

A PHARMACOLOGICAL APPROACH TO PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTATION

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In 1959 the Research Division of the Parapsychology Foundation ran LSD experiments with selected mediums. At first all received about 100 gamma of LSD. Later, in the case of two, the amount was raised to 125 gamma.

The reactions of the mediums were somewhat the same. They all felt as if they were possessed with philosophical knowledge; they felt the need to make spontaneous prophecies. One medium saw spirit personalities around the experimenters. All appeared to have no trouble in producing hallucinations, and they were able to distinguish their perceptions from their hallucinations.

One difference in these sessions, as compared to normal psychic sessions, was the nature of the imagery. The mediums felt that their images were symbolically important to themselves; important to their own psychological problems. Although all received esthetic enjoyment, one received less than the others. They all felt there was unity in the world and that this experience was unique. It was not just a repetition—if I understood them correctly—of previous experiences and not the same as a normal psychic experience.

On six different occasions we gave psychometry tests to these subjects. Except for one medium, who was extremely successful on the tests, no outstanding results were noted. The variations were so close to coincidence, that we felt nothing psychic was occurring.

It appears to me that an experimental approach with drugs could be worthwhile in two situations: (1) if the ESP effect

is really significant; and (2) if an experiment was done with LSD, followed by a short, twenty minute, ESP experiment. In the LSD state, a longer testing period is not practical. A negative score will occur if one persists too long.

There may be other drugs, of which I am not aware, where testing and experiments are feasible. I would be interested in such experiments, even if only a slight increase in psi efficiency were obtained. If the increase were only twenty per cent, it would be worthwhile. These experiments could be carried out in parapsychological research laboratories. For example, Dr. Cedric Wilson did a series of drug experiments at the University of Liverpool, financed by different pharmaceutical companies. He experimented with the drugs and standard psychological tests. He also used ESP tests, and obtained even more interesting data than might have been possible working only for parapsychological purposes. I believe the drugs he used were amphetymine, chlorapromazine, and one of the barbiturates.

The goals of the Research Division include the following. One is to ascertain the intensity of experience necessary for psi activity. LSD is very important in this respect—it produces such intense feelings. Another goal is experimenting with different levels of spontaneity. If the subject is thoroughly interested and intensely absorbed in what she wants to see or to achieve, the experiment works. This is where pharmacological aid might be important. A third goal concerns imagery. Again the use of drugs could be of help, as they can change imagery, and make it subject to experimental control. By suggestion one can obtain desirable effects. Finally I would emphasize that depersonalization as achieved by some drugs might be important in mediumistic situations where the subject is not well-trained psychologically.