

# ARCHÆVS

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*The Legacy of Mircea Eliade,  
Religions & Modernity,  
Hermetic Currents & Esotericism,  
and other contributions*

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**MIRCEA ELIADE AND IOAN PETRU CULIANU  
ON NARCOTICS AND RELIGION\***

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*Mircea Eliade: the narcotic, erotic and religious dimensions  
of the hippie movement*

In 1932, the Romanian journal *Cuvântul* [The Word] published an article on Aldous Huxley signed by the young Mircea Eliade. Comprised of several episodes, the text was partly eulogistic and partly critical. At that time Huxley had not yet published any of his great books. He used to collect the excellent contributions he had made to the daily press into volumes for publication. Although Eliade was known to do the same, he found in this sufficient reason for criticism: “A mentality of an apothecary, of a man who cures his patients by prescribing narcotics and laxatives, who abhors all [surgical] interventions, who is not interested by the root causes of the illness, yet suffers along with the sick and shows him compassion, offering him powders and herbs to postpone the greater

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\* This study represents a chapter, revised and updated by Andrei Oîșteanu, from his recent book *Narcotice în cultura română. Istorie, religie și literatură* [*Narcotics in Romanian Culture: History, Religion and Literature*], published in 2010, in Romanian, by Polirom Publishing House, Iași (see a review in *Studia Asiatica* 11 [2010]). Other topic-related studies, also signed by Andrei Oîșteanu, are: “Narcotics and Hallucinogens: Scholars from the Romanian Territories Travelling to the East (Spathary Nicolae Milescu, Demeter Cantemir, J.M. Honigberger, Mircea Eliade)”, *Studia Asiatica* 10 (2009), pp. 263-285, and “Mircea Eliade, from opium and cannabis to amphetamines”, *Euresis. Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires et culturelles*, no. 3-4, 2007, pp. 169-181. The latest study was published in Romanian in Andrei OIȘTEANU, *Religie, politică și mit. Texte despre Mircea Eliade și I.P. Culianu* [*Religion, Politics and Myth: Texts on M. Eliade and I.P. Culianu*], Iași: Polirom, 2007, pp. 62-75 [editor's note].

pains and to lull or soothe the smaller ones” (text retrieved from *Euthanasius' Island*, 1943)<sup>1</sup>.

As time went by, Eliade's opinions became more nuanced, albeit remaining laden with irony. In his diary, Eliade was amused by a tale told by Doctor Humphrey Osmond on Huxley's participation in a Congress of psychology in San Francisco. Humphrey Osmond, the British psychologist, is the one who first prescribed mescaline to Huxley (in 1953) and the man who coined the word *psychedelic*. Osmond mentions how Huxley listened most attentively to the communications made during the congress, “making the sign of the cross most devoutly every time that Freud's name was mentioned”<sup>2</sup>. Eliade's opinion of Aldous Huxley changed substantially around the mid 1950s, especially after the latter published his famous books *The Doors of Perception* (1954) and *Heaven and Hell* (1956), wherein he associated narcotic experiences (induced by mescaline and LSD) with mystical ecstasy.

Mircea Eliade settled in Chicago in 1957. In the autumn of the year 1959, still ill-adapted to *the American way of life*, the historian of religions could be found meditating on the unfortunate destiny of contemporary man, discovering that the latter had been “smashed, suffocated, crushed under the weight of the ‘industrial civilisation’”. “How are we to rediscover the sacramental dimension of existence?” – he wonders in his diary. “[...] There must be a way out. Aldous Huxley proposes mescaline, alcohol, and drugs. There would be a lot to say on this topic.”<sup>3</sup> It is very likely that Mircea Eliade would have indeed had “a lot to say on this topic”, but once again he chose discretion. Or maybe he jotted it in his diary, but he censored the text before publication. At any rate, such comments merely marked a beginning of an era and of the psychedelic culture. It so happened that Eliade found himself right in the “eye of the storm”, in the midst of the psychedelic culture.

\*

In the '60s-'70s, while he was a professor in the United States, Eliade was highly interested in the *hippie* movement and in the explosion of narcotics use among the young Americans (and West-Europeans) of the time. I have commented Eliade's interest in this topic on another

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Drumul spre centru*, an anthology compiled by Gabriel LIICEANU and Andrei PLEȘU, București: Univers, 1991, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I (1941-1969), edited by Mircea HANDOCA, București: Humanitas, 1993, p. 567.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

occasion<sup>4</sup>. As a matter of fact, Mircea Eliade's career and the history of the history of religions have in the 1965-1974 decade an important point of inflexion. Until then a dry academic discipline (if not an annex of theology), the history of religions suddenly became an existential challenge and a very popular preoccupation among millions of young rebels from the western societies.

In the '60s, the new generation of young people, born after the war – raising against the society “administered” by their parents – started to find interest in the non-western societies, in the non-Christian religions (Jesus was “interesting” only as a proto-hippie), in the oriental cultures, in the ancient magical and ritual practices, etc. The Orient, mysticism, shamanism, yoga practices, the Indian religions, the drugs attracted their interest. At the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, Eliade held classes on shamanism and yoga, on the sacred and the profane, on myths, dreams and mysteries. He also talked about voluntary intoxications with psychotropic plants in different archaic cultures (Thracia, Iran, India, China, shamanic Asia, medieval Europe etc.) and about the “archaic techniques of ecstasy”. *Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* is actually the subtitle of his book *Shamanism*, published in French in 1951 and – not by chance – reedited in huge number of copies at the Princeton University Press in 1964, 1972 and 1974.

The classrooms where Mircea Eliade was teaching became inappropriate and were replaced with amphitheatres. He started to be invited to held conferences in other American university centres, in California, for example, in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara – birthplaces of the hippie movement. “The second class. I have been speaking freely, I have been improvising before a hall just as packed”, noted Eliade with surprise in his journal, on 8 February 1968, about the classes held at the University of Santa Barbara<sup>5</sup>.

In 1978, at the end of the hippie movement, Eliade himself admitted that the history of religions had become at that time “a discipline en vogue”, and the shamanism “almost an object of delight”: “What I have seen in Chicago and in Santa Barbara is fascinating. In America, the history of religions is a discipline en vogue, not only among the students which, as [Jacques] Maritain said, are ‘illiterate from the religious point of view’, but also among those curious to know the religions of the others: Hinduism, Buddhism, the archaic and primitive religions.

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<sup>4</sup> Andrei OIȘTEANU, *Religie, politică și mit. Texte despre Mircea Eliade și I.P. Culiianu*, Iași: Polirom, 2007, pp. 57-61.

<sup>5</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I (1941-1969), București: Humanitas, 1993, p. 583 = Mircea ELIADE, *No Souvenirs. Journal (1957-1969)*, translated from the French by Fred H. Johnson Jr., San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982, p. 306.



Shamanism became almost an object of delight. Painters, men of theatre take interest in it, as many young people also do; they think their drugs prepare them to understand the shamanic experience. Among those students, some have found the absolute in an ephemeral [Oriental] sect [...]. I do not encourage them, but I am not criticizing their choice either, because they tell me: ‘Before, I took drugs, I was a larva, I believed in nothing, I have twice tried to kill myself, I was close to getting killed one day when I was completely stoned, and now I have found the absolute!’”<sup>6</sup>.

It was an era when the young American rebels had discovered not only the Orient (especially India), but also the “Orient from the South”, that of the Indians of Central America. The main exponent of this discovery was Carlos Castaneda (1925-1998), the American of Peruvian origins and student at the Faculty of Anthropology of the University of California, Los Angeles (*UCLA*, MA in 1962, PhD in 1973). It is highly probable that the young Castaneda attended some classes held by Mircea Eliade in the ‘60s. Published between 1968 and 1972, his first books describe his initiation by a shaman guru from a north-Mexican tribe, with the help of some hallucinogen plants: cactus *peyotl* buds, also known as peyote buttons (*Lophophora williamsii*), the *teonanacatl* psychedelic mushrooms (*Psilocibe mexicana*), and jimson weed (*Datura stramonium*).

The students started to seek in Eliade not only a professor, but a “master”, if not even a “guru”. His books began to have a large public success, to be reprinted in large numbers, etc. By no means do I intend to minimize the value of Mircea Eliade’s work, or the efficiency of his methods in creating a real school of historians of religions. I merely want to emphasize that all of the above happily overlapped with a specific socio-cultural context, which unexpectedly aroused the interest of the young people for disciplines as the history of religions, cultural anthropology and Oriental studies.

Little was said about the way in which Mircea Eliade understood the American hippie movement of the second half of the ‘60s. At that time, the professor had turned 60 (in March 1967) and was teaching history of religions at the University of Chicago and in other universities in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Boston, etc., counting many hippies among his students. At the beginning, Eliade showed surprise at the magnitude of the phenomenon and by its new and particular characteristics, both social and cultural. His opinions and explications were not enthusiastic from the start. Initially, the generation of

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<sup>6</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Încercarea labirintului*, a dialogue with Claude-Henri ROCQUET, translation and notes by Doina Cornea, Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1990, pp. 99-100. The French original edition was published in 1978 (Belfond, Paris).

intellectuals like Eliade, Cioran & Co, formerly young rebels of the '20s (now around 60 years old, therefore of the same age as the young hippies' grandfathers), looked at the "flower power" generation with mistrust. In 1969, for example (a crucial year, that of the Woodstock festival), the hippie students in Paris were for Cioran a scandalous sight: "Those girls almost naked, those boys with long hair, what a sinister and repugnant spectacle! Everything will go to the pieces, inexorably!"<sup>7</sup>

Eliade also crossed, with no pleasure, moments when the "bourgeois" that he was felt discomfort at the "stench of the sweaty body" emitted by an unwashed hippie student. But Eliade tried to look under the surface of the phenomenon. The filth of the young *hippies* – as Eliade very quickly understood – "is also part of the ideology and practices of 'the rebellion'. It is the expression of the same desire to protest against the opulent society and to break noisily with the moral, political, and aesthetic ideals of the parents"<sup>8</sup>.

In a second phase, the rebels aroused the curiosity of the professor Eliade. "How much I can learn from the young people in the college", he wrote down in his journal in January 1968. Initially, he tried to benchmark the hippie movement by listing its external forms ("bearded, with the hair of nomadic Tziganes, dressed in a manner which is both eccentric and poor, specialists in LSD and mescaline"), but also the main ideological themes: "They are all in revolt against the ideology of parents and institutions, especially academic institutions (the Establishment). Certain themes return like a leitmotif: anti-traditionalism, antireductionism (they are for Jung and against Freud), they are interested in mystical doctrines, but not in religion as an institution; they like life, they are optimistic, and they find that everything that happens to them has a meaning and significance. Of the ten or eleven that I have just seen today, they were all anti-existentialists (especially anti-Sartre), and a single one (anthropology) was interested in structuralism. The others – 'mystics', rather"<sup>9</sup>.

Even if some of the students found that the majority of the professors seemed "stupid, childish, *irrelevant*", they somehow trusted Mircea Eliade. They considered him to be "one of them": he had studied in India, practiced Yoga, written about shamanism, sexuality, mystical initiations ("how passionate the students are about the 'initiation'", notes Eliade) and, especially, about the use of hallucinogens and other "techniques of ecstasy". Others described to him what they felt during the

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<sup>7</sup> Emil CIORAN, *Caiete III, 1969-1972*, translated from French by Emanoil Marcu and Vlad Russo, București: Humanitas, 2005, p. 110.

<sup>8</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, 1993, p. 597; M. ELIADE, *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 317.

<sup>9</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, 1993, p. 582; M. ELIADE, *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 304.

Yoga meditations: “I always listen carefully to those young people, who ‘practice Yoga’ and describe for me their experiences during some meditations; I often recognize entire passages from my books”<sup>10</sup>. “In America, Eliade’s options – remembers Virgil Nemoianu – goes to the young revolt of the ‘60s (the ‘flowers’ revolution’) and those young people often recognize him as one of them”<sup>11</sup>.

Some hippie students described to him their experiences with lighter drugs (marijuana, hashish) or with psychedelic substances (LSD, mescaline). One day (in 1968), a student told him about the feelings he experienced after smoking marijuana and taking LSD. Only after reading Mircea Eliade’s book on shamanism did he understand that he had in fact experienced a “shamanic initiation”. In January 1971, a student signed in to attend Eliade’s class on “Initiation” in order to understand her own experience, as she had consumed “a large quantity of hashish” and “a dose of LSD” at a “hippie gathering” that had turned into “a ritual witch festival”.

The professor listened carefully to his students, noting down in his journal their narcotic experiences. I think that the first entry of this kind is of a relatively early date, April 14, 1966. Eliade had the intuition that “through the paranormal experiences of hallucinogenic drugs”, “the younger generations” will create “an intelligible, significant, new literature of the fantastic”. Afterwards, in 1968, the historian of religions remarked that “the unprecedented success of hallucinogenic drugs among the young” illustrates a syndrome, among others, of a complex *Zeitgeist* of the western society<sup>12</sup>.

From this point of view, also memorable was Mircea Eliade’s meeting with the beatnik poet Allen Ginsberg. This meeting took place, at the poet’s request, in Chicago, on February 25, 1967. Ginsberg came to the professor as to a sort of a “guru”, “as a searcher for wisdom to a great teacher”, comments Andrei Codrescu<sup>13</sup>. The beatnik poet “resembles a Himalayan ascetic”, one who “drinks and smokes without stopping”, noted Mircea Eliade. Among others, Allen Ginsberg told the historian of religions about “his drug experiences”, about the mechanisms of “poetic

<sup>10</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. II (1970-1985), edited by Mircea HANDOCA, București: Humanitas, 1993, p. 116.

<sup>11</sup> *Întâlniri cu Mircea Eliade*, volume coordinated by Mihaela GLIGOR and Mac Linscott RICKETTS, with a preface by Mac Linscott Ricketts, a foreword by Mihaela Gligor, and an afterword by Sorin Alexandrescu, București: Humanitas, 2007, p. 188.

<sup>12</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, p. 553, 582, 597-598, 603-604, and vol. II, pp. 27, 39-40; *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 279, 318.

<sup>13</sup> Andrei CODRESCU, *Miracol și catastrofă*. Dialoguri cu Robert Lazu, Arad: Hartmann, 2005, 70.

inspiration” and about the “technique of meditation”. The poet told him what he felt when he took several drugs, “mescaline, LSD, and many others”. Once he arrived at home, Mircea Eliade carefully took down all the details in his journal<sup>14</sup>. Still in 1967, Eliade was visited by another rebel poet: Andrei Codrescu – a hippie aged twenty, a drug user, who was about to discover America and the psychedelic culture of the young generation. Only a few months earlier, in 1966, Allen Ginsberg and Andrei Codrescu had met in New York and had become friends<sup>15</sup>.

As confirmed by a student and disciple of Eliade from the “flower power” period, Douglas Allen, Eliade is “fascinated with hippies”, with the young people “who are exploring Indian and other non western experiments with the mythic and symbolic structures of harmony with nature, ritual nudity, and so forth”. The historian of religions is “extremely generous, even romantic, in describing these talented students who are alienated from the modern West and experimenting with ‘spiritual’ alternatives” (a codified expression for psychedelic substances)<sup>16</sup>.

A souvenir from the second half of the ‘60s is recorded by another ex-student of Mircea Eliade, the American historian of religions Norman Girardot, back then a bearded hippie who intoxicated himself with “mind-distorting herbs” (probably marijuana) and with mescaline. On the habits of Eliade himself, Girardot does not tell much, except that he was “wearing baggy corduroy pants and still freely smoking a sweetly aromatic and particularly cheap Cherry Blend pipe tobacco”<sup>17</sup>.

For Eliade, the smoking of the pipe constituted a whole ceremonial, described by the Romanian poet Constanța Buzea, who visited the historian of religions in January 1971 in Chicago: “[Eliade] fills up his pipe generously. He manoeuvres all kind of small bags. In one he puts the ashes. From another he extracts with two of his fingers the golden tobacco. Then, with his thumb, he pushes the tobacco down in the pipe’s horn. He does not light it up immediately but listens, in his favourite position, the fist under his chin, like a child in the presence of a miracle; conquered, as a faithful who does not doubt God’s existence, but waits for Him to show up. Then he lights up his pipe. The right hand, pale

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<sup>14</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, p. 571-573; *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 295.

<sup>15</sup> Andrei CODRESCU, *Prof pe drum*, translated by Ioana Avădani, photographs by David Graham, București: Curtea Veche, 2008, pp. 63, 113.

<sup>16</sup> *Întâlniri cu Mircea Eliade*, 2007, p. 39; *Encounters with Mircea Eliade*, volume coordinated by Mac Linscott RICKETTS and Mihaela GLIGOR, with a preface by Mac Linscott Ricketts, and a foreword by Mihaela Gligor, Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2005, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> *Întâlniri cu Mircea Eliade*, 2007, pp. 102-103; *Encounters with Mircea Eliade*, 2005, pp. 68-69.

and immobile, the one that holds the pipe, has something of the care of handling a cult object. Crisped, it looks like sustaining a snake”<sup>18</sup>.

Mircea Eliade spoke to his disciples about the “ritual function of smoking”, as it was practiced by the pre-Columbian South-Americans. In 1973, Eliade noted in his journal that, after 1492, the Europeans had pushed smoking in the profane area: “Smoking was introduced in Europe as a drug, not as a sacrament. That is why the consequences, after four centuries, are dramatic”<sup>19</sup>. For the use of the tobacco in religious and magical-ritual practices by the South-American peoples, see the 1966 book by Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Du miel aux cendres*.

The fact that Eliade was interested in the hippie students’ experiences, whom he seemed to understand and with whom he shared sometimes a common language, modified their expectations. Some were looking for a guru; he was not prepared for that, and felt forced to step back, with due reserve. Not by chance, the situation occurred for the first time precisely in California (the birth place of the hippie movement), at the time when he was teaching in Santa Barbara. “Some students came to see me afterward in my office, notes Eliade on February 8, 1968. One of them, with long hair falling onto his shoulders, suggested to me that I speak about Yoga, about mysticism, and that I connect the archaic world, the Oriental world, and the ‘modern world’. He is certainly right. But I’m not speaking here as a guru; I’ve come to give a history of religions course ...”<sup>20</sup>.

The practice of “free love” by the hippies and their primitive “communism” fascinate Eliade. “[I am] more and more under the spell of the *hippie* phenomenon – notes he in the diary on March 3, 1968. I remember what one of my students said to me: hippies constitute a sort of secret society of a religious type. Young people who come from all parts of the United States, they are taken in by strangers (also hippies), they eat what they are given; they have ‘stores’ where each chooses what he needs [...] and leaves something in its place, if he possesses anything. In the places where they meet – the forest, the hills – they live in a sort of primitive Christian community. They all have an occupation, listen to music, ‘meditate’, etc. They practice ‘free’ love”<sup>21</sup>.

And yet he hesitates. His typology of religious manifestations seems incomplete. The spot from the “Eliade’s Table” where the “hippie movement” should be placed is not very clearly defined. It is either “a

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<sup>18</sup> Constanța BUZEA, *Creștetul ghețarului. Jurnal (1969-1971)*, București: Humanitas, 2009, p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. II, 1993, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, 1993, p. 584; M. ELIADE, *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 306.

<sup>21</sup> M. ELIADE, *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 307.

kind of secret society of a religious type”, or it resembles the early Christian communities, while some orgiastic manifestations look like “witch ritual feasts”. Eliade reads again the books dealing with the “agony of the Christianity” (Miguel de Unamuno, for instance), trying to understand the “new religion”, which the young hippies try to achieve by “initiation trials”. “I know that many hippies dream of a ‘new religion’ and struggle to get closer to the ‘unseen worlds’. This is, as a matter of fact, the justification they like to give to drug abuse. But can they homologate some artificial, facile, mechanic ecstasies with an ‘initiation’, even like that from the *Inferno* [by Strindberg]?”<sup>22</sup>.

Nevertheless, in March 1968, the religious aspect of the hippie movement appears essential to Eliade. “Why do I call this ‘movement’ religious or quasi-religious? Because it is a reaction against the absence of meaning and the vacuity of an alienated existence known especially by the new American generations (in revolt against the values and the ideals of their parents). These young people believe in life, in liberty, in *agape*, in love. They have found a meaning in life, they believe in an absolute reality which can be accessible to them. Finally they live in freedom, spontaneity, and detachment from everything”. Finally, extremely important for the historian of religions is the way in which the hippie rebels conceive of sexuality. In their idea of *free love* there is “no promiscuity or orgies” – observes Eliade. “The nudity of girls or women, they say, helps the ‘camaraderie’”<sup>23</sup>.

At a later date, after the consultation of young people’s “underground press”, Eliade nuances his opinion. “Despite the excesses of sex, of nudism, of orgiastic freedom, etc., the tone of these texts, apparently lewd or even pornographic, is religious; yes, religious. Every expression of love, especially of physical love, is accepted with emotion and deference. As I have said many times, it is possible for the uninhibited sex life exalted by the young generation of rebels to be part of the (unconscious) process of rediscovery of the sanctity of Life”. It is an “historic moment”, proclaims Mircea Eliade, when “for the first time in the history of Christian civilization, liberated sexually is triumphing everywhere and the almost ritual beatitude of nudity is being rediscovered”<sup>24</sup>.

Indeed, from the archaic manifestations of ritual sexuality, with its fertilizing functions, through the narcotic and Dionysian orgies, similar phenomena were not recorded in the western world, dominated as it was

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<sup>22</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. II, 1993, pp. 30-33.

<sup>23</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, 1993, p. 585; M. ELIADE, *No Souvenirs*, 1982, p. 307.

<sup>24</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. I, 1993, pp. 592-593, 598; M. ELIADE, *No Souvenirs*, 1982, pp. 313, 318.

by the Judaeo-Christian morals, with the exception of some veiled reminiscences (carnival excesses, residual magic and erotic rituals, etc.). “We live, as it is known, the most radical revolution of the morals and of the sexual ethics the History has ever seen”, notes Mircea Eliade in his journal, on September 6, 1973<sup>25</sup>. A couple of years later, in 1978, he underlines the great importance of the fact that through the “hippie phenomenon”, “a young generation, of a ten generations Christian (Protestant or Catholic) descent, rediscovered the religious dimension of cosmic life, of nudity and of sexuality”<sup>26</sup>. In 1973, the historian of religions still used the present tense when speaking of the “hippy phenomenon”; in 1978, he was using the past tense.

The theme of the “religious dimension” of the young’s rebellion will be approached again by Eliade and Culianu in the 16 volume *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, which Mircea Eliade had coordinated by the end of his life (Macmillan, New York, 1987). “It would be wrong to say that the ‘[sexual] revolution’ [of the ‘60s] did not have a specific ideology, or that it was completely deprived of a religious basis”<sup>27</sup>. The article *Sexuality* in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion* was written by both Mircea Eliade and I. P. Culianu, but the paragraph dedicated to the *Sexual revolutions*, from which I have quoted, was composed by Culianu. It was, of course, a formulation agreed upon by Eliade.

The opinions on the “flower power” generation formulated by Eliade *post factum*, at the end of the ‘70s and in the ‘80s, are essential, because enough time had passed for an objective historical evaluation. “[The hippy movement] constitutes an example of our unexhausted and unpredictable creativity”, declared he in 1978. Even if this complex social, cultural, political and religious movement was of short life, and even if the former hippies would become (again) bourgeois (which happened), the historian of the religions was convinced that the “Californian” experience (that is, started from California), produced a benign psycho-mental revolution, whose “openings” would last: “In the colleges, confessed Eliade in 1978, everybody says that drugs have lost considerably from their seduction [...] And even if [the young people] will give up their ‘Californian’ experience, in order to become functionaries, drivers, teachers, I am sure they got richer because of it”<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> M. ELIADE, *Jurnal*, vol. II, 1993, p. 127.

<sup>26</sup> M. ELIADE, *Încercarea labirintului*, 1990, p. 102.

<sup>27</sup> Ioan Petru CULIANU, *Cult, magie, erezii. Articole din enciclopedia ale religiilor*, translated by Maria-Magdalena Anghelescu and Dan Petrescu, with a preface by Eduard IRICINSCHI, Iași: Polirom, 2003, p. 180.

<sup>28</sup> M. ELIADE, *Încercarea labirintului*, 1990, pp. 101-102.

I believe my presentation is not deprived of importance. First of all, I think the way in which a historian of religions and a specialist of the sacred of Eliade's calibre understood the hippie movement in its own environment, in the American student's milieu, is significant. But it is equally important to see how, in his turn, the professor influenced an entire generation of young people. What is more, besides the analysis of student-professor relationship, of the relations between a representative of the "parents' generation" and the representatives of the "young people's generation", it is also interesting to see how a "mainly right-wing intellectual" related with a "mainly left-wing" social movement (for example, the conflict between Eliade's structural anticommunism and the opposition to the Vietnam war of the young rebels). I shall deal with this last aspect on another occasion.

*Ioan Petru Culianu: Narcotics, shamanic ecstasies  
and drug manipulated dreams*

I said before that it is highly probable for the young American anthropologist of Peruvian origin Carlos Castaneda (1925-1998) to have attended in the '60 the history of religions classes held by Mircea Eliade probably at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The books he published between 1968-1972 describe his initiation by a shaman (Don Juan Matus) belonging to the north-Mexican tribe Yaqui, by means of hallucinogen plants: peyote buttons (*Lophophora williamsii*, from which *mescaline* is extracted), a psychedelic mushroom – *Psilocibe mexicana* (smoked in a special shamanic pipe), jimson weed, thorn apple or the devil's weed – *Datura stramonium* (prepared as a hallucinogen ointment applied on the temples and on the forehead). The three initial volumes published by Carlos Castaneda are *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968), *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan* (1971), *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan* (1972).

After he exerted a major influence on the younger generation (12 volumes, translated in 17 languages, 8 million copies sold), Castaneda was strongly contested. The most vehement destroyer of the "Castaneda myth" was the American psychologist Richard de Mille, in two successive volumes. The first volume on Castaneda's imposture was written by Richard de Mille in 1976 (*Castaneda's Journey: The Power and the Allegory*), the other, a collective one, being edited by him in 1981 (*The Don Juan Papers: Further Castaneda Controversies*).

In his well-known book *I letterati e lo sciamano* (1989) on the image of the shaman in the American literature, Elémire Zolla dedicated a



consistent chapter to Carlos Castaneda's work. But the Italian historian of religions did not forget to comment upon "the ethnological hoax" of which other anthropologists accused Castaneda<sup>29</sup>.

Ioan Petru Culianu also considered Castaneda a "*pseudo-anthropologist*" which presented his narco-initiatic fictions as authentic experiences and anthropological researches conducted on the field. At the beginning of the '70s, says Culianu, "the most challenging performer of *out-of-body experiences*", by means of psychedelic substances like the *mescaline* and the *psilocybin*, "was widely supposed to be the pseudoanthropologist Carlos Castaneda, that is, before it became clear that he was a novelist, not an anthropologist"<sup>30</sup>. Culianu speaks of the "young people whose idol Castaneda remains: a charlatan rather than an anthropologist"<sup>31</sup>.

It is interesting to note that in 1988 (therefore after Eliade's death), Culianu affirms that "in the Romanian context of the '30s", Mircea Eliade, who had returned from India as a legendary hero, was "a sort of a *grand oncle* of Carlos Castaneda". Castaneda, concludes Culianu, "succeeded in becoming a respected scholar in spite of his work of fiction which, read by too many people, was too often misunderstood"<sup>32</sup>.

In fact, Ioan Petru Culianu's attitude towards the American-Peruvian anthropologist is quite surprisingly and nuanced. It is far from the adulatory position of some authors and far from the demolishing one of others (including Richard de Mille, for instance). True or not, fictional or non-fictional, claims Culianu, the only thing Castaneda's work did was to confirm once more "what was already known about the proprieties of the hallucinogen substances and on the 'powers' of Indian shamans [...]. Be it true or fictional, it is however about a phenomenon which exists both in the history of religions and in the history of the western

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<sup>29</sup> Elémire ZOLLA, *I letterati e lo sciamano. L'Indiano nella letteratura americana dalle origini al 1988*, Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1989, pp. 359-401 (first edition, Milano: Bompiani, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> Ioan Petru CULIANU, *Călătorii în lumea de dincolo*, translation by Gabriela and Andrei Oișteanu, preface and notes by Andrei OIȘTEANU, Iași: Polirom, 2007, third edition, pp. 70, 87; I. P. COULIANO, *Out of This World. Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein*, Foreword by Lawrence E. SULLIVAN, Boston-London: Shambhala, 1991, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Mircea Eliade*, revised and annotated edition, translated by Florin Chirișescu and Dan Petrescu, with a letter from Mircea Eliade și afterword by Sorin Antohi, București: Nemira, 1995, p. 273.

<sup>32</sup> I. P. CULIANU, "Secretul doctorului Eliade", in ID., *Studii românești*, vol. I, second edition, translations by Corina Popescu and Dan Petrescu, Iași: Polirom, 2006, pp. 385-386.

civilizations”. As a consequence, even the authenticity of Castaneda’s anthropological investigation and experience is under doubt, concludes Culianu: “everything he describes remains, if not true, at least well put...” It is not by chance that I. P. Culianu gave his text (published in Italy in 1981) precisely this title – *Se non è vero, è ben trovato...*<sup>33</sup>.

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Like Mircea Eliade, Culianu was very interested in the role the psychoactive substances play in different mythical-religious and magical-ritual manifestations. In his monograph on the otherworldly journeys, Culianu detected three distinct ways of producing ecstasies and out-of-the-world visions: *Altered States of Consciousness*, *Out-of-Body Experiences* and *Near-Death Experiences*. In the first two, the consumption of psychotropic plants is sometimes attested.

Culianu proved a daring approach when dealing with the *Greek medicine-men* which he called *iatromantes*: Pythagoras of Samos, Abaris of Hyperborea, Aristeas of Proconessos, Epimenides of Crete and many others. Culianu identified in their behaviour some “shamanic practices”: the intoxication with hallucinogen or euphoric plants, ecstatic journeys, the leaving of the body by the soul, catalepsy, abstinence, foresight, ubiquity, anamnesis, iatromagic, etc.

Of Abaris the Hyperborean, Herodotus tells “the story that he would have gone with his arrow all around the world, without eating anything” (Histories IV, 36). One of the psychotropic plants used by the *iatromantes* would be one hard to identify even by Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia* XXII, 73-75), called *alimos* (sometimes *halimos*), meaning “without hunger”. It would be a plant which consumed in small quantities, suspends hunger<sup>34</sup>. Culianu claimed that it is a local plant, similar with the coca leaves of South America (*Erythroxylum coca*), “containing some alkaloid holding hunger in suspension”.

“According to the information provided by Maximus of Tyre concerning the character of Epimenide’s visions” – concluded the historian of religions – “it cannot be ruled out that those were induced by a hallucinogen”<sup>35</sup>. Or in other words, also by Culianu: “[t]he testimonies

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<sup>33</sup> I. P. CULIANU, “Religia și creșterea puterii”, in the collective volume Gianpaolo ROMANATO, Mario G. LOMBARDO, Ioan Petru CULIANU, *Religie și putere [Religione e potere]*, Torino: Marietti], second edition, translated by Maria-Magdalena Angheliescu and Șerban Angheliescu, Iași: Polirom, 2005, pp. 201-205.

<sup>34</sup> I.P. CULIANU, *Călătorii în lumea de dincolo*, 2007, pp. 179-180; I.P. COULIANO, *Out of This World*, 1991, p. 130.

<sup>35</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Experiențe ale extazului. Extaz, ascensiune și povestire vizionară din elenism până în Evul Mediu*, with a preface by Mircea ELIADE, and an

did not mention whether they [= Gr. *Iatromantes*] were supposed to use euphoric or hallucinogenic substances, but recent researches on the properties of psychotropic and psychedelic drugs would rather incline the balance in favour of such a hypothesis.”<sup>36</sup>

In the footsteps of scholars like Karl Meuli, Eric R. Dodds, F.M. Cornford, Walter Burkert and Carlo Ginzburg, Culiănu proposed the expression “shamanism beyond shamanism”, considerably extending the classical area of manifestation of shamanism in the proper sense of the word. He extended the established boundaries not only of the geographical area (Central and North Asia) but also of the “ideological” area (including the Greek *iatromantes*, the European wizards etc.). In this respect, he parted company with his more conservative master Mircea Eliade, reproaching him that “he circumscribed the meaning of shamanism so as to exclude phenomena that can be more properly defined as sorcery”<sup>37</sup>.

Indeed, when he discovered magical-ecstatic practices, attested in documents, like for example in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Moldavia (*Codex Bandinus*, 1646-1648), Mircea Eliade was confused. He put the term “shamanism” into quotes, and the title of his 1962 study turned from an affirmation to an interrogation “*Șamanism*” *la români?* (“Shamanism” and Romanians?). More than that, the answer to his own question was a negative one. In order to explain some striking similarities between the ecstatic practices of Moldavian medicine-men (called *incantatores* by the Catholic bishop Marcus Bandinus) and those of the shamans of Central Asia, Eliade applied with precaution a convenient solution: the “import” of shamanism, allegedly brought by a population of Magyar origins, and therefore from Central Asia (Csangos, *Ciangăi*). The Romanian historian of religions took on the facile solution proposed previously (in 1958) by the well-known Hungarian shamanist Vilmos Diószegyi: “those *incantatores* of Bandinus belonged to a group of *Csangos* from Moldavia”<sup>38</sup>.

Much in the same way, starting from the theories of H. S. Nyberg and G. Widengren, Mircea Eliade asked himself whether the

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afterword by Eduard IRICINSCHI, translated from French by Dan Petrescu, București: Nemira, 1998, pp. 33-34.

<sup>36</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Psihanodia*, București: Nemira, 1997, p. 74; I. P. CULIANU, *Psihanodia I. A Survey of the Evidence concerning the Ascension of the Soul and Its Relevance*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> I.P. CULIANU, *Călătorii în lumea de dincolo*, 2007, p. 80; I.P. COULIANO, *Out of This World*, 1991, p. 38.

<sup>38</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *De la Zalmoxis la Genghis-Han. Studii comparative despre religiile și folclorul Daciei și Europei Orientale*, translated by Maria and Cezar Ivănescu, București: Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1980, pp. 193-205.

specific Zarathustrian type of religious experience can be linked with the ecstatic experiences of the shamans of Central Asia. One of the main arguments consisted in the fact that in both cases the substance used to attain the state of ecstasy was the psychotropic plant of *cannabis* (*bang*). In 1976, in the first volume of his *History of Religious Ideas*, Eliade set this problem up also in an interrogative way, as he entitled the specific chapter “Shamanic ecstasy?”. The historian of religions’ answer was again negative<sup>39</sup>.

As I said on a different occasion, it is largely a conventional problem, even if it is not restrained to a terminological one. Mircea Eliade had an intuition on this approach already in 1951, when he published his monograph on shamanism: “[i]f we understand by it [= shamanism] any ecstatic phenomenon and any magical technique whatsoever, it goes without saying that a number of ‘shamanic’ features will be found among Indo-Europeans, just as they will be found among any other ethnic or cultural group”<sup>40</sup>. In 1983, Culianu also agreed with Eliade on this count: “Whether or not one calls them [Gr. *iatromantes*] shamans is a matter of pure convention”<sup>41</sup>.

It seems that Eliade and Culianu had reached a pact, according to which everything depends on what we agree to call “shamanism”. Yet while the first (more conservative) did not encourage the extension of the term “shamanism” beyond its classical meaning, the second (more of an innovator) encouraged it. The dossier remains open, its hot core being the polemic (sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit) between Mircea Eliade and Ioan Petru Culianu.

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Ioan P. Culianu’s most specialized text concerning the use of drug plants by the witches of Medieval Europe (including the Romanian space) is a conference held in March 1981 at the Groningen University, where he used to teach. Afterwards, Culianu included the lecture’s text in his book *Éros et magie à la Renaissance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1984). In this study, entitled *The Reality of Witchcraft*, he dealt both with the forms of involuntary intoxication with *Claviceps purpurea* infected rye, and with the “magical flights” provoked by the hallucinogen ointments the

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<sup>39</sup> M. ELIADE, *Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase*, translation by Cezar Baltag, București: Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1981, vol. I, pp. 324-325.

<sup>40</sup> M. ELIADE, *Shamanism. Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974, p. 375.

<sup>41</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Psihanodia*, 1997, p. 62; I. P. CULIANU, *Psichanodia*, 1983, p. 27.

witches used. “Everywhere in his writings – states Dan Dana on a taunting tone – Culianu privileges the real use of hallucinogens. The accent which Culianu placed on hallucinogens is not independent from the occidental vogue of the same substances (used nevertheless with different purposes)”<sup>42</sup>.

The deep interest in this topic of the Romanian historian of religions (who resided then in the liberal Netherlands) results clearly in the last paragraph of his study on *The Reality of Witchcraft*, quoted above: “I have seen many drug addicts and no day goes by without me hearing talks about them, not to mention the fact that I have read a whole literature on their experiences. I am convinced that the use of hallucinogens – under the supervision of ‘specialists’ and within some brotherhoods of initiates – is at the origin of some religious beliefs of the humankind, especially of those connected with the mobility of the soul and with the magical flight. As for the witchcraft, there is not even a shadow of doubt that this was the case”<sup>43</sup>. Read carefully, this paragraph indicates an important change of perspective. The psychotropic plants became for Culianu not only hallucinogen, but even *entheogen* (“generating God inside us”, or “revealing God inside its users”). Those kinds of plants would be at the “origins” of some mythical-religious beliefs and magical-ritual practices (associated with the “mobility of the soul”, psychanodia, “magical flight”, etc.).

The irony is that Culianu’s assassination was drug linked, one way or another. In a first instance, taken by surprise by the news of the killing, Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca from Paris did not give any credit to the idea of a “political assassination”. “We presume that it is rather about a junkie *en manque*”, noted in her diary Monica Lovinescu, on May 26, 1991, a few days after the cold blooded murder of the historian of religions<sup>44</sup>. It was, of course, an erroneous judgment. A junkie *en manque* does not enter into a university and shoots a professor with the gun in the neck without robbing him, leaving then without a trace.

More serious is the fact that Culianu’s assassination was fraudulently associated with international drug traffic, with – no more, no less – the Columbian drug cartels. It was said that the last phone conversation of the young scholar was made from his office, just before

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<sup>42</sup> Dan DANA, *Zalmoxis de la Herodot la Mircea Eliade. Istorie despre un zeu al pretextului*, with a preface by Zoe PETRE, Iași: Polirom, 2008, p. 374.

<sup>43</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Eros și magie în Renaștere, 1484*, translated by Dan Petrescu, with a preface by Mircea ELIADE, and an afterword by Sorin Antohi, București: Nemira, 1999, p. 340, and I. P. CULIANU, *Studii românești*, vol. II, translated by Maria-Magdalena Anghelescu, Corina Popescu and Dan Petrescu, with a note on the edition by Tereza CULIANU-PETRESCU, Iași: Polirom, 2009, p. 63.

<sup>44</sup> Monica LOVINESCU, *Jurnal (1990-1993)*, București: Humanitas, 2003, p. 141.

the murder, and that the called party had been someone from Medellín (Columbia)<sup>45</sup>. This is just one of the many diversions set up in order to blur the general view of the assassination. I have written on another occasion that it was all about putting the police on a wrong track. Culianu – it is said – took cocaine, “allegedly, for experimenting on himself what he had been studying for a long time: the state of ecstasy of shamans and wizards”<sup>46</sup>.

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Narcotics also appear in Ioan Petru Culianu’s prose. In the novel entitled *The Emerald Game* (written in 1987), two characters from Florence experiment, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, an opium-based drug “exceedingly expensive”, *Theriaca* – “the drug of immortality”. Culianu describes in high details a series of extra-sensorial states induced by the opium jam, varying from euphoria to synesthesia, from hallucination to deep narcosis: „I closed my eyes and became nothingness. There was no thought, no sound, no feeling, no sensation at all. There was neither space nor time”<sup>47</sup>.

In a Borges-like story, written by Culianu when he was about 19 years old (around 1969), the alchemist Geronimo Rossi from 16<sup>th</sup> century Ravenna distilled roses in alembic, succeeding in obtaining “a perfume so strong as never before, intoxicating and aphrodisiac”. “Testing its properties, I have found out that it was anaesthetic, drug, cure for headaches, aphrodisiac, tonic for the brain if taken in small quantities and soporific in larger quantities. In about a year, I published a book, thinking of the ritual and mystic role this drug could have.” In 1574, when he was 33, Geronimo – the possessor of the secret of the “rose of fire” revelation – is kidnapped by the members of a secret Persian sect, “of the immortals”. They knew how to extract from *rosa amphybia*, “the essence of the state of ataraxia”. On the way to Iran, the kidnapped alchemist and his kidnappers travelled in an “ecstatic silence”, on a ship over which “flew a mortuary atmosphere, imbued in the thick rose perfume”. “In the evening, a sort of ritual carousal with opium and strong rose essence

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<sup>45</sup> Ted ANTON, *Eros, magie și asasinarea profesorului Culianu*, second revised Romanian edition, translated by Cristina Felea, with a preface by Andrei OIȘTEANU, Iași: Polirom, 2005, p. 46.

<sup>46</sup> A. OIȘTEANU, “Un altfel de Culianu”, preface for T. ANTON, *op. cit.*, 2005, pp. 5-15 (here p. 11).

<sup>47</sup> I. P. CULIANU, with the collaboration of H. S. WIESNER, *Jocul de smarald, A novel*, translated from English by Agop Bezerian, Iași: Polirom, 2005, pp. 231-234; the quotes are taken from the unpublished English original, pp. 278-279.

followed. At night, we sailed almost at random, following the hallucinations of the laudanum<sup>748</sup>.

Yet from the perspective of the present study, of a higher importance is the novel *Toz grec*, unfinished and unedited, written in French and Romanian between 1981 and 1984, when Culiănu served as professor at the Groningen University (Netherlands), before moving to the United States. The novel is composed of several autonomous episodes. The episode that I comment, *The Lombrosa Experiment*, was written in French in 1984<sup>49</sup>.

The novel's main character, professor Caspar Stoltzius, a historian of sciences and an expert in dreams (onirologist, in Schopenhauer's sense), is the author's *alter ego*. He travels for a cycle of conferences to the small American town of Lombrosa, California. Then, on 21 June 198..., the records speak of professor Stoltzius's suspect death. The police investigation seems to discover that the professor was involved in the transportation from Hong Kong of a huge quantity of pure cocaine (15 tons) to Lombrosa. The FBI takes over the investigation, but it remains marred by uncertainty and false trails. It appears that the corpse does not belong to Stoltzius, who is declared missing and not dead, and the cocaine transport evaporates, shared, as it seems, between mafia clans. In other words, both professor Stoltzius and the cocaine disappear without trace.

In just a few years, Lombrosa city changes radically: the town has the lowest crime rate and the lowest environment pollution index; only alternative energies are being used; the unemployment rate is very low; the inhabitants enjoy longevity and high spirits; the cultural production is maximal, and so is the consumption; state institutions are respected; a large University is founded (with an excellent publishing house: the Lombrosa University Press); the social assistance is general, etc., etc. From a town with a small population, Lombrosa becomes a two million city and receives the title of "The happiest town in the USA". The

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<sup>48</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Arta fugii (povestiri)*, with five drawings by the author, and a preface by Dan C. MIHĂILESCU, Iași: Polirom, 2002, pp. 115-118. The stories from this book were written by Culiănu between 1967 and 1972, during his student years in Bucharest.

<sup>49</sup> The unpublished novel *Toz grec*, written by I.P. Culiănu from 1981 to 1984, is under press at the Polirom Publishing House (Iași). I have published the autonomous episode commented here, "The Lombrosa Experiment", in the *Addenda* of my book *Narcotice în cultura română. Istorie, religie și literatură*, Iași: Polirom, 2010, pp. 471-479. I would like to thank the author's sister, Mrs Tereza CULIANU-PETRESCU, for the information and texts provided from the Culiănu family archive.

explanation was very simple, yet nobody in the town of Lombrosa knew it: someone was pouring cocaine in the community's water system.

In this way, Culianu creates a sort of an ideal society, a modern utopia. He winks at the reader, implicitly alluding to different other modern (quasi-)utopias, imagined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He alludes, for instance, to *Erewhon* (1872)<sup>50</sup>, a novel by Samuel Butler, where the locals maintain a perfect health by ingesting opium (*laudanum*) as a panacea, a valid cure for all their psycho-somatic diseases. Or maybe I. P. Culianu alludes to *Une fantaisie du docteur Ox* (1872), a short story by Jules Verne, in which an entire Flemish community lives in an eternal collective euphoric state due to the fact that Dr Ox (the director of a factory that decomposes water into its components) enhances the oxygen level of the air the inhabitants breathe. One might think Culianu's novel to be a simple "small joke", but the author's stake is much larger.

At a certain point, in the novel *Tozgreac*, the *Lombrosa Shadow* journal discovers a strange fact recorded in 1978 in a small Dutch locality called Potverdorrie. The article's title arouses the reader's interest: "A Cocaine-Addict Village in the Netherlands. The Authorities Have Troubled their Happiness". In the drinking water of the Dutch village Potverdorrie, the authorities had found traces of cocaine. A journalistic investigation is set on. The Lombrosa press connects the events that took place in the '80 in the Californian locality, the disappearing of professor Stoltzius and of the tones of pure cocaine, with the inexplicable "happiness" of the town's inhabitants.

It is also made the connection with the theories of the oniologist Caspar Stoltzius, presented at the Lombrosa University shortly before his strange disappearance. Man, claimed the professor, has the possibility of "manipulating the dreams of individuals or of a community...". "Imagine a world were peoples' dreams are happy, full of optimism and hope, full with compassion for one's neighbour... If the whole world dreamt happy dreams, it could avoid the end to which it seems to head to: self-destruction..." The professor was categorically "against drug abuse", but stated that, "in small quantities, any natural drug is a treasure in the service of individual and collective health".

In the novel, the experiment of collective intoxication is described from an "engineer's point of view". We are presented the (extremely small) quantities of cocaine dissolved in the town's water, their progression, the percentages used, the time tables etc. All of them are rigorously calculated. The effects – hard to quantify – of the narcotisation are also analysed: the relationship between the drug percentage and the quality of the dreams, when do the individuals

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<sup>50</sup> The title *Erewhon* is an anagram of *Nowhere*, meaning *Utopia*.



exposed to the experiment get to “a state of availability” and when are they the most prepared to be influenced by the induced dreams.

In the same time, it is discovered that in the Lombrosa city rye bread is being consumed, infected with *Claviceps purpurea*, a fungus that parasites the rye and contains a very strong hallucinogenic alkaloid. From this parasite, in 1943, the Swiss Albert Hofmann synthesized the psychedelic drug LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide). The *Lombrosa bread* had become a product highly appreciated by the inhabitants of the Californian city.

Involuntary collective intoxications of this kind are indeed attested in pre-modern Europe. The 18<sup>th</sup> century epidemics of religious chorea, attested in the Netherlands, Spain, Poland etc., are explained by the ethnologists by the peasants’ use of *Claviceps purpurea* infested rye bread<sup>51</sup>. The subject was also discussed by Culianu in non-fiction works, his studies of history of religions, in the first half of the ‘80s, precisely when he worked at *Tozgreac* novel. “Since a couple of years ago, – claimed Culianu in 1981 – the *Claviceps purpurea* infested rye crops are no longer available on the market, being destined to the researchers only: the junkies had started to buy them *en gros*”<sup>52</sup>. This is another proof of the functionality of the symbiosis between the studies on the history of religions and the fantastic stories signed by Culianu, a subject I have tackled on another occasion<sup>53</sup>.

Returning to the *Tozgreac* novel and to the chapter called *The Lombrosa Experiment*, in august 199..., journalist Alessandra Cassini conducts an investigation in the fictitious Californian town, publishing it in *One Magazine* under the title “Lombrosa, a new way of living?”. “Our correspondent had long conversations with inhabitants of the happiest town in the USA. Hallucinating! You cannot tell whether they are crazy or illuminated! They are fervent believers in their earthly mission and in after-death retribution.” “How can you tell?”, asked the journalist. “We have *real dreams*”, they replied.

The last chemical analysis, performed in 200..., finds nothing irregular in the town’s water. Yet strangers are not welcome in Lombrosa. Rumour has it that the onirologist professor Caspar Stolzius is still alive.

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<sup>51</sup> For details, see Andrei OIȘTEANU, *Narcotice în cultura română*, 2010, pp. 29-33 (“Involuntary Intoxications”).

<sup>52</sup> I. P. CULIANU, *Eros și magie în Renaștere*, 1999, pp. 332-333 and I. P. CULIANU, *Studii românești*, vol. II, 2009, p. 55.

<sup>53</sup> See the foreword of I. P. CULIANU, *Călătorii în lumea de dincolo*, 2007, p. 14.