

# The Salutory Hallucination

**"My Self and I," by Constance A. Newland** (Coward-McCann. 243 pp. \$4.95), recounts the pseudonymous author's experiences with LSD as a means of psychotherapeutic treatment. Free-lance journalist Richard C. Kostelanetz is working on a study of neurosis and the writer.

By RICHARD C. KOSTELANETZ

ALTHOUGH she appeared to be an able, efficient woman, working as an actress and a writer, Constance A. Newland suffered from a number of psychological troubles. The most disturbing was her sexual frigidity which, even after psychotherapeutic treatment, she was unable to overcome. Instead of accepting this deficiency, she agreed to submit to an experimental procedure. Under the direction of a medical psychiatrist, she used lysergic acid diethylamide-25 (LSD), a chemical which, as it relaxes consciousness, induces hallucinations. "My Self and I" is the story of her discovery of the source of her ills and of her rehabilitation to a happier life.

Like all such confessions, this book must be judged first of all by its contribution to analytic understanding, and, second, by its value as art. On the first point it is a qualified success. Her thesis is that as LSD rapidly destroys the blocks covering the psychic unconscious, it permits the repressed materials to come into the surface mind much more rapidly than they can under traditional psychoanalysis. In addition, it releases forgotten experiences such as infant traumas from the bonds of repression. In causing hallucinations, or vivid dreams that beg for interpretation, LSD makes patients more aware of the hidden forces within themselves. Mrs. Newland's argument is, quite simply, that the drug is a "useful adjunct to psychotherapy," though she adds almost as an afterthought that it might have a beneficial physiological effect upon the mentally ill. Fortunately, the book is not marred by a messianic tone. She does not advise everyone to use the drug, nor does she suggest it is a cure-all.

Occasionally she makes an analytically ignorant comment. For instance, she writes, "There had been no resistance I had not been able to overcome." This

is impossible, for, by definition, a resistance is a block of which the patient is not aware. Then, too, she seems unsure about the place of suggestion in LSD therapy. She writes that the analyst never suggests specific fantasies to the patient: he encourages her only to follow up the ones that already occupy her mind. But on at least one occasion, as she reports it, her analyst asked her to think about another subject. LSD makes the patient very responsive to all sorts of suggestions. For example, in one case reported by Dr. Mortimer A. Hartman in "The Use of LSD in Psychotherapy", edited by Harold Abramson, two Freudians using LSD got similar results, but their findings differed from those uncovered under the same conditions by two Jungians. Perhaps, then, the doctor's optimism may be more important than the drug in curing a patient. Unresolved ambiguities like these lessen the persuasiveness of Mrs. Newland's case for LSD. Finally, it should be pointed out that, although many users have enthusiastically reported good results, no physiological study or statistical survey has proved to the satisfaction of psychiatric circles that the chemical has a definitely positive effect upon the mentally ill.

The author frankly remarks that she was formerly a "popular" writer, and "My Self and I" leaves much to be desired as literary art. Like many patients who have been in contact with Jungians, she uses phrases like "transcendent" and "holy experience" with a shocking thoughtlessness. Several of the chapter headings have all the contrived sensuousness of those in a macabre mystery—"The Screams," "The Slim Black Nozzle," "The Purple Screw," "The Malevolent Maggot," "The Riddle of the Sphinx." Most disturbing of all is her chronic use of the very worst clichés to describe her attitudes. Thanks to her analysis, she writes, "I no longer want a man just like the man who married dear old mom." On the next page, she speaks of research in advanced psychology as the pursuit of a "frontier." The book is redeemed as literature, however, by its fine dramatic structure. With each chapter Mrs. Newland takes us further and further into her incredible hallucinations, until, just as we can bear no more, she engineers the catharsis and closes with a happy ending.

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VIKING

## Coping with Tots

**"Dialogues with Mothers,"** by **Bruno Bettelheim** (Free Press. 216 pp. \$3.50), goes a step beyond Spock in offering parents a technique whereby they may analyze problems with their youngsters. Mary B. Hoover, a free-lance writer, is a member of the Book Review Committee of The Child Study Association of America.

By MARY B. HOOVER

COUNT on Bruno Bettelheim to come up with a different kind of book for parents. Though not a professional rebel, this Chicago psychoanalyst, who is professor of education at the University of Chicago and head of its Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children, is an original, often unconventional thinker. His earlier books ("Love Is Not Enough," "The Informed Heart," "Truants from Life") have been widely acclaimed and hotly debated. Not surprisingly, this latest one, designed to help parents of normal children handle the day-to-day problems of their youngsters, is a provocative—and debatable—departure from the expected.

Mothers looking for pat prescriptions—what to do when—are not going to find them here. What the author is trying to teach is an approach to child rearing that will give parents the insight and self-confidence they need to solve problems.

Except for its Introduction and a few short, interpolative comments, the book is made up of selected transcriptions of what went on in a parent-education group led by the author, who has worked out a special technique that he teaches his mothers to use: a way of analyzing for themselves whatever they consider a problem. He believes this approach can provide parents with a useful short-cut to understanding.

The mothers involved in this group were wives of students, mostly graduate students, attending the University of Chicago in the period just after the Second World War. They met bi-monthly or monthly for approximately five years, during the second of which it was decided to tape the proceedings. Attendance at the sessions varied from fifteen to forty, many of whom were with the group throughout its existence. All sessions reproduced in the book center around the problems of parents with children under six. But that should not limit the volume's audience, since the value of the discussions hinges not on the specific difficulties considered



Bruno Bettelheim — "an original often unconventional thinker."

but on the way in which Dr. Bettelheim helps a mother achieve empathy with her child and insight into how her attitudes are affecting her thinking and actions.

Readers are expected to struggle right along with the mothers themselves to master the author's method of analysis. So whatever specific pointers on child care they pick up are simply an incidental bonus.

While this reviewer found "Dialogues with Mothers" as engrossing as a first-rate detective story, some parents may not be as receptive to Dr. Bettelheim's basic message as they might be if it were presented in a somewhat different format, with more interpretive material. They may become so frustrated or bored by the continual parrying of questions in the verbatim transcriptions that they never become personally involved in the learning process going on. This format may also give readers the mistaken notion that they already know what the author is trying to convey.

From time to time in the course of the book Dr. Bettelheim gives various mothers a hard time. He passes harsh judgment on many things that they do; yet no mother appears to have been deeply upset by incurring his disapproval. But will the reader always react in such a healthy fashion? After all, to eavesdrop on a mother being criticized for doing something you know you have yourself done can be an unnerving experience. While no doubt Dr. Bettelheim's group was reassured by his face and tone, this does not necessarily come across in print.

One thing is certain: "Dialogues with Mothers" should spark a lot of conversation in the months to come. It is an unusual attempt to go a step beyond Spock, and, as such, deserves wide readership among parents as well as careful professional evaluation.

## Protestant Approach

Continued from page 32

my will is not hoping in fabulous myths and loving only idle dreams?

Without this prior objectivity of faith as an assent of the mind to divine truths, any effort to reunite the Church of Christ is building on sand. There can be no union of the faithful with Christ their Head, nor union among themselves as members of the same visible organism, unless they share the same internal faith and externally profess the same fundamental doctrines.

A more heartening aspect of ecumenical writing is the humility and frankness with which the subject is approached. It shows anxiety about a condition that had been suffered to exist for centuries, but must now be changed in the face of a monolithic anti-Christianity that threatens to crush or absorb any divided movement that stands in the way. Yet its inspiration is not mainly survival or self-defense but devotion to a Person and obedience to His call. **"One Lord, One Church"** (Association Press, \$1.25) is more than the title of a book by J. Robert Nelson; it is the motive force behind a ferment that affects all Christians everywhere. "Jesus Christ wills His Church to be one in mind, spirit, life and witness."

This solidarity is a primary part of God's redemptive plan. "It is a necessary mark of the Church which God has sent forth into the world to proclaim and extend the reconciling work of Christ. The Church must be one if it is to be used by God for unifying all the world in Christ."

### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO 984

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 984 will be found in the next issue.*

QC MAGC JOBCF D HPG-

CFOXCON PZ XCO DOB

XPFOAOH OCQEKDKCFE.

QCBCMM KLAMMAKE.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 983

*The man who admits he is wrong is wise; the man who gives in when he is right is married.*

—OHIO TIMES.