

al preparatory meetings, the session took place in a chapel during a Good Friday service. Following the standard double-blind procedure, half the subjects in each group received psilocybin, half a control substance. Following the religious service tape-recordings were made of individual reactions; each subject also completed a detailed questionnaire and wrote a phenomenological account of his experience. From these three sources of data "the conclusion was drawn that . . . those subjects who received psilocybin experienced phenomena that were apparently indistinguishable from, if not identical with, certain categories defined by the typology of mystical consciousness." This typology was derived from a study of the writings of the mystics and contained the following categories: (1) experience of undifferentiated unity, (2) objectivity and reality, (3) transcendence of space and time, (4) sense of sacredness, (5) deeply-felt positive mood, (6) paradoxicality, (7) alleged ineffability, (8) tran-

siency, (9) positive changes in attitude and/or behavior. The authors conclude that "at long last, research into mysticism need no longer be limited to the scholarly scrutiny of various devotional or metaphysical documents left behind by such historic personages as Shankara, Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, William Blake, and Teresa of Avila. Persons can be studied extensively both before and after the experience of mystical consciousness in controlled settings. Experimental subjects who have experienced this form of consciousness have made powerful claims of increased personality-integration, of greater sensitivity to the authentic problems of other persons, and of a responsible independence of social pressures, of both sensing deeper purposes in life and losing anxieties about death, guilt, and meaninglessness." (The article is published in the *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 5, N. 3, July 1966).

Ralph Metzner

THE PSYCHEDELIC DICTIONARY

Freak-Out

According to Eric Partridge (*Origins*) *freak*, originally a caprice, is o.o.o. ("of obscure origin"). But possibly related to Middle English *fræk*, quick, bold, from Old English *fræc*, bold, whence Early Modern English (16th C) *freck*, insolent, eager. He says also akin to Old English *frēc* is Gothic — *friks*, — greedy, whence Medieval Dutch *frisc*, fresh, whence Medieval French

frisque, lively, whence 'to frisk', whence both a *frisk*, and *frisky*. Compare German *frsch*, insolent. Webster defines *freak* as (1) a sudden fancy, odd notion, whim; (2) a whimsical nature, capriciousness; (3) any abnormal animal, person or plant; monstrosity. He says it derives from the Anglo-Saxon word *frian*, to dance.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sirs:

In a letter published in the *Psychedelic Review* (#7) Dr. A. Hoffer attacked Dr. R. D. Laing for the views that he expressed in his article, "Transcendental Experience in Relation to Religion and Psychosis". (*Psychedelic Review* #6)

As Dr. Hoffer is a biochemist and psychiatrist of some reputation, and has done a lot of work in treating what he feels is a disease called schizophrenia with various chemical agents (including vitamin B₂), I would think that Dr. Hoffer would be confident that his own work would, in itself, suffice to refute a point of view which he thinks is in error.

This seems not to be the case and, by the tone of his letter, Dr. Hoffer was moved to engage in an extended and personal polemic.

One wonders, then, what Dr. Hoffer found so disturbing.

His critique is first directed toward the illogic of Dr. Laing's position. e.g. "Laing would remove from the schizophrenic the comfort that most normal people have in the thought that their psychedelic reaction is drug induced.", or "Laing would take from the schizophrenic his right to be sick." Neither of these statements follow from Dr. Laing's article. Rather they seem related to attributions that Dr. Hoffer has made about schizophrenia with which he feels Dr. Laing would disagree and which he then accuses Dr. Laing of doing.

Secondly, Dr. Hoffer states that, "Laing seems remarkably naive and ignorant of molecular

and genetic advancements of the past two decades." As regards the latter Dr. Hoffer is apparently referring to the thirty year old work of F. J. Kallman whose twin studies seemed to indicate that schizophrenia has a hereditary basis. On the other hand, one wonders if Dr. Hoffer is aware of the most recent work of Pekka Tienari, "Psychiatric Illnesses in Identical Twins". (*Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, Supplementum 171, Volume 39, 1963) In this study sixteen pairs of identical twins were described, all characterized by the occurrence of schizophrenia in one of the twins and not in the other. i.e. sixteen of sixteen pairs were discordant for schizophrenia. Furthermore, Tienari states, "It is also noteworthy that not a single definitely concordant identical pair of twins has been discovered in any of the twin studies conducted in Northern Europe, (Essen-Moller, Kringlen, the present study)". Moreover, Dr. Hoffer states that at a recent meeting on the molecular basis of mental illness which was sponsored by NATO and which he attended, "there was a remarkable consensus that the molecular basis of schizophrenia was firmly established." Yet, he does not give any evidence to support this, and in fact, goes on to say that, "the specific details of the biochemical pathology still must be spelled out," a point crucial to the proof of a theory which he just stated has already been proven.

Thirdly, Dr. Hoffer engages in a bitter and personal invective not only in reference to Dr. Laing, but also to the "North American Psychiatric Establishment" which he accuses of "obsessional thinking" and "Freudians" whom he accuses of obstinacy because they refuse to give up the belief that schizophrenia is not a disease. As regards his attacks on Dr. Laing, contrast the

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statement that Dr. Laing is deluded, "Few people who have experienced either the psychotomimetic or the psychedelic experience (except perhaps Dr. Laing) can convincingly delude themselves . . .", with some statements that Dr. Hoffer, himself, makes in the course of his letter:

1. ". . . psychedelic reactions . . . were the basis of Christianity, of Alcoholics Anonymous, of Synanon, and of Schizophrenics Anonymous.
2. "The devils in our society are barely tolerated most of the time."
3. "Madness may take only two forms, (a) the madness of the devil and (b) the madness of the saint."
4. "If schizophrenia is madness, society will deal with it as it did during the days of the inquisition."
Finally, Dr. Hoffer would have us disregard

Dear Dr. Metzner:

The editorial in *Psychedelic Review* Number 8 contains a quotation from an article written by Dr. Harvey Powelson and by me which is misleading. The quotation reads, ". . . according to estimates published recently in the (sic) *Nation* . . . , 'the proportion of college students who experiment with pot or LSD may run as high as 10%' . . ." The statement in *The Nation* reads: "But on campuses where cosmopolitan students congregate — large city campuses or prestigious small liberal arts colleges — the proportion of

Dr. Laing's position on the basis of his own richness of experience and general Weltanschauung. This includes, of course, his ready identification with Society, or as he puts it, "the Good Society", such as one that produces NATO and NATO sponsored conferences, as well as the physical treatments of 'mental disease', i.e. electroshock therapy, leucotomy, tranquilizers, and custodial care mental hospitals, all examples of, to use Dr. Hoffer's words, "all the goodness in society which is mobilized to help the sick become well."

On the basis of his letter, I remain to be convinced, either of the accuracy and merit of his polemic, or the point of view which Dr. Hoffer seems to want to substantiate.

Joseph H. Berke, M.D.
Kingsley Hall
London, England

students who experiment with pot or LSD may run as high as 10 per cent." It is evident from the statement in *The Nation* that the proportion of students who experiment with pot or LSD is considerably less than ten per cent, when all college campuses are considered.

I should appreciate your publishing this correction in the *Psychedelic Review*.

Sincerely yours,
Mervin B. Freedman, Chairman
Department of Psychology
San Francisco State College

BOOK REVIEWS

THE VARIETIES OF PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE
BY R. E. L. MASTERS AND JEAN HOUSTON
Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
New York, Chicago, San Francisco. \$7.95

One man's glowing rose, this book says, can be another man's epiphany. In presenting a rich and comprehensive catalogue of the varieties of psychedelic experience, the authors are also putting down the varieties of "psychedelic swamis" — that growing herd for whom "empathy becomes mystic union; depersonalisation becomes the Body of Bliss; and spectacular visual effects, the Clear Light of the Void. Without having gained the stability, maturity, and elasticity to assimilate Eastern values, the leap from Western games is usually into a nebulous chaos seen as Eastern truth."

For some, psychedelics have wonderfully multiplied all the devices for self-evasion. This book, among other good things, could be a primer for people who have a high stake in their own gullibility. They have reached an agreement with the leaders of the Psychedelic Revolution based on a misunderstanding. However free these followers are of the hostile and militant forms of complacency they are opposed to, no form of complacency is altogether benign.

The authors feel that psychedelics offer the best access yet to the contents and processes of the human mind; the book's dust jacket says this is the first comprehensive guide to the effects of LSD on human personality. Both statements are true.

Here are the authors' points of view on issues of immediate concern:

— Although "research has been directly injured by a messianism as unwarranted as it is undesirable," it must, of course, be continued. Equally important — and here they must be given full marks — it should continue without the crippling limitation of control by a single profession. Research into the phenomena of the psychedelic experience so far contraindicates

confinement to the shrunken world of psychiatric medicine or the even more terrestrial realm of laboratory psychology. Anthropology, parapsychology, comparative religion and mythology, philosophy and the creative arts are finding this material of urgent relevance. Indeed, specialists in these fields who are awake to this urgency have been educated and live their lives in precisely those areas of which medical men are most ignorant, and often most afraid. As someone once said, science makes major contributions to minor needs. There are more things in heaven and earth than are discernible by orthodox scientific, and particularly medical, methods.

— It is no longer a controversial issue whether or not persons who have taken the drug should be disqualified for research. On the contrary, they are far better equipped.

— It is not LSD, but the mishandling of a session, which is the key factor in LSD psychosis.

— One of the most clear-cut lessons from psychedelic research is that hospital and clinical settings should be avoided. They create more paranoia, more bodily symptoms, and restrict travel to fewer dimensions. Instead a qualified guide, and a natural, or otherwise congenial, setting are necessary.

— Psychedelics, however, should not be made available to everybody. Indiscriminate use with unstable subjects and people of low intelligence can be either dangerous or futile. The experience has proved most rewarding for deeply honest, introspective individuals who are highly motivated toward growth and expansion.

— Psychedelics provide access to symbolic integral levels of the psyche beyond those touched by psychoanalysis and psychotherapy where the encounter is usually with literal life history and related affect.

— Therefore, psychedelics open up possibilities of work on these levels that aims not at restoring the sick to health, but