# Psychedelic Drugs in the Twentieth Century

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> Hence, in intent, mystical salvation definitely means aristocracy; it is an aristocratic religiosity of redemption And, in the midst of a culture that is rationally organized for a vocational workaday life, there is hardly any room for the cultivation of acosmic brotherliness, unless it is among strata who are economically carefree.
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> —Max Weber

> But once kabbalism came to perform a social function, it did so by providing an ideology for popular religion. It was able to perform this function in spite of its fundamentally aristocratic character, because its symbols, reflecting as they did the historical experienc of the group, provided the faith of the masses with a theoretical justification.
>
> —Gershom Scholem

> Reality is a crutch

—Graffito of the Sixties

The reception of psychedelic drugs in modern industrial society is a complicated topic for the future cultural historian. Their influence has been broad and occasionally deep, varied but often hard to define. By now millions of people in the United States and Europe at all levels of society have used them; they have served as a day's vacation from the self and ordinary waking consciousness, as psychotherapy, professional or self-prescribed, and as the inspiration for works of art, especially for rock songs, the folk music of the electronic age; they have also provided a basis for metaphysical and magical systems, an initiatory ritual and a fountain of cultural symbolism for dissident groups; their use has been condemned and advocated as a political act or a heretical religious rite. Since the early 1960s, the cultural history of psychedelic drugs has been inseparable from the episode that has become known as the hippie movement. When the hippies were at the center of the public stage, so were psychedelic drugs; as the hippie movement became assimilated, losing its distinctiveness but leaving many residues in our culture, psychedelic drugs moved to the periphery of public consciousness, but they continue to exert a similar subtle influence.

It is impossible to write an adequate history of such an amorphous phenomenon without discussing the whole cultural rebellion of the 1960s; and it is impossible to do that adequately with the sources now available, which are very numerous (millions of words were spilled on the subject) but scattered, low in quality, and often inaccessible. The underground magazines, newspapers, and broadsides must be searched for serious themes underlying the extravagant claims, pseudorevolutionary wrath, drugged platitudes, and gleeful or savage mockery of elders and betters. The Iyrics, music, and public performances and poses of rock groups in the late 1960s must also be reinterpreted without wartime partisanship as the expression of a moment in culture. Biographies, memoirs, and recorded oral reminiscences will eventually give some sense of the texture of the time in the words of people who no longer feel obliged to attack or defend ideological phantoms. The cultural history of psychedelic drugs, like the cultural history of alcohol, cuts across too many social categories to be easily formulated as a single story. It will ultimately emerge only from the accumulation of separate stories about the people who have used the drugs; only a beginning has been made, and the knowledge we have is atypical, either because it concerns spectacular and unusual events like the Manson cult's killings or the great rock festivals, or because the rare highly articulate commentator, like Timothy Leary or Tom Wolfe, is deliberately taking a participant's point of view and a polemical stance. The immediacy of such journalism and memoirs cannot be reproduced here, and yet any narrative must be partial and ill-proportioned, since the immortalizing light of publicity has touched only parts of the scene. The most important questions the story raises are: What cultural changes have the drugs effected? Which of their cultural functions have been exhausted and which are still operating? What unexplored or

incompletely explored possibilities remain? The answers will demand a detailed examination of the drugs' properties and uses as well as the social history that follows.

The starting point of this history is as indeterminate as the definition of a psychedelic drug. We might begin with the discovery of distilled liquor, the elixir of life, in the thirteenth century, or the introduction of coffee and tobacco in the seventeenth century, or the stimulus provided by the artificial paradises of opium and hashish to the imaginations of such men as Coleridge, De Quincey, and Baudelaire in the nineteenth century. But for our purposes we can say that the first "new" psychedelic substance to make a social impact in Europe and the United States was nitrous oxide. Its introduction is associated with some famous scientific names. Joseph Priestley discovered it in 1772, and its effects were fully explored for the first time by Humphry Davy, Faraday's teacher, in 1798. Davy tested it extensively on himself and his artist and scientist friends and published a 600-page volume entitled *Researches Chemical and Philosophical, Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide and Its Respiration,* in which he enthusiastically described the philosophical euphoria it produced. Further testimonials came from poets like Coleridge and Robert Southey: Coleridge, an opium addict, called nitrous oxide "the most unmingled pleasure" he had ever experienced; Southey wrote, "The atmosphere of the highest of all possible heavens must be composed of this gas." Others who inhaled it were Josiah Wedgwood and Roget of Roget's *Thesauris.* Nitrous oxide was nothing more than an esoteric entertainment for gentlemen of the cultural elite until the 1840s, when Horace Wells and William Morton introduced it into dentistry as an anesthetic; dentists and surgeons still use it for that purpose.

Attempts to derive a philosophy or guide for life arise from each succeeding new form of intoxication or altered consciousness, and nitrous oxide was no exception. In 1874 the American Benjamin Paul Blood wrote a pamphlet called "The Anesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy"; William James read it and was prompted to experience the metaphysical illumination himself; the passages he wrote on drug-induced mysticism and its relation to philosophical questions remain among the most eloquent and intellectually acute comments on a subject that has otherwise produced much foggy writing. But neither the psychedelic effects of nitrous oxide nor the sometimes similar effects of ether and chloroform, also used in the nineteenth century medicinally and for pleasure, ever became a matter of great public interest. A few eccentrics like Blood tried to derive a metaphysics from them, but no nitrous oxide cults were formed. The revelations experienced on operating tables and in dentists' chairs remained as private as most spontaneous mystical experience. This can be partly explained by the brevity of the effect and the fact that its meaning tended to fade from memory, as well as the difficulties in handling and transporting a gas. Even more important, no social precedent for public recognition existed until the drug revolution of the 1960s intensified the search for mind-altering chemicals and provided drug users with ideologies and models for organization. Today nitrous oxide is publicized in the drug culture's communications media, and there are formal groups advocating its use for pleasure and transcendence (see Shedlin and Wallechinsky 1973).

The rapid development of experimental physiology and pharmacology in the late

nineteenth century generated an extensive search through folk pharmacopoeias for new drugs and efforts to extract the active principles of familiar ones. Among the many drugs discovered or synthesized (including cocaine and aspirin) was mescaline, the latest successor to opium, cannabis, and anesthetics as a creator of artificial paradises. The peyote cactus had been vaguely known from the descriptions of early Spanish chroniclers and later anthropologists and travelers, but its presence was not felt in industrial society until the Plains Indian peyote religion made it familiar on the southwestern frontier of the United States after the Civil War. Scientific study of mescaline began in 1880, when a woman in Laredo, Texas, sent samples of peyote to several medical researchers and to the drug house Parke-Davis. Ludwig Lewin tested peyote extract on animals and in 1888 published the first scientific report on the new drug (Lewin 1888). From then on interest grew slowly but persistently, paralleled and reinforced by the rise of the peyote religion. Mescaline was isolated in 1895 and synthesized in 1919. Parke-Davis and European drug houses marketed peyote for a while as a respiratory and heart stimulant, but it did not become an important therapeutic agent like opium, cannabis, and nitrous oxide. Instead it was used experimentally to study the nature of the mind and mental disturbances, and also taken independently by scholars, intellectuals, and artists to explore unfamiliar regions of consciousness. In the 1890s Weir Mitchell and Havelock Ellis gave the earliest personal accounts of peyote intoxication in medical journals; they emphasized the esthetic aspect of the experience and pointed out that the intellect was relatively unimpaired (Mitchell 1896; Ellis 1897). Galton and Charcot also studied mescaline; William James tried peyote, but the only effect was stomach cramps and vomiting. In the tradition represented by J.-J. Moreau de Tours' *Hashish and Mental Illness* of 1845, mescaline intoxication was regarded as a potential chemical model for psychosis; the idea was introduced in the 1890s, at about the same time that the concept of schizophrenia itself was crystallizing. This use of mescaline was periodically revived and not entirely abandoned until seventy years later (see, for example, Knauer and Maloney l91S; Stockings 1940). As early as the 1920s enough knowledge had been accumulated for several substantial books: Alexandre Rouhier's *Peyotl: La plante qui fait les yeux emerveilles* (1927); Karl Beringer's *Der Mescalinrausch* (1927); and the first work attempting a formal classification and analysis of mescaline visions, Heinrich Kluver's *Mescal: The Divine Plant and Its Psychological Effects* (1928).

Several other mind-altering drugs were discovered or developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Europeans discovered the iboga root in the 1860s, and ibogaine was extracted in 1901. *Ayahuasca* was described by travelers in the 1850s; harmine and harmaline were first synthesized in 1927, and in 1928 Lewin conducted the first experiment with harmine in human subjects (Lewin 1929). By 1941 Schultes and others had rediscovered the sacred mushrooms and morning glories of Mexico, although their chemical constituents were still unknown. MDA had been synthesized as early as 1910, and in 1932 Gordon Alles (the discoverer of amphetamine) tested it on himself and described the effects. So at the time of the discovery of LSD there was already an established tradition of literary and medical research into the properties of drugs that would later be called psychedelic or hallucinogenic.

As the first synthetic substance to exhibit mescaline-like properties and the most powerful psychoactive drug ever discovered, LSD gave a strong impetus to this research. Albert Hofmann developed the new drug in 1938 at the laboratories of the Sandoz drug company in Basel, Switzerland. It was one of a series of synthetic derivatives of ergot alkaloids produced in a search for new medicines; Hofmann knew nothing of mescaline and was not looking for psychoactive properties. He had already synthesized the uterine contractant ergonovine in 1936, and the chemical structure of the new compound suggested a potential respiratory and circulatory stimulant. He designated if LSD-25, because it was the twenty-fifth compound of the lysergic acid amide series. It was tested on animals, but Sandoz pharmacologists did not find the results interesting enough to pursue. Hofmann did not lose interest, however, and on April 16, 1943, he prepared a fresh batch. As it crystallized, a trace was absorbed through the skin of his fingers, and he had a mild psychedelic experience. Three days later, on April 19, he swallowed 250 micrograms, planning to raise the dose gradually, since no substance known at the time was active in such small quantities. As we know now, 250 micrograms was more than enough for a very powerful effect. This first inadvertent high-dose LSD trip was understandably terrifying; at times Hofmann feared that he would lose his mind or die. The powers of LSD were confirmed by other Sandoz employees, and in 1947, after a delay because of the war, Werner A. Stoll at the University of Zurich published the results of an experiment with psychiatric patients and normal volunteers as subjects (Stoll 1947); he used Lewin-s term "Phantasticum" (plural "Phantastica") to describe the drug. Sandoz sent samples to several research institutions in Europe and the United States, and other reports began to appear in 1949.

So began the first phase of LSD's history, which lasted until the early 1960s. During this period Sandoz supplied it to medical researchers in Europe and America as an investigatory drug; scholarly papers described its effects on various human functions at various doses, compared it to other drugs, and examined its therapeutic uses and the relation of its action to schizophrenia. Stoll had already noted the resemblance between LSD and mescaline; soon it seemed advisable to speak of a class of drugs variously named psychotomimetic, hallucinogenic, psycholytic, psychodysleptic, or psychedelic; the rather appropriate "phantastica" (or "phantasticant") was unfortunately abandoned. Dimethyltryptamine, ibogaine, harmaline and many synthetic drugs of indole and methoxylated amphetamine structure were soon placed in this class, and so were psilocin and psilocybin after their discovery in the late 1950s. The number of scientific reports on LSD alone rose from six in 1950 to 118 in 1956; thereafter it remained at about one hundred a year until research with human subjects was cut off almost completely in the mid-1960s (Hoffer and Osmond 1967, p. 83). Throughout the fifties psychedelic drugs, mainly LSD and mescaline, were rather freely available to physicians and psychiatrists in Europe and the United States. They were regarded as promising therapeutic agents or as interesting new tools for exploring the mind; the United States Army and the CIA also investigated them in ethically dubious and sometimes outrageous experiments as incapacitating agents for chemical warfare (see Asher 1975; Taylor and Johnson 1976);[1] but the evidence from many thousands of trials seemed to show that they were not

particularly damaging to the mind or body—nor even attractive enough to become a drug abuse problem, since their effects seemed variable and as often terrifying or emotionally exhausting as pleasant. Havelock Ellis had remarked at the turn of the century that mescaline might succeed opium and hashish as a euphoriant, and others since had testified to the occasional beauty and wonder of the psychedelic experience; but only a few men like Aldous Huxley were prescient enough to imagine before 1960 that LSD and mescaline would rise to higher social visibility or become a larger cultural phenomenon than nitrous oxide or cannabis had been in the nineteenth century.

Even in the 1950s interest had not been confined to laboratories and hospital research wards. LSD, several thousand times as powerful as mescaline, was easier to produce and distribute in the quantities necessary to gain a wide reputation. And the nature and intensity of the psychedelic experience were such that those who did not retreat in horror often became proselytes. The new interest in psychedelic drugs had the same kinds of sources as earlier drug vogues: medical researchers and psychiatrists who were trying LSD themselves and giving it to their friends and private patients; botanists, anthropologists, and amateur scholars who were continuing the search for psychedelic plants in the tradition of Lewin and Schultes; and literary people of the kind who have always taken inspiration from new forms of drug-induced changes in consciousness. This time the synthetic chemists were also at work ingeniously manipulating molecular structures to create new compounds either derived from the natural psychedelics or suggested by them. A chronology might include the following:

1949: LSD is introduced for the first time in the United States at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital (now the Massachusetts Mental Health Center), and research on its psychotomimetic properties begins.

1950: Busch and Johnson publish first recommendation of LSD as an adjunct to psychotherapy.

1951: Humphry Osmond begins work with mescaline and LSD at a Saskatchewan hospital.

1953: First clinic using LSD in psycholytic ("mind loosening") therapy established at Powick Hospital in England by Sandison.

1953: Aldous Huxley writes to Humphry Osmond about one of his papers on mescaline; a correspondence follows, and Osmond administers mescaline to Huxley.

1953: William Burroughs in the Amazon taking yage; Wasson in Mexico in search of psychedelic mushrooms.

1954: Huxley publishes *The Doors of Perception* describing the mescaline effect and

reflecting philosophically on it.

1954: *Virola* tree identified as source of Amazonian snuffs.

1955: Wasson takes *teonanacatl* in Oaxaca.

1955: Atlantic City meeting of the American Psychiatric Association includes symposium on psychedelic drugs addressed by Huxley; the book *LSD and Mescaline in Experimental Psychiatry,* edited by Louis O. Cholden, comes out of the conference.

1955: Peretz and others present first clinical report on TMA.

1956: Stanislav Grof begins his career of LSD research in Prague.

1956: Expedition to Oaxaca by Wasson and Heim; *Psilocybe mexicana* identified and the mushrooms sent to Hofmann.

1956: Stephen Szara presents first clinical report on DMT and DET.

1957: Article on magic mushrooms by the Wassons appears in *Life.* 1957: The drug house Smith, Kline & French issues report on clinical trials of MDA since 1949.

1958: The theologian Alan Watts takes LSD for the first time.

1958: Hofmann reports isolation and synthesis of psilocin and psilocybin.

1959: Hofmann isolates Iysergic acid amides from *ololiuqui* seeds.

1959: First international conference devoted to LSD; from it comes the book, *The Use of LSD in Psychotherapy,* edited by Harold Abramson.

1959: Phencyclidine introduced.

1959: The novelist Ken Kesey takes LSD, peyote, phencyclidine, and other drugs as an experimental volunteer at Menlo Park Veteran's Hospital in California.

1960: Over 500 papers on LSD in print.

In 1955, Huxley spoke of "a nation's well-fed and metaphysically starving youth reaching out for beatific visions in the only way they know"—through drugs (Young and Hixson 1966, p. 48). In an article on mescaline in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1958, he

suggested that it might produce a revival of religion (Huxley 1977, pp. 146-156). The fulfillment of his prophecies began when college students yearning to free themselves from the stuffy complacency of the 1950s fell under the influence of academic and literary figures promoting psychedelic drugs as a means for the permanent transformation of consciousness. The fact that psychedelic visions could be hellish as well as beatific was another fascinating challenge to the user rather than an objection to this astounding new way of feeding metaphysical appetites. The psychedelic movement was a kind of crisis cult within Western industrial society, formed by children of affluence and leisure who were inadequately assimilated culturally and homeless psychologically. Their malaise was best described in Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* (1960). What had turned the Plains Indians to peyote in the 1870s turned some college-educated whites to LSD in the 1960s; their old cultural forms seemed meaningless, and they needed new symbols and rituals to shape beliefs and guide action. The hippies who fancied themselves as white Indians, successors to the hipsters described by Norman Mailer as white Negroes, may not have been so wrong; but they, resembled traditional Indians less than those other modern men, the adherents of the peyote religion (see Spindler 1952).

Like the peyote religion, the psychedelic movement represented a confluence of several cultural streams and had many independent founders. Professionals and intellectuals with metaphysical and religious interests were important as guides, psychopomps, or road men; artists, including novelists and poets like Ken Kesey and Allen Ginsberg as well as rock musicians and the creators of psychedelic posters, light shows, and underground comics, also provided inspiration; other leaders came forth from among pop-culture hedonists or radical dropouts. Organized medicine and psychiatry (and eventually the law) became the enemy, playing the role of an Aztec priesthood or a Spanish Inquisition opposite the movement s prophets, shamans, and sorcerers. The leader who came closest to uniting all strands of the movement in his person was Timothy Leary. Here the man, the moment, and the milieu found one another. His case exemplified his own idea of set and setting as determinants of the significance of the psychedelic experience. For him, it was not only a metaphysical revelation but the source of a new social role as chief prophet, Pied Piper, trip guide, ideologue, and interpreter of the new consciousness. Leary filled Eric Hoffer's requirements for a charismatic cult leader: "audacity and a joy in defiance; an iron will...; faith in his destiny and luck; contempt for the present...; a delight in symbols (spectacles and ceremonials); unbounded brazenness" (McGlothlin 1974b, p. 297). He was capable of speaking "as one who had authority, and not as their scribes," but also capable of disarming humility and self-directed irony. Huxley put it in different terms in a letter to Osmond in 1962: Leary's behavior was "the reaction of a mischievous Irish boy to the headmaster of his school. One of these days the headmaster will lose patience.... I am very fond of Tim, but why, oh why, does he *have* to be such an ass?" (Bedford 1974, p. 717). Whether or not psychedelic drugs expanded Leary's consciousness, the psychedelic movement greatly expanded the range of his activities, providing new fields for the display of his intellectual and forensic gifts, his charm, boldness, and carelessness of consequences. His books, articles, and lectures shaped the ideas of people who did not read them—one definition of broad intellectual influence—and his insolently rebellious

attitudes and free way of living were envied or regarded as exemplary even by people who did not have the resources to imitate them. He popularized the phrase "Turn on, tune in, and drop out" and the expression "set and setting," and he rang the changes on these ideas beguilingly throughout the early sixties.

In spite of a successful career as an academic psychologist, which culminated in appointment to a research post at Harvard in 1958, Leary had always been somewhat unconventional. A Harvard colleague remembers him in the late 1950s as charming and cynical, contemptuous of middle-class conformity, and delighting in forbidden acts like sleeping with patients. Some of his colleagues even described him as a psychopath, and he humorously accepted the designation as a badge of honor. In those days Leary spoke of the "hybrid vigor" of the cultural offspring of unusual social unions—disparate classes, for example—and soon the psychedelic movement provided him with opportunities to create his own hybrids (Slack 1974). Leary was one of the proponents of a theory called transactional psychology (elaborated by Eric Berne in *Games People Play* and other books), which treated social roles and behavior as a series of games, each with its own rules, rituals, strategies, and tactics. Since Leary regarded social selves, including his own, with irony and distrust, psychedelic drugs performed an apparent service by dissolving the ego and "ending the Timothy Leary game." Using the terminology of this theory, Leary proclaimed that the drugs released people from the grip of the game-world and enabled them to return and live in it without commitment or anxiety; they could recognize its fundamentally unserious nature and preserve the compassionate detachment of a Hindu or Buddhist saint. (Alan Watts developed similar ideas starting directly from the study of Indian religion.) Most people's lives, in this view, consisted of absurd and futile rituals bound by restrictive rules of which they remained unconscious unless they were liberated by the drugs. The point was to recognize and delight in the fact that everything was only play, universal forces playing in and through persons, persons trying on roles and playing parts for the pleasure of the game. When Leary said, "There is no such thing as personal responsibility. It's a contradiction in terms" (Slack 1974, p. 171), others might call him a psychopath but he was stating a philosophical doctrine. This mixture of social criticism, straightforward hedonism, and traditional Eastern religion became, mostly in diffuse and vulgarized versions, the founding philosophy of the hippie movement. Leary was not its only proponent, but he put its arguments in the most brilliant and seductive form and set a conspicuous example by public practice of its tenets.

The Timothy Leary game, if it did not end, at least began again on a new field with more players the day he took psilocybin mushrooms while participating in a Harvard Summer Study Project at Cuernavaca, Mexico in the summer of 1960: "Five hours after eating the mushrooms it was all changed. The revelation had come. The classic vision. The full-blown conversion experience." (Leary 1968a, p. 283). He returned to Harvard that fall, obtained pure psilocybin (then recently synthesized for the first time by Hofmann) from Sandoz, and began research and experimentation, a large part of which consisted in taking the drug himself and giving it to colleagues, friends, graduate students, and others, including inmates of a state prison in a rehabilitation project that began in January of 1961. A Harvard colleague, Richard Alpert, was converted and became his

ally. LSD was added to his armamentarium in November 1961, after more than a hundred psilocybin trips. Of this experience, even more powerful than any produced by psilocybin, he wrote, "We [he and Alpert] had moved beyond the game of psychology, the game of trying to help people, and beyond the game of conventional love relationships. We were quietly and serenely aware of too much.... I have never recovered from that shattering ontological confrontation. I 4ave never been able to take myself, my mind, and the social world around me seriously.... From the date of this session it was inevitable that we would leave Harvard, that we would leave American society... tenderly, gently disregarding the parochial social insanities" (Leary 1968a, pp. 255-256). This gives some idea of the kind of effect LSD could have on those prepared to abandon themselves to it.

The clinical detachment and scientific objectivity conventionally recommended for evaluating drugs seemed to Leary and Alpert to be worse than beside the point, in fact actively pernicious, in interpreting the psychedelic experience; and such methods were soon abandoned in informal group sessions that resembled academic seminars or medical experiments less than a cross between religious convocations and wild parties. As the center of so much attention in those years of Kennedy's presidency, Harvard was an excellent stage and pulpit; the fame of Leary and psychedelic drugs was soon spreading not only on campus but throughout the country. It was through the Harvard connection that LSD first gained the attention of the mass media. Leary's provocative wit was guaranteed to arouse interest and anger; an example is his and Alpert's reply to a critical article in the Harvard *Crimson:* "Psychedelic drugs cause panic and temporary insanity in people who have not taken them" (La Barre 1964 [19S8], p. 2S2). Soon he was in trouble with the Harvard authorities and the Massachusetts Food and Drug Division—the headmaster was losing patience, as Huxley had predicted—and at the same time, he began to abandon his commitment to the academic role or game. He had found a following and, as he announced with a characteristic mixture of arrogance and self-deprecating irony, decided that he had become a prophet and might as well play the role full-time. By the spring of 1965, when Leary and Alpert were dismissed from Harvard in an atmosphere of considerable publicity, they had in effect decided to abandon the academic world anyway. The chairman of the Harvard Social Relations Department declared, "They started out as good sound scientists and now they've become cultists" (Geller and Boas 1969, p. 166). He said that they were impulsive, insensitive, and afflicted by a bland sense of superiority and a holy man syndrome (Downing 1964, p. 165). By Leary s own estimate, he administered psilocybin or LSD to 400 people from the fall of 1960 to the spring of 196S (Geller and Boas 1969, p. 165).

In 1962 Leary and Alpert had founded an organization called the International Foundation for Internal Freedom (IFIF). In the spring of 196S this group set up an institute in Mexico for the philosophical and religious study of psychedelic drugs; it was deluged with applications and then closed by the authorities after a month, creating yet another wave of publicity. That summer Leary and Alpert founded the *Psychedelic Review,* and an editorial against LSD appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* written by the head of the Harvard Health Services. In the fall the Castalia Foundation (named after the utopian academy in Hermann Hesse's novel *The Class Bead*

*Game)* was established on an estate at Millbrook, New York, owned by Billy Hitchcock, an heir to the Mellon fortune; Millbrook continued to be Leary's base of operations for several years and a more or less working model of what came to be thought of as the psychedelic lifestyle (see Kleps 1977). In 1966 the Castalia group formed a new organization with the acronym L.S.D. (League for Spiritual Discovery); Leary went on taking psychedelic drugs weekly, writing, traveling, presiding over rites and celebrations, counseling and inspiring his friends and followers, and generating both good and bad publicity of a kind that created increasing interest in the drugs and in himself. He was also intermittently harassed by the authorities, mostly on marihuana charges, since there were no effective criminal laws relating to LSD. Millbrook was raided by the police several times (once, in March 1966, under the direction of prosecuting attorney G. Gordon Liddy, later made famous by the Watergate scandal), and Leary was also arrested for smuggling at the Mexican border by customs officials.

The perpetual court cases gave him an aura of at least potential martyrdom; but it is not clear in the name of what he would have been martyred, since he put so little stock in principle or philosophical consistency. His philosophy was originally apolitical or antipolitical; he spoke of a revolution in consciousness, or, as he sometimes called it, a neurological revolution, that would first make all mere political or social change seem trivial and then eventually create its own social forms. He moved on to a temporary rhetorical alliance with political radicals in the late sixties. Finally, in 1968, he was jailed in California on a marihuana charge; later, he escaped from his minimum security prison with help from hippie and radical friends, and spent some time in exile in Algeria and Switzerland. He was extradited and spent more time in prison, then was pardoned and released; he now lectures at colleges, where he has abandoned political and drug proselytizing and talks about the prospects for colonization of outer space. Whether he is seen as a creative cultural impresario or simply as an intellectual adventurer and opportunist, it is clear that Leary did not take himself seriously enough to be the founder of a religion; his charismatic qualities were not linked to any fixed beliefs in a way that would provide a social movement with a direction. In accordance with his playful philosophy, he was simply trying out one role after another. His friend and supporter Alpert, now known as Baba Ram Dass, went in a different direction, one much more common for former users of psychedelic drugs—toward the formal practice of Indian religion.

By the mid-1960s, to paraphrase W. H. Auden s line about Freud, LSD was no longer a drug but a whole climate of opinion. There was a great variety of psychedelic scenes. Tom Wolfe observed Leary's professed dedication to Eastern meditation, experienced guides, and carefully arranged settings from the point of view of the group led by the West Coast novelist Ken Kesey; he charged the Harvard prophet and his friends with upper-middle-class respectability and a flight from the contemporary America celebrated in the Kesey group's emphasis on noise, bright colors, eccentric dress, motor vehicles, flashy technology, and provocative public craziness. If this is an incorrect description of Leary, who was no responsible middle-class citizen, it does exemplify two aspects of the psychedelic movement. For three or four years in the late 1960s, it was the counterculture:

a social world of its own with characteristic food, dress, shops, nightclubs, music and visual arts, ways of making a living, philosophical, religious, and political leaders of various persuasions, as well as status distinctions and internal rivalries—everything but a productive economic basis. There were the middle-class, middle-aged professional people meditating in what Wolfe called their "Uptown Bohemian country retreats," Pranksters with their Day-Glo painted buses and bodies, rock musicians with their high-living entourages and passionate audiences, runaways panhandling on the streets of Haight-Ashbury or Greenwich Village, rural commune and urban crash-pad dwellers, chemists concocting familiar and new drugs in illicit laboratories.

There were psychedelic churches, ashrams, rock festivals, light shows, posters, comic books and newspapers, psychedelic jargon and slang. Every middle-sized city had its enclaves, and there was also a drug culture touring circuit, with stops at Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, Haight Street in San Francisco, the East Village in New York, Cambridge, Ann Arbor, Amsterdam, Mexico, Morocco, Afghanistan, India, Nepal. Everyone had his own idea of what was meant by turning on, tuning in, and dropping out—his own set and setting—and the drug culture provided almost as many variations in doctrine, attitude, and way of life, from rational and sedate to lewd and violent, as the rest of American society. There was the theologian Alan Watts, and there was the jailbird and murderer Charles Manson.

Nevertheless, believing it faced a common enemy, the counterculture had an appearance of unity, direction, and permanence; to some it looked like the beginning of a transformation in consciousness that would sweep the world. The Fillmore Auditorium, a psychedelic ballroom in San Francisco, could be seen as "the throbbing center of the universe. It was like the point from which radiated out the sounds that moved the whole world" (Pope 1974, p. 55). Hunter Thompson writes, "San Francisco in the middle sixties was a very special time and place to be a part of. Maybe it *meant something.* Maybe not, in the long run... but no explanation, no mix of words or music or memories can touch that sense of knowing that you were there and alive in that corner of time and the world.... You could strike sparks anywhere. There was a fantastic universal sense that whatever we were doing was *right,* that we were winning.... Our energy would simply *prevail.* There was no point in fighting—on our side or theirs. We had all the momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave" (Thompson 1971, pp. 66-68).

In invigorating polemical exchanges, conservative medical authorities or lawmen would declare the use and users of LSD to be sick and dangerous, and psychedelic drug advocates would reply that it was they, the established powers, who were sick and dangerous rigid, repressed, afraid to confront their deepest selves and see the futility of their lives, desperate to prevent others from examining their lives and thereby escaping from repressive control. Charges and countercharges like this gave the impression that there really was a unified counterculture engaged in vigorous nonviolent war with the established system. The spirit of rebellion created by the black liberation movement and above all by the war in Vietnam merged with that of the drug revolution and furthered the illusion of community and solidarity.

Leary spoke for the drug culture:

> In the current hassle over psychedelic plants and drugs, you are witnessing a good-old-fashioned, traditional religious controversy. On the one side the psychedelic visionaries, somewhat uncertain about the validity of their revelations, embarrassedly speaking in new tongues (there never is, you know, the satisfaction of a sound, right academic language for the new vision of the Divine), harassed by the knowledge of their own human frailty, surrounded by the inevitable legion of eccentric would-be followers looking for a new panacea, always in grave doubt about their own motivation—(hero? martyr? crank? crackpot?)—always on the verge of losing their material achievements—(job, reputation, long-suffering wife, conventional friends, parental approval); always under the fire of the power-holders And on the other side the establishment (the administrators, the police, the fund-granting foundations, the job-givers) pronouncing their familiar lines in the drama "Danger! Madness! Unsound! Intellectual corruption of youth! Irreparable damage! Cultism! (Leary 1968, pp. 56-57)

From the other side, a psychiatrist, Daniel X. Freedman, wrote that the psychedelic prophets were victims of a delusional autonomy and bland sense of superiority, protected themselves by using the ego defense known as denial, and had a need to proselytize in order to allay their own doubts: "It is interesting that classifications of pathological outcomes of conversion (including irresponsibility and omniscience) startlingly resemble patterns we see with LSD.... Implied are unsolved problems with authority figures. Salvation often involves renunciation of previous ties; those who are saved must repetitively convince others in order to diminish their own doubt, isolation, and guilt" (Freedman 1968, p. 338).

The power of psychedelic drugs to produce at least temporary adherence to a new conception of oneself and a new way of life can be regarded with an admiring eye, like Leary's, or a dubious eye, like Freedman's; in any case, the power was at its height when the drugs were a novelty. This "cultogenic" property, as it has been awkwardly called, is embodied innocently in the Huichol ceremonial, the peyote religion, and some of the psychedelic churches that sprang up in the early sixties, as well as corruptly and satanically in the Charles Manson family. It was well described by Wolfe in his intimate account of Kesey's Merry Pranksters. Kesey s Acid Test parties were a kind of religious rite with their own religious art:

> The Acid Tests were one of those outrages, one of those *scandals* [the reference is to St. Paul's description of Christianity] that create a new style or a new world view. Everyone clucks, fumes, grinds their teeth over the bad taste, the bad morals, the insolence, the vulgarity, the childishness, the lunacy, the cruelty, the irresponsibility, the fraudulence... The Acid Tests were the *epoch* of the psychedelic style and practically everything that has

> gone into it... Even details like psychedelic poster art, the quasi-*art nouveau* swirls of lettering, design, and vibrating colors, electro pastels and spectral Day-Glo, came out of the Acid Tests Later other impresarios and performers would recreate the Prankster styles with a sophistication the Pranksters never dreamed of Art is *not eternal, boys.* The posters became works of art in the accepted cultural tradition.... Others would do the mixed-media thing until it was pure ambrosial candy for the brain with creamy filling every time To which Kesey would say "They know *where* it is, but they don't know *what* it is." (Wolfe 1969 [1968], pp. 223-224)

Leary called himself a "high priest" and flattered drug chemists and drug dealers by describing them as successors to the medieval alchemists. Another term borrowed by the heresiarchs of the psychedelic sects and also used scornfully by their enemies was the Hindi guru, meaning spiritual teacher, a figure with elements of priest, psychotherapist, and trip guide.

One formulation of the issue was Youth versus Age; most of the drug users were young, and a Flower Child had to be, at least in spirit. Leary flattered his followers this way: "The present generation under the age of 25 is the wisest and holiest generation that the human race has ever seen" (Leary 1968a, p. 46). He wrote an essay with the title, "Hormonal Politics," proposing the unusual idea that the basic question in politics was how much time you spent making love last week (Leary 1968 b, p. 168). In a cheerful short essay called "Start Your Own Religion" (ibid., pp. 223-236), he adjured the user of psychedelic drugs to consider himself a spiritual voyager and not a naughty boy, but often it seemed that he meant to obscure the distinction. He spoke of good vs. evil, underground vs. above ground, and the free, ecstatic, moist, sensual, and funny life forces vs. the dry, humorless, destructive antilife forces. He wrote of the "evolutionary leap" the young had taken by fruitful derangement of their nervous systems. They had experienced more than the Buddha and Einstein, they were ambassadors from the future, they had ended the 400-year bad trip that began with the scientific revolution and the rise of industrial society (Leary ;968 a, pp. 161-162), and so on in that extravagant style. He replied to the criticism that LSD was used indiscriminately and for kicks by writing that it *should* be indiscriminate and for kicks, like life itself (Leary 1968 a, p. 14).

The hippie movement constituted the mass following of the psychedelic ideology. It began to gather force around ].965 and reached its height between 1967 and 1969. Although the matter was often obscured for tactical reasons, there is no doubt that the initiating element, the sacrament, the symbolic center, the source of group identity in hippie lives was the psychedelic drug trip. To drop out, you had to turn on. It was not a question of how often the drugs were used; sometimes once was enough, and many people experienced a kind of cultural contact high without taking drugs at all. Earlier bohemians had their unconventional dress, sexual and work habits, hairstyles and political attitudes; what distinguished hippiedom and expanded its population far beyond that of genuine literary and artistic bohemias was simply the extra ingredient of LSD. By democratizing

visionary experiences, LSD made a mass phenomenon of attitudes and ideas that had been, the property of solitary mystics, esoteric religions, eccentric cults, or literary cliques. Every teenager who had taken 500 micrograms of LSD could convince himself, with the help of teachers like Leary, that he was in some sense an equal of the Buddha or Einstein.

The hippie movement in its visions combined a theoretical benevolence and gentleness with an interest in communitarian experiments, the occult, magic, exotic ritual, and mysticism. It borrowed its crazy-quilt of ideas from depth psychology, oriental religion, anarchism, American Indian lore, and the Romantic and Beat literary current of inspired spontaneity. I9liddle-class young people, provided with a childhood free of the most obvious forms of coercion and made self-conscious by the adolescent subculture and the youth consumer market that supplied it, were unwilling to submit to what they saw as the hypocrisies and rigidities demanded by adult jobs and roles, the unfreedom of adult life; a society worried about unemployment was willing to delay their entry into the job market and prolong their adolescence. The implicit purpose of the hippie style was to prolong the freedom and playfulness of childhood as far as possible into adulthood: to make the culture a youth culture. They rejected the accepted social definitions of reason, progress, knowledge, and even reality; they proclaimed their abandonment of the egocentrism and compulsiveness of the technological world view. American society was seen as a dehumanizing, commercialized air-conditioned nightmare, meanly conformist in its manners and morals, hypocritical in its religion, murderous and repressive in its politics; it outlawed the liberating psychedelic drugs and approved of enslaving alcohol and nicotine. A transformed way of life would be built on the intimations provided by LSD, the "mind detergent" that purged the psyche and midwifed a personal rebirth as the first step toward a new form of community.

The formula included self-realization, freedom from inhibition, communal ecstasy, expanded awareness, cleansed perception, essential rather than superficial religion, and a new spiritual order in which Blake's "mind-forged manacles" would be broken and our oneness with the universe recognized Hippies were expected to withdraw from the economy of conspicuous consumption and competitive emulation to live in holy poverty, scorning money, property, and upward mobility. Like the Huichols, they would return through psychedelic drugs to a lost state of innocence, a time before time began when the creation was fresh and the earth a paradise. They would turn away from the empty democratic political forms of industrial society and organize themselves into "tribes," imitating the organic community of preliterate hunters and gatherers. On the one hand they were young men and ladies of leisure, scornful aristocrats rejecting the vulgarity and hypocrisy of mass culture; on the other, they were self-made noble savages, or serene and compassionate yogis. Their festivals, and indeed their lives, were supposed to combine play and prayer and make the two indistinguishable. The hairstyles, dress, manners, and language were partly a mark of indifference to the established conventions, partly a deliberate mockery and challenge. Instead of measuring out their lives with coffee spoons, they proposed self-abandonment and sensual indulgence; in place of secular humanism and political rationalism (revolutionary or conservative), they preferred a farrago of mystical and prophetic apolitical religions—Zen, Sufism, yoga, Tantra, shamanism,

Gnosticism.[2]

Hippies and their critics searched for historical analogies to validate or invalidate this peculiar mixture of Asian notions of serenity and passivity with American optimism and emphasis on youth, which had its first incarnation in the Americanized Zen Buddhism of the marihuana-smoking Beat Generation. Hippies were proclaimed the successors of the Cynics, the early Christians or Buddhists, Thoreau, St. Francis, antinomian religious sects, the youth movements of German Romanticism, the literary bohemians of the 1840s or the 1920s, or the mystery cults of the ancients; they were said to have inherited the dream of the Land of Cockaigne or Arcadia, or the tradition of American experiments in community anarchy. "Hippie" itself was originally an outsider's term, invented by journalists; insiders sometimes regarded it as at best sympathetically condescending in the style of the mass media, at the worst uncomprehendingly scornful. They often preferred to call themselves "heads," implying superior awareness, or even "freaks," with the implication that they were mutants, hopeful monsters who represented the next stage in cultural evolution. Some intelligent observers in fact agreed that here was "a significant new culture aborning." (Roszak 1969, p. 38). That, of course, was only the vision; the reality, as always, was something else. In any case, what looks like a desirable mutant from one point of view is simply a monstrosity from another. So some sensitive outsiders, like cultivated Romans contemplating a Hellenistic sect, regarded the whole phenomenon, even in its most exalted and philosophical aspects, as a form of barbaric enmity to reason and civilization, a sometimes sadly naive and confused, sometimes aggressively coarse and brutal mixture of fraud and folly, a compound of collective eccentricity and personal aberration that could only be destructive.

The psychedelic culture had its characteristic public occasions and assemblies: celebrations of equinoxes and solstices, be-ins, rock concerts, and so on. Here, for example, is Wolfe's description of the Love Festival held in Golden Gate Park on October 7, 1966, the day the California law against LSD went into effect:

> Thousands of heads piled in, in high costume, ringing bells, chanting, dancing ecstatically, blowing their minds one way and another and making their favorite satiric gesture to the cops, handing them flowers, burying the bastids [sic] in tender fruity petals of love. Oh Christ, Tom, the thing was fantastic, a freaking mind-blower, thousands of high-loving heads out there messing up the minds of the cops and everybody else in a fiesta of love and euphoria. (Wolfe 1969 [l968], p. 827)

At about the same time a white-robed Leary, playing the prophet game, presided over the founding rites of the League for Spiritual Discovery in New York. Other characteristic events were Kesey s Trips Festival in January of 1966, the Human Be-In in San Francisco in January 1967 (a gathering of the tribes" with 20,000 participants), and the Woodstock Rock Festival of the summer of 1969, with an audience of more than 300,000, almost all under twenty-five.

More permanent meeting places were the psychedelic dance halls and discotheques with their elaborate light and sound apparatus designed to make the most of the drugs' sensory effects. In their first year of operation the Fillmore Auditorium and Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco had about a million customers (Marshall and Taylor 1967, p. 106). In places like these, as well as music festivals and recording studios, the drug culture assimilated rock and roll. If drugs were its most important commodity and commercial enterprise, music was not far behind. The musicians and entrepreneurs of rock, along with drug dealers, were its financial aristocrats, and much of the rock music of the late sixties was inspired by psychedelic experiences or designed to be heard under the influence of the drugs. The surrealist imagery of song Iyrics and album covers showed the influence even more unequivocally. A musical style invented by a San Francisco group, the Grateful Dead, was called acid rock; but for a few years most rock music was in a broader sense acid rock, as is obvious from the titles and Iyrics of songs like the Byrds' "Eight Miles High," The Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," Donovan's "Sunshine Superman, or the Beatles' "Magical Mystery Tour and Tomorrow Never Knows," with its borrowings from a psychedelic Bible, the Tibetan Book of the Dead:

Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream.
It is not dying, it is not dying.
Lay down all thought, surrender to the void.
It is shining, it is shining—
That you may see the meaning of within.
It is being, it is being.

Psychedelic mixed-media art imitated the synesthesia of the drug experience by means of stroboscopic lights, movies, slide projections, scents, shadows, and deafening music used to overwhelm the senses and derange habitual modes of perception. Psychedelic posters and paintings evoked drug visions with their garish colors, biomorphic forms, crowded detail, and surrealist mythological imagery—only the emotional intensity and the incessant movement and change could not be reproduced. Films like *Easy Rider* and the Beatles' animated cartoon *Yellow Submarine* were another kind of visual celebration of the drug experience. Rock music and other products with a hippie flavor entered the larger culture, often commercialized and trivialized in the form of imitation "psychedelic" T-shirts, pens, and so on. The drug culture developed a technical terminology and slang out of a mixture of black dialect, older street drug talk, Eastern religious language, and its own inventions. It gave currency to expressions like turned on, straight, freak, freaked out, stoned, tripping, tripped out, spaced out, far out, flower power, ego trip, hit, into, mike, plastic, going with the flow, laying one's trip on someone, game-playing, mind-blowing, mind games, bring-down, energy, centering, acid, acidhead, good trip, bum trip, horror show, drop a cap or tab, karma, samsara, mantra, groovy, rapping, crash, downer, flash, scene, vibes, great white light, doing your thing, going through changes, uptight, getting into spaces, wiped out, where it's at, high, ball, zap, rush, and so on. Many old terms like

"travel agent" took on new meanings that were half in-jokes and half esoteric cult-signs.

The alleged enemy was conformist society, the straight world, adults, medical authorities, the government, the law, and so on—a situation well defined in the title of a book by Nicholas von Hoffman: *We Are the People Our Parents Warned Us Against.* But things were not so simple. America confronted the hippies with a mixture of attraction and revulsion summed up in the two public faces of the lazy, dirty, hedonistic, promiscuous, and parasitical dope fiend and the radiantly angelic product of the love generation. The hippies made conventional society anxious but also touched its imagination. After all, some of them were the sons and daughters of its pillars. Favorable and unfavorable publicity in the mass media were equally effective in spreading the use of psychedelic drugs. Paeans to the gentleness, peaceableness, and sexual openness of the flower children made recruits for the drug culture; reports of suicides, fatal falls, or psychotic reactions were discounted as establishment propaganda, and it was even said (especially by Leary) that scare publicity and medical mishandling *caused* most bad drug reactions. Cops-and-robbers stories about drug arrests contributed to the exhilarating sense of forbidden adventure. Students surveyed at a high school in California in 1967, when asked whom they would trust as the narrator of an anti-LSD film, answered "no one" (Braden 1970, p. 413): a common effect of adverse drug publicity in the sixties on young people who understood how much hypocrisy, displacement, and projection went into adult condemnations. And yet it was partly the way some adults flattered them as spiritual and social innovators that made young drug users so confident of their judgment. Some professional people—sociologists, psychologists, journalists, clergymen—were so excited by the hippies' proclamations of messianic transcendence and social revolution that they abandoned their own judgment and invested disappointed hopes for drastic and immediate change in a movement that made promises far beyond its capacities.

Amid the mixture of hostility and approbation that greeted the hippies and their drugs, the law hesitated for a while and then came down on the side of repression. In the early days psychedelic drugs were not treated with the peculiar moralistic severity reserved for substances classified as "narcotics" (including, ironically, the much milder marihuana). Until 1963 LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin were easy to obtain for clinical and experimental research; and until 1966 there were no state or federal criminal penalties for unauthorized possession, manufacture, and sale. Only after 1966, when Sandoz took its LSD off the market in response to the new laws and the new public atmosphere, was most of the LSD in circulation manufactured in illicit laboratories. Under the present comprehensive federal drug law, which was enacted in 1970, most "hallucinogens" including marihuana are classified as drugs with a high potential for abuse and no current medical use; possession for personal use is a misdemeanor, unauthorized manufacture or sale a felony. State laws are similar to the federal law.

One familiar effect of illegality is a decline in drug purity and quality. A common complaint, voiced by Kesey, Michael Hollingshead (the man who introduced LSD to Leary), and other connoisseurs, is that the illicit drug available after 1966 was not the same as pure Sandoz LSD: the trip provided by illicit LSD was a chaotic, mind-shattering, physically and emotionally exhausting roller coaster ride instead of a serene cruise with a

clear view of Reality. The decline of the psychedelic movement has even been attributed to the loss of its sacrament. The irony of this is that it implies the inferiority of the natural plant form, which always contains a mixture of alkaloids; it also makes the purity of an anti-technological religious vision dependent on precision technology. What does the evidence show?

According to data compiled by the PharmChem Research Foundation, a California organization, the only psychedelic drugs now generally available on the street are LSD, PCP, and to a lesser extent MDA. Almost no one takes the trouble to manufacture mescaline or psilocybin, because their effects resemble those of LSD and the much larger amounts required make the expense too great. Mescaline is available only in the form of peyote buttons and psilocybin only in the form of psychedelic mushrooms, which have been discovered growing all over the United States; they are increasingly sought after in the wild (see Pollock 1975 a; Weil 1977 a) and, with difficulty, can also be cultivated (see Oss and Oeric 1976). (Many "psilocybin mushrooms," incidentally, are just commercial mushrooms laced with LSD.) Anything labeled as pure or synthetic mescaline, psilocybin, or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is almost certainly either LSD or PCP, or else contains no drug. Some chemicals closely related to LSD have been synthesized to sidestep the law; the one most often available is the acetylated variant, ALD-52, which is almost as potent as LSD itself. As for the quality of illicit LSD, adulterants and substitutes must be distinguished from products of improper synthesis. Since the variable physical and psychological effects of LSD sometimes resemble those of strychnine, belladonna, or amphetamine, there are rumors that illicit LSD often contains these substances. But laboratory analysis, especially the work of the PharmChem Research Foundation, shows that illicit LSD rarely contains adulterants, although the advertised dose is usually two to five times the actual one. The major problem is impurities that are by-products of careless or inadequate synthesis.

In the manufacturing process, ergotamine or other ergot alkaloids are reduced to Iysergic acid (d-lysergic acid monohydrate), which is then converted to LSD. The whole procedure, and especially the last stage, in which LSD is separated from iso-LSD by chromatography, is rather delicate; it requires skill and good equipment. The government has tried to cut off the supply of chemical precursors; but illicit chemists are usually able to obtain enough, because several ergot derivatives are used as medicines and the quantities needed are small by one estimate, 70 kg of ergotamine tartrate is enough to supply the American LSD market for a year (McGlothlin 1974 b). The only impurity regularly found by the PharmChem Laboratory, aside from occasional traces of ergotamine, is iso-LSD: it is very similar to LSD in chemical structure (the same atoms in a slightly different arrangement) but pharmacologically inactive. It is rarely present in a proportion of more than 15 percent and appears to have no effect on the drug action. So street LSD seems to be reasonably pure.

This assumption has been challenged, however. According to the well-known drug chemist A. T. Shulgin, for example, the methods used by PharmChem cannot reveal certain ergot derivatives and other substances that may be pharmacologically active. Another problem is that LSD must be stored away from the influence of light and the

oxygen in the air; the breakdown product of its exposure to light, lumi-LSD, is probably not distinguishable from active LSD by PharmChem's methods. But the significance of impurities is very questionable. No other drug is as potent as LSD, and it is hard to see how microgram quantities of much less powerful substances could modify its effect. A mere deterioration in potency would not affect the nature of the experience. The insistence that everything went bad when the Sandoz product was removed from the market probably reflects not a real pharmacological difference but the illusion that all trips should be good trips unless something is seriously wrong with either the drug or its user. By not admitting that the effects of LSD can sometimes be chaotic, painful, or terrifying, the disillusioned former user may justify his apostasy without impugning the magical virtue of the sacrament itself.

LSD is odorless, colorless, and tasteless, and the small amounts needed can be stored in any number of ways. For example, painting it onto the fingernails and impregnating the cloth of a man's suit have been used for smuggling. In the early sixties sugar cubes were soaked in LSD, but this practice no longer exists. The most common forms today are blotter (impregnated paper), microdot (dried droplets on paper), "windowpane" or "clear light" (gelatin sheets), powder, and tablets. Sometimes a chemist identifies his product by a trademark like a particular color or symbol: in the sixties there was Orange Sunshine, and later names include White Rabbit and Blue Comet. The wholesale price in 1972 was $500 to $800 a gram; in 1977 it was about $2500 a gram, or twenty-five cents for a 100-microgram dose. The retail price in 1977 was between one and three dollars for a dose containing from 50 to 200 micrograms. (The average dose is 75 micrograms.) Since LSD is not a drug of habit—few people use it even as often as once a month—the cost is usually no obstacle to anyone who wants it. In 1972 it was estimated that sales in the United States amounted to $9,000,000 at the bulk level and $245,000,000 at retail for a total of 15 kilograms or 35 pounds. Since prices have tripled or quadrupled, this figure is now probably higher; but the LSD traffic is still far less lucrative than the trade in heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates, or marihuana.

How much LSD has been or is being used? *Life* magazine estimated in.1966 that a million people had taken mescaline, LSD, or psilocybin; the FDA seized a million illegal doses in 1967 (Geller and Boas 1969, p. 180); in December 1967, the legendary psychedelic chemist Owsley (Augustus Owsley Stanley, III), patron of Kesey and the Grateful Dead rock group, was arrested holding 200 grams of LSD, or a million 200-microgram doses, as well as a large quantity of DOM (STP); the estimated production capacity of illicit laboratories uncovered by the authorities in 1967 was 40,000,000 doses (Brecher 1972, p. S66); in 1971 it was estimated that 5,000,000 Americans had used LSD (McGlothlin 1975).

There is a widespread impression that all of this is past, that in the late sixties everyone was taking psychedelic drugs and by the late seventies no one was. As early as 1971, Hunter Thompson wrote, They are still burning the taxpayers for thousands of dollars to make films about 'the dangers of LSD,' at a time when acid is widely known—to everybody but the cops—to be the Studebaker of the drug market; the popularity of psychedelics has fallen off so drastically that most volume dealers no longer even handle

quality acid or mescaline except as a favor to special customers: Mainly jaded, over-thirty drug dilettantes—like me, and my attorney" (Thompson 1971, p. 201). But if the estimate of a total production of 15 kilograms is accepted, in 1972 150,000,000 hundred-microgram doses were sold—certainly not as much of a decline as Thompson implies. Actually, it appears that almost as many people are experimenting with psychedelic drugs now as in the late sixties, but fewer are taking them habitually, trying to build a vision of the universe and a way of life on them, or suffering unexpected disastrous reactions. The novelty is gone, their limitations and dangers are better understood and their virtues easier to put into perspective; as often happens after a new drug has been on the scene awhile, epidemic abuse has stopped. Culturally, LSD is not now a major signal of rebellion or cause for alarm any more than long hair on men.

Some statistics are appropriate here. Since 1968, surveys of LSD use have been conducted among high school seniors in San Mateo County, California, which is in the San Francisco Bay area, a center of the drug culture. On a questionnaire asking how often they had taken LSD in the last twelve months, students gave about the same answers in 1974 as they gave in 1968 when publicity about LSD was at its height. In 1968, 18 percent had used LSD at least once, and 8 percent had used it ten or more times; in 1974 these figures were 23 percent and 9 percent. The high point was 1972, when the answers were 25 percent and 11 percent (McGlothlin 1975). At the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic, in September 1967, 85 percent of the patients had used LSD at least once, and 67 percent had used it in the previous month; in September 1972, 84 percent had used it at least once, but only 30 percent in the previous month (Eagle 1975). Fifteen to 20 percent of the undergraduates in the class of 1969 at "an Eastern university, apparently Harvard, had taken LSD (Pope 1971, p. 7). A 1970 study of 5,482 Army enlisted men showed that 7 percent had used LSD (Black et al. 1970).

A study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse based on information collected from October 1974 to May 1975 from a sample of 2,500 men in their twenties shows the following: Twenty-two percent of them had used psychedelic drugs; 10 percent had used them ten or more times; only 23 percent of those who had used them had done so in the previous year, and only 8 percent in the previous month. Seven percent of the sample, or 34 percent of those who had ever used psychedelic drugs, used them between 1974 and 1975 and therefore were "current users"; by extrapolation, 1,370,000 men in their twenties qualified for this designation. The prevalence of use reached a high of 10 percent in 1972 and declined to 6 percent by 1974; psychedelics were the only drugs showing such a decline. Men born between 1952 and 1954, the youngest in the sample, had the highest rate of use—about 30 percent; of men born in 1944, only 6 percent had ever taken the drugs. Thirty-two percent of the sample said psychedelic drugs were easy to obtain, and 38 percent said it was difficult but possible. Twenty percent of the users reported some ill effects; 35 percent of all users and 48 percent of those who used the drugs ten or more times thought the overall effect good; 1.3 percent of all users—seven men in the sample—had been treated for problems arising from psychedelic drugs. (The term "psychedelic drugs' was not defined, and to some people it may have meant PCP as well as LSD.) (O Donnell et al. 1976.)

The impression of a continuing decline in use is confirmed by other studies. A Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) survey indicated that 4.3 percent of youths aged between 12 and 17 in 1974, and 2.8 percent of youths in that age group in 1975 had taken psychedelic drugs; for adults, the figures were 1.5 percent and 1.1 percent (Strategy Council 1976, p. 15). The *National Survey on Drug Abuse: 1977,* published by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and based on a sample of 4,594 subjects, shows that 6 percent of the total population of the United States over the age of twelve, about 10,000,000 people, have used hallucinogenic drugs; about 0.7 percent (1,140,000) are current users. In the 18 to 25 age group, 20 percent have used hallucinogens and 2 percent are current users (National Survey 1977).

There is now a stable pattern: a small but not negligible minority of young people in their teens and early twenties, including a relatively large proportion of the undergraduates at academically selective colleges, take LSD several times over a period of a year or two and then stop. Very few use it continually or go on using it for long. (Thompson is wrong in supposing that most users are "jaded, over-thirty drug dilettantes'-trying to recapture the excitement of the mid-1960s.) The only psychedelic drugs still rising in popularity (if PCP is not considered a true psychedelic) are MDA and psilocybin mushrooms, both prized for gentleness.

Psychedelic drugs, then, are still with us, but the psychedelic movement has disappeared. Its unity proved to be spurious, its staying power a false hope. As Thompson regretfully observes,

> This was the fatal flaw in Tim Leary's trip. He crashed around America selling consciousness expansion without ever giving a thought to the grim meat-hook realities that were lying in wait for all the people who took him too seriously... Not that they didn't deserve it No doubt they all Got What was coming To Them All those pathetically eager acid freaks who thought they could buy Peace and Understanding for three bucks a hit But their loss and failure is ours too. What Leary took down with him was the central illusion of a whole life-style that he helped to create ... a generation of permanent cripples, failed seekers, who never understood the essential old mystic fallacy of the Acid Culture the desperate assumption that somebody —or at least some *force—is* tending that Light at the end of the tunnel. " (Thompson 1971, pp. 78-179)

Psychedelic drugs could sustain cults but not a culture; the hippies could not live up to their own hopes any more than they could justify the fears of their enemies. From the start the movement was amorphous, muddled, with great variations in participation and commitment. Occasional masters or gurus, often older men, provided philosophical justifications and political guidance; a few hippies were organized into communes and tribes and manned the institutions of the culture; but many were dropouts, some of them runaways, who drifted into the life with no clear conception of what they wanted or were

rejecting and drifted out again in a few years after succeeding or failing in the transition to adulthood; and an even larger number were never more than "weekend" or "plastic" hippies, tourists wearing native garb whose idea of the scene was derived from psychedelic travel posters. Most of the young people who might once have been called hippies by the mass media or even described themselves that way never grasped much more than an opportunity to find drugs, sex, excitement, freedom from rules and restrictions, or, most touchingly, a home and family away from their homes and families. They were "the simple hippies, the stray teeny-boppers, the runaways, the summer dropouts—the micro-organisms without power of locomotion that hung in the heavy water pool of Haight-Ashbury waiting for the more complex creatures to inhale them into their mouths and ingest them into their bellies where they could be food'-(von Hoffman 1968, p. 193)—and, if they did not find their way out, potential victims for a man like Charles Manson.

Since there was less than met the Day-Glo-bedazzled eye to start with, the inevitable decline should have been no surprise. But in fact it proved desperately and unreasonably disappointing. As Hunter Thompson testified, it left behind an inarticulate sense that some irrecoverable significance, some unique opportunity for transcendence and rebirth, had been lost; this was the social counterpart of the LSD user's emotions on returning from a psychedelic voyage. A participant wrote in the late 1960s that 'hate and love seem to be merging in a sense of cosmic failure, a pervasive feeling that everything is disintegrating, including the counter-culture itself, and that we really have nowhere to go." (Goldman 1971, p. 159). This feeling can only seem sentimental, far in excess of its object, without some knowledge of the transformations the mind undergoes through LSD.

As the disintegration proceeded, pieces picked themselves up and moved off in various directions, which can be represented symbolically by Methedrine, Marxism (or Maoism), Marihuana, and Meditation. Progressing from psychedelic drugs to intravenous injection of Methedrine (methamphetamine) and then addiction to depressants (alcohol, barbiturates, and heroin) was one form of the descent into despair and misery that revealed how much in the drug culture had always been pathological. The high language about love and community emanating from the few articulate leaders admired by sympathetic observers obscured a great deal of sordid reality. The hippie world's benign tolerance for eccentricity, its refusal to judge, make rules, or exclude, and its programmatic lack of discipline had attracted unstable persons who not only would not but could not make lives for themselves in straight society—from adolescents in turmoil to borderline psychotics like Charles Manson and antisocial characters like the Hell s Angels. The drug culture had no resources to protect itself against those who joined it to disguise, justify, or alleviate their disturbed conditions. For the same reasons it was easily corrupted by drug dealers' profiteering and co-opted by commercial exploitation of its superficial symbols; in part it was created by newspaper and television publicity, and its relationship with the mass media, both orthodox and "underground," was intimately symbiotic. Nicholas von Hoffman wrote in 1968:

> The advertising campaign which sold acid has to be among the great feats

> of American merchandising.... The dope style is more than empty inventive facility—the creativity of the account executive. It carries meaning at many levels. The most obvious has been using it to connect the product, as do automobile manufacturers, with youth and modernity; but like Avis, except more successfully, the dope industry identifies its merchandise with the deeper emotions. Avis uses the underdog theme. The dope pushers connect their stuff with nothing less than God, infinity, eternal truth, morality, every soteriological value the society has.... The mass media ... are ill-adapted to picking up and describing complex social phenomena. This is one reason they become the unknowing means of dope advertising.... Dope was associated with ideas which have no necessary connection with the dope business the sharing, the search for community, the looking for an alternate way of life, the love and flower-power themes. (von Hoffman 1968, pp. 42-44)

Psychedelic ideology rejected the coercive mechanisms of society on principle; it permitted no systematic distinction between inspired originality, eccentricity, and madness, or between a capacity to transcend the demands of routine social adjustments and an inability to live up to them. The same improvisatory and happy-go-lucky attitudes that gave the drug culture its charm—its childlike or childish aspect—also meant disorganization and formlessness; the playful hippie ethic, which corresponded to Leary's ideas about the game-nature of ordinary life, could not sustain permanent institutions because it did not recognize steadfastness, discipline, and responsibility as autonomous virtues. Hippies could be endearing and sporadically inventive, but they often acted like spoiled children, and one of their defining characteristics was unreliability. Problems requiring concentration or sustained effort were often dismissed irritably with the word "hassle." Man cannot live by drugs alone, and except for the drug trade, economic dependence on the ostensibly scorned straight society was unavoidable; sometimes the munificent parent of one resident would be supporting a whole commune. The psychological community of a collective LSD trip was inadequate as a model for genuine communities; it suggested no working arrangements for ordinary life.

The drug culture's downward path is retraced in detail in *Love Needs Care,* David E. Smith's and John Luce's chronicle of the rise and decline of the Haight-Ashbury hippie community from 1965 to 1969. Haight-Ashbury became a center of the counterculture in 1965 with the opening of a psychedelic shop selling drug paraphernalia. It was enriched by an influx from the nearby North Beach area of Beat Generation fame, and attracted the attention of the mass media after the Be-In or Gathering of the Tribes in Golden Gate Park in January 1967. The press spread rumors that 100,000 migrants would be coming that summer. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy that attracted many young people to the dubiously named Summer of Love, sometimes regarded as the flood tide of the drug culture. If it was, the ebb began immediately and was precipitous; by January of 1968 most of the flower children had abandoned the scene and it was dominated by speed

freaks, addicts, alcoholics, motorcycle hoodlums, and the teenage runaways and schizoid or inadequate personalities they preyed on. Hepatitis, bronchitis, venereal disease, decayed teeth, malnutrition, and untreated cuts and burns, always problems in urban hippie enclaves, had become pervasive (Smith and Luce 1971).

Haight Street served as a kind of laboratory that provided advance signals of the consequences of tendencies implicit in the movement from the start. The early rural communes, for example, unable to exclude or reject anyone and incapable of managing their affairs, tended to fall apart in chaos (see Yablonsky 1968). The Woodstock Rock Festival of 1969 and the talk of a Woodstock Nation for years afterward seemed to prove that the counterculture still had some life. But Woodstock was mainly a gathering of "plastic hippies": middle-class young people on vacation, many of whom lived with their parents or in college dormitories. The Altamont Rock Festival of 1970, with its murderous culmination, was sometimes proclaimed to be the counterculture's final self-inflicted blow. But the problems had been inherent from the start. Charles Manson had been taking LSD with his "family" in Haight-Ashbury during the Summer of Love, and the summer of Woodstock was also the summer of the Tate and LaBianca murders. Robert Stone s prizewinning novel *Dog Soldiers* (197S) conveys the atmosphere of desolation left in some regions by the death of the counterculture; the plot centers on heroin smuggling, the dream of psychedelic utopia is represented by a pathetic remnant in a New Mexico commune, and the only winners are coolly manipulative cynics with no cultural commitments at all. Everything about Manson, including the form his delusions took, was a perfect malicious caricature of hippie beliefs and the hippie way of life. The world of *Dog Soldiers* was the next stage.

Chaos, crime, and addictive drugs were one way out; another direction was radical politics. Relations between cultural and political revolutionaries had always been strained. The general tendency of the hippie movement was apolitical or antipolitical: Leary's notion of neurological politics meant no politics at all in the conventional sense; if each person changed himself, the sum of all the individual conversions would somehow amount to a new social order. The protest implicit in being tuned-in and dropped-out was not easy to reconcile with ordinary political protest. Wolfe describes Kesey's attitude toward a demonstration against the Vietnam War: *"Come rally against the war in Vietnam.* From the cosmic vantage point the Pranksters had reached, there were so many reasons why this little charade was pathetic, they didn't know where to begin" (Wolfe 1969 [1968] p. 192). When the day came, Kesey's antics dampened the militant mood of the demonstrators. To many people psychedelic drugs seemed the most important thing that had ever happened to them, and political issues were no more significant to someone on an LSD trip than they are in dreams. The drug made political quarrels seem trivial and political action ephemeral and foolish; nothing that lay between the agonizingly personal and the grandly cosmic really mattered. Radicals naturally complained that retreat into a drugged dream-world was incompatible with any kind of politics, however broadly interpreted; and they took the hippies' intimate relationship with the mass media and technological capitalism as proof of how easily a merely cosmic revolution could be absorbed by the dominant social system.

But traditional affinities between bohemianism and dissenting political activism were also present. New Left philosophers like Herbert Marcuse promoted the notion of altering the cultural context of politics to overturn a form of domination that was not just externally oppressive but corrupting to the very heart and soul of its victims. The new radicals of the sixties also had in common with the hippies an interest in participatory democracy, and the political use of the idea of alienation was similar to the counterculture's critique of industrial society. Most important, there was (or seemed to be) a common enemy. The underground press was a mixture of rude radical politics and fantastic hippie nonpolitics, aimed at being as offensive as possible to the sensibilities of straight society. Hippies and radicals were expressing the same disgust in different ways. The convergence was closest from 1968 to 1971, at the height of campus rebellion and Vietnam War protest, as some of the undissipated rebellious energies of the disintegrating drug culture were diverted into politics. Abbie Hoffman and others founded the Youth International Party or Yippies in 1968 as a kind of politicized Merry Pranksters. During the conspiracy trial for the demonstration at the 1968 Democratic Convention, Hoffman and his fellow defendant Jerry Rubin, with the cooperation of the judge, aimed at undermining the decorum of the legal system to destroy its authority. But this hippie-radical alliance proved to be a temporary phase too. The underground newspapers became more respectable, or more straightforwardly political, or they disappeared; the Vietnam War ended, and mass demonstrations were no longer available to provide an opportunity for displays of New Left and hippie theatricality. The careers of Tim Leary and Eldridge Cleaver suggest how this whole constellation has disappeared: they started from separate points in drug proselytizing and political radicalism, became allies for a short time in the late sixties, and now, after imprisonment, exile, and further vicissitudes, have given up both drugs and radical politics.

Methedrine and Marxism indicate two directions; marihuana represents a third. Radical politics or addictive drugs absorbed only a few of the people who had temporarily assumed the habits and language of the counterculture; most of them returned to more or less conventional lives. As usual after a conversion, there was much backsliding. Even for those who did not abandon them, psychedelic drugs ceased to imply cultural radicalism. LSD was taken more casually, for pleasure, without apocalyptic expectations; often its more profound effects were deliberately suppressed:

> There are like six people sitting in a room tripping, and grooving on the pretty colors, and suddenly Jane starts getting into something heavy. She begins to realize that acid is a bigger thing than just seeing colors, and she begins to get deep into it and get frightened. Then somebody looks over and grins and says, "Whassa matta, Jane, you freaking out?" And either she snaps back into seeing the colors thing or she gets real frightened and never takes acid again. (Pope 1971, p. 36)

But, as this quotation indicates, LSD was not a reliable pleasure drug: ecstasy is not

fun. People who used psychedelic drugs mainly for what they defined as pleasure tended to stop sooner than those who had more serious and complex purposes. Illicit drug users looking for something that would not disrupt their normal routines returned to substances like marihuana and cocaine, which have reliably euphoric effects and do not alter consciousness too much. Both have become increasingly acceptable as everyday social drugs; they are used simply to feel good, and not as a source of cultural identity. The magazine *High Times* is the *Playboy* of these new drug users. Despite some halfhearted counterculture rhetoric, its casual tone is very different from the rage and exaltation of the drug-culture press of the 1960s, and its readers no more constitute a subculture than do readers of *Gourmet* or whiskey drinkers. Psychedelic drugs play a relatively small part in their lives.

Everything is back to normal, then; but normality itself is different, and not only in the increasing acceptability of marihuana as a pleasure drug. As the epithet "mind detergent" implies, in some circumstances LSD had a kind of brainwashing power; it could induce the feeling of having achieved a new identity through death and rebirth of the self. Even after this feeling faded, it often seemed that nothing would ever be quite the same again. The psychedelic voyage, like any adventure, changed the traveler. There were subtle differences in the sensibilities and interests of LSD users who turned off and dropped back in; they can be symbolized by Meditation, the fourth direction we have named for former followers of the psychedelic movement.

Transcendental Meditation is the simplest and most popular of the therapies and religious techniques sometimes described as transcendental or mystical. Most had existed long before psychedelic drugs became popular—some for thousands of years—but the residue of the psychedelic experience created an enormous new interest in them. Spokesmen for the drug culture very early began to refer to the danger of emphasizing LSD itself too much. Kesey was one of the first: "What I told the hippies was that LSD can be a door that one uses to open his mind to new realms of experience, but many hippies are using it just to keep going through the door over and over again, without trying to learn anything from it (Wolfe 1969 [1968], p. 201). Ram Dass said in 1970, "I think LSD is making itself obsolete. All acid does is show you the possibility of another type of consciousness and give you hope. But your own impurities keep bringing you down.... After a while you dig that if you want to *stay* high, you have to work on yourself" (Playboy Panel 1970, p. 201). In a 1968 study of Berkeley and Haight-Ashbury LSD users, half of them said they would give up the drug on the advice of a trusted mystic (Cohen 1973). The most common reason why people stopped using LSD, more common than worry about mental and physical health and far more common than fear of legal penalties, was the belief that LSD itself had enabled them to go "beyond" it, by transcending the need for it.

The psychedelic movement did not create the revolution it had promised, but it was more than a brief trip, a Ghost Dance for white middle-class youth. Many of the several million people who used LSD never abandoned the idea that in some sense they had achieved expanded awareness. They believed they had understood for the first time what the sages of prescientific and antiscientific traditions were talking about:

> Many people in the acid world have taken up the occult sciences, I Ching, tarot cards, astrology, and numerology Their interest flows from their acid experiences which, they believe, have given them new sensitivities and glimpses of ways of knowing and feeling that the categorical rationalism of the west fails to pick up or even denies.... Larry [a former graduate student in mathematics] now views his academic studies as denatured—inhuman beside the important points of life. Acid set him to reading Eastern religion and put him in pursuit of cabbalistic learning. (von Hoffman 968, p. 188)

Psychedelic drugs opened to mass tourism mental territories previously explored only by small parties of particularly intrepid adventurers, mainly religious mystics. Most of the tourists simply returned with a memory of having seen something important but no idea how to interpret it or incorporate it into their lives. But some decided to make their own attempts at exploration without drugs, and they discovered that religious traditions had the best maps—especially the religions of India. The drugs whetted metaphysical appetites that Eastern religion promised to satisfy. This project had great advantages over the drug culture in seriousness and permanence. Eastern gurus were relatively immune to the curiosity of the mass media or condescending sociological expertise: they were neither sensational enough (since sex and drugs were not involved) nor easily subject to analysis on Western terms. Their rules, prohibitions, and insistence on arduous training were a relief to recruits weary of the drug culture's indiscipline and its anarchy of standards. Young people who had never learned self-discipline or even considered it important now discovered that it could order and enrich their lives; this may have mattered more than any of the specific spiritual techniques in maintaining a sense of community and psychological stability.

There were other factors as well. One perceptive observer has identified a common goal of *detoxification* on the journey to the East. To realize the ideals of simplicity and naturalness suggested but not achieved by the drug culture, it was necessary to get rid of technical aids that were seen as impure and ultimately in some sense poisonous. Many of those who turned to Eastern disciplines came to regard drugs as pollutants that overload the senses, distract the mind, and prevent the user from attaining the goals they allow him to glimpse. They were seen as dangerous and somehow fraudulent, artificial in a bad sense, like many other chemicals in the air of industrial society. People who now sought spontaneity and self-transcendence in all their experience could no longer tolerate confining them to unusual chemically induced states, especially ones that depended on drug technology. So doubts about Western science and industry already present in the drug culture, as well as the concern for purity and wholeness represented by the ecology movement, led to a rejection of psychedelic drugs (Pope 1974; see also Cox 1977).

The novelist and explorer Peter Matthiessen described his passage beyond LSD:

> I never saw drugs as a path, far less as a way of life, but for the next ten

> years I used them regularly—mostly L8D but also mescaline and psilocybin. The journeys were all scaring, often beautiful, often grotesque, and here and there a blissful passage was attained that in my ignorance I took for religious experience....
>
> I had bad trips, too, but they were rare; most were magic shows, mysterious, enthralling After each—even the bad ones—I seemed to go more lightly on my way, leaving behind old residues of rage and pain. Whether joyful or dark, the drug vision can be astonishing, but eventually this vision will repeat itself, until even the magic show grows boring; for me this occurred in the late sixties, by which time D and I had already turned to zen.
>
> Now those psychedelic years seem far away; I neither miss them nor regret them. Drugs can clear away the past and enhance the present; toward the inner garden, they can only point the way Lacking the grit of discipline and insight, the drug vision remains a sort of dream that cannot be brought over into daily life. Old mists may be banished, that is true, but the alien chemical agent forms another mist, maintaining the separation of the "I" from true experience of the infinite within us. (Matthiessen 978, pp. 44, 47)

Liberal capitalist industrial society has absorbed a cultural movement that implausibly promised to transform it out of recognition. This absorptive or adaptive capacity has been decried by philosophers like Marcuse who consider it a means of neutralizing all opposition and emptying it of meaning. But in fact society to some extent becomes what it consumes; the adaptation has not been all on one side, and the drug culture has modified habits and ways of thinking in more important matters than marihuana smoking or long hair. Forays across the border of ordinary waking awareness are no longer merely a hobby for cranks and fringe groups or spontaneous individual adventures without public status. Psychedelic drugs made common coin of the term 'altered states of consciousness" by greatly simplifying access to these states and therefore promoting their systematic exploration. As this exploration proceeds, with and without drugs, a certain limited degree of consensus is developing about the importance and the (in some yet to be determined sense) reality of the experiences that occur in such states, and more and more study is aimed at placing this new consensual reality in relation to religious and metaphysical traditions as well as the very different consensual realities of common sense and science.

This was undoubtedly the most important cultural change that psychedelic drugs produced. They released new forces into the consciousness of millions of people. These forces might be seen as good, evil, or morally ambiguous; they might be regarded as coming from within, as an upsurge from the unconscious mind, or from beyond, as a revelation from other planes of existence, or some way to reconcile these interpretations might be sought. In any case, they raised theoretical and practical issues that seemed to tax the combined resources of modern science and the more ancient branches of human wisdom. It was as though a country previously known to us only through occasional

travelers' tales in which it was hard to separate reportage from imagination was now being visited not only by tourists but by geographers and anthropologists who could compare their observations, put them into a common language, and arrange them in a theoretical order. A mass of new experience was provided for the intellect to master or be mastered by. Furthermore, the implications for the conduct of life sometimes seemed literally tremendous (marvelous, terrible, capable of making one tremble). Only a few people allowed their lives to be totally changed by the psychedelic message (which was ambiguous anyway, like all the verdicts of oracles), but no one who received it was completely untouched. LSD is no longer held out as a way to transform the world, but many people retain a powerful sense of incompletely explored emotional and intellectual possibilities, of something felt as intensely real and not yet explained or explained away. To determine how much this is justified, we have to consider more closely the actual effects of psychedelic drugs and the questions they raise about the human mind and the universe.

## Footnotes

1. As we were going to press, a book on CIA mind control projects was published (Marks 1979). It relies on interviews and on documents obtained from the government through the Freedom of Information Act to expose CIA funding and encouragement of behavioral science research, including LSD and other psychedelic drug experiments, during the 1950s and early l9t;0s. To call inadequate the standards of consent and protection for human research subjects employed in some of this work would be an understatement; an example is the practice of administering LSD to people who were not told what drug they were taking or, in some cases, that they had taken a drug at all. Marks also shows once again that in Cold War days academics favored military and intelligence agencies with an attitude of casual acceptance derived from an almost unthinking patriotism that would be inconceivable today. However, it is impossible to take seriously Marks' suggestion that the needs of the CIA were a major source of academic interest in LSD and, by diffusion, of the drug culture. These phenomena had their own intellectual and social roots independent of and sometimes opposed to government interests. (back)

2. For autobiographical remarks from some of the more articulate hippies on the role LSD played in their lives, see Wolf 1968. (back)

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**The Psychedelic Library Homepage**

**Psychedelics and Culture Menu**