

## Stop asking what, start asking why

In a relatively quiet community as is Lincoln, drugs are now more or less a pursuit of pleasure. Users may be attracted because drugs produce euphoria or because they open the mind and senses to new and exciting sensations, especially of sight and sound.

They are, too, an escape from daily life. Just as students have traditionally looked forward to the weekend, beginning with a rousing Friday Afternoon Club, when they can drink to loosen up and get away from the weekly study pressures, they may begin to use drugs to help temporarily ease building tensions.

These tensions are magnified as the pressures of life around the individual increase. As students move into post-college life, perhaps in a large city, they will realize the full extent of societal pressures that can operate on an individual.

Just such a city is New York. It is perhaps the epitome of the city life where drugs, both the mild ones common to college students, and the hard ones that, unless the habit is broken, lead eventually to addiction and death. It is toward this city life America is moving.

With the pressures of an urban society, the hurry, the crowds, the misfits increase. Daily living becomes an emotion-charged world, one in which people will beat each other with umbrellas to get on a crowded subway because schedules have been curtailed in anticipation of greater business closing on the national holiday to celebrate the landing of the first Americans on the moon, one in which every subway ride or walk on the street brings at least one beggar unable to make it in the fast-moving city.

In such an atmosphere, drug use skyrockets as does liquor consumption. It's a tossup whether the middle-aged man, or sometimes woman, slouched in a doorway or lying on the sidewalk, is bombed out of his mind on rotgut liquor or stoned out on cocaine or heroine. These are the tragedies, but they by no means complete the story.

Users of the non-addictive drugs, marijuana, mescaline, acid and amphetamines, are found everywhere. Middle-aged business executives turn on; those who don't are curious and anxious to see what it's all about. To college students a pot party is as commonplace as a beer bust would have been a few years ago. High schoolers from the small-town atmospheres of the boroughs are likely to be among those who smoke a little pot every morning before they start the day, just as much as the artist or musician in the warrens of the East Village.

Officials in New York are aware of this; they know that when they're not around an informal jam session in Washington Square Park may turn into an equally informal pot auction.

But they realize, too, that this need to escape is a product of the gigantic city they are trying to run of and of the lives its inhabitants lead. They accordingly direct attention to improving the life, to making the city a place that can be lived in. Because hard drugs are the worst problem, they are devoting time and money to places where users can go for help.

They are trying to understand why people get hopelessly hooked, and what they can do to prevent the frustrations and emptiness that leads people the whole drug route.

These people have taken a big step; they recognize drug use as a symptom, not a cause. Perhaps if persons everywhere would concern themselves more with giving people a direction rather than cutting off their escape from a directionless existence, they could treat the real problem.

Holly Rosenberger

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## Researchers work to determine effects of marijuana

This article is reprinted from the Nov. 10 issue of the National Observer.

by William J. Lanouette

A National Observer survey of current marijuana research leads to strikingly contradictory conclusions:

—It is a dangerous drug whose long-term effects may be harmful.

—It is a safe drug, no more harmful than alcohol or tobacco, capable of producing mild intoxication.

Both conclusions are culled from the latest "medical opinion." Each has its strong supporters.

The findings are contradictory in part because of a genuine difference of interpretation of the information among those investigating marijuana. But more importantly the differences are a by-product of the slim reserve of marijuana information, which researchers, to a man, call meager. This lack of knowledge enables widely varying opinions to be easily sustained.

This scarcity has several causes. Pharmaceutical manufacturers have little incentive to develop marijuana because it is legally classed as having no medical use. Private foundations prefer to fund such medically urgent projects as cancer and heart research. University researchers avoid the topic because of difficulties in obtaining marijuana and in protecting subjects from legal prosecution.

In addition, of the nearly 50 Federally sponsored marijuana research projects now under way, only 2 are directly concerned with the effects of the drug on humans. Dr. Reese T. Jones is testing the effects of marijuana on human perception and cognition at the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute in San Francisco. Dr. Harris Isbell is comparing marijuana and LSD intoxication among former morphine addicts at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Addiction Research Center in Lexington, Ky.

Given the information available, researchers in marijuana do agree on certain conclusions. It is not a narcotic, like heroin or morphine, since it is not an opium derivative. Its active element comes from the flowering top of the cannabis hemp plant. When its leaves are smoked, it is a mild hallucinogen, capable of altering mood, judgment, and functional ability. Stronger effects are possible if its resin (hashish) is smoked or shewed.

Marijuana is not addictive and does not cause physical dependence, since tolerance to its effects

and symptoms of withdrawal do not occur, but it can create psychological dependence and become habit forming. It does not, in itself, lead to the use of stronger drugs and is considered weaker when compared with LSD, amphetamines, and barbiturates. Its intoxicant effect depends as much on the attitude of the user and his setting as the strength of the dosage. Marijuana is not toxic; no deaths have been attributed directly to it in the United States. It does not produce aggressive behavior but, rather, passive, euphoric tendencies. It is not an aphrodisiac.

Less certain, however, are its long-term effects. The three major studies made in the past 75 years conclude that use of marijuana for extended periods holds few dangers. The most recent study, Britain's "Report by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence," stated last November:

"Having reviewed all the material available to us we find ourselves in agreement with the conclusion reached by the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission appointed by the Government of India (1893-1894) and the New York Mayor's Committee on Marijuana (1944), that long-term consumption of cannabis in moderate doses has no harmful effects."

But disagreement immediately arises over what is a moderate dose. The Federal Government, which is critical of foreign research methods, willingly admits its lack of knowledge on this aspect of marijuana research.

There are two significant impediments to modern research in marijuana. One is its variable strength. The plant that produces it, cannabis sativa L., varies in strength from one continent to another, and even from one side of a marijuana patch to another. Cannabis was fully synthesized in 1965, and since then its active ingredient, identified as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), has served as the standard for determining strength.

With THC as a basis, pharmacologist have determined that marijuana must have about 2 per cent or more THC to be potent. Marijuana grown in the United States varies from about .05 per cent to 1.5 per cent. Turkish marijuana is about 2 per cent THC; Mexican marijuana ranges from 2 per cent to 4 per cent. Hashish may have as much as 20 per cent THC.

Dr. Robert Petersen, research director at the NIMH's Division of Narcotic Addiction and Drug Abuse, points out that "when you're comparing mari-

juana with alcohol, it can vary in strength anywhere from 3.2 beer to 100 proof whiskey."

Researchers cite a second impediment to their efforts — the difficulty in acquiring high-quality marijuana. Since marijuana is an illegal substance and the domestic version is relatively weak, researchers must depend on the Federal Government to allocate them consignments of confiscated marijuana.

"The red tape is terrible," says a former researcher at NIMH. "I don't blame research people for working on other drugs. It's easier to get LSD or morphine. The regulations are so difficult because no one wants to take the responsibility of giving permission to use marijuana on humans."

The two clinical experiments on human beings most often cited by researchers — because they are the only ones recently conducted — were made in 1968. Both have been criticized by NIMH for faulty methodology.

In the spring of 1968 Andrew Weil, Norman Zinberg, and Judith Nelsen conducted a round of experiments on human subjects at the Boston University School of Medicine and concluded that "it is feasible and safe to study the effects of marijuana on human volunteers who smoke in a laboratory." They reported a moderate increase in heart rate, reddening of the eyes, but no change in pupil size, blood sugar, or breathing.

A study comparing the effects of marijuana and alcohol on driving performance was conducted by the State of Washington's Department of Motor Vehicles by Alfred Crancer, Jr., and associates at the University of Washington Department of Pharmacology. The result: Marijuana smokers could operate a driver simulator as well when they were "high" as when they were normal; when "high" on alcohol, however, their performance dropped 15 per cent.

With a rising clamor for research, the Federal Government announced in January a marijuana research plan to be supervised by NIMH. The program is divided into a "supply phase," an "animal research phase," and a "clinical research phase."

The supply phase will attempt to establish a central source of marijuana and THC for research. Until this system is in operation, researchers will continue to apply for marijuana and THC through the NIMH, which obtains confiscated marijuana from the Justice

## Music reflects drug culture

by J. L. Schmidt

"You've got to get up in the air, act like you don't even care..."  
 —Three Dog Night

Up, up and away. The Wright Brothers set science back on its heels when they discovered how to get high in their wonderful machine.

Many years later, Timothy Leary and several other notables set the establishment back on its heels when they discovered a completely new way to fly... and began teaching others all about it.

From the weird, opium-smoked caves of the Middle East emerged a religion which was definitely drug inspired. Music followed suit, and soon, news of these strange things filtered to the pure free airs of the United States.

Today, music with allusions to drugs are everywhere. From jukeboxes in cowboy bars to bubblegum radio stations, puritanical Americans have been made aware of the fact that some of their brothers are getting strung out, crashing and burning, right before their very ears.

References in isolated songs have given energetic conclusion jumpers the opportunity to make up stories that will never end. Remember the stink raised over "Puff, The Magic Dragon?" This, however, was not enough to turn off the music publishers, and more definite allusions have cropped up.

Remaining in the more obscure field for a moment we can turn to the Beatles, those ever faithful, always successful trend setters, who as late have given us, "Happiness is a Warm Gun." A line from the song states that "Mother Superior jumped the Gun", which has been taken to mean that Brian Epstein, Beatles manager, has kicked the habit and is no longer using the gun, or hypodermic syringe, whichever you will.

Nebraskans weren't reached until 1965 when Bob Dylan brought "Rainy Day Women," to his Pershing Concert. "Everybody wants to get stoned." And by the time they figured out that nobody was really throwing rocks at him, they turned around and heard Ray Charles in concert inviting them with, "Let's go get stoned."

As if this wasn't enough, a whole lot of those freaky, long-haired bands started infiltrating the air waves with their strange talk. Grace Slick of the Jefferson Airplane sang about two pills in "White Rabbit," and some nut on kids stories realized that the rabbit in Alice in Wonderland was advising everyone to "feed your head."

The Moody Blues popularized the religious aspects of the music with their album "In Search of the Lost Chord," in which they devoted an entire cut and a substantial part of the liner notes to an explanation of the word "Om."

Straight, hard allusions have been made by Stephenwolf, who went so far as to sing about one of the internal problems of the drug cult in his "Pusher," a direct cut at the people who try to cheat users by selling bad stuff.

Crow sing in concert about one of the members of the group who got some bad stuff from his girl friend and tripped out singing, "these are not the colors that I paid you for."

The Who have devoted an entire album to drugs. "Tommy" was deaf blind and mute until a gypsy woman turned him on and made him able to "see." This turned him into a Pinball Wizard and made him feel that he was free.

The Rolling Stones hit it hard with a name and extended their thoughts through "Paint it Black," a good cover for all of reality, to paint it black. And "hey, hey, you, you, get offa my cloud" warned others to leave their own special little patch of unreality alone.

Some propaganda against drug usage has been emphasized in music. Donovan sang that "I could 'ave tripped out to see ya, but I've changed my ways." The Beatles reported in Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band that they were "fixing the hole in the roof to keep my mind from wandering."

Even some helpful advice has been offered to drug users by the Flying Burrito Brothers, who advised in their song, "Hippy Boy," that "It's the same for every hippy, bum or freak, never carry more with you than you can eat."

And Three Dog Night advises that you let things run their true course in, "Dreaming isn't good for you, unless you do the things that it tells you to."

But, you've got to circle for a landing and get back down to earth. Perhaps music is headed for a landing too — eventually.



## Nebraskan editorial page

### Drugs gain place as new-time religion

by Jim Evinger

A real part of the subculture surrounding drug use is the hallucinogenic religious movement.

Its focus is on this worldliness; trips are, for the most part, pantheistic. The searches for meaning and striving for goals are over — the meaning of existence is existence itself. Depending on the experience, some will discover the minuteness of their ego or self, rather than their finiteness.

The disparity between experience perceived and experience as it happens is the key to psychedelic drugs. Perception is heightened; there is an extreme effect on the senses. Variations in experiences are common.

But several recurring themes can be identified, based on repetitive experiences:

—There is a sharpening or a distortion of the senses, depending upon your viewpoint.

—The senses of a personal, finite identity may be lost as a person "transcends" his environment — not losing a feeling of "somebody," but gaining a feeling of "everything."

—The experience of time is radically transformed. There may be a sense of release from the time-boundness of everyday society.

—Words come to be futile, being inadequate for expression of experiences.

—The dualities of language (as subject-object relationship) disappear.

—The final, all-embracing truth is known because one becomes the final truth.

Timothy Leary, Esquire magazine's venerable high priest, claims that we are merely agents of reality, but become preoccupied with our "material selves." To Leary, energy is primary and material is secondary. He sees the goal of life and religion as uniting us mentally with that primal energy. This energy

is his common denominator for all pure religions. He decries contemporary religions as too dogmatic and institutionalized.

Leary considers LSD the vehicle to true religious discovery, that "direct, intuitive" grasp of the truth. His Neo-American Church uses LSD as a sacrament.

Is the LSD religions experience authentic mysticism? The question goes unanswered since no one speaks as an authority, but the experiences of the drug user and the pure-practicing mystic sound similar.

Does the drug permit the experience or produce it? Is the agent, LSD, the route to the religious experience, or the experience in itself. If the former, are there alternative vehicles? Or is the agent-drug an integral part of the experience itself? Answers are lacking.

What are the true religious experiences while on hallucinatory drugs? Philosophers delving into this topic are careful to distinguish between naturalistic and theistic mysticism, but conclusions are largely speculative.

It appears that logic is the ultimate irrelevance here, that the movement is modern romanticism, and that it reflects a disillusionment with and a partial abandonment of science.

It is, however, difficult to say whether the trip is mystical or anti-mystical, whether it is intellectual or anti-intellectual. It is anti-intellectual in that it is anti-scientific.

Ironically, the ritual of the hallucinatory religious movement has become institutionalized far faster than Christian ritual ever did.

In any event, it seems rather doubtful that man's time-honored search for religion lies in the exhortation, "Whatever turns you on."