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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTHAMPTON**



# **Preliminary Research Data Analysis of LSD Consumption in Britain: A Qualitative Study.**

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**BREAKING  
CONVENTION**





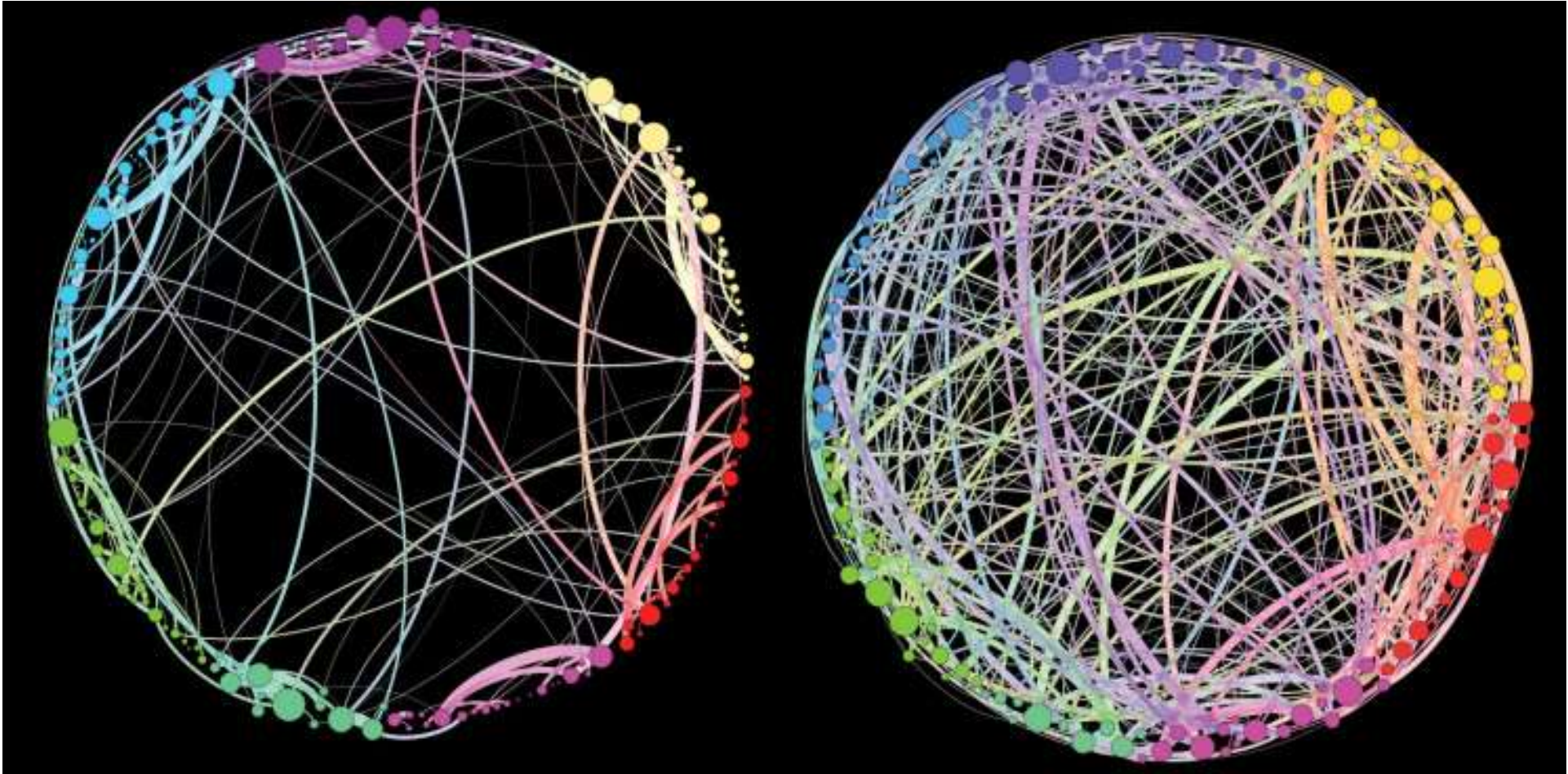












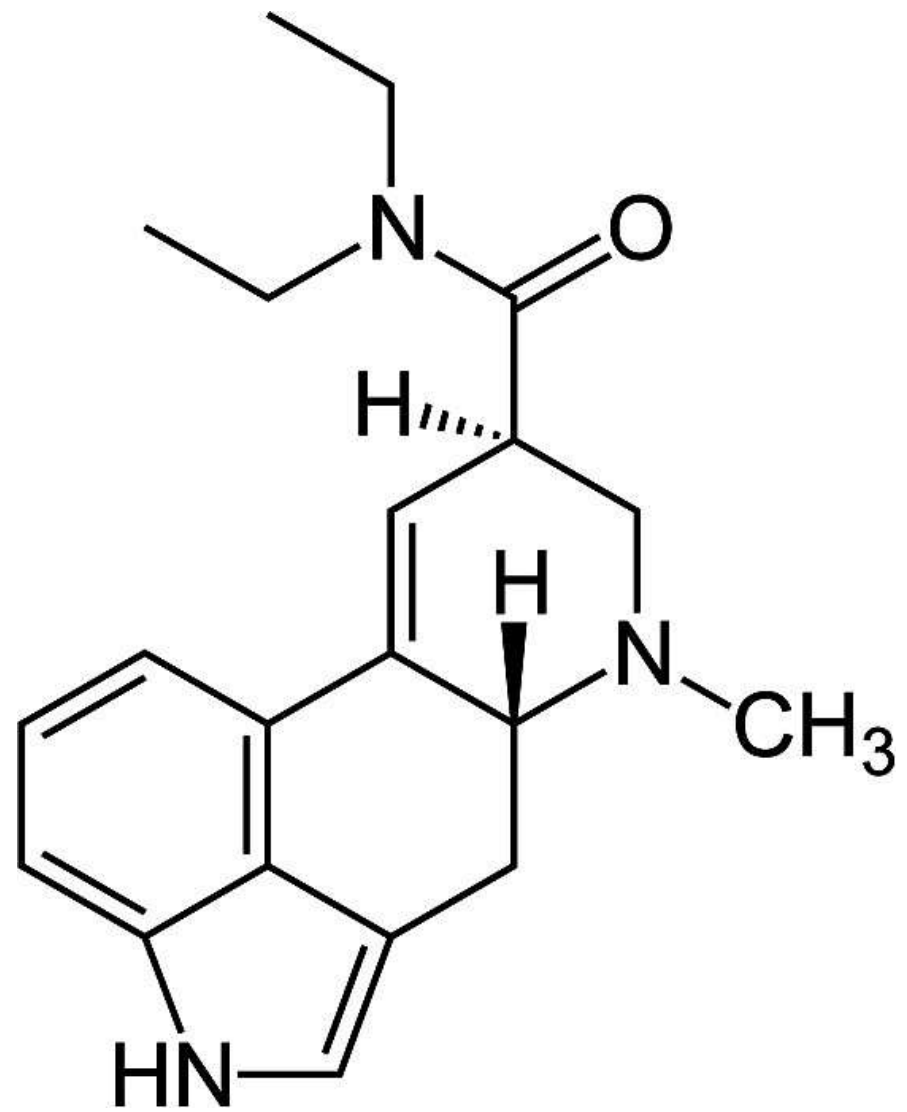
# Overview

- Psychedelic drug research
- LSD research and its links to transpersonal psychology and parapsychology
- Methodological outline
- Research findings
- Future implications









# Emerging Trends in the Current Literature

- **Nutt (2014)** claims that *“the psychedelic state is unquestionably one of the most interesting psychological experiences humans can have.”*
- The research around psychedelic use focuses primarily within the pharmacological sector where psychedelics are administered within a controlled, clinical setting (e.g., **Gasser, Kirchner & Passie, 2015; Nutt, King & Nicols, 2013**).





# Psychedelics and Parapsychology

- **Tart (2002)** “On the one hand, there is for most human beings, an immense, potential spiritual and transpersonal significance to psi phenomena that appeals deeply to the human spirit. On the other hand, materialistic scientism, the dominant paradigm in science, has led to a lot of progress in the material realm, it has a view that crushes the human spirit.”
- **Braud (1997)** “In common Western science, theory, mechanism, and rational explanations are valued more over description and appreciation. There is consensus that meaningful personal experiences should be excluded from the arena of science.”

# Psychedelics and Parapsychology

- **Smythies (1960)** infusions of certain plants and cacti (i.e. ayahuasca) have magical properties enabling the taker to have paranormal experiences of one kind or another.
- **Luke (2010)** explains many anthropologists have experienced a diverse range of paranormal phenomena during shamanic psychedelic sessions.
- **Strassman (2001)** argues DMT drug usage is linked with alien abduction experiences.





# LSD and Parapsychology

- **Rogo (1984)** when referring to LSD- we receive ESP impressions unconsciously, these manifest in the form of *hunches, visions* and *hallucinations*.



# LSD and Parapsychology

- **Luke (2010)** states the typical phenomena of interest to parapsychologists regarding drug-induced ASCs include; telepathy, NDEs, OBEs, entity encounters and past-life recall.
- **Luke (2008)** suggests the experiential quality of these experiences is more favourable towards qualitative methods of analysis.





# Method

- 4 participants – 2 female/2 male
- Age range – 20 to 55 years
- One-to-one, semi-structured interviews
- Questions exploring experiences whilst taking psychedelics
- Ethical approval given by UoN staff research ethics committee



# Analysis

- Drawing from a thematic approach using Braun & Clarke's (2006) 6 steps to achieve analysis
- Thematic Analysis enables data sources to be analysed in terms of the principal concepts or themes
- Main themes found for this preliminary research:-
  - *Theme 1* - Experiences with 'other-worldly' entities
  - *Theme 2* – Anomalous nature
  - *Theme 3* – Spiritual awakening experience
  - Theme 4 – Hallucinogenic Persisting Perceptual (Dis)order (HPPD)

# Theme 1 - Experiences with 'other-worldly' entities

## Cathy

“... they were just walking towards me and I was getting really worried as to what they were going to do and then they just kind of came towards me and kind of come through me and then more and more were just coming and they were humble and they were kind and at first I was a bit worried as I've never seen it before and oh I don't know what's going to happen here but as soon as I realised that they weren't a threat it was yeah it was quite lovely actually and yeah it was quite lovely.”



## Theme 2 – Anomalous nature

### Taylor

“I was lying on the path and I was having a kind of out of body experience, I could see my body and my dress was shrinking and somebody else who wasn’t taking acid picked me up and took me to their house to chill out.”

“I was watching the exorcist and it completely freaked me out, the noises coming out of the exorcist, I was really quite scared of satanic kind of stuff, I became actually religious for a period of time, I had holy water in my bedroom.”

## Theme 2 – Anomalous nature

### Taylor

“I used to sometimes hallucinate even though I wasn’t tripping that this doll used to be crawling over the floor, one of those horrible China dolls, I used to wake up sometimes thinking I was being possessed as well.”

### Harry

I saw Alice and wonderland motives everywhere, I saw the Chesire cat smiling, he will just sit there and float around me, I panicked because this never occurred to me before, he would look at me and smile and that says It all if that makes sense.”

# Theme 3 – Spiritual Awakening Experience

## James

“I took 2 tabs and that was a break through experience the whole reality changed, I was in a different dimension of space-time, everything recognisable in terms of physics was thrown out of the window, I couldn't remember who I was or where I was I lost my identity and I just became consciousness just experiencing fractals of energy, magnificent patterns but I wasn't James to experience it I was a part of it.”



# Theme 3 - Spiritual Awakening Experience

## Harry

“there are some people who when going into these types of drugs don’t understand the massive implications for the psyche and self, I don’t know if you’ve heard of the Tibetan book of the dead, but I enter the ‘Bardo’ which is a place most will never reach in their life.”

# Theme 4 – Hallucinogenic Persisting Perceptual Dis(order)

## Cathy

“I just liked to do it in fields and places where I was close to home and um we walked to the top of this park (names place) and it was right on a hill and I saw the northern lights and the stars were going all across the sky you know and they were multiplied by a million and like falling down from the sky into the ground and there were beams of light like the aurora borealis going all up over the sky and the moon had um holographic Hindu petals coming out of it which I still see to this day regardless of whether I am tripping or not, I still get a faint outline of these petals still from that trip.”

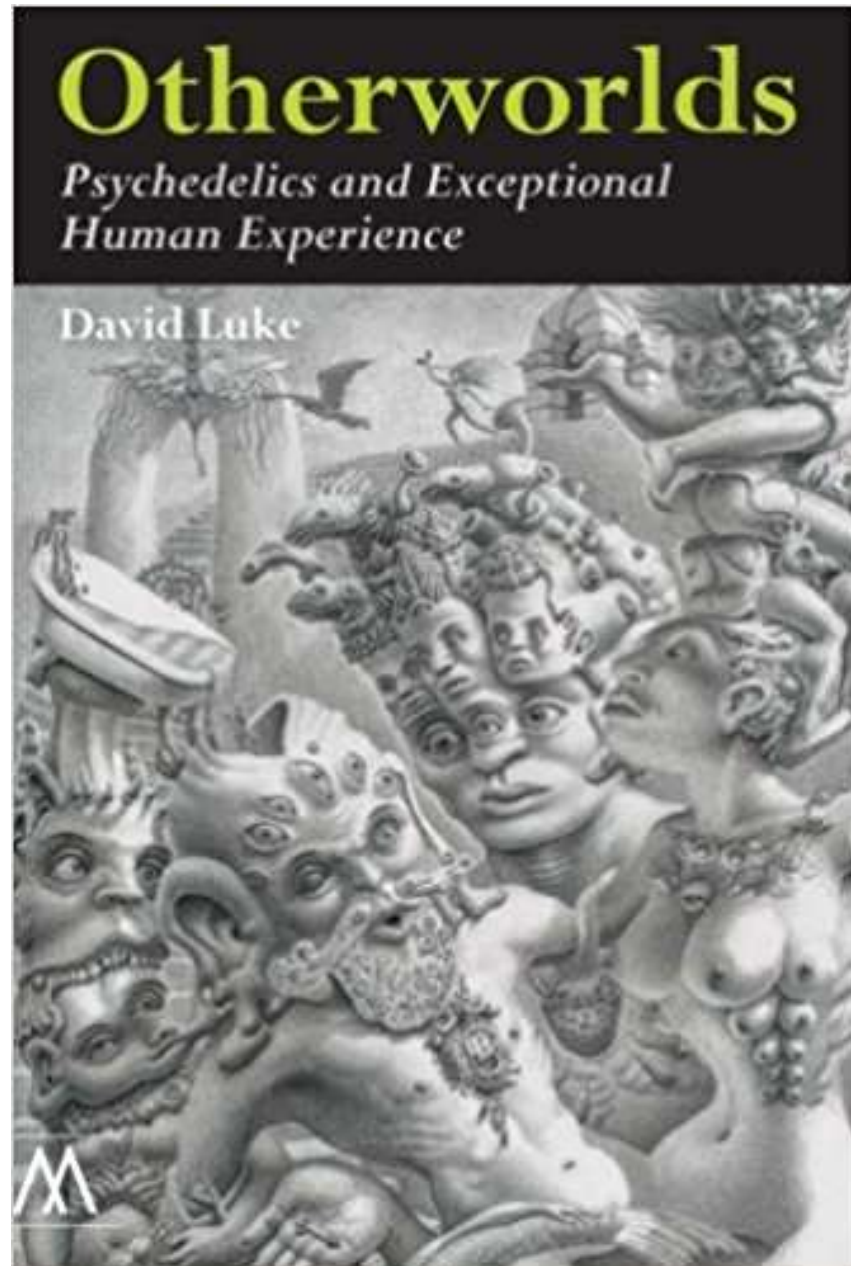
# Discussion

- The rationale for this research was primarily embedded in transpersonal psychology, however, the results of the analysis thus far identifies strong links to parapsychology with a variety of AE's apparent within the participants narratives.
- Emphasis on 'set and setting'.
- Prevalence of HPPD surrounding LSD usage and the potential limitations around this disorder in line with clinical parapsychology.
- There is a lack of understanding around LSD usage. This project attempts to shed light on the spiritual and parapsychological components of these experiences.



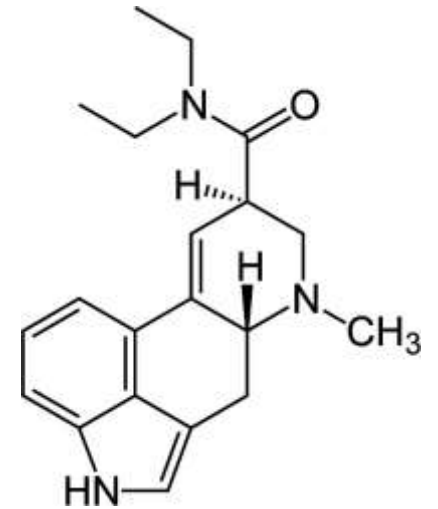
# Future implications

- This study is indicative that LSD should be of concern to qualitative parapsychological researchers.
- HPPD an understudied topic and we recommend exploration into this phenomena.
- Psychedelic renaissance; there is a growing trend in support of the idea LSD experiences shouldn't be demonized as 'psychotic' but rather 'spiritual' and 'meaningful' experiences.
- LSD is still used by many individuals from all walks of life (e.g. hippie communities, silicon valley, prolific scientists & students).



# Thank you!

## Questions?



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