

THE
Psychozoic Press
Fall, 1982 • Issue No. 1

In This Issue...

DEVELOPING AN HYPOTHESIS

We should work toward developing an hypothesis of how psychedelics act, not only upon our own mind, but also upon the human mind in general.

A SOCIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

The use of psychedelics as a spiritual adjunct has been well established for centuries. Those who use them in this day should maintain a virtuous mode of mind.

PHYSICALLY SPEAKING

Education about the physical aspects of psychedelics and their mode of action within the brain and body is elemental to constructively using them. Discussion on chromosome damage.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

"Where I'm coming from."

COLLECTING THE MEMORABLE TRIPS

Don't waste your experiences in having a good time with nothing to show for it later. Keep a record.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PSYCHOZOIC PRESS

An informational advisory and communication exchange paper.

AFTERWORD

In the coming issues...

The *Psychozoic Press* is printed quarterly at 2121 Braley Road, Coos Bay, Oregon, 97420.
Single issues, \$1.00, year subscription, \$3.50.

Copyright, 1982
by
E.D. Smith
Erowid Edition © 2010

Developing an Hypothesis

Persons who have had a fair amount of experience with psychedelics will no doubt be aware of the influence their use has had among musicians and artists. It is possible to arrive at this conclusion simply by spending a little time at the local library studying information on recent trends in the creative arts. Computer graphics are becoming more popular as art forms in themselves, and modern music is utilizing electronic and computer-coupled processors to generate sounds which a few years earlier could only be heard (and/or seen) in the mind.

There is a technique utilized by television advertising agencies in which a word or picture is disassembled into a multitude of dots or lines; these dots or lines are then moved about according to ordered mathematical functions and reassembled into another picture or word. The use of computers coupled with sound and visual display tubes such as the television is probably yet in its infancy. We mention it here because there is an analogy between the computers in the external world and the computer in our inner world, the brain.

The brain indeed functions in many circumstances of data processing like a computer, and it does so very well, considering its complexity and small size. Mechanical acts such as walking and running, as well as automatic body functions such as temperature control, digestion, and breathing become programmed into us so that we can carry on these activities without thinking too much about them. Certainly we don't want to suggest that the brain is only a computer; rather that, once an activity is learned, the brain can function as a computer in replaying the learned (programmed) action without necessitating the intense concentration it required initially to get the program started. It takes a great deal of concentration, for example, for a baby to learn to walk, but an adult spends little time thinking about it; he can instead think of other more important things while his WALK program is on automatic, so to speak. This is only

a rudimentary example, and there are many other aspects to consider if one was to study all aspects of human behavior, but it is mentioned here to illustrate that it is one way of getting a perspective on how psychedelics affect us.

Psychedelics obviously have a great effect on our minds and brains, and we should have some basic knowledge about their functioning if we want to assess the effects brought about. The brain-as-a-biocomputer is one model we can use to understand the effects of psychedelics within the realm of sensory alteration. Any explanation which is presented though, can only be considered an hypothesis, since the effects of psychedelics are so often interpreted subjectively.

Carlos Castaneda is one author who gives us a perspective on a hypothesis which is subjective in *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* and his subsequent books. His thesis is that the multiplicity of realities in the world are only partially accessible to ordinary consciousness, and the use of psychotropic substances gives the human a more complete accessibility to a wider range of realities.

The viewpoint which he presents is coherent and very attractive, but not one which I can comfortably incorporate into my own interpretation of the psychedelic experience. Yet this is not to say that his view is inconsistent with my own, but rather it is an alternate view. Castaneda's background and the background of the characters presented in his stories are very much different from my own, so it is not surprising that we interpret the psychedelic experience differently.

For one example, Don Juan taught Carlos that each individual has a unique place of power somewhere on the earth. To translate this into my own life experiences, I would say instead that there are time-space situations of well being which are unique for me in that they are very comfortable for my consciousness and I enjoy being there. It may not be the same place

consistently, but there are elements common to each one which produce similar feelings of satisfaction.

On the other hand, Don Juan also presents some concepts which are totally strange and alien to me: flying through the air, talking to lizards, changing form into an animal. In fairness, however, I'd have to admit that some of my concepts are probably as strange to him as are his to me.

We should remember that billions have lived and died and are living on the earth. We would be little more than cosmic microbes if there were no differences among us, but also, the more people we know, the more likely we will find some very similar to ourselves. By relating our own individual ideas about psychedelics with people who have similar ideas, we will be able to extrapolate a more accurate hypothesis of how psychedelics act upon the human mind in general.

A Sociological Overview

Psychedelics have been in use for centuries, yet it is only within the last couple decades that the American public has begun to learn about them. At first the drugs were regarded with hope, curiosity, or cautious skepticism. In the late '60s though, a lot of young people began experimentation with them (for various reasons) and there were numerous "accidents": people freaking out in the supermarket, killing their mother-in-law, flying out of windows, etc. (There is probably as much variety in the cause of the accidents as in the reasons people had for taking the drugs in the first place, but that's a topic for another discussion.) Finally, through the process of media sensationalizing, legislation, and outright paranoia about drugs in general, the vast majority of the general public now has a very negative attitude about psychedelics.

Yet it does not necessarily have to be so. Several of the early researchers suggested that psychedelics have a great potential for inducing altered states of mind which would actually prove ben-

eficial to the individual long after the sensory effects have ended. People have commonly reported feeling more tolerant toward others, understanding themselves better, being more creative, and having a more positive outlook on life. Wouldn't it possible to rectify the schism which exists between users and non-users because of misunderstanding, ignorance, and fear; to create another small element of empathy and harmony without them attacking one another? The establishment attacks by developing legislation and law enforcement; the users attack by synthesizing counterculture lifestyles, exclusive cults and so forth with neither side giving much thought to creating a mutually acceptable interfacing situation.

The ancient Aztecs of old Mexico were well noted by Gordon Wasson for incorporating the use of psychedelics into their religious ceremonies, and this use continues even to the present among their descendants. The fact that the ancient Aztecs recognized the spiritual benefit to be derived from the magic mushrooms is evidenced by the name they gave them: *teonanácatl*, the flesh of God.

But the elements of the world for the ancient Aztecs were very much different than they are for the man in the streets today. We recognize the unique chemical compounds contained in the shrooms which gives them their psychedelic properties; the Aztecs regarded them as a special plant with divine powers. It is tempting to think that we know what really causes the mystical vision because of our more highly evolved level of knowledge in chemistry, but the ancients were just as valid in their viewpoint, considering the degree of knowledge they had available in their time.

When peyote was made illegal in the United States in the 1920s, the Native American Church brought the issue to the Supreme Court, as it was a sacramental substance employed in their spiritual teachings. The law was found to be unconstitutional, but only when applied to

members of the church. The Indians' use of peyote dated back long before the law was enacted, so the exception was made to preserve the constitutionality of religious freedom. Again, this is evidence of the positive spiritual potential of psychedelics.

Unfortunately, this argument of psychedelics being an essential element of religious belief has not met with much success in modern courts. Apparently one must demonstrate that the use of such a sacrament and associated religious practices was being applied long before the legislation was enacted—impossible for most people because the potential of psychedelics was not popularly realized until after the laws had been passed.

Anyway, such well-established spiritual connotations that the American Indians and Aztecs have displayed clearly indicates that there are people for whom the experience can be spiritually meaningful, law or no law. One has to conclude therefore, that legislators are wrong in making psychedelics illegal for everyone, but right in trying to prevent people from harming themselves or others. But it's practically impossible to make a legal, technical distinction between those who stand to benefit from the trip and those who might try to walk out and stop freeway traffic; even knowledgeable medical professionals hesitate to predict an individual's reaction.

But there are still enough legal psychedelics available to avert this situation, and ultimately demonstrate that such a potential benefit can be safely achieved. However, we should certainly take precautions to avoid a recurrence of the hedonistic indulgence which characterized the advent of LSD in the '60s.

A year or so ago, *High Times* hinted that possibly society will experience an acid renaissance (psychedelic renaissance would have been a more appropriate phrase) sometime within the next few years. In spite of the current opposing

attitude, it does seem likely that psychedelics will continue to play an increasingly important role in the evolution of social empathy and spiritual awareness because there exists such a need for understanding in a world so torn with war, crime, poverty and other socio-spiritual ills.

This is not to say that psychedelics will provide an overnight solution to problems that have been here for centuries, but they may provide alternative perspectives into the causes of such problems. Religion, politics, science, and philosophy have not been able to provide the answers, at least not in a way which can be universally utilized to bring peace to the world.

And the greatest threat to the world as a whole these days is the threat of nuclear holocaust—a threat which we (mankind) have created ourselves. Surely, if we can create the problem, we have equal potential for creating the solution. As the real root of such a problem lies within the heart (mind) of man, we should expect that solutions can be derived from the same source. Psychedelics may not give us answers as to why we have violence, divorce, famine, etc., but, being mind manifesting, we have a good chance, by their use, of understanding how the mind functions in creating that type of thinking.

We should work toward mutual understanding. Those opposed to drug use may not want to hear anything more we have to say about them, but they might take note of our behavior in areas they can relate to, especially if we can demonstrate a positive and virtuous mode of mind.

Physically Speaking...

We should take into consideration the potential effect of chemical alteration of the body's natural balance. We should know about phenomena such as tolerance, cross tolerance, interactions, and dosage ranges. The *Psychozoic Press* is, in part, an attempt to disseminate true information in this area, factual and accurate as possible, regarding the material aspects of psychedelics and

how they affect the material aspects of the body, the brain, and nervous system.

Those who are familiar with varying doses of psychedelics probably realize that for any drug there is an optimum range if he is to expect it to be a beneficial experience. Also, this range can vary from time to time depending on setting and circumstances, and it certainly varies from one individual to another.

Many people who had used LSD became really alarmed when the media began putting out stories of chromosome damage, and this fear in itself (completely aside from whether it's true or not) is bound to be an inhibitor to the users' positive attitudes. In view of the evolving public attitude against LSD in the late '60s, the newspapers and other media were quick to snap up a report by scientists stating the link between chromosome damage and LSD use. By this time legislation against LSD had already been passed, public attitude was leaning heavily against its use, and the religious community had denounced any meaningful potential of the drug. Therefore, such stories would help sell newspapers, reinforce the cynics' cries of alarm, and go a long way toward inhibiting users. At it's worst, the news stories employed subtle scare tactics to give people the impression that LSD use might cause deformed babies, miscarriages, or even sterility.

Chromosome damage was initially reported in *Science* in 1967. The controversy has been fairly well clarified in recent literature, but these clarifications have not been snapped up by the press as readily as were the original chromosome damage stories. The chromosome damage initially reported was in a schizophrenic patient being treated not only with LSD, but also with chlorpromazine (Thorazine) and other drugs. Furthermore, the studies were designed to demonstrate chromosome damage by LSD without mentioning that other causes for similar chromosome damage could be routinely encountered in everyday life. Alcohol, aspirin, even changes

in body temperature or getting a cold can cause possible chromosome damage in white blood cells. In fact, a certain percentage of damaged chromosomes is entirely normal.

Laboratory cultured white blood cells in which chromosome breakage is induced by foreign substances have little bearing on whether the same substance will cause similar breakage inside the body. The body's natural defenses produce neutralizing agents against many potentially damaging materials. Some studies on rats and fruit flies did demonstrate chromosome damage, but these required ridiculously huge doses over a long period of time.

Nor will this type of chromosome damage produce defective progeny, since the damage does not occur in the reproductive cells. Multiple doses in rats of up to 500 mcg/kg body weight failed to show abnormal offspring or increase in spontaneous abortion. Peyote users of the Native American Church have no higher rate of birth defects than do the rest of the population. Nevertheless, a thinking and loving mother would not want to expose her unborn child to foreign substances; it's just not a good idea to take drugs during pregnancy if one is not sure it will be beneficial to the baby.

Finally, it is well known that alcohol and thalidomide in large doses can cause birth defects, yet those drugs act directly on the unborn fetus and not by inducing chromosome damage. In summation then, the absence of chromosome damage does not guarantee a normal baby, nor does the presence of chromosome damage necessarily cause birth defects.

Editor's Comments

It is not the intent of the *Psychozoic Press* to introduce psychedelics to the non-user, nor to provide a communication on where to obtain them. Rather, I feel that by reason of my extensive experience with them, and because of having basic skills in writing and objective observation, that I am obligated to disseminate information

on the subject of psychedelics as truthfully and accurately as possible. This sense of obligation arises in part from my impression that during the experience, many thoughts, impressions, even fantasies have come to mind which have been useful to me in integrating my personal self and spirit into the reality world outside myself in a way which has enabled me to live more congenially with others about me. And I've talked with others who have had similar expressions and experiences. Surely there is much more potential for other users in this regard than is now being realized.

I have passed through several phases of attitude about psychedelics; all in all it is very much a learning experience, and I'm not ashamed to admit that during the past 15 years I've made some stumbling and fumbling errors. I don't expect that everything I write will be accepted, but by utilizing the *Psychozoic Press* as a vehicle of communication with others of similar attitudes and interests, together we can generate a confluence of thought and creative understanding which can be utilized by those with a desire to learn but with less experience. If, through interacting my experience with the experience of many of you out there, we can enable someone to gain a more clear understanding of what is happening with psychedelics in today's society, then he will be less likely to harbor feelings of fear and anxiety toward those who do use them.

It is no longer important (to me) to try to get others to try psychedelics. There is, after all, a considerable hazard for any beginner, and even experienced users sometimes get into binding situations with the drugs. It is important, however, to get some accurate information out so as to provide the opportunity of having a pleasant and useful experience by carefully preparing for the trip and having some idea what to expect. A bad trip is very unpleasant, but the chance of it happening can be reduced to virtually zilch. The intensity of unpleasant effects in a bad trip can just as well be reversed in polarity to provide the user with a positive experience, but it takes

some degree of learning and skill to be thoroughly sure of yourself beforehand.

I do not advise anyone to use black market sources, or to engage in attempts to synthesize illegal drugs. Black market drugs tend to be frequently adulterated, impure, and variable in quantity. There are, of course, some reputable dealers who offer high quality and uniformity, but far too many are out to make a fast buck any way they can. I no longer use street sources, since there are natural psychedelics available legally, and these are more reliable in terms of uniformity of psychoactive constituents.

Those of us who enjoy the psychedelic experience may grumble and point at the constrictors of freedom in the legislature, but it doesn't seem likely that the legislation was brought about as a part of conspiracy against altered states of consciousness as much as by a fearful desire of the established political community to protect Americans from unknown dangers. Legislation was enacted in an atmosphere of almost superstitious paranoia in the wake of numerous psychedelic accidents; these were precipitated by experimental use in ignorance of possible consequences.

Therefore we would do well not to antagonize non-users by using the "salesman" technique to convince others of the benefits, potential or realized, of psychedelics. Also, the "missionary complex" about psychedelics tends to lead a lot of people into getting high who aren't properly prepared. In the early days when LSD was legal, the high incidence of accidents by the inexperienced and unprepared sent up a red flag to law enforcement and medical people, which led to the ensuing legal action against its use, eventually even against research. But we don't want to repeat that situation with regard to the remaining legal hallucinogens, and one of the ways to prevent it is by educating ourselves and establishing a communication network through which the group as a whole may learn from the experiences of each individual.

It is a good idea for the users and even the interested non-users to consult library resources on psychedelic drugs. There is, of course, a considerable amount of misinformation, but there is also a good deal of accurate information. It seems to me that there is a trend in recent literature to take a second look (with due caution) at the field of psychedelics and their potential and this is a good sign. In any case, each writer is entitled to his own opinion but it's still the reader who makes the final decision on the validity of a written work.

Collecting the Memorable Trips

I have done a fair amount of writing on psychedelics through my years of experience, but mostly these are notes I've taken for my own reference. As I reviewed my notes a few months ago, I became aware that I had developed a composite picture of the psychedelic experience and how it has proved helpful to me. I realized too, that because of my experience, I had the opportunity to help other people achieve similar goals and the development of the *Psychozoic Press* is an attempt to manifest that opportunity. Taking notes has proven valuable for me and I suspect there are others out there who have done the same. If you are a user of psychedelics and haven't taken notes, you should seriously consider doing so.

Of course it's very difficult to take notes when there is so much of the experience which exceeds ordinary reality, and one can't expect to get the whole of the trip down in data. Also one should keep in mind that it's very difficult to deal with the phenomenon of neurological time delay during the trip. A tremendous and magnificent insight may be gone and superseded by something else before one has time to pick up a pen or microphone. It doesn't work too well to try to make elaborate, concise notes, for the very action of doing it then encroaches upon the original continuity of the trip. Instead, I have had more success jotting down a few key words or phrases from which I can later extrapolate the original chain of thought and its significance.

I've seldom taken down more than eight or ten such phrases during a trip of several hours, but this can later, at my own convenience, be expanded into several pages. Sometimes it's gibberish, sometimes fantastical, but very often I feel I've recognized some truly insightful aspect of my personal universe.

Aside from the idea of taking notes by writing or making tapes, one might also consider artworks as a means of expressing the psychedelic experience. One picture is worth a thousand words, the old saying goes, and the visual display during the trip lends itself to the potential for the creation of some very interesting artistic statements for those who are so inclined. Music, poetry, sculpture, photography and short stories are other valid means of expression; in short, just about anything you can use as a means of expression can also be utilized to interpret (translate) the experience. No matter which method one chooses, it's bound to take your best efforts to bring it to fruition.

If you truly believe psychedelics have enriched your life, then you should also realize the necessity for treating the experience with due respect. Be able to distinguish from recreational use, therapeutic use, and abuse. Ultimately, of course, definitions for each of these areas have to be made by the individual, but in so doing one should keep in mind that he has no right to infringe upon others rights with radical or disruptive behavior. It's a principle of life, really, more than a specific attitude toward psychedelics. If, for example, you have a nice car that you've worked hard to get, you want to take care of it so it will provide you with good service. Similarly, take care of your experiences; build them into a collection with which you can demonstrate to others (discreetly selected) the significance they have in your life. "Don't throw your pearls to the swine" Jesus said, but uninhibited indulgence just to have a good time is doing exactly that. Over the years, your notes or creative works will accumulate, will reinforce and clarify your concept of the value of the psychedelic experience.

The *Psychozoic Press* wishes to encourage readers to contribute to the paper in this respect. Have you had a pleasant experience, which you would like to share with others? Or perhaps an unpleasant experience, one from which others could learn to avoid the causative factors? Insights into aspects such as the spiritual elements, out-of-body excursions, telepathy, and such would be of interest to other readers, and writings in this vein could be either subjective or objective. (Castaneda and Huxley described their experiences subjectively, while Hofmann, being a scientist, was more objective in his reports.) Either viewpoint is valid. Perhaps you have some factual information you would like to pass along to others, or suggestions on how to integrate the psychedelic experience into the social sphere. How have psychedelics benefited or harmed you, modified your view of the universe, or been interpreted by those who have observed your use? Whether a given experience is good or bad makes little difference so long as you are able to extrapolate from it concepts which can be meaningfully applied (by yourself or others) in everyday life.

The *Psychozoic Press* will take exception to information relating to marijuana, however, as that is a drug of a different order and there is already plenty of writing being done on it, both pro and con. Besides, it would probably create more contributions than we could assimilate in this small paper. Also, we don't want any information on buying, selling, dealing, or accessibility of illicit drugs, nor does the *Press* offer any drugs for sale. Such a context would certainly attract the attention of law enforcement agencies, which would bring down problems and interference.

Since the *Psychozoic Press* is copyrighted, contributions selected for publication will become the property of the *Press*. However, if your writing is used, the author can, if desired, get permission to reprint any part of that issue if he or she submits a written request to that effect. Writers may wish to be recognized, remain

anonymous, or use a pen name, and the *Press* will comply with the wishes of the contributor in this regard. If you want your original copy returned, be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope or sufficient postage. Send your contributions to:

Editor, Psychozoic Press
2121 Braley Rd.
Coos Bay, OR 97420

Objectives of the Psychozoic Press

The *Psychozoic Press* is principally directed toward those who are already familiar with the psychedelic experience and wish to utilize it safely and intelligently as a means of enhancing their understanding of themselves, the world of humanity, or the universe in general. We are not a sourcebook for drugs, nor is the *Press* intended as a starting point to develop any spiritual, religious, or charismatic movement to propagate the use of psychedelics. It is not an underground publication, and not meant to induce people to illegal activities, even though many of you may have in the past had experiences with illegal drugs. We hope to teach people to avoid rash experimentation which so often leads to frightful experiences and paranoid rejection by well-intentioned but misunderstanding non-users.

The majority of people feel that psychedelics are not only not good for themselves, but not good for anyone else either. This attitude is somewhat analogous to racial prejudice and religious persecution, but we feel that individuals should have the option to use or not, so long as their actions do not interfere with the rights of others. It will probably take many years to dispel the existing public attitude, and we should first be able to demonstrate that we are capable of intelligently and constructively applying the psychedelic experience in our own lives. The basic purpose of the *Psychozoic Press* then, is to function as an advisory and informational communication exchange center.

Afterword

Since this is the first issue, it is intended only as an introduction to subsequent issues, which will be published quarterly. You will note that we have touched only superficially on several aspects of psychedelics, leaving room for more specific elaboration later. We chose to cover a wide range of topics lightly to see what the responses from readers would be and where the main interests lie. Future papers will deal more precisely with aspects of psychedelics in which readers express greatest interest.

To be frankly honest, the *Psychozoic Press* is an experimental project being developed on the assumption that, as we discussed earlier, psychedelics are going to be playing an increasingly significant role in shaping spiritual and mental attitudes of the future. Hopefully we will get enough readers interested to be able to expand the paper considerably during the developmental stages. Being able to do this depends principally on getting feedback and input from our readers.

About a third of the next issue will be devoted to a discussion of some of the legal hallucinogens and their respective dosage ranges. Another third will consist of readers' contributions and answering questions; the remaining portion will be generated by interfacing appropriately related information to these two departments. In the meantime, we'll be looking forward to hearing from you. — Editor

