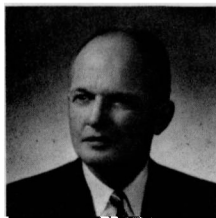


PSYCHEDELIC RESEARCH: OBSTACLES AND VALUES



WALTER CLARK has retired as Professor of Psychology of Religion at Andover Newton Theological School after a career of teaching literature, education, and psychology that also has included 10 years as Dean of the Hartford School of Religious Education. His 12 years of investigation of the LSD-type drugs have made him impatient with the superficiality of much psychological and theological study. He recently participated in the amazingly effective psychodisleptic therapy of Roquet in Mexico City. His most recent books are *Chemical Ecstasy* and *Religious*

Experience. His co-authors share many of his interests. JONATHAN LIEFF recently secured his MD from Harvard Medical School and, with the support of his wife CAROLYN LIEFF, carries on innovative music therapy as a psychiatric resident at Boston State Hospital. ROY SUSSMAN secured his MA at Harvard Graduate School of Education. His interests include psychotherapy, religion, and creative art.

One of the explosive controversies of our day, both social and scientific in nature, concerns the proper use of the LSD-type drugs, variously called hallucinogenic, mind-altering, mind-revealing, or psychedelic. Because of bureaucratic restrictions and public fear of the highly publicized dangers of the drugs both real and supposed, responsible investigators have too often retired from the field, despite their interest in the drugs and the conviction of many that these drugs are exceedingly promising tools in mental health and for the study of the human mind and development.¹ The consequence is that most of the experimentation now in progress is carried on informally by irresponsible youth with dubious materials. From a scientific point of view, this is a grievous waste of human energies and experience. Indeed, the true experts in the field have often been the minority of such users who are keen-minded, have had extensive psychedelic experience, and have done extensive reading to supplement this experience. The medically acknowledged "experts" have skirted only the fringes of the area which, at the worst, is a social problem but, at the best, is one of the most promising frontiers of modern science.

The present study was undertaken by way of sampling the views of

¹ Two reviews of the scientific literature relating to dangers of LSD, both of which conclude that there seems to be no reason why controlled research should not continue are those of Dishotsky, Loughman, Mogar, and Lipscomb (1971) and Long (1972).

responsible researchers and would-be researchers to discover their views about this last-mentioned surmise. What are the areas of promise for the LSD-type drugs? How great do they feel this promise to be? What are the difficulties in carrying out research? The idea was that the results would be of help to those in a position to shape policy, in directing those already working in the field, and to those contemplating research or otherwise interested in the area.

PROCEDURE

A questionnaire was inserted in the April 3, 1972 issue of *Behavior Today* asking persons interested in psychedelic research to fill it out and send it to the senior author. The same was inserted in the *Newsletter* of the Association for Humanistic Psychology for May, 1972. The present summary is based on the replies of the first 100 respondents including six who were approached during the process of framing the questionnaire. All but seven of the rest filled out the form printed in *Behavior Today*. It will be seen that, aside from the six interviewed respondents, the respondents were self-selected, presumably on the basis of interest in the possibility of doing research in this area or of making such research possible. Nearly all stated that they would like to do such research or that they (32 of them) were already doing so. Forty-nine of the sample had at some time been engaged in controlled research with the drugs. Only one of these stated he would no longer like to work in the field. Eighty-two of the respondents had personally used LSD-type drugs.

Respondents were asked chiefly what they considered the main obstacles to such research, how important they thought various areas of the research to be, what kinds of projects they themselves would like to pursue, and how they felt researchers should be qualified. There is no reason to believe that the responses were not fairly representative of the population sampled (i.e., scientists and social scientists interested in research with LSD-type drugs). Though the size of this total population is uncertain, it is safe to say that it represents hundreds and potentially thousands of researchers in the United States and Canada with similar interests, whose concerns do not normally come to the attention of the public. The questionnaire was relatively long and involved matters of judgment, thought, and the willingness to give time to its consideration. In addition, respondents had to go out of their way to cut out the form, stamp an envelope, and address it. The replies were then tabulated, systematized, and are reported below.

RESULTS

Answers involving ratings will be found summarized in Table 1. Some of those who were interviewed were not confronted with all the questions and others left blanks, the number giving no reply to each item has been noted. And since the total number of respondents was 100, numbers in each category represented percentages of the total polled.

It will be seen that the query about governmental red tape was the only one answered by everyone. Here 82 indicated that governmental red tape was a large factor in discouraging them from pursuing this type of research and causing difficulties when they did, while only four reported it was not a factor at all. Fifty-three mentioned other types of red tape as large factors. These kinds of obstacles hindered important research organizations as well as individuals. For instance, Dr. Hudson Hoagland, Director Emeritus of the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, said that his organization had given up research with the LSD-type drugs despite interest in it for these reasons. At the same time Martha McCarthy, a social worker in San Jose, California, had made no effort to implement her interest in this type of research because it "seemed impossible." But the attitudes of other people were also felt as a problem, particularly by the 30 who rated disapproval by their superiors as *large*.

Not surprisingly the inability to secure clearance to use the drugs was felt to be about as much of a problem as red tape, with 78 rating this as a large factor. Only five in the sample felt psychedelic research has to a large degree become unimportant. There was more difference in opinion on the risks involved in using the drugs, though the great majority felt the risks to be either slight or nonexistent in controlled research settings. Lack of suitable volunteers seemed not a serious problem to most, though the securing of funds with which to carry out the research was a serious problem. Fifty-three rated the latter a large obstacle, while another 16 rated the hindrance as *medium*. For example, Kenneth Godfrey, MD, of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Topeka, Kansas, who has used the drugs with his patients for a number of years, deplored the lack of money "to hire good, strong therapists."²

²Other obstacles not listed in the questionnaire volunteered by respondents were six mentions apiece of unavailability of good drugs and the illegality of what drugs there were; three mentions of time preempted by other interests; two of no training opportunities; and one each of social misunderstanding, lack of MD, lack of PhD, unavailability of "rare and recently discovered psychogenics," no chance to give drugs to the general public in proper setting, dismissal as a professor, and "consistent malicious media coverage" especially relative to drug abuse (mentioned by Duncan Blewett, PhD, of Regina, Saskatchewan).

TABLE 1. Ratings by 100 Researchers Interested in the LSD-Type Drugs
Why researchers did not engage in research with the drugs; chief difficulties and to what degree.

Reason	Large	Med- ium	Slight	Nil	No reply
Governmental red tape	81	14	1	4	0
Other red tape	60	17	5	8	10
Disapproval by peers	3	17	22	44	14
Disapproval by administrators or superiors	34	24	14	21	7
Concern for public misunderstanding	20	13	24	32	11
Concern for professional status	8	18	21	40	13
Concern for effects on family	5	13	23	37	22
Inability to secure clearance	78	8	1	9	4
Conviction this research now unimportant	5	3	9	54	29
Physiological risk too great to humans	6	15	24	41	14
Psychological risk too great	7	14	34	24	21
Lack of access to proper setting	24	13	9	37	17
Lack of funding	53	16	8	11	12
Difficulty in recruiting suitable volunteers	2	5	12	52	29

Rated promise of the use of LSD-type drugs in various areas, assuming opportunity for controlled experimentation

Area	Nega- tive	Neu- tral	Meager	Mod- erate	High	Break- through	No reply
Scientific	0	0	6	26	33	27	8
Mental health	0	1	7	15	34	36	7
Social	2	6	10	16	27	24	15
Cultural	2	2	10	19	25	25	17
Educational	2	5	9	25	25	18	16
Religious	5	8	7	13	23	34	10
Total	11	22	49	114	167	164	73

In summarizing this section of the questionnaire we note that governmental and other red tape, clearance to use the drugs, and lack of funding were felt to be the chief difficulties. The disapproval of superiors was also considered as a problem by a number of respondents.

The respondents' ratings of the promise of the use of psychedelics, if responsible experimentation could be carried out, is surprisingly high. Most of the ratings have the advantage of a perspective coming from the respondents' personal experiences, while 59, or well over half, have also had backgrounds of experimentation with human subjects at some time. Thus their familiarity with the field tends to be first hand and so of much more significance. Out of a sum total of 528 separate ratings, nearly a third, 31% to be exact, indicated *breakthrough*—an extremely high rating, in various of the fields indicated. Another 32% of the ratings were *high*. Only 2% of the ratings were *negative* and 4% *neutral*. The rest were all positive in varying degrees. For mental health, 36 judged the promise to be *breakthrough*, while 34 judged the promise to be *breakthrough* for religion. Among the latter were three of the five religious scholars who responded, one a Jesuit, one a professor of religion in a Lutheran college, and one a professor in a Protestant seminary. The other two also gave positive ratings.

Dr. Stanislav Grof, of Maryland Psychiatric Research Center and Johns Hopkins Medical School, has described LSD-type drugs as tools making possible knowledge of the nature of man comparable in its revolutionary significance to the quantum theory in modern physics.³ A scanning of the list of projects suggested by these researchers will help to document this view. The list is summarized in Table 2.

First, as one would expect, many cluster around the general area of psychotherapy. For example, Harry Freeman, MD, Director of Research at Medfield State Hospital, Massachusetts, who had sponsored pilot experiments using LSD with both psychotics and normals before recent legal curtailments, would like to see whether psychotics could be put into acute stages more amenable to treatment as well as to use the LSD-type drugs for an investigation into the biochemistry of the mentally ill. In both cases, as can be inferred by scanning the nature of almost all the research subjects, he would expect favorable results.

It is interesting that Paul Grof, MD, of the Department of Psychiatry at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, reports the "profound facilitation of psychiatry" with the use of LSD in his work at the Psychiatric Institute in Prague in the 1960s. He would like to continue such research. His brother, Stanislav Grof, MD, Chief of Psychiatry at Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, the principal center for psychedelic research in the United States, expresses similar ideas. The pilot experiments of the

³Dr. Grof's statements were made at a seminar on drugs sponsored by the J. F. Kennedy School of Politics at Harvard University, April 25, 1972.

TABLE 2. Summary of Projects Involving LSD-Type Drugs Suggested by Researchers

Frequency	Project
40	Psychotherapy, including long term treatment of schizophrenics and alcoholics
12	Research in religious fields
11	Self-growth in therapists and other normals
9	Drug abuse
8	Pure psychological research, including brain functioning
8	Effects of drugs on creative ability and problem solving
6	Facilitation of the paranormal, including ESP and out-of-the-body experiences
6	Phenomenology of drug states, including comparison with hypnosis
4	Rehabilitation of criminals
3	Study of perception
3	Preparation for death and assistance to the dying
3	Radical educational reforms and innovations, including the enhancement of certain learning outcomes under drugs
2	The influence of set and setting, including response to stress under drugs
1	Drugs in conjunction with biofeedback
1	Effects on business management
1	Antidotes for psychedelics
1	Ethnopharmacology
1	Study of apparent X-ray-like effects under drugs

latter with the psychoanalytic uses of LSD in Prague on severely ill inmates of a mental hospital demonstrated that many of such patients can be recovered, perhaps most of them. Some of Dr. Grof's patients are now among the respected artists in Czechoslovakia. With fewer restrictions, he would like to continue such research. Many of the respondents expressed similar desires, in particular four who would like to do research in the treatment of autistic children, presumably to follow up successful results reported by Bender, Goldschmidt, and Siva-Sanka (1962) with LSD given daily to such patients over months and even years. Three other respondents would like to try to increase mental health and human functioning by research using LSD-type drugs with normals. This subject can be linked with 10 suggestions involving the stimulation of self-growth among therapists, ministers, and other helping people.

There were at least 11 people who would like to be involved in research involving religion. Professor Robert Ochs, SJ, of the Bellarmine School of Theology in Chicago, would like to work with Catholic theologians to study the mystical and other areas of the religious consciousness. Up to now he has hesitated to make attempts in this direction because he expects difficulties in securing permission, though he has had a training session with ingestion of LSD at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center. Several other respondents linked research in facilitation of meditation to the drugs with an expected enhancement of creativity. Dr. Louisa Aiken of Socorro, New Mexico, a gynecologist, would like to probe the drugs' "religious use to help discover inner potential."

Naturally a number of suggested topics were grouped around the practical problem of drug abuse. Both these and theoretical concerns were demonstrated by the topic of a comparative study of the phenomenological similarities and differences between psychedelic states and hypnosis "for the purpose of perhaps replacing *over*-use of drugs by the nondangerous use of hypnosis," mentioned by Professor Erika Fromm of the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago. At the same time, one of Dr. Fromm's graduate students, Daniel P. Brown, reported that he has already done some unfunded research into patterns of drug usage and especially into the "dynamic consequences of present youth usage" during his involvement with clinics for the assistance of youths with drug problems.

Less ordinary projects range from testing Jungian hypotheses through the use of LSD, suggested by Dr. Clark I. Guillems, head of the Department of Psychology at Missouri Southern State College at Joplin, to that of Professor James B. Parsons of the Department of History, University of California at Riverside, who would like to break new ground in testing possible contributions of the psychedelics to historical research (1971). Other unusual projects included radical education reform, effects on business management, the study of ethnopharmacology, and the development of ceremonies designed for the initiation of people into wisdom, both of the latter topics being of interest to anthropologists. The use of drugs in initiation rites in primitive societies is well known from widely read anthropologists (e. g., Castaneda, 1971; Harner, 1973). [If this subject seems far-fetched in application to more rational societies, it is well to reflect that Plato may have been acquainted with psychedelic experience in his probable initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Here the high point of the ceremony involved ingestion of the *kykeon*, a potion very likely made up of a drug with psychedelic properties (Clark, 1974).]

In the answers to another question, it developed that a minority of the respondents had made attempts to implement their projects on their own. Only a few of these had been successful. Several indicated that, even with government approval, restrictions were so burdensome and numerous that some of the most promising projects had not been pursued. For example, the extremely well qualified and distinguished public health expert, Joel Fort, MD, of the Center for Solving Social and Health Problems in San Francisco, interested in creativity studies, psychedelic effects on recidivist felons, and training of therapists and ministers, had a project in the last-named field turned down by NIMH. Many other respondents had failed to seek implementation primarily because the contemporary climate with respect to LSD-type drugs gave them little encouragement that the considerable effort with respect to preparation would come to fruition.

Angus McDonald, PhD, of the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto relates how he went to Canada primarily because he thought psychedelic research would be easier there. Though he was able to secure his degree through an amphetamine study, things soon closed down in his attempt to study ethnopharmacology. He writes discouragedly,

In spite of finding a much published anthropologist to bring drugs from his South American trip for reasearch (yage, yopo, nippo, etc.), I found subtle pressures everywhere not to pursue it. No physician cared to participate in such research; everyone said they were interested, but no one wanted to be involved. A number of psychologists and psychiatrists assured me that the University of Toronto ethics committee would never clear such a study anyway, and it would be a waste of time to try. Thanks to agents of the World Health Organization, my anthropologist associate came back from South America without materials, though he had government clearance to bring them into Canada and has done so previously, passing them on to Wassen. He indicated that sources were unwilling to be involved, and he himself decided that the bureaucratic hassles involved were not worth it.⁴

Dr. McDonald goes on to say that the same results greeted his attempts to do research related to the theories of Dr. Roland Fischer (1971) presented in a recent issue of *Science*. Many scientists state their interest, but few are willing to buck the system.

Table 3 sets forth the various ideas of respondents as to requirements for this type of research. A study of it will show that many approaches are

⁴ Angus McDonald, personal communication, April, 1972.

TABLE 3. Qualifications Suggested for Researchers

Frequency	Qualification
36	Must have used the drugs themselves
33	Same requirements as for all researchers working with people, such as empathy, maturity, mental balance, and a high degree of a sense of ethical responsibility, including the felt obligation of securing the fully informed consent of subjects
30	A special course of training, including observations and training sessions under experienced direction
12	Research should be under the direction of someone with the proper degree, an MD (or possibly a PhD), or with university affiliation
3	<i>Not</i> degrees
3	Perceptiveness in carrying out meaningful research
2	Government permission (i.e., FDA, NIMH, BNDD, etc.)
1	Adequate facilities
1	Long-term funding

suggested, from those that are very conventional to those that suggest that the researcher in this field is in a very special category subject to special requirements. Most often mentioned were the 36 references to the need for the researchers to have used the drugs themselves, followed by the 30 who mentioned general clinical training plus a special course on the LSD-type drugs which should include training sessions. Understanding, empathy, maturity, and a sense of responsibility generally cover a number of the suggestions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Can society provide no legal or viable way to put the usefulness and value of the LSD-type drugs to the scientific test beyond the meager programs still in operation? This is the question policy raised in our study. To review our results in this sophisticated sample those who gave the extreme rating of *breakthrough* to the promise of the drugs ranged from 18, cited in Table 1, with reference to the educational area to 36, or more than a third, with reference to the mental health field. More than half of the sample gave this impressive rating to at least one of the six suggested areas of *basic science, mental health, society, culture, education, and religion*. Despite

these striking opinions, and as testified in the study, it is extremely difficult to secure the necessary funds or the freedom to pursue such research so necessary for creative results. The chief external results felt by our respondents as at least hampering, and for most completely inhibiting, are governmental red tape, administrative checks, the inability to secure clearance, and finally inaccessibility to proper funding. Such well regarded and competent researchers in the area who have felt some or all of such pressures include Dr. Hudson Hoagland, Professor Erika Fromm, Dr. Joel Fort, and Dr. Stanislav Grof, already mentioned, plus Dr. Stanley Krippner of Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, and Dr. Charles Tart of the Psychology Department at the University of California at Davis.

Positive aspects of the study were represented by widely ranging and frequently penetrating studies that the respondents listed as projects they would like to pursue, given the opportunity. These have already been sufficiently noted and summarized in Table 2. Also the list of qualifications suggested for researchers may be helpful to those concerned with defining standards for those working in the field. Here a careful scrutiny of Table 3 may lead some to sense that many respondents considered that the psychedelic researcher requires special empathic, ethical, and, one might say, profound qualities of a transcendental nature not necessarily guaranteed by a conventional medical or psychological degree or the mere possession of governmental permission.

For example, Daniel Goleman, a graduate student and teaching fellow in Harvard's Department of Social Relations, was one of those suggesting what he calls "purity of motive." This suggests something requiring an integrity beyond that needed in ordinary psychological transactions of a professional nature, and a subtler level than many of the more facile though eminently reasonable requirements suggested by many of the others. It may be contrasted with that suggested by Jonathan O. Cole, MD, Superintendent of Boston State Hospital and former administrator at NIMH with responsibility for drug research, who mentions simply the possession of an "IND to FDA only." Doubtless he would expect the FDA to satisfy itself of the presence of whatever is meant by "purity of motive." But how can that be assured?

Actually it is the phraseology of the two suggestions that distinguishes, even though only very subtly, a difference between the generations and between one who has used the drugs, who sees another dimension in life and the administrator for whom the guidelines point to a respected, concrete, and safe institutionalized permission. Goleman's requirement is

typical of the younger researcher who feels liberated, perhaps by a transcendental experience through the LSD-type drugs, toward a freer and yet more exacting task that, at the same time that it is pursued with more freedom, nevertheless demands higher standards for its success. This contrast raises issues that may be very hard to settle between researchers who have not had a psychedelic experience and those who have. Perhaps it is the very sensing of this profound and awesome dimension that makes the average administrator so loath to sanction research with the LSD-type drugs. It is probable that only those who have experienced the religious dimension of the psychedelics will understand what one user (not in the study) meant when he said that the only way to control the uses of the psychedelics was religiously, as with the peyote Indians.

As we have noted, there is no way of calculating just how widespread are views represented by this sample of respondents. But there is no doubt that this population can be multiplied many times among scientists in North America. Yet the survey raises many issues to be debated not only between those who wish to do psychedelic research and those who do not, but also between individual members of such as the present sample. The larger issue is just how free research should be in a democracy when one group, doubtless in a minority even of scientists, is so generally in favor of research as are these respondents, who see so much promise for society as the result of controlled, systematic attacks on many problems seemingly penetrable through a judicious use of these chemical tools. But all innovators at one time were in a minority!

Of course, in a free society, research is not free nor should it be if dangers clearly outweigh benefits. Psychedelic, like all scientific research, should be done only on the general principle of "calculated risk." The best controlled studies and surveys of dangers that we have, clearly point to further responsible experimentation even with that most feared of all the psychedelic drugs, lysergic acid dimethylamide-25. Dishotsky and his collaborators (1971), in the previously mentioned survey article in *Science* conclude, "Within these (the article's) bounds . . . we suggest that, other than during pregnancy, there is no present contraindication to the continued controlled experimental use of pure LSD." Under similar conditions Cohen (1960) suggests that psychological risks are minimal. In general our respondents seem to agree. Yet despite informed advice of this nature, as already noted, most of the experimentation today has to be done illegally, often by irresponsible youth.

It would seem that there is something wrong with the governmental and medical establishments if responsible and qualified researchers such as

those in our sample find it so difficult to secure either the permission or the funds necessary to attack the problems that most feel will open important doors to the future of humanity. But obstacles to new ways in science are nothing new, as controversies involving Galileo's use of his telescope, vaccination, and evolution have taught us. Our respondents point to other revolutionary scientific changes resulting from the use of a new tool, and even beyond, to cultural benefits they feel will result from a careful but resolute investigation with these chemicals that have such potency in their effect on the human mind. In the eighteenth century, the art of surgery was advanced through the connivance of medical men whose only source of bodies to study were corpses taken by stealth from cemeteries. In the nineteenth century, Walter Reed conquered yellow fever by risking human lives in secrecy through pursuing the only way research could identify the virus causing the disease. It would seem not only intolerably wasteful, but also too often tragic, if this should prove the only way society at present may pursue psychedelic investigation. Leary's sentences top 20 years!

We have initiated our study in the hope that it may prompt a consideration of viable ways in which our society may facilitate legal means of pursuing competent research in the area of the psychedelics. As the result of this study, we conclude that both the government and the other sources of public funding should consider seriously the easing of the way toward careful, deliberate, and imaginative investigation of scientific data to be made available to us through the mind-revealing drugs.

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It's a bit embarrassing to have been concerned with the human problem all one's life and to find at the end that one has no more to offer by way of advice than "Try to be a little kinder."

ALDOUS HUXLEY

1962, the year before he died