

Editorial

THE INTRODUCTION of psychedelic foods and drugs into our culture is following a sequence of stages the shape of which is familiar to us from the history of similar movements, particularly, hypnotism and psychoanalysis. Both of these provided a methodological breakthrough in the understanding of human nature and attendant threats to our self-image (we learn that we are less masters of ourselves than we like to imagine). In both cases an initial period of bitter and public debate, centered primarily around the issue of safety vs. danger, was followed by a period in which an attempt was made to provide a suitable *model* and *ethic* for the use of the new technique. In these cases the model that was finally adopted was medical: both psychoanalysis and hypnotism have become medical treatment specialties, in spite of the consistent opposition of their innovators and some of their most eminent practitioners. William James, for example, opposed the simple relegation of hypnotism and other "mental" techniques to a medical framework, and Freud himself to the end of his life argued convincingly that psychoanalysis should be the province of specially trained laymen.

We do not want to see psychoanalysis swallowed up by medicine, and then to find its last resting place in textbooks on psychiatry — in the chapter headed "Therapy," next to procedures such as hypnotic suggestion, autosuggestion, and persuasion . . . it may become indispensable to all the branches of knowledge having to do with the origins and history of human culture and its great institutions; such as art, religion, and the social order. It has already contributed to the solution of problems in these fields, but the contribution made is small in comparison with what it will be when historians of civilization, psychologists of religion, etymologists, etc., become willing to use the new weapon for research themselves. Therapy of neuroses is only one of the uses of analysis; perhaps the future will show that it is not the most important. At all events, it would be unreasonable to sacrifice all other uses to this one, merely because it touches the field of professional medicine. [The Question of Lay Analysis, N. Y., Norton: 1950, p. 121]

Freud's fears have turned out to be justified for psychoanalysis. Hypnotism also suffers from being put on the shelf of medical treatment specialties.

The psychedelic drugs are now passing through analagous stages. Initially, the debate centered around the issue of safety and danger. Medical and psychiatric warnings based on psychotomimetic experiments were countered by statements from many eminent scholars and artists. The names of Havelock Ellis, Weir Mitchell, William James, Aldous Huxley, Timothy Leary, René Daumal, Gerald Heard, Alan Watts, Robert Graves, Henri Michaux, William Burroughs, are drawn at random from a long list of serious men who have documented the value, importance, and safety of the chemically aided exploration of human consciousness. The first stage of the debate seems to be almost over. There is general agreement among researchers in this field that the drugs *per se* are safe and that the potential and real dangers come from the way they are used.

The psychedelic controversy is now entering a second stage of debate: there is growing agreement among psychiatrists, pharmacologists, and psychologists that *set* (expectation) and *setting* are the crucial variables in determining the nature of the psychedelic experience as well as its potential benefits or dangers.* There is now sufficient evidence to indicate that continued psychiatrically oriented, double-blind, psychotomimetic experiments are ethically questionable. As in the case of hypnotism and psychoanalysis, the scientific and ethical relationship between drug-giver and drug-taker is of the utmost importance.

The need for a model and ethic of psychedelic research is clearly apparent. The dangers of using the psychedelics without an explicit contract and ethical code, in other words allowing the enormous power of liberated neural-psychic energy to be channeled into the usual goals of money, power, sex, and status, can be constated by anyone who observes patterns of drug use in major metropolitan areas. A recent fictional treatment of a psychedelic-oriented society (reviewed in this issue) highlights sociologically the problems we now face and those we can expect unless we can develop appropriate models and ethics. The usual problems of social structure and interpersonal relationships are only complicated and magnified by the use of psychedelics unless an explicit contract is worked out and careful collaborative attention is paid to preparation, expectation, setting, and follow-up.

Psychiatric practitioners, strictly following the medical treat-

*Hoffer, A.: LSD: A Review of its Present Status, *Clin. Pharmacol. Ther.*, 1965, 6, 183-255.

ment model, have in fact now recognized the importance of these extra-drug variables as can be seen from the papers read at the recent Second Josiah Macy Foundation Conference on the Use of LSD in Psychotherapy, as well as from the design of recently established and federally supported projects on LSD treatment of alcoholism and the effects of the LSD experience on attitude change.

The question remains whether the medical model is the only one or even the best one without contesting that it is one possible model with obvious applications. Eventually, the issues of control and responsibility for new advances in scientific techniques such as the psychedelic drugs will have to be determined from a number of points of view. No single group or profession can or should claim total authority over such a potentially useful tool. Moreover, it is not at all clear in what way professional training, psychiatric or other, corresponds with the knowledge and wisdom requisite for the intelligent exploration and application of the psychedelic experience.

The *Psychedelic Review* has published and will continue to publish reports of patterns of consciousness-altering drug use in other cultures (cf. the articles by McGlothlin, Carstairs, and Kusel in this issue), in order to provide comparative data for research in this area. Many cultures, especially the Middle East and India, have a long history of the widespread use of the psychedelic drug, cannabis, with attendant social customs and patterns that may appear strange to our alcohol-dominated culture but which, nevertheless, may have certain desirable or attractive features to an impartial observer. In any case, such cross-cultural comparisons should help us maintain perspective about the patterns of drug use and abuse in this culture.

In addition to the medical therapeutic application, four main models have so far been proposed for the application of psychedelic drugs. The *Psychedelic Review* will continue to serve as a forum for the discussion of all five of these research avenues. The *religious* model is one obvious possibility, documented scientifically in the research on drug-induced mysticism carried out by Dr. Walter Pahnke at Harvard, (reported in the New York Times, Saturday, May 15, 1965), and illustrated by the Native American Church's use of peyote as well as by a number of other churches recently founded which include psychedelic worship as an explicit part of their rituals.

The *artistic* model has recently gained more impetus by the opening in New York of the Coda Gallery, devoted to an exhibition of psychedelic art, as well as a series of demonstrations and lectures

called the Psychedelic Theatre under the sponsorship of the Castalia Foundation, (reported in *The Nation*, July 5, 1965). An increasing number of younger poets, painters, musicians, and film makers are avowedly drawing inspiration from psychedelic experiences both in terms of type of imagery used and in terms of new techniques of communicating states of altered consciousness. The *Psychedelic Review* has published poems by such artists and plans in the future to reproduce psychedelic paintings and drawings, although some of the most exciting breakthroughs in this field, involving new light projection techniques will remain irreducible to the pages of a journal.

The *scientific* model is for the present the least explored though in some ways the most exciting. From isolated researchers have come reports of the use of psychedelics to provide experiential insight into some of the more abstruse concepts of the modern energy sciences. There are also suggestions that the psychedelics may provide some new experiential leverage into the now dead-end character of ESP research. Is it possible that the psychedelic experience can help to narrow the gap between a scientific construct based on mathematics or the results of instruments of observation and our experiential understanding? Only a tiny minority even among physicists, for example, are actually able to experience the space-time continuum called for by modern physics, or the double nature, both particle and wave, of light. There is a remarkable convergence between the statements of the modern energy sciences and some of the myths of Hindu and Buddhist philosophers, and certain reports of scientifically sophisticated psychedelic subjects. For example, a symposium on the "Rhythmic Functions of the Living Systems," published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, (vol. 98, Oct. 1962), which can hardly be said to be a scientific fringe group, contains data and theoretical formulations which dwarf in complexity and imaginativeness anything that the voluminous psychedelic science fiction literature has come up with, (cf. John J. Grebe, "Time; its Breadth and Depth in Biological Rhythms").

Finally, there is the application of psychedelics, which is to some the most interesting and most important, as an aid to the individual and social development of a permanently higher level of consciousness. The possibility of neurological liberation from culturally imprinted game and role structures, with an attendant conscious participation in human evolution, is raised here. This last strand has links both to ancient traditions that might be called esoteric and to modern philosophers such as deChardin, Leary, Metzner, and Alpert's adaptation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead,

The Psychedelic Experience, is one example of research in this area. Furthermore, interest in systems of developing consciousness and harmonious functioning is reflected in the increasing preoccupation on the part of many serious people with the theories and methods of G.I. Gurdjieff (presented in the previous and current issues of *Psychedelic Review*), who is one of the most powerful and remarkable philosophic and psychological personalities to have appeared in the western world and whose ideas and teachings promise to exert an increasing influence in the future. Gurdjieff's teachings represent perhaps the most effective way we now know of applying the insights of the psychedelic experience to everyday life, and of training the human organism to be able to maintain a higher level of consciousness more permanently than the temporary drug-induced state.

Psychedelic Review will continue to present theories, data, and discussions on all of these various models and applications of psychedelic research in order to forestall as long as possible the premature crystallization of psychedelic philosophy and methods into any one, necessarily limited, framework. Our relative ignorance of the scope of consciousness causes us to leave the question open and ourselves flexible.

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