

M. J. Stolaroff
December 3, 1958

HISTORY OF EXPERIENCES WITH CO₂

This is an attempt to document the subjective experiences of a number of CO₂ sessions taken over a considerable period of time. I feel that these sessions have been of very great benefit to me, for a number of reasons, which I hope will become apparent as the experiences unfold.

February 2, 1956. I first met Al Hubbard on this date, as a result of previous correspondence. During the course of our talking together, he acquainted me with CO₂, describing it as another one of the agents which shuts down the cortical mind, thus allowing access to the deep unconscious. In this case, it acts very quickly, giving one a high boost, and can be controlled by the number of breaths inhaled. He asked me if I wished to try it, and I agreed. I first took 2 breaths. I experienced a feeling of great warmth, and I saw a perfectly clear, blank field, as I had been able to achieve previously only after at least a half hour of intense concentration. It was a wonderful feeling. Whereas in prayer there was always great effort necessary to keep out distractions, here the field was simply automatically wiped clean.

Next we were going to try 6 breaths. However, shortly after I started breathing, I felt an intense pressure developing around my head, which I had also previously experienced in meditation. On the 5th breath it got so intense that I pushed the mask away. A visual image developed of a view of the sea, in color. It was beautiful, and accompanied by the feeling of warmth which for me has become characteristic of inhaling CO₂. The beauty is not only visualized, but is somehow felt.

I was told that I was resisting, and that I should relax. After relaxing thoroughly, reclining on a bed, I was administered 8 breaths. I saw children playing ball in a school yard, a printed page came before my face which I could not quite read, and the view of the sea re-appeared. Once more it was all in color, and felt beautiful and good. These experiences left me quite exhilarated.

April 13, 1956. This was the day before I was to have LSD for the first time. I had several sessions with Al in the morning. I don't remember them in detail. I remember seeing children playing in the school yard, a Madonna and her infant, and an exciting experience of being in a small plane and buzzing an orchard. In the afternoon I had several more sessions with Bill Gallienne, who was to be co-director the next day. Since I was quite tense before each inhalation, he suggested that I verbalize "I'm afraid," and try to let the fear come up. As I exhaled, I stated "I'm afraid!" and as I inhaled, he suggested it to me. However, as soon as the gas took hold, I felt lifted, and any feeling of fear disappeared. I don't remember what I experienced, except that near the end, the field of imagery suddenly broke up into a whirl of swirling, riotous, jagged colors, expressing utter confusion. I felt it represented the scrambled up mess which lay in the unconscious. I was to experience this same breakdown of colors many times in the future

when I took much over 15 breaths. However, it's interesting to note that as I progressed, the tendency for this riot of color breakup to form gradually diminished, until it disappeared altogether, even with many more breaths. The next series of inhalations with Bill drew a completely blank field. However, I noticed a significant change. I was now breathing the gas deeply and willfully, as if I had suddenly decided within to no longer resist it.

I had only one more experience with CO₂ this trip to Canada, the day after my session. I took 6 breaths, and once more saw the children on the playing field. Al suggested that maybe I needed to play more. As I later thought about it, I thought this suggestion quite valid, as I take life much too seriously.

I also found that with the passage of time, I would get insights into the meaning of some of the CO₂ experiences, often in specific situations. I saw that the printed material on the page I frequently saw (more often than I have reported so far) represented my rigidity - my desire to have things definitely tied down and in place.

June, 1956 Al Hubbard, on his way to Los Angeles, stopped by, and I had another CO₂ session. The first experience was very humbling. I realized that I thought I had made great spiritual progress as a result of my Canada trip and thought I was way up high. Instead, I saw that I was way down low. This was accompanied by intense feelings. This faded into the view of the opening of a cave, and I was standing outside the entrance, beside a feminine figure. This was interpreted to be the cave of my unconscious, which I was reluctant to explore. Next I was asked what it would be like if I always did what everyone said, what everyone else wanted me to. This was suggested to me as I went under. Just before I went under, I realized that this was all wrong. Then came a whirl of imagery at tremendous speed, spinning round and round like a racing Merry-go-round. My answer was, "Boy, that was confusing." Al smiled and asked "Well?" I began to see that I had gotten the answer, and to realize how the unconscious answers on an unfamiliar, non-verbal level. With my rigidity of analytical thought, I could see that it was going to be hard for me to learn the language and symbolism of the unconscious.

July, 1956. On his way back north, Al made me a present of CO₂ equipment (horror among the medical profession!) During another party's LSD session, I tried an experiment with CO₂. After looking at the sun in a special way, I was given the gas. Again the experience was most humbling. I saw that I was playing God, and experienced the feeling of deep humiliation in seeing how wrong it was. Then I saw a most beautiful throne, exquisite, with minute ornate details. I moved closer and closer, realizing this was the throne of God, and a voice from behind the throne, drawing closer with each pronouncement, repeated three times "Jesus Christ." This was a most profound experience. One puzzling aspect to me was why the voice said Jesus Christ, as I never at any time ever stated or thought any more than the simple name, Jesus.