxication. The reader, the thinker, the person who waits, the flâneur, are types of illuminati—just as much as the opium eater, the dreamer, the ecstatic. And more profane. Not to mention that most terrible drug—ourselves—which we take in solitude.

[Translated Edmund Jephcott]

From "May–June 1931"

I have often wondered whether my particular irenic nature is not linked to the contemplative spirit engendered by the use of drugs.[1] The universal reservations toward one's own way of life, which are forced upon every writer—without exception, I believe—by contemplation of the situation in Western Europe, are related in a bitter way to the attitude toward other human beings that is induced in the drugtaker by the poison he takes. And to take the full measure of the ideas and impulses that preside over the writing of this diary, I need only hint at my growing willingness to take my own life.

[Translated by Rodney Livingstone]

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From *The Arcades Project* (1927–1940)

Das Passagen-Werk was first published posthumously in 1982 in GS5 (two volumes). It is a massive collection of citations, commentaries, and reflections on nineteenth-century Paris. The greater part of the materials, in French and German, are organized by Benjamin in folders, or "convolutes," within which each individual item is tagged and numbered. Tags in parentheses are Benjamin's, while those in brackets have been supplied by the German editor. Translated as The Arcades Project in 1999.

Elements of intoxication at work in the detective novel, whose mechanism is described by Caillois (in terms that recall the world of the hashish eater): "The characters of the childish imagination and a prevailing artificiality hold sway over this strangely vivid world. Nothing happens here that is not long premeditated; nothing corresponds to appearances. Rather, each thing has been prepared for use at the right moment by the omnipotent hero who wields power over it. We recognize in all this the Paris of the serial installments of *Fantômas.*" Roger Caillois, "Paris, mythe moderne," *Nouvelle Revue Française,* 25, no. 284 (May 1, 1937): 688.[1] (G15,5)

Prostitution of space in hashish, where it serves for all that has been. (G16,2)

"Your understanding of allegory assumes proportions hitherto unknown to you; I will note, in passing, that allegory—long an object of our scorn because of maladroit painters, but in reality a most *spiritual* art form, one of the earliest and most natural forms of poetry—resumes its legitimate dominion in a mind illuminated by intoxication." Charles Baudelaire, *Les Paradis artificiels*. . . . The passage is taken from the chapter on hashish.[2] (H2,1)

Nineteenth-century domestic interior. The space disguises itself—puts on, like an alluring creature, the costume of moods. The self-satisfied burgher should know something of the feeling that the next room might have witnessed the coronation of Charlemagne as well as the assassination of Henri IV, the signing of the Treaty of Verdun as well as the wedding of Otto and Theophano.[3] In the end, things are merely mannequins, and even the great moments of world history are only costumes beneath which they exchange glances of complicity with nothingness, with the petty and the banal. Such nihilism is the innermost core of bourgeois coziness—a mood that in hashish intoxication concentrates to satanic contentment, satanic knowing, satanic calm, indicating precisely to what extent the nineteenth-century interior is itself a stimulus to intoxication and dream. This mood involves, furthermore, an aversion to the open air, the (so to speak) Uranian atmosphere, which throws a new light on the extravagant interior design of the period. To live in these interiors was to have woven a dense fabric about oneself, to have secluded oneself within a spider's web, in whose toils world events hang loosely suspended like so many insect bodies sucked dry. From this cavern, one does not like to stir. (I2,6)[4]

For the experience of the *correspondances,* Baudelaire refers occasionally to Swedenborg, and also to hashish.[5] (J12a,5)

There may well be the closest connection between the allegorical imagination and the imagination put in thrall to thinking during hashish intoxication. At work in the latter are different sorts of powers: a genius of melancholy gravity, another of Ariel-like spirituality. (J67a,6)

Allegorical dismemberment. The music to which one listens under the influence of hashish appears, in Baudelaire, as "the entire poem entering your brain, like a dictionary that has come alive."[6] (J78,3)

The following passage from *Les Paradis artificiels* is decisive for [Baudelaire's] "Les Sept Vieillards." It makes it possible to trace the inspiration for this poem back to hashish: "The word 'rhapsodic,' which so well portrays a train of thought suggested and dictated by the outer world and the hazard of circumstance, has a great and more terrible truth in relation to hashish. Here, human reason becomes mere flotsam, at the mercy of all currents, and the train of thought is *infinitely* more accelerated and 'rhapsodic.'"[7] (J84a,1)

The appearances of superposition, of overlap [*Überdeckung*], which come with hashish may be grasped through the concept of similarity. When we say that one face is similar to another, we mean that certain features of this second face appear to us in the first, without the latter's ceasing to be what it has been. Nevertheless, the possibilities of entering into appearance in this way are not subject to any criterion and are therefore boundless. The category of similarity, which for the waking consciousness has only minimal relevance, attains unlimited relevance in the world of hashish. There, we may say, everything is

face; each thing has the degree of bodily presence that allows it to be searched—as one searches a face—for such traits as appear. Under these conditions even a sentence (to say nothing of the single word) puts on a face, and this face resembles that of the sentence standing opposed to it. In this way every truth points manifestly to its opposite, and this state of affairs explains the existence of doubt. Truth becomes something living; it lives solely in the rhythm by which statement and counterstatement displace each other in order to think each other. (M1a,1)

Hashish. One imitates certain things one knows from paintings: prison, the Bridge of Sighs, stairs like the train of a dress. (M2,3)

We know that, in the course of flânerie, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment. When the authentically intoxicated [*rauschhafte*] phase of this condition announces itself, the blood is pounding in the veins of the happy flâneur, his heart ticks like a clock, and inwardly as well as outwardly things go on as we would imagine them to do in one of those "mechanical pictures" which in the nineteenth century (and of course earlier, too) enjoyed great popularity, and which depicts in the foreground a shepherd playing on a pipe, by his side two children swaying in time to the music, further back a pair of hunters in pursuit of a lion, and very much in the background a train crossing over a trestle bridge. Chapuis and Gélis, *Le Monde des automates* (Paris, 1928), vol. 1, 330. (M2,4)

The peculiar irresolution of the flâneur. Just as waiting seems to be the proper state of the impassive thinker, doubt appears to be that of the flâneur. An elegy by Schiller contains the phrase: "the hesitant

wing of the butterfly." This points to that association of wingedness with the feeling of indecision which is so characteristic of hashish intoxication.[8] (M4a,1)

A phrase which Baudelaire coins for the consciousness of time peculiar to someone intoxicated by hashish can be applied in the definition of a revolutionary historical consciousness. He speaks of a night in which he was absorbed by the effects of hashish: "Long though it seemed to have been . . . , yet it also seemed to have lasted only a few seconds, or even to have had no place in all eternity."[9] (N15,1)

Excursus on the Place du Maroc. Not only city and interior but city and open air can become entwined, and *this* intertwining can occur much more concretely. There is the Place du Maroc in Belleville:[10] that desolate heap of stones with its rows of tenements became for me, when I happened upon it one Sunday afternoon, not only a Moroccan desert but also, and at the same time, a monument of colonial imperialism; topographic vision was entwined with allegorical meaning in this square, yet not for an instant did it lose its place in the heart of Belleville. But to awaken such a view is something ordinarily reserved for intoxicants. And in such cases, in fact, street names are like intoxicating substances that make our perceptions more stratified and richer in spaces. One could call the energy by which they transport us into such a state their *vertu évocatrice,* their evocative power—but that is saying too little; for what is decisive here is not the association but the interpenetration of images. This state of affairs may be adduced, as well, in connection with certain pathological phenomena: the patient who wanders the city at night for hours on end and forgets the way home is perhaps in the grip of this power. (P1a,2)

The figure of the flâneur. He resembles the hashish eater, takes space up into himself like the latter. In hashish intoxication, the space starts winking at us: "What do you think may have gone on here?" And with the very same question, space accosts the flâneur. [G°,5]

Redon's flowers and the problem of ornamentation, especially in hashish.[11] Flower world. [L°,13]

Hashish in the afternoon: shadows are a bridge over the river of light that is the street. [M°,6]

The problem of space (hashish, myriorama)[12] treated under the rubric "Flânerie." The problem of time (intermittences) treated under the rubric "Roulette." [O°,12]

From the Notebooks

[Note on Surrealism, 1928–1929 (GS2, 1022)]
Overcoming of the rational individual through intoxication—of the motorial and affective individual, however, through collective action: this characterizes the entire situation.

[Preparatory sketches for "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 1939 (GS1, 1179)]
Fundamental to this feeling [of empathy, *Einfühlung*] is the insinuation of one's own ego into an alien object. The virtuoso of empathy does not in fact step outside himself.[1] His masterstroke consists in having so emptied out his own ego, and made it so free of all ballast of the person, that it feels at home in every mask.

The experience of the hashish-intoxicated man who sees two ragged passersby turn into Dante and into Petrarch[2] has for its armature nothing other than empathy. The third party is the intoxicated man himself, engrossed as he is. His identification with great genius—with Dante and Petrarch, for example—is so perfect that every subject he assimilates to himself becomes identical with Dante and with

Petrarch. Here, nothing more of the person remains than an unlimited capacity, and often also an unlimited propensity, for entering into the situation of every other in the cosmos, including every animal, every inanimate object.

From the Letters

[September 19, 1919, to Ernst Schoen (CWB, 148)][1]

I have also read Baudelaire's *Paradis artificiels.* It is an extremely reticent, unoriented attempt to monitor the "psychological" phenomena that manifest themselves in hashish or opium intoxication for what they have to teach us philosophically. It will be necessary to repeat this attempt [*Versuch*] independently of this book.

[January 30, 1928, to Gershom Scholem (CWB, 323)][2]

[Ernst Joël] and another one of my opponents from [my days as a student in Berlin], through God's—or Satan's—intervention, have miraculously transformed themselves and have become caryatids on the gate through which I have now entered the realm of hashish on two separate occasions.[3] That is to say, both of these physicians are conducting experiments on narcotics and they wanted me to be their test subject. I agreed. The notes I made—in part independently, in part relying on the written protocols of the experiments—may well turn out to be a very worthwhile supplement to my philosophical observations, with which they are most intimately related, as are to a certain degree even my experiences under the influence of the drug.

But I would like to be assured that this piece of information will remain locked in the bosom of the Scholem family.

[July 26, 1932, to Gershom Scholem (CWB, 396)]
The literary forms of expression that my thought has forged for itself over the past decade have been utterly conditioned by the preventive measures and antidotes with which I had to counter the disintegration constantly threatening my thought as a result of such contingencies. And though many—or a sizable number—of my works have been small-scale victories, they are offset by large-scale defeats. I do not want to speak of the projects that had to remain unfinished, or even untouched, but rather to name here the four books that mark off the real site of ruin or catastrophe, whose furthest boundary I am still unable to survey when I let my eyes wander over the next years of my life. They include the *Pariser Passagen,* the *Gesammelte Essays zur Literatur,* the *Briefe,* and a truly exceptional book about hashish.[4] Nobody knows about this last topic, and for the time being it should remain between us.

[February 7, 1938, to Max Horkheimer (GB6, 23)][5]
Critical theory cannot fail to recognize how deeply certain powers of intoxication [*Rausch*] are bound to reason and to its struggle for liberation. What I mean is, all the insights that man has ever obtained surreptitiously through the use of narcotics can also be obtained *through the human:* some through the individual—through the man or through the woman; others through groups; and some, which we dare not even dream of yet, perhaps only through the community of the living. Aren't these insights, by virtue of the human solidarity from which they arise, truly political in the end? At any rate, they

have lent power to those freedom fighters who were as unconquerable as "inner peace," but at the same time as ready to rise as fire. I don't believe that critical theory will view these powers as "neutral." It's true that at present they appear conformable to fascism. But this is a deceptive appearance, and stems only from the fact that fascism has perverted and degraded the productive forces of nature—both those familiar to us and those more remote from us.

[February 23, 1939, to Theodor W. Adorno (CWB, 597–598)][6]

Sameness is a category of cognition; strictly speaking, it is not to be found in sober perception. . . . [Baudelaire] artificially came to the aid of the historical hallucination of sameness, which had taken root along with the commodity economy. And the tropes in which hashish was reflected for him can be deciphered in this context.

The commodity economy arms the phantasmagoria of sameness, which, as an attribute of intoxication, at the same time establishes itself as a central figure of semblance. "With this potion in your body, you will soon see Helen in every woman."[7] The price makes the commodity the same as all those that can be bought for the same price. . . . From the perspective of my Baudelaire study, the revised construct will look like this: I will do justice to the definition of flânerie as a state of intoxication, and thereby to its connection with the experiences Baudelaire had produced with drugs.

[See also the excerpt from Benjamin's letter of ca. May 26, 1933, to Gretel Adorno, in the "Editorial Note" by Tillman Rexroth in this volume.]

An Experiment by Walter Benjamin

JEAN SELZ

EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I can still hear Walter Benjamin's slow, deliberate voice citing this observation by Karl Kraus: "The more closely you look at a word, the more distantly it looks back."[1] We were sitting on the terrace of a small waterside café in the port of Ibiza. Before us, the masts of a large schooner were silhouetted in the hot night air, beneath a sky glittering so brightly that it seemed filled with more than its usual complement of stars. Benjamin was telling me about an experiment he had conducted with hashish.

That phenomenon of distance by which new relations between himself and the objects around him were established, the phenomenon he was trying to explain to me with the aid of Kraus's remark, was part of the radical alteration that hashish produced in one's consciousness of space, along with the complete annihilation of one's normal sense of time.

He had brought me some excerpts from his notebooks to read—passages he intended to make use of in writing his essay "Hashish in Marseilles,"[2] later published in the *Cahiers du Sud.* These notes described how an individual could gain access to a new and vastly expanded interior life. ("Versailles, for one who has taken hashish, is not too large, or eternity too long.") As a result of this expansion, ob-

jects can be viewed according to an optics in which their position in space is identical to a distance in time. ("From century to century, things grow more estranged.") The sense of the "identical" was of primary concern to Benjamin. He often spoke to me of his thoughts on this subject. In certain cases, the word *identité* ["identity"] was far from adequate to denote the state in which two objects were alike, so he had coined a new term for it in French: *mêmité* ["same-ity"]. Under the influence of hashish, this impression that two different things were actually one and the same was linked to a feeling of happiness that he savored with delicate care. He had written in his notebook: "One should scoop sameness from reality with a spoon." But this reference to sameness might cause confusion. Rather—and I think I am right in saying this—Benjamin was concerned not with any perfect resemblance between one thing and another, but with the possibility that a single thing could be in different places at the same time. This was a typically Benjaminian distinction, and it explains why, when in "Hashish in Marseilles" he cites a phrase by the Danish writer Johannes Jensen—"Richard was a young man with understanding for everything in the world that was of the same kind"—he pointed out that this "appeared to say something similar" to what he himself had noted.[3] He adds that Jensen's phrase enabled him to bring his rational sense of it into juxtaposition with the "individual, magical meaning" of his hashish experience.

The strange visions that Benjamin evoked that evening affected the way our eyes perceived the vague shapes discernible around us in the darkness of the harbor: a long, womanly cascade of hair and an Empire-style mantelpiece appeared in place of, respectively, a fishing net hanging on a wall and a monument erected to Ibiza's privateers. We happily interpreted this unusual scenery as a friendly welcome

that hashish was graciously extending to us, through the reports of its researcher.

The whole evening was eminently conducive to such confidences. I, in turn, told Benjamin about the time I'd experimented with opium two years before. He had never smoked opium, and was extremely interested in everything that related to the ways the drug altered the senses of sight and hearing. We then tried to determine the parallels and differences between hashish and opium. The former provokes amusement; the latter, courtesy. The hashish eater, Benjamin wrote, yields readily to "a wonderful, beatific humor." It's a mysterious mood, which seems to have discovered new sources of comedy so powerful that they spark uncontrollable laughter. Such laughter would require an outlay of energy far too costly to the opium smoker's feeling of serenity—to his need for silence and stillness in which the refinements of courtesy are given free rein.

The possibility of going outside, of mingling with the street life of a city as Benjamin had done in Marseilles, is basically incompatible with the exigencies of opium. The blaring of car horns, which for him was transformed into a chorus of trumpets, would have been unbearable to the ears of an opium smoker. Yet hashish has its delicacy: Benjamin noted his "fear that a shadow falling on the paper might hurt it." The deformation of sounds is much more extreme with opium, which can actually transmute one sense into another, can change a sound into a precise image—say, the tolling of a bell into an opening door. (With regard to this particular vision, it seems to me now that the invisible link causing it to arise from the sound perhaps resides in the completely unconscious thought of the back-and-forth movement that characterizes both the bell and the door.)

My description of these phenomena and many others inspired

Benjamin with a keen desire to try opium. On many occasions afterward, he asked me if I could possibly arrange things so that we could smoke together sometime. It was by no means easy to get hold of opium in Spain. But I told him I'd see what I could do.

I can't begin to describe all the crazy things I did in Barcelona, in that *barrio chino* whose very name seemed to spell encouragement for my hopes. It was in fact a Chinese neighborhood, but in those days when societal freedoms were not yet threatened by Franco's repressive police, you had the feeling that in the *barrio chino* everything was possible—you could try anything.

I ventured to make difficult inquiries in a language I could barely speak; entered into conversations with people who were extremely polite to me and obviously eager to steal from me; connected in the *barrio* with a woman who was only vaguely Chinese and who made all sorts of promises; spent much time waiting uneasily in a squalid Chinese bar that, like the woman, had scarcely anything Chinese about it and where I sat staring curiously at paper cutouts of shady-looking figures, the only decorations on its damp walls. But my efforts all came to nothing.

Not until the spring of the following year was it possible for me to bring a small pellet of opium to Ibiza. Benjamin, in his flight from Berlin (this was two months after the burning of the Reichstag), had taken refuge at my place in Paris, and from there we had traveled back to the little island together.[4] But merely having some opium wasn't enough. In order to smoke it, we also needed a whole devilish array of paraphernalia that I'd gotten rid of long ago and that, anyway, I wouldn't have risked carrying in my suitcases. At least I'd brought a little earthenware stove, which was indispensable. The rest

took a lot of ingenuity and improvising. A piece of bamboo, plugged up at one end with a bit of wax, served as a pipe. The biggest challenge was to have some needles manufactured by an Ibizan blacksmith, who never caught on to the possible uses of such objects. We had to ask him to remake them several times.

When everything was ready, we settled ourselves down, toward the end of a day in June, in a room at my house on the Calle de la Conquista, located at the very top of the old city. The windows looked out over the roofs of the cube-shaped white houses around the Estació Marítima, the little bay that sheltered the harbor. I didn't compose what Benjamin called a *Protokoll* of that extraordinary night. But my notes, which are still in my possession, had the advantage of being made in the course of the experiment. And if they cannot completely fill all the gaps in my memory, they at least enable me to describe the highly unusual climate in which the opium had immersed Benjamin's mind.

He very soon learned the difficult art of inhaling with a single deep breath and keeping his lungs filled with the pipe smoke. Everybody knows that opium enhances one's propensity for speech. Thus, after five or six pipes, we began to feel unusually talkative. But Benjamin was a smoker who refused the initial blandishments of the smoke. He held back slightly. He didn't want to yield to it too readily, for fear of weakening his powers of observation.

The view from the open window, through the white muslin curtain, was the repeated focus of his musings. The terraced roofs, the curve of the bay, and the line of distant mountains, captured by the curtain or swathed in its folds, undulated along with it when it stirred—ever so slightly—in the hot evening air. The city and the

curtain soon ceased to be separate things. And if the city had become fabric, that fabric had become the stuff of a garment. It was *our* garment, but was moving ever farther away from us. We then observed that *the opium was divesting us of the country in which we were living.* Benjamin added the humorous remark that we were engaging in "curtainology" [*rideaulogie*].

He was wearing a little black skullcap (made in Russia, I think), embroidered in gold with an interlacing pattern. We labeled it "a hat fashioned in trombone marmalade." I would need a fair number of pages to describe the connections I made between the "marmalade" of that cap and the "trombone strongbox" which had appeared in the course of my previous opium experiences—the numeral 8 and the box's key being contained in the curves of the brass, whose shape was also linked to my memories of the miniature cars and furniture made of gilded lead that had been among my favorite childhood toys. But to return to our *noche ibicenca:* I remember that Benjamin's Russian cap was the starting point for what we called "the entry of ideas into the chamber of meanders." This had to do both with the deviousness by which ideas come to the smoker's mind, and with the way in which ornaments participate in the elaboration of his thoughts. Elements of his surroundings come to life, and the motionless observer seems obliged to explain these metamorphoses.

The objects and flowers that surrounded us in the room thus gradually assumed primary importance. A small lace tablecloth gleamed like crystal, and the table beneath it changed into ice—followed by all the other furniture, which arranged itself according to the description given by Professor Georg Wolfgang Krafft in an old book whose engravings I'd pored over delightedly as a child.[5] They'd depicted various views of the Ice Palace built in St. Petersburg in 1740. The au-

thor thought regretfully that on the planet Saturn this little palace (in which Benjamin—who'd become as Russian as his cap—and I were now enclosed) would have had a less ephemeral existence, since it would have been much farther from the Sun and thus would not have melted. But perhaps one should assume that the professor was thinking of Saturn as if it were a location in Hell, a place of extraordinary cold where the souls of the empresses, immigrants from Earth, had traveled through the mists to live out their wintry lives. In any case, the czarina who'd had the little palace built out of ice from the Neva could do nothing but watch it melt away when spring came, and send back to the battery the artillery squadron charged with firing the cannons that defended its terraces and that, through their muzzles of ice, shot real ammunition—"though it couldn't be denied," wrote the professor, "that the cannon powder was unable to produce a really thunderous roar." I was especially taken with the bedroom and its charming furniture, which had been carved entirely out of ice, right down to the logs in the fireplace that were sometimes set alight with the aid of naphtha. On the curtained bed were two pillows and on the floor two pairs of slippers, all made of ice. And when I wondered why and for whom Anna Ivanovna had built that elegant ice residence, it occurred to me that this was the most beautiful house that anyone could ever offer to Death, and that it was the czarina's gift to Death before her passing, which indeed took place the following year.

It seemed that Benjamin and I had likewise disappeared into a sort of death for some indeterminate length of time. When he came to himself, he spoke of "the waters of sleep"—the waters of a river whose current, he said, had borne away his thoughts. The scene before us had changed. My ice palace had melted, and the night, which

had grown stormy, was mounting a fearsome attack on us through the open window with its lightning bolts. But closing the window would have required far more effort than we could muster, and we preferred to remain in the grip of terror—a state quite familiar to opium smokers. Anyway, Benjamin was becoming interested in the lightning bolts, which surely, he thought, had "something to tell us," and in fact were telling it to us, though we couldn't understand them, every time they *went white.*

It was in their dazzling whiteness (had they been yellow before?) that they seemed to achieve their purpose. We had already experienced, a short time earlier, that voluptuous feeling which is perhaps the most maleficent of all such feelings inspired by opium: the sensation of having arrived at the goal. We found ourselves in harmony with the lightning bolts, and our fear of them was somewhat assuaged. We began discussing a statement by Valéry: "There are certain flashes that are exactly like ideas."[6] Meanwhile, the storm had worsened and had destroyed the quiet enchantment of the night. For Benjamin, the vivid pink of a large bouquet of carnations took on a threatening intensity—a raging fire had just erupted in it. I, for my part, saw in that pink the sparkling chandeliers of a grand reception hall, while a tiny man stepped out of a pomegranate blossom and greeted us with a flourish of his red-plumed hat. Then the images of the room faded before those of memory, and Benjamin proceeded to tell me stories of his youth until the sun came up. I must confess that I listened with only half an ear, preoccupied as I was with my own internal visions.

Not until the following evening, as we were on our way to hear an Andalusian singer who was performing in the basement club of a little café in Ibiza, did we rediscover those connections, already grown

tenuous, by which the opium was attaching us to every single thing. The words of Castilian Spanish had become *visible,* in the form of dogs. But whereas in the spoken language these dogs were kept on a leash, in song they were set free, and they bounded away to lead the violent life for which they were destined.

[Translated by Maria Louise Ascher]

Notes

1. Main Features of My First Impression of Hashish

1. For the anecdote, see the opening of Benjamin's essay "Franz Kafka" (1934), in SW2, 794–795; also in GS4, 758–759, "Die Unterschrift" (The Signature). Grigori Potemkin (1739–1791) was a Russian soldier and statesman who became the chief favorite of Catherine II in 1771. The anecdote concerns one of Potemkin's periodic depressions, during which he is unable to attend to state business. After a number of high officials have failed to obtain his signature on some important papers, a minor clerk confidently brings him the documents. Potemkin indeed signs them, yet it turns out that the name he has written is not his own but the clerk's. The immediate source of the anecdote is Aleksandr Pushkin's *Anecdotes and Tabletalk,* no. 24.
2. See GS1, 262; also in *Origin of German Tragic Drama,* trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1985), 83. On horizontal extension, compare AP, Convolute F4a,1 and F8a.
3. Ernst Joël (1893–1929) took part with Benjamin in the German Youth Movement before World War I (see SW2, 603–604) and later became a physician in Berlin, where, with Fritz Fränkel, he initiated and supervised Benjamin's experiments with hashish. He committed suicide. Fränkel (1892–1944), a neurologist, emigrated in 1933 to France, where, from 1938 to 1940, he lived in the same building as Benjamin, afterward fleeing to Mexico.
4. Franz Hessel (1880–1941), writer, translator, and editor, was a friend and collaborator of Benjamin's. In 1925–1928 they worked together on a translation of Proust, and in 1927 they planned a jointly written newspaper article on the Paris arcades. Hessel emigrated to Paris in 1938. Benjamin's reviews of two of his books appear in SW2, 69–71, 262–267.
5. "Des Schmetterlings zweifelnder Flügel." See J. C. F. Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke* (Munich: 1965), vol. 1, 229: "mit zweifelndem Flügel / Wiegt der Schmetterling sich über dem rötlichen Klee." This phrase is cited in AP, Convolute M4a,1, where hashish intoxication is brought into the context of flânerie.

2. Main Features of My Second Impression of Hashish

1. Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), the widely influential French painter, was especially noted for his expressive use of color and his dramatic modeling of figures.
2. Charlemagne was crowned emperor in Rome in A.D. 800; Henri IV of France was assassinated in 1610; the Treaty of Verdun of 843 ratified the breakup of the

Carolingian Empire; and Count Egmont, one of the leaders of the Flanders nobility, was executed by the Spaniards under the Duke of Alba in 1568.

3. The god Hermes in his function as guide (e.g., of the three goddesses to Paris, of the souls of the dead down to Charon the Ferryman, and of Persephone back from the underworld).
4. The Latin phrase is from the Requiem Mass. The text actually reads, "Tuba mirum spargens sonum / Per supulcra regionum" ("The trumpet, scattering a wondrous sound / through the tombs of every land").
5. Odilon Redon (1840–1916), post-Impressionist French painter and engraver, is best known for his paintings of flowers.
6. On Ernst Bloch, see note 11 below.
7. On Ernst Joël, see Protocol 1, note 3.
8. Kafka's collection of eighteen short prose pieces under the title *Betrachtung* (Meditation) was published in 1912.
9. Daphne was a mountain nymph who escaped the advances of Apollo when she was turned into a laurel tree.
10. This last paragraph is taken up, slightly revised, in AP, Convolute S1a,5. Other passages from this protocol are adapted in Convolutes I2,6; M1a,3; R2a,3; G°5. Colportage was a system of distributing books (especially devotional literature), linens, notions, and other wares by traveling peddlers in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France. Benjamin gives an example of "colportage illustration" in the "mechanical picture," with its composite imagery, in AP, Convolute M2,4. He associates the "colportage phenomenon of space" not only with flânerie and feuilletonism but with mid-nineteenth-century interior design and the recycled deployment of figures in the wax museum. These phenomena have in common a principle of spatiotemporal layering and multiple perspective, though Benjamin remarks that the connection between the colportage phenomenon of space and colportage has yet to be explained (see Convolutes M1a,3; M6a,1; Q2,2; S2,1).
11. Manuscript in Ernst Bloch's hand, though authorship of this segment is uncertain. Dated January 14, 1928. All but three of the notes appear almost verbatim in the following protocol, which is in Benjamin's hand. On the question of authorship, see note 16 below. A philosopher and personal friend of Benjamin's, Bloch (1885–1977) took part in this session and possibly other of Benjamin's drug experiments. He taught at the University of Leipzig (1918–1933), where he drifted toward Marxist thought in the 1920s. After a period of exile in Switzerland and the United States, he returned to Germany in 1948, teaching at Leipzig and Tübingen. He is the author of *Geist der Utopie* (The Spirit of Utopia; 1918), *Spuren* (Traces; 1930), and *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (The Principle of Hope; 3 vols., 1952–1959).
12. Character in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest,* the name evidently referring to the "Shakespearean" intoxication mentioned in the preceding entry.
13. Allusion to the veiled image of the goddess Isis at Sais in Egypt. Lifting the veil of Isis brings beneficial enlightenment and self-knowledge in Novalis' fragmentary novel *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* (The Novices of Sais; written 1798–1799) and end-

less woe in Schiller's poem "Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais" (The Veiled Image at Sais; 1785).

14. On Kafka's *Betrachtung,* see note 8 above.
15. Erwin Piscator (1893–1966), German Expressionist theater director, famous for his innovative staging techniques, which had a powerful influence on Bertolt Brecht.
16. Richard III had no sons. The reference is presumably to his nephews, Edward V and Richard, the duke of York, whom Richard III, it is thought, had murdered. This paragraph is taken up nearly verbatim in AP, Convolute I2a,1, where the studio is identified as belonging to Charlotte Joël, the wife of Ernst Joël (see Protocol 1, note 3), and where it is made clear that Benjamin himself is the speaker.
17. "Bleiben Sie noch eine Zeitlang identisch!"
18. Dated January 15, 1928, or soon afterward. This protocol is in Benjamin's hand. See notes 11 and 16 above.

3. Protocol of the Hashish Experiment of May 11, 1928

1. Dated May 11, 1928. The spaces for entering the time and the amount of the dosage were left blank.
2. On Ernst Joël, see Protocol 1, note 3.
3. Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935), German psychiatrist.
4. On Fritz Fränkel, see Protocol 1, note 3.
5. Both the English and the German words derive from Latin *collega* or *conlega,* "colleague," with the elements *com,* "together," and *legatus,* past participle of *legare,* "to depute." The inferred Indo-European root of the latter is *leg-*, "to collect," with derivatives meaning "to speak," source also of the words *logos* and *lex.*
6. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834) British economist, wrote *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), which argues that population tends to increase faster than food supply, with inevitably disastrous consequences, unless the population increase is checked by moral constraints or by war, famine, or disease.
7. The newspaper *Die Vossische Zeitung* incorporated into its title the Prussian coat of arms, which depicted two muscular, seminude standard-bearers leaning symmetrically against a shield.
8. Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), a German socialist writer, author of *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* (The Materialist Conception of History; 1927), was secretary to Friedrich Engels in London and editor of *Die Neue Zeit* (1883–1917). He opposed Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution.
9. Count Alfred von Waldersee (1832–1904), Prussian field marshal, was commander of European forces in China during the Boxer Rebellion (1900–1901). The east German city of Wittenberg was the residence of Martin Luther and the starting point of the Reformation (1517). Jüterbog is a German city located northeast of Wittenberg and south of Berlin.
10. Myslovice is a town in Silesia, about seventy miles southeast of Wroclaw, Poland.

See the following protocol, as well as "Myslovice—Braunschweig—Marseilles" in this volume.

11. Dated May 11, 1928.
12. Standard usage is "*der* Raum" (space).
13. Christian Morgenstern (1871–1914) was a German poet famous for his linguistically innovative nonsense verse, such as *Palmström* (1910). His other works include *Ich und die Welt* (I and the World; 1898) and *Einkehr* (Turning In; 1910).
14. The Treaty of Versailles, signed in 1919, ended World War I. Rapallo, a city in northwest Italy, was the site where a treaty establishing friendly relations between Germany and the Soviet Union was signed in 1922.
15. Presumably, Benjamin did not take part in the experiment referred to here, of which we have no record. Wiesbaden, a city of west-central Germany on the Rhine, has been a noted spa since Roman times.
16. Fränkel's protocol has not been preserved.
17. The Hansa-Ufer is a section of Berlin on the banks of the Spree River, near the Tiergarten.

4. Saturday, September 29 [1928]; Marseilles

1. This protocol, dated September 29 and 30, 1928, constitutes the preliminary version of the essay "Hashish in Marseilles," included in this volume.
2. The city of Aix, or Aix-en-Provence, is located nineteen miles north of Marseilles.
3. Hermann Hesse's novel *Der Steppenwolf* was published in 1927. See *Steppenwolf,* trans. Basil Creighton (1929, 1963; rpt. New York: Holt, 1990), 174ff. Hesse (1877–1962) tried unsuccessfully to get Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900* published in Germany in the mid-Thirties. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946.
4. Wilhelm Speyer (1887–1952) was a novelist and dramatist whom Benjamin accompanied on a motoring tour of Italy in 1929 and with whom he collaborated on a novel and several plays.
5. Marcel Brion (1895–1984) was a French novelist and critic and co-founder of the literary journal *Cahiers du Sud,* in which he arranged for the publication of a French translation of Benjamin's essay "Hashish in Marseilles" in 1935. He reviewed Benjamin's *Trauerspiel* book, as well as the translation of Proust by Benjamin and Hessel, and promoted Benjamin's work in other ways as well.
6. This paragraph is adapted in "Myslovice—Braunschweig—Marseilles," included in this volume.
7. Compare the effect of the Little Hunchback in *Berlin Childhood around 1900,* in SW3, 385. "Shrinkage" *(Schrumpfung)* is an important term in Benjamin's literary theory: see SW2, 415–416, 408, 55.
8. In Greek mythology, Ariadne was the daughter of King Minos of Crete. She fell in love with Theseus and gave him the ball of thread that enabled him to find his way out of the Labyrinth. She then fled with him and his Athenians, but he later abandoned her on the island of Naxos.

9. "Not a penny for lyric poetry." Source of citation unknown.
10. Johannes Vilhelm Jensen (1873–1950) was a Danish novelist, poet, and essayist. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1944.
11. Benjamin refers to a German proverb: to give stones instead of bread is to offer something useless in the guise of doing a service. (Thanks to Jean-François Poirier for this information.)
12. Gustav Glück (1902–1973), one of Benjamin's closest friends during the 1930s, was a director of the foreign section of the Imperial Credit Bank in Berlin until 1938, when he emigrated to Argentina. He is the immediate model for Benjamin's essay "The Destructive Character," and is the dedicatee of Benjamin's essay "Karl Kraus." Erich Unger (1887–1952), a German-Jewish author with pronounced mystical tendencies, was a member of the circle around the esoteric thinker Oskar Goldberg.
13. Compare the fragment on hashish intoxication from GS1, 1179, included in this volume ("From the Notebooks").
14. The story of Barnabas is told in the New Testament (Acts 15).
15. Karl Kraus (1874–1936) was an influential Austrian journalist, critic, playwright, and poet. Benjamin's essay "Karl Kraus" (1931) appears in SW2, 433–458.

5. Hashish, Beginning of March 1930

1. Participating in this session were Egon and Gert Wissing, who took part in a number of Benjamin's drug experiments. Egon (1900–1954) was Benjamin's cousin; he had studied medicine and worked later as a radiologist in Boston. His first wife, née Gertrud Frank, died in Paris in 1933.
2. The concept of aura (from Greek *aura,* "breath," "air in motion") plays an important role in Benjamin's later essays "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" and "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (both in SW4) The term appears earlier in Benjamin's work—for example, in his essay "Goethe's Elective Affinities" (written 1921–1922; see SW1, 348) and in a piece from 1925, "Nichts gegen die 'Illustrierte'" (Nothing against the Illustrated [News]; GS4, 449)—and there are brief references to "aura" in the first two hashish protocols. Benjamin's use of the concept is derived in part from the philosophy of Ludwig Klages, author of *Vom Traumbewußtsein* (Dream Consciousness; 1914) and *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (Eros and Cosmos; 1922). Also important for his thinking, as he himself indicates in a letter of July 5, 1929 (GB3, 474–475), was the discussion of *Aura* in an article entitled "Lebensluft" (Vital Air), published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of April 19, 1929, by the poet and philosopher Karl Wolfskehl.
3. The later works of Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), the influential Dutch post-Impressionist painter, include self-portraits, a series of sunflower paintings (1888), and "Starry Night" (1889). They are characterized by bold, rhythmic brush strokes and radiant colors.
4. In Greek mythology, Medea is the niece of the witch goddess Circe and the royal sorceress of Colchis on the Black Sea, the site of Jason's legendary quest for the Golden Fleece. She is the subject of a celebrated tragedy by Euripides (431 B.C.).

5. *Haupelzwerg* is a nonsense word, although *Zwerg* means "dwarf."
6. Magdeburg is a city of central Germany on the Elbe River southwest of Berlin.

6. On the Experiment of June 7–8, 1930

1. On Gert and Egon Wissing, see Protocol 5, note 1.
2. Margarethe Köppke (1902–1930) was a prominent German stage and film actress.
3. On Ernst Bloch, see Protocol 2, note 11.
4. Peter Altenberg (real name Richard Engländer, 1862?–1919), was an Austrian writer of short prose poems, a favorite of Benjamin's since his student days.
5. Sentence obscure in the German. On Ariadne, see Protocol 4, note 8. The Kafir, or Nuristanis, are a people inhabiting parts of the Hindu Kush in northeast Afghanistan.
6. The passage about the window, particularly the phrase "by jolts" *(ruckweise),* recalls the description of the Imperial Panorama in the section by that name in Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (SW3, 347).

7. Egon Wissing: Protocol of the Experiment of March 7, 1931

1. This protocol is dated March 7, 1931. On Egon Wissing, see Protocol 5, note 1. The "capsule" in question is a preparation of hashish.
2. Eucodal, an opiate, is derived from codeine but is much stronger therapeutically. It is used generally as an analgesic. Wissing refers to it later in the protocol as "morphine."
3. "Aid to the East"—national subsidies begun in 1926 to maintain the large Prussian estates east of the Elbe river, which were threatened by competition with Poland after the establishment of the "Polish Corridor" by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.
4. On the myth of Daphne, see Protocol 2, note 9.
5. *Schnappbäume, Zopperbäumchen. Der Schnap* means both "snap" and "mouthful." *Schnappen,* "to snap" or "to snatch," has earlier associations with notions of puffing and snorting; it is the source of the substantive *Schnaps,* which originally meant "a quick sip or gulp." The interjection *schnapp!* is the equivalent of "before you can say 'Jack Robinson.'" As regards the coinage *Zopper,* the translation here takes a hint from the old form *zoppern,* related to *zögern,* "to hesitate."
6. *Réclame* is French for "advertisement."
7. Benjamin's terms are *Laubsägearbeiten, Laubsägenase,* and the completely nonsensical *Laufsägespiel.*
8. Alfred Kubin (1877–1959), Austrian painter and writer, was the author of the Expressionist novel *Die andere Seite* (The Other Side; 1909).

8. Fritz Fränkel: Protocol of the Experiment of April 12, 1931

1. Protocol dated April 12, 1931. The German text in Volume 6 of the *Gesammelte Schriften* lists as the author of this and the following protocol "Ernst Joël or Fritz Fränkel," but it is known now that Joël died in 1929. On Fränkel, see Protocol 1, note 3.

9. Fritz Fränkel: Protocol of April 18, 1931

1. See Protocol 8, note 1. At least part of this protocol was written after the experiment, as indicated by the phrase "days later" toward the end.
2. From Horace, *De arte poetica* (The Art of Poetry), V, 139: "Mountains will labor, a funny little mouse will be born." Trans. Smith Palmer Bovie, *Satires and Epistles of Horace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 277.
3. Enoch is mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 5.21–24) as a type of the righteous man who "walked with God." "Amarazzim," as Scott Thompson notes (at www.wbenjamin.org/protocol1.html#32), is evidently the Yiddish *ameratsim,* plural of *amorets,* "ignoramus."
4. "Äffen, nachäffen, voräffen." "Voräffen" (*vor* = "before") is Benjamin's play on *nachäffen,* "to mimic" (*nach* = "after"). There is perhaps an echo here of the Benjaminian terms *Vorgeschichte* and *Nachgeschichte,* "fore-history" and "after-history" (as in AP, Convolute N10,3).
5. An area of diminished acuity within the visual field.
6. "Pu-pu-pu Ruhe, Respekt und Ordnung." One of the names mentioned here is presumably that of Wilhelm Frick (1877–1946), the first elected Nazi official in Germany, later hanged as a war criminal, who was in the news in April 1931 after trying unsuccessfully to institute an academic chair in "racial science" in Thuringia. (See Scott Thompson's note at www.wbenjamin.org/protocol1.html#36.) The adjective *munter* means "wide-awake, cheerful."
7. Merck is a German pharmaceutical and chemical company founded in the seventeenth century.
8. The Tempelhofer Feld, today the site of one of Berlin's airports, was until 1918 a military parade ground and barracks.
9. "Spasmus Semper's Land of Youth" is a play on the title of a popular autobiographical novel of 1905, *Asmus Sempers Jugendland,* by Otto Ernst (pseudonym of Otto Ernst Schmidt).

10. Crock Notes

1. The "Crock Notes" were written ca. June 1933. Concerning this fragmentary text, which refers to an experiment with opium conducted at the home of Benjamin's friend Jean Selz on Ibiza in 1933, see Tillman Rexroth's "Editorial Note" and Selz's "An Experiment by Walter Benjamin," both included in this volume. See also Selz's "A proposito di 'Crocknotizen,'" in the Italian edition of the text, *Sull'hascisch* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975, 1996), 140, which corrects the dating of the piece by the German editors (as "summer 1932," in GS6, 824). The piece is dated "end of May 1933" in GB4, 219, but this is rendered questionable by Selz's mention that the experiment took place in June (see below, 151). The meaning of the word "crock," which was still unknown to Rexroth, is explained by Selz: "There is no word 'crock' in German. . . . What was actually involved was a slightly Germanized form of the French *croc,* 'hook.' Of course, the meaning we gave to the word had nothing to do with this. At once absurd and secret, it was the term we used to refer to opium. Some friends

who smoked had invented the expression; I got it from them and shared it with Benjamin. We didn't know exactly how this special usage of the term arose. It is conceivable that it originated in sympathy with the humorous vocabulary of Père Ubu (in Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu Roi* [of 1896]), who speaks frequently of his 'croc à phynances.' The orthography employed by Benjamin corresponds precisely to our pronunciation of the word (in French, the final 'c' in *croc* is silent). Also, the word *fête,* which appears in French in the 'Crock Notes,' was part of our special vocabulary: it did not carry its usual meaning of 'festival' or 'feast,' but referred solely to those sessions during which we made use of 'crock'" (cited in GS6, 824). Jean Selz (1904–1977) was a French writer and art historian who became acquainted with Benjamin on Ibiza in 1932, and who later translated sections of his *Berlin Childhood around 1900* into French.

2. The last two sentences are in French in the original (with the exception of the first word of the second sentence, the German *Roi*). A *torchon* is a dishcloth or duster.

11. Fritz Fränkel: Protocol of the Mescaline Experiment of May 22, 1934

1. This protocol is dated May 22, 1934. Mescaline, as obtained from the peyote cactus or produced synthetically, is a hallucinogen. On Fritz Fränkel, see Protocol 1, note 3.
2. "Dawdling" here translates *Säumen,* which can also mean "hemming." Benjamin plays on this double meaning as the paragraph continues.
3. In the Rorschach Test, introduced in 1921 by the Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach (1884–1922), a person is asked to describe what he sees in ten inkblots, of which some are black or gray and others have patches of color. Comparing the response to established norms, the tester attempts to describe the testee's psychological makeup. The test is used in diagnosing psychopathology. The Roman numerals in the text below refer to specific inkblots.
4. Yakut is the name of a people inhabiting the region of the Lena River in eastern Siberia.
5. The Parcae are the Fates in Roman mythology, traditionally represented as three goddesses: Clotho, who spins the thread of life; Lachesis, who determines its length; and Atropos, who cuts it off.
6. The story of the Queen of Sheba is told in 1 Kings 10.1–13, in the Old Testament. King Solomon gives the queen "all that she desired," including, some say, an heir.
7. "This hand is altogether grand. / It's called my hand."
8. A forester's house or gamekeeper's lodge. Benjamin plays on the name of Friedrich Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche (1846–1935). Her marriage to the anti-Semitic agitator Bernhard Förster alienated her from her brother. Nevertheless, after Nietzsche's mental breakdown in 1889 she served as his guardian at Weimar, and after his death in 1900 she renamed her family home the Nietzsche Archive. She later gained a wide audience for her edition of Nietzsche's works, in which she suppressed or distorted many passages and forged nearly thirty letters.

See Benjamin's 1932 review, "Nietzsche und das Archiv seiner Schwester," in GS3, 323–326.

9. "Riffraff" translates "Lumpengesindel." This is the title of story 10 in the collection of fairy tales published by the Brothers Grimm as *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Nursery and Household Tales; 1812 and 1815). Little Cock and Little Hen are characters in this story. See Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900,* in SW3, 385 ("The Little Hunchback").
10. *Struwwelpeter* (Slovenly Peter; 1844) is a popular collection of ten versified stories by the German physician Heinrich Hoffman (1809–1894). It recounts the sometimes gruesome fates of children with various bad habits.
11. These notes are in Benjamin's hand. They partly duplicate material from Fränkel's protocol immediately preceding.
12. A reference to Goethe's *Faust, Part Two,* Act 1, in which Faust visits the "Mothers," vaguely defined mythological figures, in search of the secret that will enable him to discover Helen of Troy. After his encounter with the Mothers, Faust experiences rhapsodic visions.
13. See note 7 above. Here Benjamin has "ist aller Hand" ("is the hand of all"), in contrast to "ist allerhand," as cited by Fränkel.

12. Undated Notes

1. These notes were written in the years 1927–1934.
2. "Jedes Bild ist ein Schlaf für sich."
3. "I brush the images."
4. San Gimignano is a town in the Tuscany region of Italy, northwest of Volterra. Benjamin was there in July 1929, and he published a piece on the town in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* that August (see GS4, 364–366).
5. Comic opera of 1849 by the German composer Otto Nicolai, based on Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor.* In "A Berlin Chronicle," Benjamin recalls journeying as a child through a wintry Berlin to see this opera (SW2, 626).
6. The reference is to Walther Gottheil's *Berliner Märchen* (1900).
7. Benjamin adapted the lines "Oh brown-baked . . . in winter days" as the epigraph to his *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (SW3, 344).
8. John Brown, *Barbarossa: A Tragedy* (London, 1771).
9. This line and the following one echo material in Protocol 3.

Myslovice—Braunschweig—Marseilles

1. "Myslowitz—Braunschweig—Marseille" was first published in the Berlin journal *Uhu* in November 1930, and is now in GS4, 729–737. It is based on Benjamin's drug protocol of September 29, 1928 (Protocol 4 in this volume), which was later additionally reworked in the essay "Hashish in Marseilles" (see the following piece). It also adapts passages from Ernst Joël's protocol of May 11, 1928 (part of Protocol 3), and from Benjamin's essay "Marseilles" (SW2, 232–236). The name "Eduard Scherlinger" is evidently Benjamin's invention.

2. On Bloch, see Protocol 2, note 11.
3. Adolphe Monticelli (1824–1886) was a French painter known for his landscapes and his skill as a colorist.
4. Benjamin here confuses the Phoenicians with the Phoceans, a Greek tribe from Asia Minor who established Massilia as a trading post around 600 B.C.
5. Baudelaire's book on hashish and opium, *Les Paradis artificiels* (Artificial Paradises), was first published in 1860. On Hesse's *Steppenwolf,* see Protocol 4, note 3.
6. On Myslovice, see Protocol 3, note 10.
7. A play on the word *Braunschweiger* ("one from Braunschweig"), whose components mean "brown" and "silent."
8. In German, *Bank* means both "bench" and "bank."

Hashish in Marseilles

1. "Haschisch in Marseille" was first published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* December 1932, and is now in GS4, 409–416.
2. This article has been translated by Scott J. Thompson as "The Hashish-Rausch: Contributions to an Experimental Psychopathology," at www.wbenjamin.org (accessed December 2005), which contains other information relating to Benjamin's drug use. On Ernst Joël and Fritz Fränkel, see Protocol 1, note 3.
3. On Ariadne, see Protocol 4, note 8.
4. On Jensen, see Protocol 4, note 10.
5. On the German proverb Benjamin alludes to here, see Protocol 4, note 11.
6. Benjamin is referring to Gustav Glück and Erich Unger. See Protocol 4, note 12.
7. On Barnabas, see Protocol 4, note 14.
8. On Karl Kraus, see Protocol 4, note 15.

From *One-Way Street*

1. *Einbahnstraße* was first published in 1928 and is now in GS4, 83–148. Translated in SW1, 444–488. "To the Planetarium" is the final section of the text.
2. Luna Park was a spectacular amusement park in existence from 1903 to 1946 on Coney Island in New York. It featured rides, animals, and elaborate electric lighting in color. Many other amusement parks have since adopted the name.

From "Surrealism"

1. "Der Sürrealismus" was first published in *Die literarische Welt,* February 1929, and is now in GS2, 295–310. Translation in SW2, 207–221; the excerpts here are taken from 208–209 and 215–216.

From "May–June 1931"

1. "Mai–June 1931," which did not appear during Benjamin's lifetime, was first published in GS6, 422–441. Translation in SW2, 469–485; the excerpt here is taken from 470. "Contemplation" translates *Betrachtung* (translated as "reflection" in Protocol 12).

From *The Arcades Project*

1. Roger Caillois (1913–1978) was a French writer who in 1937, together with Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, founded the Collège de Sociologie, at which Benjamin occasionally attended events. *Fantômas* was the name of a cycle of popular twentieth-century thrillers by Marcel Allain.
2. Baudelaire, "The Poem of Hashish" (sect. 4), in *Artificial Paradise,* trans. Ellen Fox (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 68.
3. The Holy Roman emperor Otto II (955–983) married Theophano (955?–991), daughter of Byzantine emperor Romanus II, in 972, at Rome.
4. See the opening pages of Protocol 2.
5. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) was a Swedish scientist, philosopher, and mystical religious writer, whose works exerted considerable influence on modern literature.
6. Baudelaire, "The Poem of Hashish" (sect. 4), in *"My Heart Laid Bare" and Other Prose Writings,* trans. Norman Cameron (1950; rpt. Haskell House, 1975), 111.
7. Ibid., 107.
8. See Protocol 1, entry 22 and note 5.
9. Baudelaire, "The Poem of Hashish" (sect. 3), in *"My Heart Laid Bare" and Other Prose Writings,* 102. Baudelaire claims here to be citing verbatim the letter of an unnamed woman.
10. Belleville is a working-class neighborhood in Paris.
11. On Odilon Redon, see Protocol 2, note 5.
12. See the first entry in Convolute Q, "Panorama," in *The Arcades Project.* The myriorama was a popular montage game, invented in 1802, involving a set of cards that could be rearranged in any order to make up a series of views of a continuous panoramic landscape.

From the Notebooks

1. See Convolute M17a,2, in *The Arcades Project,* where Benjamin refers to the flâneur as "the virtuoso of this empathy [with the commodity and with exchange value]."
2. See Protocol 4 and "Hashish in Marseilles," in this volume.

From the Letters

1. Ernst Schoen (1894–1960), German musician, poet, and translator, was artistic director of a major radio station in Frankfurt. He provided Benjamin with opportunities to present his work on radio during the 1920s and early 1930s.
2. Gershom (Gerhard) Scholem (1897–1982), professor of Jewish mysticism at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was a close friend and correspondent of Benjamin's from 1915 on, and later helped to edit his writings. He was the author of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1961).
3. Reference is to Ernst Joël and Fritz Fränkel. See Protocol 1, note 3.
4. The three German titles refer, respectively, to *The Arcades Project,* to a projected but unrealized collection of essays on literature and literary criticism, and to the se-

quence of letters published in 1936 as *Deutsche Menschen* (German Men and Women; in SW3, 167–235).

5. Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) was professor of philosophy and sociology at the University of Frankfurt and director of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt and New York. He was the author of *The Eclipse of Reason* (1947) and many other works.
6. Theodor W. Adorno (originally Wiesengrund; 1903–1969) first met Benjamin in 1923 and became one of his closest friends, later editing his writings. He was the author of many works on philosophy, literature, and music, including *Minima Moralia* (1951).
7. Goethe, *Faust,* Part One, V, 2603–2604.

An Experiment by Walter Benjamin

1. On Kraus, see Protocol 4, note 15. Jean Selz's "Une Expérience de Walter Benjamin" was first published in 1959 in the periodical *Les Lettres Nouvelles* and reprinted in Selz, *Le Dire et le faire, ou Les Chemins de la création* (Paris, 1964). See also Selz's essay "Benjamin in Ibiza," trans. M. Martin Guiney, in *On Walter Benjamin,* ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1988), 353–366. On Selz, see Protocol 10, note 1. In French, *expérience* means both "experiment" and "experience."
2. Included in this volume. Selz goes on to quote a number of passages from this essay.
3. On Jensen, see Protocol 4, note 10.
4. The burning of the Reichstag (Parliament) building in Berlin on the night of February 27, 1933, is widely believed to have been carried out by the newly formed Nazi government itself, so as to enable it to assume emergency powers.
5. *Description et représentation exacte de la maison de glace, construite à St. Petersbourg au mois de janvier 1740 et de tous les meubles qui s'y trouvoient; avec quelques remarques sur le froid en général, et particulièrement sur celui qu'on a senti cette même année dans toute l'Europe; composée et publiée . . . par Georg Wolfgang Krafft . . . , traduit de l'allemand par Pierre Louis Le Roy* (St. Petersburg: Academy of Sciences, 1741).
6. Paul Valéry, *Monsieur Teste,* trans. Jackson Mathews (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 20 ("The Evening with Monsieur Teste," 1896).

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Press, 1999), translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin on the basis of the German volume edited by Rolf Tiedemann.

The following translations appear here for the first time: Protocols 1, 2 (Bloch segment and second Benjamin segment), 3, 4, and 6–12; the editorial note by Tillman Rexroth; the excerpts from Benjamin's notebooks; the excerpt from the letter of February 7, 1938, to Max Horkheimer; and "An Experiment by Walter Benjamin." The essay by Marcus Boon likewise appears here for the first time.

Jean Selz's essay was originally published as "Une Expérience de Walter Benjamin" in a 1959 issue of *Les Lettres Nouvelles* (Paris: Gallimard), and was reprinted in Jean Selz, *Le Dire et le faire, ou Les Chemins de la création* (Paris: © Mercure de France, 1964).

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"Benjamin's [hashish] experiments correspond quite precisely to the specific cognitive intentions articulated in his most fully developed philosophical texts, intentions that would find expression above all in the extraordinary *Arcades Project*. [He perceived] 'how deeply certain powers of intoxication are committed to Reason and its struggle for freedom.' Benjamin accurately saw how in the epoch of the decline and self-destruction of bourgeois society, both 'the more common productive forces of nature' and 'the more remote' forces—the powers of ecstasy—are 'perverted and spoiled.' In the pre-fascist and fascist eras, Benjamin was able to turn such deformation into a medium of experience."

—HERMANN SCHWEPPENHÄUSER, co-editor of Walter Benjamin's *Complete Works* in German

"Current research on hashish and other hallucinogens focuses on the mechanisms by which they distort thought and perception. In today's scientific drug journals, the topics are neurons, chemical messengers, and techniques for visualizing cellular energy dynamics. Walter Benjamin's *On Hashish* reminds us why we are interested in hallucinogens in the first place: they transform individual consciousness. Benjamin's hashish experiments, which he refers to as 'trances,' also remind us that subjective states, even those induced by powerful pharmacological agents, reflect their historical settings as well as their underlying biochemistry. The cultural context for *On Hashish* includes Marx, the Symbolist poets, Kafka, the emergence of mass culture, and the rise of fascism. The result is a one-of-a-kind fusion of grand ideas, longings for community, and the twists and turns of cannabinoid perception."

—GENE HEYMAN, Medical Researcher, Behavioral Psychopharmacology Research Laboratory, McLean Hospital

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