Glossy Visions: Coverage of LSD in Popular Magazines, 1954-1968

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Abstract

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Glossy Visions: Coverage of LSD in Popular Magazines, 1954-1968 (303 pp.)

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The subjective experience offered by the drug LSD was of intense interest to popular magazines for years before the drug entered widespread recreational use. While both were absent from coverage of other drugs, personal descriptions of drug experiences and visual illustrations of the drug's effects were commonplace in magazine coverage of LSD. A content analysis of popular magazine articles about LSD from the time of the drug's discovery until the year that possession of the drug became a federal crime demonstrated that much of the coverage was accepting of LSD use for the purpose of self-enrichment by individuals who were not ill. Often, intellectuals and celebrities represented drug users in magazine coverage. The use of LSD to create spiritual experiences was explained in many magazine articles, especially in *Time*, whose publisher, Henry Robinson Luce, advocated the drug to employees and professional acquaintances. Magazine coverage of LSD helped introduce the drug to the public and advanced public understanding of the "psychedelic" experience. The coverage, much of which preceded widespread availability of LSD, aided in the diffusion of the drug to the public at large.

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To S.B.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Acid and the Media

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the academic understanding of mental illness was transformed by a series of breakthroughs in the field of pharmacology. Prior to the 1950s, leading academic psychiatrists saw little promise in the use of drugs. But the discovery of new drugs that acted on the mind, including lysergic acid diethylamide in 1943 and chlorpromazine (Thorazine) in 1950 helped to convince the psychological establishment that mental illness had some basis in chemistry. The drugs, made available for experimental trials at about the same time, made a seemingly conclusive argument. Researchers found that one drug, LSD, seemed to turn madness on, while the other turned it off. The use of these drugs for the treatment of mental illness and exploration of the mind was a major scientific project of the 1950s and 1960s.[1]

The discovery of chlorpromazine, the first of the modern antipsychotics, has been credited with launching a revolution in the treatment of mental illness and contributing to a cultural shift that has changed our perspective on the human condition.[2] But LSD, never brought to market or approved as treatment for any condition, probably became more of a household name, and probably made as big a splash in popular culture. Acid rock, acid tests, and psychedelic art were all born within two decades of LSD's American

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[1] David Healy, *The Creation of Psychopharmacology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 182.

[2] See Ibid., 1-2; and Erika Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 50, no. 7 (June 2005): 383.

introduction. The drug was associated with a burgeoning and vocal youth movement, denounced by President Lyndon Johnson, and finally prohibited nationwide in 1968, with the passage of federal legislation making simple possession of LSD a crime.[3]

Sociologists, historians, and scientists who have examined the LSD phenomenon have frequently suggested that magazine articles about LSD played a role in popularizing the drug. Magazine coverage was criticized in passing in a book by LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann and articles by medical researchers Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, noted by historians Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, and praised for its comprehensiveness by *Chicago Tribune* reporter and author William Braden. All these observers noted the lively interest in LSD by popular magazines. It has even been suggested that the excessive interest in LSD by popular magazines, rather than actual acid use, created the popular impression of a 1960s LSD epidemic. But while many scholars have made passing reference to magazine coverage as a factor at various stages of the drug's diffusion, no systematic studies of this coverage were located.[4]

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[3] See Todd Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's Consumer Society," in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention Monograph 6, ed. Hank Resnik (Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990), 43; Lyndon B. Johnson, "The State of the Union 1968," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 34 (February 1, 1968): 228; and "The President's Remarks," *The New York Times*, October 26, 1967.

[4] See Albert Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, trans. Jonathon Ott (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), 58-59; Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 758; Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 88; William Braden, "LSD and the Press" in *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance*

Previous scholars have used H.W. Wilson Company's *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* to roughly quantify the level of magazine attention to LSD over time.[5] An electronic compilation of historical editions of *The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, *Readers' Guide Retrospective*, also provided a means to compare the number of articles about LSD and other drugs. Though far from comprehensive, the *Readers' Guide Retrospective* includes many of the mass-circulation, popular magazines of the period, including the weeklies *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Life*, *Look*, *New Republic*, *The Nation*, and *Business Week*; as well the monthlies *Reader's Digest*, *The Atlantic*, *Esquire*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Popular Science*, *Mademoiselle*, *McCall's*, and others.[6] The database's "Smart Search" feature, which searches within article abstracts and subject terms, was employed to identify magazine articles by searching under drugs' chemical and trade names. This method is not as thorough in its identification of articles as would be a full-text search, which is not available for this database. However, because the Smart Search includes

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and the Mass Media, eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), 199, 205-7; Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1993), 254-55; and John R. Neill, "'More than Medical Significance': LSD and American Psychiatry, 1953 to 1966," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 19, no. 1 (January-March 1987): 41.

[5] See Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 254-55; and Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 55.

[6] The criteria for inclusion in *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* during the period of this study is not explained either in the original bound volumes or the online database. The *Readers' Guide* for March 1959 to February 1961 indexed authors and subjects appearing in 110 publications. See preface to Sarita Robinson, ed., *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, March 1959-February 1961*, vol. 22 (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1961).

keywords, this method did have the advantage of selecting articles that were judged by others to have been substantially about the drug.

Research using both chlorpromazine and LSD began around 1950. A search in *Reader's Guide Retrospective* located a total of 202 magazine articles about LSD published prior to 1968, the year possession of the drug was prohibited by federal legislation. (Two of the articles were rejected because they were not about the drug.) Of these, 129 articles appeared in popular magazines, while there were 73 articles in five specialty science publications indexed by the database: the peer-reviewed journal *Science*, *Chemistry*, and the digests of scientific research *Science News-Letter*, *Science News*, and *Science Digest*. By contrast, a search for articles about chlorpromazine found only 54 published before 1968, all but thirteen of which were in the same specialty science publications.

Popular magazines covered LSD more extensively than other, superficially similar pharmaceutical discoveries from the same era that more quickly went into more widespread use. The first drug to be marketed as a tranquillizer was meprobamate, sold beginning in 1955 under the names Miltown and Equanil. Historian of psychiatry Edward Shorter wrote that the demand for these was greater than for any previous drug, and that by 1956, one in twenty Americans was taking tranquilizers during any given month.[7] Nevertheless, a search in *Readers' Guide Retrospective* located only twelve popular

[7] Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 316.

magazine articles and twelve scientific magazine articles published in the first twenty years after the drugs' release.

The comparison seems even more stark with Diazepam, trade name Valium, the "mother's little helper" which was released in 1963 and became the nation's best-selling drug by 1969. In the first twenty years after being brought to market, Valium was the subject of only fourteen popular magazine articles and seventeen articles in the scientific magazines indexed by *Readers' Guide*. This despite the fact that more than 90 million bottles of Valium were dispensed yearly in the United States during the 1970s, and despite a wave of concern over addiction in the late 1970s, including the admission by former first lady Betty Ford of dependence on the drug.[8]

Although scholars in a wide range of disciplines have noted the extraordinary character of magazine coverage of LSD, it has not been the subject of a systematic analysis. The study sought to provide that analysis. As well as describing the coverage, this study explored reasons why this obscure experimental drug was so thoroughly covered by popular magazines. Finally, this study examines the coverage in light of the theoretical literature which proposes how media content might influence drug use.

Methodology

This study combines historical and archival research about the development of knowledge about LSD with a qualitative discussion of its portrayal in the media,

[8] See Ibid., 318-19; and David Herzberg, "'The Pill You Love Can Turn on You': Feminism, Tranquilizers, and the Valium Panic of the 1970s," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (March 2006): 79.

especially magazines. Magazine articles discussed were located by a variety of means: through WilsonWeb's *Readers' Guide Retrospective*, through other databases and indices of particular publications, and through serendipity. This qualitative discussion of coverage is matched with quantitative results of a content analysis of articles located through the *Readers' Guide Retrospective*. So as to maintain consistent selection criteria, only articles located through a *Reader's Guide* search for "lysergic or LSD" were included in the content analysis. Expanding the search by adding terms "hallucinogen*" or "acid" did not locate additional articles.

Of the 129 articles in popular magazines identified through this method, two were not about the drug LSD and were excluded from the analysis. Articles in three of the more-obscure publications—*American Record Guide*, *American Education*, and a special supplement to the teacher's edition of *Senior Scholastic*—could not be found. Articles included in the content analysis, ordered by year, are reported in Appendix A.

There is a body of scholarship that suggests that there could have been effects from the amount of magazine coverage regardless of its content. Todd Gitlin pointed out that any coverage of illegal drugs may inadvertently encourage their use, by calling attention to forbidden fruit.[9] George Gerbner similarly observed that anti-drug campaigns can inadvertently encourage drug use by raising its salience.[10] The catalog of "boomerang effects" offered by Charles Atkin includes the possibility that a mass media anti-drug

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[9] Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's Consumer Society," 49.

[10] George Gerbner, "Stories that Hurt: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs in the Mass Media," in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention Monograph 6, ed. by Hank Resnik (Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990), 111.

campaign can result in "inadvertent social norming" by convincing audience members that drug use is more pervasive or accepted than it actually is.

Scholars have also suggested ways that the content could matter. Atkins pointed out that celebrities that are allowed to speak in the role of ex-users may be perceived as role models worthy of emulation. Highly threatening, fear-based appeals about the danger of drugs could desensitize audience members to potentially harmful outcomes and exaggerated claims could also undermine credibility. "Portraying the proscribed behavior as undesirable may promote the competition as the audience becomes curious, learns it is fun, or regards it as challenging," Atkin wrote. "In particular, it may be risky to portray risky behavior because it may be appealing to risk-takers in the audience."[11]

Diffusion theorists have also identified elements that make mass media messages more effective in the diffusion of an innovation. They include testimonials, especially from people whose social class is the same as or better than that of audience members.[12] As advertising professionals have also realized, messages that associate a product with status and celebrity can affect diffusion. Finally, two-sided appeals—messages that discuss both advantages and disadvantages of an innovation—can be more effective than

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[11] Charles Atkin, "Promising Strategies for Media Health Campaigns," in *Mass Media and Drug Prevention: Classic and Contemporary Theory and Research*, eds. William D. Crano and Michael Burgoon (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 38-39.

[12] Everett M. Rogers, with Floyd F. Shoemaker, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 35, 213.

one-sided appeals, especially if audience members are likely to initially disagree or to be exposed to subsequent counter-propaganda.[13]

A content analysis scheme composed of twenty yes-or-no questions was devised to measure the prevalence of these elements in magazine coverage during this period. Coders also noted the occurrence of the names of individuals who were identified as frequent sources in magazine coverage through a prior reading of the articles. The twenty questions included whether the coverage of LSD seemed one-sided or two-sided; whether favorable and unfavorable sides to LSD use were presented; and whether drug use by college professors, intellectuals, or celebrities was described. The presence and nature of first-person accounts of drug use, the use of LSD for religious purposes, and descriptions of side effects were also noted. (See Appendix B for the complete code book and Appendix C for a sample code sheet.) While this study does not attempt direct comparison with subsequent coverage of other drugs, it is worth noting how out-of-place subjective descriptions of drug effects or the views of drug advocates would be in contemporary news coverage of, for example, oxycodone or crack cocaine.

Finally, there was the word used to describe the LSD experience itself. Researchers have documented the impact that word choice in mass media communication can have on audience opinions of contested issues.[14] One popular term used to describe the experience, "psychedelic," was coined by Osmond because he felt that words like

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[13] Ibid., 265.

[14] Adam F. Simon and Jennifer Jerit, "Toward a Theory Relating Political Discourse, Media and Public Opinion," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 2 (June 2007): 264-65.

"hallucination" and "psychosis" implied negative states of mind.[15] The implication was not lost on other scientists, who complained that while the terms hallucinogenic and psychotomimetic (or psychosis-mimicking, often also spelled "psychomimetic") "reflect a careful scientific concern with potentially dangerous, though unique drugs," the word psychedelic suggests that the drug's effects are "good."[16] In 1966, *Business Week* described the debate over terminology:

> Some consider the word "hallucinogen" to be inaccurate and negatively biased, arguing that the LSD-related drugs do not strictly speaking produce hallucinations; this group would rather use the word "psychedelic," which means mind-opening, or consciousness-expanding. But those who use psychedelic are sometimes accused of bias in favor of the drugs.[17]

A textbook on drugs explained, "the terms *psychedelic* and *hallucinogen* convey almost opposite points of view on the drug experience, and each is likely to be used by ideologues of directly contrary opinions."[18] The content analysis recorded when the word "psychedelic" entered discussion of the subject in magazines.

To determine inter-coder reliability, fifteen articles (representing 12 percent of the population of articles) were randomly selected and reviewed by two coders, the author of this study and a master's student in journalism and mass communications. The coding instrument was determined to be highly reliable, with agreement according to simple pair-wise comparison ranging from 100 percent on six questions to 71 percent on two questions. These two questions with the lowest inter-coder reliability asked the coder to

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[15] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 55.
[16] Cole and Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," 758.
[17] "More Light, Less Heat Over LSD," *Business Week*, June 25, 1966, 83.
[18] Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 243.

identify whether the names on a list of prominent individuals appeared in the article and whether the article presented an unfavorable side of non-medicinal LSD use. Overall agreement was 92.6 percent. (For a variable-by-variable report see Appendix D.)

Overview of Magazine Coverage

The earliest magazine coverage of LSD located through the *Readers' Guide Retrospective* search were two articles published in 1954, approximately five years after the drug was first introduced to American scientists. After sporadic coverage through the 1950s, there was a spike in coverage by both weekly and monthly magazines in 1962 and 1963, roughly corresponding with the expulsion of Harvard professors Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert for conducting psychedelic experiments with undergraduate students. After a brief lull, the level of magazine attention given to LSD increased again between 1966 and 1968 amid tales of expanding LSD use, newly discovered side effects, and the passage of prohibitive legislation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Articles About LSD in Popular Magazines Published from 1954 through 1968

	Publication Year							
Journal Name:	1954-1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	Total
Time	4	2			7	5	2	20
Newsweek	1	2		1	7	4		15
Look	1	1			1	3	2	8
The New Republic			1		3	3	1	8
Life		1			4			5
America					4			4
The New York Times Magazine				1	1	1	1	4
The Saturday Evening Post	1	1				1		3
U.S. News & World Report					1	2		3
Business Week					2			2
Saturday Review		1				1		2
The Nation				1	1			2
Sports Illustrated			1					1
The New Yorker					1			1
Total Weeklies	7	8	2	3	32	20	6	78
Reporter		1			1			2
Senior Scholastic (Teachers' edition)						2		2
Total Biweeklies	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	4
Mademoiselle				1	1	2		4
Esquire		1			1		1	3
Ladies' Home Journal		1			1		1	3
Scientific American	1		1		1			3
The UNESCO Courier							3	3
Harper's				1		1		2
Horizon (Tuscaloosa, Ala.)		1					1	2
McCall's					1	1		2
National Review						1	1	2
Popular Science						2		2
PTA Magazine					1		1	2
Redbook							2	2
Good Housekeeping					1			1
Missiles and Rockets				1				1
Natural History						1		1
Parents' Magazine & Better Homemaking (1959)						1		1
Reader's Digest					1			1
The American Scholar							1	1
The Atlantic (1932)					1			1
Today's Health	1							1
Trans-Action							1	1
U.S. Camera						1		1
Vogue							1	1
Total Monthlies	2	3	1	3	9	10	13	41
The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science						1		1
The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists							1	1
Total Bimonthlies	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
The American Scholar							1	1
Total Quarterlies	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Grand Total	9	12	3	6	42	33	21	126

As indicated by Table 1, the earliest coverage of LSD in the 1950s was in weekly magazines and the monthlies *Scientific American* and *Today's Health*. Prior to 1963, coverage of LSD was most extensive in *Time* magazine, which ran four articles when no other magazine published more than one. As media attention to LSD increased after 1963, articles about the drug began also appearing in a wider range of publications, notably women's, family, and parenting magazines. Toward the end of the period examined in this study, LSD appeared to be everywhere—at least in the media.

Amid the proliferation of magazine articles, there were a small number of sources whose voices were repeatedly and reliably heard. In their analysis of television news coverage of crack cocaine in the 1980s, Jimmie L. Reeves and Richard Campbell identified the individuals who appeared in multiple stories as a means to track those who had important roles in defining the drug or drug users.[19] In their study, the list of "chief definers" was populated by government and law enforcement officials, addiction experts, and lawyers.[20] There were no unambiguously pro-drug sources on their lists.

Magazine coverage of LSD prior to 1968 was heavy with sources from the realms of science and culture, on the other hand, and the most frequently reoccurring sources were the most ardently pro-drug (see Table 2).

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[19] Jimmie L. Reeves and Richard Campbell, *Cracked Coverage: Television News, the Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 49.

[20] Ibid., 68-71.

Table 2. Frequently Occurring Sources in Magazine Coverage of LSD, 1954-68

Source	Number of articles	Percentage of total articles
Timothy Leary, scientist and LSD advocate	49	39
Aldous Huxley, writer and intellectual	28	22
Albert Hofmann, scientist and LSD discoverer	26	21
Richard Alpert, scientist and LSD advocate	18	14
Sidney Cohen, scientist	16	13
Humphry Osmond, scientist	9	7
Allen Ginsberg, poet	8	6
Harold Abrahamson, scientist	6	5
Alan Watts, writer and intellectual	5	4

A small number of voices were widely disseminated in magazine coverage of LSD in the years prior to its prohibition. At times, the tone of articles was hostile toward their views. Nevertheless, it was through these scientists and scholars, not cops and politicians, that LSD was defined in the media.

Reality Check: Veridical Levels of LSD Usage

Journalists working in the 1950s and 1960s had no systematic evidence by which to estimate the prevalence of LSD use nationwide. Law enforcement records were of little help because legal restrictions on LSD distribution were minimal prior to 1962, and states did not start passing legislation to prohibit the drug until a few years later.[21] The Drug Abuse Warning Network, a government program that collects data on drug-related

[21] Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 370-71.

emergency room visits and deaths, was not developed until 1974.[22] The National Household Survey of Drug Abuse, which sends contractors door-to-door to distribute forms to be returned anonymously by mail, was not initiated until 1971.[23] While politicians, pro-drug activists, and journalists frequently cited wild estimates or anecdotes to back up their impression of swelling LSD use, at that time there were simply no hard numbers available.[24]

Better numbers are available today. The most systematic attempt to estimate drug use retroactively was by National Institute on Drug Abuse statisticians using answers to a question about the age of first drug use on NHSDA surveys conducted between 1985 and 1991. As the statisticians noted, the method was prone to two types of error, both of which would tend to undercount drug users: it missed individuals who tried drugs and then died before 1985, and it relied on respondents' accurately remembering drug use that occurred decades earlier. They said, "it is also possible that the former users who have not used in many years could be prone to deny ever having used the drug."[25] The study

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[22] Drug Enforcement Administration, "1970-1975," DEA History Book, A Tradition of Excellence, 1973-2003, http://www.dea.gov/pubs/history/1970-1975.html [accessed May 21, 2008].

[23] Joseph Gfroerer and Marc Brodsky, "The Incidence of Illicit Drug Use in the United States, 1962-1989," *British Journal of Addiction* 87, no. 9 (September 1992): 1346-47.

[24] For examples of how anecdotal reports of LSD use from a particular college or hospital emergency room were used as evidence of a national epidemic, see "LSD," *Time*, June 17, 1966, 30-31; "New Reports on Rising Problem," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 10, 1967; and Leszek Ochota, "What is the Clinical Evidence?" *The New Republic*, May 14, 1966, 21-22.

[25] Gfroerer and Brodsky, "The Incidence of Illicit Drug Use in the United States, 1962-1989," 1350.

also lumps LSD in with "hallucinogens," a category of the original surveys that included peyote and mescaline as well as LSD (see Table 3).

Table 3. Estimates of Hallucinogen Initiates

Year	Initiates (1000s)	95% confidence interval
Pre-1962	217	164-287
1962	9	3-33
1963	2	0-28
1964	42	20-88
1965	121	60-246
1966	94	51-174
1967	221	145-336
1968	418	277-631
1969	528	388-718
1970	805	652-992
1971	573	442-743
1972	793	632-997
1973	770	628-944
1974	818	664-1008

Between 1974 and 1989, the estimated annual number of initiates ranged between a high of 818,000 in 1974 and a low of 513,000 in 1980.

Source: Joseph Gfroerer and Marc Brodsky, "The Incidence of Illicit Drug Use in the United States, 1962-1989," *British Journal of Addiction* 87, no. 9 (September 1992): 1348.

Table 3 held two surprises for those who considered psychedelics to be a 1960s phenomenon. More people turned on to hallucinogenic drugs in each year of the 1970s than in any single year in the 1960s. And nearly as many people reported trying LSD or another hallucinogenic drug prior to 1962 as in 1967, the year remembered for its Summer of Love.[26]

[26] The sociologist Erich Goode claims that five of ten people believe that LSD use peaked in the 1960s and notes one textbook on the psychology of drug use that propagates this error. Using the number of articles about LSD listed in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* as an index of media attention, he observes that attention to LSD "plummeted" after 1967, even while Gallup Polls of college students showed that use continued to skyrocket through the early 1970s. He concludes that media attention is

Scholars have argued that most people learn about the extent of drug use from the mass media rather than personal experience.[27] This study examined how potential users were introduced to LSD and what they were told. Over less than two decades, LSD evolved from scientific breakthrough to literary plaything to public menace, eliciting detailed descriptions from a fascinated media. Early experimenters found that the subjective, mind-centered LSD "trip" defied description. Over the course of years, however, magazines collected and refined attempts at such description, and delivered them to America's coffee tables. This study investigated how and why magazines may have provided this information, and what effect it may have had.

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responsible for the myth that hallucinogen use was most common in the 1960s. See Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 254-55.

[27] See *Ibid.*, 254; and Thomas J. Johnson and Wayne Wanta, "Influence Dealers: A Path Analysis Model of Agenda Building During Richard Nixon's War on Drugs," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 182.

Chapter 2: Early Coverage of Hallucinogenic Drugs in Popular Magazines

> Obviously, by the end of the 1950s the public was well aware of LSD.
> —Steven J. Novak, "LSD Before Leary"

> Marijuana use was common in 1960, but few people had as much as heard of LSD-25, as it was referred to then.
> —John Beresford, Introduction to *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*

The Selling of LSD

Critics with a range of perspectives blamed popular magazines for fanning the flames of the LSD craze. Often, their remarks are based on a common-sense impression, rather than systematic analysis, and lack supporting detail for the more extraordinary charges. LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann charged the press with "introducing and expediting" the spread of LSD into the black market, citing as typical examples two magazine articles from 1954 that presented vivid descriptions of LSD trips, along with a 1959 magazine article that aired actor Cary Grant's enthusiasm for the drug.[1] Sociologist Richard Blum observed that "nearly every important national magazine carried a major article dealing with the drug itself" in 1962 or 1963, raising the "national noise level" concerning LSD to a din.[2] *Chicago Tribune* reporter and author William Braden noted

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[1] Hofmann cited a first-person account, "My Twelve Hours as a Madman," published in *MacLean's Canada National Magazine* in 1954; a sensational account of an LSD trip, "Ein Kuhnes Wissenschaftliches Experiment," ["A Daring Scientific Experiment"] published in the German magazine *Quick* in 1954; and an illustrated article detailing Cary Grant's use of LSD, "The Curious Story Behind the New Cary Grant," published in *Look* in 1959. See Albert Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, trans. Jonathon Ott (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), 58-59.

[2] Richard Blum and Associates, *Utopiates: The Use & Users of LSD-25* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 4.

that magazines covered a psychedelic movement while it was being ignored by radio and television and often given cursory treatment as a crime story in most newspapers.[3] Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain blamed coverage of the Harvard LSD scandal in "most of the major U.S. magazines" for giving Timothy Leary national prominence as "Mr. LSD," a role he relished. "The extensive media coverage doubtless spurred the growth of the psychedelic underground," the historians wrote.[4] In an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, two scientists hostile to the psychedelic movement, Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, also fingered "a series of articles in national popular magazines—*Look*, *The Reporter*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *Ladies' Home Journal*" for focusing major attention on "these drugs, their effects, and the personal eccentricities and misadventures of the people advocating their use."[5]

LSD publicity was frequently recognized as a magazine phenomenon. Sociologist Erich Goode considered the frequency of articles about LSD in popular magazines as the independent variable affecting the public's impression of the drug's prevalence. He reasoned that the high volume of magazine articles in the 1960s caused the public to

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[3] William Braden, "LSD and the Press" in *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media*, eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), 199, 205-7.

[4] Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 88.

[5] Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 758.

associate LSD with that decade and not with the 1970s, when usage was actually higher.[6] John R. Neill similarly suggested that "mass circulation magazines" in the mid-1960s created the mistaken impression of an LSD epidemic.[7] Scholars have also used magazine coverage of LSD in the late 1960s to illustrate moral panic, a phenomenon in which society reacts against a behavior that is viewed as threatening or deviant.[8] A 1966 survey intended to gauge the impact of LSD publicity on the recruitment of experimental volunteers was prompted by "sensational" publicity "in such magazines as *Playboy*, *The Reporter*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*."[9] Most of the nineteen LSD researchers who responded to a 1966 survey found that volunteer subjects were at least as numerous following the outburst of publicity, although the number of "appropriate" volunteers had declined. The results of this survey also indicated many volunteers were lured by a "promise of nirvana" as a result of publicity, and more viewed their participation as potentially dangerous.[10]

One reason for the glut of LSD publicity in magazines was that the topic was so well suited for magazine treatment. The story included aspects of celebrity, bizarre behavior, gee-whiz scientific breakthrough, pop culture, and colorful, psychedelic art. It

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[6] Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1993), 254-55.

[7] John R. Neill, "'More than Medical Significance': LSD and American Psychiatry, 1953 to 1966," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 19, no. 1 (January-March 1987): 41.

[8] Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 55.

[9] Charles D. Dahlberg, Ruth Mechaneck and Stanley Feldstein, "LSD Research: The Impact of Lay Publicity," *Journal of American Psychiatry* 125, no. 5 (November 5, 1968): 685.

[10] Ibid., 687.

allowed magazines to exploit their technological advantage in color reproduction, their strength for longer-form, explanatory journalism, and their taste for oddity. Magazines ranging from *Popular Science* to *Ladies' Home Journal* published first-person accounts of psychedelic trips.[11]

There was precedent for the lavish descriptions of drug trips, and even the outright advocacy of drug use, described for the public on glossy magazine pages in the 1950s and 1960s. The scholar of U.S. Drug Policy David Musto identified a persistent cycle in the history of American drug use, in which successive generations forgot the harm caused by a drug and repeated the excess of the past. [12] In 1968, Sidney Cohen proposed a similar pattern in the history of psychedelic drugs, suggesting that the current psychedelics craze was an echo of the nineteenth-century English fascination with laudanum, an alcoholic preparation of opium. "Elizabeth Barrett Browning, [Algernon Charles] Swinburne, Edgar Allan Poe, and many others spoke of the extract of Oriental poppy capsule in terms singularly similar to the eulogies of today's LSD advocates," Cohen observed, also noting drug use by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and recalling lines by Thomas De Quincey. "Happiness might now be bought for a penny," the Englishman

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[11] See Jacob Brackman, "Four Ways to Go: The End of the Trip," *Esquire*, September 1966, 126; Michele Iris, "I Tried LSD," *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1966, 52; and R. Gannon, "My LSD Trip: Non-Cop, Non-Hippie Report," *Popular Science*, December 19, 1967, 60.

[12] David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xi-xii. Sidney Cohen proposed a similar explanation in "The Cyclic Psychedelics," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 125, no. 3 (September 1968): 393-94.

wrote in 1822. “Portable ecstasies might be corked up in a pink bottle, and peace of mind sent down by mail.”[13]

An even closer analog to LSD was the drug mescaline (also spelled mescalin), the psychoactive component of the hallucinogenic peyote cactus, first isolated from peyote buttons in 1896 by the German chemist Arthur Heffter.[14] Among early experimenters with mescaline was British psychologist and intellectual Havelock Ellis, who introduced mescaline to others including the poet W.B. Yeats. Ellis described his experience with the drug in numerous places, including articles in *Popular Science Monthly* and *The Contemporary Review*.[15] “Mescal intoxication may be described as chiefly a saturnalia of the specific senses, and, above all, an orgy of vision. It reveals an optical fairyland, where all the senses now and again join the play, but the mind itself remains a self-possessed spectator,” Ellis summarized in an 1898 article. “It may at least be claimed that for a

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[13] Quoted in Cohen, “The Cyclic Psychedelics,” 393.

[14] Although mescaline was considered less potent than LSD, both drugs would be used for basic research on schizophrenia, as treatment for alcoholism, and in psychotherapy. See Gary M. Fisher, “Some Comments Concerning Dosage Levels of Psychedelic Compounds for Psychotherapeutic Experiences,” in *The Psychedelic Reader: Selected from the Psychedelic Review*, eds. Gunther M. Weil, Ralph Metzner, and Timothy Leary (Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1965), 145; and Paul Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs: A Complete Guide to Their History, Chemistry, Use and Abuse* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 400.

[15] See Havelock Ellis, “Mescal: A Study of a Divine Plant,” *Popular Science Monthly*, January 1903, 237-53; and Havelock Ellis, “Mescal: A New Artificial Paradise,” *The Contemporary Review*, January 1898, reprinted in *Wildest Dreams: An Anthology of Drug-Related Literature*, ed. Richard Rudgley (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1999), 272-88.

healthy person to be once or twice admitted to the rites of mescal is not only an unforgettable delight but an educational influence of no mean value."[16]

But while they lived on in library books and literature courses, descriptions such as these were absent from the mass media for most of the twentieth century as a result of obscenity laws, industry codes, and government activism. In television, film, and publishing, material about drugs was frequently suppressed for fear that any depiction of drug use might serve as an enticement. When magazines covered LSD in the 1950s and 1960s, they offered information unavailable in other media.

Suppression of Drug Speech Through Obscenity Laws and Industry Codes

The deliberate suppression of information about drugs dates back to the 1870s, near the end of a period recognized as a paradise for dope fiends, when opium, cocaine and hashish concoctions were widely available from druggists and through the mail.[17] Drug information—specifically, information about drugs that produced abortion or prevented pregnancy—was a major focus of the post-Civil War crusade against obscenity led by New York Society for the Suppression of Vice founder and U.S. Post Office special agent Anthony Comstock. The 1873 the federal Comstock Law specifically forbade publishing or mailing information, instructions, "or any drug or medicine, or any article whatever, for the prevention of conception or for causing unlawful abortion," as

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[16] Ellis, "Mescal: A New Artificial Paradise," 286, 288.

[17] Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 3.

well as "obscene, lewd or lascivious" materials.[18] Forty years after the passage of the law, Comstock boasted he had "convicted persons enough to fill a passenger train of sixty-one coaches, sixty coaches containing sixty passengers each and the sixty-first almost full. I have destroyed 160 tons of obscene literature."[19]

Comstock-era attacks on obscenity drew on an understanding articulated in the 1868 English ruling in *Regina v. Hicklin*.[20] Under that decision, obscenity was defined in terms of that which could be harmful to women, children, or the mentally deficient. "The tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall," the English Court had found.[21] Using this definition, courts had found ample grounds to ban printed information about birth control and abortion, as well as racy books. Among the hundreds prosecuted under the Comstock Law was Edward Bliss Foote, inventor of the rubber diaphragm, and birth control advocate Margaret Sanger, who fled indictment in 1915 for sending birth control information through the mail.[22]

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[18] *An Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use*, 42nd Cong., 3rd sess., (March 3, 1873), *Statutes at Large of the United States of America, 1789-1873*, ch. 258, 598.

[19] Frederick F. Schauer, *The Law of Obscenity* (Washington, D.C.: The Bureau of National Affairs, 1976), 13.

[20] Richard F. Hixson, *Pornography and the Justices: The Supreme Court and the Intractable Obscenity Problem* (Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 9.

[21] *Regina v. Hicklin*, quoted in Marjorie Heins, *Not in Front of the Children: "Indecency," Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 28.

[22] Jack Hafferkamp, "Un-Banning Books," in *Porn 101: Eroticism, Pornography, and the First Amendment*, eds. James Elias, Veronica Diehl Elias, Bern L. Bullough,

The use of drugs for birth control was considered illicit at the time, but illicit (or recreational) drug use as we understand it today was curbed as well. It was a popular subject in the earliest, half-minute films shown in coin-operated arcades, in part because it gave directors an opportunity to show off trick effects. One of the first films created was *Opium Den* by W.K. Laurie Dickson for Thomas Edison in 1894.[23] While obscenity cases against books were prosecuted on an *ad hoc* basis, often at the instigation of local anti-vice societies, early films were subject to systematic censorship and licensing in many cities and states. The U.S. Supreme Court established that films were not protected under the First Amendment in *Mutual Film Corp. v. Industrial Commission 236 U.S. 230 (1915)*, but were rather "business pure and simple," and hence subject to state regulation, just as any other business. This ruling was not reversed until 1952.[24] Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kansas, Maryland, New York, and Virginia all passed legislation creating film censorship boards between 1913 and 1922.[25]

Commerce in narcotic drugs was not effectively regulated in the United States until the passage of the Harrison Narcotic Act in 1914.[26] Several state censorship laws

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Gwen Brewer, Jeffrey Douglas and Will Jarvis (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1999), 401.

[23] Michael Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness: An Illustrated History of Drugs in the Movies* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1982), 13.

[24] Daniel S. Moretti, *Obscenity and Pornography: The Law Under the First Amendment* (New York: Oceana Publications Inc.: 1984), 87-88.

[25] Garth S. Jowett, "'A Capacity for Evil': The 1915 Supreme Court *Mutual* Decision," in *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era*, ed. Matthew Bernstein (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 21-25.

[26] John C. McWilliams, "Through the Past Darkly: The Politics and Policies of America's Drug War," in *Drug Control Policy: Essays in Historical and Comparative*

from this period specifically mentioned drugs, as well as sexual and other immoral activities. Instructive details of the "use of opium and other habit-forming drugs" were prohibited in Maryland. Ohio prohibited "scenes which show the use of narcotics and other unnatural practices dangerous to social morality as attractive." In Massachusetts the law read, "pictures and parts of pictures dealing with the drug habit: e.g., the use of opium, morphine, cocaine, etc. will be disapproved."[27]

By the end of 1921**,** censorship legislation was being considered in 36 states.[28] At the same time, Hollywood was under increasing pressure to clean up its act, following several gossip-page scandals: the Fatty Arbuckle rape and murder trial in San Francisco, followed by the possibly drug-related homicide of Paramount Studios director William Desmond Taylor and the cocaine addiction of star Mabel Normand. In response, studio executives drew up a "black list" of 117 drug users and addicts who were warned to sober up or lose their jobs.[29] In order to escape further regulation from outside, studios formed the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association of America and hired Postmaster General Will H. Hays as its head.[30]

The National Association of the Motion Picture Industry condemned "stories that make gambling and drunkenness attractive or scenes that show the use of narcotics and

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Perspective, ed. William O. Walker III (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 9-10.

[27] Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness*, 54.

[28] Murray Schumach, *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor: The Story of Movie and Television Censorship* (New York: H. Wolff, 1964), 19.

[29] Jill Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams: A History of America's Romance with Illegal Drugs* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 59-60.

[30] Schumach, *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor*, 19.

other unnatural practices dangerous to social morality," in a 1921 statement. The Association of Motion Picture Producers and the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association of America issued a resolution in 1927 discouraging the use of the word "drugs" in connection with smuggling. "Naturally, the methods of distributing illegal drugs, and of peddling dope may never be shown since this is an art of the 'traffic' in drugs."[31]

The Motion Picture Production Code developed under Hays was adopted in 1930 and went into effect in 1934. The original version of the Code stated: "Illegal drug traffic must never be presented. Because of its evil consequences, the drug traffic should never be presented in any form. The existence of the trade should not be brought to the attention of audiences." The Code was amended in 1946: "The Illegal drug traffic must not be portrayed in such a way as to stimulate curiosity concerning the use or traffic in such drugs; nor shall scenes be approved which show the use of illegal drugs, or their effects in detail."

Hollywood's Production Code effectively drove any depictions of drug use from the silver screen from its implementation in 1934 to the late 1940s, when the Production Code Authority approved several films made with the participation of Federal Bureau of Narcotics officials. According to a Production Code Authority staff member, U.S. Narcotics Commissioner Harry Anslinger "used information concerning the drug abuse of several stars at MGM to blackmail the Motion Picture Association when it sought to

[31] Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness*, 55.

eliminate the drug provision from the Code in 1948."[32] No films depicting drug use or trafficking were granted certificates of approval from the Production Code Authority until 1948, with the approval of *To the Ends of the Earth*, an adventure about an international narcotic investigation that was made with the cooperation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and included Anslinger, appearing as himself, in its cast. The FBN also participated in the making of the 1949 *Johnny Stoolpigeon*, reviewing scripts and enjoying pre-release screenings. One other movie that received Production Code Authority approval despite depicting drug smuggling was *Slattery's Hurricane*, presumably because it was made with Navy cooperation.[33]

But it was not until 1955 that Hollywood shattered the cinematic silence about drug use with *The Man with the Golden Arm*. The film's happy depiction of narcotics use and its happy ending were understood by the director and studio to comprise a test case to challenge the Code. Anslinger condemned the film, which starred Frank Sinatra as a heroin-addicted card dealer, in a front-page story in *Variety* before production was even complete.[34] The movie was released to theaters in 1956 without Production Code Authority approval. The film was successful with audiences and won three Oscar

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[32] Jerold Simmons, "Challenging the Production Code: *The Man with the Golden Arm," Journal of Popular Film and Television* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 42.

[33] Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness*, 55-56.

[34] Simmons, "Challenging the Production Code: *The Man with the Golden Arm*," 42.

nominations.[35] In order to repair the damage, the Production Code Authority amended the Code in 1956 to permit showing drug use as long as it was presented in a negative light:

> Drug addiction or the illicit traffic in addiction-producing drugs shall not be shown if the portrayal:
> (a) Tends in any manner to encourage, stimulate or justify the use of such drugs; or
> (b) Stresses, visually or by dialogue, their temporarily attractive effects; or
> (c) Suggests that the drug habit may be quickly or easy broken; or
> (d) Emphasizes the profits of the drug traffic; or
> (e) Involves children who are shown knowingly to use or traffic in drugs.[36]

Similar prohibition was written into the Television Code, which was adopted by the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters in 1951, amid calls by church and Congressional leaders to clean up television content.[37] Network censors who reviewed abstracts of programs only inconsistently applied the television code, which remained in place through early 1970s and did not apply to news programs.[38] Among prohibitions on sexual content, lotteries, and swearing, the 1951 television code stated: "Drunkenness and narcotic addiction are never presented as desirable or prevalent;" and "The administration of illegal drugs will not be displayed."[39]

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[35] IMDb.com, "*The Man with the Golden Arm*," Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048347/ (accessed June 24, 2008).

[36] Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness*, 56.

[37] Matthew Murray, "Television Wipes its Feet: The Commercial and Ethical Considerations Behind the Adoption of the Television Code," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 22, no. 2 (Fall: 1993): 128.

[38] Schumach, *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor*, 227-33.

[39] National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, "Code of Practices for Television Broadcasters," adopted December 6, 1951. See "Television History – The

The hard line against depictions of drug use in the electronic media did not carry over to magazines, which featured occasional articles describing the horrors and risks of drug use. Harry Anslinger himself occasionally wrote for popular magazines, producing articles that epitomized a style of acceptable drug speech: sensational, unremittingly hostile toward drug use and users, and very entertaining.

The Loudest Voice: Harry Anslinger's War on Speech

Anslinger was appointed by President Herbert Hoover to head the independent Federal Bureau of Narcotics within the Treasury Department in 1930. For the next 32 years, the bullying, bald-headed bureaucrat was the face of U.S. drug prohibition. During his long tenure as the nation's top drug cop, Anslinger was one of the loudest and most consistent public voices about the drug issue. He used his post as U.S. Narcotics Commissioner as a bully pulpit to decry drugs and the criminal behavior of drug users, speaking to the public through magazine interviews and popular magazine articles that appeared under his byline.[40] But despite his occasional role as a magazine writer,

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First 75 Years," TVhistory.tv, http://www.tvhistory.tv/SEAL-Good-Practice.htm (accessed June 24, 2008).

[40] See, for example, H.J. Anslinger, "Marijuana, Assassin of Youth," *American Magazine*, July 1937, 18; H.J. Anslinger, "Marijuana More Dangerous than Heroin or Cocaine," *Scientific American*, May 1938, 293; H.J. Anslinger, "Another Problem for the Big Cities," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 6, 1959, 74-74; H. J. Anslinger, "Facts About Our Teenaged Drug Addicts," *Reader's Digest*, October 1951, 137-40; H. J. Anslinger, "Teen-age Dope Addicts; New Problem?" *U.S. News & World Report*, June 29, 1951, 18-19. Prior to taking the position of U.S. Narcotics Commissioner, Anslinger also wrote a feature article about the dangers posed by sharks and barracuda for the *Saturday Evening Post*. See H.J. Anslinger, "Tiger of the Sea," *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 12, 1926; 58.

Anslinger was anything but a proponent of open speech. The commissioner embraced the opportunity to rail against drugs, but steadfastly opposed any kind of expression that would give the impression that drug use was common, let alone rewarding or glamorous, and worked to silence speech or research that examined drugs as anything other than a law-enforcement problem.

In the 1930s, Anslinger's tales of marijuana-induced murders, rapes, and attacks on police flavored the debate over the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act, leading to the criminalization of cannabis.[41] In several articles in popular magazines, the narcotics commissioner declared that smoking marijuana sometimes caused insanity, a belief supported by some health experts at the time.[42] A 1937 article in *American Magazine* that bore the commissioner's byline, "Marijuana, Assassin of Youth," opened with a dramatic description girl's body sprawled on the sidewalk after a plunge from a Chicago apartment house. It looked like suicide, but the killer was "a narcotic known to America as marijuana." Anslinger continued:

> How many murders, suicides, robberies, criminal assaults, holdups, burglaries, and deeds of maniacal insanity it causes each year, especially among the young, can only be conjectured. … Here indeed is an unknown quantity among narcotics. No one knows, when he places a marijuana cigarette to his lips, whether he will become a philosopher, a joyous reveler in a musical heaven, a mad insensate, a calm philosopher, or a

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[41] See McWilliams, "Through the Past Darkly," 13-17; Larry Sloman, *Reefer Madness: A History of Marijuana* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 35-83; and Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams*, 128-29.

[42] When asked if smoking marijuana caused insanity, the physician who headed the Division of Pharmacology of the National Institute of Health said, "I think it is an established fact that prolonged use leads to insanity in certain cases, depending upon the amount taken, of course," at an interagency meeting in 1938. See Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams*, 128-29.

murderer.[43]

The effect of the drug was described as unpredictable and uncontrollable, and capable of wrestling away an individual's regard for law, morals, and self-preservation. In short, it was madness. "Addicts may often develop a delirious rage in which they are temporarily and violently insane," Anslinger wrote. "This insanity may take the form of a desire for self-destruction or a persecution complex to be satisfied only by the commission of some heinous crime."[44] In an article in *Scientific American* the following year, Anslinger reiterated that "Bureau records prove that its [marijuana's] use is associated with insanity and crime" and provided a list of effects, attributed to an unnamed "authority" that described a madman:

> 1. Feeling of unaccountable hilarity.
> 2. Excitation and a disassociation of ideas; the weakening of power to direct thoughts.
> 3. Errors in time and space.
> 4. Intensification of auditory sensibilities, causing profound dejection or mad gaiety.
> 5. Fixed ideas; delirious conviction. This is a type of intellectual injury so frequent in mental alienation. The user imagines the most unbelievable things, giving way to monstrous extravagances.
> 6. Emotional disturbance during which the user is powerless to direct his thoughts, loses the power to resist emotions, and may commit a violence which knows no bounds when disorders of the intellect have reached a point of incoherence. During this dangerous phenomenon, evil instincts are brought to the surface and cause a fury to rage within the user.
> 7. Irresistible impulses which may result in suicide.[45]

By the 1960s, marijuana was largely understood to be a mild intoxicant, perhaps as

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[43] H.J. Anslinger, "Marijuana, Assassin of Youth," 18.
[44] Ibid., 150.
[45] H.J. Anslinger, "Marijuana More Dangerous than Heroin or Cocaine," 293.

dangerous as alcohol and worrisome to the extent it might lead to more dangerous drugs.[46] However, the same fears of unrestrained impulsiveness and loss of self-control were expressed in strikingly similar ways in coverage of the new drug of the moment, LSD. LSD became the drug of madness and irrationality.

Magazine coverage of LSD in the years immediately prior to its prohibition also employed a quality of evidence similar to Anslinger's journalism in the late 1930s. The commissioner did not use national statistics or data about the prevalence of marijuana use, but rather dramatized the phenomenon through anecdotal horror stories, told in lavish detail, but with no names and few hard facts. He was known to embroider.[47] As well as the stoned girl who cheerfully decided to solve her school problems by tossing herself out the window, Anslinger described a dazed marijuana addict who murdered his entire family with an ax. ("'I had a terrible dream,' he said. 'People tried to hack off my arms!'")[48] Similarly suspect anecdotes, complete with nearly identical cop-transcribed quotations, would be told and retold in magazine coverage of LSD, often with a similar level of attribution.

Because they were not about LSD, Anslinger's forays into journalism did not surface through the *Readers' Guide* search that constituted the selection criteria for the formal content analysis. However, his articles are valuable as exemplars of a certain style of anti-drug journalism. According to the content analysis criteria, the articles were one-

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[46] For example, see Richard Goldstein, "Drugs on the Campus: Who's Smoking Marijuana—and Experimenting with LSD—and Why? A Coast-to-Coast Survey," *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 21, 1966, 40-41.

[47] Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams*, 159.

[48] Anslinger, "Marijuana, Assassin of Youth," 18-19, 150-51.

sided, presenting only information congruent with the author's central thesis that drug use was unacceptably dangerous and immoral. They displayed a bias against non-medical use of drugs. There was heavy emphasis on side effects, the permanent damage to the individual said to result from drug use. Finally, there were no descriptions or explanations of drug use from a user's perspective. Unrelentingly hostile toward drug use, they offered no information that might lead a prospective user to make a poor choice.

In keeping with the image he cultivated as a hard-line crime fighter, Anslinger was hostile toward efforts to study treatment or addiction and brought pressure to bear to squelch views that did not support tougher drug laws or a strict law-enforcement approach.[49] A former Federal Bureau of Narcotics detective and staff lawyer in the 1950s told a journalist:

> [Anslinger] tried to suppress anyone's reports or information that would be contrary to his policy. If push came to shove and he couldn't effectively suppress it in its early stages, he would try to suppress the man, the preparer of the report, as some weirdo. Some person of poor judgment who should be discredited.[50]

The targets of Anslinger's attacks included politicians, writers, and academics. He denounced New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and the New York Academy of Medicine in 1944, when the Academy released "The LaGuardia Marijuana Report," which found the drug did not have catastrophic effects.[51] Fourteen years later, Anslinger

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[49] Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams*, 159-60.

[50] Sloman, *Reefer Madness*, 207.

[51] See Rufus King, *The Drug Hang-Up: America's Fifty-Year Folly* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 82-85; Jack Herrer, *The Emperor Wears No Clothes: The Authoritative Historical Record of the Cannabis Plant, Marijuana Prohibition, & How*

attempted to discredit a joint American Bar Association – American Medical Association report on narcotic drugs, which contemplated a medical model for the treatment of addiction. Heresies in the report included suggestions that physicians be permitted to prescribe narcotic drugs during the treatment of addicts, that prison was not a good solution for the problem of addiction, and that outpatient addiction treatment be explored. Anslinger attacked the report by questioning the motives of committee members, charging that the document would aid America's communist enemies, and sending Treasury agents to prevail on the foundation that was to pay for its publication. The bureau broadly distributed a comprehensive attack on the report in 1959, while blocking government distribution of the original report and funding for additional ABA-AMA projects. The report was published three years after its completion by the Indiana University Press through the efforts of Indiana sociologist Alfred Lindesmith.[52]

Lindesmith, an early advocate of the medical treatment of drug addiction, was first targeted in 1939 when the Narcotics Commissioner charged that the academic was associated with "a collection of racketeers."[53] Anslinger solicited a judge to write a refutation of a 1940 article by Lindesmith in *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, demanded a correction for a 1948 article in the journal *Federal Probation*, and in 1950 asked J. Edgar Hoover if Lindesmith was a "member of any Communist-

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Hemp Can Save the World, 10th ed. (Van Nuys, Calif.: HEMP/Queen of Clubs Publishing, 1995); and Sloman, *Reefer Madness*, 200-1.

[52] King, *The Drug Hang-Up*, 161-75.

[53] John F. Galliher, David P. Keys and Michael Elsner, "Lindesmith v. Anslinger: An Early Government Victory in the Failed War on Drugs," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 88, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 667.

Front organizations." The FBN ultimately concluded this to be the case.[54] Anslinger employed similar tactics in 1958 when he machinated censures for the members of a group within the National Institute of Health who held a symposium on narcotics legislation.[55]

Lindesmith and Anslinger also butted heads over Lindesmith's attempt to show the 1948 Canadian documentary, *The Drug Addict*, in the United States. Produced by the National Film Board of Canada with the assistance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the film supported a medical approach to drug treatment, suggested that complete control was impossible, and advocated moderate reform. Anslinger, who wrote that showing the film "would do incalculable damage in the way of spreading drug addiction," successfully prevailed upon the State Department and the Public Health Service to ban the documentary in the United States. The Canadian government, however, rejected Anslinger's request to censor the film in Canada.[56] The movie had won an Academy of Canadian Film and Television award for best documentary.[57]

More than any other single individual, Harry Anslinger managed the system of formal and informal controls that limited what Americans heard about drug use and drug

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[54] Ibid., 678-79.

[55] Rebecca Carroll, "The Narcotic Control Act Triggers the Great Nondebate: Treatment Loses to Punishment," in *Federal Drug Control: The Evolution of Policy and Practice*, eds. Jonathon Erlen and Joseph F. Spillane (New York: Pharmaceutical Products Press, 2004), 119.

[56] Galliher, Keys and Elsner, "Lindesmith v. Anslinger," 670-78. The quotation, from a 1950 letter to Motion Picture Association of America president Eric Johnson, appears on page 673.

[57] National Film Board of Canada, "Our Collection: *Drug Addict*," http://www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/?id=16688&v=h&lg=en&exp=$%257B%255C (accessed June 24, 2008).

users. The tactics of suppression and condemnation would break down in the late 1960s, with the collapse of the film code, increasing permissiveness on the part of network censors, and the emergence of a popular culture smitten with psychedelic experience.

Sex, not Drugs: Constricting the Definition of the Obscene

Even as television networks and movie studios embraced self-regulation to quiet legislators' concerns about racy and raunchy programming, a long series of court decisions was chiseling away at the government's authority to directly suppress books and films. While talk about sex, politics, and drugs often went hand in hand, two disparate traditions of analysis developed for political and sexual speech. Anti-government or political speech fell under the legal tradition stemming from sedition, while obscenity was increasingly narrowly defined in terms of sex. As the Supreme Court progressively refined the circumstances under which either of these free-speech exceptions could be applied, speech about drugs fell between the cracks. Neither sexual nor seditious, by default drug speech became more difficult to prosecute.[58]

The legal basis for considering descriptions of drug use in literature as obscenity

[58] But it was not impossible. In 2007, the high court affirmed that speech about drugs may be banned from a school setting, even if not disruptive, lewd or offensive, or an invitation to lawless action. In the opinion of the court, written by Justice John Roberts, the "special characteristics of the school environment, *Tinker, 393 U.S. at 506*, and the governmental interest in stopping student drug abuse – reflected in the policies of Congress and myriad school boards, including JDHS – allow schools to restrict student expression that they reasonably regard as promoting illegal drug use." See *Morse v. Frederick, 551 U.S. ___(2007)*,14.

began to crumble in 1933, as the result of an influential district court decision to allow James Joyce's *Ulysses* to be imported from France. That decision, affirmed by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, redefined obscenity in terms of its imagined effect on an "average reader," rather than on women or children or others deemed especially impressionable.[59] Courts also narrowed the definition of what kinds of material may be conceded to be harmful. In 1960, a federal appeals court upheld in the case against D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* that even "normal sexual interest" (as opposed to prurience) is acceptable in a work of literary merit.[60] The test for obscenity finally adopted by the Supreme Court in the landmark 1973 case *Miller v. California* required that, to be prohibited, material must describe "sexual conduct or excretory function" in a way that appeals to the reader's "prurient interest," a definition that excludes drug use.[61]

Over roughly the same period, the Supreme Court also narrowed the circumstances under which non-obscene speech can be suppressed out of concern for how listeners might react. Starting in 1919, the court had upheld convictions of socialists and other political dissidents for engaging in speech the justices perceived as having the potential to spark revolution or other "substantive evils."[62] But over the next few decades, "the value of free speech was clearly going up, and the realistic danger of evil was clearly

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[59] Hixson, *Pornography and the Justices*, 11-12.

[60] Hafferkamp, "Un-Banning Books," 404.

[61] Henry Cohen, *Freedom of Speech and Press: Exceptions to the First Amendment* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2007), 2.

[62] Darien A. McWhirter, *Freedom of Speech, Press and Assembly* (Pheonix: The Oryx Press, 1994), 43-50.

going down, at least in the minds of the justices," Darien A. McWhirter wrote. [63] In 1959, the Supreme Court decided the film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was protected speech even though it was perceived as advocating adultery, which at that time was a violation of New York state law. [64] The emerging emphasis on freedom of speech reached what McWhirter called its "outer limit" in the *Brandenburg v. Ohio 395 U.S. 444 (1969).*[65] The court overturned the conviction of a Ku Klux Klan leader under a law that made it a crime to "advocate the duty, necessity or propriety of crime." In doing so, the court established the current test: advocacy of criminal behavior is protected unless "such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action."[66] The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals cited these cases when it overturned a lower court's decision to deny bail to Timothy Leary based on the likelihood that, if free, Leary would advocate illegal drugs and thereby pose a danger to the community. The appeals court concluded that it would be unconstitutional to silence Leary unless members of his audience could be reasonably expected to purchase illegal drugs immediately after hearing him advocate their use.[67]

Anslinger resigned as head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in 1962. Historian Jill Jonnes described the bureau he left behind as small, riddled with corruption, and

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[63] Ibid., 48-49.

[64] *Kingsley International Pictures Corp. v. Regents 360 U.S. 684 (1959)*.

[65] McWhirter, *Freedom of Speech, Press and Assembly*, 51.

[66] Cohen, *Freedom of Speech and Press*, 14.

[67] *Columbia Law Review*, "Denial of Bail pending Appeal to Prevent Advocacy of Use of Illegal Drugs Held Unconstitutional Infringement of Free Speech," *Columbia Law Review* 70, no. 8 (December 1970): 1460-67.

ineffectual in its central mission of fighting drug trafficking.[68] Described as a "consummate bureaucrat" by more than one historian, Anslinger had argued that he had the drug trade under control rather than asking for more agents, even as heroin use surged in the 1950s.[69] Economists have observed that law enforcement agencies may have an incentive to exaggerate the prevalence of crime, in order to secure their own funding. Anslinger played by a different strategy, downplaying the prevalence crime (and foregoing the fight for additional funding) in order to maintain the impression of success.

Society's suppression of speech about illegal drugs was more of a patchwork effort than a coordinated campaign, ultimately relying as much on cultural sensibilities as the law. That is not to say it was ineffective. The works of three Beat Generation writers considered most influential in sparking the 1960s interest in underground culture and drugs, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Buroughs, were all subject to obscenity prosecutions.[70] A San Francisco judge in 1957 found that Ginsberg's *Howl* was not obscene, despite its sexual content, because it had literary merit.[71] In Chicago in 1959, a judge reversed the Post Office's determination that an issue of *Big Table* literary magazine could not be mailed because a story by Kerouac contained "words that mention the private parts of the anatomy, bodily functions and various types of sexual perversions and aberrations expressed in terms of the lowest vehicle that can be used to convey their

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[68] Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams*, 191-201.

[69] Ibid. Anslinger is described as a "consummate bureaucrat" in *Ibid.*, 158; and McWilliams, "Through the Past Darkly," 13.

[70] The influence of Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs on popular drug use in the 1960s is discussed in Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs and Pipe Dreams*, 205-16.

[71] Edward de Grazia, "How Justice Brennan Freed Novels and Movies during the Sixties," *Cardoza Studies in Law and Literature* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1996): 260.

meanings." The Post Office hearing officer had similarly condemned a story by Burroughs in the same publication as "vile, vulgar and filthy."[72] The 1962 Massachusetts decision to ban *Naked Lunch* was predicated on the novel's treatment of "the interrelationship of sex and violence, sex and cannibalism, with bestiality, with homosexual exploitation," rather than its descriptions of drug use. The ban was reversed in 1966.[73]

Although the works of all these writers were ultimately allowed to reach the public, the specter of legal problems may have discouraged others. In an introduction to Burroughs' *Junky*, Ginsberg recalled a stifling fear of prosecution for talking, let alone publishing, about drugs in the 1950s:

> There was at the time – not unknown to the present with its leftover vibrations of police state paranoia, cultivated by narcotic bureaus – a very heavy implicit thought-form, or assumption: that if you talked about "tea" (much less junk) on the bus or the subway, you might be arrested – even if you were only discussing a change in the law. It was just about illegal to talk about dope. A decade later you still couldn't get away with a national public TV discussion of the laws without the Narcotics Bureau and FCC intruding with canned film clips weeks later denouncing the debate. That's history. But the fear and terror that [*Junky* editor Carl] Solomon refers to was so real that it had been internalized in the publishing industry, and so, before the book could be published, all sorts of disclaimers had to be interleaved with the text – lest the publisher be implicated criminally with the author.[74]

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[72] Full text of the U.S. Post Office's administrative decision in the matter of *Big Table* magazine Issue No.1, Spring 1959 is available from the web site of the The Poetry Center of Chicago, http://www.poetrycenter.org/about/perspectives/usps.html (accessed June 25, 2008).

[73] Michael Barry Goodman, *Contemporary Literary Censorship: The Case History of Burroughs' Naked Lunch*, (Metuchen, N.J., The Scarecrow Press: 1981), 2, 4.

[74] The introduction to the 1977 edition of *Junky* was reprinted in Allen Ginsberg, *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, (New York, HarperCollins: 2000), 382-85. The quoted section is on page 384.

Until the resurgence of interest in hallucinogenic drugs in the late 1950s, sympathetic descriptions of drug use, including subjective drug experiences, and especially illegal drug experiences, were not considered suitable material for family publications. Perhaps inevitably, journalists' instincts for sensationalism took hold when flirting around the edges of that which could not be described directly. When tough-guy actor Robert Mitchum was nabbed by police detectives smoking marijuana with two women in a cabin in Laurel Canyon, just outside Hollywood, on September 1, 1948 the press demonstrated its fascination and horror. *Time* quoted Mitchum's confession to police:

> "This is the bitter end of everything—my career, my home, my marriage. Sure, I've been smoking marijuana since I was a kid. I guess I always knew I'd get caught. My [estranged] wife and kids are on their way out here now. The stage was set for a big reconciliation. Ha! With that temper of hers, she'll turn right around and head back East. … How does marijuana affect you? Well, try it yourself sometime . . ."[75]

Mitchum biographer Lee Server demonstrated that the quotation, which the actor renounced, was likely a police fabrication.[76] Nevertheless, it was widely quoted in contemporary coverage, perhaps because it gave the journalists something they could use: a description of drug use as damnable and regrettable, with a broken career as the only effect worth describing.

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[75] "Crisis in Hollywood," *Time*, September 13, 1948, 100.

[76] Lee Server, *Robert Mitchum: "Baby, I Don't Care"* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 167, 171-72.

For Indians Only: Early Coverage of the Native American Church

One context in which it was acceptable to discuss drug use in the media was when decrying its evils or calling for greater regulation, a practice occasionally engaged in by Anslinger himself.[77] In his writings and proclamations, Anslinger located drug use within minority communities and characterized it in the most depraved terms when calling for its abolition.[78] Throughout American history, "the most passionate support for legal prohibition of narcotics has been associated with the fear of a given drug's effect on a specific minority," Musto observed.[79] The prohibition of opium, marijuana, and cocaine were accompanied by hysterical media coverage associating each of the drugs with sexual aggressiveness or violence by Chinese, Mexicans, and blacks, respectively. Each major wave of drug prohibition took place when the social order appeared threatened by competition for economic or political power from the minority group. "Customary use of a certain drug came to symbolize the difference between that group and the rest of society; eliminating the drug might alleviate social disharmony and preserve old order," Musto wrote.[80]

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[77] See, for example, H.J. Anslinger, "Another Problem for the Big Cities," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 6, 1959, 74-76; H.J. Anslinger, "Facts About Our Teen-Age Drug Addicts," *Reader's Digest*, October 1951, 137-40; H.J. Anslinger, "Marihuana More Dangerous than Heroin or Cocaine," *Scientific American*, May 1938, 293; and H.J. Anslinger, "Marijuana, Assassin of Youth," *American Magazine*, July 1937, 18.

[78] See Anslinger, "Marijuana, Assassin of Youth," 18; and Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams*, 200.

[79] Musto, *The American Disease*, 294.

[80] Ibid., 294-95. The association between drugs and minorities and the lower class is discussed at length in John Helmer, *Drugs and Minority Oppression* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

This association between drug use and a perceived social backwardness among its minority users was on clear display in coverage of the Native American Church, which in the early 1950s was enmeshed in a legal battle over the sacramental use of peyote buttons, a natural source of mescaline. Archeological evidence suggests that Native peoples in Mexico and the American Southwest have consumed hallucinogenic cacti and mushrooms for 10,000 years to experience visions as part of religious rituals.[81] The practice continued in twentieth-century America under the auspice of the Native American Church, whose ritual use of peyote was repeatedly threatened with prohibition by state legislatures and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[82]

Although mescaline was similar in effect to LSD, the laboratory drug magazine editors would find so fascinating, the magazines displayed little curiosity about Indians' sensation from a mescaline high. In general, the magazines were preoccupied with links between peyote use and the Indians' relationship with larger society, whether as victims of progress or potential criminals. Little effort was made to explain the peyote experience from the perspective of the Indian users, who were presented as unsophisticated and were not paraphrased or quoted.

The most extreme example was a 1951 article in *Time* that described Navajos, "already wretched in their poverty and disease," as "easy prey for peyote peddlers."[83] The church was presented as a front for orgiastic "peyote parties" that lasted until dawn and

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[81] Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs*, 397.

[82] Omer C. Stewart, *The Peyote Religion* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 213-38.

[83] "Button, Button…," *Time*, June 18, 1951, 82.

ended in dismal hangovers, cured with canned peaches and sweets. While the article briefly described the drug's effect as "dreams in Technicolor" and side effects (unsubstantiated in scholarly literature) including heart and kidney damage, the article's primary concern was the behavior of Indians hopped up on the drug. A "paleface intruder" described a scene where both children and adults gathered around a fire and a "crude" sand painting for a "peyote hassle":

> The liquid was doled out in cups. After that, said the observer, it was "every man for himself." Men hopped up with peyote, he reported, "are likely to grab the closest female, whatever age, kinfolk or not."
>
> **Plentiful Supply.** There have been many cases of reported sex crimes, some against children, committed under the influence of peyote. Last week Dr. Clarence G. Salsbury, longtime medical missionary among the Navajos (and longtime foe of the Indian Bureau), reported that he had just heard of two cases of infanticide and one of fatal child neglect caused by peyote. At Flagstaff's Navajo Ordinance Depot many Indians were unable to work for days at a time after peyote jags. At least one-third of the 61,000 Navajos are estimated to be addicts.[84]

In a statement published in *Science* six months later, five anthropologists disputed that the drug is addicting or used for other than spiritual or medical purposes by members of the Native American Church.[85] Their statement specifically rebutted the contention of "antipeyote propagandists," (contained in the *Time* article's lead) that fruit and candy

[84] Ibid.

[85] Weston La Barre, David P. McAllester, J.S. Slotkin, Omer C. Stewart, and Sol Tax, "Statement on Peyote," S*cience* 114 (November 30, 1951): 532-33.

were eaten to get over a peyote hangover.[86] A briefer version of their comments was also published in *Scientific American.*[87]

Other publications were less condemnatory of peyote use than *Time*, but they too had little interest in exploring the meaning of the peyote experience outside of a specifically Indian context. A 1950 article for collectors of Indian relics in *Hobbies* magazine described how Native Americans, demoralized by the power of the Christian God, "found that their habit of eating peyote to dull pain or terror and give them a feeling of great strength, brought this foreign God to them in a way they understood." The article, which contained no direct quotations, also explained the drug's effect as "visions in Technicolor."[88] The article in *Hobbies* concluded that peyote "has never been a moral issue," was not habit-forming and "has served to bring the Indians and Christianity closer together."[89] A subsequent article in the same magazine presented a brief description of peyotism among Omaha Indians without editorial comment or direct quotations.[90] Even the most rapturous description, found in a 1948 article in *Travel*, quickly shifted from the user's perspective on the drug experience to the perspective of an anthropologist or tourist:

> The visions or manifestations range from the weirdly grotesque—turkeys with straw hats and dogs with wings—to scenes of breathtaking beauty—valleys of roses and dancing rainbows above purple seas—all rapidly changing, almost incredibly colored, and observed with a sensation of rapturous ecstasy. Forgotten are the days of labor beneath hot sun, the

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[86] Ibid., 532.
[87] "Peyote," *Scientific American*, October 1951, 38-39.
[88] Elizabeth X. Green, "Peyote Cult," *Hobbies*, March 1950, 142.
[89] Ibid., 143.
[90] James H. Howard, "Omaha Peyotism," *Hobbies*, September 1951, 142.

> dust, the poverty. In their haven of fantasy they glimpse, however briefly, all the loveliness and joy of their utopian hunting grounds.[91]

Meaning was assigned to the peyote experience through observation, rather than use. To explain the real significance of these visions, *Travel* left the reservation and turned to parapsychologists, presenting the results of a range of studies that demonstrated how mescaline enhanced extrasensory perception and "supernormal mental abilities."[92]

The magazines varied widely in their editorializing on peyotism, but none contained the multiple sources or contrasting viewpoints that are associated with balance in news reporting. All were one-sided. While the articles in *Travel* and *Hobbies* contained some description of the drug effect, it was brief and described from a clinical perspective, not as user testimonial. Indian religion was presented as exotic to look at, but not enticing to try.

The Psychedelic Exception

While dismissive of Native Americans' visions, magazine editors were fascinated when scientists wielded a man-made version of the same drug in a laboratory. In the 1950s, scientists developed a theory that the effects of mescaline were related to the symptoms of insanity. As a result, the subjective experiences they produced became worth studying. No longer degenerate souls seeking escape from misery, drug subjects became courageous explorers for science. There was no question of morals or legality.

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[91] Vincent H. Gaddis, "*The Cult of the Sacred Cactus*," *Travel*, November, 1948, 17.

[92] Ibid., 17, 33.

Magazines printed enticing, subjective descriptions of psychedelic drug experiences that would have been unacceptable had they been attributed to a street-drug user.

One of the first popular magazine articles to describe the resurgence of scientific interest in mescaline appeared in *Newsweek* in 1953. "Mescal Madness" discussed the theory, which guided research with mescaline and LSD for about half a decade, that the drugs induced temporary schizophrenia. *Newsweek* explained that researchers also used cocaine, morphine, and marijuana to induce "experimental psychoses" in normal people, but these drugs were habit-forming and left the subjects unable to describe what they had experienced. Mescaline was the best drug discovered so far, allowing the subject to visit bizarre realms and describe them afterward with unblurred consciousness. *Newsweek* relayed scientists' hopes that from studying mescaline trips, they could understand madness:

> "In mescaline, we have an agent which can reproduce in the normal subject under experimental conditions all those phenomena which are found in the subject of so-called psychogenic psychosis," declares Dr. G. Taylor Stockings, Birmingham, England, psychiatrist, in the *Journal of Mental Science*. "The drug is therefore of the greatest importance as a method of approach to the understanding of mental disorder."[93]

Understanding the kind of drug experience that had previously been beneath polite discussion was now an important scientific puzzle. The same article included a quotation from Havelock Ellis and a paragraph describing a typical experience as nausea "followed by a derangement of the brain centers of sight and sound, which causes a constant stream of scenes of incredible beauty, color, grandeur and variety."[94] There were no

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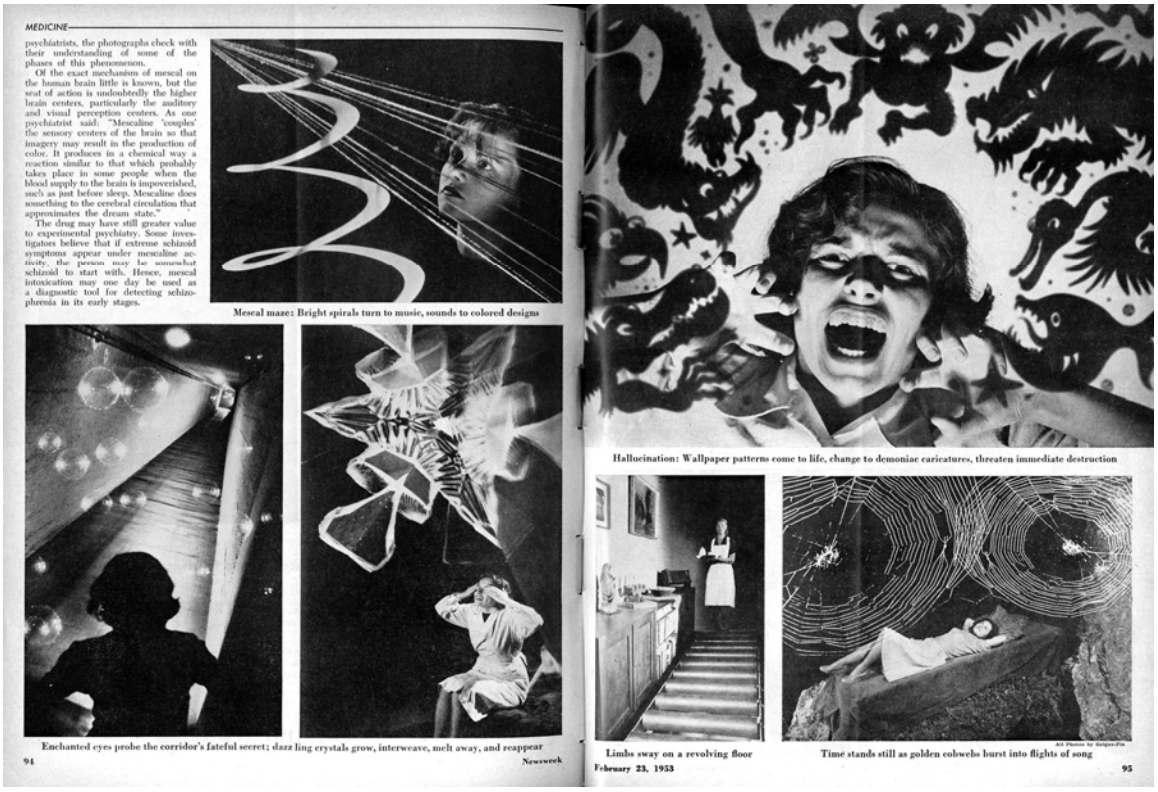
[93] Mescal Madness," *Newsweek*, February 23, 1953, 92.
[94] Ibid.

contemporary quotations or first-hand descriptions of mescaline trips from scientists or laboratory subjects, but the renewed interest in subjective drug effect was illustrated with nine accompanying photographs from a German photographer said to portray "more vividly than with words what mescaline madness can mean." In the staged photographs, a young woman marvels at swirling forms and dazzling crystals and recoils from wallpaper forms come to life.[95] The drug experience was slickly presented, packaged as educational, and represented by a woman with model good looks (see Figure 1).


MEDICINE

psychiatrists, the photographs check with their understanding of some of the phases of this phenomenon.

Of the exact mechanism of mescal on the human brain little is known, but the seat of action is undoubtedly the higher brain centers, particularly the auditory and visual perception centers. As one psychiatrist said, "Mescaline 'couples' the sensory centers of the brain so that imagery may result in the production of color. It produces in a chemical way a reaction similar to that which probably takes place in some people when the blood supply to the brain is impoverished, such as just before sleep. Mescaline does something to the cerebral circulation that approximates the dream state."

The drug may have still greater value to experimental psychiatry. Some investigators believe that if extreme schizoid symptoms appear under mescaline activity, the person may be somewhat schizoid to start with. Hence, mescal intoxication may one day be used as a diagnostic tool for detecting schizophrenia in its early stages.

Mescal maze: Bright spirals turn to music, sounds to colored designs

Enchanted eyes probe the corridor's fateful secret; dazz ling crystals grow, interweave, melt away, and reappear

94 Newsweek

Hallucination: Wallpaper patterns come to life, change to demoniac caricatures, threaten immediate destruction

Limbs sway on a revolving floor

Time stands still as golden cobwebs burst into flights of song

February 23, 1953 95

Figure 1. Early psychedelic photographs in "Mescal Madness," *Newsweek*, February 23, 1953.

[95] Ibid., 92-94.

While these early examples of psychedelic art attempted to depict subjective drug experience, the face of the drug subject was still included within the frame. In a sense, the photographs offered a compromise between describing the experience from an outside observer's perspective and offering subjective experience itself. As the style developed, it became more common for psychedelic art to place the viewer in the drug-user's shoes. Still, the article and photographs went further than any about the Native America Church in conveying an experience that was alluring, entertaining, and without social stigma.

Lengthy descriptions of otherworldly drug experiences would become more common as LSD emerged as the favorite drug for the same type of trials. Because the drug was not illegal, because it was not widely used recreationally, and because scientific and literary figures attested to its significance, it was discussed in a way that other mind drugs were not. Prior to LSD, subjective drug experiences were not often described in the media. They were considered internal, private, and shameful. To publicly present this type of information was considered to be uncouth at best, and irresponsible or dangerous at worst.

The glorious and elaborate hallucinogenic reveries offered by magazines in the 1950s and 1960s offered a type of information that had been banned from much of the mass media for a generation. They showed the possibility of an experience beyond the normal realm, validated by the interest of scientists, scholars, artists, and the magazines themselves. That which had been tawdry was becoming sensational.

Chapter 3 The Science of Madness and Mysticism: LSD in the Academy

> "Like anything else, what you get out of it depends on what you bring to it."
>
> —Timothy Leary, quoted in *Mademoiselle*, 1966

The Discovery of a New World

LSD was born under refined circumstances. Albert Hofmann, a research chemist in the Basel, Switzerland, laboratories of the pharmaceutical company Sandoz, was re-creating the twenty-fifth in a series of molecules derived from lysergic acid when he absorbed a minute amount of the substance through either his lungs or fingertips. (The details were a mystery to the Swiss chemist, who attested to "meticulously neat" work habits.) In a note to his boss, Hofmann explained what happened next:

> Last Friday, April 16, 1943, I was forced to interrupt my work in the laboratory in the middle of the afternoon and proceed home, being affected by a remarkable restlessness, combined with a slight dizziness. At home I lay down and sank into a not unpleasant intoxicated-like condition, characterized by an extremely stimulated imagination. In a dreamlike state, with eyes closed (I found the daylight to be unpleasantly glaring), I perceived an uninterrupted stream of fantastic pictures, extraordinary shapes with intense, kaleidoscopic play of colors. After some two hours this condition faded away. [1]

Explaining the meaning of this experience would preoccupy scientists from far-flung, sometimes hostile, corners of the academy for the next 25 years. A range of factors, including the timing of the drug's arrival, its physical properties and heritage, developments in the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry, and perhaps chance,

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[1]Albert Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, trans. Jonathon Ott (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), 15.

resulted in LSD grabbing researchers' attention in a way that mescaline had not. Psychiatrists were interested in the drug's chemical mechanism and the possibility of a chemical explanation for mental disorders. Psychologists were interested in its effect on repressed memories and creativity. Other intellectuals discussed the meaning, import, and historical antecedents of the drug's visions. The questions resisted easy answer: Was this the sensation of madness? Of religious ecstasy? How was it caused? Where did the visions come from? What did they mean? How could they be used?

Within three years of its release to researchers in 1948, more than 100 articles had been published in medical journals reporting LSD experiments on animal and human subjects, including many that reported the authors' own experiences with the drug.[2] By 1961, the number of published studies had reached 1,000. That number doubled again by 1965, by which time the drug had been the subject of several dozen books and six international conferences and administered by researchers to approximately 40,000 patients and experimental subjects.[3] A 1972 Consumers Union report summarized: "Few drugs known to man have been so thoroughly studied so promptly."[4]

Scholars with backgrounds in brain chemistry, in psychology and psychotherapy, in literature and religion all applied their expertise to the LSD project. They asked

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[2] Erika Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 50, no. 7 (June 2005): 383.

[3] See Ibid.; and Paul Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs, A Complete Guide to Their History, Chemistry, Use and Abuse,* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 49.

[4] Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 366.

different questions and, perhaps inevitably, found different results. Various researchers found LSD to be a tonic for sexual frigidity, a key to unlock repressed memories, an aid to creativity, a producer of artificial schizophrenia, a respite from the pain of terminal disease, a source of religious and mystical experience, and a tool for transcending social roles.

Explaining the LSD experience was first an academic exercise. The drug was considered a product of science, and it fell first upon medical and psychiatric researchers to interpret drug experiences that were outside normal reality and notoriously difficult to describe. Over the next few decades, the circle of those with access to the drug widened to include scholars in the social sciences and humanities, and other, more casual researchers as well as their experimental subjects, patients, and friends. Until 1962, "substantially all" the LSD consumed in the United States was produced by Sandoz and legally distributed to psychiatrists, psychologists, and other qualified researchers, according to the Consumers Union report.[5] Scientists and scholars had nearly two decades of exclusive access to LSD, before the drug concerned either politicians or police, in which to figure out what it did.[6]

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[5] Ibid., 350.

[6] There are anecdotal reports of a New York entrepreneur who sold LSD connived from Sandoz as early as 1960, and a Southern California ring began limited underground production of LSD beginning around 1962. Addiction Research Foundation researchers Reginald G. Smart and Dianne Fejer reported, "Prior to 1960, there were almost no reports of illicit LSD use." See Andrew Weil, foreword to *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 3rd expanded ed., by Peter Stafford (Berkeley, Calif.: Ronin Publishing, 1992), 17-18; Steven J. Novak, "LSD before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," *Isis* 88, no. 1 (March 1997): 107; and Reginald G. Smart and Dianne

Scholars of semiotics, sociology, anthropology, and communication share a conviction that the way an object, issue, or event is described may influence perception of the thing itself.[7] Communication scholar Stephen Reese wrote that the terminology, paradigms, conflicts, and interpretations in which information is structured "unquestionably" affect cognitive processing by the people who receive it.[8] Researchers have suggested that drug abuse is an "unobtrusive issue" for which the public gets most of its information through the media rather than through direct experience.[9] The way LSD was framed in magazine coverage was especially important considering that the coverage provided many readers with their first impression of what the drug had to offer.

It has been suggested that, as one avenue of research, scholars examine how frames enter the mass media.[10] With coverage of LSD this is possible to an unusual degree. Not only did the framing of LSD have a clear beginning, but the origins of popular ideas about the drug were preserved in publications and on the pages of peer-

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Fejer, "Illicit LSD Users: Their Social Backgrounds, Drug Use and Psychology," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 10, no. 4 (December 1969): 297.

[7] See Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, vol. 4 (Autumn, 1993): 293; and Stephen D. Reese, "Prologue-Framing Public Life: A Bridging Model for Media Research," in *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and our Understanding of the Social World*, eds. Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr. and August E. Grant (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), 7.

[8] Reese, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 9.

[9] Thomas J. Johnson and Wayne Wanta, "Influence Dealers: A Path Analysis Model of Agenda Building During Richard Nixon's War on Drugs," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 182.

[10] Dietram A. Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory of Media Effects," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 1 (March 1999): 108.

reviewed journals. More fascinating still, much of the research was flawed and the conclusions wrong.

Ideas about LSD that were created in the academy and disseminated in the media affected not only how LSD was viewed and discussed, but also how it was experienced. What Everett Rogers, the father of diffusion theory, observed about marijuana would be equally true for LSD: "Enjoyment is introduced by the favorable definition of the situation that one acquires from others."[11] Education and expectations both affect the perception of a particular substance as enjoyable or unpleasant, relaxing, energizing, or spiritually weighty.[12] A particular drug may have a great range of effects. How it is subjectively experienced may ultimately depend on what effect the individual user seeks and pays attention to.[13] While the effects of drugs are experienced subjectively, the project of framing and giving meaning to that experience is larger than the individual. As Todd Gitlin pointed out:

> Drugs are physical substances, and intoxication is a physiological and psychological state. But the meaning of a given drug to the people who use it, even the experience of the drug itself, differs considerably from one society, one sector, one group, even one moment in time to another. That meaning is not preordained in nature; it is constructed—and not by wholly free human beings, but rather by people with specific opportunities, desires and limits, operating in and among specific institutions.[14]

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[11] Everett M. Rogers with Floyd F. Shoemaker, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 127.

[12] Ed Knipe, *Culture, Society and Drugs: The Social Science Approach* (Prospect Park, Ill.: Waveland Press, Inc., 1995), 69-72.

[13] Howard S. Becker, "History, Culture and Subjective Experience: An Exploration of the Social Bases of Drug-Induced Experiences," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 8 (September 1967): 164-65.

[14] Todd Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's Consumer Society," in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention

Two specific institutions most involved in the construction of meanings around LSD were the media (and especially magazines) and the academy.

Biographers have examined the lives of many scientists and intellectuals who played key roles in early LSD research, including the psychiatrists Sidney Cohen and Humphry Osmond. Aldous Huxley's life and writings have been subject to extensive scholarship. Other important figures, including Hofmann and psychologist Timothy Leary, have published memoirs and first-person accounts. This chapter sheds new light on the history of LSD by synthesizing these accounts, and by focusing on preconceptions, methodological biases, and flaws in studies that helped shape lasting ideas about this drug.

Measuring Madness: Early Experimentation with LSD

Hofmann joined Sandoz in 1929, soon after earning a doctorate with distinction from the University of Zurich. For his first six years on the job he examined the active compounds in the Mediterranean squill, a spiny plant whose bulb seemed to have the same effect on the heart as digitalis. In 1935, with "creative joy" and "eager anticipation" he embarked on a second program of research, methodically synthesizing the alkaloids in the grain fungus ergot.[15]

Monograph 6, ed. Hank Resnik (Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990), 32.

[15] Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, 5.

Midwives had used grain infected with ergot to quicken childbirth for centuries. But the herbal, listed in medical texts authored as early as 1582, also had a dark side. Seventeenth-century scientists linked the consumption of bread made with infected grain with localized epidemics of "St. Anthony's fire," a horrific disease with symptoms that included rotting limbs, madness, and death.[16]

By creating a synthetic version of the active components in ergot, Hofmann hoped to create a drug that could be more accurately and reliably dispensed than the natural product. Sandoz already sold one synthetic drug, trademarked "Gynergen," modeled after a component of ergot and used in obstetrics and for the treatment of migraines. The substance Hofmann accidentally absorbed on April 16, 1943 was named LSD-25 because it was the twenty-fifth in a series of lysergic acid derivatives. He had synthesized that particular derivative once before, in 1938, but it was set aside after animal testing revealed only unexplained restlessness and a moderate effect on uterine activity. Hofmann credited what he said was an unusual decision to produce the drug a second time five years later to "a peculiar presentiment – the feeling that this substance could possess properties other than those established in the first investigations."[17]

The Monday following his first, inadvertent trip, Hofmann conducted a deliberate self-experiment with LSD-25, consuming a minute amount of the substance dissolved in water. After experiencing "dizziness, visual distortions, symptoms of paralysis, desire to

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[16] More recent research has proposed mass poisoning from ergot-infected rye as a cause of the hysteria surrounding the Salem Witch Trials in 1692-1693. See Linnda R. Caporael, "Egotism: The Satan Loosed in Salem," *Science* 192 (April 2, 1976): 21-26.

[17] Hofmann, *LSD: My Problem Child*, 3-8, 14.

laugh," he and his assistant left the laboratory by bicycle for Hofmann's home. On the ride, commemorated by devotees of Hofmann and LSD as "Bicycle Day," the chemist experienced intense visual hallucinations and strange contortions of self-perception. Back at his home, he felt himself possessed by a demon, removed from his body, taken to another world, perhaps mad, perhaps dying.[18]

> My surroundings had now transformed themselves in more terrifying ways. Everything in the room spun around, and the familiar objects and pieces of furniture assumed grotesque, threatening forms. They were in continuous motion, animated, as if driven by an inner restlessness. … Even worse than these demonic transformations of the outer world were the alterations that I perceived in myself, my inner being. Every exertion of my will, every attempt to put an end to the disintegration of my ego, seemed to be wasted effort. … I was seized by a dreadful fear of going insane. I was taken to another world, another place, another time. My body seemed to be without sensation, lifeless, strange. Was I dying? Was this the transition? At times I believed myself to be outside my body, and then perceived clearly, as an outside observer, the complete tragedy of my situation. I had not even taken leave of my family ... Would they ever understand that I had not experimented thoughtlessly, irresponsibly, but rather with the utmost caution, and that such a result was in no way foreseeable?[19]

Hofmann's fear subsided, and he slowly began enjoying the play of shapes and colors. He fell asleep exhausted, waking the following morning with a clear head and the sensation of well-being and renewed life. "The world was as if newly created," he wrote.[20]

Hofmann turned LSD-25 over to the Sandoz pharmacological department for animal testing. Under the influence of LSD, cats stood in fear of mice or ignored them. Fish swam in strange positions. Under low dosage, spiders spun unusually exacting webs,

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[18] Ibid., 16-17.
[19] Ibid., 17-18.
[20] Ibid.

which became more rudimentary when the dosage was increased. Giving LSD to a single chimpanzee in a caged community created a reaction that the writer Jay Stevens deemed prophetic.[21] Hofmann recalled: "Even though no changes appear in this single animal, the whole cage gets in an uproar because the LSD chimpanzee no longer observes the laws of its finely coordinated hierarchic tribal order."[22]

Initial research was oriented toward finding a use (and, ideally, a market) for the Sandoz discovery. In the 1940s, researchers had concluded that mescaline could cause experimental subjects to exhibit textbook symptoms of psychoses including catatonia, paranoia, apathy, homicidal and suicidal impulses, and mania. The first published study on LSD, by Dr. Werner Stoll, a University of Zurich psychiatrist and the son of Sandoz president Arthur Stoll, appeared in the *Swiss Archives of Neurology* in 1947. Stoll concluded that LSD could also be used to induce abnormal mental states in normal subjects, himself having experienced depression and ecstasy while under the influence of the drug.[23]

Stoll also saw psychodynamics in his subjects' visions. The theories of Sigmund Freud postulated that explanations for abnormal behavior were found in repressed memories and subconscious desires. The LSD visions were drawn from some internal well. The drug seemed to break down the barriers around the ego, allowing subjects'

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[21] Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 11.

[22] Hofmann, *LSD: My Problem Child*, 24.

[23] See Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 11; Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 12-13.

repressed memories to pass more easily into consciousness. Stoll also saw a potential use for LSD as an aid to psychotherapy.[24]

Soon after the publication of Stoll's study, the company offered LSD to qualified researchers under the trade name Delysid. LSD was shipped as sugarcoated tablets or as a liquid solution in a small glass vial. Accompanying literature suggested two uses:

> **Analytical:** To elicit release of repressed material and provide mental relaxation, particularly in anxiety states and obsessional neurosis.
>
> **Experimental**: By taking Delysid himself, the psychiatrist is able to gain an insight into the world of ideas and sensations of mental patients. Delysid also can be used to induce model psychoses of short duration in more normal subjects, thus facilitating studies on the pathogenesis of mental illness.[25]

The Right Drug at the Right Time

The drug arrived during a period of growth for psychology, in terms of intellectual activity, funding, and employment. With passage of the first National Mental Health Act in 1946, Congress appropriated $4.2 million for psychiatric health care and research; in 1964, Congress appropriated $176 million. In 1940, there were about 3,000 American psychiatrists; in 1950, there were 7,500. In 1940, the American Psychological Association had about 700 members; the APA had 8,500 members in 1951, and about 15,000 in 1956.[26] The proposed uses for LSD appealed to psychologists in all parts of

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[24] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 11.

[25] Text of the product monograph for Delysid quoted from Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, 47.

[26] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 16.

what had become a fractured, and often fractious, discipline.[27] "For psychoanalysts, the drug released memories or revealed the unconscious; for psychotherapists, it brought patients to new levels of self-awareness; and for psychopharmacologists, LSD supported contentions that mental disorders had chemical origins," wrote medical historian Ericka Dyck.[28]

Until about 1960, the dominant school of thought in psychology was behaviorism, which rejected theories rooted in unobservable mental processes as unscientific.[29] Behaviorism had its origins in the thought of John B. Watson (1878-1958), who denied the importance of the unconscious mind and unmeasurable thought to focus entirely on overt, observable actions.[30] Watson explained in 1913:

> Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of human behavior. Introspection forms no essential part of its methods, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness. The behaviorist, in his efforts to get a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizes no dividing line between man and brute.[31]

In his own experimental work, Watson also attempted to show that classical conditioning, a theory formulated through Ivan Pavlov's (1849-1936) experiments using the digestive systems of dogs, was equally applicable to human beings. Pavlov, winner of

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[27] Ibid., 14-15.

[28] Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 382-83.

[29] Morton Hunt, *The Story of Psychology* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 278.

[30] Ibid., 253.

[31] John B. Watson, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views it," in *A History of Psychology: Original Sources and Contemporary Research*, edited by Ludy T. Benjamin Jr. (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1988), 401.

the 1904 Nobel Prize, developed his theory of classical conditioning based on experiments that showed that dogs could be "conditioned" to salivate by cues that preceded the actual arrival of savory food.[32] In 1919 and 1920, Watson showed that an infant could be similarly conditioned to recoil at the sight of a rat, if the appearance of the rat was paired with a noise that caused the boy to cry.[33] Experimental researchers followed Watson's call for rigorously controlled animal studies to show the relationship between quantifiable stimuli and observable response. Early experiments attempted to graph the relationship between hunger and pecking in chickens, and the rate at which a rat improved its speed through a familiar maze. Researchers hoped their results could ultimately be expressed in formulae that would be equally applicable to human beings.[34]

These hopes would never be realized. Different species of animals reacted differently to similar stimuli, and their behavior often did not follow a smooth response-rate curve. As well, the researchers found that even rats exhibited behaviors, like glancing both ways at intersections, that suggested some mental process was indeed taking place.[35] Despite these shortcomings, behaviorism—with its skepticism toward unobservable causes, thirst for objective measurements, and faith in the controlled experiment—retained a commanding position in psychology through about 1960.[36] To psychologists who approached the discipline through this paradigm, LSD was appealing because it

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[32] Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 248-53.
[33] Ibid., 257-59.
[34] Ibid., 262-64.
[35] Ibid., 275-79.
[36] Ibid., 278.

seemed to create mental illness without relying on repressed memories or unobservable mental states. It seemed scientific.[37]

Philosophically opposed to behaviorism were academics and clinical psychologists who worked in the tradition of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who found the motives for patients' behavior hidden in the unconscious mind. With insights derived from case studies and self-analysis, Freud designed a model for the mind organized around such structures as the id, ego, and superego, which were entirely theoretical and had no basis in physiology.[38] Psychoanalysts in the academy, and in clinical practice, believed that neurosis was caused by pathogenic ideas, often memories of childhood sexuality, which were repressed by the conscious mind. Denied expression, these memories and emotions bubbled forth through dreams and neurosis. Treatment was closely linked with diagnosis: by raising these ideas to the patient's conscious mind, psychoanalysts helped dispel the symptoms they caused.[39]

Although psychologists in the psychoanalytic tradition were hostile to suggestions that there were non-mental roots to mental illness, by the 1950s even staunch Freudians were forced to acknowledge that drugs could alter an illness' course.[40] In the 1940s, researchers had found spots in the brains of animals where a jolt of electricity could be applied to stimulate pleasure, overriding the creature's usual urges. Other technological breakthroughs, including the lobotomy, demonstrated that physical manipulation of the

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[37] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 18.

[38] Raymond E. Fancher, *Pioneers of Psychology* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 238-40.

[39] Ibid., 230-33.

[40] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 19.

brain itself could effect psychological change.[41] Science also seemed to be on the verge of new inroads in understanding the brain's chemical mechanisms, with two Nobel prizes awarded for psychopharmacological research in the 1950s. Experimentation with LSD took its place alongside research into the new antidepressants and anti-psychotics. "Throughout the 1950s, thousands of biochemical studies revealed a high level of enthusiasm for the possibility that chemical studies would revolutionize psychiatry by offering novel insights into mental illness," Dyck noted.[42]

Especially tantalizing for biochemical-oriented researchers was the fact that such minute quantities of LSD appeared to cause such dramatic effects on the brains of their subjects. The standard dose was 0.025 milligrams of LSD, the equivalent of 0.0000009 ounces of the pure chemical.[43] One ounce of LSD could produce 300,000 doses; an amount the size of an aspirin tablet could set 3,000 people off on an eight- to twelve-hour LSD trip.[44] At the same time, the drug seemed safe. While scientists demonstrated that injections of LSD between 300 and 100,0000 times the effective dose could cause respiratory arrest in mice, rabbits, and an unfortunate elephant, there were no recorded cases of toxic overdose by humans.[45] The fact that it was so effective in microscopic doses suggested to researchers that LSD acted on a specific site in the brain, upending the

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[41] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 14-19.

[42] Erika Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 383.

[43] Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, 25-6, 46.

[44] Frank Gannon, *Drugs: What They Are, How They Look, What They Do* (New York: The Third Press, 1971), 113.

[45] Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, 25-27.

previously dominant view that consciousness-altering drugs worked by flooding the brain with a poison that overwhelmed normal function.[46]

Psychiatrists discovered that LSD was a twin to another blockbuster drug of the 1950s, the powerful sedative and antipsychotic chlorpromazine, which was sold under the trade names Largactil and Thorazine. Given beforehand, chlorpromazine blocked the effects of LSD. Administered later, it ended the LSD trip. "Psychiatry, it seemed, had overnight become scientific. Madness could be induced and resolved within hours. If this was the case, it could surely be studied systematically and would quickly yield up its secrets," wrote historian of psychopharmacology David Healy.[47] If LSD indeed caused subjects to experience mental illness, researchers hoped it might be used to isolate a metabolic cause.[48] Scientists also felt a need for a drug that could produce a model psychosis against which new and better anti-psychotic agents could be tested.[49]

The first shipment of LSD-25 to American researchers was received by a team headed by Max Rinkel at Boston Psychopathic Hospital, a clinic associated with Harvard University, in 1949.[50] At the 1950 meeting of the American Psychiatric Association Rinkel announced results showing that LSD induced temporary psychotic episodes in

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[46] David Healy, *The Creation of Psychopharmacology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.), 182.

[47] Ibid., 182.

[48]Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 383.

[49] John R. Neill, "'More than Medical Significance': LSD and American Psychiatry, 1953 to 1966," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 19, no. 1 (January-March 1987): 39.

[50] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 20.

normal subjects, setting forth hope that it would soon be possible to study mental disorders objectively in laboratory settings.[51]

Rinkel's team used a variety of strategies to measure the effects of LSD on 100 "normal" volunteers as well as on hospitalized psychiatric patients. As well as observation, both individually and in groups, the volunteers were subjected to a battery of psychological tests: Rorschach, Wechsler-Bellevue Block Designs, Draw-a-Person, Drawings of Feelings, Thematic Apperception Cards. The researchers employed a before-and-during design, giving the tests to volunteers once before the drug was administered, then a second time while they were on the drug. The volunteers were also observed, both individually and in groups, by a team that included a sociologist. [52]

To provide control, volunteer participation took place over two days. On both days, the subjects were presented with a glass of water. On one day, the "control day," it was plain water. The other day it was spiked with LSD. Volunteers were not told which day was which. Observers on the team were also "often" kept in the dark as to which volunteers were given the drug. Physiological effects, including elevated heart rate and dilated pupils, were measured on psychiatric patients given the drug. In one instance, a patient was given LSD before and after a lobotomy, in order to measure the difference in

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[51] See Max Rinkel, Robert Hyde, Harry Solomon and Hudson Hoagland, "Clinical and Physio-Chemical Observations in Experimental Psychosis," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 111 (June 1955): 881; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 20.

[52] Rinkel, Hyde, Solomon and Hoagland, "Clinical and Physio-Chemical Observations in Experimental Psychosis," 882-83.

effect.[53] The extensive trials confirmed what the team expected to find: LSD produced short-term psychosis, creating new possibilities for experimental research. "Experimental psychiatry, *i.e*., the comprehensive study of experimentally-produced psychosis, is important for the advancement of psychiatry," the researchers summarized in their *American Journal of Psychiatry* article. In a less formal account published the same month in *Scientific American* and credited to "Six Staff Members of Boston Psychopathic Hospital" the team described the discovery of LSD's potential to provide insight into mind and feelings of a mental patient as the most important result:

> The staff of mental hospitals have struggled year by year to get a deeper understanding of what their patients are actually feeling and thinking. Only in this way can they come into communication with the patient and help him. Now that they can experience themselves something approaching the feelings of their patients, they will be able to communicate better. Moreover, mental illness will no longer be so strange or mysterious; there will be fewer barriers between the sick and the well.[54]

Despite all the efforts by Rinkel's team for control, a close reading of their reports indicated how heavily the study was weighted to these findings. Psychological tests could provide quantitative data, but measuring a subject's psychological state was not like measuring his heart rate. The subjects' responses resulted from interaction between the researcher and the subject. Not only is there room for measurement error on the part of the researcher, but his mien could affect the subject. The Boston team recognized that volunteers on LSD were extraordinarily responsive to the researcher's approach.[55]

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[53] Rinkel, Hyde, Solomon and Hoagland, "Clinical Clinical and Physio-Chemical Observations in Experimental Psychosis," 882.

[54] "Experimental Psychoses," *Scientific American*, June 1, 1955, 39.

[55] Ibid., 37-38.

Another problem, not explicitly recognized by the researchers, was sympathetic bias on the part of volunteers.

The more than 100 normal volunteers for the study came from attendants, nurses, psychologists, doctors, and research associates on the hospital staff, as well as students and scientists from outside Boston Psychopathic. Their most common motivation was "to have a temporary psychotic experience in order to approach an understanding of a mental patient," the researchers reported in the formal study.[56] In the popular account, the researchers suggested this was one reason that hospital staff members may have displayed more response from the drug than did other volunteers.[57] These volunteers were not only aware that the researchers—who were often colleagues—expected them to have a psychotic experience; they were hoping for it too. In other words, many of the subjects were motivated in more than one way to help the researchers get the results they wanted.

Efforts at control were illusory. Despite the researchers' implementation of "control day," it was unlikely that any volunteers would not quickly distinguish between the day they were given a large dose of LSD and the day they were not. It was equally unlikely that an attentive observer would not quickly surmise who had been drugged. Because the experimental design involved repeated measures, there was also a problem of history. A drugged volunteer may well have remembered his previous response and tried to provide something helpfully different. Consider how easily sympathetic bias

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[56] Rinkel, Hyde, Solomon and Hoagland, "Clinical Clinical and Physio-Chemical Observations in Experimental Psychosis," 882.

[57] "Experimental Psychoses," *Scientific American*, 37.

could influence a volunteer being asked to draw a second picture of a man and woman after having been given the LSD.[58]

Skepticism played little part in the magazine coverage of Rinkel's experiments. The Boston Psychopathic trials were discussed in long, illustrated feature articles between 1954 and 1956 in *Look*, *Scientific American*, and *Today's Health*. Similar research was discussed in two *Time* articles and an article in *The Saturday Evening Post* during same period.[59] *Time* had a different take, but the other magazines hyped the possibility that LSD could herald a new era of insight into mental illness with feature stories set primarily in mental hospitals and research labs. None expressed doubt that the visitation was indeed some form of madness. The great hope offered by LSD was that the imaginary worlds visited by experimental subjects could be brought back and described to the sane. The theory made their subjective drug experiences the prime interest of researchers, who believed they could get a glimpse of madness, and to magazine editors, who hoped to plaster such visions on their pages.

Experimental Madness in Magazines

Breaking through the barrier between external observations of insanity and the actual experience of the insane was one of the great hopes of the LSD researchers. It was

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[58] This was one of the measures used by the Boston Psychopathic group. See Ibid.

[59] See Robert M. Goldenson, "Step Into the World of the Insane," *Look*, September 21, 1954; "Experimental Psychoses," *Scientific American*, June 1, 1955, 34-39; Robert M. Yoder, "Help for the Living Dead," *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 25, 1955, 42-24, 64-65, 71; Lillian Pompian, "Experimental Insanity," *Today's Health*, August 19, 1956, 38; Dream Stuff, *Time*, June 28, 1954, 66; and "Artificial Psychoses," *Time*, December 15, 1955, 60.

also appealing to magazine editors, who saw the possibility of enticing readers to "Step into the World of the Insane," as the story in *Look* was titled, by sharing the insights offered by LSD. The search for articles about LSD in the *Readers' Guide* located six such between 1954 and 1956 (see Appendix A).

There were broad similarities among the articles. All primarily related the results of scientific research, employing scientists, doctors, and, to a lesser extent, experimental subjects, as sources. Three of the six discussed Rinkel's trials in Boston; all but one of the others discussed research conducted elsewhere along the same lines. Only the article by the Boston researchers for *Scientific American* did not include descriptions of the LSD experience from a user's perspective. In all articles that included such descriptions, the experience was described as risky and disorienting, but not entirely negative or positive. (The 1954 *Time* article also included a first-person description that was unambiguously positive.) They all discussed the contention that LSD caused instant insanity and scientists' hopes that it would allow them to crack the mysteries of mental illness. One of the challenges scientists faced was pulling the wildly subjective experiences of the LSD subjects into their objective realm. The *Look* article dramatized their task in an opening scene describing an LSD experiment, possibly at Boston Psychopathic:[60]

> The attendant [who had been given LSD at 8:15 a.m.] stared vacantly for a few moments, and when he spoke again his voice had lost its cheerful tone: "What is this, Madame Tussaud's waxworks? The way you sit there

[60] The article did not specify where the scene took place but discussed LSD trials at both the Boston Psychopathic Hospital and New York State Psychiatric Institute and Hospital. See Goldenson, "Step Into the World of the Insane," 30, 32.

> staring at me—you don't look human." The doctors looked at each other knowingly; the one with the pad wrote: "8:47. Emotional flatness. Distorted vision." . . .
>
> The young man looked at him with the utmost annoyance and said, "Don't scowl at me like that. And don't come so close. Your head looks enormous a . . . a leering gargoyle. And you don't need to shout. I can hear you. I'm not deaf!"
>
> The doctor had not moved an inch, nor had he changed his expression or the quiet tone of his voice. His colleague noted: "Suspiciousness. Feelings of persecution. Perpetual distortion."[61]

The promise of LSD was not only that subjects were able to enter into the world of the insane, but that they would come back to report what they found. The subjective drug experience was educational. *Look* offered to bring readers on that trip too, through a series of photographs staged to "simulate the sensations that a volunteer would experience on such a mad journey," according the caption under the first. In one photograph, the distorted faces of doctors loomed menacingly from three corners of the frame; in others a confused subject clapped a hand to her head and recoiled against a wall. While the article in *Scientific American* did not include direct quotations about the drug experience from users, it was accompanied by a half-dozen drawings produced by drug trial subjects said to "illustrate stages of the reaction to LSD."[62] Captions explained that the heavily symbolic drawings expressed a subject's feeling of euphoria, followed by a bleak depression (see Figure 2).[63] Even pictures required interpretation.

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[61] Ibid., 30.
[62] Ibid., 36.
[63] Ibid., 36-37.

Figure 2. Drawings by a subject on LSD, published in "Experimental Psychoses," *Scientific American*, June 1955.

The Saturday Evening Post approached the same story about the potential of LSD to advance scientific research from a different angle. "New Help for the Living Dead" dramatized the horror of schizophrenia through the tale of a middle-class man (only a fictitious name was given) who went in and out of an institution after developing the disease in his late thirties. Discussion of the drug's effect came from a National Institute of Mental Health researcher who talked about the similarities of the reactions of "those who take LSD" and schizophrenics.[64] Research using LSD provided the source of hope that a cure or biochemical treatment for the disease might soon be found. The last of the articles in monthlies, "Experimental Insanity" in *Today's Health*, similarly concluded that "now it is at least possible to hope that learning what makes the personality of man tick normally or abnormally lies just around the corner and that the war on mental disease may produce a major victory in a few years."[65] The four-page article quoted Rinkel and

[64] Yoder, "Help for the Living Dead," 66.
[65] Pompian, "Experimental Insanity," 59.

paraphrased heavily from the study Rinkel and his team had published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* two months before.[66]

The content analysis identified all these articles as one-sided, indicating there was no presentation of conflicting viewpoints. The articles were all primarily about science, and the stories were written to present the scientific sources, which came across as authoritative and consistent. These articles explained; they didn't critique. As well as presenting similar science, four of the six articles included the anecdote about Hofmann's accidental discovery of LSD that opened this chapter.

The story of Hofmann's discovery of LSD was true, but the artificial insanity theory promoted by Rinkel's study and others like it was soon found to be flawed. By about 1956, the medical establishment had moved beyond the hypothesis that LSD produced a simulacrum of genuine insanity. There were simply too many differences, large and small, between genuine schizophrenia and the LSD state. LSD rarely caused the sensation of hearing voices, common with genuine schizophrenics, and schizophrenics rarely experienced the visual distortions common with hallucinogenic drugs.[67] Perhaps

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[66] For example, the Rinkel team explained the following motivations for volunteer participation: "Many wanted to have a temporary psychotic experience in order to approach an understanding of the feeling of a mental patient; others hoped to gain knowledge of their own problems; some volunteered out of curiosity; on account of group acceptance; or for monetary reasons." In the *Today's Health* story, Lillian Pompian wrote: "What would motivate anyone to volunteer for such an experiment? . . . They wished to have a temporary psychotic experience in order to gain this insight. Other volunteers hoped to gain knowledge of their own problems. Some came out of curiosity or for monetary reasons." See Rinkel, Hyde, Solomon and Hoagland, "Clinical and Physio-Chemical Observations in Experimental Psychosis," 882; and Pompian, "Experimental Insanity," 58.

[67] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 55.

the most significant difference was that subjects under the influence of LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs did not actually believe in the reality of their visions.[68] The fact that subjects rapidly acquired a short-term tolerance for LSD, requiring escalating dosages to achieve the same effect on consecutive days, indicated to researchers the possibility that the drug effect was caused by the same mechanism as schizophrenia was remote.[69]

The focus of research evolved from administering LSD to mimic madness to using the drug to treat it. Researchers noted, as had Stoll, that in small doses the drug seemed to help patients overcome natural defensiveness to explore the landscape of their minds. In larger doses, the drug temporarily wiped away reality and allowed the subject to stare into the void. Altered perceptions were accompanied by an increased sense of insight, and subjects said the meaning found in the experience lingered after the drug wore off.[70]

The two stories in *Time* expressed this view of LSD's potential in sprightly, personality-driven articles published in 1954 and 1955. The first, "Dream Stuff," opened with a long quotation from Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception*, published in 1954, featuring the "amateur mystic" marveling at the bamboo legs of a chair. The story went on to announce the result of a British study that found LSD was "the best of all such

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[68] Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs*, 46.

[69] Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 758.

[70] See Ibid.; Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 55-56, 62-63; and Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs*, 46.

drugs so far tested" for helping psychiatric patients re-experience their past during therapy.[71] The story included extensive quotations from patients who had experienced incredible visions: "When I looked at the doctor's hand, the detached part of me saw it as it was, the other part expressed a feeling of horror … the hand was so old as to be ageless … There were sand and bright colors … Egyptian ornamentation and a sphinx … [ellipses in the original text]"

The story in *Time* two years later, "Artificial Psychoses," opened with an account of Hofmann's unexpected discovery before elaborating on psychologists' hopes for a drug that allowed them to turn on and off at will a state similar to natural insanity. The story also included extensive quotations from someone experienced with the drug, a twenty-three-year-old psychology student who found himself "disassociated, plagued, pounded, weighted" the first time he was given LSD as part of a laboratory insanity trial in Cincinnati. Unlike the other magazine articles from this period, both of the *Time* articles contemplated—and dismissed—use of hallucinogenic drugs outside of the laboratory or clinic. "No psychiatrist will go as far as Author Huxley (who prescribed mescaline for all mankind as a specific to unhappiness," *Time* asserted in 1954.[72] The 1955 story concluded: "It is a dangerous drug and should be used only under strictest medical supervision."[73]

In an article published in 1967, the sociologist Howard Becker argued that drug psychosis was really the result of a panic or anxiety reaction on the part of an

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[71] "Dream Stuff," *Time*, 66.
[72] "Artificial Psychoses," *Time*, 60.
[73] "Dream Stuff," *Time*, 66.

inexperienced user. He went on to point out that insanity was often just a facile explanation for unfamiliar states of mind. “In a society whose culture contains notions of sanity and insanity, the person who finds his subjective state altered [by a drug] may think he has become insane,” he wrote.[74] Another explanation for the laboratory insanity hypothesis was that it answered scientists’ needs. A madness-producing drug allowed psychiatric researchers to apply their preferred methodology to their specialty’s most pressing disease. Hope and ambition played a role in the creation of laboratory madness. Although the fraternity of experimental researchers was enamored with the controlled experiment, the studies conducted at Boston Psychopathic demonstrated how elusive genuine control could be. The fact that these researchers’ conclusions were not sustained by subsequent research was not a failure of science; the nature of scientific inquiry is for good studies to eventually drive out bad. But there was a failure of journalism.

The magazine articles were accurate as popularizations of current scientific research. As representations of reality, they were flawed. Although the medical understanding of LSD quickly evolved beyond temporary insanity, the idea was firmly lodged in the popular literature. “The scientific literature, and, even more, the popular press frequently state that recreational drug use produces a psychosis,” Becker wrote. “The nature of ‘psychosis’ is seldom defined, as though it were intuitively clear.”[75] As the result of repetition, not proof, the theory became common wisdom. Maybe the result of magazine writer’s habit of checking the clips, maybe the result of the general

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[74] Becker, “History, Culture and Subjective Experience: An Exploration of the Social Bases of Drug-Induced Experiences,” 163, 166.

[75] Ibid.,166.

impossibility of taking back words, the theory introduced through the Boston study persisted in the media. "LSD causes 'instant insanity,'" *U.S. News & World Report* declared in 1966. "For up to eight hours after swallowing a dose of LSD, the user literally goes out of his mind."[76]

Describing the Void

As researchers began exploring the uses of LSD for therapy, the drug was employed in clinical trials on juvenile delinquents, autistic children and adults, drug and alcohol addicts, schizophrenics, neurotics, and institutionalized mental patients.[77] However, they still faced the same fundamental challenge of objectively measuring the impact of an experience that was innately subjective, unobservable, and ambiguous. Not only were researchers' conclusions about LSD affected if they were asking questions about creativity or mysticism rather than a schizophrenic episode; the presumptions of experimental subjects, their treatment, and the setting in which experiments took place also seemed to strongly influence results.[78]

It was a persistent problem of measurement. Something certainly happened to subjects given mind drugs, but how to reliably describe and quantify effects upon a subject's mind? Among the tools at researchers' disposal were external observations,

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[76] "If You Want to Know About LSD . . ." *U.S. News & World Report*, July 18, 1966, 82.

[77] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 57.

[78] See Richard H. & Associates Blum, *Society and Drugs, Drugs I: Social and Cultural Observations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970), 129; and Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs*, 313.

interviews, and standardized psychological tests; physiological tests like blood pressure and urinalysis; and self-experimentation. All had shortcomings. The most important effects were the least observable.

Standardized intelligence and personality tests offered researchers the possibility of generating more objective, quantitative data. However, the answers found by standardized questionnaires were limited by the questions asked. The most commonly used questionnaire for LSD research, developed by a New York laboratory, presented all of its questions in negative terms, asking whether subjects felt unsteady, anxious, peculiar, weak.[79] Another problem was the extent to which subjects were emotionally responsive to the researchers, reacting to coldness with hostility, warmth with love. Just as with schizophrenics, subjects on LSD could become hostile when doctors insisted that they participate in Rorschach or Draw-A-Person tests.[80] These standardized tests would have been especially difficult to administer to the severely mentally ill, who were frequently on drug trial rosters. Lee and Shlain argued that the approach employed by behaviorist researchers "was inherently flawed not only because it sought to quantify creative experience but also because it ignored the input of the observer, which always influenced the result of an LSD experiment."[81]

Self-experimentation, not only with drugs but also potential infectious agents and surgical procedures, had a distinguished history in medical research. Early in his career,

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[79] Novak, "LSD before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," 90-2.

[80] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 24.

[81] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 63.

Sigmund Freud himself experimented with cocaine, using spring-powered devices to graph his reaction times and measure muscle strength. Freud recommended the drug against fatigue, concluding, "under cocaine my reaction times were shorter and more uniform than before taking the drug; but sometimes, in a more cheerful and efficient mood, my psychic reactions were just as good." [82] Although data developed from Freud's self-experimentation improved understanding of cocaine dosages and the time-course of its effect, the doctor was later criticized for findings that promoted a worthless therapy and ignored cocaine's potential for abuse.[83]

Many of the early LSD studies contained a self-experimentation component. "It would be simply unethical to think that someone else should go first," LSD discoverer Hofmann told an interviewer.[84] Several problems were perceived with data generated by self-observation, however. To researchers steeped in the behaviorist tradition, it did not seem scientific. Self-experimentation with mind drugs inevitably ran up against the problem of the unreliable observer, the impossibility of control, and the easy avenue for the entry of bias. Self-experimentation was inherently subjective and difficult to verify. The results were also inconsistent. While some researchers claimed extraordinary experiences while under the influence of LSD, others reported only unpleasant or inconsequential effects.[85]

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[82] Lawrence Altman, *Who Goes First? The Story of Self-Experimentation in Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 69.

[83] Ibid., 70.

[84] Ibid., 209.

[85] Novak, "LSD before Leary," 91.

As a result of these difficulties, many early studies relied entirely on narrative observations of drugged subjects by researchers. These observations have been shown to be surprisingly frail. A recent critique concluded the data produced by fifteen years' worth of studies examining the effects of LSD on autistic children was largely worthless because of the way observations were conducted:

> Observations were naturalistic with little apparent appreciation for the value of controlling the conditions under which observations were made. The observers themselves were not blind to the fact that the children had received the medication, and the reliability of their narrative descriptions was never assessed. The resulting data are for the most part purely qualitative and presented in a narrative form that is highly subjective, potentially biased by observer expectations, and of unknown reliability and validity. … Whatever promise LSD might have was never going to be validated through these types of studies. Despite a good number of independent studies, it remains impossible to determine whether or not LSD had any therapeutic value for the children with autism who participated in these studies.[86]

As well, most of the autism studies examined did not randomly assign subjects to a control group, or use control groups at all.[87] In most cases, researchers selected the severely disabled children for LSD trials on the basis only that no other treatment had worked. The children were given the drug either once or twice or repeatedly for months, or in some instances, years.[88] Researchers following this methodology reached an initial consensus that children were happier and more responsive while on LSD. However, the

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[86] Jeff Sigafoos, Vanessa A. Green, Chaturi Edrisinha and Guilio E. Lancioni, "Flashback to the 1960s: LSD in the Treatment of Autism," *Developmental Neurorehabilitation* 10, no. 1 (January-March, 2007): 79-80.

[87] Ibid., 80.

[88] Ibid., 77.

consensus was eventually reversed as patients in later studies were observed as unresponsive and withdrawn.[89]

Studies that relied primarily on external observations of drugged subjects were prone to the same kind of error. In both autism trials and studies of model psychosis, error tilted in the same direction: toward confirmation of researchers' hopes and expectations. In these cases, "objective" methodologies seemed to allow researchers plenty of space to engage in rose-tinted interpretation of ambiguous data. The larger process of scientific inquiry functioned properly, however. Overly enthusiastic findings were contradicted by studies that found less sensational results. In scientific journals, at least, errors were corrected.

[89] Ibid., 79.

Chapter 4: Finding God in the Test Tube

> Have you ever tried the effects of mescalin on a congenitally blind man or woman? This surely would be of interest."
>
> —Aldous Huxley to Humphry Osmond, 1954

Humphry Osmond's Altered Perception

The same year that Rinkel announced at the American Psychiatric Association Conference in State College, Pennsylvania, that LSD heralded a new era in the study of madness, in London a 33-year-old psychiatrist named Humphry Osmond launched a program of research using mescaline with his colleague John Smythies at St. George's Hospital. Osmond's interest in mescaline had been piqued when he noticed similarities between the molecular formula for the drug, printed in a French book about peyote, and the molecular formula for the hormone adrenaline.[1] The similarity led Osmond and Smythies to speculate that, in stressful situations, the mind transformed adrenaline into a mescaline-like hallucinogenic substance. The imaginative thesis captured the medical establishment's attention.[2] Osmond sampled the drug one afternoon in Smythies apartment anticipating the experience of model psychosis and was struck by how real the

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[1] Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 26.

[2] See Ibid.; Humphry Osmond and John Smythies, "Schizophrenia: A New Approach," *Journal of Mental Science* 98 (April, 1952): 309-15; Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 46-47; and Erika Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism, 1950-1970," *Social History of Medicine* 19, no. 2 (August 2006): 314-15.

drug experience seemed and the ease with which it washed objective reality away.[3] Like other researchers, Osmond and Smythies concluded that mescaline also produced symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized thoughts and behavior.[4]

In his 1955 study, Rinkel reported that he had found evidence that the adrenal system was involved in the LSD phenomena, an idea he credited to Osmond and Smythies.[5] However, where Osmond and Smythies had also observed psychosis-like effects in subjects given adrenochrome, an adrenalin-related drug, Rinkel's team observed no mental effect from the drug at all. Rinkel hypothesized that the difference "may be due to the difference in the molecular structure and stability of the product." His discussion did not broach the possibility that the various findings might result from unreliable observations.[6]

In 1951, Osmond left London to become deputy director of psychiatry at a state mental hospital in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, a job he discovered through the classified advertisements in *The Lancet*. He was looking for an environment more accepting of

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[3] See Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 27; Erika Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 50, no. 7 (June 2005): 383; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 45-6.

[4] Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism, 1950-1970," 314.

[5] Max Rinkel, Robert Hyde, Harry Solomon and Hudson Hoagland, "Clinical and Physio-Chemical Observations in Experimental Psychosis," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 111 (June 1955): 891-93.

[6] Ibid., 892.

biochemical research.[7] Working with Canadian collaborator Abram Hoffer, Osmond continued to experiment with mescaline. In 1953, Osmond and Smythies published an essay in *The Hibbert Journal*, a British quarterly review of religion, philosophy, and theology, which called on researchers to consider ramifications of mescaline, electronic calculators, and studies demonstrating ESP while building new theories of the mind. The psychiatrists also asserted that no one is competent to treat schizophrenia until he has used mescaline to experience the condition himself.[8]

In 1953, Osmond and Hoffer began experimenting with LSD in the treatment of chronic alcoholics, under the theory that the drug's effect seemed similar to delirium tremens, or "the shakes," the horrifying symptoms of alcohol withdrawal, including visual and tactile hallucinations, which were fatal in about 10 percent of cases. Over the course of a late-night conversation while at an Ottawa medical conference, the researchers reasoned that many alcoholics gave up drinking after hitting bottom and experiencing delirium tremens. If the shakes marked a critical turning point in the course of the disease, perhaps the same effect could be achieved by inducing simulated delirium tremens with using LSD. The researchers recruited two patients admitted to the hospital for chronic alcoholism to test their novel treatment. One immediately quit drinking after the LSD treatment. The other stopped six months later.[9]

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[7] See Erika Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 384; and Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism, 1950-1970," 315.

[8] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 29.

[9] Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism, 1950-1970," 317.

This small trial inaugurated a stream of inquiry involving researchers in both the United States and Canada. In 1955, another Canadian psychiatrist, Colin Smith, conducted a larger trial with 24 alcoholic patients at the University Hospital in Saskatoon. Patients were prepared for the LSD experience during the first part of a two- to four-week hospital stay, during which they were encouraged to talk about their drinking and told what to expect from the LSD. They were given a single dose of LSD toward the end of their stay and encouraged to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings after their discharge. Three years later, half reported that they had either quit or significantly curtailed their drinking.[10]

In the decade following their first alcoholism trial, Osmond and Hoffer administered LSD to more than 700 alcoholism patients, reporting a rate of success of about 50 percent.[11] Their success was not duplicated, although the *New York Times* obituary of Osmond pointed out that no one had really tried. Other studies used different methodologies, and research into LSD was ultimately curtailed as LSD gained popularity as a recreational drug.[12]

Osmond and Hoffer proposed several different theoretical frameworks to explain their findings, including a biochemical explanation that linked both delirium tremens and the effect of LSD to adrenaline production and a hypothesis that LSD caused an upsurge

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[10] See Ibid., 318-19; and Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 384.

[11] Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism, 1950-1970," 317.

[12] Douglas Martin, "Humphry Osmond, 86, Who Sought Medicinal Value in Psychedelic Drugs, Dies," *New York Times*, February 22, 2004.

of previously repressed material.[13] However, the Saskatchewan researchers were convinced that LSD worked because of the experience it triggered, and not simply the biochemical effect of the drug itself. "From the first we considered that not the chemical, but the experience as a key factor in therapy—in fact, we used a sort of psychotherapy made possible by the nature of the experiment," Hoffer wrote in 1966.[14] Their subjects regularly reported experiencing new personal insights and moments of clarity while on LSD. In some cases, the effect from a single LSD experience resembled a religious conversion.[15] The researchers encouraged these responses and prodded their patients to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous, whose twelve-step program encouraged drinkers to acknowledge a higher power. Osmond and Hoffer corresponded with Alcoholics Anonymous founder Bill Wilson, who experimented several times with LSD and was pleased to see spirituality enter the medical discourse about alcoholism.[16]

The Saskatchewan studies were met with skepticism by members of the medical community who doubted the scientific validity of experiments that melded medical and spiritual approaches to alcohol addiction. Critics argued that other stimuli, such as talk therapy or meetings, needed to be controlled in order to isolate the effect of LSD. To this way of thinking, endorsing the drug as a treatment for alcoholism without isolating its

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[13] See Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 385; and Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism," 316-17.

[14] Quoted in Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism," 317.

[15] Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 385.

[16] Dyck, "'Hitting Highs at Rock Bottom:' LSD Treatment for Alcoholism, 1950-1970," 320-21.

effect from environmental variables would be irresponsible and simply bad science.[17] A group of Toronto researchers with the Canadian Addictions Research Foundation attempted to overcome these shortfalls in the Saskatchewan group's methodology by administering LSD to alcoholics who were blindfolded or restrained, and not permitted to interact with observers. The same results were not achieved.[18]

Osmond's essay in the *Hibbert Journal* caught the attention of Aldous Huxley, the 58-year-old essayist, novelist and intellectual, whose place among the literary constellations had been established 35 years earlier with the publication of the dystopian novel *Brave New World*, which had become basic to high school curricula.[19] Huxley, famously kindly and personable, lived in the Hollywood Hills, worked adapting screenplays for Hollywood studios, and socialized in a rarified circle of expatriate intellectuals. Huxley's social set included the mystic and writer Gerald Heard, who emigrated with Huxley from England; English novelist Christopher Isherwood; Ivor Stravinsky; Greta Garbo; Charlie Chaplin; and Harpo Marx.[20] In a characteristic gesture,

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[17] Ibid., 324.

[18] Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," 385.

[19] One teacher's guide recommended Huxley's *Brave New World* on a year-long twelfth-grade curriculum containing thirteen other authors, including Jane Austin, Joseph Conrad and Herman Melville. See Dwight L. Burton, *Literature Study in the High Schools* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), 135.

[20] See Nicholas Murray, *Aldous Huxley, an English Intellectual* (London: Little, Brown, 2002) 313-323; "Aldous Huxley," *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography, Volume 6: Modern Writers, 1914-1945*, Gale Research, 1991, reproduced in Biography Resource Center, Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale, 2008. http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC

Huxley sent a note congratulating Osmond and Smythies on their research and invited them to visit him if ever in Los Angeles.[21]

Huxley's Open Door

Huxley had a long intellectual engagement with questions surrounding drugs, science, and mysticism, extending back to the 1930s and soma, the fictional drug that anesthetized residents of *Brave New World* by raising "a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds."[22] But Huxley had high expectations for mescaline as a means to expand experience and taste inspiration. In correspondence with Osmond, Huxley was insistent in his desire to try mescaline.[23] In a letter to Osmond confirming his travel arrangements, Huxley wrote:

> "Under the current dispensation the vast majority of individuals lose, in the course of education, all the openness to inspiration, all the capacity to be aware of other things than those enumerated in the Sears-Roebuck catalogue; is it too much to hope that a system of education may someday be devised which shall give results, in terms of human development, commensurate with the time, money, energy and action expended? In such a system of education it may be mescaline or some other chemical substance may play a part by making it possible for young people to "taste and see" what they learned at second hand, or directly but at a lower level of intensity, in the writings of the religious, or the works of poets, painters and musicians.[24]

In drugs, Huxley saw not escape, but education.

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[21] Murray, *Aldous Huxley*, 498.

[22] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 52.

[23] Aldous Huxley, *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. Grover Smith (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 669.

[24] Ibid.

Where most prior investigators were grounded in academic psychology or the natural sciences, Huxley came from the humanities. He read visions of dreamy inner worlds penned by William Blake, Henri Michaux, and William Butler Yeats, accounts that had obvious value regardless of the chemical that inspired them. Huxley also had a long engagement with the philosophy of William James (1842-1910), the first professor of psychology in America, whose understanding of mystical states was shaped by experiments with laughing gas.[25] Huxley discussed James' philosophy in his own work.[26] James' masterwork, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, made an appearance in Huxley's *Brave New World* as one of the banned books stashed by the Controller, along with the Bible and *The Imitation of Christ*, a fifteenth-century devotional manual.[27]

In his diaries, and in *Varieties*, James recounted how, at the age of 28, he suffered a deep depression. The worry that his physical and emotional pain might result from forces outside of his control increased his inner turmoil. Appropriately for a philosopher, he broke from his depression through an act of philosophy: by deciding, on an eight-month trial basis, to act, and believe, as though he had free will. The trial was a success, and the lesson that beliefs affect those who hold them became central to his thought.[28] The cornerstone of James' thought was the belief that ideas should be evaluated for their

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[25] Morton Hunt noted, "There were no professors of psychology in American universities before James began teaching the subject in 1875." See *The Story of Psychology* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 150; William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 307-8; and Raymond E. Fancher, *Pioneers of Psychology* (Toronto: George J. McLeod, 1979), 167.

[26] Aldous Huxley, "History of Tension," *Scientific Monthly*, July 1957, 5-6.

[27] Huxley, *Brave New World*, 157.

[28] See James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 134-35; and Ibid., 153-56.

usefulness to the person who holds them, not according to their absolute truth, which may be impossible to discern.[29] In his view, beliefs were rules for action and "the true is what works well."[30]

This framework gave James little cause to doubt the validity of the experience afforded to him by nitrous oxide, a medical anesthetic which became a party drug following its discovery in London about 100 years earlier.[31] James' curiosity about nitrous oxide was piqued by an 1874 pamphlet titled "The Anesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy," in which Benjamin Paul Blood, an Amsterdam, New York, landowner and amateur philosopher, described metaphysical insights achieved with the gas. James was "more than skeptical" about the relative value of drug-induced insights (as well as the quality of Blood's philosophizing) in an anonymous review of the pamphlet for *Atlantic Monthly*. "What blunts the mind and weakens the will is no full channel for truth, even if it assist us to a view of a certain aspect of it; and mysticism versus mysticism, the faith that comes of willing, the intoxication of moral volition, has a million times better credentials," he wrote.[32] But James went on to become friends and corresponded with Blood, and eventually saw the amateur philosopher's self-published pamphlet as a permanent influence. "I forgot how it fell into my hands, but it fascinated

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[29] Fancher, *Pioneers of Psychology*, 167.

[30] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 351, 361.

[31] Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 312.

[32] [William James], Review of "The Anaesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1874, 627.

me so 'weirdly' that I am conscious of its having been one of the stepping-stones of my thinking ever since," James later wrote.[33] He discussed his nitrous oxide experience in the chapter of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in which he laid out his definition of mysticism:

> Nitrous oxide and ether, especially nitrous oxide, when sufficiently diluted with air, stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree. Depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed in the inhaler. This truth fades out, however, or escapes at the moment of coming to; and if any words remain over in which it seemed to clothe itself, they prove to be the veriest nonsense. Nevertheless, the sense of a profound meaning having been there persists; and I know more than one person who is persuaded that in the nitrous oxide trance we have a genuine metaphysical revelation.
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> Some years ago I myself made some observations on this aspect of nitrous oxide intoxication, and reported them in print. One conclusion was forced upon my mind at that time, and my impression of its truth has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.
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> … Looking back on my own experiences, they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably reconciliation. It is as if the opposites of the world, whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. … I feel as if it must mean something, something like what the Hegelian philosophy means, if one could only lay hold of it more clearly. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear; to me the living sense of its reality comes only in the artificial state of mind.[34]

In *Varieties*, James located drug-induced experiences near the top of his "mystical ladder," above more mundane experiences of insight and déjà vu, and inferior (in terms

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[33] G. William Barnard, *Exploring Unseen Worlds: William James and the Philosophy of Mysticism* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997), 29.

[34] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 307-8.

of "religiosity") to "religious mysticism pure and simple."[35] In the same chapter in which he describes his drug experiences, James outlined what he believed to be the defining characteristics of a mystical experience. The mystical experience is *ineffable*, or impossible for people, once returned to a normal state of awareness, to express adequately; *noetic*, in that it is a state of both feeling and knowledge; and marked by *transience* and *passivity*. One of the qualities, transience, poorly describes forms of non-Christian mysticism, one scholar has noted.[36] The qualities are well suited for drug-induced states, however. James believed that it was appropriate for individuals to seriously consider the meaning of their own mystical experiences, even if that experience may mean nothing to others. He was emphatic that the existence of altered states proved that rational consciousness was not the only route to understanding. "Yes, I repeat once more, the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe," he wrote.[37] Critics attacked James by highlighting the importance of drug experiences to his thinking.[38] One contemporary scoffed, "Truly the new beatitude is a hard saying: 'Blessed are the intoxicated, for to them the kingdom of spirits is revealed.'"[39]

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[35] Barnard, *Exploring Unseen Worlds*, 22-25, 34-37.

[36] See Ibid., 13-15; and James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 321-34.

[37] See James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 335, 338; and Robert J. Vanden Burgt, *The Religious Philosophy of William James* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981), 56-58.

[38] Dmitri Tymoczko, "The Nitrous Oxide Philosopher," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1996, 93-94.

[39] James H. Leuba, "Professor William James' Interpretation of Religious Experience," *International Journal of Ethics* 14, no. 3 (April 1904): 330.

Osmond had some reservations about providing mescaline to as eminent a figure as Huxley. "I did not relish the possibility, however remote, of being the man who drove Aldous Huxley mad," he recalled.[40] But there was a solid scientific rationale. After a few years of experimenting on normal subjects, it had become clear that most subjects had a hard time verbalizing what the mescaline or LSD experience was about. At a 1956 conference, Osmond complained that one problem with LSD research was "a dearth of subjects skilled in self observation."[41] Osmond hoped that a better description could be gained from someone as intellectually gifted and articulate as Huxley.

In May 1953, Osmond accepted Huxley's offer of hospitality. The psychiatrist stayed with Huxley and his wife, Maria, when he visited Los Angeles for the American Psychological Association convention. Although skeptical of psychology, Huxley even attended a few APA sessions with Osmond, where he impishly made the sign of the cross at each mention of Freud's name.[42] At 11 a.m. on the second-to-last day of Osmond's stay, the psychiatrist offered Huxley a glass of water in which four-tenths of a gram of mescaline crystals had been dissolved.[43]

Huxley's experience that day, described in detail in his thin book *Doors of Perception*, was both religious and poetic. "It was without question the most extraordinary and significant experience available to human beings this side of the

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[40] See Aldous Huxley, *Moksha*, eds. Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1977), 36; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 46.

[41] Steven J. Novak, "LSD before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," *Isis* 88, no. 1 (March 1997): 93.

[42] David King Dunaway, *Huxley in Hollywood* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), 284.

[43] Ibid., 285.

Beatific Vision," Huxley wrote to his book editor. "It opens up a host of philosophical questions, throws intense light and raises all matter of questions in the field of aesthetics, religion, theory of knowledge."[44] Under the influence of mescaline, the severely myopic writer was entranced by mundane objects around him: table legs seemed to writhe, books on the shelves of his study glowed like gems. Huxley felt he had been granted the vision of an artist: "It is a knowledge of the intrinsic significant every existent," he wrote.[45] "This is how one ought to see," he recalled repeating during the experience. "This is how one ought to see, how things really are."[46] Although Huxley experienced this vision through mescaline, in both *Doors of Perception* and a second volume released in 1956, *Heaven and Hell*, he asserted that he was also writing about the experience that could be achieved through LSD.[47]

This was not a brush with madness; it was a view of reality. One biographer explained, "For Huxley, the drugged state was the true—or at least a dimension of the truth. These were not hallucinations he experienced but deliberate visions, which opened at least one clear pane in an otherwise muddy door."[48] The Other World opened to Huxley was unabashedly mystical, abounding with Biblical imagery and religious

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[44] Huxley, *Moksha*, 42.

[45] Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954, 33.

[46] Ibid., 34.

[47] See Ibid., 11; and Aldous Huxley, *Heaven and Hell*, in *Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2004), 87.

[48] Dunaway, *Huxley in Hollywood*, 297.

experience.[49] He wrote in *Doors of Perception* that he viewed the drug-induced experience as "what Catholic theologians call 'a gratuitous grace,' not necessary to salvation but potentially helpful and to be accepted, thankfully, if made available."[50] Huxley continued:

> To be shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception, to be shown for a few timeless hours the outer and the inner world, not as they appear to an animal obsessed with survival or to a human being obsessed with words and notions, but as they are apprehended directly and unconditionally by Mind at Large—this is an experience of inestimable value to everyone and especially the intellectual.[51]

Recognizing that the drug-induced experience was rooted in chemistry, Huxley reasoned that, "in one way or another, all our experiences are chemically conditioned, and if we imagine that some of them are purely 'spiritual,' purely 'intellectual,' purely 'aesthetic,' it is merely because we have never troubled to investigate the internal chemical environment at the moment of their occurrence."[52] Huxley argued that mystics from time immemorial have sought visions by moderating their body chemistry through fasting, self-flagellation, breathing exercises, and insomnia.[53] This viewpoint baited critics, notably Oxford professor R.C. Zaehner, who found that drugs could only prompt lesser mystical states and declared that Huxley's view undermined religion.[54] Other

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[49] Hal Bridges, "Aldous Huxley: Exponent of Mysticism in America," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 37, no. 4 (December 1969): 350.

[50] Huxley, *Doors of Perception*, 73.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Huxley, *Heaven and Hell*, 155.

[53] Ibid., 155-6.

[54] June Deery, *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 108.

critics questioned the universality of Huxley's experience. One researcher remarked that *Doors of Perception* contained "99 percent Aldous Huxley and only one-half gram mescaline."[55]

Nevertheless, Huxley's opinion carried weight. Steven Novak wrote that Huxley "converted" both Humphry Osmond and Albert Hofmann to his interpretation of the psychedelic effect.[56] In a 1956 letter to Osmond, Huxley proposed the word "phanerothyme," constructed from Greek roots relating to "spirit" or "soul," to describe the experience:

> To make this trivial world sublime,
> Take half a Gramme of phanerothyme.

Osmond responded with a coinage constructed from Greek terms meaning "mind-manifesting:"

> To fathom hell or soar angelic
> Just take a pinch of psychedelic.[57]

Although the word was Osmond's, it embraced Huxley's metaphor of widely opened doors of perception. As Osmond explained:

> The central property of any of the substances labeled psychedelic is the enhancement of experience. … They seem to step up the capacity of the organism to respond, to find gradations of stimulus input, to enhance response to stimulation in the upper and lower levels of perceptual responding, and to break down the barriers imposed by the different sensory avenues through which simulation is received, in order to produce

[55] Ronald Fisher quoted in Novak, "LSD before Leary," 93.
[56] Ibid., 93-94.
[57] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 55.

> new perceptions, a greater frequency of illusions, and, more rarely, "hallucinations."[58]

Osmond's hope that a refined literary mind would be capable of producing a more compelling explanation of the mescaline experience had been realized. The two were not completely satisfied, requesting funding from the Ford Foundation and other foundations for a proposal to administer mescaline to top scientists, philosophers, and artists to test the extent to which the drug really expanded the mind.[59] It mattered little that their proposal was rejected. The theory of drug experience formulated by Huxley on the basis of four-tenths of a gram of mescaline in water would come to define the experience for a generation.

Coverage of Huxley: A Door Swings Open

The publication of Huxley's *Doors of Perception* in 1954 has been identified as the starting point of the modern psychedelic movement. Commentators suggested that Huxley's lurid, first-person account of a transcendental drug trip helped establish the mystical interpretation of the drug experience, and that his name lent it credibility.[60] Huxley spoke from an esteemed pulpit, with grace and erudition. There is no telling how many LSD experiments, formal and informal, were influenced by prior readings of *Doors*

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[58] Bernard S. Aaronson and Humphrey Osmond, "Introduction: Psychedelics, Technology," in *Psychedelics: The Uses and Implications of Hallucinogenic Drugs*, eds. Bernard S. Aaronson and Humphrey Osmond (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1970), 9.

[59] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 52-53.

[60] See Ibid., 10; Deery, *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science*, 106; and Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 68.

of Perception. As the psychedelic movement developed, *Doors* became unavoidable to those with even a casual interest as the movement's foundational text.

However, the book preceded the public interest in psychedelic drugs by years. The exploration of LSD for non-psychiatric uses had only just begun, and it would be more than a decade before the drug would be available even at the drug movement's ground zero, the corner of Haight and Ashbury streets in San Francisco.[61] At least initially, Huxley's essay was an unusual exercise about an obscure topic. It was not a bestseller. [62]

The book generated media attention disproportionate to sales, however. The fact of the book's publication was newsworthy to a magazine industry obsessed with celebrity, culture, and oddity. Drug use in general, and especially drug use as a spiritual exercise, was beneath serious discussion prior to the publication of *Doors*. Huxley's advocacy of drugs for mystical salvation broke taboos and seemed to contradict the lessons of his best-known book. In coverage of Huxley, magazines brought these ideas onto America's coffee tables: *The Reporter* explained:

> Coming from a lesser writer than Huxley, such suggestions for the salvation of mankind could be dismissed as the woolgathering of a misguided crackpot. But coming as they do from one of the masters of English prose, a man of immense erudition and intellect who usually demonstrates a high moral seriousness, they deserve more careful scrutiny.[63]

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[61] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*,145-46.

[62] Keith L. Justice, *Bestseller Index: All Books, by Author, on the lists of Publishers Weekly and New York Times through 1990* (Jefferson, N.C., McFarland & Co.: 1998), 159.

[63] Marvin Barrett, "Aldous Huxley, Merchant of Mescalin," *The Reporter*, March 2, 1954, 46.

Huxley's use put psychedelics and LSD into a very different context than Native American peyotism or the freewheeling adventurism of the beats. The works of Kerouac, Burroughs, and Ginsberg that were prosecuted as obscene all presented drug use with an aesthetic that prized immediacy of expression and appreciated rule-breaking more than rules. For the beats, drug use was another way to escape rule-bound society and access one's natural (and sometimes ugly) self. For Huxley, on the other hand, drug use confirmed societal truths about the role of man and God. While equally rapturous, Huxley's description of drug use was more acceptable because he claimed it to be ennobling.

Magazines walked a tightrope to entice readers with Huxley's sensational views while remaining within the bounds of polite conversation. A 1954 article in *Saturday Review*, "Mescaline – An Answer to Cigarettes?" presented a full page of *Doors of Perception* excerpts touting the superiority of mescaline to alcohol and tobacco. The article did not include any of Huxley's lavish drug trip descriptions, however, or even a summary of his impression of the drug effect. Huxley's embrace of mescaline as an artificial paradise was not stated in selected excerpts, but merely disputed in a sidebar by an anthropologist who studied the Native American Church. [64]

"I doubt if peyote would qualify as 'artificial paradise' of the sort Mr. Huxley is seeking," J.S. Slotkin wrote. He continued that what peyote "does do remarkably well is to permit a mystically inclined person to have a mystical experience fairly easily and for

[64] Aldous Huxley, "Mescalin—An Answer to Cigarettes?" *Saturday Review*, February 6, 1954, 14.

relatively long periods of time" and concluded: "I do not think most middle-class Americans would be interested in these effects of peyote. Certainly, they would not find it a substitute for tobacco, alcohol, barbiturates, or benezedrine."[65]

The Reporter's review of *Doors of Perception* went further in explaining Huxley's advocacy of mescaline, describing it as a "highly exasperating" anti-intellectual transformation in the author's thought. The reviewer, Marvin Barrett, noted that Native Americans used peyote in a manner similar to Huxley, but found the schizophrenia interpretation of the drug effect more convincing. "Scientists and psychiatrists are somewhat less enthusiastic than Huxley and the Indians," he noted.[66] Although the overall tone was skeptical, the writer included quotations from Huxley that elaborated the author's belief in the possibility of self-transcendence through drugs, as well as through religion and art. The article ended dismissively:

> And so, as an alternative to creativity and faith in the ultimate goodness of God and man, in place of either Christianity or alcohol, as a cure for the ten times ten gloomy sentiments of 1954, Huxley offers us four grams of mescalin in a glass of water.[67]

In leading journals of liberal opinion, other intellectuals discussed and debated Huxley's contention that there was an Other World accessible through drugs, art, and religion. In *The New Republic*, noted philosopher Hans Meyerhoff praised Huxley's erudition in *Heaven and Hell*, the 1956 follow-up volume to *Doors of Perception*, but argued that there was little evidence to substantiate that all artistic and religious incarnations of

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[65] James S. Slotkin, "The Anthropologist," *Saturday Review*, February 6, 1954, 15.

[66] Barrett, "Aldous Huxley, Merchant of Mescalin," 46.

[67] Ibid., 47.

beauty reflected the same Other Word.[68] The poet Richard Eberhart was less critical, praising *Heaven and Hell* as "fascinating and tantalizingly short." "Whether the reader will rush out and buy some mescaline, I don't know, but he might well rush out and buy a transporting book," the poet concluded. [69]

In *Time*, Huxley's description of a mescaline trip in *Doors* served as a launching point for an article describing research into hallucinogenic drugs. *Time*'s 1954 piece that discussed both Huxley and research using LSD began:

> "I took my pill at eleven," reported Novelist Aldous Huxley in *The Doors of Perception.* "I was in a world where everything shown with Inner Light…The legs, for example, of that chair—how miraculous their tubularity … I spent several minutes—or was it several centuries?—not merely gazing at those bamboo legs but actually being them …"[70]

By reproducing Huxley's enticing language in describing the drug trip, *Time* went further than reviews in other popular magazines in challenging the taboo against descriptions of recreational drug use. However, a look at what was left out of the quotation was illuminating. In *The Doors of Perception*, the sentence containing "was in a world where everything shown with Inner Light," continued "and was infinite in its significance."[71] And to get to that point from when Huxley popped his mescaline pill, *Time* editors skipped several arguably more colorful passages, including, "I was seeing what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation – the miracle, moment by moment,

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[68] Hans Meyerhoff, "In the Mind's Antipodes," *The New Republic*, May 14, 1956, 17-18.

[69] Richard Eberhart, "The Other Side of the Mind," *The Nation*, April 14, 1956, 309-10.

[70] "Dream Stuff," *Time*, June 28, 1954, 66.

[71] Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, 22.

of naked existence," and "Words like 'grace' and 'transfiguration' came to my mind."[72] While willing to reproduce Huxley's sensational descriptions, *Time* balked at associating the experience with legitimate Christian faith.

After the opening quotation from Huxley, the *Time* article described scientists' discovery of a new, more potent psychiatric tool: LSD. The story went on to describe the effect of LSD as "roughly like the ordinary dreamer who knows he is dreaming" and to tout the results of a British study published that month that found LSD to be "the best of all such drugs so far tested" as an aid to psychotherapy. The scientific potential of LSD for the treatment of mental illness become the main focus of the story, and further discussion of hallucinogens' effects reflected the interests of psychiatrists:

> Patients can often recall and re-experience their childhood in clear detail. Wrote one woman: "I realized I was reliving an incident that occurred when I was quite small, on holiday … I was not in the least surprised to see my hand and arm [become] quite little, about the size of a child of seven or eight …" Others find themselves way back in time: "Part of me was detached …"[73]

The magazine distanced Huxley's enthusiasm from that of scientists excited about LSD's research potential "No psychiatrist will go as far as Author Huxley (who prescribed mescaline for all mankind as a specific against unhappiness)," *Time* reported.[74]

There was a shift in attitudes toward hallucinogenic drug use following the publication of *Doors of Perception*. Huxley's graphic description of drug use opened the way for others to tell their own, interior stories of drug adventurism. Huxley lent

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[72] Ibid., 18.
[73] "Dream Stuff," *Time*, 66.
[74] Ibid.

legitimacy to a disreputable genre. Descriptions of drug trips could not be presented on television during this period, nor in film, but they became a regular facet of magazine coverage.

Three years prior to the publication of *Doors of Perception*, *Time* characterized the Native American Church as "wretched" Navajos and "peyote peddlers."[75] When the magazine revisited the subject in 1954, after its review of Huxley's experimentation, its attitude was sympathetic. The post-Huxley article, "The Church & the Cactus," opened with a quotation from an "old Indian" describing his belief in the connection between peyote and God, and explained "peyote helps them experience their faith as an immediate reality." The story continued to describe a peyote ceremony as a casual, orderly affair and concluded with a believer's statement, "We accept Jesus Christ and the Bible. We are Christians." Huxley was mentioned in a footnote: "In his latest book, *The Doors of Perception*, Novelist Aldous Huxley prescribes mescaline, a derivative of peyote, for all mankind as an alternative to cocktails."[76] In the space of three years, Indian peyote use had been transformed from a squalid practice that led to sexual licentiousness to an uplifting religious experience, defined in a way that made it most acceptable to readers. It was noteworthy too that the "old Indian" was quoted using the kind of direct Biblical language that was excised from *Time's* report on Huxley's book. The reference was tongue-in-cheek, but use of Huxley's name elevated both the drug and the situation.

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[75] "Button, Button…," *Time*, June 18, 1951, 82.
[76] "The Church & the Cactus," *Time*, Aug. 9, 1954.

The Doors of Perception also opened the door for other magazine writers to explore hallucinogen use. A 1954 piece in the *New Yorker* began, "Aldous Huxley's recent book *The Doors of Perception*, makes it plain that he, like a good many people, is strongly taken with the romance, mysticism and folklore that have grown up around peyote, an untasty vegetable that I, too, have had an acquaintance with."[77] The writer, ethnologist Alice Marriott, described her own participation in a peyote ritual while conducting fieldwork with Indians in South Dakota. An older tribe member, the uncle of her translator, offered to hold a peyote ceremony to help cure her of an undiagnosed sickness that made her feel lifeless and attenuated in the Plains' summer heat. Marriott participated in the ceremony, swallowing the bitter cactus buttons and then staring, entranced, at the fire in center of the teepee. The door to the teepee came to represent to her an entrance to "beauty beyond the senses and beyond the earth."[78] She passed through the door, to gaze at cool stars and feel a cool breeze, and then returned to doze by the teepee fire. The following day, feeling strong and full of life, she returned to the house in which she stayed with Mary, an Indian friend and translator.

> "What was it like?" she asked as I began to undress. "You can describe it, can't you? No one else ever can—not even Wilma. Go on, tell me. What was it really like?"
>
> "Paradise," I answered, and fell across the bed, asleep. . . .
>
> The drought broke soon after, but the peyote had already strengthened me and helped me. The tremendous first exhilaration lasted for several days, and there was no sudden drop following it. I tried once more to answer Mary's question, but I did not actually succeed. "It is like seeing the door to life swing open," I told her, rather helplessly, and she shook her head.

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[77] Alice Marriott, "The Opened Door," *The New Yorker*, September 25, 1954, 90.
[78] Ibid., 38.

"That's what they all say," she said, and we have left it at that ever since.[79]

Exotic voyages in "American voodoo," so called in *Look* magazine, had become fashionable. The picture magazine ran a four-page spread on a peyote ceremony in 1957, with an accompanying first-person account that approached the line between observer and subject, but did not quite cross. Laura Bergquist quoted an "Indian expert" who explained peyotism as an escape from a miserable reality.[80] The author consumed less than half of a dose of peyote during her trip to a Crow Indian meeting and experienced only a subtle change in her hearing. "Suddenly, the 'words' of the peyote songs, which are really unintelligible nonsense, spoke a language I could almost understand. And the drumming sounded as loud as any in the Congo," the piece concluded.[81] The story referred to Huxley, but watered down his descriptions of the mystical splendor of a mescaline trip to the observation that the drug "heightened his ability to concentrate while dulling his 'will to act.'"[82]

Both of these articles mixed first-person description of the peyote experience with an anthropological perspective on the peyote ceremony. In subsequent articles, emphasis on the drug experience would overwhelm the interest in native beliefs, perhaps because magazine writers now had other frameworks in which to describe what was going on. One of the most remarkable articles, the 1957 *Life* story "Seeking the Magic

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[79] Ibid., 96.

[80] Laura Bergquist, "Peyote: The Strange Church of Cactus Eaters," *Look*, December 10 1957, 36.

[81] Ibid., 38.

[82] Ibid., 36.

Mushroom," contemplated that the mystical, marvelous effects from eating hallucinogenic mushrooms may have inspired religion around the world. In the article, J.P. Morgan vice president R. Gordon Wasson explains his thirty-year quest to find hallucinogenic mushrooms and describes the mushroom's "astonishing" effects when consumed. The article, the third in *Life's* "Great Adventures" series, was promoted with a line on the cover. In the article, Wasson described a fascination with mushrooms that began on a Catskills vacation with his wife in 1927 and culminated in a thatched-roof Indian home in a remote Mexican village. While the first time he ate the hallucinogenic mushrooms was during a ceremony presided over by an Indian folk healer, Wasson was more concerned with hallucinogenic mushrooms generally than with a particular native group's ritual. He collected seven different varieties of magic mushrooms during trips to Mexico with various experts, participating in mushroom rituals nine times and bringing more mushrooms home, which he consumed six weeks later in his New York bedroom.[83] Wasson described his experience with Mexican hallucinogenic mushrooms in wholly positive terms: "For the first time the word ecstasy took on real meaning. For the first time it did not mean someone else's state of mind."[84] After vividly describing the resplendent palaces and mythological beasts he saw under the influence of the drug, he wrote:

> The visions were not blurred or uncertain. They were sharply focused, the lines and colors being so sharp that they seemed more real to me than anything I had seen with my own eyes. I felt that I was now seeing plain,

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[83] R. Gordon Wasson, "Seeking the Magic Mushroom," *Life*, May 13, 1957, 110, 118.

[84] Ibid., 102.

> whereas ordinary vision gives an imperfect view; I was seeing the archetypes, the Platonic ideals, that underlie the imperfect images of everyday life.[85]

Wasson reported that he and his friends woke on the morning following their initial mushroom experience "rested and heads clear, though deeply shaken by the experience we had gone through."

Like Huxley, Wasson was an esteemed figure with an interesting range of acquaintance. He had been an English professor at Columbia University and is credited as a pioneer in the field of banking public relations.[86] In the 1920s he had been an associate editor of *Current Opinions* and the author of a signed financial column for the *New York Herald Tribune.* On a 1956 mushroom hunting trip discussed in the *Life* story, Wasson was accompanied by Roger Heim, director of the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.[87] Heim cultivated samples and provided them to LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann, who used them to isolate the psychoactive component psilocybin for the first time.[88] Wasson was also deeply interested in hallucinogens' potential to create a mystical experience and was lead collaborator, along with Hofmann, on a 1978 book suggesting

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[85] Ibid., 109.

[86] R. Gordon Wasson (1898-1986) Archives, "Biography," Harvard University Herbaria, http://www.huh.harvard.edu/libraries/wasson/BIOG.html (accessed July 4, 2008).

[87] Wasson, 120.

[88] Albert Hofmann, *LSD, My Problem Child*, trans. Jonathan Ott (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980),110-11.

that an Ancient Greek rite, the Eleusinian Mysteries, revolved around consumption of the LSD precursor ergot.[89]

Wasson's detailed, loving description of mushroom use was credited by Lee and Shlain with inspiring hundreds of people to make the trip to Mexico to try the drug themselves.[90] Peter Stafford, a long-time writer on psychedelic drugs, credited Wasson's editors at *Life* with coining the term "magic mushroom," which became a common name for the hallucinogenic fungi. The story certainly educated many readers about the possibilities of an unfamiliar style of recreational drug use, presented as the exotic and idiosyncratic goal of a very accomplished man. Stafford pointed out that while there were only 512 copies printed of the two-volume *Mushrooms, Russia and History* that Wasson and his wife had published in 1956, millions read the seventeen-page version printed in *Life*.[91]

The following week, the magazine printed seven letters to the editor about the feature. A Wichita, Kansas, reader declared, "Your article about mushroom worship is an outrage against faithful Christians," but other writers were more open-minded. A Fort Lauderdale, Florida, woman wrote, "Seeking the Magic Mushroom is without doubt the most fascinating article I have ever read." Most helpful was a letter from a New York woman who instructed readers how they could have similar experiences on their own:

Sirs:

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[89] R. Gordon Wasson, Albert Hofmann and Carl A.P. Ruck, *The Road to Eleusis: Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978).

[90] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 73.

[91] Peter Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 3rd expanded ed. (Berkeley, Calif.: Ronin Publishing, 1992), 236.

> I've been having hallucinatory visions accompanied by space suspension and time destruction in my New York City apartment for the past three years.
>
> The essential difference between Mr. Wasson's vision and my own is that mine are produced by eating American-grown peyote cactus plants.
>
> I first heard about peyote in Aldous Huxley's book, *The Doors of Perception*, in which he described this ancient "tranquilizer."
>
> The chemicals in peyote are known. A drug called mescaline is made from it which is already in use effectively for psychotherapy and research.
>
> I got my peyote from a company in Texas which makes C.O.D. shipments all over the country for $8 per hundred "buttons." It usually takes about 4 "buttons" for one person to have visions.[92]

The letter writer was not the only one to discover peyote during this period. In 1960, the proprietor of The Dollar Sign Café in East Greenwich Village Café was busted for selling capsules of ground peyote over the counter. Although the peyote was confiscated, he was never charged.[93] In the late 1950s, peyote "became a familiar object on many college campuses and in beatnik and artistic circles," observed Stafford, a longtime author on psychedelic drugs.[94] "By the early 1960s, the media were definitely fascinated by these substances," he wrote. *Doors of Perception* was soon joined on bookstore shelves by two anthologies of classic accounts of drug use by writers and scientists, Robert DeRopp's *Drugs and the Mind* (1957) and David Ebin's *The Drug Experience* (1961).[95]

Magazines continued to publish contemporary accounts of drug adventurism. In one Mexican mushroom hunting account, *Esquire*'s 1961 "The Night We Ate Magic

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[92] "Letters to the Editors," *Life*, June 3, 1957, 16.
[93] Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 116.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 114.

Mushrooms," American tourists ate mushrooms with an Indian folk healer, but brought their own catechism: "As departure day approached, this mysterious fungus and the effect it might have on us became Topic A to Z. We read Huxley, Wasson and others who had navigated these voyages to the end of the mind," the comic Hollywood writer, novelist and playwright Budd Schulberg wrote.[96] Although his own experience was disappointing (and despite his self-characterization as a "skeptic"), his belief was unshaken:

> Despite my failure to accompany my wife and our friends into what Huxley has called "the Old World of the mind," I had seen the mystic mushrooms work such marvels in them that the skeptic who climbed the mountain was not quite the same man who came back into the valley. As we rapidly move forward into the new world of chemopsychiatry, it is fascinating to contemplate those transplanted Mongolians who, in the most primitive of physical environments, discovered thousands of years ago a key to the gate that bars the way for most of us to the unknown country of the soul. It seems to be an unexplored continent we of the West either deny or try to find through muddling poor substitutes like alcohol.[97]

Huxley ignited the media's interest in hallucinogenic drugs, and his name and ideas were invoked in subsequent coverage with startling regularity. More than one-fifth of the magazine articles about LSD selected for the content analysis mentioned Huxley in his capacity as a drug user. In magazine coverage between 1954 and 1968, Huxley's name appeared as often as that of Albert Hofmann, the actual discoverer LSD. The only figure mentioned more often in magazine coverage of LSD during this period was Timothy Leary, although he didn't enter coverage until 1962.

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[96] Budd Schulberg, "The Night We Ate Magic Mushrooms," *Esquire*, December 1961, 129.

[97] Ibid., 316.

As with the early experimenters who used LSD to find artificial psychosis, Huxley saw in the subjective reaction that which he desired. Huxley had been writing about mysticism for twenty years before his first experience of the Other World through mescaline in 1953.[98] Hans Meyerhoff pointed out that the beauty and significance of art (as well as the power and pull of religion) can be explained apart from Huxley's assertion that both reflect the same, deeper reality that he found through drugs.[99] However, Huxley's elegantly expressed ideas persisted, spread both through the author's extensive personal network and repetition in the mass media.

[98] Deery, *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science*, 105.
[99] Meyerhoff, "In the Mind's Antipodes," 17-18.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Studies with LSD

> "Oh, sure, we all took acid. It was a creative group—my husband and I and Huxley and [novelist Christopher] Isherwood."
>
> —Clare Boothe Luce, *Dick Cavett Show*, April 9, 1982

How New Drugs Spread

In the 1950s, the doctors and psychologists who administered LSD were the first line of gatekeepers, controlling access to the drug that was still only manufactured by one company, Sandoz.[1] The question of how doctors in the 1950s decided to use new drugs has been subject to considerable scrutiny, mainly because of intuitively challenging results from a landmark study from the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University. The report, *Medical Innovation: A Diffusion Study*, used interviews with 126 doctors—85 percent of the general practitioners, internists, and pediatricians in four Midwestern towns—along with analysis of prescription-writing records to map how a new prescription drug spread through social channels.[2] In a pre-test that guided the primary study, the researchers found that, except for a few pioneers, a doctor's decision to use a new drug nearly always came about after speaking with another doctor who used

[1] Peter Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 3rd expanded ed. (Berkeley, Calif.: Ronin Publishing, 1992), 50.

[2] See James S. Coleman, Elihu Katz and Herbert Mezel, *Medical Innovation: A Diffusion Study* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), 17-19; and James S. Coleman, Elihu Katz and Herbert Mezel, "The Diffusion of Innovation Among Physicians," *Sociometry* 20, no. 4 (December 1957): 254.

it, and that doctors in the same social circle appeared to adopt the drug at the same time.[3] It was a troublesome finding for scholars who preferred to think that drugs were adopted on the basis of scientific opinion, or at least drug company outreach.[4] Rather, the bureau researchers looked at social relationships, finding that the new drug was first adopted by opinion leaders in the medical community, who were influenced by medical journals, conference attendance, or another outside force. Opinion leaders were believed to then sway the prescribing habits of other physicians through personal contact. In short, James Coleman, Elihu Katz and Herbert Menzel found confirmation of the "two-step flow" hypothesis developed by their colleagues at the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, in their earlier study of voting decision-making, *The People's Choice*.[5]

While the two-step flow was compelling as a metaphor, it was not consistently confirmed by subsequent studies examining the narrow problem of prescription drug diffusion during the same period. An attempt to replicate the Bureau's drug study in a large city in 1958 and 1959 found that physicians were more likely to rely on journals and drug company representatives for information than on colleagues.[6] Several surveys of physicians in the 1950s found the doctors did not consider peer influence to be as

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[3] Herbert Menzel and Elihu Katz, "Social Relations and Innovation in the Medical Profession: The Epidemiology of a New Drug," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1955-1956): 348.

[4] Raymond A. Bauer and Lawrence H. Wortzel, "Doctor's Choice: The Physician and His Sources of Information about Drugs," *Journal of Marketing Research* 3, no. 1 (February 1966): 40.

[5] Ibid., 337.

[6] See Ibid., 348; and Charles Winick, "The Diffusion of Innovation Among Physicians in a Large City," *Sociometry* 24, no. 4 (December 1961): 384-96.

important a factor as drug marketing or journal articles. But most damning was a re-analysis of the Bureau of Applied Social Research data set, published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 2001, which found support for the conclusion that the decision to prescribe the drug moved through social networks evaporated when variables were added to control for the level of drug advertising. These researchers also argued that variables measuring drug advertising were left out because the original study was narrowly conceived to measure the effectiveness of a newsletter distributed by the study's sponsor, the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, a manufacturer of the drug being studied.[7]

Scholarship since the 1950s has elaborated the two-step flow model to account for the influence of different types of communication at different phases in an individual's adoption of a new technology. The more contemporary approach, articulated by Everett Rodgers in *Diffusion of Innovations*, proposes that the media play an important role in the initial phase, informing an individual that a new product or process exists. Once an individual is aware, the decision whether or not to adopt the innovation may be influenced more by others in the individual's social network. Rodgers suggested that this time sequence was masked in the two-step flow model because researchers did not consider the time sequence leading up to a decision.[8]

The communication environment for LSD was in some ways simpler than for a heavily marketed prescription drug. LSD was not supported by a marketing campaign or

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[7] Christophe Van den Bulte, "*Medical Innovation* Revisited: Social Contagion versus Marketing Effect," *The American Journal of Sociology* 106, no. 5 (March 2001): 1409, 1416, 1429-30.

[8] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 285-86.

traveling drug company representatives (at the time called "detail men"). As an experimental drug, LSD was not in the regular distribution network, and could not be simply picked up at a pharmacy. The policy of Sandoz was to ship LSD only to psychologists or physicians who applied to the company, attesting that they intended to use the drug for research. The company was remarkably open-minded in the specialties of researchers to whom it supplied the drug (including pediatricians and radiologists), as well as the directions of their research. Sandoz recognized qualitative work, as well as quantitative clinical trials and laboratory experiments. Psychology, after all, had a qualitative tradition going back to Freud of case studies and generalizations from close studies of particular patients. Clinical psychologists and others in private practice were eligible to receive the drug from Sandoz, as long as they promised to write up their results.[9]

To an extraordinary extent, the spread of LSD to the first generation of researchers has been tracked through personal contacts between individuals. The pattern of personal relationships between researchers may have been dictated by the drug's special circumstances. For many, it was a personal experience with LSD that provided the impetus to launch a program of research. Often, interest in the drug would spread with the travels of those who could provide physical access to it. Between about 1954 and 1962, LSD moved through social channels among psychiatrists and researchers, who

[9] See Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 49-50; and Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 50.

used it for psychotherapy and studies in topics including creativity and religion that exposed thousands more to the drug.

While Sandoz did not employ detail men to educate researchers about LSD, there were a number of freelance evangelists who took the job. One was the mysterious Captain Al Hubbard, "Cappy" to his friends, who first tried LSD in Great Britain in 1951. "It was the deepest mystical thing I've ever seen," he recalled.[10] Hubbard, a former child inventor, smuggler, World War II intelligence officer, and uranium entrepreneur, spent much of the 1950s hopping around Europe and the United States in a private airplane, introducing intellectuals, scholars, religious leaders, and anyone else who would hold still, to LSD.[11] He contacted Osmond in Vancouver, meeting the young psychiatrist for lunch at the city's yacht club. Hubbard, whose habitual outfit was a security officer's uniform complete with gun belt, met with Huxley in 1955 in Los Angeles and supplied the author with his first dose of LSD.[12] A half-dozen years later, a man with a background in philosophy and a job as executive secretary of the Institute for British American Cultural Exchange, Michael Hollingshead, played a similar role on the East Coast, turning on researchers Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert, Frank Barron, and Houston

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[10] See Aldous Huxley, M*oksha*, eds. Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1977), 42; Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*,44-45; and Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 53-57.

[11] Lee and Schlain, *Acid Dreams*, 50.

[12] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 53, 55.

Smith, as well as Donovan, Paul McCartney, Keith Richards, Paul Krassner, and Charlie Mingus from his personal stash of LSD.[13]

Journal articles and magazine reports contain clues to LSD's spread. The 1955 *Time* magazine article noted Harold Abramson, a researcher at Cold Spring Harbor Biological Laboratory in Long Island, had "developed a technique of serving dinner to a group of subjects, topping off the meal with a liqueur glass containing 40 micrograms of LSD."[14] In a round table at a conference years later, Abramson commented, "It was all I could do to prevent all of Brookhaven, people in the school system, friends, and so on, to come to dinner with us on Friday evenings to take LSD." [15] In 1958, a journal article reporting the results of six case studies with LSD therapy at the Long Beach, California, Veterans Administration Hospital mentioned investigators holding "LSD-25 social parties."[16]

In 1964, a group of sociologists associated with the Institute for the Study of Human Problems at Stanford University attempted to construct a natural history of LSD use by interviewing 92 LSD users in California. The group found that LSD initially

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[13] Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 49.

[14] *Time*, "Artificial Psychoses," December 19, 1955, 60.

[15] Harold A. Abramson quoted in the transcript of a discussion following Kenneth E. Godfrey, "The Metamorphosis of an LSD Psychotherapist," in *The Use of LSD in Psychotherapy and Alcoholism,* ed. Harold A. Abramson (Indianapolis: The Bobs-Merrill Company, 1967), 475.

[16] See Myron Feld, Joseph Goodman and John A Guido, "Clinical and Laboratory Observations on LSD-25," *Journal of Mental and Nervous Disease* 26, no. 2 (February 1958): 176; and Steven J. Novak, "LSD Before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," *Isis* 88, no. 1 (March 1997): 99.

spread through social and professional channels, but by the end of the decade was available to anyone willing to pay:

> Experimental workers and subjects in the sample first began taking the drug in 1950. It then became available to medical and mental-health professionals and practitioners who started taking it about 1956 in informal settings. Patients then began to receive it in psychotherapy, after which it became available, about 1959, to black-market users. The latter obtained it through social contacts with professionals. Finally, the religious-medical center was established, and by 1960, LSD was available on a fee basis to the general public.[17]

LSD Therapy, for Self-Improvement and Profit

The most prominent Los Angeles psychiatrist working with LSD was Sidney Cohen, a researcher at the Los Angeles Veterans Administration Hospital and professor at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine. Cohen acquired LSD from Sandoz with the intention of conducting model psychosis studies after the pattern set by Max Rinkel in Boston.[18] His focus changed, however, after he tried the drug for the first time October 12, 1955. The doctor experienced "nirvana without ecstasy" in a drab hospital room. "I seem to have finally arrived at the contemplation of eternal truth," he wrote in his account of the trip.[19] When he recovered from the drug, two things bothered Cohen: first, that he could not remember enough of the LSD experience; and

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[17] Richard Blum and Associates, *Utopiates: The Use and Users of LSD-25* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 62-63.

[18] Novak, "LSD before Leary," 92.

[19] Sidney Cohen included the narrative of his first LSD trip as the account of an unnamed doctor in *The Beyond Within: The LSD Story* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 106-11. The quotation appears on page 107. Novak identified the authorship of this passage through comparison with Cohen's initial record of his reactions. See "LSD Before Leary," 92, note 16.

second, that he remembered having somewhere read a description of his vision. He located it in the 1822 book by Thomas De Quincey, C*onfessions of an English Opium-Eater*.[20]

Like Osmond, Cohen reasoned he could get a better description of the fascinating new drug by studying it in better minds. The first three studies conducted by doctoral students under his supervision relied on standard psychological tests to measure the effects of LSD on 81 members of the academic community. Next, Cohen recruited psychoanalysts as subjects, believing these experts in the unconscious would have special insight into the drug's effect on their own minds. The results were disappointing. The psychoanalysts either did not respond or responded badly to the drug, and the psychological tests seemed to miss what Cohen experienced as the indescribable essence of LSD.[21]

In 1957, he teamed up with Betty Eisner, a young psychologist who volunteered to be one of Cohen's early research subjects after she realized that she would be trying the same drug she had read about in *Look* magazine.[22] Together, Eisner and Cohen designed studies to test LSD as an adjunct to psychotherapy. Twenty-two subjects participated in the first study, by swallowing LSD and then lying on therapists' couches for four to eight hours, where they were encouraged to discuss conflicts and family issues

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[20] Cohen, *The Beyond Within*, 110-11.

[21] Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 92, 95.

[22] Betty Eisner, "Remembrances of LSD Therapy Past," (Self-published memoir: August 7, 2002), 5-6. http://www.erowid.org/culture/characters/eisner_betty/eisner_betty.shtml (accessed April 30, 2008).

while listening to music of their choice. After the session, the subjects were brought to another room where they were encouraged to draw or paint in art therapy. [23] "It was interesting to note how LSD lowered an individual's barriers enough to make the person possible to relate to. No matter how unpleasant or hostile before, all patients were 'lovable' once the LSD was working strongly," Eisner recalled. [24]

Cohen and Eisner reported that of the 22 patients in their first study, sixteen were considered improved after between one and six LSD sessions, as judged by the two doctors, the person closest to the patient, and the patient him- or herself. Among unimproved patients was a schizophrenic who was given the drug sixteen times. The gains were attributed to what the researchers called an integrative experience: "a state wherein the patient accepts himself as he is, and a massive reduction in self-conflict occurs. There is a feeling of harmony with his environment, and an upsurge in creativeness." The study went on: "The integrative experience should be described further because it has not been a matter for scientific scrutiny and the semantic difficulties are considerable."[25]

Cohen was pursuing this goal along other lines. Both Eisner and Cohen were friends with Gerald Heard, a science fiction writer and popular philosopher who had emigrated from England with Huxley in 1937. Eisner was a visitor to the monastery the

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[23] See Betty Grover Eisner and Sidney Cohen, "Psychotherapy with Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 127, no. 6 (December 1958): 531; and Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 92, 95.

[24] Eisner, "Remembrances of LSD Therapy Past," 52.

[25] Eisner and Cohen, "Psychotherapy with Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," 533, 535-36.

bearded mystic had founded 60 miles south of Los Angeles under the guidance of Swami Prabhavananda, who maintained a high-profile Hindu temple in Hollywood.[26] Cohen turned to Heard for help in describing the effects of LSD after his disappointing results with tests on psychoanalysts.[27] In an unpublished essay for a commemorative volume planned after Heard's death, Cohen wrote, "We learned from Gerald that, just as in some psychological experiments animals are inappropriate test subjects, so in certain experiments with the psychedelics *ordinary men are inadequate subjects* . . . He was a skilled, articulate observer in entering into an indescribable, surging state, which could fragment some with its intensity and divert others with its entertaining visual displays."[28]

Like Osmond before him, Cohen hoped refined, literary minds would be able to describe the experience that left normal subjects at a loss for words. Cohen met Huxley in late 1955, after the publication of *Doors of Perception*. Cohen biographer Steven J. Novak suggested that prior reading of *Doors of Perception* "may have" shaped Cohen's initial impression of the psychedelic experience.[29] Cohen treated Huxley and Heard as collaborators, collecting written reports and supplying them with LSD for both self-experiments and to administer to others.[30]

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[26] See "Gerald Heard," *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, 5th ed. (Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale Group, 2001). Reproduced in Biography Resource Center, http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC (accessed April 30, 2008); and Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 96.

[27] Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 93.

[28] Quoted in Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 95.

[29] Ibid., 93, 94.

[30] Ibid., 95.

Many of these experiments took place in Huxley's sitting room, with participants including Heard, Buddhist scholar and San Francisco talk show host Alan Watts, who perceived the LSD experience as a shortcut to the transcendent state that can be achieved through meditation, Oscar Janiger, and Keith Ditman, one of Cohen's former residents who studied the drug as a cure for alcoholism.[31] "LSD became for us an intellectual fun drug," Ditman summarized in a 1991 interview.[32] Lee and Shlain identified the social scene that developed around Los Angeles psychiatrists and subjects as the first group to use LSD socially, rather than clinically.[33] Janiger described the scene:

> These people had first taken it experimentally, because that was the only way it was given at all. Then it was just a short step for people who had taken it to say, "Let's try it [again]" and make up some circumstance which would justify it. At the beginning, nobody would dare say, "Let's just take it." . . .
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> So in somebody's home there would be six to eight people, and they would take the drug. I was at one or two of those, and Huxley would be there, and Heard, and you would meet this strata of people. It was here that you met these people who were the investigators, plus those people who were some of their subjects—who had showed a special affinity or interest in the drug.[34]

Clare and Henry Luce were on the periphery of this scene, initially receiving the drug from Cohen, delivered by Heard, for experiments in their Phoenix home. "Oh, sure, we all took acid. It was a creative group—my husband and I and Huxley and [novelist Christopher] Isherwood," Clare said on the April 9, 1982 Dick Cavett show.[35] There was no shame in association with this group. Novak pointed out that three members of the

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[31] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 51.
[32] Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 99.
[33] Ibid., 51-52. See also Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 42.
[34] Oscar Janiger, quoted in Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 42.
[35] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 71.

scene—Huxley, Heard, and Isherwood—were pictured, along with chemist Linus Pauling, to represent the Los Angeles intellectuals in a 1960 *Life* magazine spread about the city's coming of age.[36]

Oscar Janiger, a psychiatrist who taught at the University of California at Irvine, was one of the first West Coast researchers to work with LSD. Janiger was introduced to LSD in 1952 by one of his students, a professional diver. He liked it. The psychiatrist, who also maintained a private practice in Beverly Hills, devised what at the time was a novel way to get beyond the persistent problem that faced LSD researchers: how to measure a subjective experience that, for most patients, resisted words. Janiger decided that instead of administering questionnaires or tests, he would simply give subjects pencils or other art supplies and encourage them to create. The formal studies were conducted in his offices, with each subject monitored by a designated babysitter, who was required to have experienced LSD him- or herself.[37]

Although Janiger did not publish any results from the study for years, he saw sufficient evidence in the qualitative results to continue research. Between 1955 and 1962, the psychiatrist supervised more than 2,000 administrations of LSD to 848 subjects, including many artists.[38] On follow-up questionnaires, many of the artists

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[36] See Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 93; and "A Warm Climate for Cultural Life," *Life*, June 20, 1960.

[37] See Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 59-66; and Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 42-43.

[38] Different sources variously estimate the number of subjects in Janiger's experiments. Stafford puts the number at 875 individuals and "several thousand" administrations, while the Janiger's *Associated Press* obituary estimates 1,000 individuals and approximately 3,000 administrations. The number in the text is drawn

judged the work they produced on LSD as more interesting than or aesthetically superior to their usual work.[39] Of course, a feeling may or may not be accurate. After taking a dose of LSD in Janiger's private office, diarist Anaïs Nin found herself besieged by glowing, evanescent images and struck by their meaning. "NOW I KNOW WHY THE FAIRY TALES ARE FULL OF JEWELS," she finished the entry.[40] Upon further reflection, she realized that most of the images she saw under LSD's influence had been borrowed from her own published works or the works of others.[41]

Janiger's innovative qualitative study design did not solve the problem of measurement, it just moved it further downstream. For a study published in 1989, Janiger and anthropologist Marlene Dobkin De Rios attempted to quantify those results. They asked an art history professor to review 250 drawings produced by Janiger's patients between 1955 and 1962, including 56 paintings and drawings of identical Indian deer kachina dolls made before and after the artists were given LSD.[42] The art historian noted that styles of several artists became more abstract while on LSD, lines often became looser and the composition became larger on the page. However, the researchers concluded that they ultimately could not determine if LSD increases creativity. "Capturing the elusive elements of a creative act is like trying to weigh a pound of

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from the 1989 review of Janiger's research by Janiger and Marlene Dobkin De Rios. See Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 42; "Oscar Janiger Died," Associated Press, August 17, 2001; and Oscar Janiger and Marlene Dobkin De Rios, "LSD and Creativity," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 21, no. 1 (January-March 1989): 129.

[39] Janiger and Dobkin De Rios, "LSD and Creativity," 133.

[40] Anaïs Nin, *The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Volume 5* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1974), 259.

[41] Ibid., 262.

[42] Janiger and De Rios, "LSD and Creativity," 132.

leaping mice," they wrote. "All that can be definitively said about the effect of hallucinogens is that a strong subjective feeling of creativeness accompanies many of the experiences," they wrote.[43]

By 1959, psychoanalysts in California were discovering that LSD could be an effective—and profitable—adjunct to private practice. Administered before a talk therapy session, the drug was found to increase the level of comfort patients felt toward their therapists, as well as their level of acceptance for the theoretical frameworks the therapists used to interpret their problems. "Under LSD the fondest theories of the therapist are confirmed by the patient," Cohen wrote in 1967.[44] From a "nihilistic" viewpoint, "any explanation of the patient's problems, if firmly believed by both the therapist and the patient, constitutes insight or is as useful as insight. It is the faith, not the validity, that counts."[45] Alternately, truth might be found in the various theories because they all described the same core reality.[46]

Therapists also found that LSD helped patents visualize internal conflicts. As well, insights derived while under the influence of LSD seemed invested with greater significance by patients and remembered even after the drug wore off. The effect was described as "portentousness":

> . . . the sense that something—even a trivial platitude—is fraught with a cosmic significance too profound to be adequately communicated.

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[43] Ibid., 129.

[44] Sidney Cohen, "Psychotherapy with LSD: Pro and Con," in *The Use of LSD in Psychotherapy and Alcoholism*, ed. Harold A. Abramson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967), 578.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

> Whether or not LSD does in fact enable users on occasion to grasp significant new insights into themselves or the world about them—a much debated issue—the drug certainly gives many users a feeling that they have achieved profound new insights.[47]

No wonder therapists enjoyed working with patients who were on LSD, which was still considered experimental. Sandoz supplied the drug to doctors, seemingly of any specialty, at no cost, with only the caveat that they had to promise to write up the results in order to qualify as researchers. By 1959, there were a dozen therapists working with LSD in the Los Angeles area alone. Some charged patients with routine psychological complaints, such as depression and sexual frigidity, as much as $500 or $600 per session for LSD. A particularly prolific therapy practice was run by psychiatrist Arthur Chandler and radiologist Mortimer Hartman, who reported giving LSD 690 times to 110 patients prior to 1960, with a success rate of 69 percent.[48]

In 1960, Cohen published a study combining data provided by 44 researchers, encompassing 25,000 administrations of LSD or mescaline to almost 5,000 patients.[49] "This inquiry into the adverse effects of hallucinogenic drugs indicates that with proper precautions, they are safe when given to a selected healthy group," Cohen concluded.[50] The negative reactions reported in the survey of researchers appeared limited to occasional panic attacks and flashbacks. In ten cases, the drug sparked prolonged

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[47] Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—Including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 351.

[48] See Novak, *LSD Before Leary*, 105-6; and Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 63-65.

[49] Novak, *LSD Before Leary*, 87-88.

[50] Sidney Cohen, "LSD: Side Effects and Complications," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 130, no. 1 (January 1960): 39.

psychotic episodes. “When major untoward reactions occurred, they were almost always due to psychological factors,” he wrote.[51]

The study was embraced within the LSD research community. “LSD activists read Cohen’s study as a ringing endorsement,” wrote Cohen biographer Steven Novak. The study was cited as evidence that LSD was “remarkably safe” by Timothy Leary in testimony before Congress and the calculations of risk derived from the study were incorporated into a model medical release form for LSD therapy.[52] In the 1960 study, Cohen acknowledged that the data voluntarily reported by psychotherapists was “doubtless incomplete,” and that the most disastrous cases might not be reported because of researchers’ feelings of guilt.[53] “However, it must be generally representative of the gamut of mishaps that may be encountered,” he concluded.[54]

Hollywood’s Visions in Technicolor

California’s exploding interest in LSD was noted with sensational coverage in the local press and on television. In 1957, Cohen served as a technical consultant to a local television special on LSD, *The Lonely World*. “It is about LSD,” Cohen wrote. “I’m not too proud about the story, but it is not completely incredible.”[55] He also participated with Heard in the production of an eight-part television series, *Focus on Sanity*, which showed one of his subjects, an attractive young woman, in the throes of an LSD trip. In 1958,

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[51] Ibid., 30-31.
[52] Novak, “LSD Before Leary,” 87, 105.
[53] Cohen, “LSD: Side Effects and Complications,” 38-39.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Quoted in Novak, “LSD Before Leary,” 101.

Cohen administered LSD to a young University of Southern California biochemist for the benefit of local television cameras, prompting stories in both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Los Angeles Evening Mirror*. The splashy story in the *Times* ran under the headline "*Fantastic Sensations Gained with New Drug*."[56] Therapy findings presented by Cohen and Eisner at the 1958 American Medical Association conference in San Francisco also led to a local television appearance and a front-page story in *The San Francisco Chronicle*. LSD therapy was described in *This Week*, the Sunday supplement to the *Los Angeles Times*, illustrated with a color drawing of a Kuchina dolls, rendered by an artist on LSD. "The brilliant color, the emotional quality of the drawing are characteristic of the state of intense excitement a person feels when his personality as been 'exploded' by LSD," the copy explained.[57] *San Francisco* and *Los Angeles* newspapers reported optimistically on local trials with LSD for the treatment of alcoholism.[58]

Newspapers elsewhere did not cover California's interest in LSD as intently as the California press. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* published brief articles on experiments in artificial insanity in 1957, but nothing that would suggest what was occurring on the West Coast.[59] To William Braden the failure of newspapers to cover the

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[56] See Ibid., 101-2; and Harry Nelson, "Fantastic Sensations Gained with New Drug," *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1958.

[57] Joe Hyams, "How a New Shock Drug Unlocks Troubled Minds," *This Week* (Sunday supplement), *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1959, 6.

[58] Novak, "LSD before Leary," 103.

[59] See "Clams and Insanity; Experiments may Shed Light on Schizophrenia," *The New York Times*, March 3, 1957; Howard Whitman, "Chemical Warfare Used to Ease Mental Illness," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 18, 1957; Theodore R.

multi-faceted LSD story was demonstrated by a trip to a newspaper morgue, where files held hundreds of clippings about LSD. "The clippings were scissored from newspapers across the country, and there are very few of the them that date prior to 1963," he wrote.[60] From a New York City vantage, a physician with close ties to the drug movement recalled, "Marijuana use was common in 1960, but few people had heard of LSD-25, as it was referred to then."[61] Magazines also reported little on LSD until, in 1959, the normally reticent Cary Grant told Hollywood gossip columnists on the set of "Operation Petticoat" that he had participated in 60 LSD sessions and felt "born again" as a result of the therapy.[62]

Cary Grant's new willingness to talk openly about his private affairs—and, especially, the life-changing effect of LSD for him—was the stuff of editors' dreams. In newspaper stories and magazine accounts, LSD therapy was credited with bringing Grant happiness and self-awareness, and even for switching a longtime preference from blonde

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Van Dellen, "How to Keep Well; Is Mental Disease Chemical?" *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 18, 1957; and "16 Prisoners 'Go Crazy' in Humanity's Behalf," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 13, 1957.

[60] William Braden, "LSD and the Press" in *The Manufacture of News: Deviance, Social Problems and the Mass Medi*a, eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), 197.

[61] John Beresford, "Introduction to the First Edition," in *Psychedelic Encyclopedia*, 3rd expanded ed., by Peter Stafford (Berkeley, Calif.: Ronin Publishing, 1992), 15.

[62] See Novak, *LSD Before Leary*, 103; Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 64-65; and Geoffrey Wansell, *Haunted Idol: The Story of the Real Cary Grant* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1984), 232-33.

to brunette.[63] "All my life I've been searching for peace of mind," he told *Look*. "I'd explored yoga and hypnotism and made attempts at mysticism. Nothing really seemed to give me what I wanted until this treatment."[64]

The correspondent who reported the story for the *New York Herald Tribune* was barraged by telephone calls and 800 letters. "Friends wanted to know where they could get the drug. Psychiatrists called, complaining their patients were now begging them for LSD. Every actor in town under analysis wanted it," Joe Hyams recalled.[65] In *Time* magazine, the first article to mention Grant's LSD use began: "In Hollywood, it was only natural that psychiatric patients undergoing analytic treatment should have visions in wide screen, full color, and observe themselves from cloud nine."[66] Magazines' treatment of this story could not have been more different from their previous handling of Robert Mitchum's marijuana arrest, ten years earlier. While both revelations were sensational, Mitchum's marijuana-smoking was of course illegal, while Grant's experimentation with LSD was not. As well, the movie star's use of marijuana was presented as debased, depraved, and shameful. LSD, on the other hand, was cutting-edge, scientific, and promising. It was a different category of substance, evoking curiosity.

Grant's rebirth by way of LSD was too good of a story to go away. Nearly a decade after the news of Grant's LSD use first broke, it was still discussed at length in

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[63] See Laura Bergquist, "The Curious Story Behind the New Cary Grant," *Look*, September 1, 1959, 57-58; "The Psyche in 3-D," *Time*, March 28, 1960, 83; Amos Coggins, "Cary Grant-Ageless Idol," *The Washington Post*, February 14, 1960.

[64] Bergquist, "The Curious Story Behind the New Cary Grant," 57.

[65] Joe Hyams quoted in Bob Gains, "LSD: Hollywood's Status Symbol Drug," *Cosmopolitan*, November 1963, 79.

[66] "The Psyche in 3-D," *Time*, March 28, 1960, 83.

profiles and interviews.[67] Grant's testimony that his mental life was improved as a result of LSD therapy could not be proven false, and was the opinion of the person who would know best. So there must be a strong presumption that the debonair leading man did indeed experience positive changes as a result of LSD. But even that cannot be known for sure. The marriage to Betsy Drake, which Grant credited LSD with saving, broke up in 1962. At divorce proceedings in 1968, his next wife, actress Dyan Cannon, accused Grant of erratic, sometimes violent behavior, which she blamed on his weekly LSD habit.[68]

The Innovation Takes Root

From the mid-1950s, magazines helped awareness of LSD seep beyond fraternities of psychologists and psychiatrists to the culture at large. Initially, diffusion of the drug took place through a genuine two-step flow. A researcher or psychologist decided to work with the drug, and as a result it was tested on dozens or hundreds of volunteers. Naturally, the psychologist also tried the drug himself. Many experts on LSD therapy, including Cohen and Osmond, insisted that therapy should only be led by therapists who had experienced the drug first-hand. By the early 1960s, some therapists routinely took the drug with their clients in order to enhance rapport.[69] "At one time, it

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[67] See Warren Hodge, "The Other Cary Grant," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 3, 1977, 16, 32; and Betty White, "Cary Grant Today," *The Saturday Evening Post*, March 1978, 46. His LSD advocacy was also discussed in "Old Cary Grant Fine," *Time*, July 27, 1962, 40.

[68] "Cary Took LSD, Mrs. Grant Says," *The Washington Post*, March 21, 1968.

[69] Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 106.

was impossible to find an investigator willing to work with LSD who was not himself an 'addict,'" a *Journal of the American Medical Association* editorialist charged in 1964.[70]

However, drug-trial volunteers were not passive followers. Many, perhaps most, were curious about the drug and sought it out. At Boston Psychopathic, members from the hospital staff stepped forward because they wanted to experience the sensations of their patients. There are many accounts of individuals, including Betty Eisner and Abbie Hoffman, who sought out participation in LSD trials after reading about the drug in the popular press.[71] At a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in 1960, three psychiatrists described concerns that volunteers were self-selecting for LSD trials. One of the volunteers interviewed, described as a sex-inhibited medical student, had said he hoped the drug would allow him to let go of himself in order that he could make a grab at a nurse in a non-punitive setting. The study of 56 volunteers also found that "many" had previously read news accounts of the drug's weird effects.[72]

Novelist Ken Kesey volunteered as an experimental subject at the Veteran's Hospital in Menlo Park, California, in 1960 in order to try LSD. To Kesey, it was an anti-intellectual experience, a way of breaking down the unconscious barriers that prevent

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[70] Roy R. Grinker, Sr., "Bootlegged Ecstasy," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 768.

[71] See Eisner, "Remembrances of LSD Therapy Past," 5-6; and Abbie Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), 73.

[72] Nate Haseltine, "Doctors Cite Mental Quirks of Drug-Test Volunteers," *The Washington Post*," May 13, 1960.

people from experiencing the here and now.[73] Kesey became the center of the Northern California LSD scene that created the Merry Pranksters, Acid Tests, and the Grateful Dead chronicled in Tom Wolfe's book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.[74] The poet Allen Ginsberg, described in one history of LSD as "poet laureate of the acid subculture," went out of his way to try LSD in 1959 as a test subject at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California. He experienced the drug as an antidote to a deadening and conformist culture.[75] Rather than being passive subjects for doctors' experiments, many drug trial volunteers sought out opportunity, often as a result of prior information, and used it for their own purposes.

By 1957, Sandoz-labeled LSD and psilocybin was getting out of the company's Hanover, New Jersey, plant and into the hands of beatnik artists and musicians living in Bohemian Greenwich Village.[76] By 1961, there was at least one dealer in New York with a "small" clientele including "bankers, lawyers, doctors, teaching staff from New York and Columbia universities, writers, musicians, painters, playboys, clergymen [and] prostitutes" who obtained LSD by simply calling Sandoz, and, in an officious voice, requesting it.[77] In 1962, two men were arrested and charged with smuggling LSD from Israel. The two men, who were both introduced to LSD as volunteers in Southern

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[73] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 119-20.

[74] Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Bantam, 1968).

[75] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 58.

[76] See Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 42; and Peter Stafford, "Re-creational Uses of LSD," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 17, no. 4 (October-December 1985): 224.

[77] Stafford, "Re-creational Uses of LSD," 224.

California experiments, claimed that they had manufactured the drug themselves in Los Angeles in 1960.[78]

A number of factors made Los Angeles fertile territory for LSD: the town's fascination with the new; a local fad for non-Western religion; a fascinated local press; Hollywood's longstanding absorption in fantasy and drugs; and the city's preoccupation with status. In the California of the late 1950s, LSD had social cache. "More and more of the California intelligentsia began to push the drug … it had virtually become a status symbol among the cocktail-party set," *Cosmopolitan* recalled in a 1963 article "LSD: Hollywood's Status-Symbol Drug."[79]

As interest in the drug spread, LSD centers with looser associations with traditional research sprang up across the country. One major LSD research center was opened in 1962 by Myron Stolaroff, an electrical engineer by training, who had been introduced to the drug by Gerald Heard. Stolaroff's International Foundation for Advanced Studies, in Menlo Park, California, administered hundreds of doses of LSD and mescaline for studies on learning and creativity.[80] Also in 1962, a group that included pediatrician John Beresford and psychologist Jean Houston opened the Agora Scientific Trust in Manhattan to test the effect of LSD on normal volunteers. "Although the book that mainly described this work—Masters and Houston's *The Varieties of Psychedelic*

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[78] Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 107.

[79] Bob Gains, "LSD: Hollywood's Status-Symbol Drug," *Cosmopolitan*, November 1963, 78.

[80] See Peter Stafford, "Re-creational Uses of LSD," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 17, no. 4 (October-December 1985): 223-24; and Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 50.

Experience—did discuss some therapeutic applications, most attention was focused on what governmental agencies would now refer to as recreational usage," Stafford wrote in 1985.[81] In a front-page feature in the *San Francisco News Call Bulletin*, a Menlo Park housewife talked about paying $500 for an LSD experience at Myron Stolaroff's International Foundation for Advanced Study and finding total love. "There has opened a pipeline to myself, clean and pure, freed of false values, unfounded fears, self-created restrictions, repressed feelings," she attested.[82]

Huxley's use of and thinking about LSD spread to researchers within his social orbit, but the generation of LSD philosophers and scientists he influenced were not passive recipients of his opinion. Sidney Cohen, Keith Ditman, Oscar Janiger, and later, Timothy Leary, had all become fascinated by Huxley's views before meeting him personally. They, in turn, broadcast their own views through the media, building interest in LSD. Alan Watts' experimentation with LSD resulted in the 1962 publication of *The Joyous Cosmology*, which discussed the psychedelic experience in mystical terms and had an introduction by Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert.[83] Sidney Cohen also wrote several books on LSD, including one, simply titled *LSD*, in which he played the role of the reasonable scientist in counterpoint to Alpert's far-out claims. Jane Dunlap, who became curious about LSD after reading the 1957 *Life* cover story "Seeking the Magic

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[81] See Stafford, "Re-creational Uses of LSD," 222-23; Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 49-50; and R.E.L. Masters and Jean Houston, *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966).

[82] George Dusheck, "In Drug-Filled Chalice, Total Love," *San Francisco News Call Bulletin*, January 3, 1963.

[83] Alan W. Watts, *The Joyous Cosmology: Adventures in the Chemistry of Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1962).

Mushroom," favorably described experiences as a volunteer subject in Oscar Janiger's creativity studies in the 1961 *Exploring Inner Space*.[84] Huxley wrote for *Life*, among many other publications; Heard's treatise on psychedelics was published in *Horizons* and subsequently reprinted in *Psychedelic Review*; Alan Watts wrote for *The New Republic*. Huxley, especially, had a type of celebrity that was an artifact of the pre-television age. He was not only watched and talked about by the media; he was read.

Several of the loudest media voices about LSD, measured by appearance in magazine articles, originated from this group. Of the 126 articles located through *Readers' Guide Retrospective*, more than half mentioned Osmond, Huxley, Cohen, Alpert, or Leary (see Table 4). As the media attention given to this substance mounted after 1962, magazines repeatedly turned toward this cast of scientists and investigators to explain psychedelic drugs. Their insights about the drug, gained largely through uncontrolled self-experimentation and flawed scientific studies, were summarized, amplified, and repeated as the media story about the drug was told.

[84] Jane Dunlap, *Exploring Inner Space: Personal Experiences Under LSD-25* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1961), 11.

Table 4. Frequently Occurring Sources in Magazine Coverage of LSD by Year, 1954-68

Source	Publication Year												Total
	1954	1955	1956	1958	1960	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	
Timothy Leary, scientist and LSD advocate						1	8		3	25	11		48
Aldous Huxley, writer and intellectual	1				1		7	1	4	7	4	2	27
Albert Hofmann, scientist and LSD discoverer		3	1	1			3		2	7	4	4	25
Richard Alpert, scientist and LSD advocate							7		3	6	2		18
Sidney Cohen, scientist							4	1	1	7	2	1	16
Number of articles in which at least one of these sources appears	1	3	1	1	1	1	11	2	4	31	14	6	76

No magazine articles appeared in the years 1957, 1959, and 1961.

As a marker of the group's influence, consider the word "psychedelic," coined in correspondence between Osmond and Huxley in 1956. The word was considered biased, because it attributed unproven positive aspects to the drug experience, and scientists with other points of view about hallucinogenic drugs objected to its use.[85] Its first appearance in the magazine articles was in a 1963 *Look* article about Leary's scandalous departure from Harvard. The word "psychedelic" was at least mentioned in half the magazine articles published over the next five years, and often the concept was defined. (see Table 5).

[85] See Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 758; and "More Light, Less Heat Over LSD," *Business Week*, June 25, 1966, 83.

Table 5. Use of the Term "psychedelic" in Magazine Articles, 1954-1968

Publication year	Articles using "psychedelic"	Total articles	Percentage using "psychedelic"
1954-1962	0	9	0
1963	1	12	8
1964	2	3	67
1965	4	6	67
1966	21	42	50
1967	16	33	48
1968	9	21	43
Total	53	126	42

Many groundbreaking uses of LSD, in both research and recreation, originated from the network of psychiatrists and intellectuals who gathered around Huxley. They shared Huxley's belief that drug fantasy was worthy of serious study. Collaborative thinking and flawed science stoked their excitement, which would be broadcast to the public through magazines. In the explosion of media attention to coverage that followed, it would become impossible for an LSD explorer to approach the void alone. From her seat in Los Angeles's high society, it seemed to diarist Anaïs Nin that in 1963 the media was moving in:

> For a while, it seemed confined to serious, dedicated, intense scholarly people. … Our parties were meaningful and very special. We shared our esoteric experiences. These experiences should have remained esoteric. All the ancient beliefs, religious, philosophies were at first esoteric. This was not an expression of superiority; it meant that to enter certain realms of knowledge and experience, one needed initiation.
>
> But this is an anti-democratic concept. Slowly, I saw the media infiltrate. Anyone could get possession of LSD. It became a fad, a game, with disastrous results.[86]

[86] Anaïs Nin, *The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Volume 6* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 332-33.

Two figures on the periphery of Huxley's social network had major roles in the avalanche of coverage of this small clique's thinking about an obscure drug, although through quite different means. One was Timothy Leary, the outrageous apostle of LSD who embarked on a deliberate campaign to publicize the drug and his use of it. His public speaking, legal problems, and lifestyle made for good stories. Although often bracketed with irony, skepticism, or moral outrage, Leary was the most frequent spokesman (of any view) in magazine coverage of LSD after 1962. He sought the publicity. Leary saw himself as the egalitarian wing of a psychedelic movement that was united in its belief that the drugs could revolutionize psychology and philosophy. Huxley advocated an "evolutionary" change: "Work privately. Initiate artists, writers, poets, jazz musicians, elegant courtesans, painters, rich bohemians. And they'll initiate the intelligent rich. That's how everything of culture and beauty and philosophic freedom has been passed on," Leary recalled being told by Huxley.[87] "In the tradition of the esoteric schools of antiquity, these sage scholars also advised us to keep the movement scholarly, elitist, apart from politics and public," Leary wrote. "The message was clear. Let's keep this knowledge to ourselves. Don't go public or you will bring down the wrath of society."[88] Possessed by what he described as the American faith in democracy and frontier spirit, Leary and co-investigator Frank Barron "couldn't see ourselves as part of a select priestly class following models that belonged to the Old World."[89] During a psilocybin trip with

[87] Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks: A Personal and Cultural History of an Era* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1990), 44.

[88] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 46.

[89] Ibid.

the poet Allen Ginsberg and his lover, Peter Orlovsky, in 1960, Leary became convinced that everyone should have the right to take mind-expanding drugs. "At this moment, we rejected Huxley's elitist perspective and adopted the American egalitarian open-to-the public approach," he wrote.[90]

As well as appearing as the most frequent magazine source, Leary was occasionally given the reins. Leary sat for a long, freewheeling interview for *Playbo*y in 1966, during which he made the memorable statement that "in a carefully prepared, loving LSD session, a woman will inevitably have several hundred orgasms," a claim which would be examined in articles in the *New York Times Magazine* and *Mademoiselle*. For *Esquire*, Leary wrote about the day he turned on Allen Ginsberg.[91]

Another influential member of the circle around Huxley was Henry Luce, the publisher of *Time* and *Life*, who turned on to LSD around 1959 and advocated the drug to employees and professional acquaintances. His magazines covered the drug with a level of interest and knowledge unapparent elsewhere. Many publications covered LSD through Leary, allowing the disgraced professor to mouth extraordinary claims. In Luce's publications, some of the same views were delivered in the editorial voice that endeavored to speak for Main Street.

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[90] Ibid., 50.

[91] See "Playboy Interview: Timothy Leary," *Playboy*, September 1966, 100; Donald Bruce Louria, "Cool Talk about Hot Drugs," *New York Times Magazine*, August 6, 1967, 45-46; and Max Lerner, "LSD Spelled Out," *Mademoisell*e, January 1967, 124; and Timothy Leary, "In the Beginning, Leary Turned on Ginsberg and Saw that it was Good," *Esquire*, July 1968, 83-86.

Chapter 6: The Luces' Strange Trip: Magazine Coverage of LSD, 1963-1964

"We agree this could never be taken like alcohol 'Just for kicks.'"
—Clare Boothe Luce, conversation with
Henry Luce in undated LSD trip journal

The Publisher and the Pill

In the 1950s and 1960s, open bottles of scotch and bourbon appeared on layout tables as each week's issue of *Life* magazine approached completion. Alcohol was an accepted, even celebrated, part of the corporate culture at *Life*. Slow news days, a feast day in Nepal, or a bump in the price of the British pound were sufficient excuses for impromptu office parties, often signaled by a martini-emblazoned flag hung over the doorway to the foreign news department in the magazine's high-rise offices in Manhattan's Rockefeller Center. Office Christmas gatherings, staff outings, and celebrations were lavishly hosted, professionally catered, and buoyed by seas of booze.[1]

Among the most lavish of *Life's* staff gatherings was the annual "Hunt Ball," inaugurated in the early 1960s and named for managing editor George Hunt. The entire staff of *Life*, including correspondents flown in from around the world, gathered in a New York hotel ballroom for the formal, boozy affair. Henry Robinson Luce presided from the head table. Luce founded *Time* in 1923 and retained the title of editorial chairman of all his publications, including *Life* and *Fortune*, until his death in 1967. Longtime *Life* writer

[1] See Loudon Wainwright, *The Great American Magazine* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 282-86; and Robert T. Elson, *The World of Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, Volume Two: 1941-1960*, ed. Duncan Norton-Taylor (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 331, 333.

and editor Loudon Wainwright recalled that Luce's speeches at these events were "variously exhilarating, rambling, elegant, boring, hilarious, pompous, brilliant and incomprehensible."[2]

At one of these balls, Luce "savaged" a staff writer who had the temerity to compare the beat poet Allen Ginsberg with Walt Whitman, challenging the hapless employee to recite lines of Ginsberg on par with the lines of Whitman that Luce recalled from memory.[3] At the 1964 Hunt Ball at New York's Hotel Pierre, Luce, a chain smoker, held forth to the assembled editors, writers, and photographers on the advantages of LSD, which he used with his wife, the playwright and Republican political operative Clare Boothe Luce. Former *Life* publisher and *Time* chairman Andrew Heiskell recalled:

> Without any preamble that I can remember, he said that he and Clare were taking LSD! And two hundred and fifty people fainted. [laughter] And then he went right on. I don't think he had any notion of what he had said. I don't know whether he thought all of us took LSD and therefore he would be one of the boys—maybe that. You know, he was very specific about it. He said, "Yes, yes, we take LSD. We do it under doctors [sic] supervision."[4]

Although the incident was legendary among old *Time-Life* hands, Luce's LSD use was treated lightly in memoirs and biographies, as though with a wink to save the old man embarrassment. Wainwright dismissed the speech he called "famous" in a single sentence

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[2] Wainwright, *The Great American Magazine*, 285.

[3] Curtis Prendergast with Geoffrey Colvin, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Changing Enterprise, Volume Three 1960-1980* (New York: Athenaeum, 1986), 199.

[4] "Oral History of Andrew Heiskell (1987)," Columbia University Libraries Oral History Research Office, Interview 1, Session 5, 264-65, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/nny/heiskella/index.html (accessed January 7, 2007).

in his history of *Life*.[5] It rated only three sentences in the only academic study of Luce, James Baughman's *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media:* "Clare introduced him to the hallucinatory drug LSD, which she had been trying after a doctor friend extolled its virtues. Harry enjoyed his trips. During one he directed a symphony; during another he spoke with God," Baughman wrote, before moving on to other topics.[6] In *Henry and Clare: An Intimate Portrait of the Luces*, biographer Ralph Martin discussed Henry Luce's use of and enthusiasm for LSD for half a page.[7] Robert Hertzstein gave the subject a paragraph.[8] In *Luce and his Empire*, W.A. Swanberg devoted two paragraphs to Luce's use of LSD, including the tidbit that the drug so impressed Luce "he turned up in New York to present the managing editors of *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune* with copies of a book on psychedelic drugs along with an enthusiastic talk about the subject's story possibilities—a suggestion quickly adopted by *Time* and *Life*, the latter being the first 'family' magazine to cover it." Swanberg did not provide his source for the anecdote.[9] To biographers, the image of Luce, lifelong Republican and consummate Cold Warrior, tripping on acid and chatting with God on a golf course or conducting an imaginary backyard orchestra may have seemed amusing, but unimportant,

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[5] Wainwright, *The Great American Magazine*, 285.

[6] James L. Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Boston: G.K .Hall & Co., 1987), 193.

[7] Ralph G. Martin, *Henry and Clare: An Intimate Portrait of the Luces* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1991), 401.

[8] Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, Time, *and the American Crusade in Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 240.

[9] W.A. Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 463, 476.

and perhaps unseemly and sensational.[10] The revelation in John Kobler's 1968 biography that the Luces used acid generated a gossipy headline in the *New York Post*, even though it received only a paragraph and a footnote in the book.[11]

However, archival material suggests that the brief mentions of Clare and Henry Luce's LSD use by biographers greatly underplay the profound impact the drug had on the couple's personal lives. Later in life, Clare would downplay her experimentation with LSD. For a 1973 Q & A, she told the interviewer "we only took it once or twice" and allowed the interviewer's question, "But it was part of a medical research project, wasn't it?" to stand uncorrected.[12]

While scholars have paid little attention to the Luces' advocacy of LSD or the coverage of the topic in Luce's magazines, it did catch the attention of a few observers. YIPPIE! founder Abbie Hoffman, who famously prescribed LSD to the judge while on trial for leading protests during the 1968 Democratic National Convention, recalled deciding to try LSD in 1965, "just about the time a *Life* magazine cover story was touting LSD as the new wonder drug that would end aggression." He added:

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[10] Brief accounts of Luce's orchestra trip at his Arizona home are related in John Kobler, *Luce: His Time, Life and Fortune* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), 102; Wilfred Sheed, *Clare Boothe Luce* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1982), 124; Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire, 463*; and Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* Time, *and the American Crusade in Asia*, 240. The golf course trip is described in Sheed, *Clare Boothe Luce*, 124; and Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 72.

[11] See "LSD gave Luces the Time of Their Life," *New York Post*, March 2, 1968; and Kobler, *Luce: His Time, Life and Fortune*, 102.

[12] Martha Weinman Lear, "On Harry, and Henry and Ike and Mr. Shaw; Clare Boothe Luce, She Who Is Behind 'The Women' Backstage," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 22, 1973, 220.

> I've always maintained that Henry Luce did more to popularize acid than Timothy Leary. Years later I met Clare Boothe Luce at the Republican convention in Miami. She did not disagree with this opinion. America's version of the Dragon Lady caressed my arm, fluttered her eyes and cooed, "We wouldn't want everyone doing too much of a good thing."[13]

Time's flattering coverage of LSD was also noted by the Church of Scientology in a series of full-page advertisements in *USA Today* responding to an unfavorable 1991 *Time* story about the church. The church accused *Time* of being wrong in its coverage of LSD, Prozac, Hitler and Mussolini, as well as Scientology.[14] William Braden, a *Chicago Tribune* reporter who delved into the drug culture for his 1967 book *The Private Sea: LSD and the Search for God*, complained that newspapers had done a poor job of covering the drug movement by focusing on irresponsible behavior, medical side effects, and the relatively rare horrific trip. He said that newspaper editors feared that describing the LSD experience might encourage readers to try the drug. "I must add that run-of-mill coverage of LSD has more often than not been superficial at best and violently distorted at worst. Since 1963, the newspapers had had almost nothing to say about the potential benefits of psychedelics in psychotherapy and related fields," Braden wrote.[15] He found the topic absent from television and radio, with the exception of talk radio format and a 1966 CBS documentary narrated by Charles Kuralt.[16] But Braden introduced his two-

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[13] Abbie Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), 73.

[14] Scott Donaton and Steven W. Colford, "Scientology Fires Ad Barrage at 'Time,'" *Advertising Age*, June 3, 1991, 50.

[15] William Braden, *LSD and the Press* in *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media*, eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), 199, 205-6.

[16] Braden, "LSD and the Press," 207.

paragraph, impressionistic description of magazine LSD coverage by writing, "It is painful to admit that the major magazines have done a better job than newspapers in reporting on LSD, and that *Time* and *Life* between them have possibly done the best job of all."[17] Luce biographer Robert Hertzstein noted in 2005 that "LSD was the only part of 1960s 'counterculture' treated respectfully by *Time*—mainly because certain respected theologians expressed interest in the substance."[18] One such thinker was Father John Courtney Murray, a prominent Jesuit theologian and writer, who took LSD with Clare and Henry Luce in their Phoenix home. Henry and Clare both also took LSD with Gerald Heard, who was known for philosophical essays.

Coverage of LSD in *Time* and *Life* reflected the attitude toward the drug in the Luce home. Scores of personal letters and more than a dozen acid-trip journals among Clare Boothe Luce's papers at the Library of Congress testify to the Luces' advocacy for a drug they used recreationally and believed had tremendous psychological and spiritual value. The papers, combined with other evidence from archival and secondary sources, show both Henry and Clare Boothe Luce expressed special interest in how *Time* and *Life* covered the drug. Examination of the articles shows that the most enthusiastic coverage of hallucinogens in *Time* and *Life* occurred after Luce began experimenting with the drug in the late 1950s and before he died in 1967. Coverage of LSD in *Time* and *Life* took place during a key period during its life as a consumer product. The magazines began educating the public about LSD more than a decade before the drug was widely available

[17] Ibid., 207.
[18] Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* Time, *and the American Crusade in Asia*, 240.

on the street, and they continued to promote a uniquely culturally-acceptable interpretation of the LSD experience even after illicitly manufactured LSD entered the market, as the number of first-time users was increasing exponentially.

Clare Boothe Luce was supplied with LSD by Los Angeles therapist Sidney Cohen in 1959. The drug was delivered to the Luces' Phoenix home by Heard, who stayed for a visit. Papers in a restricted section of the Clare Boothe Luce collection at the Library of Congress indicate that the former playwright, ambassador, and congresswoman took acid at least fourteen times over the next several years, with companions including Heard, her husband, and Father Murray, who was helping the couple work through marital problems.[19]

When she tried the drug in 1959, Clare was at loose ends. She had experienced a phenomenally successful career by any standard. She had been the author of four successful Broadway plays in the 1930s, editor of *Vanity Fair*, two-term congresswoman in the 1940s, and ambassador to Italy from 1953 to 1956, among other accomplishments. A front-page obituary in the *New York Times* said she was often on lists of the world's

[19] In her LSD journals, Luce typically listed those present with initials only. However, correspondence with both Murray and Heard confirms that they took LSD together. See letter from Gerald Heard dated February 13, 1960, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 766, container 3; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; letter from John Murray, dated March 12, 1960, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 766, container 9, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; letter from John Murray dated August 1, 1962, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 795, container 8, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; "Conference between HRL and CBL," Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 796, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

ten most admired women.[20] But in an "informal, and very private report" to Heard and Cohen in 1959 on her first three experiments with LSD, she described herself as deeply unhappy her entire life, prone to migraines and gastric upset, and, at times, paralyzed by indecision. Recent events had made things worse: Henry Luce had announced that he planned to leave her for a twenty-four-year-old English woman.[21] The love affair was in the gossip columns.[22] Perhaps worst, Clare was forced to recognize that her husband had not been telling the truth when he had claimed to be impotent twenty-three years earlier. The lie helped Clare gain the Catholic Church's blessing for her conversion to that faith while remaining married to a devout Presbyterian. "For almost 58 years—all my conscious life—until last spring—I felt certain that I would be deserted, rejected, 'let down,' denied by everyone or anyone I came to love, or even respect, sooner or later," she wrote.[23]

When Clare took LSD with Heard and another friend for the first time in her Phoenix home on March 11, 1959, she said she saw the world through the eyes of "a happy and gifted child," full of bliss and contentment, without fear, in joyous acceptance of the good-and-evil duality of nature, and at one with the world. "Whatever the effects

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[20] Albin Krebs, "Clare Boothe Luce Dies at 84: Playwright, Politician, Envoy," *New York Times*, October 10, 1987.

[21] Clare Boothe Luce kept a transcript of a conversation she held with her husband concerning this episode in their marriage and discussed her reaction in other personal writings. See "Conference between HRL and CBL," and "Imaginary interview," Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 796, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[22] Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 403.

[23] She discussed her psychological state in a letter addressed to Heard but with instructions for him to pass it along to Cohen. See letter to Gerald Heard dated Nov. 20, 1959, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 796, container 12, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

of LSD on the body, the effect on the psyche—my psyche—in any event, were at the time altogether good," she wrote to the psychiatrist. She credited her new peace of mind for the strength to negotiate continued marriage to Henry and to turn down a prestigious job that she said she did not want, as ambassador to Brazil.[24]

Although the year was not included in the date of many of the fourteen hand-written journals of acid trips in Clare's papers, journals and correspondence indicate that she took acid at least four times before the end of 1959 and at least twice in 1960, with companions including Heard and Father John Murray.[25] A Catholic priest, he also served as an intermediary between Clare and Henry as they worked through their marital problems during this period.[26]

Clare's writings while on LSD are largely prosaic; during one trip in 1959, she described gazing through a kaleidoscope and marveling at the taste of jam.[27] During another, in 1960, she discussed nuclear war with her friends and came to the conclusion that "life like a bell has many resonances—work, children, the copper-brass amalgam—

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[24] Ibid. During the March 11, 1959 trip Clare turned down a telephone call from "Nixon," telling her aide that she would return the call later. Clare was active in the Republican Party and served as national co-chair for Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential run. See "Experiment with LSD 11 March 1959, Phoenix, Arizona," Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 793, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[25] See letter from Gerald Heard dated February 13, 1960, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 766, container 3; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; letter from John Murray, dated March 12, 1960, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 766, container 9, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; letter from John Murray dated August 1, 1962, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 795, container 8, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[26] "Conference between HRL and CBL," Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 796, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[27] Journal dated December 8, 1959, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 793, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

friendships—but faith is the clapper that strikes and makes the resonances."[28] She spent part of one acid trip in 1961 sorting mosaic glass by her swimming pool.[29]

While Clare was a prolific writer during her use of acid, many of her acid-trip writings are undated. In an undated account of an acid trip with Henry in their Pheonix home, Clare describes her husband examining plants in the garden, then coming back in the house to talk. They discussed the drug: "We agree this could never be taken like alcohol 'Just for kicks.'"[30]

Biographers described two LSD experiences by Henry, the son of a Presbyterian missionary. During one, he conducted an imaginary orchestra in his backyard and admired a squat, hairy cactus he had never before liked. "Did you ever see anything more beautiful," he declared to Father Murray, who laughed out loud.[31] During the other, "he claimed to have talked to God on the golf course, and found that the Old Boy seemed to be on top of things and knew pretty much what he was doing," in the words of Wilfred Sheed.[32] The origins of these accounts and the dates when these episodes took place is

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[28] Journal dated August 6, 1960, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 793, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[29] Journal dated February 14, 1961, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 793, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[30] "a.m. 11:45 HRL took 100 gamma of lsd…," Clare Boothe Luce Collection, Library of Congress, box 793, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[31] See Wilfred Sheed, *Clare Boothe Luce,* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1982), 124; Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire, 463*; and Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* Time*, and the American Crusade in Asia*, 240.

[32] See Sheed, *Clare Boothe Luce*, 124; and Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 72.

not clear.[33] However, correspondence from Clare Boothe Luce to Heard indicated that Henry Luce had certainly tried LSD by February 1960.[34]

Letters and writings preserved in the Henry Robinson Luce collection at the Library of Congress offered no clues to what the publisher found in LSD. However, the descriptions are strikingly consistent with the interpretation of LSD fantasy that Heard published in the magazine *Horizon* in 1963, a copy of which was preserved in papers Clare Boothe Luce donated to the Library of Congress:

> You see and hear this world, but as the artist and the musician sees and hears. And, much more important, it may also give far-reaching insights into one's own self and into one's relationship with others. Some takers of it have even felt that they had won an insight into the "nature of the Universe and the purpose of Life." These insights can be remembered and, if the person wishes, can be incorporated into his or her everyday living to bring it a "better order."[35]

Time *and* Life*'s Excited Interest*

Coverage of LSD in *Time* was more extensive than in any other magazine during the period of this study. Of the 126 articles published prior to 1968 and located through a query in the *Readers' Guide Retrospective*, twenty appeared in *Time* magazine, one-third more than in *Newsweek*, its closest rival. *Time* was one of the first to report on LSD in 1954. The query revealed six *Time* stories about LSD prior to 1965, compared to three in

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[33] Jay Stevens describes Luce as having both experiences on the same drug trip in Phoenix in 1958. While plausible, this could not be confirmed from archival records. See Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 72.

[34] Gerald Heard refers to an acid trip with both Henry and Clare in a letter to Clare on February 13, 1960, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 766, container 3, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[35] Gerald Heard, "Can This Drug Enlarge Man's Mind?" *Horizon*, May 1963, 29.

Newsweek, two in *Look*, and two in the *Saturday Evening Post*. No other magazine included in this study had more than one article indexed under LSD prior to 1965. The overall level of magazine coverage increased dramatically between 1965 and 1968. A total of 96 articles were located across all the magazines during this period, compared with only 30 articles total during the previous eleven years. During this period, too, *Time* published more articles about LSD than any of the other weekly or monthly popular magazines indexed (see Table 1).

Time not only wrote more often about LSD than other weekly news magazines, the articles were more in-depth. The average length of the *Time* articles on LSD was 950 words, compared with 720 words in *Newsweek* and 520 words in *U.S. News and World Report*, which published only three articles about the drug. During the period covered by this study, *Time* devoted nearly 19,000 words to articles about LSD. *Newsweek* devoted less than 60 percent as much space, with about 11,000 words. *U.S News* devoted about 1,600 words, less than 10 percent of the space the subject received in *Time* (see Table 6).

Table 6. Amount of Coverage of LSD in Weekly News Magazines, 1954-1968

Publication	Number of articles	Average length (words)	Total length (words)
Time	20	950	19,000
Newsweek	15	720	11,000
U.S. News & World Report	3	520	1,600

The number of *Time* stories located through the *Readers' Guide Retrospective* does not fully reflect the extent to which LSD entered the magazine's vocabulary. A full-text search for "LSD" in the *Time* electronic archive between 1948 and 1968 located 355

stories and letters containing at least a passing reference to LSD, including an additional five stories prior to 1963. Similar full-text searches are not available for the other news magazines.

While there were only five stories about LSD in *Life*, several of the *Life* articles treated psychedelic drugs quite extensively, including the 1963 "Chemical Mind-Changers," which archival evidence shows was reviewed by both Henry and Clare Boothe Luce prior to publication.[36] Psychedelics were on the cover of *Life* three times during the period examined by this study: on March 26, 1966 for "LSD: The Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug that Got Out of Control," illustrated with an image of an outstretched hand holding a pill (see Figure 3); on September 9, 1966, for "LSD Art" (see Figure 4); and with the 1957 article "Seeking the Magic Mushroom," which was not retrieved by the LSD search. *Time* felt a proprietary interest in the magic mushroom story. The year after "Seeking the Magic Mushroom" was published, *Time* ran a story announcing that Hofmann had discovered the active component in magic mushrooms, "largely thanks to ethnologist (and J.P. Morgan vice president) R. Gordon Wasson and his Russian-born wife, two dedicated, medical-minded mushroom eaters."[37]

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[36] A pre-publication draft of the article initialed by Henry Luce and addressed to Clare is in her papers. See Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 715, container 14, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[37] "Mushroom Madness," *Time*, June 16, 1958, 44.

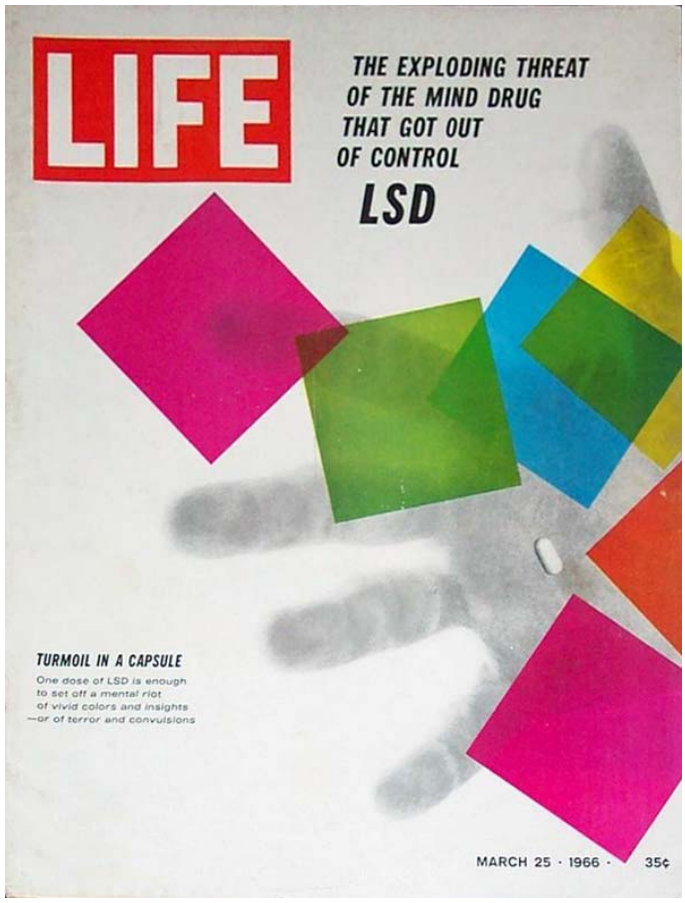

Figure 3. *Life* readers were warned about LSD in a March 25, 1966 cover story.

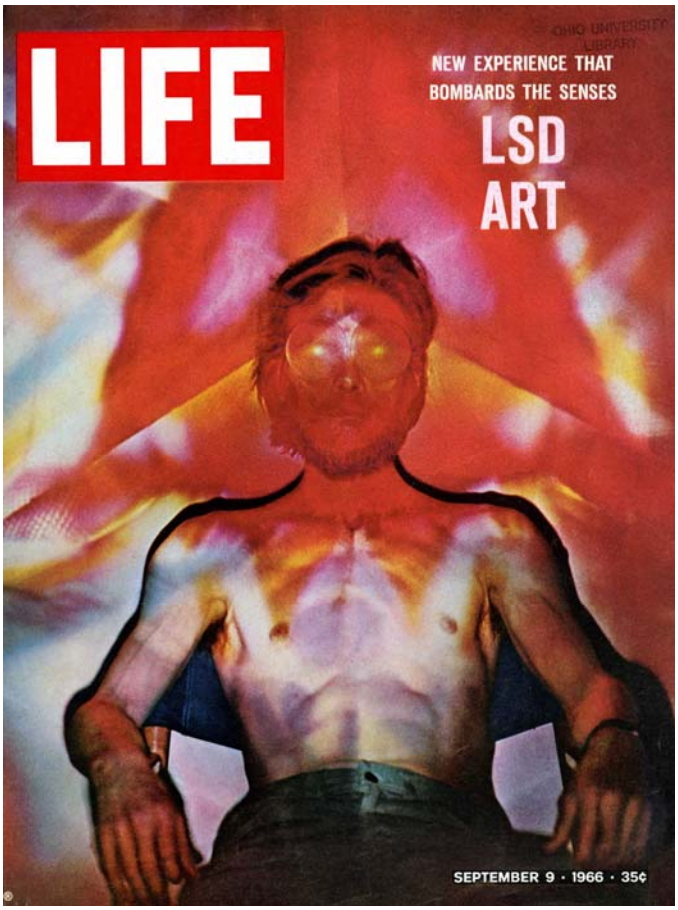

Figure 4. The article "LSD Art" was promoted on the cover of *Life*, September 9, 1966.

The first article in *Time* or *Life* to discuss LSD after the publisher turned on was the story that discussed its use by Los Angeles psychiatrists in treating celebrity clients, a scenario that cast a positive light on the Luce's own use. The story, "The Psyche in 3-D," began:

> In Hollywood, it was only natural that psychiatric patients undergoing analytic treatment should have visions in wide screen, full color, and observe themselves from cloud nine. What was remarkable was that these phenomena—experienced by (among others) such glossy public personalities as Cary Grant and his third exwife [sic], Betsy Drake—were

> reported in the cold, grey scientific columns of the A.M.A.'s *Archives of General Psychiatry*.[38]

The article went on to credit LSD with "accelerated recovery" for about half the patients on whom it was used. The LSD trip was described as vivid, colorful visions, sometimes populated by puppets or Disney characters, sometimes based on perfectly recalled childhood memories, sometimes fantasies of God and the devil. Researchers cited in the article said that LSD should only be administered by psychiatrists who had taken the drug twenty to forty times themselves, so they understood what patients would be going through.. The story ended with Grant's endorsement:

> In Hollywood, word of LSD's powers inevitably circulated with the martinis, led to a fad to try it. An osteopathic psychiatrist gave it experimentally to a number of the curious, including famed Novelist-Mystic Aldous (The Doors of Perception) Huxley. Among the [Arthur] Chandler- [Mortimer] Hartman patients were several movie notables, whom the doctors refused, because of professional ethics, to name. But some named themselves. One of these was durable Actor Grant, 56, who emerged from therapy to give a confused account of what had ailed him during a long and successful career, but he was convinced that he had at last found "a tough inner core of strength."[39]

The article described drugs being given under psychiatric supervision in a comfortable room with classical music playing. The patients were outfitted with blinders and sometimes earplugs. Use in the Luce home was much more casual. Clare explored purchasing supplies of the drug directly from an Italian pharmaceutical distributor, and she once received LSD through the mail from Cohen with the note: "Dear Clare—Have

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[38] "The Psyche in 3-D," *Time*, March 28, 1960, 83.
[39] Ibid., 84.

you found the enclosed capsule? May it be a glorious day." In one undated journal, Clare described dropping acid by herself before getting in the car for the ride from the Luces' New York apartment to their Connecticut estate, where she went for a walk in the autumn woods. "Great beauty, peace, 'reconciliation'—to be alone, mediatory, doing nothing— and not to be bored, or feel guilty, or even very much alone … this is the beauty of the chemical, that it destroys boredom."[40]

Timothy Leary Takes Harvard by Storm

LSD was at the peak of medical acceptance in 1959, when a 39-year-old clinical psychologist named Timothy Leary landed on the bottom rung of Harvard University's tenure track. Leary's appointment to the Center for Research in Human Personality was based on research that bridged the gap between quantitative psychological experimenters and qualitative psychotherapists. The study that first brought Leary notice, published in 1955, was a between-groups natural experiment on mental health patients at the Kaiser Clinic in Oakland, where Leary was director of psychological research. Leary and Frank Barron compared the rate of improvement among patients on a waiting list for psychotherapy, compared with those who actually received treatment. Both groups improved, but "the therapy patients did not improve significantly more than the waiting-

[40] See undated letter from Sidney Cohen to Clare Boothe Luce, Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 795, container 3, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and undated journal, "11:30 a.m. Took 75 micrograms LSD 25 at Waldorf … ," Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 973, container 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

list controls," the study concluded.[41] To measure psychological improvement, Leary used the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, a standardized psychological test based on a battery of true-or-false questions. Leary was an expert in this type of psychological measurement. His next major accomplishment was a scheme to interpret personality test scores by plotting them on a two-dimensional circular grid. Leary laid out his model, based on analysis of six years' of data collected by Kaiser, in *The Interpersonal Diagnostic of Personality*, which was well received by peers and praised in *The Annual Review of Psychology* as "the most important book on psychotherapy of the year."[42]

Leary became disillusioned with academic psychology while in California. He felt as though his research at Kaiser demonstrated its futility. "For all its efforts, psychology still hadn't developed a way of significantly and predictably changing human behavior," he wrote in his 1983 autobiography. "I had found myself practicing a profession that didn't seem to work."[43] In 1955, shaken by the suicide of his wife, Marianne, on the morning of his 35th birthday, Leary quit his job and took his two young children to Florence, Italy, where he worked on a theory of psychology he labeled "existential transactional." He recalled telling David McClelland, his future boss at Harvard:

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[41] Frank Barron and Timothy F. Leary, "Changes in Psychoneurotic Patients With and Without Psychotherapy," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 19, no. 4 (August 1955): 245.

[42] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*,128.

[43] Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks: A Personal and Cultural History of an Era* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1990), 16. The evolution of Leary's psychological thought is also described in Thomas J. Riedlinger, "Existential Transactions at Harvard: Timothy Leary's Humanistic Psychotherapy," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 33, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 6-18.

> I explained that by *existential* I meant that the psychologist should work with people in real-life situations, like a naturalist in the field, observing behavior in the trenches. "We should treat people as they actually are and not impose the medical model or any other model on them." . . .
>
> "By *transaction* I mean that psychologists shouldn't remain detached from their subjects.They should get involved, engaged in the events they're studying. They should enter each experiment prepared to change as much or more than the subjects being studied."[44]

McClelland and others have located Leary's existential transactional psychology as a current of humanistic psychology, which was arriving in the mid-1960s as an alternative to behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Humanistic psychologists criticized behaviorism for focusing on minutia and ignoring what was important about human behavior, and criticized psychoanalysis for focusing too narrowly on the individual's unchangeable past. They called for therapy that focused less on problems, and more on helping the individual reach his or her full potential. Humanistic psychology shares vocabulary with the self-help movement. As envisioned by one leading thinker, Abraham Harold Maslow, the goal of therapy is to help humans meet higher needs for things such as love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. As Jay Stevens points out in *Storming Heaven*, Maslow also recognized the potential for one-time, peak experiences to effect lasting psychological change.[45]

Leary's insight that social roles were games that followed particular rules and rituals was validated during his first experience with hallucinogenic mushrooms while on

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[44] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 17.

[45] See "Humanistic psychology," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9041477 (accessed May 5, 2008); and Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 130-32.

a beach vacation to Mexico with friends in the summer of 1960.[46] "Like almost everyone who has had the veil drawn, I came back a changed man," he later wrote. "We discover abruptly that we have been programmed all these years, that everything we accept as reality is just social fabrication."[47]

Leary returned to Harvard eager to research psilocybin, recently formulated by Sandoz as a pill, and other, related drugs. His old collaborator Frank Barron directed him to read William James, who had been chair of Harvard's psychology department three-quarters of a century before.[48] Leary wrote to Huxley, who was in Boston for the semester for a visiting professorship at MIT. They met regularly and Huxley offered suggestions while the Harvard lecturer designed a program of research with psilocybin and LSD.[49]

Although Leary was an experimental psychologist, he was determined to avoid what he called "the behaviorist approach to others' awareness." Their program would "avoid labeling or depersonalizing the subject. We should not impose our own jargon or experimental games on others," Leary wrote in a 1968 account.[50] He explained in a later autobiography:

> We decided to make our research existential-transactional. Our experiments would not follow the medical model of giving drugs to others then observing only external results. First, we would teach ourselves how to use the drugs, how to run sessions. Since we were using a new type of

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[46] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 15-17.
[47] Ibid., 33.
[48] Ibid., 38.
[49] See Ibid., 41-42; and Timothy Leary, *High Priest* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1968) 66-65.
[50] Leary, *High Priest*, 65.

> microscope, one which made visible an extraordinary range of new perceptions, our first task was to develop experimental manuals on how to focus the new tools. The scientists we trained could then use the drugs precisely and safely, on themselves and others, to study any and all aspects of psychology, aesthetics, philosophy, religion, life.[51]

The most influential study produced under Leary's tutelage tested the potential of LSD to induce religious feeling. In the so-called Good Friday experiment, conducted by doctoral student Walter Pahnke, ten seminary students were given pills containing the active component of hallucinogenic mushrooms, while another ten were given an active placebo of chemicals that cause a tingling sensation, but no cognitive effects. The seminarians were taken to a private chapel, where they listened to religious services taking place in another part of the building. Following the service, subjects completed a 147-item questionnaire. Subjects who were given hallucinogens had statistically higher scores on indices designed to measure nine categories of mystical experience.[52] The study was well received, and frequently cited by scholars interested in addressing LSD as a religious experience. Another researcher pronounced the study "of especial importance because of its careful methodological controls."[53] Leary praised the study as "a systematic demonstration of the religious aspects of the psychedelic experience."[54] The study's

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[51] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 37.

[52] Walter N. Pahkne, "Drugs and Mysticism" in *Psychedelics: The Uses and Implications of Hallucinogenic Drugs*, eds. Bernard Aaronson and Humphry Osmond (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1970), 145-65.

[53] Joseph Havens, "Working Paper: Memo on the Religious Implications of the Consciousness-Changing Drugs (LSD, Mescaline, Psilocybin)," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 3, no. 2 (spring 1964): 218.

[54] Timothy Leary, "The Religious Experience: Its Production and Interpretation," in *The Psychedelic Reader*, eds. Gunther M. Weil, Ralph Metzner and Timothy Leary (Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1965), 192.

design recognized that subjects' reactions were caused by the interaction between the drug, the subject, and the setting. Perhaps all less-pious subjects would not react like seminarians on Good Friday, but at least it demonstrated an effect that could be measured with post-exposure questionnaires. It was presented as evidence for psychedelics in *The New York Times Magazine, The Reporter,* and in two articles in *Time*.[55]

Nearly three decades later, all the members of the experimental group who participated in a follow-up study "still considered their original experience to have made a uniquely valuable contribution to their spiritual lives," an assertion made by no members of the control group.[56] The author, a pro-drug advocate and Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Ph.D., noted that both the experimenters and the subjects likely realized who had received magic mushrooms once the drug started to take hold. Nevertheless, he concluded that the study's conclusions "strongly support the hypothesis that psychedelic drugs can help facilitate mystical experiences when used by religiously inclined people in a religious setting."[57] This hypothesis was also supported by a recent double-blind experiment conducted at John Hopkins University, which also found that when administered under supportive conditions, psilocybin caused experiences

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[55] See Leonard Wallace Robinson, "Hearing Color, Smelling Music, Touching a Scent," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 22, 1965, 14; Noah Gordon, "The Hallucinogenic Drug Cult," *The Reporter*, August 15, 1963, 38; "Instant Mysticism," *Time*, October 25, 1963; and "Mysticism in the Lab," *Time*, September 23, 1966, 62;

[56] Rick Doblin, "Pahnke's 'Good Friday Experiment': A Long-term Follow-up and Methodological Critique," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 23, no. 1 (August 1991): 23.

[57] Ibid., 23.

similar to spontaneously occurring mystical experiences.[58] However, Rick Doblin's critique also found that Pahnke "significantly under-emphasized" negative aspects of the seminarians' experiences. Five of the seven subjects from the psychedelic group, re-interviewed decades later, said they had also experienced moments when they feared going crazy or dying, or that they were too weak to survive the ordeal. This was not reported. As well, Pahnke failed to mention in his doctoral dissertation or subsequent publications that he tranquilized one of the seminarians with Thorazine after the man ran out from the chapel and into the street, moved by the preacher's exhortation to spread the word.[59]

Pahnke died in 1971. His errors were of omission and oversimplification; he left out evidence that would have introduced doubt and complicated his results. Washed through the media, the findings were further simplified. As reported in *Time*:

> Perhaps the best-known deliberate effort to create religious experience with drugs was a special service in the basement chapel beneath Boston University's nondenominational Marsh Chapel on Good Friday last year. Organ music was piped into the dimly lit chapel for a group of 20 subjects, most of them divinity students, half of whom were given LSD while the rest took placebos. A minister gave a brief sermon, and the students were left alone to meditate. During the next three hours, all except one of the LSD takers (but only one of those who took placebos) reported "a genuine religious experience."
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> "I felt a deep union with God," reports one participant. "I remember feeling a profound sense of sorrow that there was no priest or minister at the altar. I had a tremendous urge to go up on the alter and

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[58] R.R. Griffiths, W.A. Richards, U. McCann and R. Jesse, "Psilocybin Can Occasion Mystical-Type Experiences Having Substantial and Sustained Personal Meaning and Spiritual Significance," *Psychopharmacology* 187, no. 3 (August 2006): 268.

[59] Doblin, "Pahnke's 'Good Friday Experiment,'" 21-3.

> minister the services. But I had this sense of unworthiness, and I crawled under the pews and tried to get away. Finally, I carried my Bible to the altar and then tried to preach. The only words I mumbled were 'peace, peace.' I felt I was communicating beyond words."[60]

The anecdote might had been told differently if the journalist were aware that one of the ten drugged subjects went running mad through the streets. *Time* also reported that Leary "gave the drug to 69 'fulltime religious professionals,' found that three out of four had 'intense mystico-religious reactions, and more than half claimed that they had the deepest spiritual experience of their life."[61] As well as the current research coming from Harvard, the *Time* article mentioned the largely discredited theory that "in large enough doses, these drugs can simulate the effects of certain forms of psychosis," and introduced with a lead that drummed up interest with *Time's* characteristic style:

> In every age, men have struggled to perceive God directly rather than as a tenuously grasped abstraction. Few succeed, and the visions of the world's rare mystics have normally come only after hard spiritual work—prayer, meditation, ascetic practice. Now, a number of psychologists and theologians are exploring such hallucinogenic drugs as mescaline, psilocybin and LSD-25 as an easy way to instant mysticism.[62]

A similar follow-up by Doblin found even more profound problems with the Concord Prison Experiment, the most ambitious project attempted by Leary's group at Harvard. For this study, the team of psychologists and graduate students recruited volunteer subjects from among maximum-security prisoners with three to five months left before parole from the Massachusetts Correctional Institution, Concord. The subjects would take psilocybin three times in a group therapy session with a member of Leary's

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[60] "Instant Mysticism," *Time*, October 25, 1963, 86.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

staff. Their changes would be measured by administering standardized personality tests before and after therapy. Improvement could also be measured by monitoring parole violations after release, and comparing their rate of recidivism with that of other prisoners.[63]

The experiment was designed to test psilocybin in the context of Leary's existential transactional psychology, which called on therapists to help patients see past the social roles and games in which he said they were mired. Leary believed that this required the therapist and patient to meet on even footing. They both must take the drug. Leary recalled: "We made it clear to the prisoners that this was nothing *we* were doing to them. There was no doctor-patient game going here. We would take the drugs along with them. We were doing nothing to them that we weren't happily doing ourselves."[64] The subjects were trained to take over the experiment by administering tests, recruiting volunteers, and delivering lectures.[65] The team also followed up with members of the experimental group after release, creating a non-profit foundation to coordinate post-release efforts.[66] In his biography, Leary reported that the "objective indexes" of personality tests showed positive changes. "Their personality scores had swung dramatically and significantly in the direction of improved mental health," Leary wrote.[67]

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[63] See Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, Madison Presnell, Gunther Weil, Ralph Schwitzgebel and Sarah Kinne, "A New Behavior Change Program Using Psilocybin," *Psychotherapy* 2, no. 2 (July 1965): 61:72; and Leary, *Flashbacks*, 84-88.

[64] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 85.

[65] Ibid., 88.

[66] Rick Doblin, "Dr. Leary's Concord Prison Experiment: A 34-Year Follow-Up Study," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 30, no. 4 (October-December 1998): 420.

[67] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 88.

He also claimed that the rate at which they returned to prison was reduced by as much as one-seventh.[68] In a 1965 publication, he claimed that 18 months after the program's termination, the new crime rate had been reduced to 7 percent for participants, compared to 28 percent for prisoners overall.[69] "It seemed that two major factors were bringing about changes in the convicts: first, the perception of new realities helped them recognize that they had alternatives beyond the cops and robbers game; then, that the empathetic bonding of group members helped them sustain their choice of a new life," Leary later wrote.[70]

However, a 1998 follow-up study by Doblin found that Leary's reports of success were "misleading."[71] Leary followed idiosyncratic rules to determine if an arrest or violation was counted as a new crime. Most troubling, however, was the flawed base-rate statistics against which he measured improvement. Leary compared the recidivism rate for experimental subjects who had been out of prison for ten months against the overall rate for prisoners who had been out for 30 months, without mentioning the sleight of hand. Doblin argued that Leary knew recidivism rates increased over time, that numbers for a fair comparison were available, and it would have been "easily possible" for Leary to make the comparison appropriately.[72]

In a companion piece, Ralph Metzner, a graduate student who was second author to Leary of the original study and became a frequent collaborator, wrote it was

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[68] Ibid., 89.
[69] Leary, et al., "A New Behavior Change Program Using Psilocybin," 71.
[70] Leary, *Flashbacks*, 85.
[71] Doblin, "Dr. Leary's Concord Prison Experiment," 425.
[72] Ibid., 422.

"disconcerting, of course, to discover, 35 years after the fact, that a research project I was involved in and wrote about, made quantitative errors and reported erroneous conclusions."[73] Metzner went on to recall how disappointed group members where when, nearly a year into the project, they discovered that the convicts involved in the psilocybin experiments were doing no better than the control group. Because the standardized personality tests showed change in the inmates, Leary and other researchers were convinced that recidivism by subjects represented a failure to provide sufficient post-release support. Metzer wrote that he had no idea how Leary came up with the "finding" that the subjects committed fewer new crimes:

> This "finding," which has now turned out to be erroneous, was, of course the kind of result we wanted to find. It enabled us to maintain a positive, enthusiastic attitude in talking about the project. We fell victim to the well-known "halo effect," by which researchers tend to see their data in as positive a light as possible. I have myself, in later years, sometimes forgotten the basically negative result we reported in the study, and talked about the project as if we lowered the recidivism rate. … Whether Leary made these mistakes consciously, faking the results that he wanted, or whether they were unconscious mistakes of carelessness, motivated by over-enthusiasm is impossible to say at this point.[74]

The Concord Prison Experiment was represented as successful in reducing recidivism, by the investigators and historians.[75] *The Saturday Evening Post* also described a reduction in recidivism among participating inmates, but suggested it may

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[73] Ralph Metzner, "Reflections on the Concord Prison Experiment and the Follow-Up Study," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 30, no. 4 (October-December 1998): 427.

[74] Ibid., 428.

[75] See Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 71-73; and Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 158.

have been the result of the additional post-release care.[76] This and the Good Friday experiment were among the best experimental evidence for the effectiveness of psychedelic drugs. But it was Leary's third program of research that would generate the most notoriety and launch his second career as a public figure. Over the course of "many" meetings with Huxley in October and November of 1960, Leary designed a program of group experimentation with LSD that would transcend all the usual conventions of experimental design and control. In effect, it was to be a self-experimentation study in which the subjects would be given control over their own use:

> From these meetings grew the design for a naturalistic pilot study, in which the subjects would be treated like astronauts—carefully prepared, briefed with all available facts, and then expected to run their own spacecraft, make their own observations, and report back to ground control. Our subjects were not passive patients but hero-explorers.[77]

The self-experimentation was conducted with a casual attitude. The first experiment was conducted on the evening that four small, grey pillboxes of psilocybin arrived in the mail from Sandoz. Leary was having a small party in his apartment. After working on a bottle of burgundy and some whiskey and soda, Leary was enjoying "a fine alcoholic stupor," his date was lying in front of the fire, and an undergraduate couple who lived upstairs stopped by. Another friend of Leary's, a scientist, suggested, "the hell with all this phony talk and measurement business, let's get mushrooms and start swinging."[78]

> I had been lecturing all year on research philosophy and ethics and how you should be collaborative and not use your position as a scientist to

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[76] John Kobler, "The Dangerous Magic of LSD," *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 2, 1963, 32.

[77] Leary, *High Priest*, 67.

[78] Ibid., 69.

> get an unfair advantage and about sharing information and sharing the power to make decisions with the subjects. And this was the way we had set up the mushroom research. Collaborative all the way. No pulling rank. Everyone taking turns giving mushrooms and taking them. … Besides, it would be a useful pilot study.[79]

In 1962, administrators at Harvard became concerned by what appeared to be freewheeling use of LSD by Leary and Alpert. They found plenty to object to: Leary and Alpert administering drugs in their homes, with no physicians present, in a nonchalant manner, without controls, at times without the explicit consent of subjects, who were graduate and undergraduate students.[80] Leary and Alpert argued that forewarning subjects would prejudice their experiences, and that the setting in which the drug was administered also affected the experience. They maintained that it was necessary for the person administering the drug to take some himself in order to relate to the subject. "Finally, they contend that experience itself is a legitimate goal of inquiry and taking the drug gave new insight into personality," another researcher into psychedelic therapy summarized.[81]

Whether or not describing the experience was a legitimate goal of scientific inquiry, it would become an extended side project for artists and journalists. Always on the lookout for the new, fashionable, and the exotic, magazines accepted the premise that the drug experience was worthy of examination and description, if only to see what all

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[79] Ibid., 69-70.

[80] See W.V. Caldwell, *LSD Psychotherapy: An Exploration of Psychedelic and Psycholytic Therapy* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 24-25; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 86-87.

[81] Caldwell, *LSD Psychotherapy*, 24.

the fuss was about. Covering Leary required some explanation of psychedelic drugs, and a quick review of the clips would have revealed an intellectual history of fascinating depth. Like Leary, magazines put considerable effort into explaining and conveying the drug experience to any who would listen.

The Mad Professor Makes News

Newsweek became the first magazine to report that a Harvard psychologist had founded the International Foundation for Internal Freedom to conduct experiments with hallucinogenic drugs. The 200-word article explained only that the drug "induced the bizarre thought patterns of the psychotic," and that at Harvard it was being sold to students for $1 a dose. "The group ostensibly is serious, but its offbeat dilettantism (much like some of the interest in hypnotism) has caused concern among university officials," the article concluded.[82]

Twelve more articles about LSD were published in the popular magazines indexed by the *Readers' Guide* over the next year (see Appendix A). Three more followed in 1964. Of the sixteen articles total, seven covered the dismissal of Leary and Alpert from Harvard. The other nine included a lengthy first-person account of an LSD trip taken under medical supervision, Gerald Heard's pro-psychedelic manifesto, Alan Watts' thoughts on psychedelics and religious freedom, and a story in *Time* about the potential of drugs to create mystical experience. Nine of the sixteen stories included some mention of Leary, but Huxley was mentioned in eight. Whether because LSD was the

[82] "Hallucinations," *Newsweek*, December 10, 1962, 56.

product of pharmacy, because of decades of journalistic or scientific interest, or because of the absence of law enforcement concern, only rarely did the articles manifest what coders judged as bias against non-medical use of LSD (see Table 7).

Table 7. Magazine Portrayal of LSD, 1962-1964

Articles including …	count (of 16 total)
… description(s) of the drug experience from a user's perspective	13
… description(s) of a particular LSD experience that was entirely successful for the user, described in entirely positive terms	10
… description(s) of a particular LSD experience that was a bad experience for the user	6
… reference to the use of LSD by a medical doctor, researcher or college professor, excluding Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert	7
… reference to the use of LSD by an artist, public intellectual or celebrity*, excluding Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert	10
… apparent bias against use of LSD for non-medical purposes	4

*a person with whom the reader is assumed to be already familiar

It was primarily the news and mass-culture-oriented magazines that latched onto Leary's story. Articles in *Newsweek*, *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reporter*, *Look*, and *Esquire* touched on Leary's bizarre behavior at Harvard, his dismissal at the end of the spring quarter, and his summer attempt to establish an LSD commune near Acapulco. In general, the magazines had little regard for Leary but were curious about his drug. Articles in *Newsweek*, and a March 29, 1963 article in *Time*, fell back on the temporary psychoses explanation for the drug use.[83] (The second piece in *Time*, "Instant Mysticism," explained research into transcendental drug use without describing the Harvard scandal.) Long pieces in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reporter*, and *Look* tried to get a little deeper into Leary's thought and conveyed his breathless tone. While

[83] See "Hallucinations," *Newsweek*, December 10, 1962, 56; and "LSD," *Time*, March 29, 1963, 72.

none of the magazines displayed much sympathy for the disgraced professor, their curiosity about the technology was unaffected. The *Saturday Evening Post* explained Leary and Alpert's "Experience" at length:

> In general, earthly realities evaporate. Conscious memory, reasoning power, time and space perceptions stop functioning normally. During the early stages, sensory perceptions are almost unbearably acute … As the effects reach deeper levels, the subject grows detached from his own ego; he undergoes a kind of psychological death. Then, reborn, he may believe that he has penetrated the ageless imponderables of who-am-I?, what-is-the-meaning-of-life? A number of painters, writers and musicians say LSD enables them to understand their own creative processes and thus improve their work. Many subjects testify to mystical revelations. God, they maintain, appeared to them; they heard Him and talked to Him. Others are pervaded by an awareness of the unity of all things, of identification with the cosmos and a boundless, ego-dissolving love for mankind. And still others, struggling against the loss of their egos, suffer hideous torment.[84]

The *Saturday Evening Post* article, which spread over seven pages, was both fascinated by the technology of LSD and appalled by the excesses of Leary and his followers. However, the theological interpretation of LSD pushed by Leary predominated. Twelve paragraphs about Leary's interpretation of "the Experience" and his experiments were followed by a rebuttal not on scientific, but on theological grounds:

> "Reports are given of deep mystical experiences," he [Harvard Center for Personality Research director David C. McClelland] said, "but their chief characteristics is the wonder at one's own profundity rather than a genuine concern to probe deeper into the experience of the human race in these matters … One can hardly fail to infer that one effect of the drug is to decrease responsibility …"[85]

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[84] John Kobler, "The Dangerous Magic of LSD," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 11, 1963, 32.

[85] Ibid., 35.

The magazines were skeptical of Leary, but his explanation for LSD dominated stories in *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Look*, and *Esquire*. Even coated with sarcasm, the visions offered by Leary and Alpert were appealing, and nearly impossible to directly refute. Journalists entered difficult territory, where metaphor was bolstered by flawed science. *Time* and the *Reporter* discussed the Good Friday experiment conducted under Leary as evidence for his views; the *Saturday Evening Post* described results of the Concord Prison experiments as promising but inconclusive; *Look* threw around some of Leary and Alpert's statistics ("91 percent of our subjects enjoyed pleasant experiences; 66 percent reported insights") bracketed by skepticism.[86] *Esquire* not only presented the Harvard researchers' perspective, but also their proselytizing tone in a piece largely concerned with university politics. No other scientific viewpoints are explored in the article, which began:

> The nervous system … is a completely adequate, completely efficient, ecstatic organ …Trust your inherent machinery. Be entertained by the social game you play. Remember, man's natural state is ecstatic wonder, ecstatic intuition, ecstatic accurate movement. Don't settle for less.[87]

This pitch doesn't come from "some bright lads in an advertising agency, but rather assistant professor Richard Alpert and lecturer Timothy Leary of the Harvard Social Research Department," *Esquire* went on to explain.[88] The magazine's cheeky explanation of the duo's beliefs was continued in another passage that began, "Leary and

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[86] See Ibid., 32; "Instant Mysticism," *Time*, October 25, 1963, 86; Noah Gordon, "The Hallucinogenic Drug Cult," *The Reporter*, August 25, 1963, 38-39; Andrew Weil, "The Strange Case of the Harvard Drug Sandal," *Look*, November 8, 1963, 48.

[87] Martin Mayer, "Getting Alienated with the Right Crowd At Harvard," *Esquire*, September 1963, 73.

[88] Ibid.

Alpert consumed quantities of the drugs and found that as a result they could understand the Mysteries of Life."[89]

The tone was sarcastic, but that did not dispel the sales pitch's appeal. Leary and his group were dismissed as wide-eyed cultists, but the experience that prompted their beliefs was acknowledged as real on some level. Nearly a decade of philosophizing by Huxley offered the media a ready framework in which to discuss the mystical "Experience." Huxley's name was dropped in stories about the duo's dismissal in the *Reporter, Look, Esquire,* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Except for short item in *Newsweek*, all the articles went beyond Leary to explain the scholarly excitement about LSD and the uses to which the technology was being put. While middle-of-the-road publications were happy to defrock an irresponsible Harvard professor for self-important foolishness, the technology held their respect.

Articles that did not mention Leary were even more extraordinary. In 1963, Gerald Heard published "Can this Drug Enlarge Man's Mind?" in *Horizons*, in which he concluded that it could. In a sidebar, the article included warnings from Cohen that the drug could be dangerous when taken in frivolous conditions, by individuals on the verge of a mental breakdown, or when given by an unskilled therapist. In the main text, Heard wrote: "LSD is certainly one of the least toxic chemicals man has ever put inside his system. Compared with alcohol, nicotine, coffee—our three great stand-bys—it could be called almost a docile mare against those mettlesome stallions, as far as most people are concerned." He concluded that the drug should be used the way he and others in his

[89] Ibid.

social circle conceived of their own use: "… the practical answer to What should be done about it? seems to be that LSD remain for the time being what it is: a 'research drug,' to be used with greatest care to explore the minds of those who would volunteer to aid competent researchers as voyagers to the 'Gate of Ivory,'" a name for the realm of fantasy suggested by Penelope in the Odyssey.[90]

Saturday Review, the magazine which had avoided discussing mysticism or portraying drug fantasy in a page of published excerpts from *Doors of Perception* nine years before, was now interested. The magazine ran a five-page, first-person account of an LSD trip taken under medical supervision. The story, which mentioned neither Leary nor the Harvard drug scandal, demonstrated growing interest in the drug and in the subjective drug fantasy. However, Harry Asher's trip was a failure. "They Split My Personality" described a reasonably pleasant LSD trip that ended with several days of depression and apathy, followed by weeks of jumpiness and occasional hallucinations. After several months of depending on barbiturates to sleep, the writer said he recovered. "But if the condition I had was schizophrenia, my sympathy for those so afflicted has been increased many times," the story concluded.[91]

Time published two stories about the dismissal of Alpert and Leary in 1963. The first, which appeared March 29, did not mention Huxley, and had a dismissive tone. It began:

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[90] Gerald Heard, "Can This Drug Enlarge Man's Mind?" *Horizon*, May 1963, 31-32, 115.

[91] Harry Asher, "They Split my Personality," *Saturday Review*, June 1, 1963, 43.

> For a couple of freewheeling years, two young Harvard psychologists have carried on wide-ranging experiments with mind-altering drugs. At the university's Center for Research in Personality, they sent their graduate-student subject floating off into other-worldly visions of new and fantastic forms of "reality" and a new meaning of life. Now the cosmic ball is over. Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, both Ph.D.s, are being dropped from the Harvard faculty because university authorities agree with the medical profession that the drugs they use are too dangerous for campus experiments. But the two psychologists are acting blithely unconcerned.[92]

Time's position on the non-medical use of LSD softened eight months later in one of the most extraordinary articles about LSD. *Time*'s religion-department story "Instant Mysticism" described non-medical LSD use by academics, ministers, and psychologists, all in pursuit of a religious experience. The article included no mention of LSD side effects or the long-term consequences. It began:

> In every age, men have struggled to perceive God directly rather than as a tenuously grasped abstraction. Few succeed, and the visions of the world's rare mystics have normally come only after hard spiritual work—prayer, meditation, ascetic practice. Now a number of psychologists and theologians are exploring such hallucinogenic drugs as mescaline, psilocybin and LSD-25 as an easy way to instant mysticism.
>
> In large enough doses, these drugs can simulate the effects of certain forms of psychosis—to the point, in some cases, of permanent derangement. But in controlled, minute doses the drugs produce weird and wonderful fantasies of sight and feeling; in Greenwich Village and on college campuses, they seem to be replacing marijuana as the hip way to get kicks. Some investigators who have tried the drugs claim to have undergone a profound spiritual experience, and these men are seriously, if gingerly, studying the undefined relationship between drug-induced visions and the classic forms of mystical ecstasy.[93]

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[92] "LSD," *Time*, March 29, 1963, 72.
[93] "Instant Mysticism," *Time*, October 25, 1963, 86.

The article went on to discuss how drugs had produced mystical experiences for Huxley, a prison psychologist, a divinity school professor, a Princeton researcher, and an MIT instructor. The story mentioned that Leary "was dropped from the Harvard faculty last spring after receiving strong criticism for his research on the use of LSD and psilocybin," but it went on to report the findings of his research, including the famous Good Friday experiment that found LSD heightened seminarians' religious experience. Opposing viewpoints were saved for the second-to-last paragraph. Eastern religion expert R.C. Zahner stated that drug-induced experiences "are qualitatively different from the ecstasies granted mystics" and the president of a Presbyterian seminary worried, "The drugs make an end run around Christ and go straight to the Holy Spirit."[94]

In the final paragraph, these claims were countered by three theologians who believed that the drug had the power to deepen faith. The final word went to an M.I.T. instructor who took LSD as a divinity student at Harvard:

> "The pity is that our everyday religious experience has become so jaded, so rationalized that to become aware of the mystery, wonderment and confusion of life we must resort to the drugs. Nevertheless, many of us are profoundly grateful for the vistas opened up by the drug experience. It remains to be seen whether this experience is to be interpreted in religious language."

In the same month, *Life* magazine ran the second of a two-part series on "Control of the Brain," titled "The Chemical Mind-Changers," which focused extensively on LSD. Leary's perspective was also discussed in a long *Life* story on the state of psychoactive drug research, although the name of the tarnished professor was not mentioned. The

[94] Ibid., 86-87.

Luces took a special interest in this series. A rough draft of the stories, initialed by Henry Luce with a hand-written note addressed to Claire, was in her papers. The first part of the series, which dealt with the electronic stimulation of the brain using electrodes, underwent few changes between review by the Luces and publication in *Life*. Several paragraphs were lightly re-written and 250 words discussing the brain's architecture were added.[95]

Changes to the second part of the series, "Chemical Mind-Changers," were more dramatic. As well as getting a new lead and 500-word introduction, the section of the story dealing with LSD was thoroughly revised and expanded. The rough draft of the story reviewed by the Luces described the general effects of LSD and contemporary psychiatric research with the drug in about 400 words, with no attribution. The published story devoted about 1,600 words to contemporary LSD research and included expert comment by two psychiatrists, including the psychiatrist who provided the drug to the Luces. Cohen was cited as the primary source for "some landmarks that will aid the reader in reaching a rational opinion" on what the author wrote had lately become a matter of controversy. The article said Cohen had found "the evidence indicates that with proper precautions, they [LSD and mescaline] are safe when given to a selected healthy group," and "for 'normal' people, the hallucinogens can give a rewarding esthetic,

[95] See Robert Coughlan, "Control of the Brain," *Life*, March 8, 1963, 92-95. The typed rough draft of the article is in the Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 715, container 14, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

philosophical or religious experience—such as a sudden sense of comprehension of the nature of God."[96]

The search in *Readers' Guide* uncovered only three articles about LSD from 1964, one of which explored using the drug to catch fish.[97] The others were fascinated with the religious aspect of the LSD experience. An eight-page feature in *Scientific American*, credited to a slate of authors including Leary's friend and colleague Frank Barron, was a serious attempt to describe the drug experience in clinical language and using line graphs to display responses from subjects taking the drug to questions like "Are you anxious?" over time.[98] In the *New Republic*, Alan Watts reviewed the publication of Sidney Cohen's book *The Beyond Within: The LSD Story* with an article titled, "Who Will Run Your Nervous System?" Watts praised Cohen's research, but disagreed with Cohen's opinion that the drug should remain under psychiatric control. The use of consciousness-changing drugs was fundamentally a religious issue, Watts wrote, and by trying to maintain control psychiatrists were overreaching to protect the dogma of their profession:

> We will probably have to recognize that the transformation of consciousness, whether by Yoga or LSD, is basically a religious problem, entitled to the same constitutional protection as freedom of worship. Our difficulty in accepting this is the inability to see that LSD enthusiasts stand today where Quakers and Presbyterians stood in the 17th Century, when they were regarded as perverts and lunatics and public menaces. I am sure

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[96] Robert Coughlan, "The Chemical Mind Changers," *Life*, March 15, 1963, 89.

[97] R.H. Boyle, "Dreamy New Era for Fish," *Sports Illustrated*, March 30, 1964, 50.

[98] Frank Barron, Murray E. Jarvik and Sterling Bunnell Jr., "The Hallucinogenic Drugs," *Scientific American*, April 1964, 34.

> that there were those who became psychotic and even suicidal from having flouted Authority so flagrantly as to become a Quaker.[99]

Time heralded Cohen's publication of *The Beyond Within* with a 1,300-word story titled "The Pros & Cons of LSD." [100] W.A. Swanberg's claim that Luce gave managing editors at *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* copies of a book on psychedelic drugs and told them to cover the subject could not be verified from other sources.[101] If true, however, this story about Cohen's book may have been the result. The Luces thought highly of Cohen and a copy of *The Beyond Within* with an extraordinary warm inscription to Clare was among her papers.[102]

"The Pros & Cons of LSD" described Cohen's book as the first "impartial appraisal by a competent scientist writing in lay language" about LSD. The story recounted several blissful trips, mentioned the possibility of horrible ones, and labeled the drug as "definitely dangerous" for borderline psychotics. But the primary "con" was that a vital tool for scientific inquiry could get a bad name even though it was the most important way to study the human mind. "But the responsible hopes raised by serious and cautious research have been matched by wildly visionary claims. Irresponsible misuse of

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[99] Alan Watts, "Who Will Run Your Nervous System?" *The New Republic*, November 28, 1964, 16.

[100] "The Pros & Cons of LSD," *Time*, December 18, 1964, 63.

[101] Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 463.

[102] The inscription reads "Clare, if 'What is received is received according to the nature of the recipient'—I am both the finest and the worst of men—the finest for having known you—the worst for having lost that greatest of opportunities. It is to you—of course—to whom the book was written—a poor enough offering—but with it goes my love to the end." See Clare Boothe Luce Collection, box 715, container 14, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

the drug has led to both scares and scandals," the lead paragraph ended. The point was picked up at the article's conclusion:

> **Antics & Reaction:** In the last few years, Dr. Cohen and other reputable researchers have been disturbed by what he calls the "beatnik microculture" and its abuses of LSD and other hallucinogens. The danger, he says, is that the public reaction against oddball antics may set back serious research for many years.
>
> It is tempting, he suggests, to say that one gets from the LSD encounter what one deserves, but he quotes Aquinas for a more accurate summation: "Quidquid recipietur secundum modum recipiientis recipietur"—our nature determines what we receive. But mankind will not always know its present mental limits. "The mind's surmised and still unknown potential," says Dr. Cohen, "is our future. The experience called hallucinogenic will play a role in leading us to the future."[103]

Time magazine's acceptance of hallucinogenic technology that was consistent with traditional values was at one end of the continuum in magazine coverage. At the other end were women's magazines, which saw LSD as a threat, especially to children. In 1963, LSD was mentioned in a *Ladies' Home Journal* article that adopted a fretful tone about Americans' propensity to turn to drugs to escape from their problems. "Doctors say the LSD has triggered violent psychoses and suicides," the magazine warned. Amid descriptions of drug trips and misbehavior by Timothy Leary, the article included anecdotes about unnamed people who "flipped" on LSD: a Chicago housewife who took LSD on a dare and was then hospitalized for months at the Illinois State Institute, and a "brilliant young graduate student in physics" who "took the stuff on a sugar cube and went wild. He tore off his clothes in the street, fought policemen and had to be handcuffed, straightjacketed and hospitalized, perhaps for years." The magazine also

[103] "The Pros & Cons of LSD," *Time*, 63-64.

presented a moral argument: "'Apparently, LSD appeals greatly to people who think it is not enough to be alive, awake and running around,' says Dr. Jackson Smith, institute clinical director. 'LSD is dangerous as hell.'"[104]

While *Newsweek* and *Ladies' Home Journal* were disparaging toward the possibility of constructive recreational or religious use of LSD, other magazines found it to be a fascinating technology and a story worth telling well. At the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Look*, the story was assigned to journalists who would go on to have fascinating careers: the *Saturday Evening Post* writer, John Kobler, would later write a biography of Henry Luce and break the story of his LSD use; the *Look* writer, Andrew Weil, became a widely recognized expert on health and alternative medicine who made the cover of *Time* magazine twice, in 1997 and 2005.[105] Both Kobler and Weil made good-faith efforts to fully understand the phenomena on which they were reporting. *Esquire* writer Martin Mayer poked fun at Leary and Alpert, but happily accepted that the drug had some appeal. And the subject was thoroughly explored in *Time* and *Life*.

At this early stage in the diffusion of LSD, perhaps any publicity would be good publicity. Depicting the new technology would familiarize some in the audience, spark curiosity, and perhaps be the inspiration to give it a try. This was why the Federal Bureau of Narcotics actively discouraged depictions of narcotics use in the cinema through this period, and industry codes discouraged programming about drugs on television.

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[104] Robert P. Goldman, "Instant Happiness," *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1963, 68-69.

[105] See *Time*, October 17, 2005 and *Time*, May 12, 1997.

However, magazine coverage of LSD in the early 1960s not only publicized the drug, it often showed its most attractive face.

The End of the Trip

Leary and Alpert left academe in 1963 with the immediate goal of building IFIF, the International Foundation for Internal Freedom, a non-profit organization that was to operate a nationwide chain of research centers to provide hallucinogenic experiences to individuals seeking higher consciousness. IFIF quickly enrolled 3,000 dues-paying members and opened offices in New York, Boston, and Los Angeles. [106] "It tears my heart out to see what's happened to them," said Leary and Alpert's department head at Harvard, David McClelland. "They started out as good scientists. They've become cultists."[107] In some respects, the careers of Leary and Alpert confirmed his judgment: Leary envisioned himself starting a new religion, the pair published a psychedelic instruction manual based on the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*, and Leary named one of his books *High Priest.*[108] But Leary was more salesman than cultist, focusing more on product than theology. Over a lunch in 1966, communications scholar Marshall McLuhan suggested that Leary coin a slogan to push LSD through the media. "Lysergic acid hits the spot," the media theorist sang. "Forty billion neurons, that's a lot." Later that year, Leary formed his own church, the League for Spiritual Discovery, with the stated mission

[106] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 96.
[107] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, 189.
[108] See Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 108; and Leary, *High Priest*, 260.

of promoting consciousness change through LSD and the enigmatic slogan "Tune in, turn on, drop out."[109]

Leary embraced his role as spokesman for LSD, granting interviews, publishing books, embarking on speaking tours and remaining in the news through continued bizarre behavior. Leary's approach frustrated Huxley, who believed that the hope for LSD lay in restraint, strict scientific study, and the limited introduction of the drug to intellectual and political leaders. Huxley avoided television appearances in which he would be positioned as the advocate for LSD and was irked by Leary's "nonsense-talking" and delight in flouting authority. [110] In a letter to Osmond, Huxley complained:

> "I am very fond of Tim—but why, oh why, does he *have* to be such an ass? I have told him repeatedly that the only attitude for a researcher in this ticklish field is that of an anthropologist living in the midst of a tribe of potentially dangerous savages. Go about your business quietly, don't break taboos or criticize the locally accepted dogmas. Be polite and friendly—and get on with the job. If you leave them alone, they will probably leave you alone. [111]

Huxley died in 1963, soon after receiving his last wish, an intravenous injection of LSD, obtained from Sidney Cohen and administered by his wife, Laura.[112]

Sidney Cohen worried that widespread use of LSD would result in more adverse reactions. By the late 1950s, the psychiatrist had begun disassociating himself professionally from Eisner, Heard, and others who he felt were uncritical in their

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[109] Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, xv, 268.

[110] June Deery, *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 107.

[111] Aldous Huxley, *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. Grover Smith (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 945.

[112] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 96-97.

advocacy for LSD.[113] As LSD became more controversial, he positioned himself solidly in the middle of the road, calling for cautious research and deploring irresponsible use. "Some of the best friends of LSD are its worst enemies," he wrote in the preface to his book *LSD*. "In their way they have aborted much of the careful study of this most important agent. They have managed to shock the citizenry to the point that all hope of safely, cautiously and gradually introducing the psychedelics into our culture is lost."[114]

Henry Luce remained outspoken with subordinates at *Time* and *Life* about his enthusiasm for LSD. At the 1964 banquet for the staff of *Life* magazine, Luce launched into the legendary monologue extolling the benefits of LSD and mentioning his own use.[115] The banquet took place as Luce was descending from the position of editor-in-chief of all of his publications, but he retained the title of editorial chairman and both the power and the inclination to influence coverage.[116] At the time of his retirement, he was asked by a magazine columnist, "But if the editors now decide to support candidate A for President, and you are for candidate B, which candidate will the magazines support?"

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[113] Novak, *LSD Before Leary*, 100-101.

[114] Richard Alpert and Sidney Cohen, *LSD*, ed. Carol Sturm Smith (New York: New American Library, 1966), 10.

[115] Heiskell, who died in 2003, described a similar incident to Luce biographer Ralph G. Martin, placing it at the Hunt Ball, an annual banquet for the staff of *Life* at the Waldorf Hotel. See Ralph G. Martin, *Henry and Clare: An Intimate Portrait of the Luces* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1991), 401; and "Oral History of Andrew Heiskell (1987)", Columbia University Libraries Oral History Research Office, Interview 1, Session 5, 264-65, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/nny/heiskella/transcripts/heiskella_1_5_264.html (accessed January 7, 2007).

[116] Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 442-43.

Luce responded: "That's simple. They will support candidate B."[117] The official *Time* corporate history had Luce confiding to an old associate, "I do reserve the human right to talk to managing editors and writers and correspondents without going through channels."[118]

In 1966, the former *Time* writer and Pulitzer prize winner John Hersey was master of a college at Yale when Luce came to visit. After a meeting with students, the sixty-eight-year-old publisher began talking about his use of LSD:

> After they had left, he had a scotch, and said, "Oh, John, I've been experimenting with LSD, and it's the most wonderful thing! You look at that glass on the table, and see shimmering colors on either side of it."
>
> This was a time when LSD was ruining lives at Yale. I thanked my stars that he didn't say that when the kids were there![119]

As LSD gained additional traction as a street drug in 1966, stern warnings about side effects were mixed in with coverage in *Time* and *Life*. Reporting "An Epidemic of 'Acid-Heads,'" in 1966, *Time* declared that "everywhere the diagnosis is the same: psychotic illness resulting from unauthorized, nonmedical use of the drug LSD-25." Cohen was quoted: "'LSD can kill you dead—by making you feel that you can walk on water, or fly.'"[120] But the magazines did not shy away from describing the drug's possibilities or abandon hope it would provide regular people with mystical experiences

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[117] Ibid., 443.

[118] Curtis Prendergast with Geoffrey Colvin, *Time, Inc.: The Intimate History of a Changing Enterprise, Vol. 3* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 195.

[119] John Hersey, quoted in Martin, *Henry and Clare*, 401. See also Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 476.

[120] Epidemic of 'Acid-Heads,'" *Time*, March 11, 1966, 44; "LSD," *Time*, June 17, 1966, 30.

envisioned in traditional Christian terms. One of the most extraordinary examples of *Time*'s coverage was published in September 1966, at the height of magazine publicity for LSD, when recreational LSD use was growing, there was a recognized black market, and New York and California had outlawed possession of the drug.[121] The article, "Mysticism in the Lab," began in Sunday school:

> St. Paul was converted while riding on the road to Damascus by a sudden vision of the Risen Christ, who appeared to him in the form of a blinding light that struck him to the ground.
>
> Teresa of Avila, the 16th Century saint, had poetic visions of "pure water running over crystal, the sun reflecting it and striking through it." Simone Weil, the lonely Jewish girl who turned into a Christian mystic, tells how the recitation of lines by George Herbert, such as, "Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back," acted on her intuitive conscious like prayer. "Then it happened," she recalled. "Christ himself came down, and he took me."
>
> Deep within myself. Most experiences of mystical consciousness have come only after hard work—spartan prayers, mediation, fasting, mortification of the flesh. Now it is possible, through the use of LSD and other psychedelic drugs, to induce something like mystical consciousness in a controlled laboratory environment.[122]

Eight weeks later, a story about LSD began: "What kind of person is likely to enjoy a trip on LSD? Only the extrovert, Alabama Psychiatrist Patrick H. Linton suggested last week at a regional meeting of the National Association for Mental Health."[123] A *Life* cover story in the same year, "The Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug that Got Out of

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[121] See "New York State Controls LSD Use Under '65 Law," *The New York Times*, June 1, 1966; "2 States in West Ban Sale of LSD: California and Nevada Act to Control Illegal Use," *The New York Times*, May 31, 1966.

[122] "Mysticism in the Lab," *Time*, September 23, 1966, 62.

[123] "Turning it on with LSD," *Time*, November 25, 1966, 58.

Control," balanced concerns and hopes for LSD in a five-article package. The stories were cautionary in parts, offering *Life* science editor Albert Rosenfield's opinion that LSD was "emphatically not" for everyone and that for some it may be "a one way ticket to an asylum, a prison or a grave."[124]

But the package also included two pages of testimonials on the potential of LSD to induce religious experiences under the headline, "Scientists, Theologians, Mystics Swept up in a Psychic Revolution." And along with a typical anecdote about a teenage girl's bad trip, the package included a first-person account by a "hard-headed, conservative, Midwestern, Republican businessman" who discovered an understanding of God while using LSD.[125] In an editorial the following month, *Life* suggested that lawmakers should take a lesson from Prohibition and find a way to discourage LSD "cultism" while still "making LSD available, under controlled conditions, to researchers and citizens who have good reason to try LSD and who can pass the necessary physical and mental tests."[126]

Henry Luce died of heart blockage on February 28, 1967, one day after checking into St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix. For reading material, he brought a detective novel, his Bible, and a work of theology.[127] Coverage of LSD in *Time* and *Life* became much more ordinary following Luce's death. After four articles in 1966, *Life* did not publish

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[124] Albert Rosenfeld, "The Vital Facts About the Drug and Its Effects," section of "LSD: The Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug that Got Out of Control," *Life*, March 25, 1966, 30A.

[125] "A Hard-Headed Businessman's Vivid Memory," section of "LSD: The Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug that Got Out of Control," *Life*, March 25, 1966, 30D.

[126] "LSD: Control, Not Prohibition," *Life*, April 29, 1966, 4.

[127] Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 482.

another major article about LSD in the 1960s. The *Readers' Guide Retrospective* search located five *Time* stories about LSD from 1967 and two from 1968, but the magazine was through waxing poetic about the theological implications of LSD trips. Three stories in 1967 discussed studies that LSD caused cell damage and damaged fetuses, but they framed the evidence as preliminary.[128] Another 1967 story discussed hallucinogens used by native peoples but yet to be explored by scientists.[129] The magazine also reported on arrests of tripping motorists in Los Angeles and purported cases of blindness caused by college students staring at the sun.[130] A similar legend about western Pennsylvania college students going blind was debunked by the magazine in 1968.[131] *Time* also reported on the reluctant decision of the head of the FDA to support new federal laws making possession of the drug a crime.[132]

During the 1950s and 1960s, *Time* and *Life* displayed a surprisingly accepting attitude toward LSD, despite skepticism toward other aspects of the counterculture and a loud embrace of traditional American values. The psychiatrist Sidney Cohen, who enjoyed a special relationship with the Luces, was a prominent source in coverage in these magazines. Cohen appeared much more frequently as an expert source in *Time* and *Life* than in other magazines in the set (see Table 8). More than others in his circle of LSD pioneers, Cohen's attitude came to represent a balance between hope for LSD's

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[128] See "Drugs and Chromosomes," *Time*, September 15, 1967, 84-85; "Cell Damage from LSD," *Time*, March 24, 1967, 46; and "LSD and the Unborn," *Time*, August 11, 1967, 60.

[129] "Beyond LSD," *Time*, February 10, 1967, 84-85.

[130] "More Bad Trips on LSD," *Time*, May 26, 1967, 64.

[131] "Another LSD Hallucination," *Time*, January 26, 1968, 66.

[132] "Penalties for LSD," *Time*, March 8, 1968, 53.

therapeutic potential and concern over its strange and tragic compilations. Cohen raised these concerns both in his academic publications and in the popular media. *Time* and *Life* also balanced excitement over the potential of LSD with some of these concerns, although they were slow to give up the hope that the drug could continue to be made available to responsible adults. Ultimately, the magazines were more open to continued non-medical use of psychedelic drugs than their favorite psychiatric source. While *Life* editorialized against legal prohibition of LSD in 1966, Cohen was invited by California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. to the 1966 signing of a bill that prohibited LSD possession in that state.[133]

Table 8. Prevalence of Selected Sources in *Time*, *Life*, and Other Magazines, 1954-1968

Publication	total articles	Sidney Cohen		Timothy Leary		Albert Hofmann		Aldous Huxley	
		count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total
Time	20	3	15	7	35	4	20	6	30
Life	5	2	40	3	60	1	20	2	40
other weeklies	53	6	11	25	47	9	17	9	17
monthlies	40	3	8	11	28	9	23	9	23

Time and *Life* were fascinated by LSD. Henry Luce's magazines discovered LSD in 1955 and remained enthusiastic even as the drug was becoming popular with the public, feared by lawmakers and decried in the media. *Time* and *Life* frequently discussed the LSD experience in an explicitly biblical framework. Scare stories were balanced with endorsements of LSD by professors, businessmen, and celebrities.

[133] See Sidney Cohen and Keith Ditman, "Prolonged Adverse Reactions to Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 181, no. 2 (July 14, 1962): 161-62; "LSD: Control, Not Prohibition," *Life*, April 29, 1966; Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 109.

*Tim*e and *Life* informed the public that the type of drug use pioneered by Huxley and Leary was possible, and presented use in the most palatable context. Several scholars have noted that one remarkable aspect of the 1960s craze for LSD was that people took the drug for a set of related reasons—mind expansion, inner exploration, spiritual growth, self-improvement—that went beyond simple recreation. The drug lent itself to "spiritual quest for meaning," in the words of sociologist and 1960s radical Todd Gitlin. "The discourse of LSD tended toward "God," "dissolution of self," and "discovery of existence," he wrote.[134]

As the counter-culture developed, this experience came to be associated with anti-establishment values. "The drug was the ideological centerpiece of this revolt against authority and materialism—against the values of consumer society itself," in Gitlin's words.[135] Of course, no chemical is inherently anti-authoritarian. In *Time* and *Life*, the same technology was offered in a way consistent with establishment values and traditional beliefs. The magazines contributed a distinctively biblical and Christian interpretation of the LSD experience to the media cacophony. While many other high-profile LSD advocates perceived the drug as mystical, it was nearly always in reference to Eastern religion. Aldous Huxley believed that LSD could provide mystical insights to seekers of any faith and was not himself devoted to a particular religion. He was

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[134] See Todd Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's Consumer Society," in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention Monograph 6, ed. Hank Resnik (Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990), 43; and Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1993), 243.

[135] Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's Consumer Society," 43.

fascinated with Buddhism and Hinduism and his death was commemorated with a secular memorial. Gerald Heard was a devotee of a Hindu sect with a following in Los Angeles. Alan Watts was prominent for popularizing Zen Buddhism in America. Jewish-born Allen Ginsberg's religious sensibilities had also drifted eastward following his wanderings with the Beats. The Good Friday experiment conducted at Harvard under Timothy Leary's supervision did test psychedelics in a Christian context; however, the professor himself had a deeply relativistic view towards religion, suggesting on more than one occasion that everyone should start their own. The manual that he and Richard Alpert devised for guiding mystical trips was based not on the Bible, but the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*. There were several Christian theologians who seriously considered psychedelics in the 1960s, including Walter Houston Clark.[136] However, the portrait of LSD in most of the mass media was more often flavored with Buddhist meditation, Hindu chanting or Eastern-inspired art than with imagery of the traditional Christian sort. In short, the perspective of *Time* and *Life* on LSD was not far different from the perspective of the publisher, Henry Luce.

Luce communicated his opinion about LSD to employees at his publications, and there is circumstantial evidence that this may have influenced staffers to do a more thorough job as a result. In many ways, coverage in *Time* and *Life* was journalistically superior to what appeared in other magazines. The Luce publications conveyed a challenging perspective on an intellectual issue that was the subject of lively debate. The

[136] For example, see Walter Houston Clark, "The Mystical Consciousness and World Understanding," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 4, no. 2 (Spring, 1965): 152-61.

coverage included sympathetic attempts to understand LSD users, and the magazines resisted the anti-drug hysteria present in other periodicals, especially after 1966. Direct involvement by Luce may not have been necessary to achieve this result. Simply the knowledge of employees that the boss was interested in LSD could have motivated writers and editors to do a better job. By 1967 and 1968, an institutional history of more even-handed coverage may have been sufficient to discourage *Time* and *Life* from fully participating in the frenzied assault on LSD.

Luce felt that it was his right to dictate the editorial stance of his magazines. Often he exercised this prerogative to the chagrin of reporters who considered themselves better informed.[137] Since the 1950s, left-leaning commentators have criticized Luce for exercising personal influence over the opinions expressed in his magazines.[138] Luce did little to discourage them. Even as he entered retirement in 1964, Luce bragged that he expected his magazines would continue to reflect his political preferences over those of his editors.[139] On issues important to the publisher, the antagonistic critics found little divergence between Luce's viewpoint and that of his publications. According to the magazine *Commentary*:

> Up to the day of his death, then, Henry Luce exercised a pervasive influence over *Time*. This is not to say that he dictated every item that appeared in the magazine, from a review of a biography of Marcel Proust to the latest Jerry Lewis movie (though one may well wonder how many peripheral items were written to please the Boss). But every substantive stand that *Time* ever took was, above all, the stand of Henry Luce. In a

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[137] Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 3.
[138] Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media*, 173.
[139] Joseph Epstein, "Henry Luce and His Time," *Commentary*, January 1967, 40.

way that applies to few other recent publishers, Luce turned his magazines into personal diaries.[140]

Luce belonged to a different era than Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, whose brazenness in inserting personal politics in editorial coverage was the stuff of legend. Still, scholars have traced the correspondence between the stances of Luce's publications on domestic politics, China, the Cold War, and Vietnam and the publisher's own right-of-center politics.[141] Luce himself did not hide his belief that it was a publisher's prerogative to affect his publications' editorial stance. "I am a Protestant, a Republican and a free enterpriser," he was quoted as saying in *Newsweek* in 1967. "I am biased in favor of God, Eisenhower and the stockholders of Time Inc.—and if anybody who objects doesn't know this by now, why the hell are they still spending 35 cents for the magazine."[142] *Time* was envisioned by Luce and partner Briton Hadden as a magazine willing to express an opinion. According to its 1923 prospectus, *Time* would differ from the weekly *Literary Digest* in that "The *Digest*, in giving both sides of a question, gives little or no hint as to which side it considers to be right. *Time* gives both sides, but clearly indicates which side it believes to have the stronger position."[143]

Especially at *Time*, the editorial structure made special allowance for top-down influences on editorial content. News departments at *Time* were fed by long dispatches from reporters, wire service reports, and newspapers and magazines. Editors condensed

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[140] Ibid.

[141] See Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 3; and Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media*, 172-79 and 186-91.

[142] "Henry R. Luce: His Time and Life," *Newsweek*, March 13, 1967, 68.

[143] Robert T. Elson, *Time, Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1923-1941*, ed. Duncan Norton-Taylor (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 8.

reams of information while translating reporters' prose into un-bylined stories in *Time's* unique, sporty style. Reporters covering both China and the war in Vietnam were accustomed to this process transforming both the substance and tone of their reporting.[144] Contemporary critics saw in this process the means for Luce to insert *Time*'s relentlessly Republican bias. "Luce can order hundreds of persons to write what he wants and he can use only that part of their writing which he likes," an English professor wrote in the *Nation*.[145]

The possibility that Luce also nudged his magazines toward more enthusiastic coverage of LSD was rich in irony, considering the publisher's buttoned-down persona and advocacy of Midwestern and traditional values. The magazines were remembered for their hostility towards communism and moralistic views on foreign policy, not their embrace of the free-spirited 1960s. Baughman noted, "Because Luce's publications sought to create and control a national consensus, he chose his causes more carefully than some detractors have admitted."[146] Enthusiastic coverage of LSD seemed out of character.

But while surprising when viewed through the lens of subsequent events, the early coverage of LSD in *Time* and *Life* reflected the excitement about science and faith in technological progress typical of both the publications and the period. In 1965, *Time* had

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[144] See Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* Time*, and the American Crusade in Asia*, 242-44; and Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire*, 3.

[145] H.J. Sachs, "Henry Luce and I," *Nation*, July 4, 1953, 13.

[146] Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media*, 4-5, 7.

a circulation of more than 3 million, well more than any American newspaper.[147] *Time* sold nearly as many copies each week as *Newsweek* and U.S *News & World Report* combined.[148] The circulation of *Life* was 7.2 million in 1965, making it the sixth-largest magazine in the country.[149] Marketers routinely seek positive editorial coverage to move product, and the magazine industry has a long history of popularizing drugs, from 19th-century patent medicines to contemporary pharmaceuticals. Repeatedly explaining how LSD was used, illustrating its use in socially constructive ways, and showing its use by high-status people, in high-society settings, could only have contributed to its popular acceptance.

Coverage of LSD may have also helped shape users' experience of the drug. In regard to marijuana, Rogers wrote that potential users must "learn" a favorable attitude toward the drug-induced sensations in order to enjoy them.[150] The often-favorable attitude toward LSD in Luce's magazines helped create expectations for transcendental, spiritually weighty drug fantasies that have become part of 1960s lore. In the 1960s, many drug advocates maintained that one could not understand the LSD experience without trying it oneself. *Time* and *Life* covered the topic as though they understood.

Luce was unembarrassed by his own use of LSD. He no doubt saw himself as similar to the respectable, traditionally minded spiritual seekers depicted using the drug

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[147] Luman H. Long, ed., *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1966* (New York: New York World Telegram and The Sun, 1966), 734-35.

[148] Ibid., 734.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Everett M. Rogers with Floyd F. Shoemaker, *Communication of Innovations*: A Cross-Cultural Approach (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 127.

in his magazines. Through the mid-1960s, *Time* and *Life* spoke to their readers as potential LSD users, with non-judgmental and often enticing descriptions of the drug's effect. The promotional coverage started more than a decade before the drug was widely available and continued even after it was widely abused, contributing to an atmosphere in which millions, like Henry and Clare, turned on to LSD.

Chapter 7: Fascination and Horror at the Summer of Love: Coverage 1965-1968

"Poor old LSD, it is in a mess."
—letter from Gerald Heard to Clare Boothe Luce, 1966

Pharmacy Gone Bad

As the nation settled into the 1960s, media attention to LSD escalated, driven by a range of factors: increasing evidence of recreational LSD use and side effects; the identification of LSD with an increasingly visible hippie subculture; the actions of Timothy Leary; and the increasing pace of psychedelia in popular culture. To magazines at one end of the political spectrum, LSD represented the decline of western civilization; at the other end, broken hopes for a better future through science.[1] The dismissal of Leary and Alpert was just the beginning of waves of LSD publicity that started in the weekly news and picture magazines, moved to intellectual journals, then splashed into women's magazines, educational magazines, and periodicals of all types.

When the Leary story broke, the media had been caught up in concern about another drug: thalidomide, prescribed widely in Europe to pregnant women as both a cure for morning sickness and a sleep aid. An application from Cincinnati-based drug manufacturer William S. Merrell Co. to market the drug in the United States was pending before the FDA when reports of limbless, seal-like babies born to women who took the drug started coming from Europe. *The New York Times* published more than 100 articles about thalidomide in the last eight months of 1962, including reports on the successive

[1] See Frank S. Meyer, "The LSD Syndrome," *National Review*, March 21, 1967, 301; and Lisa Bieberman, "The Psychedelic Experience," *The New Republic*, August 5, 1967, 17.

waves of birth defects from around the world and speculation about the scope of potential disaster here. More than 10,000 "thalidomide babies" were born world-wide, but only six in the United States. Nevertheless, American media tuned in. *Readers' Guide Retrospective* included 50 articles about the drug published in popular magazines in 1962 and 1963. Magazine stories covered the birth of crippled children, the anguish of their parents, and the call for tighter regulation. The young, female Food and Drug Administration doctor who held up the thalidomide application, Dr. Frances Kelsey, enjoyed brief celebrity, with profiles in *The New York Times*, *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Parents*. She was awarded the highest presidential honor given civil servants, the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service.[2]

It was primarily out of concern over this averted disaster that Congress approved greater controls on the use of experimental drugs. In October 1962, Congress passed legislation requiring that drugs be proven both safe and effective for an indicated condition. Access to investigational drugs that did not meet those criteria was to be tightly controlled by the FDA. The Kefauver-Harris Drug Amendments, which went into effect in 1963, were not aimed at LSD, but LSD researchers were caught squarely in its net. Direct access to LSD for non-medical research, like that carried out by the Agora

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[2] See "Thalidomide Disaster," *Time*, August 10, 1960, 80; "Vigilant Doctor Gets a Medal," *U.S. News and World Report*, August 20, 1962, 13; Morton Mintz, "'Heroine' of FDA Keeps Bad Drug Off the Market," *New York Times*, July 15, 1962; Morton Mintz, "The Doctor Said No," *Reader's Digest*, October 1962, 86-89; J.L. Block, "Doctor Kelsey's Stubborn Triumph," *Good Housekeeping*, November 1962, 12; and "Parents Magazine honors Dr. Frances Oldham Kelsey for Outstanding Service to Family Health," *Parents*, October 1962, 64.

Scientific Trust, which researched LSD's religious potential, and the International Foundation for Advanced Study, where it was administered for personal growth, was curtailed under the new law. Because LSD was categorized as investigational, it could no longer be used as part of a general psychiatric practice. Sandoz immediately restricted access to the drug to psychiatrists who received funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, the Veteran's Administration, or a state mental health commission. [3]

The requirement that a drug be proven effective for a known ailment was also a problem in regard to LSD, which was considered safest when used by the mentally healthy. It was not used to relieve specific symptoms of illness, but rather in pursuit of more vaguely articulated goals. As Lee and Shlain observed, there was a basic conflict between the psychedelic movement and the assumptions of Western medicine. "Most doctors automatically dismissed the notion that drugs might benefit someone who was not obviously ailing," they wrote.[4] While the Kefauver-Harris Drug Amendments would seemed to pull LSD back under the medical establishment's control, the medical establishment itself had been turning against the drug.

With no known physiological side effects or toxicity, LSD had for years been considered remarkably safe. A study that became widely cited to demonstrate the safety of LSD was published by Sidney Cohen in 1960, reporting the results of a survey of the negative reactions observed by 44 therapists and researchers who used the drug. Cohen

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[3] See Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985) 90; and Steven J. Novak, "LSD before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," *Isis* 88, no. 1 (March 1997): 107-8.

[4] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 90.

observed that the responses were not necessarily representative, but that they covered more than 25,000 LSD administrations to almost five thousand individuals. Participating psychiatrists reported three suicides by troubled patients occurring days or months after LSD treatment and eight cases in which the treatment caused a psychotic reaction lasting longer than two days. The rate of negative reaction indicated to Cohen "that, with proper precautions, [hallucinogenic drugs] are safe when given to a selected healthy group."[5]

The evidence looked worse when it began turning up in Cohen's examining rooms at the University of California, Los Angeles Hospital. Biographer Steven Novak wrote that Cohen's concerns were crystallized in the case of a woman with a long history of mental health problems who was treated with LSD eight times and arrived at UCLA Hospital in 1961 following a suicide attempt. Cohen felt the patient should not have been treated with LSD. By 1960, retreat centers and churches had been organized around LSD. There was also a cottage industry of LSD therapy, by therapists of diverse training who administered the drug without medical supervision. In 1961, the FDA began its first investigation into the misuse of LSD, focusing on Southern California physicians and psychologists who were not authorized to use the drug. The investigation culminated in raids on several Los Angeles therapists in 1962.[6] The same year, California State Medical

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[5] Sidney Cohen, "Lysergic Acid Diethylamide: Side Effects and Complications," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 130, no. 1(January 1960): 30, 33-36, 38.

[6] Sociologists associated with Stanford's Institute for the Study of Human Problems cited Leary's Mexican LSD community, a metropolitan church, a center for medically supervised LSD administration and a mountain retreat centered around creative interests as examples of institutionalized use of LSD. See Richard Blum & Associates,

Board agents seized an assortment of drugs from a church in greater Los Angeles after a parishioner sued the pastor for inducing him to try LSD. The parishioner claimed he attempted suicide while on the drug.[7]

In 1962, Cohen and colleague Keith Ditman published a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reporting "an increasing number of untoward events in connection with LSD-25 administration." The doctors reported having encountered five cases in which LSD caused patients to experience what they described as a prolonged psychotic break. In each case, the patients had underlying psychiatric problems that were exacerbated by LSD and "unskillful therapeutic management." In some cases, the drug was administered by "nonmedical practitioners" without medical supervision. One of these patients was given LSD more than 300 times. [8]

Cohen and Ditman also mentioned patients' use of the drug to justify acting-out behavior, citing a case in which an LSD patient unsuccessfully fought a charge of grand larceny by arguing that he had no control over his actions. Marijuana users participated in "LSD parties" and took the drug recreationally. The researchers also reported a child who inadvertently swallowed an LSD-impregnated sugar cube was still in a "partial disassociated state" a month later. It was a story with special resonance; an identical incident four years later would result in a flurry of national magazine coverage. "The use

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Utopiates: The Uses and Users of LSD-25 (New York: Atherton Press, 1964) 124-25; and Novak, "LSD before Leary," 108.

[7] "Church Raid Turns up Sex Stimulants," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 1962.

[8] Sidney Cohen and Keith Ditman, "Complications Associated with Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD-25)," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 181, no. 2 (July 14, 1962): 161.

of LSD-25 can be attended with serious complications," Cohen and Ditman concluded. "This is especially true now that a black market in the drug exists."[9] Their warning call was picked up by the *New York Times*, which reported on the journal article but was unable to unearth further evidence of a black market.[10]

In May 1963, Cohen and Ditman published a more detailed account of nine cases in which LSD use appeared to bring on prolonged adverse reactions in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. The article was an elaborated version of the study published the year before. The cases included a woman, who, for two years after her first LSD experiences, was preoccupied with "pseudo-philosophic abstractions about 'truth, beauty, love and life.'" After seeking a second psychiatric LSD experience, she developed the belief that she was in the Garden of Eden and appeared nude in public. After ten days, her husband put her into a mental hospital, where she experienced partial improvement after electroshock therapy and medication.[11] Other cases included a 32-year-old secretary who experienced sporadic panic attacks after three LSD sessions with a psychotherapist who frequently administered the drug; a psychoanalyst who went into a depression after taking LSD; and a woman with a long history of family and mental health problems who abandoned her family and children to live a "beat" lifestyle after taking the drug.[12]

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[9] Ibid., 162.

[10] Donald Janson, "Doctors Report a Black Market in Drug that Causes Delusions," *New York Times*, July 14, 1962.

[11] Sidney Cohen and Keith Ditman, "Prolonged Adverse Reactions to Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 8 (May 1963): 476.

[12] Ibid., 477-79.

The authors also noted "transcendental" aspects of the LSD experience, which they said incorporated paranoia and, more frequently, megalomania and the users' desire to deliver others to the same LSD-inspired insight. The tendency was demonstrated by the final case study, of a psychologist who, after three LSD administrations, acted out a number of grandiose plans. "One was to take over Sandoz Laboratories in order to secure a world supply of the drug. He threatened his wife with a gun, then left her, wrote some songs and plays of minor merit, and went off to live in the desert. He recovered gradually after a number of months without specific treatment," the psychiatrists reported. The psychiatrists also noted that while the actual incidence of negative reaction was unknown, it was infrequent; that patients with prior emotional problems were most at risk, and also the most likely to seek LSD treatment; and that in a majority of cases, where complications developed, the drug had been obtained on the black market.[13]

In a strongly worded editorial in the same issue of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, concern was largely focused on the excess of a certain type of LSD therapist, of which Timothy Leary was the most prominent representative. The editorial by Roy R. Grinker, Sr., summarized the history of LSD starting with model psychosis, then continued:

> LSD-25 was then used as an adjunct to psychotherapy, presumably loosening defenses and facilitating "insight." The affective release interested many psychiatrists who administered the drug to themselves, and some, who became enamored with the mystical hallucinatory state, eventually their "mystique" became disqualified as competent investigators. …

[13] Ibid., 479.

> Here again is the story of ill-results from the ill-advised use of a potentially valuable drug, due to unjustified claims, indiscriminate and premature publicity, and lack of professional controls. Indeed, this is a warning to the psychiatric profession that greater morbidity, and even mortality, is in store for its patients unless controls are developed against the unwise use of LSD-25.[14]

The profligate use of LSD by dubious members of the therapy fraternity was a threat to professional norms. Evidence that LSD practitioners were getting out of control extended beyond Leary. In Los Angeles, Dr. Mortimer Hartman, one half of the LSD therapy practice that treated Cary Grant, had his medical license suspended after being picked up by police while on a heavy dose of Ritalin. The *Saturday Evening Post* found his partner, Dr. Arthur Chandler, lounging by a swimming pool surrounded by young men and women with the appearance of "starlets" that he described as patients. "The trouble is, LSD attracts unstable therapists as much as it does the neurotic patient. It gives them an intoxicating sense of power to bestow such a fabulous experience on others," Sidney Cohen told the reporter.[15] In his 1964 book on LSD, Cohen elaborated the disorder of "therapist breakdown," affecting "a substantial minority of those dispensing the drugs." He wrote that, as a result of a pre-existing borderline personality, the sense of power born from dispensing the drug, or the therapist's own consumption, afflicted

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[14] Roy R. Grinker Sr., "Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 8 (May 1963): 425.

[15] John Kobler, "The Dangerous Magic of LSD," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 11, 1963, 39.

therapists have become megalomaniacal, depressed, or "found themselves in legal difficulties because of their anti-social practices."[16]

In leading journals of the medical and psychiatric professions, the use of a powerful drug outside of a medical framework was perceived not only as reckless, but also as an affront to deeply held notions about the role of medicine in treating disease. In the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Jonathon O. Cole and Martin A. Katz used an article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* that proposed, "LSD provides an encounter which brings a sudden liberation from ignorance and illusion, enlarges the spiritual horizon and gives meaning to life," as an excuse to draw knives. The critics commented, "Such explanations may have a mystical or philosophical sound which appeals to the enthusiast, but they are likely to produce doubt or even violent disbelief and concern in physicians used to a more pragmatic approach and in scientists used to a more communicative language."[17] They went on:

> Rather than being the subject of careful scientific inquiry, these agents have become invested with the aura of magic, offering creativity to the uninspired, 'kicks' to the jaded, emotional warmth to the cold and inhibited, and total personality reconstruction to the alcoholic or psychotherapy-resistant chronic neurotic. On the West Coast, the effects are judged by some to be related to the insights of Zen Buddhism; on the East Coast, they are judged by others to lead the way to a new and free social order. Like the broom in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, the drugs seem to have walked out of the laboratory into the outside world on their own feet and have turned on the unsuspecting apprentice.[18]

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[16] Sidney Cohen, *The Beyond Within: The LSD Story* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 17-19.

[17] Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 758.

[18] Ibid.

Cole and Katz also pointed out that LSD therapy remained "unproven."[19] It was unclear how some of the wilder claims in favor of LSD could ever be answered through mundane cause-and-effect. Despite two decades of scientific attention, thousands of studies, and tens of thousands of administrations to volunteer subjects, there was still no consensus on the use of LSD as a medical treatment for anything. The fact that subjects built up a short-term tolerance for psychedelic drugs suggested that the drugs did not produce genuine madness. While researchers appeared to have demonstrated that an administration of LSD could effect short-term changes in personality test scores, convincing evidence of long-term behavioral change as a result of LSD therapy remained—and remains—elusive.[20] Cole and Katz observed that whatever effect LSD therapy does have might be attributable to power of suggestion, with patients attempting to live up to the expectations conveyed by the therapist during pre-trip interviews. Therapists frequently philosophized with subjects prior to or during the session, or incorporated music or other artistic expression believed to aid the drug effect. "The physician may be so involved in the treatment he can not evaluate its effects objectively," Cole and Katz continued. "Specific components of the therapeutic process described may often have a bizarre—almost schizophrenic—component, which tends to make serious

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[19] Ibid.

[20] See Mariavittoria Mangini, "Treatment of Alcoholism Using Psychedelic Drugs: A Review of the Program of Research," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 30, no. 4 (October-December 1998): 412; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 90.

investigators discount this whole area as a delusional belief shared by a group of unstable clinicians and lay enthusiasts."[21]

Psychedelic use of LSD created problems for a research establishment that had grown out of the behaviorist fixation on observable causes and effects. Drugs were prescribed for the relief of specific symptoms.[22] The deliberate use of a drug to improve the healthy (especially in a non-observable, "spiritual" way) reflected a change in paradigm. Scholars have suggested that America's "temperance culture," a set of beliefs inherited from Protestantism holding that the surrender of personal self-control was evil in and of itself, has inhibited research into drug-induced states.[23] Leary wrote that the experimenters who researched therapeutic applications for LSD were aware of these biases and urged restraint. "Their message was: 'Society has assigned the administration of drugs to the medical profession for healing disease. Any non-doctor who gives or takes drugs is a dope fiend. Play ball with the system. Capture the medical profession the way Freud did.'"[24] The comparison with Freud was apt. Like Freud, the psychedelic researchers stretched the vocabulary of their disciplines, drawing metaphors from the humanities and attempting to change the terms in which problems were discussed.

LSD therapy had become an embarrassment to the medical profession. Psychologists' personal use of the drug was initially brave, not shocking. The drug had

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[21] Cole and Katz, *The Psychotomimetic Drugs*, 760.

[22] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 90.

[23] Michael R. Nusbaumer and Denise M. Reiling, "Temperance Culture and the Repression of Scientific Inquiry into Illegal Drug-Altered States of Conscience," *Contemporary Justice Review* 10, no. 3 (September 2007): 249.

[24] Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks: A Personal and Cultural History of an Era* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1990), 44.

been recommended for consumption by psychologists in order to enhance their understanding of their patients. Many experts on LSD therapy, including Cohen and Osmond, advocated that it only be led by therapists who had experienced the drug first-hand. By the early 1960s, some therapists conducting LSD therapy would routinely take the drug with their clients in order to enhance rapport.[25] With the strange powers ascribed to LSD, subjective knowledge was seen as a barrier to objectivity, and a mark against the investigator's professionalism. "At one time, it was impossible to find an investigator willing to work with LSD who was not himself an 'addict,'" a 1964 editorial by Grinker charged.[26]

If editorials in the profession's leading journals are an indication, by 1964 the medical profession had turned against LSD therapy, especially in the way it was being conducted by their lay colleagues.[27] Concerns over damaged patients and the degradation of professional standards competed for their shares of outrage. LSD was giving the field a black eye. Perhaps this was the reason that three years later, a poorly designed study purporting to show genetic damage from LSD would inspire so many replications and related research.

Despite outrage in the medical lounge, LSD was still only a minor part of the public hand-wringing about drug abuse in 1965. Marijuana was more prevalent and its

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[25] Novak, "LSD Before Leary," 106.

[26] Roy R. Grinker, Sr., "Bootlegged Ecstasy," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 768.

[27] See Dana L. Farnsworth, "Hallucinogenic Agents," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 185 (September 14, 1963): 880; Grinker, "Bootlegged Ecstasy," 768; and Grinker, "Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," 425.

use also seemed to be increasing. Concern also focused on two other products of pharmacy, amphetamines and barbiturates, whose use also appeared to be increasing. Even in December 1965, the recreational use of LSD did not seem prevalent enough to warrant more than a single-sentence mention in a five-page *Saturday Evening Post* report on "The Thrill Pill Menace," subtitled "Illicit Drugs are Hooking the Nation's Youth and Creating a Vast New Industry in the Underworld." LSD was said to be likely to be included on a new government list of controlled drugs, which it was. In 1965, Congress passed Drug Abuse Control Amendments intended to bring the use of pills under greater control by the medical establishment. The only drugs specifically mentioned in the text of the 1965 amendments were amphetamines and barbiturates, but the bill was written to allow the secretary of the Food and Drug Administration to extend the law's reach to other stimulants, tranquilizers, and drugs with "hallucinogenic effect." The law required drug manufacturers and pharmacies to be licensed and keep records of prescriptions and inventories of supply. The law specifically permitted possession of these substances for personal use, but reaffirmed that doctors, through the writing of prescriptions, would remain in control over who gains access.[28]

The FDA interpreted restrictions of the Drug Control Amendments to extend over LSD. In April 1966, Sandoz, still the only legal manufacturer of LSD, announced that it was ceasing distribution of the drug, all but ending availability through legal channels. Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports* noted that attempts to restrict

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[28] See *Drug Abuse Control Amendments of 1965*, Public Law 89-74, 89th Cong., 2d sess. (July 15, 1965); Bill Davidson, "The Thrill-Pill Menace," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 4, 1965, 27; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 92.

the supply of LSD beginning in 1963 actually resulted in an increase in availability, as acid was manufactured or imported from abroad to meet demand. Because of the high potency of LSD, an underground laboratory might easily produce a million-dose batch, only about nine ounces of the pure chemical. High-quality, domestically produced acid from the most famous underground chemist of the era (and Grateful Dead soundman) Augustus Owsley Stanley III hit the streets in February 1965. In 1967 alone, the government closed underground laboratories it claimed had capacity to produce 25,000,000 does of LSD and LSD-like drugs per year.[29] By this time, members of a curious public would be able to get LSD without even having to go to a quack therapist.

Panic on the Pages?

In a four-page analysis in a textbook on the sociological theory of moral panic, Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda argued that the escalating frequency of articles about LSD indexed in *Readers' Guide* helped whip up a societal hysteria that resulted in the prohibition of LSD. The analysis did not include a close reading of the magazine articles, and cited only two in detail.[30] The theory of moral panic was disputed by sociologists Benjamin Cornwall and Annulla Linders, who took on the representative example of LSD as an example of the theory's failure. They argued that the legal

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[29] See Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—Including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 336-37; Lee and Shlain, Acid Dreams, 92-93, 146-47.

[30] Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 53-56.

prohibition of LSD was progressively instituted by various branches of government starting in 1963. Working from theory, rather than examination of the mass media coverage, they concluded that negative media coverage of LSD may have been inevitable, but that the effect may have been to galvanize LSD supporters:

> Few, if any in the mainstream media would ever dare to take the word of a long-haired teenager praising LSD over a sober-looking expert describing the dangers of the drug. In the sense that the mass media can be regarded as the most important disseminators of information about LSD, in other words, their contributions to the emerging interpretation of LSD as a dangerous recreational drug were clearly highly significant. … Even when demonized, ridiculed, scorned, or pitied in the media, it would be a mistake to conclude that those who represented the target of the deviantization process played no active role in the outcome. Whether depicted as lunatics, renegade scientists, rebellious teenagers, or social outcasts, the defenders or users of LSD in various ways participated in and reinforced those constructions and interpretations. In this sense, negative coverage, in large part because it *is* negative, has significant mobilizing potential among groups who experience themselves disadvantaged by that coverage.[31]

However, examination of the articles presents a much more complex reality. LSD users were in fact frequently quoted. Of the articles indexed under LSD in *Readers' Guide* that were published during the explosion of media interest between 1965 and 1968, almost half contained a personal, subjective description of an LSD experience, told from the perspective of the LSD user. More than 30 percent of the stories included descriptions of LSD experiences considered entirely successful by the user, and which were described in entirely positive terms. The users were not all long-haired deviants and social outcasts. More than one-quarter of the articles referred to LSD use by artists, public intellectuals,

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[31] Benjamin Cornwell and Annulla Linders, "The Myth of 'Moral Panic': An Alternative Account of LSD Prohibition," *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal.* 23, no. 4 (July 1, 2002): 324.

or celebrities, not including Timothy Leary or Richard Alpert. One-quarter talked about use of LSD by doctors, college professors or researchers, again excluding Leary and Alpert. Descriptions of the drug fantasies, as well as artwork intended to reproduce its effect, was a major component of magazine coverage (see Table 9).

Table 9. Users Depicted in Magazine Coverage of LSD

Articles including …	1963 (12 articles)		1964 (3 articles)		1965 (6 articles)		1966 (43 articles)		1967 (32 articles)		1968 (20 articles)		Total (116 articles)	
	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total
… description(s) of the drug experience from a user's perspective	10	83	1	33	4	67	18	42	14	44	4	20	51	44
… description(s) of a particular LSD experience that was entirely successful for the user, described in entirely positive terms	8	67	1	33	3	50	15	35	8	25	2	10	37	32
… description(s) of a particular LSD experience that was a bad experience for the user	5	42	1	33	1	17	16	37	8	25	3	15	34	29
… reference to the use of LSD by a medical doctor, researcher or college professor, excluding Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert	4	33	1	33	3	50	10	23	5	16	3	15	26	22
… reference to the use of LSD by an artist, public intellectual or celebrity*, excluding Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert	7	58	1	33	4	67	8	19	5	16	4	20	29	25

*a person with whom the reader is assumed to be already familiar

Cornwell and Linders pointed out that not all interest groups have equal access to the media to promote their points of view.[32] However, use and access to LSD were contested issues in the 1960s, and coverage of LSD was by no means universally one-

[32] Cornwell and Linders, "The Myth of 'Moral Panic,'" 324.

sided (see Table 8). Although coders found that more than half of the articles reached the conclusion that LSD should not be taken for recreation or self-improvement, almost 60 percent included at least four sentences presenting information favorable toward LSD use. And one-quarter of the stories presented four sentences or less of information deemed unfavorable to LSD use.

Table 10. Favorable and Unfavorable Sides of LSD use Presented in Coverage, 1954-1968

	1963 (12 articles)		1964 (3 articles)		1965 (6 articles)		1966 (43 articles)		1967 (32 articles)		1968 (20 articles)		Total (116 articles)	
	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total
Articles presenting a favorable side of non-medical LSD use	11	92	2	67	5	83	27	63	15	47	6	30	66	57
Articles presenting an unfavorable side of non-medical LSD use	10	83	1	33	4	67	31	72	27	84	14	70	87	75
Articles judged two-sided	10	83	2	67	3	50	24	56	16	50	7	35	62	53
Articles judged to conclude that LSD should not be taken for non-medical purposes	3	25	0	0	1	17	24	56	22	69	13	65	63	54

LSD and the psychedelic experience were covered extensively by magazines. By 1965, Timothy Leary was a sideshow in the effort of many magazines to explain the psychedelic experience, often with first-person narratives and artwork, as well as expository writing. "To tell about that experience is a formidable, if not impossible, task," *The New York Times Magazine* warned, before quoting from one of Huxley's attempts.[33] The search in *Readers' Guide* located six articles about LSD that were published in 1965 and varied greatly in their approach to the subject (see Appendix A).

[33] Leonard Wallace Robinson, "Hearing Color, Smelling Music, Touching a Scent," *New York Times Magazine*, August 22, 1965, 14.

Two of the articles, in *The New York Times Magazine* and *Harper's*, included detailed histories of LSD research, including explanations of transcendental drug use. The six-page account of LSD in *The New York Times Magazine* opened with a quotation from a user who found God, and continued on to give a balanced account of research from Hofmann through Leary, illustrated by line drawings composed under the influence of LSD. The six-page *Harper's* piece, by Sidney Cohen, described research using LSD's ability to provide transcendental experiences to help terminal patients overcome the pain of dying. In *The Nation*, a filmmaker discussed the possibility that art may be capable of conveying the psychedelic trip, after watching Leary's attempt to do so with a multi-media presentation at New York's Village Vanguard. The author found the show disappointing, but not disillusioning. "Something new is happening, and it may be wise to suspend judgment," he concluded. The other articles that discussed LSD included an article in *Newsweek* about an architect who used the drug to design a better mental institution; an article in *Missiles and Rockets* about a study in which LSD was used to give monkeys the disorientating sensations of space travel; and, in *Mademoiselle*, a description of young people's increasing use of drugs, including the revelation that "there is a religion of LSD."[34]

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[34] See Ibid.; Sidney Cohen, "LSD and the Anguish of Dying," *Harper's*, September 1965, 69-72, 77-79; Howard Junker, "LSD: 'The Contact High,'" *The Nation*, July 5, 1965, 25-26; Michael Herr, "The Drug Puzzle," *Mademoiselle*, August 1965, 246-47; "The LSD Blueprint," *Newsweek*, May 24, 1965, 69; "Drugs Studied to Aid Astronauts," *Missiles and Rockets*, March 15, 1965, 33; and Bill Davidson, "The Thrill-Pill Menace," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 4, 1965, 27; and Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 92.

There was a similar diversity as coverage swelled, with 94 articles indexed under the drug in the *Reader's Guide* between 1966 and 1968. While Leary was frequently mentioned (see Table 4), there was also psychedelic rock, psychedelic art, and psychedelic culture, new medical side effects, and escalating parental concern. The "acid-head" phenomenon was documented in coast-to-coast surveys of colleges in the *Saturday Evening Post*[35] and *Look.*[36] *Mademoiselle,* which took pride in being "one of the first magazines to deal with the prominence of drugs among U.S. youth," followed up with a column attacking the notion of drug-induced mysticism, balanced by a second columnist who attested to the effectiveness of drug-induced mysticism in his psychiatric practice.[37] *Mademoiselle* also ran a first-person story by a writer who took LSD with a far-out Timothy Leary, but experienced no effects.[38] *Esquir*e told the story of a young man who took acid, almost as a prank, before a mental hospital tour. *Atlantic Monthly* discussed LSD in terms of the history of mysticism,[39] *Harper's* presented it as the epitome of all things Californian,[40] and *The New Yorker* abstrusely called for more regulation in a "Talk

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[35] Richard Goldstein, "Drugs on the Campus," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 4, 1966, 34-44.

[36] Jack Shepherd, "Drugs on Campus," *Look*, August 8, 1967, 14-16.

[37] Editor's Note to Max Lerner and Harold A. Abramson, M.D., "LSD Spelled Out," *Mademoiselle*, January 1967, 52.

[38] Rita Hoffmann, "Psychedelic Game," *Mademoiselle*, March 1966, 179, 214-22.

[39] John N. Bleibtreu, "LSD and the Third Eye," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1966.

[40] Richard Todd, "Turned-On and Super-Sincere in California," *Harper's*, January 1967, 42-47.

of the Town" item.[41] *Business Week* ran two lengthy stories on LSD without talking to users or discussing effects.[42]

Other memorable stories included *Time's* "Mysticism in the Lab," which discussed transcendental drug use in Christian terms; a long first-person account of an LSD trip in *Popular Science* that left the journalist existentially shaken, and another, in *Look*, that left the journalist worried for young users; an extended attempt to wrestle with Leary's philosophy in *Look*; an article by Leary in *Esquire*; and the lengthy *Playboy* interview with Leary, which was not indexed by *Readers' Guide*.[43] Many were lavishly illustrated with psychedelic art, a style rooted in the desire to express the magic of a hallucinogenic fantasy. "From LSD and fascination with mind-expanding visions comes the drugless trip," read the lead-in to *Life*'s "Psychedelic Art" cover story.[44] A magazine targeted at camera hobbyists explained:

> Psychedelic experiences have been getting a lot of publicity of late. Almost every national publication has devoted at least part of an issue to discussion of the "hippie" movement and its experimentation with various mind-expanding or hallucinogenic drugs. Many thousands of words have been expended in an effort to describe the effects of LSD on the human mind, yet very few of these descriptions have done more than scratch the surface. The written word is simply too limited to explore fully the

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[41] "Notes and Comment," *New Yorker*, October 1, 1966, 41-43.

[42] "More Light, Less Heat Over LSD," *Business Week*, June 25, 1966, 78-84; "Is the Trip Over for LSD?" *Business Week*, April 22, 1966, 141-42.

[43] See "Mysticism in the Lab," *Time*, September 23, 1966, 62; Robert Gannon, "My LSD Trip: A Non-Cop, Non-Hippie Report," *Popular Science*, December 19, 1967, 60-65, 170; Jack Shepherd, "Drugs—A Personal LSD Experience," *Look*, August 8, 1967, 23; J.M. Flagler, "The Visions of 'Saint Tim,'" *Look*, August 8, 1967; and "Playboy Interview: Timothy Leary," *Playboy*, September 1966, 93-112.

[44] See "Psychedelic Art," *Life*, September 9, 1966, 19; and "Psychedelic Art," *Horizon*, April 1, 1968, 28-31.

agonies and ecstasies of an acid joy-ride that are principally visual in effect.[45]

Goode and Ben-Yehuda described magazines sensationalizing LSD by excessively reporting on the drug's reputed side effects, especially following the publication of a flawed 1967 study presenting erroneous evidence that LSD caused chromosomal damage.[46] As the Sixties moved deeper into the Age of Aquarius, there were indeed many more magazine stories about LSD side effects and disastrous trips. While few early stories mentioned any long-lasting side effects from LSD use, the subject became a recurring theme in later coverage. News magazines published stories about research suggesting increasingly dire consequences from LSD use, and women's and educational magazines piled on with long articles exposing dire consequences to LSD use. Panic-mongering is a matter of perspective, but one way to judge the reporting would be the extent to which it deviated from—and held accountable—the current scientific consensus.

LSD and Coverage of Risk

Cohen's 1960 study, which looked across approximately 25,000 LSD administrations to find a rate of negative outcome in less than 1 percent of cases, seemed to suggest that LSD was safe. The subsequent studies emphasized case studies of a handful of negative outcomes, demonstrating how severe they could be. Both pieces of information are necessary for a meaningful assessment of risk. One way of assessing risk

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[45] "The Camera Takes a Trip," *U.S. Camera*, December 1967, 49.
[46] Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 54-55.

is the possibility of loss multiplied by the amount of loss, should it occur. Looking at only one side of the equation made LSD look safe; looking at only the other made LSD look very dangerous. Published only a week after Richard Alpert's dismissal from Harvard, Cohen and Ditman's 1963 study of side effects and the accompanying editorial got immediate notice and was the subject of two stories in the *New York Times* alone.[47] The possibility that LSD caused more than temporary side effects was not mentioned in any of the nine magazine articles published prior to 1962, while it was a regular aspect of coverage in subsequent years (see Table 11). Prior to 1967, the side effect most frequently mentioned was a psychotic reaction—an episode of craziness—which dovetailed well with the dusty interpretation of the LSD experience as temporary psychosis. Often, suicide was mentioned as well.

Table 11. Coverage of medical side effects of LSD, 1954-1968

	1963 (12 articles)		1964 (3 articles)		1965 (6 articles)		1966 (43 articles)		1967 (32 articles)		1968 (20 articles)		Total (116 articles)	
	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total
Articles that refer to medical side effects or lasting harm caused by LSD	9	75	2	67	4	67	24	56	25	78	13	65	77	66
Articles devoting four or more sentences to medical side effects or lasting harm caused by LSD	7	58	0	0	1	17	16	37	18	56	7	35	49	42

The scientific literature was clear on how difficult either charge would be to conclusively prove. Many of the serious cases reported by Cohen and Ditman took place among people who were being treated with LSD because of mental health problems.

[47] William Laurence, "On Hallucinogens: Warnings Issued on the Improper Use of LSD-25," *New York Times*, June 1963; and Emma Harrison, "Psychiatrist Warns of Health Peril in Mind Drug," *New York Times*, June 4, 1963.

There was no way to determine if the breakdown that may have been attributable to LSD would have happened anyway. Often, the breakdown did not occur the moment the drug was taken, but developed over weeks or months, and often over multiple LSD administrations. Less extreme cases of breakdown—such as a woman's decision to leave her children and adopt a hip lifestyle—may be open to other interpretations, and attributed to other causes, besides the drug. In the eyes of many psychiatrists, these problems could be mitigated through responsible use.

Conclusive proof of a connection between an LSD session and a suicide—especially one occurring days or weeks later—was just as difficult. Consider the mechanism: "When a direct relationship could be seen, it was due to devastating insights which were not skillfully managed," Sidney Cohen wrote in 1964. Among LSD therapy patients, the possibility of side effects was not so rare as to be insignificant: a prolonged psychotic state occurred in one out of 550 patients; unsuccessful suicide in one out of 830 patients; successful suicide in one out of 2,500. Nearly all the negative cases took place among individuals who were being treated for serious mental illness. The rate of negative reaction among recreational users was not clear, but psychiatrists fretted that LSD attracted pathological individuals.[48]

Communications scholar Dolf Zillman observed that, in general, the news media was more prone to present far-out examples of a phenomenon than the base rate at which

[48] Cohen, *The Beyond Within*, 212.

it occurred, which was often not known.[49] He also observed that audience members are more likely to remember the unusual anecdote more than complex information about base rates.[50] In the magazine coverage, the risk of side effects from LSD use was presented many different ways. Even at the height of LSD coverage, in 1966 and 1967, side effects were only discussed in about half the articles. In many cases, the complexity was reduced to a few sentences revealing that LSD could cause madness and psychosis. The charge was correct, although not completely accurate. Rather, it was the kind of simplification generally beloved by journalists and abhorred by their sources. In *U.S. News & World Report*, the problem was explained: "There is uniform agreement among investigators of the drug that LSD can be extremely dangerous when used without medical supervision. On record are cases of suicide, assault, sexual promiscuity and severe mental damage when LSD was used without competent medical supervision."[51] This was an accurate summation of the most severe side effects, but without any information about prevalence. The article concluded by quoting a physician: "If even one individual has that reaction, it is a dangerous drug." The most innocuous product (Peanuts? Swimming pools?) would not meet this standard of safety. Several magazines compared the risk of LSD to a game of Russian roulette. While easy to grasp, the analogy, employed in *The New York Times Magazine*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and

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[49] Dolf Zillmann, "Exemplification Theory of Media Influence," *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 2nd edition, Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann, eds. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 21-22.

[50] Ibid., 25.

[51] "If You Want to Know about LSD," *U.S. News & World Report*, July 18, 1966, 82.

Senior Scholastic, overstates the actual level risk by least two orders of magnitude, and likely by much more.[52]

Other magazines included more nuanced assessments of risk, in proportions that seemed to roughly correspond with the article's interest in psychedelics. *Popular Science* took the effort to explain the lack of statistics and the inability to compare suicide rates.[53] *The New Republic*, which editorialized against LSD prohibition in 1966, also gave prevalence statistics in an article titled, "What is the Clinical Evidence?"[54] In 1966, *Life* worried about a small number of cases of "disastrous psychological effects" from recreational LSD use in an article that included a first-person account by a "hard-headed, conservative, Midwestern, Republican businessman" who discovered an understanding of God while under LSD, as well as the more typical story about a teenage girl's bad trip. Two pages of statements largely attesting to the potential of LSD to induce religious experience were run under the headline "Scientists, Theologians, Mystics Swept up in a Psychic Revolution."[55] In a question-and-answer piece, *Life* science editor Albert Rosenfeld said that everyone should "emphatically not" have the right to try LSD, and

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[52] Robinson, "Hearing Color, Smelling Music, Touching a Scent," 14; "New Reports on a Rising Problem," *U.S. News & World Report*, 48; "New Light on LSD," *Senior Scholastic*, September 28, 1967, 22.

[53] Gannon, "My LSD Trip," 64.

[54] Leszek Ochota, "What is the Clinical Evidence?" *The New Republic*, May 14, 1966, 22.

[55] Barry Farrell, "Scientists, Theologians, Mystics Swept Up in a Psychic Revolution," section of "LSD: The Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug that Got Out of Control," *Life*, March 25, 1966, 30D-31.

that for some, LSD may be "a one way ticket to an asylum, a prison or a grave."[56] In an editorial the following month, *Life* bemoaned Sandoz's decision to cancel distribution of LSD to researchers and called for controlled use of LSD rather than prohibition.[57]*Look* offered a level-headed view of the risks of LSD in an article expressing a similar editorial stance:

> "What many of the world's leading authorities on LSD and other 'mind-affecting' drugs feared most has finally happened," the picture magazine reported. "A mood of public—and to an extent, professional—hysteria has been generated and is blocking legitimate scientific research on these substances."[58]

By the mid-1960s, magazines had an abundance of anecdotal evidence, including attendance at pro-LSD events and rallies, local polls of colleges and high school students, the increasing importance of the drug in popular culture, and Timothy Leary's inflammatory estimates, all suggesting an increase in recreational LSD use. The value of the evidence was often questionable: A statement in *Time* that "A Hollywood mogul, a Broadway producer and a noted drama critic all agree that 60 percent of stage and screen performers are using it," was difficult to believe and impossible to verify.[59] Leary's estimate that one million Americans used LSD was often repeated and likely based on

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[56] Albert Rosenfeld, "The Vital Facts About the Drug and Its Effects," section of "LSD: The Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug that Got Out of Control," *Life*, March 25, 1966, 3B-3C.

[57] "LSD: Control, Not Prohibition," *Life*, April 29, 1966.

[58] John A. Osmundsen, "The Other Side of LSD: the Promise & the Peril," *Look*, July 26, 1966, 78.

[59] "LSD," *Time*, June 17, 1966, 30.

nothing other than the high priest's imagination.[60] Still, the impression of increasing prevalence of LSD use was validated by retrospective analysis of drug use produced by National Institute on Drug Abuse statisticians (see Table 3).

Inevitably, the number of individuals experiencing serious negative reactions to LSD would have increased with the increase in both availability and use of the drug. Black market users had little assurance that they would receive chemically pure LSD, increasing the possibility of a bad reaction. With astonishing regularity, the evidence marshaled by publications to illustrate this expanding epidemic of bad trips came was the number of panicking trippers turning up in emergency rooms in New York and Los Angeles. Bellevue Hospital was particularly forthcoming with admission statistics. Young LSD users checking themselves in to Bellevue in numbers ranging from handfuls to hundreds were mentioned in *Popular Science*, *Scientific American*, *Senior Scholastic*, and *Time*.[61] The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* and the *New Republic* maintained that the majority of these cases were panic reactions by LSD users who had taken the drug without supervision, and in nearly all cases was resolved by an intramuscular shot of

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[60] Leary's claim is repeated in Thomas Buckley, "LSD Trigger," *New Republic*, May 14, 1966, 15; "If You Want to Know about LSD," *U.S. News & World Report*, 82.

[61] Lawrence Galton, "LSD, the Other Side of the Story," *Popular Science*, January 1967, 93; "Dangerous LSD?" *Scientific American*, February 1966, 54; "Drugs, Narcotics and the Flight From Reality," *Senior Scholastic*, February 10, 1967, 4; "LSD," *Time*, 34; "Time to Mutate," *Time*, April 21, 1966, 30; "Dangers of LSD," *Time*, April 22, 1966, 52.

Thorazine.[62] The *Saturday Evening Post* suggested that no use of LSD was safe in a 1967 story focused on medical side effects.[63]

In both popular and scholarly publications, the spike in LSD-related hospital admissions was blamed on the bad press panicking drug users. As early as 1964, Sidney Cohen argued against a "myth" that the vast majority of bad LSD trips are provoked by "psychiatric propaganda, which creates an atmosphere of fear rather than trust," by pointing out that publication of case studies predated the bad publicity.[64] Perhaps the most elegant statement of a "speculative" thesis linking side effects with user preconceptions was by Howard Becker, who proposed in 1967 that panic-filled trips resulted when drug users lacked a framework in which to interpret their experience.[65] Both views contain truth: LSD created short-term panic attacks for some users, and genuine psychiatric breakdowns for others, at rates that are not known. Erich Goode pointed out that while LSD was more commonly used in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, hospitals saw and reported fewer psychotic reactions from the drug than they did in the 1960s.[66]

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[62] Daniel X. Freedman, "The Use and Abuse of Psychedelic Drugs," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 19, 1968, 12; Ochota, "What is the Clinical Evidence?" 22.

[63] Bill Davidson, "The Hidden Evils of LSD," *Saturday Evening Post*, August 12, 1967, 19-23.

[64] Cohen, *The Beyond Within*, 253.

[65] Howard S. Becker, "History, Culture and Subjective Experience: An Exploration of the Social Bases of Drug-Induced Experiences," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 8 (September 1967): 163.

[66] One estimate is that less-serious, short-term complications occurred in one in 1,000 trips, while serious, longer-lasting complications occurred in roughly one in 10,000 uses. See Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1993), 251.

As LSD use was associated with a broader range of side effects, there was a body of coverage, largely in women's and family magazines, that did a spectacularly poor job conveying risk and a highly dubious job conveying severity. To demonstrate the danger of LSD, *Parent's Magazine and Better Homemaking* offered, "There was a report, for example, of a man hospitalized after he had drilled a hole into his skull with a dentist's drill while under the influence of LSD, believing that this would cause him to break out of ordinary time and enter into another dimension."[67] Without details that would make confirmation possible, the story had the air of the apocryphal. Another dubious example was in the *UNESCO Courier*, an educational magazine: "After taking LSD, a handsome American actor doused himself with petrol and set himself afire. Though he did not die, he is so disfigured that his career is ruined." The article, by the Norwegian director-general of pubic health, offered no source for the story.[68] *Reader's Digest* offered a more credible series of anecdotes, including a Los Angeles student who got hit by traffic and a 42-year-old woman who committed suicide after co-workers slipped the drug into her drink. The article concluded with an assessment of risk that, again, was more literary than helpful: "Until an enormous number of disturbing mysteries are unraveled by scientists, LSD will remain about as safe as a do-it-yourself brain-surgery kit for amateurs."[69]

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[67] William W. Zeller, "LSD: Growing Menace to Teenagers," *Parents' Magazine and Better Homemaking*, November 1, 1967, 145.

[68] Karl Evang, "LSD: New Menace to Youth," *UNESCO Courier*, May 1968, 19.

[69] Warren R. Young, "The Truth about LSD," *Reader's Digest*, September 1966, 57, 59.

Over the years, magazines collected a trove of well-worn anecdotes that were regularly used in discussions of LSD. They included the story of Hofmann's inadvertent first trip and Leary's dismissal from Harvard. Two new anecdotes were added to the collection in 1966: The story of five-year-old Donna Wingenroth, a Brooklyn girl who ate an LSD-impregnated sugar cube left in the house by her 18-year-old uncle and was rushed to the hospital; and of Stephen Kessler, a 30-year-old medical student who claimed not to remember killing his mother-in-law because he was on LSD. Neither story was directly on point in regard to the dangers of LSD. Children eat all sorts of poisons left around their homes, and Kessler had been in and out of mental institutions for years. His claim that LSD had caused a three-day bout of amnesia was unprecedented in scientific literature about the drug. His widely repeated statement, "Did I kill my wife? Did I rape anybody? What have I done?" was lifted from the police report, not always an accurate transcription. At his trial it emerged that his LSD use was a month before the murder, and that he was in fact drunk on three quarts of laboratory alcohol and sleeping pills at the time of the crime.[70]

While neither case reflected medical issues particular to LSD, they seemed to well capsulate anxiety over users' irresponsibility, the harm of innocents, and the breakdown of social control. Both Donna and the LSD killer were covered by *Time*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times Magazine*, and *Reader's Digest.*[71] The significance of the two widely-

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[70] Peter Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 3rd expanded ed. (Berkeley, Calif.: Ronin Publishing, 1992), 62.

[71] "Dangers of LSD," *Time*, July 22, 1966, 52; "Donna's Long Trip," *Newsweek*, September 25, 1967, 98; "Murder by LSD?" *Newsweek*, April 25, 1966, 29; "Donna and

repeated stories was disputed in the *New Republic*.[72] The dominant side effect story emerged in 1967, when a State University of New York in Buffalo geneticist decided to examine the chromosomes of LSD users after wandering through the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco. In 1967, Cohen and two associates published a study in the journal *Science* reporting that when human blood cells were placed in a culture containing LSD, some of the chromosomes within the blood cells seemed to break. As well, blood cells of a single schizophrenic patient who had been given LSD fifteen times were found to have more broken chromosomes than normal.[73] The man had also been treated with Librium and Thorazine.[74]

Screaming headlines in both newspapers and magazines reported the finding that LSD might cause birth defects, again bringing the recklessness of LSD users and the danger to innocents to the fore. *Time* covered studies suggesting that LSD could cause chromosomal damage and birth defects, although qualifying the findings as preliminary.[75] Other publications projected more certainty. A story about the research in *U.S. News & World Report* ran under the subhead, "The truth about LSD is coming out, and it is a

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the Sugar Cube," *Newsweek*, April 18, 1966, 100; Robinson, "Hearing Color, Smelling Music, Touching a Scent," 52; Young, "The Truth about LSD," 59.

[72] Buckley, "LSD Trigger," 19.

[73] See Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999), 251-52.; and Edward M. Brecher, "LSD: Danger to Unborn Babies," *McCall's*, September 1967, 70.

[74] Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, 60.

[75] "Cell Damage from LSD," *Time*, March 24, 1967, 46; "Drugs & Chromosomes," *Time*, September 15, 1967, 84-85.

tragic story."[76] In the *Saturday Evening Post*, a 1967 article titled "The Hidden Evils of LSD" opened with a catalog of LSD horror stories, including a deformed baby, and included as a pull-out from the main text, "If you take LSD even once, your children may be born malformed or retarded." Perhaps the low point in magazine reporting on the story was a 1967 article in *McCall's* that included discussion of unpublished research conducted by a college junior that purported to show that LSD caused birth defects in rats.[77] Even pro-drug, alternative newspapers warned that LSD could cause birth defects and genetic damage. "These 'findings' from an inadequately controlled study immediately became translated into the inescapable 'fact' that LSD would damage one's offspring—that uncountable generations of infants would be born deformed if one took LSD," Goode wrote.[78] The discovery was publicized in a National Institute of Mental Health campaign, and The National Foundation-March of Dimes distributed a leaflet illustrated by pictures of deformed, armless and legless children.[79]

To journalists, and scientists, already queasy about the growing drug movement, the suggestion that LSD caused genetic damage may have had a ring of obvious truth.[80] Within four years, nearly 100 scientific studies were published examining the link between LSD and chromosomal damage. The flurry of studies about LSD and chromosomes were distinguished by their flaws: inadequate control over factors known

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[76] "A New Report on LSD: Threat to Unborn Children," *U.S. News & World Report*, October 9, 1967, 66.

[77] Brecher, "LSD: Danger to Unborn Babies," 71.

[78] Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 252.

[79] See Ibid. and Andrew Weil, *The Natural Mind* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004), 44-45.

[80] Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 253-54.

to result in chromosome breakage; failure to conduct before-and-after observation in human subjects; the use of far higher amounts of LSD for the test-tube experiments than would normally be consumed; and, perhaps most significantly, the lack of proof that damage to this type of cell has negative health effects in the first place.[81] There was also a suspicious absence of actual deformed babies. While researchers did report six cases of birth defects that may have been associated with LSD use, the number is unsurprising considering that 4 percent of infants born in America have some significant defect.[82] A meta-analysis published in 1971 concluded "pure LSD ingested in moderate doses does not produce chromosomal damage detectable by available methods."[83]

Even when articles described these findings as tentative, the distinction may have been lost on the public. Andrew Weil wrote that the findings prompted some to seek abortions and others to temporarily quit LSD or switch to other drugs.[84] Contemporary accounts also credited the news with causing a drop in LSD use, although that effect was not reflected in Americans' responses to drug use surveys.[85] Many still believe that LSD causes birth defects or genetic mutation.[86] The myth was too good not to be true. Goode argued:

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[81] See Ibid., 252-53, and Weil, *The Natural Mind*, 44-45.

[82] Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 252-53.

[83] Norman I. Dishotsky, William D. Loughman, Robert E. Mogar and Wendell.R.Lipscomb, "LSD and Genetic Damage," *Science* 172 (April 30, 1971): 440.

[84] Weil, *The Natural Mind*, 44-45.

[85] See Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs*, 373; Marguerite Clark, "Dangers of Drug Abuse," *The PTA Magazine*, May 1968, 11; and Gfroerer and Brodsky, "The Incidence of Illicit Drug Use in the United States, 1962-1989," *The British Journal of Addiction* 87, no. 9 (September 1992) 1348.

[86] Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 254.

> The erroneous view was disseminated and accepted because there was a strong tendency to believe that a drug with such evil effects must inevitably harm the body in a range of ways. If the same mistaken research findings had been published (if, indeed, they would ever have been published) concerning the effects of a relatively innocuous substance, it would not have been news, and it would not have been accepted as true by the public. Clearly, our prejudices and preconceptions shape our view of reality and truth. … The fact that it was LSD that caused chromosomal breakage made the story newsworthy, threatening and believable."[87]

In the atmosphere of concern over horrific LSD side effects, the National Institute of Mental Health terminated its last LSD research project on human subjects in 1967. The following year, federal Drug Abuse Control amendments were modified to make possession of LSD a misdemeanor offense and sale of the drug a felony. Enforcing the law was no longer a matter for the FDA, but rather the newly created Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. The scientific exploration of LSD was brought to a halt.[88]

In the coverage of side effects, magazines demonstrated some of the worse tendencies of journalism about science. Findings were overstated, tentative results were presented with surety, and poorly designed studies received a free pass. However, magazines' overwrought descriptions of ruined lives were based on strands of scientific research that demonstrated the same flaws. If magazines' interest in LSD side effects was excessive, so too was scientific interest; time spent using exotic techniques to look for chromosomal damage from LSD might have been better spent on substances in more widespread use.

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[87] Ibid., 253-54.
[88] Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, 93.

If the appropriate role for journalism was to accurately relay the current state of scientific research, magazines did an acceptable job. Flaws in the coverage were often reflective of flaws in science, brought into greater relief as a result of the journalistic discipline of concision. Scientists were important sources in many articles, and in nearly all the articles reflected their concerns. As well, the tendency was to present the scientific viewpoint as a consensus, rather than emphasizing the back-and-forth of conflict. But if journalism was to be a watchdog over science, it failed. A detailed knowledge of genetics or psychiatry would not have been required to raise questions or adopt a more skeptical attitude. Many oft-repeated stories were simply false. There was no chromosomal damage, no deformed babies, no LSD killer. And many of the horror stories contained so little concrete information as to constitute no more than rhetorical flourishes.

Magazines did a better job as observers of the cultural strands of the LSD story. The emergence of psychedelic culture was described in magazines before it spilled out onto the streets, with accuracy and interest. Cultural figures were often used both as sources and writers. Magazines were skeptical to varying degrees, but were successful in holding up a mirror through which the psychedelic pioneers' reality could be glimpsed. The extent to which the media failed as cultural watchdogs was a matter of perspective. Certainly, many publications were sufficiently hostile toward LSD. Many others were dazzled by the celebrity and the potential for patterns of color on a glossy page. Talking about psychedelic art and mystical thinking was also an acknowledgement of its

validity, and, for many, an introduction. Whatever else, magazines made the LSD experience interesting.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Causes for coverage

Within 25 years of its discovery in 1943, LSD evolved from an obscure chemical derivative into an object of public fascination, the inspiration for psychedelic art and acid rock, and a central technology of a burgeoning counterculture that encouraged youth to "Tune in, Turn on, Drop Out." When J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* topped the paperback bestseller list in 1966, *Time* magazine noted that "the hobbit habit seems to be almost as catching as LSD," which the magazine had labeled an "epidemic."[1] The following year, President Lyndon Johnson remarked that the actions of a war medal recipient proved "not all young Americans attend LSD parties and park on the grass."[2] LSD was the only drug Johnson specifically decried in a 1968 State of the Union address, calling for increased spending on federal drug enforcement.[3] Richard Nixon beat Democrat Hubert Humphrey for the presidency in 1968 on a platform that included cracking down on illegal drugs and a campaign that capitalized on public misgivings towards hippies and political protestors who seemed to personify drug use.[4] By the time possession of LSD was uniformly criminalized in the United States with the passage of

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[1] See "Epidemic of 'Acid-Heads,'" *Time*, March 11, 1966, 44; and "The Hobbit Habit," *Time*, July 15, 1966, 48.

[2] Johnson quoted in "The President's Remarks," *The New York Times*, October 26, 1967.

[3] Lyndon B. Johnson, "The State of the Union 1968," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 34 (February 1, 1968): 228.

[4] *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* s.v. "Nixon, Richard M." http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-214054 (accessed April 22, 2008).

federal legislation in 1968, psychedelic drugs had been sampled by more than one million Americans and were perceived as a threat to the nation's health, traditions, and culture.[5]

The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune* reported on early experimental trials of LSD and presentations at conferences in the straight, objective tone typical of newspaper columns on incremental science. While these newspapers covered the invention of the new drug, they did not focus much attention on the invention of the new drug experience.[6] William Braden, a *Chicago Tribune* reporter who delved into drug culture for his 1967 book *The Private Sea: LSD and the Search for God*, complained that newspapers ignored the drug movement prior to the late 1960s, and even then covered it only superficially, focusing on irresponsible behavior, medical side effects, and the relatively rare horrific trip. He conjectured that newspaper editors avoided describing the

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[5] Joseph Gfroerer and Marc Brodsky, "The Incidence of Illicit Drug Use in the United States, 1962-1989," *British Journal of Addiction* 87, no. 9 (September 1992): 1346-47.

[6] See, for example, "Drugs Used to Cause 1-Day Mental Illness," *The Washington Post and Times-Herald*, May 11, 1951; Howard A. Rusk, "Research in Mental Illness has Paid Striking Dividend," *The New York Times*, October 31, 1954; "Brain 'Poisons' Suspected as Schizophrenia Cause," *The Washington Post and Times-Herald*, December 14, 1955; Nate Haseltine, "A Maddening Drink for Our Benefit," *The Washington Post and Times-Herald* March 18, 1956; "16 Prisoners 'Go Crazy' In Humanity's Behalf," *The Washington Post and Times-Herald*, January 13, 1957; "Clams and Insanity," *The New York Times*, March 3, 1957; and Howard Earle, "New Break-thru Against Insanity," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 17, 1957.

drug movement because they did not want to encourage readers to try the drug. Braden concluded that magazines, and especially *Time* and *Life*, had done a better job.[7]

Many magazines did attempt to describe what really seemed new about LSD: the experience, nearly impossible to express in words, but which often left the subject with a profound sensation of having been through something tremendously important. They published lavish descriptions of LSD experiences and detailed explanations of what the drug was purported to do. Much of the coverage was celebrity-tinged, and many articles proposed theories about how to interpret the LSD experience. While grey science columns noted what the scientists and psychiatrists were doing, the glossies tried to transmit, often through art, first-person accounts, and testimonials, the experience with which some researchers were so fascinated, in coverage that began about a decade before the drug was widely available on the street.

To a certain extent, the level of magazine coverage reflected the high level of interest within the academic community for the drug. Within a decade of its introduction, LSD became among the best-studied modern drugs, despite being considered experimental by the manufacturer and never brought to market.[8] LSD seemed useful not only to psychologists interested in the chemistry of the mind and chemical treatments, but to therapists who viewed the problem of mental health in non-chemical ways. LSD

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[7] William Braden, "LSD and the Press" in *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance, and the Mass Media*, eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), 199, 205-7.

[8] Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports, Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 366.

therapy, as it was practiced and offered to the public in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was a detour from the primary direction that mental health treatment would ultimately take, an unlikely combination of pharmacy with the guided introspection of Freudian analysis and talk therapy. To some advocates it validated Freudian psychotherapy by releasing repressed memories. To others, it seemed to enhance the impact of therapeutic urgings for behavioral change. It seemed to offer a bridge between hard science rooted in chemistry and beliefs rooted in social and psychological theorizing. The drug seemed to bring theoretical constructs to life.[9]

Some early studies with LSD reached overly optimistic findings as a result of using researchers' observations to judge effect, as with the studies on autistic subjects. In other studies, the pretense of control was compromised by the additional attention and personalized care given to drug subjects. Assertions that the drug promoted creativity relied on highly subjective measures. Some researchers were reluctant to report their failures, which included severe side effects and suicides. Case studies were not tested with rigorously controlled trials or long-term follow-ups. A review of studies using LSD to treat alcoholism concluded that double-blind methodology and the use of a placebo control group were rare. And several studies in which Timothy Leary was involved were compromised by fraud or incomplete reporting.[10]

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[9] See Erika Dyck, "Flashback: Psychiatric Experimentation with LSD in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 382-83; and Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 14-15.

[10] See Jeff Sigafoos, Vanessa A. Green, Chaturi Edrisinha and Guilio E. Lancioni, "Flashback to the 1960s: LSD in the Treatment of Autism," *Developmental*

Many researchers enjoyed taking the drug, perhaps adding to the level of research attention and the incentive for affirmative findings. Most users interviewed for Blum and Associates' 1964 study of the LSD movement enjoyed the drug, believed that it brought about positive changes in their personalities, and were interested in talking about it and doing it again. "Given a booster faced with an unenlightened mass, what is likely to take place? Salesmanship. A missionary spirit," the interviewers wrote.[11] Continued research may have guaranteed enthusiastic researchers personal access to the drug and the opportunity to scientifically validate a personal, positive experience. As a result, some researchers may have been guilty of "rendering their conclusions biased by their own ecstasy," in the words of the 1964 *JAMA* editorial.[12]

More distortions were introduced as the body of scholarship was translated from scholarly journal to glossy magazine. As might be expected, the popular magazines simplified the science in their reporting, shaving away a layer of nuance and doubt from a body of scholarship that, in retrospect, was already overly accepting and prone to the confirmation of shaky hypotheses. During the side-effect phase of reporting on LSD, in some magazines coverage reached hysterical notes beyond what the science would

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Neurorehabilitation 10, no. 1 (January-March, 2007): 79-80; Rick Doblin, "Dr. Leary's Concord Prison Experiment: A 34-Year Follow-Up Study," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 30, no. 4 (October-December 1998): 420-25; Steven J. Novak, "LSD before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," *Isis* 88, no. 1 (March 1997): 105; and Mariavittoria Mangini, "Treatment of Alcoholism Using Psychedelic Drugs: A Review of the Program of Research," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 30, no. 4 (October-December 1998): 392.

[11] Richard H. Blum & Associates, *Utopiates: The Use and Users of LSD-25* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 58.

[12] Roy R. Grinker, Sr., "Bootlegged Ecstasy," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 768.

support.[13] More generally, magazine coverage introduced a distortion caused by memory, as journalists failed to jettison old theories contained in their clip files as fast as the scientists had. The process of science was idealized as self-correcting. Missteps were to be overcome by critical scrutiny, and new consensuses formed. Examination of 14 years' worth of magazine coverage of LSD suggested that, in journalism, the process was more akin to accretion. New articles were constructed in part from old clips and stories from the past were repeated. Journalism perpetuated, rather than evolved.

While scientists conducting basic experimental research with LSD gradually became disillusioned by the drug's apparent failure to cure illness, investigators with broader goals adopted the drug. The intellectuals, mystics, and theologians who began working with LSD were not interested in replicable chemical reactions, but internal, subjective, mental effects – effects as amenable to exploration by artistic or literary techniques as by experiment.[14] As the LSD story evolved, the most frequently used sources in magazine coverage came not from the current of mainstream science, but from a particular eddy that swirled around an intellectual and cultural elite. Initial credit for giving LSD both intellectual heft and celebrity goes to Aldous Huxley, but as the 1960s progressed other artistic and cultural figures would lend their names to the cause.

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[13] This phenomenon was not unique to magazines. Edward Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports* noted that several newspapers reported on a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that found little support for the hypothesis that LSD caused birth defects with articles that focused on the finding that the drug might cause spontaneous abortion. See *Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—Including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 397.

[14] Steven J. Novak, "LSD Before Leary: Sidney Cohen's Critique of 1950s Psychedelic Drug Research," *Isis* 88, no. 1 (March 1997): 93-96.

Timothy Leary, the single source most often mentioned in magazine coverage, abandoned the practice of science in 1963 and could fairly be considered a celebrity. Other notables frequently mentioned in coverage of LSD included Cary Grant, Allen Ginsberg, and Allan Watts. The links between LSD and celebrities, and the reflected glamour and legitimization that the linkage conferred, may have contributed to the level of media coverage.

It was not just that magazine writers often quoted prominent LSD users, itself remarkable, considering how often the drug user's perspective would be absent from reporting on other substances.[15] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, LSD use was fashionable among a subset of the intellectual and artistic elite, especially in California, one that was perhaps not too far removed from the upper echelon of the magazine industry. This study identified a handful of magazine articles in which a reporter sampled LSD for the purpose of describing and explaining its effects to the audience. Advocates for LSD occasionally contributed magazine articles that ran under their own names. Timothy Leary wrote for *Esquire*; Alan Watts wrote for *The New Republic*; Gerald Heard for *Horizon*.[16] At the least, the intellectual elite who dabbled with LSD had the ear of those who edited some magazines.

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[15] For example, see Jimmie L. Reeves and Richard Campbell, *Cracked Coverage: Television News, the Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 68-71.

[16] See Timothy Leary, "In the Beginning, Leary Turned on Ginsberg and Saw that it was Good," *Esquire*, July 1968, 83-87; Alan Watts, "Who Will Run Your Nervous System?" *The New Republic*, November 28, 1964, 15-16; Gerald Heard, "Can this Drug Enlarge Man's Mind," *Horizon*, May 1963, 28-31.

This study also presented evidence that the use of LSD by Henry Luce may have contributed to the level of coverage of LSD in *Time* and *Life*. His influence may have been the direct result of comments on the subject to friends and subordinates. His semi-public advocacy for LSD may have also had the indirect effect of encouraging staffers to cover the subject more intently or thoroughly than they otherwise might. The coverage of LSD in *Time* and *Life*, two of the largest-circulation magazines of the period, may have prompted other media outlets to take a closer look.[17] Studies of intermedia agenda setting have demonstrated that attention to an issue in one media channel may increase its salience to other outlets.[18] It is not farfetched to imagine that coverage of psychedelics in *Time* and *Life* could have inspired reports in other media outlets. As a result, Luce's advocacy of LSD could well have had ramifications beyond his own magazines.

The growing controversy around LSD in the second half of the 1960s likely contributed to the level of interest by magazines. To observers who saw the magazine coverage as a representative episode of moral panic, the heightened media interest was interpreted as irrational reaction to behavior that seemed to threaten the values of

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[17] Luman H. Long, ed., *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1966* (New York: New York World Telegram and The Sun, 1966), 734-35.

[18] See Marilyn Roberts and Maxwell McCombs, "Agenda Setting and Political Advertising: Origins of the News Agenda," *Political Communication* 11, no. 3 (July-September, 1994): 260; and Jeongsub Lim, "A Cross-Lagged Analysis of Agenda Setting Among Online News Media," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 305.

mainstream society.[19] Subsequent scholars have questioned whether the political and legal reaction to LSD was actually a panic, or an incremental response to a legitimate social problem.[20] The moral panic interpretation also fails to account for the sizable portion of magazine coverage that was supportive or neutral towards LSD use. Even at the height of LSD publicity in 1968, 30 percent of the magazine articles examined for this study included pro-LSD viewpoints and information (See Table 10). Before LSD use was criminalized, the appropriateness of taking LSD for personal growth was a genuinely contested issue, at least in media circles. In any case, the controversy and increasing concern of lawmakers and politicians about LSD likely added to the issue's salience, as did the increasingly visible presence of hippies with whom the drug was associated.

By the late 1960s, the controls that kept drugs out of the media had broken down, and magazines were losing their position as the rare source of drug information. Starting around 1964, alternative newspapers sprang up in major cities to offer hip readers a brew consisting of large measures of drugs, sex, and radical politics.[21] Around the same time, the pop-music genre of acid rock, characterized by the warped instrument tones and disjointed lyrics employed by the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and the Beatles,

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[19] Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 55.

[20] Benjamin Cornwell and Annulla Linders, "The Myth of 'Moral Panic': An Alternative Account of LSD Prohibition," *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 23, no. 4 (July 1, 2002): 319-21.

[21] Abe Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life & Times of the Underground Press* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 21.

began dramatizing the effects of mind-bending drugs for radio listeners.[22] In 1965, the Beatles released "Day Tripper," which co-writer Paul McCartney later admitted was about LSD. The visionary "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album containing the song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," which McCartney also said was about LSD, was released two years later.[23]

At the movies, the door to cinematic drug depictions that was cracked open by *The Man with the Golden Arm* swung free in 1968, when Hollywood's Production Code was replaced by the Code and Rating Administration's more finely tuned rating scheme. Film historian Michael Starks argued that the system of ratings resulted in greater self-censorship, as filmmakers altered the content of movies in order to receive less restrictive ratings from the CARA board. "In addition to the big three—nudity, sex, and swearing—the board pays special attention to drugs, often overreacting to any film dealing with drugs, particularly marijuana. Films are given an R (restricted) rating if the drug sequences are not removed, even when the drug use is presented in a most unglamorous light," he wrote.[24] Nevertheless, the number of mainstream movies featuring pot, LSD, and sex exploded in the late 1960s. There had been a few, early LSD movies that did not seek approval under the production code, including two avant-garde, low-budget underground films about the psychedelic experience made in 1954 that were never

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[22] Roy F. Baumeister, "Acid Rock: A Critical Reappraisal and Psychological Commentary," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 16, No. 4 (October-December 1984): 339.

[23] Brent Mann, *Blinded by the Lyrics: Behind the Lines of Rock and Roll's Most Baffling Songs* (New York: Citadel Press, 2005), 186.

[24] Michael Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness: An Illustrated History of Drugs in the Movies* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1982), 57.

distributed through commercial channels.[25] LSD was discovered by exploitation film makers in the latter half of the 1960s, resulting in sensational works including *Movie Star, American Style; or, LSD, I Hate You* (1966), *Hallucination Generation* (1966), and Conrad Rook's *Chappaqua* (1966), which included Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs in bit parts. Later films to prominently feature LSD included *The Trip* (1967) starring Peter Fonda, *Psych-Out* (1968) staring Jack Nicholson, and *Wild in the Street* (1968). The 1969 film *Easy Rider,* which horrified some critics by casually presenting drug dealing and drug use, became the largest-grossing general release film in the history of Columbia Pictures.[26] The legal, cultural, and moral climate that stifled speech about drugs had lifted, and drugs, or at least the discussion of drugs, were fashionable. Portrayals of drug use and intoxication that would have been scandalous a few decades before had become merely sensational. Psychedelic art, typography, and design were becoming the period's characteristic style, and being "turned-on" was becoming a euphemism for being hip. On television, LSD and the LSD subculture had become a popular topic for network news and talk programming by1967, and by the early 1970s, junkies and pushers were regular foils for television cops.[27] By the end of the 1960s, the existence of psychedelic experience was taken for granted. Timothy Leary offered lectures and seminars to help the curious turn on without the use of drugs, and even

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[25] Ibid., 139-721.

[26] Ibid., 141-42, 145-46.

[27] See Ibid., 209-13; and Jack Gould, "TV: Channel 13 Town Meeting on LSD," *New York Times*, November 2, 1966.

Ladies' Home Journal, which had been stalwart in its opposition to drug use, offered tips for readers to achieve a psychedelic experience while remaining chemical-free.[28]

Impact of magazine coverage

Observers from a range of perspectives have noted extensive coverage of LSD by magazines, often suggesting that coverage sparked public interest. A highly critical overview of psychedelic research in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* blamed "national popular magazines" including *Look, Time, The Saturday Evening Post,* and *Ladies Home Journal* for drawing public attention to the drug.[29] A study published in the *Journal of American Psychiatry* attempted to assess if "sensational" publicity in popular magazines affected the pool of volunteer subjects for LSD trials. The researchers concluded that publicity in magazines such as *Playboy, The Reporter,* and *The Saturday Evening Post* made volunteers more numerous.[30]

Diffusion theory offers one template to assess the possible effect of this coverage. The theory, based on decades of empirical observation, offers a five-stage process by which individuals adopt a new technology. The process begins with knowledge about the

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[28] See Severin Peterson and Peggy Peterson, "Psychedelic Exercises," *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1968, 112; and R. Vaughan, "Is This Trip Really Necessary?" *Life*, November 11, 1966, 24.

[29] Jonathon O. Cole and Martin M. Katz, "The Psychotomimetic Drugs: An Overview," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 187, no. 10 (March 7, 1964): 758.

[30] Charles D. Dahlberg, Ruth Mechaneck, and Stanley Feldstein, "LSD Research: The Impact of Lay Publicity," *Journal of American Psychiatry* 125, no. 5 (November 5, 1968): 685-87.

innovation, a role that the mass media are particularly suited to fill.[31] In the case of LSD, useful knowledge to encourage adoption would not include merely that the drug had been developed, or that it was being tested in clinical studies. Knowledge that might support adoption of a recreational drug might include information about what the drug is supposed to feel like, how it is superior to other entertainments, and how the ambiguous sensations are to be interpreted.[32] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, popular magazines provided this information while few other mass media channels did.[33] Magazines defined the psychedelic experience and explained why someone might want to have it. Receiving this type of information could not be a direct cause of LSD experimentation, but could be an important precondition. Before coming to a decision about whether or not to seek out or adopt an innovation, the potential user had to be told what it was and what it was supposed to do. [34]

Scholars have noted that even negative coverage of drugs could inadvertently encourage their use, by presenting them as forbidden fruit or as a challenge for risk-takers.[35] Even the most frightening coverage of LSD in the late 1960s may have made the

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[31] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 285-86.

[32] Everett M. Rogers with Floyd F. Shoemaker, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 127.

[33] Braden, "LSD and the Press," 205-7.

[34] See James F. Engel, Roger D. Blackwell and Robert J. Kegerreis, "How Information is Used to Adopt Innovation," *Journal of Advertising Research* 9, no. 4 (December 1969): 3-8; and Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 195.

[35] See Charles Atkin, "Promising Strategies for Media Health Campaigns," in *Mass Media and Drug Prevention: Classic and Contemporary Theory and Research*, ed. by William D. Crano and Michael Burgoon (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 38-39; Todd Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's

drug appealing to some users who wanted to test their psyche against the challenge of an LSD trip. Much of the early coverage of LSD, however, was balanced or even positive, often offering coherent reasons for using the drug. Especially in *Time*, the drug was at times described with the type of enthusiasm generally reserved for the newest breakthrough in electronics or home décor. Simply portraying LSD may have run the risk of convincing some readers that the drug was more pervasive, and its use more socially accepted, than was actually the case.[36] This effect could have been compounded by the frequency with which LSD use was represented by celebrities, academics, the wealthy, and the intellectually adroit. Before the drug was associated with college students or hippies, it was often associated with the upper class. Magazines did not create the LSD use they described, but introducing a marginal activity to a mass audience may have paved the way for broader diffusion.

This may seem a large claim, especially considering that attempts to prove direct, immediate effects from media on human behavior have, by and large, proved futile. It would also seem to contradict landmark studies on the diffusion of pharmaceuticals, conducted during the period of this study, which found other sources influence doctors' decisions.[37] (These studies have been critiqued as flawed.)[38] However, the claim is

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Consumer Society," 49; and George Gerbner, "Stories that Hurt: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs in the Mass Media," in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, 111.

[36] Atkin, "Promising Strategies for Media Health Campaigns," 38-39.

[37] See Herbert Menzel and Elihu Katz, "Social Relations and Innovation in the Medical Profession: The Epidemiology of a New Drug," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1955-1956): 348; James S. Coleman, Elihu Katz, and Herbert Mezel, *Medical Innovation: A Diffusion Study* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), 17-19; and

consistent with the belief of contemporary communications scholars, articulated by Bernard Cohen in 1963, that while the news media is not always successful in telling people what to think, it is highly successful in telling people what to think about.[39] Coverage of LSD in popular magazines probably did not turn that many teetotalers into libertines, or vice versa. But by introducing LSD to the public as a brand-new drug, associated with a bizarre cloud of reactions—psychological insight, mysticism, creativity—the coverage may well have influenced the way this innovation was thought about.[40]

It was a sign of the drug's perceived novelty that the first intellectuals and psychiatrists to work with LSD felt the need to make up new words to describe the drug's effect. The term that stuck, "psychedelic," was coined by the psychiatrist Humphry Osmond in a verse in a 1956 private letter to Aldous Huxley. Osmond introduced the word to the psychiatric establishment at a meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences the following year.[41] The term quickly became part of magazines' vocabulary, cropping up in about half of the magazine articles about LSD published after 1963 (see Table 5).

James S. Coleman, Elihu Katz, and Herbert Mezel, "The Diffusion of Innovation Among Physicians," *Sociometry* 20, no. 4 (December 1957): 254.

[38] Christophe Van den Bulte, "*Medical Innovation* Revisited: Social Contagion versus Marketing Effect," *The American Journal of Sociology* 106, no. 5 (March 2001): 1409, 1416, 1429-30.

[39] Maxwell McCombs and Amy Reynolds, "News Influence on Our Pictures of the World," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, ed. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002), 1.

[40] Everett Rogers included LSD on a list of contemporary innovations but did not discuss the drug in any more depth. See Rogers, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, 19.

[41] Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), 55.

Magazines were sometimes skeptical, sometimes credulous, as they explained how to think about the new drug and the new type of drug use. The use advocated by the Luces, as part of a spiritual quest for meaning, became a remarkable feature of the landscape of the 1960s.[42]

Needless to say, there are few human experiences that can be claimed to be genuinely unprecedented. As Sidney Cohen pointed out, visionary drug experiences had been described in similarly ecstatic tones by Romantic writers of the previous century.[43] Gordon Wasson found precedents for mystical, transcendental drug use in Native American, Eurasian, and Classical culture.[44] As well, America had a long acquaintance with drugs, such as opium, which could create a state of dreamlike reverie. One reason that the psychedelic experience may have seemed so new to many in the 1950s and 1960s was because descriptions of these altered states had been wiped from the mass media. Depictions not just of drug states, but even the prevalence of drug users and drug trafficking, were shunted from film and television by industry codes.[45] Books that went

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[42] Todd Gitlin, "On Drugs and Mass Media in America's Consumer Society," in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention Monograph 6, ed. Hank Resnik (Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990), 43.

[43] Sidney Cohen, "The Cyclic Psychedelics," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 125, no. 3 (September 1968): 393-94.

[44] R. Gordon Wasson, "Seeking the Magic Mushroom." *Life*, May 13, 1957, 109-10.

[45] See Jerold Simmons, "Challenging the Production Code: *The Man with the Golden Arm*," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 42; Michael Starks, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness: An Illustrated History of Drugs in the Movies* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1982), 55-56; and National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, "Code of Practices for Television Broadcasters,"

too far in depictions of drug use or other objectionable acts faced the possibility of obscenity prosecution.[46] This presumably socially responsible, "see no evil" approach to drugs was for a while enforced by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, which was known to twist arms to suppress information about drugs it considered unhelpful.[47] In this vacuum of mass media conversation about drugs, the high-minded discussions of psychedelic drug use may have seemed more novel, more innovative, and more convincing.

The detailed descriptions of the psychedelic trip may have also achieved a more subtle effect. In all likelihood, knowledge of what the LSD experience was about was a precondition for the choice to take LSD. However, the importance of the way the drug experience was framed did not end there. By helping shape expectations, the explanation could also affect how the drug was subsequently experienced. Although drugs act on a biochemical level, scholars hold that the interpretation of a drug experience is socially constructed. Whether a substance is perceived as enjoyable or unpleasant, relaxing or frightening, energizing or spiritually weighty, depends on expectations and education.[48]

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adopted December 6, 1951. See "Television History – The First 75 Years," TVhistory.tv, http://www.tvhistory.tv/SEAL-Good-Practice.htm (accessed June 24, 2008).

[46] Allen Ginsberg, *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, (New York, HarperCollins: 2000), 382-85.

[47] See Rufus King, *The Drug Hang-Up: America's Fifty-Year Folly* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 82-85; John F. Galliher, David P. Keys, and Michael Elsner, "Lindesmith v. Anslinger: An Early Government Victory in the Failed War on Drugs," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 88, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 667; and Rebecca Carroll, "The Narcotic Control Act Triggers the Great Nondebate: Treatment Loses to Punishment," in *Federal Drug Control: The Evolution of Policy and Practice*, eds. Jonathon Erlen and Joseph F. Spillane (New York: Pharmaceutical Products Press, 2004), 119.

[48] Ed Knipe, *Culture, Society and Drugs: The Social Science Approach* (Prospect Park, Ill.: Waveland Press, Inc., 1995), 69-72.

As Everett Rogers pointed out in regard to marijuana, "enjoyment is introduced by the favorable definition of the situation that one acquires from others."[49] The enticing descriptions of psychedelic trips in magazines may not have only encouraged some readers to experiment with the drugs, but also shaped how they subsequently experienced them. Descriptions of acid-fueled quests for meaning could not only cause some readers to think about LSD; they could influence some LSD users to actually have that kind of experience.[50]

After decades of scientific trials in which LSD test subjects exhibited a wide range of reactions, scientists reached a consensus that subjects on LSD were extremely susceptible to external cues. The susceptibility of LSD subjects to unconsciously conform to experimenters' cues has been suggested as one reason that LSD experiments so often produced the hoped-for results. The drug seemed capable of inducing wildly various results, depending on the setting in which it was administered. Patients primed by Freudian psychologists had Freudian fantasies. Patients primed for religious epiphany had spiritual breakthroughs. Those encouraged to work through depression, sexual frigidity, or other psychological issues frequently managed to convince themselves (and

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[49] Rogers, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, 127.

[50] Howard Becker makes a similar point, suggesting inflammatory coverage of negative reactions to LSD could have caused an increase in bad trips. See "History, Culture and Subjective Experience: An Exploration of the Social Bases of Drug-Induced Experiences," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 8 (September 1967): 163-66.

their therapists) of at least temporary improvement. The LSD subjects were easily impressionable and easily impressed.[51]

By helping to shape expectations of LSD use, magazines may have similarly affected the drug experiences of millions of Americans who took LSD outside of medical supervision. LSD use was described in magazines before frequently being depicted in other media. After introducing the drug as chemically induced madness in the 1950s, popular magazines expanded the public's understanding of the capacity of this drug by reporting on the literary and intellectual figures who were on the forefront of experimentation (see Table 4). Some articles were illustrated with artwork and photographs in the psychedelic style.[52] Magazine reporting enlivened muddled science on LSD with perspectives from literature and culture. Often, experiences of drug subjects were described in tantalizing detail. Whether because LSD was initially perceived as a scientific marvel, or because its effects were seen as being so different from alcohol and tobacco, or because of the social stature of its most prominent users, any concerns over presenting a potential drug of abuse in a positive light seemed drowned out by interest in the editorial possibilities. That so many early users were persons of significant social stature added to the newsworthiness and appeal of the story. The fact that early advocates had a high degree of access to the media may have contributed to the volume of

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[51] See Richard H. & Associates Blum, *Society and Drugs, Drugs I: Social and Cultural Observations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970), 129; and Paul Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs: A Complete Guide to Their History, Chemistry, Use and Abuse* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 313.

[52] See, for example, the covers of *Life*, September 9, 1966; the cover of *Newsweek*, May 9, 1966; and "Mescal Madness," *Newsweek*, February 23, 1953, 94-95.

coverage. So too may have the fact that the single most powerful magazine publisher of the period, Henry Luce, advocated the drug to professional acquaintances, magazine editors, and writers.

By describing the LSD experience, magazines helped to define it for a generation. A potential LSD user in the mid-1960s could easily have read dozens of accounts of drug trips in popular magazines like *Time* and *Life* without ever having made a special effort to seek the information out. Readers with no particular interest in drugs could have learned how Aldous Huxley and other thinkers perceived them, viewed pictures that purported to convey their effects, and read testimonials by users who had both good and bad experiences. Popular magazines were not responsible for inventing the idea that LSD could be used to deepen religious faith, enhance creativity, or deliver insight. But through magazines these ideas reached enormous audiences.[53] The magazines' descriptions of celebrity and high-status LSD users influenced how the drug was perceived, and the mere willingness to write about LSD and the LSD experience signaled to readers that it was different. Marijuana and opiate use had been often depicted as seedy and self-destructive, associated with less reputable elements of society.[54] LSD, on the other hand, was presented as scholarly and scientific, endorsed by celebrities and depicted through fashion-forward art.

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[53] Luman H. Long, ed., *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1966* (New York: New York World Telegram and The Sun, 1966), 734-35.

[54] David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 294.

Experts from a range of perspectives agree that, amid the exploding popularity of LSD and the backlash against it, accurate perspective on LSD was lost.[55] The current scientific consensus is that LSD is non-addicting and relatively safe, with no known physiological side effects and a relatively low rate of negative reaction when administered in a supervised setting.[56] Many scientists maintain the drug may have genuine uses, both for therapy and research, which are being neglected because of an undeserved stain.[57] *The Lancet* editorialized in 2006:

> Exaggerated risks of harm have contributed to the demonisation of psychedelic drugs as a social evil. But although this dangerous reputation – generated and perpetuated by the often disproportionately stiff penalties for their use – is helpful for law enforcement, it does not correspond to the evidence. Rather, the social prescription against psychedelic drugs that hinders properly controlled research into their effects and side-effects is largely based on social and legal, as opposed to scientific, concerns.[58]

Despite efforts by hundreds of scientists to use objective tools to peer inside the subjective LSD experience, much of what is now known about LSD was based not on their controlled studies but on reports from the millions of informal experiments

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[55] Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 53-56; Gordon Claridge, "LSD: A Missed Opportunity?" *Human Psychopharmacology* 9 (September-October 1994): 343-51; Paul Kurtzweil, "Medical Possibilities of Psychedelic Drugs," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/795_psyche.html (accessed April 23, 2008); Jacob Sullum, "Psychedelic Revival," *Reason* 37, No. 2 (June 2005): 17.

[56] "Reviving Research into Psychedelic Drugs," *The Lancet* 367 (April 15, 2006): 1214; Paul Gahlinger, *Illegal Drugs, A Complete Guide to Their History, Chemistry, Use and Abuse*, (New York: Penguin, 2004), 314-15; Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1993), 243-56.

[57] See Claridge, "LSD: A Missed Opportunity?" 343-51; Kurtzweil, "Medical Possibilities of Psychedelic Drugs," and "Reviving Research into Psychedelic Drugs," *The Lancet*, 1214.

[58] "Reviving Research into Psychedelic Drugs," *The Lancet*, 1214.

undertaken in the decades since the drug's discovery. These self-experiments produced horror stories. There were accounts of users committing suicide, having lasting psychotic breakdowns, and committing murder. Most often, these reactions occurred among people whose madness was previously diagnosed. But there were also cases in which LSD appeared to induce psychosis in people who were healthy.[59] In any particular case, untangling the influence of the drug from the individual's predisposition was an intractable problem of control.

The decades of informal experimentation with LSD also produced some strange success stories. The powerful experiences described by Huxley, Alan Watts, and Gerald Heard could only be accepted as honest accounts, although subjective and anecdotal. As with episodes of LSD-induced psychosis, however, their insights and discoveries might well have occurred regardless of drug use.

Decades of widespread public use of LSD have not revealed the drug to have any important physiological effects. It is still believed to be non-addicting. Interviews with drug users suggested that for most, the experience had both pleasant and unpleasant aspects.[60] Estimates of the rate of prolonged psychological distress resulting from LSD ranged from one in 100 trips to one in 10,000 trips and the experiences described by users

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[59] Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports*, *Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens and Marijuana—Including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol*, 397.

[60] Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1993), 248-49.

vary widely and include panic, ecstasy, creativity, and occasional realization of the nature of God.[61]

[61] See Ibid, 250-51; and Nicholas Malleson, "Acute Adverse Reactions to LSD in Clinical and Experimental Use in the United Kingdom," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 118, no. 543 (February 1971): 229-30.

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Appendix A

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Appendix B

Content Analysis Codebook

Codebook

LSD in Magazines, 1954-1968

Thank you for agreeing to assist in this study. Your task will be to read magazine articles from the 1950s and 1960s and answer 20 questions based on criteria outlined in this document. It is recommended that you read the article through once from start to finish before answering questions. You may wish to underline critical passages.

Return to the article as you answer each of the questions below. You should be able to support each answer by referring to specific passages in the article text.

1. Does this article discuss, however briefly, non-medical use of LSD? That is, the use of LSD while not directly supervised by a research scientist, medical doctor or mental health professional.

2. Does the article, however briefly, describe or discuss the use of LSD for religious, spiritual or mystical applications, or describe its effects in this manner?

3. Does the article devote **four or more** sentences to the religious, mystical or spiritual effects or use of LSD? [Sentences may be consecutive or separate and may include direct quotes.]

4. Does the article, however briefly, describe or discuss medical side effects of LSD? Side effects are defined as effects on the users that last beyond the length of the drug experience, and may include suicide, permanent psychosis or chromosomal damage.

5. Does the article devote **four or more** sentences to medical side effects of LSD? [Sentences may be consecutive or separate and may include direct quotes.]

Questions 6 – 8 ask if the story has any descriptions of drug trips told from the user's perspective.

6. Does this article include a description of the LSD experience from a drug user's perspective? The testimonial may be a direct quote or paraphrase, and the user may be named or unnamed. The description, however, should be attributed to a particular user. The authority of the user should rely on personal experience. It may be thought of as a user's answer to the question, "What is it like?"

This category is meant to include only descriptions from the users' perspective, not those formed from outside observation.

Do not include Timothy Leary in this category or first-person accounts in this category (see Questions 7 and 8).

7. Check yes here if Timothy Leary provides a description of the drug effect from personal experience.

8. Check yes here if description of drug effect is provided by a first-person account by author.

Questions 9 through 11 ask about descriptions of particular LSD experiences included in the story. These do not have to be told from the user's perspective, but they do have to refer to particular incidents. You may only check "yes" on one of the following three questions per drug experience; however, if a particular article contains multiple drug experiences, you may answer "yes" on multiple questions.

9. Does the article include a description of a particular LSD experience that was entirely successful for the user, described in entirely positive terms?

10. Does the article include a description of a particular LSD experience that was portrayed neither as entirely positive or entirely negative, but as risky and disorienting?

11. Does the article include the description of a particular LSD experience that was a bad experience for the user, resulting in physical or emotional harm, lasting duress?

People (Questions 12 – 15)

12. Does the story refer, however briefly, to the use of LSD by a medical doctor, researcher or college professor? (not including Leary or Alpert)

13. Does the story refer to the use of LSD by an artist, public intellectual, or celebrity, however briefly? A celebrity is defined as a person who it is assumed the reader is already familiar with (not including Leary or Alpert)

14. Does the story refer to LSD use by Timothy Leary or Richard Alpert?

15. Does the story mention any of the following individuals? Please check all that apply:

Richard Alpert	Albert Hofmann
Harold	Aldous Huxley
Abrahamson	Timothy Leary
Sidney Cohen	Raph Metzner
Allen Ginsberg	Humprhy Osmond
Cary Grant	Alan Watts

16. Does the story present two sides of an issue or just one side? If disagreeing views are articulated or described in **four or more sentences** in the article check "yes" or "two."

17. Does the story present a favorable side of LSD use for people who are not suffering from an illness? Check yes only if material favorable towards non-medical LSD use occupies **four or more sentences** (may or may not be consecutive).

18. Does the story present an unfavorable side of LSD use for people who are not suffering from an illness? Check yes only if material unfavorable towards non-medical LSD use occupies **four or more sentences** (may or may not be consecutive).

19. Does the article exhibit a bias against non-medical LSD use? That is, does the article conclude that, based on the weight of evidence, LSD should not be taken for recreation or self-improvement by people who have not been diagnosed with a medical illness?

20. Does the article use the term "psychedelic" to describe the drug or drug effect? Do not check yes if the word is mentioned only in the context of the debate over the use of the word or as part of a proper name.

Appendix C

LSD in Magazines Code Sheet

Coder Initials: Date:

ArticleID										
Question 1										
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Appendix D

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was determined by simple pair-wise comparison between two coders. Variable-by-variable results are reported below:

1. Does this article discuss, however briefly, non-medical use of LSD?
   93% agreement

2. Does the article, however briefly, describe or discuss the use of LSD for religious, spiritual or mystical applications, or describe its effects in this manner?
   100% agreement

3. Does the article devote **four or more** sentences to the religious, mystical or spiritual effects or use of LSD?
   93% agreement

4. Does the article, however briefly, describe or discuss medical side effects of LSD?
   93% agreement

5. Does the article devote **four or more** sentences to medical side effects of LSD?
   100% agreement

6. Does this article include a description of the LSD experience from a drug user's perspective?
   93% agreement

7. Check yes here if Timothy Leary provides a description of the drug effect from personal experience.
   100% agreement

8. Check yes here if description of drug effect is provided by a first-person account by author.
   93% agreement

9. Does the article include a description of a particular LSD experience that was entirely successful for the user, described in entirely positive terms?

100% agreement

10. Does the article include a description of a particular LSD experience that was portrayed neither as entirely positive or entirely negative, but as risky and disorienting?

93% agreement

11. Does the article include the description of a particular LSD experience that was a bad experience for the user, resulting in physical or emotional harm, lasting duress?

93% agreement

12. Does the story refer, however briefly, to the use of LSD by a medical doctor, researcher or college professor? (not including Leary or Alpert)

100% agreement

13. Does the story refer to the use of LSD by an artist, public intellectual, or celebrity, however briefly? (not including Leary or Alpert)

100% agreement

14. Does the story refer to LSD use by Timothy Leary or Richard Alpert?

93% agreement

15. Does the story mention any of the following individuals?

71% agreement

16. Does the story present two sides of an issue or just one side?

100% agreement

17. Does the story present a favorable side of LSD use for people who are not suffering from an illness?

93% agreement

18. Does the story present an unfavorable side of LSD use for people who are not suffering from an illness?

71% agreement

19. Does the article exhibit a bias against non-medical LSD use?

93% agreement

20. Does the article use the term “psychedelic” to describe the drug or drug effect?

93% agreement