

VARIABLES IN THE LSD SETTING

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After first taking mescaline in 1951, I became aware that much that I had read of the experiences of mystics, visionaries, sensitives and spontaneous happenings of a parapsychological sort might be accounted for if they had had something similar. I realized too that if madmen had negative feelings of the sort which I have had transiently, then their behavior would be easily accounted for and would, in a sense, be quite rational. Until August, 1951 I had been inclined to consider that these were "as if experiences." Indeed this was then customary. I could not, however, disavow my own experience and I could not accept the easy inaccuracies being bandied about by Bleuler and Mayer-Gross. (These two medical gentlemen continued to aver, up to two months ago in Rome, September, 1958, that LSD, etc., produced delirium-like states.) I was forced to change my opinion by the "brute facts" of experience. Of course I might have denied it, but I was adverse to this because it would have been a violation of integrity which could not be done.

During the subsequent three years I undertook experiments with LSD 25, adrenochrome, adrenolutin and ololiuqui, mostly of a psychotomimetic sort, for inquiring into mental illness. Not until 1955 was I able to undertake LSD experiments with Captain A. M. Hubbard working in a group of two. These proved very revealing. We both recognized that transference of thought and increased empathic awareness of the other person seemed to take place. We developed a form of exercise which we called "the game" which seemed to provide a structure for limiting and so learning to understand these experiences.

In 1956 Dr. Duncan Blewett observed the game being played. In October, 1956 I took part in a peyote ceremony of the Red Pheasant Band, members of the Native American Church, then as now undergoing considerable pressure from white disapprovers. Once more the communication—nonverbal—seemed greatly enhanced and I appeared to be able to move into the experiences of these unlucky people and to be with them in their heroic past as buffalo hunters. While this was obviously not a scientific experiment it gave us further hints of how we might advance.

In November, 1956 our first 4-group experiment under rather too hurried conditions gave us much encouragement, but indicated some of the difficulties that were involved and the need for thought and planning. In May, 1957, in a 2-group experiment with Dr. Duncan Blewett, we succeeded in a major, witnessed, thought transference. Unluckily we had no recording equipment and our observer became acutely panicky because he said it was uncanny. This experiment gave us more information, suggesting that in some way an *emotional bond* or possibly the lack of an emotional blocking, may play an important part in the success or failure of these experiments. Later in 1957 another experiment with Dr. Blewett partly bogged down in technical details. But we obtained from this valuable insight into the grave difficulties involved in telepathizing Zener cards and suggestions that it is far easier to "pick up" ideas and feelings which are closely linked. In early 1958 material used in a solo experiment was sealed away and half its wrapper taken down to Florida in a sealed envelope and given to Mrs. Eileen Garrett. Neither she nor anyone else knew what this was or had been told about the LSD experience. She made some very remarkable observations after holding this envelope. In 1954 another well-known sensitive gave me a reading and these two happenings have made me wonder whether psychedelics may not assist in developing what one might call psychic openness. This second lady's observations, being less personal than Mrs. Garrett's, can more easily be discussed. In 1958, working with a group of four consisting of Mr. F. Huxley, Doctors Blewett and Paterson,

we began to see the way in which psychedelics might be used in group work. Other groups in Saskatchewan are adding more information—at present this work is being done in odd moments of other very important researches of a different sort. We naturally hope to get enough support to remedy these defects before too long.

Mrs. Garrett and Miss Hall, plus the psychedelic experiences, have given me enough evidence that most unusual things can happen. I now ask myself what sort of things happen, how do they happen and why? There seem to be three great variables whose conjunction may be essential for success: (1) A particular sort of social setting. (2) A peculiar capacity related in some way to the state of brain and mind (psychedelics, hypnosis, trance, tarot cards, crystals, etc., may all produce this in some people). (3) An ability to direct α while not getting in its way. So far as I know these three factors have never been delineated clearly before.