

quickly and fully enough to slow the pace of protest remains to be seen. What seems clear is that the council is now at last willing to consider steps which have long been ignored, postponed or flatly rejected. Perhaps Tuskegee will yet become a model Southern community.

The myth that it ever was such a model arose primarily from the desire of many people of good will, North and South, to believe it. Their self-deception is quite understandable. The contrast between Tuskegee and Hayneville is as

great as that between pre-revolutionary France and France in the Middle Ages. Tuskegee has made substantial progress in some areas; in others, it lags behind even certain other black-belt communities. Nearby Auburn, for example, is no black man's paradise, but a Negro can dine publicly with a white friend in a white-owned restaurant.

The extreme bitterness of the reaction to Younge's death, and the prevailing sense of outrage at conditions in the city, are in part due to the very gap between rhetoric and

reality. The progress that has been made, and the public relations use to which this progress has been put, have generated expectations that are greater than those existing in most Southern communities. The murder of Younge accelerated the process of dealing with the resulting frustrations. But it would have happened eventually anyway, for when the gap between claims and facts is great, exacerbation becomes so intense, and incidents so likely, that something is bound to precipitate action.

Drugs on Campus: Turned On & Tuned Out

Mervin B. Freedman and Harvey Powelson

Within the last five years the ingestion of various drugs has become widespread on the American campus. Until recently, drugs were used almost exclusively by those clearly out of step with conventional American life. Prior to 1960, also, the taking of drugs implied physiological addiction, heroin being the substance most used. An exception was marijuana. Certain groups in Los Angeles and New York, many of them actors and writers, smoked pot without deleterious physiological effects or interference with their professional activities. However, marijuana was very rarely found on college campuses.

Physiologically addictive drugs are still almost unknown on campus, but there are now few colleges and universities where marijuana and the new psychedelic drugs, chiefly LSD, are not consumed. On even the most provincial of campuses a student who has flipped out as a result of taking LSD is likely to turn up at the counseling center, or a few students may be expelled for smoking pot in a dormitory. This is not to say that the proportion of students who take drugs is high. Most college students are conventional and dutiful, and are unlikely to contravene acceptable standards of behavior in so serious a way. But

on campuses where cosmopolitan students congregate — large city campuses or prestigious small liberal arts colleges — the proportion of students who experiment with pot or LSD may run as high as 10 per cent. This is not a large proportion, but the total numbers are considerable. In a student body of 15,000, for example, but 2 per cent is 300 students — a figure not easily ignored. And the number of drug takers is growing.

It is difficult to fashion a serious case against smoking marijuana except that a user will find himself in serious trouble if he is caught by the police. The effects on society at large, were pot smoking to be as ubiquitous as the consumption of alcohol, are unknown, but within the current limits of use, there is little evidence that marijuana damages the individuals who smoke it. However, once a student has stepped over the line and finds that nothing terrible has happened, it is easy to fall into the illusion that there are no dangers at all. Occasionally a person of somewhat precarious emotional stability may be thrown into a panic state or even a psychosis as a result of smoking pot, but this seldom happens. Similarly, there is little basis for asserting that pot smoking is often a prelude to self-destructive or socially damaging acts. No data exist, for example, to demonstrate that marijuana contributes significantly to an individual's criminal tendencies.

Perhaps the most serious charge

that may be made against pot is that it is psychologically damaging. Since it is officially banned, its use reinforces rebellious and anti-social tendencies. Individuals who smoke pot regularly — as opposed to those who experiment with it on one or a few occasions — are likely to scoff at such a remark. Divorced as they are from traditional American culture and society, they are hardly frightened by the prospect of further alienation. Indeed, they are apt to welcome it.

The consistent pot smokers are for the most part graduate students in the arts, philosophy, the humanities and, to some extent, in the social sciences. The rebellion they express in many ways, pot smoking among them, stems from their disillusion with American life and values. They oppose American intervention in Vietnam, they are angered by the lot of Negroes and other disadvantaged minority groups. And they are militant. Aside from enjoying pot's intrinsic satisfactions — relaxation, heightened sensibility, etc. — these students get pleasure from sharing a rebellious, illegal activity. The more rebellious or "anti" the movement, the greater the likelihood that pot smokers will be drawn to it. On the other hand, the use of marijuana is rare in the Peace Corps and Poverty Corps. Even though these workers may oppose traditional policies and politics, their activities are more a gesture of social affirmation than of protest.

On any cosmopolitan campus to-

Mervin B. Freedman is chairman of the Psychology Department at San Francisco State College. Harvey Powelson is director of the Department of Psychiatry at Cowell Memorial Hospital, University of California.

day or in any large city, a student can easily buy marijuana or a psychedelic drug. About eighty psychedelic or consciousness-expanding substances have been identified in the Western world—morning glory seeds, peyote, psilocybin, are among the more prominent—but LSD, the most powerful, has pre-empted the field. Because of its shadowy status, it has often been easier to obtain than the clearly illegal marijuana. Revisions of federal drug laws will alter the status of LSD, but at least in the near future there is little likelihood that pot or acid will be in short supply. Connections, sometimes students, often ex-students, are easy to find. The going rate is \$5 for an LSD capsule. And for many users one capsule is good for two "trips." You dissolve it in a glass of water and drink half the glass each time.

Although the takers of marijuana and LSD overlap, these drugs have assumed quite different meanings for the students who ingest them. Pot smoking is likely to be a relaxing, convivial affair. On occasion, one may in the course of smoking marijuana undergo profound experiences, mystical or self-revelatory, but few pot enthusiasts would claim that it initiated one into life's mysteries. Devotees of LSD, on the other hand, have surrounded the ingestion of this substance with a *mystique*, with cults, with rituals. Some students claim that LSD experiences provide deep insights. They have seen themselves with a clear eye, stripped of the usual defenses and artifices which ordinarily hedge perception. A better self, an ideal self, may be envisioned. New powers are made available to them, intense mystical or religious experiences occur.

However, not all ingestions of LSD result in revelatory trips. Sometimes nothing happens. Other times, reaction may be limited to minor perceptual distortion. The setting in which LSD is taken considerably influences the effect. For some students an LSD trip is a profound personal experience; for others it becomes a religion, a way of life. These two kinds of LSD enthusiasm—the profound personal experience versus the way of life—tend to divide on the frequency of dosage. Students for whom LSD has not become a way of life probably have experienced only a few LSD trips—three or four perhaps, spaced

at intervals of several months. LSD experience is likely to contribute to their alienation. They see so very clearly the falsity of the material values that dominate Western society, they have experienced true love—they know what the word love means; they have reconciled the conflicts which plague Western man, and so on. And these experiences have spurred them on to rebel all the more vehemently against conventional American life and politics.

When LSD becomes a religion or a way of life, students take it more frequently—once a week perhaps, or even more often. And when this occurs, a student is likely to leave school. A number of large universities now have groups or cults of LSD devotees who live in the vicinity. Most of the members are ex-students. These people are turned on to their inner world, their internal experience. The external world is tuned out. They do little of anything except observe. They are great nature lovers. They will journey to places of unusual natural beauty, turn on with LSD, and look. They work spasmodically, when funds are needed, but otherwise are inactive. The preoccupations of most people—educational, professional, political—are "games" to them. There is the "Vietnam-administration game," the "student-administration game," the "Hitler-Jewish game," the "McCarthy-ADA game," and the like. Their living conditions often become squalid. The truth has been revealed to them. They are in tune with infinity, and anyone who is hung up on involvement with experiences or activities of the external world is dismissed as a square.

Communication between these votaries of LSD and squares is limited. Because so much of what occurs during an LSD trip is nonverbal, little can be reported. And "what the word cannot say, the mind cannot know." LSD enthusiasts talk of religious conversions, the awakening of artistic creativity, the reconciliation of opposites. The main change to be observed in such individuals, however, is that they have given up doing anything. The aspiring painter talks of the heightening of his aesthetic sensibilities and skills, but he has stopped painting. The graduate student who withdrew from writing his dissertation in philosophy talks of the wondrous philosophical theories he has

evolved. But nothing is written. It seems that the world of fantasy has become far more compelling than the world of involvement with external things. Indeed, fantasy is substituted for reality. If one has dreamed the idea of a great novel, the work of actually writing it becomes a drag.

Much has been made of the psychological perils of LSD. They are real enough. In San Francisco or New York one could doubtless track down a hundred or more cases of people who had been rendered psychotic as a result of a dose of LSD. Each student health service, psychiatric clinic, emergency service of a general hospital, would yield a number of such cases. Most of these episodes are of short duration. For each instance of an individual's flipping out, there are several of panic reaction to an LSD experience. Tranquilizers will terminate the physiological effects of LSD in such instances. Most of these reactions occur when LSD is taken in unfavorable settings—alone in a room or in somewhat uncongenial company. Probably more serious is the impairment of judgment that may accompany an LSD trip. It is often difficult to determine the duration of the experience. Individuals whose customary judgment is still somewhat impaired may be driving cars, teaching classes, or making decisions about important family matters.

The long-range physiological results of such a powerful stress reaction as an LSD experience are unknown. Evidence seems to be mounting that repeated ingestions of LSD may have permanent or enduring adverse effects. The semi-dazed quality displayed by some individuals who are on LSD a good part of the time may be physiological in origin, at least in part. It is unlikely that one or several ingestions of LSD will have enduring physiological effects, but definitive data on this score are not yet at hand.

It is in quietism, however, that the chief danger of LSD lies. An affluent and complex society can easily afford small groups of people whose chief commitment is to their internal processes and their fantasy worlds. But what if there were many such? It is ironic that the military establishments of both Russia and the United States, the very groups that epitomize all that

the devotees of consciousness expansion most oppose, are experimenting with LSD—as a weapon, of course. A population that is turned on will make no trouble. It will be easy prey for the conqueror. LSD zealots ignore the realities of power—unlike Mahatma Gandhi or William Blake, mystics who were committed to the human and social struggle.

LSD is unquestionably of potential value in various forms of psychotherapy. It may be used, for example, to shatter the habitual modes of reaction of people with strong fixations—alcoholics, recidivist criminals, compulsives, and others—so that they may evolve new ways of coping with the world and of living with themselves. And undoubtedly psychedelic experiences have entailed for some people profound personal insights and mystical and spiritual experiences.

These powers are to be taken seriously.

It is more difficult to take LSD seriously as a religion or a way of life. The notion that in 3 to 6 hours one may painlessly attain to the wisdom that Buddha achieved over a period of years seems ludicrous. The LSD grab bag of philosophy compounded out of Zen, Fromm, existentialism, Aldous Huxley, Jung, et al., is an unlikely guide to action in a complex society. The description of a person as "He's loving" (the ultimate compliment), as if somehow one could touch this entity of love, is right out of adolescent fantasy. Above all, the absence of a tragic sense makes LSD as a religion or way of life no more applicable to the richness of human experience than any other simplistic religion.

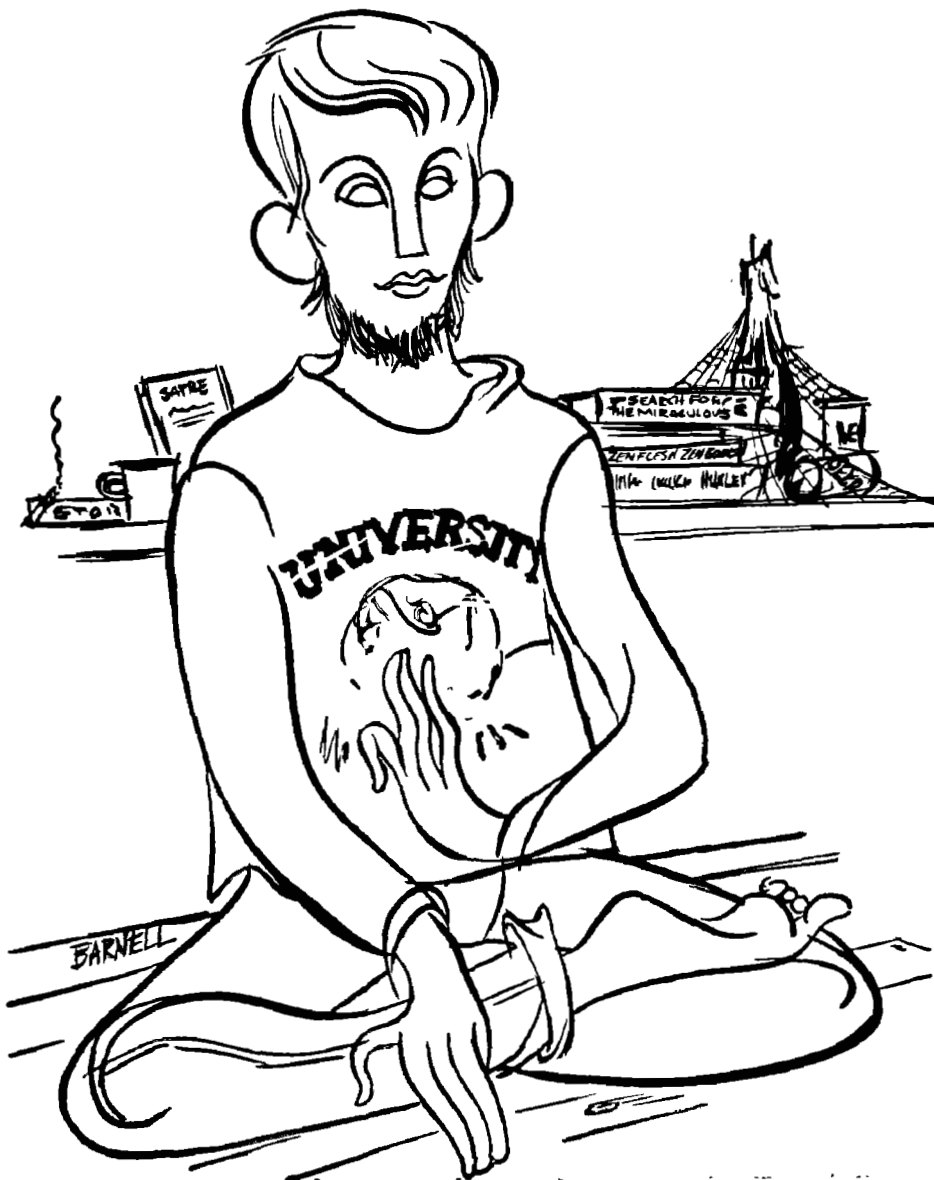
Yet the phenomenon of psychedelic experience as a religion or

way of life should not be written off. What attracts several hundreds of the brightest and most aware of American youth to psychedelic experience and makes zealots of them? Why are many thousands of other youths eager to undergo this experience? The answers are, of course, many and varied. Transcendentalism and the search for utopia are hardly new to American life. There is, however, an urgency to the quest by many young people for new values that deserves the most serious regard.

The brightest and most sensitive of college youth are examining the values of the Western world, and are finding them wanting. There is an upsurge of interest in introspection and in the life of the emotions. There is great concern with people rather than with things. Questions of ethics and morality are on their minds as perhaps never before in American life—not since the Civil War, at any rate. And their education is not meeting these interests. The things that are most important to many young Americans are not being discussed in academic life. The sterile formalism of much American higher education can hardly hold a candle to the psychedelic experience.

Similarly, many youths are turning away in disgust from American society. Injustices that were once accepted lightly—the situation of the Negro, for example—are now a source of pain. A war in Vietnam of most ambiguous morality cannot be easily tolerated. A society which expends enormous wealth on orbiting space ships, the occupants of which can talk to each other only by recourse to locker-room banter, seems almost unendurable.

The interest of many students in drug experience may not be dismissed simply as a sign of delinquency, rebelliousness or psychological pathology. It represents a search for a new way of life. It indicates needs and desires that American society and education do not now meet or fill. There is a quality of naïveté in this quest by students. Wholeness, joy, wisdom or love are not likely to emerge from a few hours that are spent under the influence of a chemical. The interest in drug experience informs us, however, that American society and education are doing little to contribute to the richness of life that students sense can be theirs.



Copyright of Nation is the property of Nation Company, L. P. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.