

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE PEYOTE CULT

By Weston La Barre. (New Enlarged Edition.) Hamden, Conn.: Shoestring Press, Inc., 1964. Pp. 260; illus. \$7.50.

Of all the hallucinogens, peyote — the small, innocuous-looking spineless cactus, *Lophophora Williamsii* — has attracted probably the most widespread attention, and this over a relatively long period of time. The bibliography concerning peyote and its chemical constituents covers many fields and is staggeringly extensive. Known since the days of the Spanish subjugation of Mexico, peyote increasingly seems every day to be claiming the attention of serious scientific investigators.

Twenty-seven years ago, Weston La Barre published his Ph.D. thesis in anthropology at Yale University. It appeared as No. 19 of the Yale University Publications in Anthropology. The volume quickly became accepted as the authoritative work on the peyote cult, but only a few years after publication it was unavailable. Mainly anthropological La Barre's treatment succeeded — it is generally agreed — in presenting what we might term an interdisciplinary approach. He reviewed much of the botany and ethnobotany, chemistry and pharmacology basic to a solid understanding of peyote itself and, in turn, of the native religious cult that had grown up around it. This, combined with his meticulous field work, gave La Barre's treatment a singularly sympathetic and objective character that one finds too often wanting in sundry studies that are otherwise sound and superbly executed. What

stands as fact is simply this: La Barre's *The Peyote Cult* is still quite generally considered to be the outstanding work on peyote. It is not often that any monograph in such a fast-moving field can hold a position of primacy for a quarter of a century. Consequently, I refrain here from being ludicrous enough to present a "review" of so well known and tested a document.

As we all rejoice in having the original again easily available, we are still more grateful that this new, enlarged edition has two appendices, bringing peyote studies up to date in an astonishingly masterful way.

The second part of this new edition, entitled "Twenty Years of Peyote Studies" (taking us from 1938 to 1958), was first published as No. 1 in Vol. 1 of *Current Anthropologist* in 1960. In addition to a bibliography of some 163 titles, mainly ethnological, La Barre presents a clear picture of the increasing political persecution of the American Indians' rights to free exercise of the peyote religious cult. He likewise gives illuminating insights into the direction of psychiatric and psychological research concerning peyote and mescaline in this period.

The third and perhaps most significant part of the new edition is "The Last Five Years of Peyote Studies." Totalling 37 pages, it is divided into sections on ethnography, problems of acculturation and diffusion, the Native American Church, mescalism, mescaline and its experimental uses, peyote as a "narcotic," peyote and the law, the secularization of peyote, chemical mysticism and an academic debacle.

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All of this is not only highly interesting but its significance to the ever more complicated role of peyote in North American Indian relations with the United States and local governments is presented in a most authoritative, unbiased and realistic point of view.

Perhaps the last two topics discussed in this section of the book will interest many readers of *The Psychedelic Review* more intimately. La Barre follows the search for the "mystic experience" through use of chemical substances—a new fashion, albeit as old as history—in an unusually objective manner; without stating his position in so many words, he leaves no doubt as to where he stands on this new search that has been embraced by many, from professors of theology and psychologists to beatnik poets and bohemians. In "An Academic Debacle," La Barre discusses the role of psilocybine, LSD and other psychotropic substances—of which peyote or mescaline form but one group—in academic circles, especially in the experiments conducted at Harvard University by Alpert and Leary. The entire history of events at Harvard that led to the dismissal of these two faculty members and their later activities with these hallucinogens, is related with factual objectivity.

At the end of this, La Barre's latest contribution to his peyote studies, he writes the following, which should be very widely respected as the judgment of a reasoned specialist and a widely recognized authority in the social sciences: "The promise of an understanding of schizophrenia—at least so far as experiments with mescaline are concerned—has now, according to the experts, largely faded away. As for hedonic escapes, Western man already complacently accepts (since it is ours) the mass use of substances

such as tobacco and alcohol which, to physical health, can be far more dangerous than a weekly Indian use of a feebly psychotropic desert plant. And as for his mental health, Western man is already imbedded in narcotic institutions such as advertising, television, and movies—which invite illusions about ourselves fully as dangerous as any Indian religious cult."

The only unfortunate aspect of the publication of La Barre's new, enlarged edition is the fact that it will not become a best seller, will not become widely available to the great mass of American readers and, because it does not beat the drum for currently popular movements, probably will not be heeded by those most in need of its lessons.

*Richard Evans Schultes*

### LSD — THE CONSCIOUSNESS EXPANDING DRUG

Edited by David Solomon. Introduction by Timothy Leary, Ph.D. N. Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1964. Pp. 273. \$5.95.

This volume is a collection of what by now may be considered a representative selection of some of the classic papers and articles on the psychedelics. Fifteen contributions form a spectrum of views—from the most enthusiastic to the most negatively conservative, with much material in between that deserves careful appraisal.

Timothy Leary's excellent introduction locates the present controversy within a historical, social, scientific, and religious perspective. The various contributions represent, as Leary suggests, "an early exploratory probe into the area of accelerated and expanded consciousness." Each chapter views the

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question of the expansion of consciousness within a different interpretive framework—with resulting differences in suggestions for the social and cultural implications of the psychedelics. Rather than a host of contradictions among the views (with one or two notable exceptions), there is a set of converging perspectives.

The inclusion of Roy Grinker's "warning" editorial (reprinted from the A.M.A. *Archives of General Psychiatry*) may represent, at some not too distant future, an embarrassing professional position.

The Grinker invective, however, is set into sharper perspective by the contribution of Cole & Katz ("The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview") in which the question of the therapeutic potential of the psychedelics is raised within a psychiatrically-based discussion of existing social and scientific use and abuse. A third medically-oriented contribution, by Dr. Eric Kast, describes the employment of LSD-25 in the amelioration of the painful and desperate situation of the terminal cancer patient. He reports that in a study of 128 patients given LSD once, significant reduction in pain intensity was observed over a three-week period. There was a corresponding general lifting of negative affect and an increase in personal indifference to the fact of approaching death. Kast's paper stands out as one of the most specific clinical applications of the psychedelics in an increasingly wider area of social settings.

Included in this volume is Unger's excellent and comprehensive survey of psychedelics and the issue of rapid personality change, which appeared first in *Psychiatry*. Unger also contributes a bibliography of the English-language literature on LSD and psychotherapy (which was also published in the last issue of this *Review*).

Terrill, Savage, and Jackson's contribution to the NAPA State Hospital Symposium on LSD, entitled "LSD, Transcendence, and the New Beginning," sketches with some interesting case histories the medico-religious framework so successful in the psychedelic treatment of alcoholism.

A special note is Humphry Osmond's "Review of the Clinical Effects of Psychotomimetic Agents." This chapter is an excellent brief survey of the pharmacologic, therapeutic, psychological and experiential aspects of the so-called "psychotomimetic" substances. The value of this paper lies in its outline of a historical perspective in which much of the contemporary scientific and social controversy may be located. In addition, the essay is full of intriguing research suggestions.

Three essays, originally pub-

## The Peyote Cult

by Weston La Barre

New enlarged edition  
260 pp., illus., app., bibliog.

\$7.50

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and balanced appraisals..."

— R. E. Schultes

Harvard Botanical Museum

lished in *Playboy* magazine, are also included in this collection. Dan Wakefield's essay, "The Hallucinogens: A Reporter's Objective View," although somewhat presumptuous in title, is a reasonable account of the psychedelic controversy at Harvard University and in Mexico, touching repeatedly on the ongoing process of current cultural assimilation of psychedelics.

Aldous Huxley's "Culture and the Individual" elaborates on the classical ongoing dialogue between socially conditioned, so-called, "normal" waking consciousness and the potential of the human nervous system.

Alan Harrington is represented by "A Visit to Inner Space," an honest and amusing description of the author's personal psychedelic exploration. There are some additional enlightening, anecdotal side-trips descriptive of the socio-political characteristics of the Harvard situation, with brief personal life-histories of the players involved. The essay gives one a taste for the flavor of the Harvard scene, a commendably explicit personal attempt at evaluation.

Other contributions to this collection include Alan Watts' "A Psychedelic Experience: Fact or Fancy?" Watts replays a meta-scientific theme persistent in his more recent writings, the organism/environment relationship, and the possibility of epistemological discovery which the psychedelics portend.

Huston Smith's essay, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?", discusses, in a commendably precise way, the issue of the veridicality of chemically-induced religious or mystical experience. Smith's distinction between religious experience and the religious life throws light on what has been described elsewhere as the "problem of psychedelic re-entry."

Timothy Leary's "How to Change Behavior" is a remarkable essay; an excursion into the psychology of personal change and applied mysticism, it represents the author's perspective during the early period of the Harvard research project. When read in conjunction with his introduction to this book, one sees an orderly sequence of experientially-grounded intellectual constructions. This essay gains greater import when read and perceived within this context.

The publication of this volume at this time probably coincides with a growing acceptance of the psychedelics. It will also probably help to determine this acceptance. In any case, on informative grounds alone it is a welcome collection of interesting and wide-ranging essays.

GUNTHER M. WEIL

UTOPIATES:  
THE USE AND USERS  
OF LSD-25.

By Richard Blum and Associates. Foreword by Nevitt Sanford. [A Publication of the Institute for the Study of Human Problems, Stanford University.] New York: Atherton Press ("Behavioral Science Series"), 1964. Pp. 303. \$8.00.

Dr. Blum's timely book, *Utopiates*, is about LSD and those who use it for individual growth, spiritual illumination, and artistic expression.

If this were all, the book would scarcely be remarkable. In fact, it is important for the cross-lights it throws on one close-knit group of LSD users and for the subtlety and range of its criticism. Underlying the strength of this study is the presentation of essays on law and related topics, essays by leading

practitioners in the field of drug use. It can be seen from this book that there is now an acceleration of social interest in the problem of acculturating the psychedelics.

These essays span the last decade: from early research in California conducted at what is called "a religious medical center" (the International Federation for Advanced Study [IFAS]), using therapeutic models of human consciousness, to the IFIF Mexican Center established by Leary, Alpert and Metzner, for whom LSD appears as a new chemical tool for human expression and development (chapters VIII and IX). Blum has also included studies of the ideas about LSD and its use by individuals who take the drug as an adjunct to their own personal explorations. Their comments and reflections on private LSD use are quite diverse, but one can claim on the basis of Blum's evidence that in the aggregate the appeal is one in which humanistic values prevail.

This book can also be praised for its treatment of some of the major social problems faced by society through the availability of

powerful mind-altering substances. Together with his associates, Blum has succeeded to some extent in exploring and explaining an unfamiliar research area composed of a wide range of *sub rosa* activity, utopian dreams, religious aspirations, and ordinary vague enthusiasm, interpenetrated by a certain atmosphere of personal life-renewal, a contagious psychological aspiration, as Blum himself admits. This book, therefore, illuminates the great stress placed on the contemporary individual psyche in its relationship with an increasingly complex and impersonal society. That the light it throws is sometimes a lurid one, does not seem completely inappropriate to our present human situation. We are living in a strange period following two major wars and constantly under the shadow of the next. Young people, particularly intellectuals and artists, are looking inward and back into their personal and archetypal past, turning, as it were, toward the inner life via the use of mind-altering substances, just as in the '30s many young intellectuals turned to the inner life via the church.

LSD

**THE CONSCIOUSNESS-EXPANDING DRUG**

**Edited by David Solomon**

Introduction by Timothy Leary, Ph.D.

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Aldous Huxley	Humphrey Osmond, D.P.M.
William S. Burroughs	Jonathan O. Cole, M.D.
Alan Watts	Huston Smith, Ph.D.
Dan Wakefield	Roy R. Grinker, Sr., M.D.

**\$5.95**

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## THE PSYCHEDELIC REVIEW

Every movement of human life is affected by the way man's mind works. Everything we see, touch, think and feel is linked with it, so that when the mind is extended for brief moments, these elements can be used more freely and creatively, and can therefore be a tremendously important influence in personal and social change. So far from LSD necessarily being the withdrawal of the mind from reality, it has brought it, for certain people, once again into an enriched, common everyday life. Both tendencies are represented in Blum's research data.

It seems likely that no quick rational explanation will be forthcoming for the range of the emotional power of LSD on the human psyche. As this book suggests, LSD has a different meaning for different people, a different meaning for different professions, and even a different meaning for different social classes; no doubt people will continue to employ it to fill their own particular needs.

This is an extremely timely and important volume and will be of great interest to readers of this journal.

Michael Hollingshead

(Appendix to Hollingshead review:)

Readers may wish to know the contents in detail: I. Background Considerations (Richard Blum). II. The Research Enterprise and Its Problems (R. Blum). III. The Natural History of LSD Use (R. Blum, E. Blum, & M. L. Funkhouser). IV. LSD "Regulars": Continuing Users Compared with Discontinuers (*ibid.*). V. Rejection and Acceptance of LSD: Users and Controls Compared (*ibid.*). VI. Psychopharmacological Considerations (Keith Kilham). VII. The Institutionalization of LSD (R. Blum et al.). VIII. Zihuatanejo: An Experiment in Transpersonative Living (Joseph J.

Downing). IX. Rationale of the Mexican Psychedelic Training Center (T. Leary, R. Alpert, & R. Metzner). X. Psychedelic Experience and Religious Belief (J. J. Downing & William Wygant, Jr.). XI. Social and Legal Response to Pleasure-Giving Drugs (Joel Fort). XII. Police Views on Drug Use (R. Blum & Jeanne Wahl). XIII. A Police Administrator Comments on the Drug Movement (Edward Comber). XIV. Conclusions and Commentary (R. Blum).

### THE BEYOND WITHIN THE LSD STORY

By Sidney Cohen, M.D. New York: Atheneum, 1964. Pp. vii & 268. \$5.00.

*The Beyond Within* is an intriguing title for a fascinating book. Author Sidney Cohen is currently one of the leaders in the field of psychopharmacologic research with the psychedelic agents. His previous works in this field, dating back to 1959, have been written for a medical audience and have dealt with the psychotherapeutic potential of LSD as well as its possible harmful effects. In 1962 he co-authored the volume *Psychochemotherapy: The Physician's Manual* (Los Angeles: Western Medical Publications) in which the biochemical theories of mental illness were reviewed in light of the increasing knowledge of the chemistry of LSD. In this work it was stated: "Whether or not any of all of these theories will be substantiated by future research, the psychotomimetic drugs, by making possible the study of 'model' psychosis, provide a useful tool for investigation from which may emerge knowledge of these disorders in human beings" (p. 38). In

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his latest work, however, Dr. Cohen has assumed the larger task of reviewing the entire scope of LSD knowledge and theory and his undertaking has been most successful. The many facets of "The LSD Story" are explored for a non-medical reader in prose that is simple and enjoyable.

As an overture to his descriptive study, Dr. Cohen offers the hypothesis that man alone seems to have a persistent desire to alter his state of awareness and reality, for they are not fully satisfying as ordinarily experienced. Historical and anthropological evidence is outlined to support his opinion. He shows how Greeks, Egyptians, Orientals, Indians, and North and South American natives have all discovered some naturally occurring substance which will change the state of consciousness. When there was no actual ingestion of some agent, men induced a change in awareness through self-sacrificing physical practices that were often painfully rigorous, and occasionally lethal. The methods varied, but the goals were constant: to induce a personal alteration in reality. In our present century, these practices continue — some condoned, many condemned — but the search for substances that will, in some way, temporarily alter awareness continues. The remarkable story of Dr. Albert Hofmann's discovery of LSD-25, by accidentally ingesting a minute amount of the substance, concludes this introductory chapter.

The major portion of the book is devoted to an examination of the effects of LSD. It begins with a discussion of the perceptive and cognitive distortions produced by the drug, and includes a review of some of the studies of sensory deprivation, indicating that many of the signs of sensory deprivation are similar to certain effects seen occa-

sionally with LSD. In a study of subjects given LSD in a state of sensory impoverishment, the author noted that "sensory deprivation can abort the LSD reaction in some people," which suggests that this drug may alter the coding mechanism of incoming sensations.

Hallucinations are examined in a separate chapter, since they are considered to be disturbances in "thinking-feeling" rather than visual aberrations. Drug induced hallucinations are compared with those naturally induced, those secondary to a psychotic process, and those of delirium tremens. Somewhat unexpectedly, this discussion is concluded with a consideration of the creative aspect of a psychedelic experience, noting that there is often a strong subjective feeling of creativity when LSD is taken.

Several accounts of subjects' personal experiences are included in the general examination of the effects of LSD. The reports vary from ecstasy to terror, from psychoanalytic insight to mystical union. The examples are well chosen for the authors are articulate, and their experiences easily understood. Dr. Cohen interweaves some of his own experiences which add further perspective to the accounts.

In perhaps the most challenging and controversial chapters, LSD is discussed as a psychotherapeutic tool. The author upholds his earlier views that the drug can be a potent adjunct to the therapeutic process, although he now disclaims its effect as a "model psychosis". He sees LSD as reducing the patient's defensiveness, thus allowing repressed memories and conflictual material to come forth which then may be dealt with therapeutically. The need for further investigation of these properties is noted, along with the difficulties of doing such research. After discussing these potential

benefits, there is a long description of the possible harmful aspects of LSD ingestion to the patient, the therapist, and the casual unsupervised user. Dr. Cohen strongly warns against the unrestricted use of these substances, both professionally and publicly; he cautions that unskilled, unsupervised use can cause much suffering. A discussion of LSD as an agent of war seems to echo these somber tones. Almost as an apology to these preceding chapters, the author concludes his work with a general positive view of the potential of LSD in the fields of psychology, religion, and psychiatry.

*The Beyond Within* is a comprehensive, well-written survey of what is currently known of LSD, its uses, abuses, and potentials. Like most broad surveys it sometimes suffers from over-simplification and occasional lapses into the philosophic. It is, however, a fascinating and thoroughly readable account of a controversial topic that daily increases in complexity.

Carl Salzman, M.D.

BEYOND THEOLOGY

By Alan Watts. *The Art of Godmanship*. — New York: Pantheon Books, Random House, 1964. Pp. 236. \$4.95.

In his latest book, Alan Watts plays the part of court jester in order to take the reader behind the scenes of the Heaven and the God of established theologies; hence, the subtitle of the book: "The Art Of Godmanship." In previous works, as Watts notes in the Preface, he had attempted a synthesis between traditional Christianity and the unitive mysticism of Hinduism and Buddhism along the lines of "the perennial philosophy." After further reflection, this view was found wanting. Watts proposes a new project in this work:

"What we need is a new kind of theological critique — not a polemic, not a debunking, not even a 'restatement in contemporary terms.' We need a natural history of theology, wherein the development of religious ideas and practices be studied, not as something good for life or bad for it, but as a form of life itself, like a particular species of flower or bird." (p. 11)

The natural history model is a questionable analogy; what he seems to be calling for is already a very large enterprise — the phenomenology of religion. Would Watts direct phenomenology to a study of theology and its history? The pioneer effort in this area is Werner Jaeger's *THEOLOGY OF THE PRESOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS*. Eric Havelock's brilliant *PREFACE TO PLATO* now supersedes Jaeger's work; these two studies, along with Bruno Snell's *THE DISCOVERY OF THE MIND*, chart the course of the rise of rationality in the Greek context, a development which includes the beginning of theology as a rational reflection, the word coined by Plato in his *REPUBLIC*. This pre-Christian Greek development, which must include Aristotle, Philo and Plotinus, is then taken into Christianity. But this kind of scholarly approach is not what Watts has in mind. By pursuing what he calls 'metatheology' he does not mean the historical sources that lead to theology as a rational pursuit; in proposing a 'metatheology' he specifies three operating principles:

1. observe religion as a form of life, 'a kind of existing, an involvement, a participation.'
2. illumine one theological system by looking at it and seeing what happens to it in the context of another.

3. deal with the subject at its mythic level.

These proposals indicate that Watts tends to equivocate between religion and theology — they are not identical. However, given the notion of a post-Christian era in which we are presently living, a viewpoint that takes into account the dialogue going on between the world religions, as Watts proposes, can only be supported. Watts' knowledge of Eastern religions affords him such a vantage point.

In a chapter entitled, "How MUST We Have Faith," he speaks about and against the hypocrisy of much of Christianity in a post-Christian world. Although one might agree with the general outlines of his critique, this reader was put off by such sweeping assertions as: "Outside Quaker meetings and Catholic monasteries, there is hardly the slightest concern for the inner life, for the raising of human consciousness to union with God — supposedly the main work of religion." (p. 86). Aside from the issue of what most adequately defines the main work of religion, the first part of the sentence is obviously untrue. In calling the Church out of its involvement in irrelevancies, Watts announces that "the basic design of traditional Christianity must first become clear." To whom? To those more clear about this design than Watts? His own attempt at clarity is his discussion of the symbolism of the First and Second Adam, the Fall and the Incarnation. But why read Watts' sketchy account, where no references are made to the brilliant discussions of these themes by Kierkegaard, von Rad, Barth, Tillich or Ricoeur.

Alan Watts is a charming man, and a marvellous speaker — his new books reads like a script for one of his television shows or like an edited tape from a number of dinner conversations. (The most delightful

and rewarding chapter in the book is chapter six, "This Is My Body.") But the book is admittedly not a work of scholarship. However, if he manages to shake any of the complacent-pious out of their rut, he will have served a worthwhile purpose; for the rest, *BEYOND THEOLOGY* is an amusing and entertaining divertimento, abundantly scattered with passages of insight and wit.

PAUL LEE

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