

Re-creational Uses of LSD

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Right from the beginning, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) was ingested for nonmedical reasons and produced an experience that was re-creational in nature. Since that day of April 19, 1943, when Albert Hofmann "determined to probe the situation," this molecule was confined to research labs at Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in Basel, Switzerland, until the late 1940's. There it was given to six schizophrenics on 20 occasions (which might be viewed as medical use) and to 16 normal subjects on 29 occasions (more likely, re-creational use). Although investigative dosages of only 20 to 30 micrograms (μg) were used after Hofmann's trip, these 23 people constituted the entire first sampling of impressions on how this new substance might be applied.

In 1947, Werner Stoll, the son of Hofmann's lab partner, communicated the first account of LSD's effects—based on this collective experience—in the pages of the *Swiss Archives of Neurology*. Then in 1949, he reported further about this drug in the same journal in an article titled "A New Hallucinatory Agent, Active in Very Small Amounts." Before the year was out, two more studies were published and the drug made its way across the Atlantic to the United States.

It came to the West Coast in a definitely nonmedical fashion via the Los Angeles psychiatrist Nick Bercel, a Hungarian. Bercel had been visiting Stoll in Switzerland, who, before they parted, told him something to the effect that "I think there are a few things we have developed you

ought to try." As Bercel recalls it, Stoll reached into his waistcoat pocket and handed him a couple of vials without much more ado. Bercel did try it once he returned home, thereby probably becoming the first person in the U.S. ever to take LSD. Bercel played an important part in the spread of this substance in the Los Angeles area in the early 1950's and was among the first to publish his findings.

At about the same time as this casual encounter between Stoll and Bercel, Otto Kauders from Vienna spoke at Boston Psychiatric Hospital—a mental health center affiliated with Harvard Medical School—and described how LSD had temporarily made Hofmann crazy. This caught the attention of those present and, as the research director has commented, "We were very interested in anything that could make someone schizophrenic." Soon Max Rinkel, a neuropsychiatrist, contacted Sandoz and received a supply.

The first to test out this batch was Robert Hyde, of Boston Hospital's Psychopathic staff, who swallowed 100 μg in water. The observing group had hoped that through the production of a temporary mental breakdown they might come to understand more about disorders of the mind. But Hyde felt little in the way of effects and actually insisted on making his ordinary hospital rounds.

Hyde's experience, even though it produced little in the way of medical results, nonetheless has a kind of delicious irony about it, because, as Rinkel later remarked, he became quite paranoid and insisted that they had not given him anything and also that Sandoz had cheated them by sending plain water. "That was not Dr.

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Hyde's normal behavior," was how Rinkel described this session, which must have been reminiscent to many of those present of an outstanding Robert Louis Stevenson theme, because "he is a very pleasant man." Hyde, it might be noted, later became a consultant about LSD for the CIA.

In current governmental jargon, the phrases "recreational usage" and/or "recreational drugs" usually refer to use other than utilization of a mind-altering substance for an established medical reason. As previously indicated, the history of LSD up until the second half of this century was almost entirely of this sort. In the three and a half intervening decades since then, little has changed. Much can be—and has been—said for and about the medical applications of this drug, and by 1966, when such usage was dramatically curtailed, it had been tried by well over 40,000 mentally ill patients. Yet, so-called recreational users have since predominated and they now constitute the vast majority of users.

Adoption of the adjective "recreational" by the government generally has about it a connotation that such experiences are rather trivial, frivolous and/or of a vulgar and lower-order nature. In fact, however, the impressions conveyed by most individuals engaged in such activities with LSD seems to have been to the effect that the consequences have been of a higher order. The bulk of those responding have repeatedly indicated that they have thought that their use of LSD had been among the most important experiences of their lives and that the drug's effects had been *re-creational*.

Because the use of appropriate language often falls short in the area of consciousness studies, it is instructive to refer to that first contrived, nonmedical experience with LSD by Hofmann. Hofmann claimed to have experienced out-of-body sensations, much fright, much religious feeling, much concern for his family's future, much sense about how ironic it seemed that he might die by experimenting further with a family of drugs that he had initially synthesized, and much feeling that he was going crazy. At that time, psychiatry could have easily described this as a dissociative experience—a use of language that may lead to an easy dismissal of any significance of the psychedelic experience.

Yet even given such psychotherapeutic terms, the degree of dissociation produced by LSD is so pronounced as to have caused many, if not most, users to see themselves from a completely novel point of view. Erhardt Sensitivity Training (EST) and a host of similar modern-day disciplines would describe many of these experiences as, in their jargon, "re-creational." Hofmann's recollection of that first deliberate trip could be said to be typical of most of the LSD literature regarding rejuvenation: "I

then slept; to awake the next morning refreshed, with a clear head, though still somewhat tired physically. A sensation of well-being and renewed life flowed through me. Breakfast tasted delicious and gave me an extraordinary pleasure. When I later walked out into the garden, in which the sun shown now after a spring rain, everything glistened and sparkled in a fresh light. The world was as if newly created."

Stan Grof has delineated some of the varieties of experience frequently encountered in re-creational use of LSD. For instance, his first acquaintance with LSD involved a stroboscope and led to important consequences, even though it was not designed with medical purposes in mind: "The basic idea was to study the driving of the waves in the occipital area of the brain. That combination of LSD and the strong flashing light triggered a very powerful experience of cosmic unity—a feeling that I was leaving my body and expanding to cosmic proportions. The memory of this experience of mystic oneness with whatever there is has stayed with me ever since."

The decade of the 1950's saw LSD passing largely into the hands of psychotherapists, who gradually developed considerably revised theories as to its effects, and something of a recreationally oriented clientele. By August 1950, for example, A.K. Busch and W.C. Johnson were discussing the drug's role as an aid in psychotherapy in an American journal, *Diseases of the Nervous System*. When Oscar Janiger, a psychiatrist who came on the scene before this decade was over, later questioned Busch as to how the pair had become involved, Busch said, "I don't know. We got the idea that if we got a good deliriant going, we might then shake things up a bit." Such thinking, rather nonmedical in origin, no doubt influenced many at this time.

The overt reason given for professional interest in this drug was that researchers were hoping—on the basis of an analogy made with the conquest of yellow fever and malaria—that if they could create a temporary psychosis, then they might be able to study their subject firsthand and maybe overcome it. The result was that LSD was gradually getting into their heads, those of their patients and those of their friends.

Oscar Janiger is a good example. He became involved with this substance when someone asked him—after he had spoken about abnormal psychology, mainly illustrating with anecdotes derived from accidents and brain lesions—whether or not he himself would like to experience such a state, and offered him LSD. The result, once he had agreed, was such that before long he had initiated nearly a thousand others. One of his subjects was an artist, who under the influence of the drug had a strong desire to draw. Later he remarked that this LSD episode

"was the most important artistic experience that [he had] ever had" and asked whether or not Janiger would mind if he told other artists about it. That opened up Janiger to the potentially significant re-creational uses of LSD.

During the 1950's there was what Allen Ginsberg has called "a big cloud of literal consciousness repression" hanging over the appreciation of altered states of mind. Hence most of those with access to LSD in these early days readily accepted the then current notion that it was a psychotomimetic (psychosis-mimicking) agent. But in many ways, this has been a powerful, but nonspecific, amplifier of the mental set of the experimenter and the conditions of any particular session. This initial designation of psychotomimetic was probably the result of unfamiliarity with LSD and the original coloration provided by Hofmann's overdose (as he sometimes describes that first deliberate LSD trip).

The import of the Busch and Johnson report of 1950 was that on the basis of their preliminary investigation many psychotherapists realized that LSD might offer a means for more readily gaining access to chronically withdrawn patients. "It may also serve as a tool for shortening psychotherapy," they added, and hoped that further investigation would justify their impressions.

Before long, others were widening the sense of LSD's potential. For example, R.A. Sandison, an English practitioner, offered his appraisal early on: "There are good reasons for believing that the LSD experience is a manifestation of the psychic unconscious, and that its material can be used in psychotherapy in the same way that dreams, phantasies and paintings can be used by psychoanalysts."

If this drug could facilitate psychotherapeutic transference, perhaps it could also be used for other purposes, such as a truth drug. That was the leading interest of those in the CIA's Chemical Division who eventually set up the LSD program known as MKULTRA, which was well under way by 1953. In his book *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate*, John Marks discussed an aspect of re-creational LSD usage based on his examination of the first 16,000 pages of relevant documents released by the CIA in the late 1970's.

What is worth commenting on is that LSD provided a great many surprises to the CIA and to various branches of the armed services as they began to try to use and control it. For one thing, these agencies were the means by which many counterculture activists of the 1960's first became acquainted with this drug. Also, as these clandestine agents on many occasions tried it on each other, they themselves were affected in subtle and unexpected ways.

Marks quotes one of the MKULTRA pioneers who talked about his first trip on LSD. The description given

presents an unusually clear example of how the drug operates re-creationally. After ingesting LSD, nothing physically about one changes, only something of one's point of view. It is like slightly moving a fulcrum of perspective, just enough to make the half-empty glass appear half full. This account by Marks of how that early CIA experimentation expanded an agent's perception of reality:

"I was shaky at first, but then I just experienced it and had a high. I felt that everything was working right. I was like a locomotive going at top efficiency. Sure there was stress, but not in a debilitating way. It was like the stress of an engine pulling the longest train it's ever pulled." This CIA veteran describes seeing all the colors of the rainbow growing out of cracks in the sidewalk. He had always disliked cracks as signs of imperfection, but suddenly the cracks became natural stress lines that measured the vibrations of the universe. He saw people with blemished faces, which he had previously found slightly repulsive. "I had a changed value about faces," he says. "Hooked noses or crooked teeth would become beautiful for that person. Something had turned loose in me, and all I had done was shift my attitude. Reality hadn't changed, but I had. That was all the difference in the world between seeing something ugly and seeing truth and beauty."

While the CIA, Army and Navy were gearing up for turning on great numbers of people to LSD without public scrutiny and often without any foreknowledge on the part of the experimenter, Humphry Osmond and Abram Hoffer, way up in Saskatoon, Canada, were thinking about the psychotomimetic aspects of this drug. One morning at about 4:00 a.m., they got the notion that they might be able to use this effect to produce a kind of artificial delirium tremens (d.t.'s) in their alcoholic patients. When d.t.'s occur naturally, about 10 percent of the experiencers recover immediately and never drink again. Osmond and Hoffer reasoned that they might be able to contrive similar results in a somewhat better than usual setting. The idea seemed a bit bizarre and laughable, but in the morning they wondered whether or not it might be that a controlled LSD-induced delirium might help alcoholics stay sober.

They tried this out on two of their patients, and one recovered immediately. About a 50 percent recovery rate came about when they ran further LSD trials, leading Osmond to question whether or not large samplings were really needed. In any event, as familiarity with this drug increased, their sense of LSD's potential grew. Hoffer has since remarked that "... by 1957 it was apparent that

even though many of our patients were helped by LSD, it was not its psychotomimetic activity which was responsible. In spite of our best efforts to produce such an experience, some of our subjects escaped into a psychedelic experience."

By the late 1950's, great impetus came about for a more apt, re-creational understanding of LSD by way of a conference called by the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation. It became undeniably clear for the first time that LSD itself actually played a minor role in determining its subjective effects. Some of those attending stated that not one of their volunteers ever wanted to take LSD again, whether the setting had been the office or the hospital. This was rather startling to those who maintained the exact opposite about their groups: that all of their people had considered the experience to be rewarding.

Charles Savage, a very early LSD experimenter, spoke about how the gathering had changed ideas about LSD. He remarked that "this meeting is most valuable because it allows us to see all at once the results ranging from nihilistic conclusions of some to the evangelical ones of others. Because the results are so much influenced by the personality, aims, and expectations of the therapist, and by the setting, only a meeting such as this could provide us with such a variety of personalities and settings."

There are two other things of importance that occurred in the 1950's concerning the re-creational applications of LSD. The first is that in 1959 Albert Hofmann received a parcel of seeds from a man in Mexico City he had made contact with while investigating the sacred Mexican fungi. These seeds were from the Mexican morning glory (*Rivea corymbosa*), and soon he determined that they contained ergot alkaloids that were similar to LSD and when ingested evoked similar experiences.

Such knowledge soon spread, with the result that a form of LSD—about 50 times less powerful than the molecule Hofmann had concocted—was recognized as being readily available to anyone willing to swallow a handful of seeds. Some of those thus venturing came to feel that the Burpee Seed Company and other seed growers must have had an inkling as to the morning glory's mental effects when they named the psychoactive varieties in America "Pearly Gates," "Wedding Bells," "Flying Saucers" and "Heavenly Blue."

The other important development was that by the time the 1960's began, the word "psychedelic" (mind-manifesting) had come into some currency and began displacing "psychotomimetic" as the descriptive adjective for LSD's effects. At the time, many people thought that this term would never pass into common usage,

because it sounded so strange. Richard Evans Schultes, of Harvard University and one of the greatest plant discoverers ever, objected further on the grounds that psychedelic was a mongrel word from both Greek and Latin roots.

In Aldous Huxley's 1954 volume *Doors of Perception*, LSD is not mentioned. But he is quite clear in this report about a May 1953 mescaline sulfate trip—entered into under the supervision of Osmond—that what he experienced was not really a psychotomimetic event, but more akin to a mystical state. Psychedelic connotes much more of this sort of interpretation than psychotomimetic, which as a descriptive term would attract only a small number of re-creational users. Additionally, the second "e" in psychedelic, if nothing else, helped to obliterate images of psychopaths.

This new word, psychedelic, was at first largely reserved for description of the positive part of an LSD experience—for the heavenly aspects, rather than for the moments considered to be hellish. But by the 1960's, this revised signifier had begun to be used generally, even to the extent of changing expectations. Abbie Hoffman, a counterculture hero who was first turned on to LSD in 1965 via acid supplied by the U.S. Army, indicated how this change in the sense of LSD's applicability had circulated even by the late 1950's: "Aldous Huxley had told me about LSD back in 1957. And I *tried* to get it in 1959. I stood in line at a clinic in San Francisco, after Herb Caen had run an announcement in his column in the *Chronicle* that if anybody wanted to take a new experimental drug called LSD, he would be paid \$150 for his effort. Jesus, that emptied Berkeley! I got up about six in the morning, but I was about 1,500 in line. . . . So I didn't get any until 1965."

In 1960, John Beresford, a pediatrician, wrote to Sandoz on a sheet of New York Hospital letterhead and for \$285 received back a gram of LSD (4,000 substantial doses) with which he intended to study effects on amoebas and to use it as a control drug for a series of bone marrow experiments. The amoeba experiments were never carried out, because Beresford and an English friend, Michael Hollingshead, soon tried this drug themselves. When the effects had worn off, their opinion—as recalled by Beresford—was that they should either throw the whole batch into New York's East River or spread it around.

The long-range consequence was that Beresford's batch of LSD eventually provided psychoactive material that was used in what became America's first LSD centers. Beresford, Jean Houston and Michael Corner opened the earliest of these centers in Manhattan and called it the Agora Scientific Trust. There they studied LSD's effects on so-called normals. Although the book that mainly described this work—Masters and Houston's *The Vari-*

eties of Psychedelic Experience—did discuss some therapeutic applications, most attention was focused on what governmental agencies would now refer to as recreational usage.

Beresford and Hollingshead split the Sandoz gram, and not long after Hollingshead moved into Timothy Leary's house near Harvard. Leary, who was involved in psilocybin studies at the time, was put off by Hollingshead's urgings that he try LSD. Leary apparently considered it to be unnatural, unlike psilocybin and mescaline. But then one afternoon Hollingshead convinced jazz musician Maynard Ferguson and his wife Flo to give it a try, and Flo soon was having such a remarkable experience that Leary decided that he would sample it too. Hollingshead bounded up the stairs to get the mayonnaise jar in which his LSD was cut with sugar, and ladled out a heaping teaspoonful to Leary.

Richard Alpert recalled what happened by saying that Leary "didn't talk for five days." As a result, Alpert told everyone who was interested "not to touch the stuff—we had just lost Timothy." But when Leary finally came down, Alpert remembers him as having just said, "Wow!" Alpert was definitely impressed. This then led to an LSD center and to tremendous further impetus for re-creational use of LSD.

The third major center for LSD studies also opened early in the 1960's in Palo Alto, California. Myron Stolaroff, the main figure behind this one, first became acquainted with this molecule by way of Gerald Heard, who in the mid-1950's had spoken about LSD in ways Stolaroff considered almost unbelievable. Stolaroff recalled one evening when he visited Heard and expressed his resistance to the idea of actually taking LSD: "In fact, I was disappointed since I thought Gerald was our outstanding modern mystic. I said, 'Why Gerald, I thought you went to all these places anyway—why do you take this stuff?' And he said, 'Oh, but it just opens the doors in so many ways to so many vast dimensions.' At this time, such was very hard for me to visualize—because I felt that for Gerald the doors ordinarily were wide open, that there couldn't be any more doors. But his enthusiasm was obvious."

Before long Stolaroff was having his first LSD experience in the Vancouver, British Columbia, apartment of Al Hubbard, one of the legendary Johnny Appleseeds of LSD. Hubbard had carried LSD around in a pouch on a circuit in the late 1950's that involved deliveries to quite a number of psychotherapists in the Los Angeles area. Earlier, he had bought 4,000 bottles of Sandoz LSD.

The LSD institute that Stolaroff eventually established did not view this substance as a psychotomimetic. This is quite evident from its first report, which

appeared in the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry* in late 1962. Here, John Sherwood, Myron Stolaroff and Willis Harman—principal figures at this West Coast institute—discussed earlier LSD findings. They also summarized the dynamics of psychedelic sessions as involving (a) an evasive stage, (b) a stage of symbolic perception, and then finally (c) a stage of immediate perception in which the user is able to:

... experience himself in a totally new way and finds that the age-old question "Who am I?" does have a significant answer. He experiences himself as a far greater being than he has ever imagined, with his conscious self a far smaller fraction of the whole than he had realized. Furthermore, he sees that his own self is by no means so separate from other selves and the universe about him as he might have thought. Nor is the existence of this newly experienced self so intimately related to his corporeal existence.

These realizations, while not new to mankind, and possibly not new to the subject in an intellectual sense, are very new in an experiential sense. That is, they are new in the sense that makes for altered behavior. The individual sees clearly that some of his actions are not in line with his new knowledge and that changes are obviously called for. Behavior patterns, worn in with many years of usage, are not easily nor quickly changed. Nevertheless, because the individual's new knowledge of himself results from deeply felt experience and is not merely intellectual, with the passage of time his behavior does tend to change, to become more appropriate to his expanded picture of himself. . . .

The importance of the Palo Alto center was that it established the efficacy of using quite large doses of LSD (200 to 400 µg), because nearly 83 percent of the first 113 participants in their program claimed that they had received "quite a bit" or "very much" lasting benefit from this drug. By the mid-1960's this institute was also viewing LSD as a potent creative tool and listed 11 ways in which it prodded these effects:

1. A capacity to structure problems in a larger context
2. A higher fluency and flexibility of ideation
3. A high capacity for visual imagery and fantasy
4. A greater ability to concentrate
5. High empathy with external processes and objects
6. Low inhibition and anxiety
7. Greater empathy with people
8. More accessibility to unconscious resources
9. An ability to associate seemingly dissimilar elements in meaningful ways
10. Much motivation to obtain closure, with an appetite

for elegance

11. A capacity to visualize the completed solution in its entirety.

After Richard Alpert was dismissed from Harvard in 1963, the media expanded its coverage to the point where hardly a national magazine failed to comment in some way. So when the Harvard LSD center moved over to Cambridge as the International Federation for Internal Freedom (IFIF) and later that summer offered a week-long seminar in Zihuatanejo, Mexico, for \$200—with psychedelic sessions available—it was no surprise that it quickly received more than 1,500 applications.

The crucial issue then for presumably several million people, who by this time had grown curious to a greater or lesser extent, was the matter of access to LSD. In the book *Utopiates*, by Blum and associates (1964), much is made of the fact that during the previous period access had been through “gatekeepers” who for the most part had been psychotherapists. But now demand had ballooned.

According to science fiction writer Chester Anderson, by 1957 a substantial leak of Sandoz acid led from its Hanover, New Jersey, plant to Greenwich Village. Beresford described how by 1961 Chuck Bick had become one of Manhattan’s chief suppliers:

Chuck’s customers included bankers, lawyers, doctors, teaching staff from New York and Columbia Universities, writers, musicians, painters, playboys, clergymen, prostitutes—as he related it the list seemed endless, though the number of purchasers was small. His method of obtaining LSD was simple. When stock ran low, Chuck phoned Sandoz in New Jersey and told the doctor there who handled LSD that this was Bick with a request for an additional vial of 10 milligrams, and could his assistant stop by in the afternoon to pick it up? Sheila, Chuck’s wife, drove over to the plant and collected it. Chuck had no problem getting LSD, and, as far as I could tell, his people had no trouble taking it.

Augustus Owsley Stanley III, however, was having difficulty getting LSD. This led him to manufacturing the substance, and over the next five years he established the first massive underground production of millions of Owsley tabs and double-domes: powerful and high-quality LSD. In *LSD: The Age of Mind*, Bernard Roseman described how he and a partner came to engage in such manufacturing as well—although in this case the quality was questionable, due to their inexperience as chemists, and also before long they were busted and charged with smuggling some 62,000 LSD tablets. Manufacture at this time was not illegal and soon more and more were getting into the game.

In 1964 a class was given at the Free University of

New York in which one of the questions of special interest was whether or not this drug should be given to very young children. If, as Freudians claimed, the adult personality is largely formed by about the age of five, then why should children not be given it early if it removed imprints of social conditioning, as Leary and others were then claiming. How was this notion to be reconciled with the notion of free will, because, for example, even Catholics wait until the age of seven before considering an individual capable of independent judgment? Was there an unresolvable dilemma here? These questions, tossed back and forth at some length, brought out that several parents there had already given LSD to their children, which perhaps indicates something of the flavor of interest at the time.

But in 1966, a different corner was turned. In the spring of that year, a five-year-old in Brooklyn swallowed an LSD sugar cube that had been left in the refrigerator by her uncle. She was taken to the hospital where her stomach was pumped. Then, almost immediately after, a Brooklyn medical student—after having been released from the mental ward at Bellevue Hospital—stabbed his mother-in-law to death and later claimed that he could not remember anything about the incident as a result of having taken LSD.

In the latter incident, it was later established that this individual had drunk a considerable amount of lab alcohol in addition to having taken various tranquilizers before the killing, and that his LSD usage had actually occurred years earlier and involved miniscule amounts. But the Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde image feared by some about LSD seemed to have been confirmed. The media had a field day with all this, and within hours district attorneys and legislators—presented to the public as LSD experts—were denouncing this drug and calling for its extinction.

Up until now, the study and discussion of LSD’s effects had been perceived as being fairly respectable. That summer the University of California at San Francisco sponsored a week-long conference about the drug’s implications, and those attending were still terribly enthusiastic. But while this was going on, word came that a California legislative subcommittee had recommended outlawing LSD. Sandoz, alarmed by the media uproar that had been created, panicked and turned over a small quantity of LSD to the Food and Drug Administration, which announced that it would sharply curtail ongoing studies. Huston Smith, speaking at the California conference, sadly concluded that the confusion about LSD had become so great and our knowledge was yet so small that “there is no hope of telling the truth about it at this point.”

Recreational LSD use until then had been almost entirely secretive and private. One of the few exceptions

was the rock and light shows put on by Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, which featured a punch containing LSD that those attending could drink of as they liked. Kesey had earlier been introduced to the drug by the U.S. Army at Stanford.

Then, on October 16, 1966, California actually did ban LSD. This event occasioned the first of what later came to be known as human be-ins or just plain be-ins, when several thousand people observed the day on both coasts. This was an act of defiance, signaling intent to continue use, and many took LSD as part of this protest. What resulted, among other things, was a good deal of publicity about the colorfulness and gentleness of those who had come out. This led to an even larger gathering in January 1967 in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

There, on a beautiful, sunny day, LSD was distributed freely among the crowd and an estimated 10,000 people turned on. Leary, Ginsberg, Lenore Kandel (who was being prosecuted at the time for issuing a volume of love poems) and the poet-playwright Michael McClure praised the psychedelics to the accompaniment of local bands formed largely of LSD users, including the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and the Holding Company and the Jefferson Airplane. By the time that vibrant day was over, most of those attending were convinced that San Francisco was soon about to experience a summer of love.

In the past an emphasis had been placed on the need to prepare oneself for an LSD session. In many of the studies already commented on, the subjects were encouraged to write out an autobiographical account weeks in advance and also submitted to various psychological tests. Frequently, they brought photos considered to be especially meaningful for them to the session. And often they spent some of the time under the drug's influence blindfolded and listening to preselected music on stereo headphones. But now, after the visions and joy of those two initial experiments with mass-scale ingestions of LSD, came a much more casual attitude toward LSD use. All over the nation there sprouted gatherings of the tribe, in which thousands would take the drug together and be programed by young minstrels whose music was designed to enhance the trip. Participants were encouraged to *freak freely*, and for the most part were left alone to do so by civil authorities.

How to describe what followed next! Previously, LSD had been taken cautiously, but now prudence was jettisoned and many hundreds of thousands took the drug rather freely in doses that earlier would have been considered reckless. Until now, those involved with LSD may have numbered a million, but use spread in what seemed like a chain reaction. And whereas before emphasis had been placed largely in psychological terms, concerns sud-

denly widened.

When Bernard Roseman took LSD for the first time, his immediate feeling was, how much of this could he take? That thought, no doubt, occurred to many who had been engaged before 1967. But until this time the idea of deliberately swallowing multiple doses had been approached rather timidly, although some individuals had experimented with this concept either by accident or design.

After Hofmann's first high-dose trip, those originally involved had erred perhaps on the side of caution: using LSD in the earliest studies in amounts little over the threshold of psychological perception. Hoffer and Osmond, studying the effects of LSD on alcoholics, were possibly the first again to see value in the use of substantial doses—trying to give their subjects an overwhelming experience and thinking that their hardcore alcoholic patients needed about twice the dose of normal individuals to achieve comparable effects. This concept of using a large amount had been carried to Hollywood Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia, which offered a week-long LSD experience for \$500, and then was promulgated to many by Al Hubbard, including those at the Palo Alto research center.

On the East Coast, the first trip taken by Hollingshead and Beresford had flowed from their each eating half of the wax paper on which they cut their gram of acid with icing sugar. They undoubtedly took a substantial amount. The following is Leary's description of what happened, as he heard it from Hollingshead: "The effect hit suddenly, and for five hours the two of them lay back paralyzed on kitchen chairs, their eyes bulging, completely severed from their bodies, from their minds, from normal reality. Helplessly spinning through cosmic landscapes, unable to speak or move, communicating only by shining powerless eyeball contact, like two astronauts drifting helplessly through space, or two men caught in diving suits miles below the surface."

At any rate, when Hollingshead went to Harvard, the group studying psilocybin there had already escalated doses of that drug in their research program well above the recommended 10 mg and were fully aware that increasing amounts brought on even more fantastic and meaningful consequences. Hollingshead took much the same attitude toward LSD, hardly hesitating to spoon out a teaspoonful when a good deal less would definitely get someone off. When the Harvard group eventually settled in Millbrook, New York, they established a kind of psychedelic mecca. It did not take long before they became casual about the use of LSD. In his book *The Man Who Turned On the World*, Hollingshead described many comical results that must have been duplicated elsewhere, as in the following

selection:

As most of the household had taken LSD anywhere up to 200 times, we did not see fit to store it surreptitiously. For example, some liquid LSD was poured into a half-empty port bottle and left on the top floor, usually out-of-bounds to visitors. A Canadian TV crew came to record a Weekend Experimental Workshop for a programme called "Seven Days on Sunday." The head of the CBC crew, a large man of about six feet, eight inches, began to wander about the house on his own. When he saw the bottle of port, he guzzled down a few slugs. Within twenty-five minutes he was on a very high LSD trip, something he was not prepared for. We were sitting in the dining-room when this huge man lumbered in with one shoe off, his tie half undone, his jacket buttons ripped off. . . .

By 1967, however, experimentation with large doses became common, with many thousands of people doing so deliberately. Some of this occurred on Owsley acid, but many more instances involved Sunshine, the product of the second major underground manufacturing that took place in the late 1960's. Tim Scully, one of the principal chemists involved, was an apprentice to Nick Sands, who took over for Owsley when he was busted. Scully claimed that 35 million doses of this acid came from Europe by way of Ronald Starks—presently a fugitive—and that an additional amount was made in the U.S. in the form of ALD-52 (an LSD homologue, said to be somewhat smoother in its effects than LSD). This tremendous amount probably only represents some of what was then appearing, because many others were also offering their wares. There were Orange Wedgies, Purple Buckets and many other forms of LSD available in those days. It was not uncommon for some to take 10 tabs at a time to see what that would do.

Another important change in the attitudes toward LSD that occurred by then was open recognition of the fact that this drug could create ecstatic experiences. This was an effect already much noted in the literature, but mainly evident from anonymous anecdotes by patients and only hinted at in most researchers' reflections. An example is Sidney Cohen's account (1962) of his glorious first experience, described in his book *The Beyond Within* as that of "a doctor," but later acknowledged as personal in the volume titled *LSD*, coauthored with Richard Alpert.

At the early Millbrook center the question whether or not to frankly recognize this ecstatic aspect was a significant debate. Such recognition might well raise uncalled-for images of orgies in the public's imagination. Late in 1966, however, Leary—busted just before for smuggling a small amount of marijuana through Laredo, Texas, as he

tried to enter Mexico, and becoming something of an LSD martyr in the process—decided to speak openly. Until then, researchers mainly skirted the issue, but Leary declared ecstasy (not to be confused with MDMA) to be a major effect of LSD. And on top of that, he described sexual implications in the pages of *Playboy*.

In the late 1960's, the novel element of group-tripping resulted in multiple experiences of synchronism and of psi-type events. Until this time such LSD-inspired feelings had cropped up regularly, but had been treated rather offhandedly because usually only a few participants were involved. Osmond, for example, recorded an earlier LSD experiment in which there was "a major, witnessed thought transference." He also described how this came to an end: "Unluckily we had no recording equipment and our observer became acutely panicky because he said it was uncanny." This was much less the feeling of the late-1960's LSD exploration.

This period became the first wave of the so-called psychedelic revolution. Young people were mostly involved, although their mentors, to a large extent, were well into their fifties. Yet these young people had found in LSD something to which they could give allegiance. Unquestionably the continuing war in Vietnam, the relative affluence then of the American middle class, and student dissatisfaction with educational goals were among the factors having to do with such a development. But when Leary concocted the slogan "Turn on, Tune in and Drop out"—conceived by most of his contemporaries to be shocking—millions, nonetheless, followed his advice.

What resulted was the establishment of an alternative culture, a counterculture in which new notions—largely derived from LSD experiences—flourished. Much of this would have been unacceptable to arbiters of taste in the media that previously had transmitted cultural feelings. However, this new, energized group soon conveyed catalytic information that was significant to the major social movements of the 1970's.

Changed attitudes toward consciousness, sexuality and ecology were part of the lingering consequences of these millions of LSD trips. This revised perception was conveyed forcefully in the form of newspapers that arose in the underground press and particularly in the popular music of that era.

By 1970, recreational use of LSD had begun to decline somewhat for reasons perhaps as complex as why its use had exploded just before. Writing in the Spring 1979 issue of *Journal of Drug Issues*, Richard Bunce related the data developed on this in relevant surveys going into the mid-1970's. One of his findings was that those people who were introduced to LSD over this period mostly were in the 14- to 17-year-old range, with use of

the drug then staying fairly steady in the 16- to 26-year-old grouping (about 10 percent). Bunce's major interest was to account for a steady decline in the incidence of bad trips over the interval, arguing that this might best be thought of in terms of a shift in social consciousness away from issues associated with psychedelics.

Bad trips and bummers—argot that hardly reflects the nature of what can occur—had by now been experienced by many, no doubt causing serious pause. Some concluded that they never wanted to experiment like that again, whereas others considered these occurrences a real puzzle. Those proclaiming the psychedelic revolution spoke of LSD as a sacrament; some even as a panacea. Need for LSD lifelines and LSD rescue services, which had arisen by then, showed these proclaimed panacean images to be somewhat false.

Many of the bad trips experienced at this time may well have been fostered by images from the media. The effects of LSD are mental and are thus difficult to image graphically. Illustrations at this time generally tended to be divided between ecstatic reflections and horrific interpretations. Added to the initiate's mental set were frequent warnings from psychotherapeutic professionals. There were arguments that this was perhaps part of a campaign to limit future experimentation and once again place LSD under the control of these professionals.

These factors greatly affected users' expectations, but by 1970 it had also become clear that the quality of street acid had become highly questionable. LSD's precursor, ergotamine, had by then been fairly effectively cut off to potential manufacturers, and one would have to take several tabs of blotter LSD then appearing to even get a buzz. With little regard for what these products could do to the mind, rip-off artists had by now come on the scene who apparently were not all that concerned about whether or not what they were selling was the pure molecule.

Beyond this, introduction of DOM (2,5-dimethoxy-4-methyl amphetamine) in the late 1960's on a rather massive scale significantly prodded this psychedelic withdrawal. The manufacturers of this product—known by its street name STP—later came to think that they probably had overestimated the proper dose and should not have distributed it at all. Subsequent popular feelings by a large number of regular LSD users was that the psychedelic effects of this drug were too much to handle.

The pitch made by Leary and his associates—emphasizing the need to “go out of your mind”—appealed to many among the adventurous young, to those with a certain amount of free time, and to some trying to find themselves. But the consequences for the bulk of the population was to close them off to the issues and applications raised by more moderate advocates. Nearly all the

positive potentials of LSD tended to be dismissed, with the whole matter seen simply as outrageous or merely as the latest fad among rebellious youths.

From the notion of its being a psychosis-producer, LSD had by the mid-1960's come to be seen as something of a significant mental tool that was rather useful. But by the end of that decade, it had come to be viewed—by many adults in particular—as just a means for seeking mindless ecstasy.

Then there was the charge by Maimon Cohen and colleagues, which first appeared in 1967, that LSD produced chromosomal damage. It was widely felt that those persisting in this usage were just indulging their senses without any regard for their offspring. By now, most early LSD researchers had beat a strategic retreat into allied, but nondrug, areas. And as a result, it took some time before it became clear that nobody could duplicate the original findings. The first reports, as it turned out, had been gravely defective—sampling mentally ill patients who, while it was true had been given LSD, had also been given large amounts of chlorpromazine and chlordiazepoxide. Both of these drugs have now been established to be definite chromosome breakers. Nonetheless, this erroneous evaluation of LSD caused many people to give up using the drug.

Finally, in enumerating the factors causing the recession of the first LSD wave, it should be mentioned that by the beginning of the 1970's many of the goals enunciated with enthusiasm only a few years before had been only partially achieved. In the flush of those earlier vision-filled days of massive group-tripping, many failed to see how hard it would be to bring the hopes of that time into the physical plane and that this had to be done step by step.

Earlier there had been a feeling that by way of flower power and the so-called Children's Crusade of that time, a new human order would come to fruition before long. It is difficult now to believe the expectations and fervor that had developed by then. In the political realm, wherein many of these hopes lay, the defeat of “Clean Gene” McCarthy and the ascension of Nixon for *two terms*, the crushing of revolutionary forces in Czechoslovakia and in France, and other discouraging world events dashed the hopes and commitments of many. No doubt, the breakup of the Beatles and the deaths of Hendrix, Joplin and Morrison all became socially disillusioning factors. The upshot was that during the early 1970's many former LSD users had come to reassess their posture and decided to maintain a considerably lower profile.

During this phase, much of the collective feeling went out of the LSD experience and those still using LSD began to have less frequent and more private trips. Many users from that earlier period, however, continued to carry

a lot of that previous intellectual baggage with them.

Those entering the LSD subculture in the mid-1970's were for the most part quite young and without much in the way of an LSD background. Their activities much more resembled the scene of the early 1960's. They were much more inclined to use the drug recreationally, without any specific purpose in mind.

For the diehards and these new initiates, acid continued to flow through the 1970's, but with little now being given away. The major manufacturing efforts were producing computer acid (so called because it came on blotter paper the size of a dollar, in five rows of 20 hits each), Microdots (tiny yellow and purple spheres) and Windowpane (also named Clearlight, with the LSD embedded in one quarter inch squares of gelatin). Lots of other so-called blotters (e.g., Mr. Natural and Red Rose) came down the pike to satisfy late 1970's demands.

Somewhere around late 1977, there emerged a second wave of interest in LSD, which once again expanded the clientele. By this time media horror stories had largely disappeared and the subject of LSD was rarely mentioned.

Interestingly, one of the things happening at this time was the appearance of relatively large amounts of the *Stropharia cubensis* mushroom. Manuals were published that showed how it was possible—for those who could do simple canning—to cultivate this fungus on rye. This was something new, in the sense that until this time most of the attempts to culture *Psilocybe*-type mushrooms had failed because the conditions needed to prevent contamination went beyond the skills of most attempting the task.

This mushroom variety, however, not only could be cultivated successfully without that much care, but it also contained an unusually large amount of psilocin and psilocybin. Also, this *cubensis* variety could be fairly readily identified by comparing them to photographs. Many individuals who had been turned off to LSD due to difficulties in identifying the pure product, came to feel that this mushroom was a reliable source of psychedelic substances. The resulting trip was gentle, and as home-production spread, this began to rekindle interest in psychedelic effects for some of those people who had dismissed further involvement with LSD.

Another new development in 1977 was the appearance of Albert and Anita Hofmann at two conferences on the West Coast. In 1969 Hofmann had been invited to speak at a gathering of researchers in San Francisco, but declined because he felt that whatever he would have to

say, as the father of LSD, would be greatly distorted by the press. Now, however, it became evident that most of the previous hysteria about LSD was over. Hofmann and his wife served as magnets, bringing together previous researchers.

These two conferences—along with several others that have happened since then—helped to restore aspects of LSD's previous respectability. For one thing, it became evident that LSD and issues related to LSD could be discussed openly, without becoming instantly sensationalized. Additionally, those participants who had retreated from LSD indicated that they had not really lost interest and that they regarded prior findings as important, even if those findings had been eclipsed as the LSD scene went underground.

At the end of the 1970's and in the early 1980's there appears to have arisen a renewed interest in LSD, with somewhat of a less flamboyant character than earlier. There also appears to be renewed distribution of high quality LSD. One might speculate that this results from a decade or more during which many of the more dedicated users came to grips with the study of organic chemistry.

What the future portends for LSD is unknown, but in an article in *New West* magazine in 1979, Charlie Haas stated that:

LSD—the scariest and most tantalizing thing you can buy without a prescription, the white hope for instant psychotherapy that became a CIA toy and a bazooka in the Bohemian arsenal, the portable Lourdes that oiled the transition of American youth from Elvis to Elvish and made all those honor students start dressing funny and printing up those unreadable purple-and-aqua posters—that LSD—is as nationally popular now as it was ten years ago, despite the fact that the same media which then could speak of nothing else are now virtually silent on the subject. Among people who swallow it or sell it, or who monitor its use from the vantage point of drug-abuse counseling, there is some sporting disagreement as to whether acid had been enjoying a renaissance for about two years or never went away in the first place, with the former view in the majority. But there is a consensus on at least two points: The bad trips and mental casualties that made such hot copy in the '60s seem to have diminished radically, and the volume of acid changing hands suggests that there are actually more users now than there were a decade ago. . . .