

A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF  
THE FEDERAL PROHIBITION OF  
PSILOCYBIN

A Dissertation  
presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by  
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AUGUST 2007

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PSILOCYBIN

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank a group of people that includes J. Kenneth Benson, Wayne Brekhus, Deborah Cohen, John F. Galliher, Jay Gubrium, Victoria Johnson, Theodore Koditschek, Clarence Lo, Kyle Miller, Ibitola Pearce, Diane Rodgers, Paul Sturgis and Dieter Ullrich.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY .....	iv
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE LIVES OF TIMOTHY LEARY AND RICHARDALPERT .....	20
3. MASS MEDIA COVERAGE OF PSILOCYBIN AS WELL AS THE LIVES OF RICHARD ALPERT AND TIMOTHY LEARY (1957-1968).....	27
4. SPECIALTY SOURCES INVOLVING PSILOCYBIN AND ITS PRACTITIONERS.....	41
5. CONCLUSION.....	74
 REFERENCES .....	 87
APPENDIX	
1. SOURCES.....	94
VITA.....	100

Note: In this dissertation when I refer collectively to substances such as psilocybin (3-[2-(Dimethylamino)ethyl]-1H-indol-4-yl dihydrogen phosphate ester), mescaline (3,4,5-Trimethoxybenzeneethanamine), DMT (N,N-Dimethyl-1H-indole-3-ethanamine), LSD (9,10-Didehydro-N,N-diethyl-6-methylergoline-8 $\beta$ -carboxamide), and LSA (d-lysergic acid amide), I will use the term “hallucinogens” rather than “psychedelics” or the currently popular term “entheogens” (chemical names taken from [www.erowid.org](http://www.erowid.org)). I am doing this for the reasons that Ralph Metzner outlines in the following passage:

“Psychedelic”, the term coined by Humphrey Osmond and Aldous Huxley and popularized by Leary and the Harvard group, means “mind-manifesting.”  
“Hallucinogenic” is the term most often used in the psychiatric research literature for these substances. The main objection to the term “hallucinogenic” is that these drugs and plants do not in fact induce hallucinations, in the sense of “illusory perceptions”. But the term “hallucinogen” deserves to be rehabilitated. The original meaning of the Latin *alucinare* is to “wander in one’s mind”; and travelling [*sic*] or journeying in inner space are actually quite appropriate descriptive metaphors for such experiences, which are referred to colloquially as “trips” (Metzner 1998).

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Statement of the problem**

This dissertation will analyze the social construction of a drug problem. In particular it will be an attempt to show how and why psilocybin (the primary hallucinogenic compound in the so-called “magic” mushroom[[www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/psilocybin.asp#1](http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/psilocybin.asp#1)]) was turned into a threatening menace in less than a decade and subsequently criminalized by the U.S. government. My analysis will be based on two types of data sources, namely, “mass media” and “specialty” sources. The mass media sources will include popular magazines and newspapers while the specialty sources will include information from taped lectures, videos, and relatively obscure published sources. The basic research question is: What can we learn from the specialty sources that the mass media sources do not reflect?

In looking at the mass media sources I will track the changing portrayal of psilocybin between June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1957 and October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1968. The primary focus, however, will be the change that occurred between 1957 and 1963. The date June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1957 was chosen because it is the same day that *Life* magazine published an article written by R. Gordon Wasson in which he detailed his experiences with psilocybin (or what he called “magic”) mushrooms in Mexico. It was through Wasson’s article that this mind expanding substance first came to the attention of Western society. The year 1963 was chosen because by that time, the popular media had painted psilocybin as a threat to the nation’s young people. The date October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1968 was chosen because it is the day that the United States government criminalized psilocybin and a similar compound psilocin.

(The main difference between these compounds is the fact that psilocin is generally considered to be more potent than psilocybin and, further, when psilocybin enters the bloodstream it is chemically transformed into psilocin [Boire 2002].) The question is what happened between 1957 and 1963 that caused popular portrayals of this substance to change so dramatically? At the time that Wasson's article was published the psilocybin mushroom—a fungus that had been known and revered by indigenous peoples of the continent for perhaps thousands of years—was depicted as a relatively harmless substance that may even have potential medical applications. Within a few years, however psilocybin, the primary active compound in the mushroom, was being demonized in the mass media.

### **Distinction between psilocybin and the psilocybin mushroom**

It is important to distinguish between psilocybin in its synthetic form and its naturally occurring form as it exists in the psilocybin mushroom. Researchers who have studied the effects of this drug have typically made use of the synthetic version. (See for example Wittmann et. al. 2007; Moreno et. al. 2006; Pahnke 1963; Isbell et. al., 1961) However, because synthetic psilocybin is expensive and difficult to manufacture and because it is relatively fragile ([www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/psilocybin.asp#1](http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/psilocybin.asp#1)) it is likely that this particular form of the drug has rarely if ever been available in the illicit drug market. According to the United States Department of Justice law enforcement sources indicate that this substance is not known to be available on the illicit market. Indeed: “Both psilocybin and psilocyn [sic] can be produced synthetically, but law enforcement reporting currently does not indicate that this is occurring”

(<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs6/6038/#look%like>). Therefore, to the extent that psilocybin has made inroads into the illicit drug market it has most likely existed in the form of the psilocybin mushroom. In fact a section of the United State Department of Justice website that is titled “How is Psilocybin Abused?” talks exclusively about “psilocybin mushrooms” (<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs6/6038/#look%like>). Federal and state laws that control psilocybin have criminalized the compound itself rather than the psilocybin mushroom. This has made for some drawn out legal battles when the government has attempted to prosecute individuals for possessing these mushrooms (See Boire 2002).

### **Distinction between psilocybin, psilocin, and other hallucinogenic compounds**

I would like to make two points here. First, because most of the literature about magic mushrooms discusses psilocybin rather than psilocin this dissertation will, for the sake of clarity, focus primarily on the former substance rather than the latter. According to Presti and Nichols (2004 in R. Metzner, ed.) these substances were discovered in 1958 by the prominent Swiss chemist Albert Hoffmann. Second, it is important for the reader to note that although these substances are, in many respects, similar to DMT, LSA, LSD, and mescaline, they are not identical with the latter substances (See for example Weil 1963:38). It seems likely that, during the 1960s, many people may not have known that there is a difference between psilocybin and other hallucinogenic compounds. In the following passage, for example, one author clearly confuses psilocybin with LSD by arguing that:

At least one scientist has presented experimental evidence that *LSD* can aid people searching for a religious experience. Dr. Walter N. Pahnke, a Harvard



psychiatrist, gave *psilocybin* to 10 Protestant theology students attending a private Good Friday service....In carefully designed tests for nine types of perception or feeling...the *psilocybin* groups scored higher [than the control group] in every category (Lawson 1965; Italics added).

Because this passage appears in a section of the article where the author is discussing LSD it seems likely that the author's use of the term LSD in referring to the results of psilocybin experiments stems from a genuine sense of confusion regarding the differences between these substances.

## **Laws**

According to Richard Glen Boire (2002:25) psilocybin and psilocin were first subjected to federal regulation by a law that is commonly referred to as "the Drug Abuse Control Amendments of 1965" (See also *Psychedelic Review* 1965:3). This law was the product of a bill that was sponsored by a Senator Thomas J. Dodd (*Psychedelic Review* 1965). It was passed in July of 1965 and took effect on February 1, 1966 (Boire 2002). The law was an amendment to the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and was intended to regulate the unlicensed "possession, manufacture, or sale of depressant, stimulant and hallucinogenic drugs" (Boire 2002:25). The statutes themselves, however, did not list the "hallucinogenic drugs" that were being regulated (Boire 2002:25). Instead the term "hallucinogenic drugs" was meant to refer to those substances that supposedly "have a 'hallucinogenic effect on the central nervous system'" (Boire 2002:25). Despite the seemingly strict provisions of the law many people were exempt from prosecution. Specifically the statutes "permit[ted]...people to possess such drugs so long as they were for the personal use of the possessor, a member of his household, or for administration to an animal" (Boire 2002:25). The federal law that *specifically* banned psilocybin and

psilocin was enacted on October 24, 1968. The latter substances were said to have ““a high potential for abuse””, ““no currently accepted medical use”” and ““a lack of accepted safety”” (Boire 2002:26). And, finally, on October 27, 1970, both psilocybin and psilocin became classified as “schedule 1” and were simultaneously labeled “hallucinogens” under a section of the “Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act” known as the “Controlled Substances Act” (Boire 2002:26). This classification, Boire (2002:26) claims, is “the most restrictive” of all drug classifications.

In addition to the federal laws prohibiting the sale or possession of psilocybin there are a number of state laws that criminalize this substance as well. The state laws, according to Boire (2002) are based on the Model Controlled Substances Act of 1970. The first state to control psilocybin was New York. According to a 1965 issue of *Psychedelic Review* the State of New York passed a law on June 7, 1965 that, as of July 1 of that same year restricted both “the sale and possession of psychedelic drugs” (*Psychedelic Review* 1965:9). Unlike the 1965 federal law the New York state law specifically included psilocybin in its coverage (*Psychedelic Review* 1965). The following section reviews the inventory of theoretical models that can be used to explain the criminalization of psilocybin.

### **Theoretical Conundrum**

The primary goal of this dissertation is to provide a theoretical framework to account for the prohibition of psilocybin. I will explain how the federal prohibition of psilocybin was caused by a series of events beginning with the Harvard administration’s attempts to shield their undergraduates from the possible harm caused by hallucinogens.

Before doing this, however, I will discuss the theoretical alternatives in the sociology of law. The discussion will shift from micro to macro level theories that have been used to account for the origins of drug laws. I will try to determine the extent to which each of these theories can be used to account for the prohibition of psilocybin. This will help the reader understand why these theories are unable to account for the criminalization of this drug. I will begin by discussing Howard Becker's theory of moral entrepreneurs. I will then discuss Joseph Gusfield's theory of symbolic crusades and will conclude with a discussion of David Musto's theory of the origin of narcotics prohibition. In the concluding chapter of the dissertation we will analyze how each of these theoretical perspectives contributes to our understanding of the criminalization of psilocybin.

### **Becker's Theory of Moral Entrepreneurs**

According to Becker (1963:162) rules such as a law prohibiting psilocybin are the result of human "enterprise". Rules, Becker argues, are brought into existence when an individual or group asserts that a given behavior is harmful and uses the resulting public scorn to bring this newly discovered problem under control. If Becker were to analyze the prohibition of psilocybin he would ask when and why was the practice of ingesting psilocybin identified as being harmful? He would further ask who were the specific individuals that helped to bring the rule that concerns us here (the federal law prohibiting psilocybin) into existence?

## **Overview of Gusfield and Musto**

Two of the most well known theories of drug prohibition are those that were made famous by Gusfield (1963) and Musto (1973). Although Gusfield's analysis focused on alcohol prohibition both he and Musto proposed theories that, if applied to the prohibition of psilocybin, would dictate that this drug was made illegal because it was associated with threatening minority groups.

## **Gusfield's Theory of the Symbolic Crusade**

In his analysis of psilocybin prohibition Joseph Gusfield would study this law to see if it were a type of "disinterested reform". The latter concept, which is at the heart of Gusfield's analysis of the Temperance Movement, refers to a situation where one group makes an effort to correct the lifestyle habits of another group despite the fact that there is no material incentive for doing so. Gusfield (1963:6-7) lists two types of disinterested reform, namely "assimilative reform" and "coercive reform". Assimilative reform occurs when the target of the reform measure is viewed as someone who can and should embrace the superior lifestyle habits of the benevolent reformer. This type of measure allows the reformer to maintain the notion that her or his culture is the dominant force in society. A coercive reform measure on the other hand is put into place when the reformer feels that the person or group that needs reforming does not accept the legitimacy and superiority of the reformer's culture. Gusfield (1963:7; See also 69, 70, 97-88) describes the situation as one where "the object of reform is seen as an intractable defender of another culture, someone who rejects the reformer's values and really doesn't want to change". Coercive reform was the dominant element in the Temperance Movement.

When compared with assimilative reform the coercive reform measure more often involves the use of criminal law as a means to institute the reform. In Gusfield's words: "Since the dominance of his culture and the social status of his group are denied, the coercive reformer turns to law and force as ways to affirm it" (1963:7). Thus, psilocybin prohibition, like alcohol prohibition is likely a coercive reform measure.

One characteristic of disinterested reform is that the group which is attempting to institute the reform measure does so in an attempt to influence the allocation of prestige within a society rather than trying to improve their financial situation. More precisely when the use or refusal to use a particular drug symbolizes group affiliation as well as a particular lifestyle the reformers try to obtain prestige for themselves by criminalizing the drug. By doing this they are able to publicly take prestige away from the other group thus improving their own status. Gusfield (1963:24) argues that disagreement regarding the use of drugs has acquired "symbolic" connotations within American society and has influenced the allocation of prestige accordingly.

In many cases, the tool that the reformers use to take prestige away from the targeted group is the criminal justice system. Gusfield (1963:11 See also 175-176) argues that it is through "acts of deference or degradation [that] the individual finds in governmental action that his own perceptions of his status in the society are confirmed or rejected". This is an example of what he calls "expressive politics" in that it refers to "political action for the sake of expression rather than for the sake of influencing or controlling the distribution of valued objects" (Gusfield 1963:19). Thus if he were to analyze the prohibition of psilocybin Gusfield would probably try to determine whether or not this law was an attempt by one group to correct the lifestyle habits of another

group and whether or not this drug symbolizes a particular lifestyle as well as membership in a particular group. If this was indeed the case he would try to determine whether or not the law was an attempt by the group that does not use psilocybin to acquire prestige by making the drug illegal thus taking prestige away from the other group.

According to Gusfield the need to do this is particularly acute at times when the reformer feels that the dominance and prestige of her or his lifestyle habits has recently declined. In his own words “As his own claim to social respect and honor are diminished, the sober, abstaining citizen seeks for public acts through which he may reaffirm the dominance and prestige of his style of life” (Gusfield 1963:4). Gusfield would probably try to determine whether or not the dominance and prestige of the lifestyle habits of those responsible for outlawing psilocybin had recently declined at the time the law prohibiting this drug was passed.

This type of reform, according to Gusfield, has moral overtones. The Temperance Movement, he argues, “has usually been the attempt of the moral people, in this case the abstainers, to correct the behavior of the immoral people, in this case the drinkers” (Gusfield 1963:2). Gusfield would probably try to determine whether or not 1968, the year that the federal psilocybin law was passed, was a time when those who were not using psilocybin viewed their own lifestyle as morally superior to that of the people who were using this substance. Gusfield would try to determine whether or not the former group felt that it had a right and/or an obligation to change the immoral lifestyle habits of its counterpart by banning psilocybin.

The symbolic importance of disinterested reform, Gusfield (1963:8) claims, is reflected in the fact that the reformers typically do not care if “*their* law” is being violated or, for that matter, even “enforced”. Indeed, with regard to alcohol prohibition Gusfield (1963:8; see also 4-5) argues that: “If the law was often disobeyed and not enforced, the respectability of its adherents was honored in the breach. After all, it was *their* law that drinkers had to avoid”. Therefore, Gusfield would probably try to determine whether or not the criminalization of psilocybin had primarily symbolic value for the reformers. In order to do this he would probably try to determine whether or not the people who were known to be ingesting psilocybin were being criminally prosecuted under this law.

### **Musto’s Theory of Drug Prohibition**

Unlike Gusfield’s analysis economic factors *would* play a central role in David Musto’s analysis of the prohibition of psilocybin. Musto argues that drug prohibition in the United States has traditionally been the result of the ruling majority’s desire to lock minority groups into a politically and economically subservient position. This desire is particularly strong at times when the ruling majority comes into political, economic, or ideological conflict with minority groups. When this happens the majority often turns to drug prohibition as a way to maintain the status quo. According to Musto (1973:245) “The occasion for legal prohibition of certain drugs for non-medical purposes appears to come at a time of *social crisis* between the drug-linked group and the rest of American society” (Italics added). Musto argues that the lack of tolerance for a given drug is often linked to an economic conflict between the ruling white majority and the group that is most closely associated with the drug. In the late nineteenth century for example when, as

a result of an economic depression, Chinese people began to compete with whites for jobs white people began a sustained program of harassment and discrimination that was intended “to drive them [Chinese people] out or at least to isolate them” (Musto 1973:6) In addition to the fear and persecution of Chinese people themselves there arose “a fear of opium smoking as one of the ways in which the Chinese were supposed to undermine American society” (Musto 1973:6). In a similar manner “The attack on marihuana occurred in the 1930s when Chicanos became a distinct and visible unemployed minority” (Musto 1973:245).

Even though Musto discusses economic conflict, this idea is similar to Gusfield’s notion that a group which feels that it has recently lost prestige to another group may use government action as a tool to degrade the status of the latter thus attempting to reacquire whatever prestige that it had lost. In the 1960s, for example, a felt need to keep the youth counterculture in check spurred an interest in the connection that the movement had with cannabis and hallucinogenic compounds (including psilocybin). In prohibiting these substances the majority felt that their actions may also stifle the movement itself. In Musto’s own words

A youth culture which attacked traditional values became closely connected with marihuana smoking and the use of other psychedelics. 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 the old order (1973:245).

Musto’s statement that the “Customary use of a certain drug came to symbolize the difference between that group [i.e. the 1960s youth counterculture] and the rest of society...” (1973:245) is similar to Gusfield’s view of the symbolic role of alcohol consumption. For Gusfield (1963:24) “The consumption or nonconsumption of alcoholic



beverages have [sic] often delineated group affiliation and status identity in American society”.

In his analysis of psilocybin prohibition Musto would probably try to determine whether or not this drug was linked to a “distinct and visible minority group” (1973:245) and whether or not the consumption of this drug symbolized the difference between the minority group and the rest of American society. If this was indeed the case he would then try to determine whether or not there was a social crisis between this group and those who wanted to criminalize the drug. Musto would also try to determine whether or not the criminalization of psilocybin was a product of the white majority’s desire to keep those who were associated with this drug from gaining political and/or economic power and whether or not it was believed that psilocybin was somehow connected to these problems.

Thus, a number of authors have discussed the theories surrounding the way in which various drugs have, over time, become associated with particular groups as well as the perceived behavioral characteristics of these groups. Gusfield’s (1963) analysis of the social circumstances surrounding alcohol prohibition is one example. Musto (1973) discusses how a wider variety of drugs fit this same pattern. A number of scholars have argued that the condemnation (as well as the legal prohibition) of various drugs has often been used as a tool to control minority groups and/or punish the “bad culture” that they represent. The works of Reinerman (2002) and Jenkins (2000) discuss this idea. A variety of publications discuss the way in which these types of actions have affected people’s access to hallucinogens (See for example Abraham 1998; Barlow 2002; Barrigar 1964 and Boire 2002).

Throughout American history, according to Musto, people who have supported drug prohibitions have often done so because they were afraid that white people would begin to use these “alien” substances after coming into contact with members of racial or ethnic minority groups that were already using them. For example: “One of the American delegates to the First Hague Conference, Henry Finger [argued that]...Californians, especially in San Francisco, were frightened by the ‘large influx of Hindoos...demanding *cannabis indica*,’ [and] who were initiating ‘the whites into their habit’” (Musto 1973:218). Not surprisingly “Finger wanted the world traffic in cannabis to be controlled” (Musto 1973:218). Therefore another factor that Musto would examine if he were to study the psilocybin law would be the types of people who were ingesting psilocybin.

### **Synthesis of theory and method**

In this dissertation I will attempt to show how and why psilocybin was constructed as a dangerous drug by the mass media. I will then evaluate the extent to which the foregoing theories can be used to account for this process. The actions of Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert and various members of the Harvard administration will show the reader *why* psilocybin was constructed as dangerous by the mass media. The contrast between the specialty sources and the mass media sources will show the reader *how* psilocybin was constructed as dangerous by the mass media. The basic research questions are: Why was psilocybin portrayed as dangerous in the mass media? Moreover, what can we learn from looking at the specialty sources? In other words, do the specialty

sources with the voices of Leary and Alpert construct the story differently than the mass media sources?

I will argue that the Harvard administration's desire to protect the university's undergraduates from the strange, mind altering effects of psilocybin as well as the radical ideas of Leary and Alpert are the primary reasons why this substance was demonized in the mass media. Members of the Harvard administration made a concerted attempt to warn undergraduates about the dangers of a variety of hallucinogens (including psilocybin). They also broadcast their opposition to those who promoted the use of these substances. This led to the demonization of psilocybin in the mass media which ultimately led to the criminalization of this drug. This argument is different from that of Musto and Gusfield in large part because in early 1963 (when psilocybin was first being demonized in the mass media) this substance had not been associated with a threatening minority group.

This dissertation will assess the mass media's portrayal of psilocybin as well as the activities of Leary and Alpert between 1957 and 1968 to see how the existing theoretical alternatives in the sociology of law can help us to explain the criminalization of this drug. Given the empirical evidence that I have it appears that Becker's theory of moral entrepreneurs is the most helpful in this regard while some aspects of Gusfield and Musto's theories are useful in explaining the criminalization of psilocybin.

## **Data**

The data for the dissertation will be divided into three chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 will be based on information from mass media sources. Chapter 4, on the other hand, will

be based on information from the specialty sources. In chapter 5 I will assess the actions of Leary and Alpert to determine the extent to which the existing theoretical perspectives can be used to account for the differences between the mass media and the specialty sources. In other words I will assess the ability of the theories to explain the distortions in the mass media accounts. We will then devise a new theory to account for those aspects of this case that cannot be explained using the existing perspectives.

The analysis will begin with Western society's discovery of psilocybin via Wasson's 1957 *Life* article in which he discussed the experiences that he had while participating in a "magic" mushroom ceremony in Mexico. It will then discuss the Harvard Drug Scandal and Leary and Alpert's activities after they were fired from Harvard and how these activities are linked to the implementation of the United States federal law in 1968 which effectively banned psilocybin and psilocin.

### **Methods and Data Sources**

Again, the mass media sources used include popular books as well as newspaper and magazine articles while the specialty sources include audio and video taped lectures and documentaries as well as relatively obscure publications. I call them "specialty sources" because they are data sources that a person would probably not encounter unless she or he was actively looking for information on this topic. This dissertation utilizes descriptions of the lives and careers of Leary and Alpert to demonstrate how much we can learn from the specialty sources. It uses information from the mass media to show what the casual reader may find in a search of published materials in this area. The goal is to determine whether or not the specialty sources add to the information that we already

have from reading the mass media sources. Thus I am looking at the various constructions of these events as they are portrayed in the two different types of sources. This strategy will allow me to highlight the difference between what is portrayed in the mass media and what Leary, Alpert, and others actually said. It will show how the mass media has distorted information about psilocybin as well as the ideas of Leary and Alpert. By highlighting these distortions we can begin to understand how society's image of psilocybin was shaped by the mass media and, therefore why this substance was criminalized. In chapter 4 we will learn about the experiences that a variety of people had with this substance most notably Leary and Alpert.

In order to obtain materials for this dissertation I utilized a variety of computer databases as well as the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature*. The substantive issues that are dealt with here include hallucinogenic drugs and drug laws as well as the ideas and actions of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert (later Ram Dass). In looking for magazine and newspaper articles. I was particularly interested in materials that were published between June 10, 1957 and October 24, 1968. Once again the former date was selected because it is the same day that R. Gordon Wasson's *Life Magazine* article titled "Seeking the Magic Mushroom" was published. The latter date was selected because it is the date that the federal law banning psilocybin and psilocin was enacted (Boire 2002). I searched for *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* articles using the Proquest database. In order to obtain magazine articles related to my topic I searched the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature*. Some of the sources used in this chapter were found using a variety of other methods. Some of the materials, for example, were found after I saw them cited in books and articles that I had already obtained. Ultimately the contrast

between the specialty and the mass media sources will provide much of the theoretical and substantive contribution of this dissertation.

### **Brief Overview of Chapters 2, 3, and 4**

Chapters 2 and 3 will be based on information taken from mass media sources. Chapter 2 will provide a brief biographical overview of the lives of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert. This section will include information about their early lives as well as what happened in the 1960s and the decades since. In chapter 3 I will utilize information from the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and various popular magazines to show what a person may encounter if she or he were to read about this subject in the mass media between 1957 and October 24, 1968.

Chapter 4, which is based on the specialty sources, will be largely composed of the direct voices of Leary, Alpert, and others. For ease of presentation some of the specialty sources are abbreviated, but the full sources are listed in the references section. Although this chapter will deal with many of the same issues that we discuss in chapters 2 and 3 the analysis will be much more detailed. I will show aspects of the story that simply do not appear in the mass media sources. For example, we will hear Alpert and Metzner's detailed descriptions of their experiences with psilocybin. We will also get a better picture of Leary's view of the risks and rewards associated with the use of hallucinogens, as well as his proposal for "strict licensing" standards to accompany the widespread use of these substances. The information contained in this chapter will paint a much different picture of psilocybin as well as the experiences and ideas of some of those who used and promoted the use of this substance. Again, the differences between chapter

4 and the mass media chapters (2 and 3) will highlight the ways in which the mass media has distorted information about psilocybin as well as the ideas and actions of Leary and Alpert.

Finally, the reader will notice that the changes in Leary and Alpert's lives roughly parallel the changes in society's attitude toward psilocybin. As Leary and Alpert became marginalized so did this drug.

### **Cast of Characters**

- A. George Alpert Jr.: Richard Alpert's older brother.
- B. George Alpert Sr.: Richard Alpert's father who was a wealthy Boston lawyer, former President of New York, New Haven, and Hartford railroad. Instrumental in founding Brandeis University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.
- C. Richard Alpert/Ram Dass: Former Harvard Professor and psilocybin researcher. Dismissed from Harvard for giving psilocybin to undergraduate students. In 1967 he traveled to India, converted to Hinduism, and changed his name to Ram Dass. He later became a renowned author and lecturer.
- D. Dana Farnsworth: Director of Harvard University student Health Services. Farnsworth was instrumental in the university's attempts to regulate the Psilocybin Project.
- E. Timothy Leary: Former Harvard Lecturer and relatively well-known clinical psychologist. He worked with Richard Alpert on the Harvard Psilocybin Project and was later dismissed from the university for not

fulfilling his teaching obligations. Leary eventually became known for advocating and popularizing the use of hallucinogens, especially LSD.

- F. David C. McClelland: Former director of Harvard's Center for Research in Personality and later Chair of the Department of Social Relations.
- G. Ralph Metzner: Graduate Student at Harvard who assisted with the Psilocybin Project.
- H. John U. Monro: He was the Dean at Harvard who led the effort to discredit Leary and Alpert.
- I. Walter Pahnke: Graduate student at Harvard University who helped Leary and Alpert conduct psilocybin experiments.
- J. Nathan Pusey: Former President of Harvard University. Pusey publicly fired Leary and Alpert.
- K. R. Gordon Wasson: Amateur mycologist and former Vice President of J.P. Morgan. Wasson ingested psilocybin mushrooms in Mexico in 1955 and wrote about the experience in a 1957 *Life* Magazine article.



## Chapter 2

### **Biographical overview of the lives of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert**

It was R. Gordon Wasson's experience with the "magic mushroom" that sparked America's fascination with hallucinogenic drugs (Weiner 2002). In a 1957 *Life Magazine* article titled "Seeking the Magic Mushroom" Wasson, a "New York banker" discussed his experiences with psilocybin mushrooms in Mexico (Weiner 2002). This drew considerable attention to a heretofore little known phenomenon. Lee and Shlain (1985:72) refer to the article as "a journalistic breakthrough" in the sense that "a mass audience" was, for the first time in history, "introduced to the mysterious world of chemical hallucinogens". The experiences of Wasson and his family were reported in a matter of fact and straightforward fashion. According to Lee and Shlain (1985:72) "the seventeen-page spread, complete with color photos, was laudatory in every way". In 1958 soon after Wasson's article appeared the Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann isolated the psychoactive compound in these mushrooms. He produced a synthetic version of the compound that he called "psilocybin" (Lee and Shlain 1985:73).

The story of these mushrooms is then picked up by Dr. Timothy Leary, a Harvard psychologist who read Wasson's article. With Leary's involvement the mass media reporting and reactions would soon change. Timothy Francis Leary was born in Springfield, Massachusetts on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1920. His parents were Irish Catholic and Tim was an only child. He finished his bachelor's degree while serving in the U.S. Army during WWII. He attended three different colleges (Holy Cross, West Point, and the University of Alabama) and was considered a discipline problem at each one. These early

run-ins with university officials would foreshadow the events that transpired nearly two decades later when Leary became a member of the Harvard faculty. After finishing his B.A. at the University of Alabama Leary attended graduate school at the University of California and, in 1950, he was awarded his Ph.D. in psychology. While studying at Berkeley Leary became disillusioned with conventional psychotherapy ultimately abandoning the practice in favor of a variety of alternative methods. After finishing his Ph.D. Leary taught classes at Berkeley and from 1955 to 1958 he directed the psychological research program at the nearby Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Oakland. In addition to this he published a number of professional articles and worked as an Assistant Professor at the UCSF School of Medicine. Clearly he was beginning to make a name for himself as a behavioral psychologist (Lee and Shlain 1985). In 1955 Leary's wife committed suicide and he was left to care for the couple's two children. Then, in 1959 Leary was appointed lecturer in Clinical Psychology at Harvard University.

Even though he was an up and coming psychologist Leary began to entertain doubts about his academic career and was beginning to undergo a "mid-life crisis" that was rooted in two unsuccessful marriages (Lee and Shlain 1985:73). In 1960 Leary traveled to Cuernavaca Mexico and several companions convinced him to ingest psilocybin mushrooms. Leary was amazed at the effects of the mushrooms stating that the experience "was above all and without question the deepest religious experience of [his] life" (Lee and Shlain 1985:73). He further exclaimed: "I learned more during the six or seven hours after I ate...[psilocybin mushrooms] than I've learned in all my years as a psychologist" (Dowling 1977).

Upon returning from Mexico Leary joined several of his friends and colleagues in starting a research program that later became known as the “Harvard Psilocybin Project” (Weiner 2002). One of the people who joined him was an Assistant Professor named Richard Alpert. Alpert, too, was disappointed with the direction in which his life was headed. Alpert was from a prominent New England Jewish family and his father George was a wealthy Boston lawyer and former president of New Haven Railroad who had been instrumental in founding Brandeis University. Richard Alpert had attended Wesleyan University, earned his B.A. at Tufts and received his Ph.D. from Stanford. By the time he was 30 years old Alpert was teaching at Harvard and acting as the associate director of the university’s Laboratory of Human Development. These accomplishments, however, were tempered by the fact that he was bisexual and would experience occasional bouts of depression, tendencies that the larger society did not understand (Dowling 1977). Given their vastly different backgrounds it is unusual that Alpert and Leary teamed up.

Alpert’s first encounter with psilocybin was, like Leary’s, a profound and life changing experience. Although he was initially frightened by the effects of the drug Alpert soon had a life changing realization: “a deep calm descended on him ‘I had just found that ‘I,’ ... ‘that scanning device, that point, that essence, that place beyond... That ‘I’ Knew. It really Knew!’” (Dowling 1977). Leary and Alpert were enthusiastic about the potential applications of the drug and they wanted to study its psychological effects. After testing psilocybin on a variety of people including prisoners, artists, scientists, and musicians Leary and Alpert eventually came to the conclusion that this drug had the potential to engender “religious experiences” and lower recidivism rates (Leland 2001).

Over the next three years they would distribute hallucinogens to a large cadre of students and “outside volunteers” (Dowling 1977).

Leary and Alpert engaged in the unorthodox practice of taking psilocybin themselves while conducting the experiments. To many of their colleagues this practice appeared to be less than scientific. As Dowling (1977) argues: “Their [Leary and Alpert’s] slipshod methods of collecting data were scorned by other members of the psychology department, who doubted the objectivity of a study in which the researchers were taking the drug along with the volunteers”. Leary and Alpert’s work was soon being scrutinized by Harvard administrators and government officials alike. To make matters worse certain members of the administration began warning the public about the supposed dangers of hallucinogens. When reports surfaced that students had experienced “acute psychoses” as a result of ingesting hallucinogens the university made Alpert promise to refrain from giving the drugs to undergraduates (Dowling 1977).

Leary, Alpert and several others attempted to further their cause by starting an organization called the “International Federation for Internal Freedom” (IFIF) (Weil 1963:46). The IFIF was based on the idea that everyone should be permitted to use hallucinogens and that the government had no right to interfere. The IFIF soon began publishing a journal called *The Psychedelic Review* with the first issue appearing in June of 1963. With the university growing increasingly concerned about its image Leary and Alpert were dismissed from Harvard in the spring of 1963. Leary was fired for neglecting his teaching duties while Alpert was fired for giving psilocybin to an undergraduate in violation of the prior agreement to refrain from doing so.

During the summer of 1963, soon after Leary and Alpert were fired from Harvard, the IFIF moved its operations to a hotel that the group had rented in the seaside town of Zihuatanejo, Mexico. However, fearing a public outcry the Mexican government expelled them from the country after only a few weeks. Soon after leaving Mexico Leary and Alpert moved to a large estate in rural Millbrook, NY where they continued to pursue their interests in experimenting with hallucinogenic compounds. At this point the IFIF dissolved and its former members had created a new organization called “the Castalia Foundation” (Lee and Shlain 1985:98). According to Lee and Shlain (1985:98) “The Millbrook residents were a tight-knit group. They shared a common lifestyle geared toward exploring the realities of their own nervous systems in a creative rather than a clinical setting”. The activities at Millbrook attracted an endless stream of visitors including well known intellectuals, artists, and musicians (Lee and Shlain 1985). Many of the visitors were linked to the youth counterculture and the local residents were not pleased. The residents of the Millbrook estate felt that they were doing important work: “Millbrook was a constant party, but one infused with a sense of purpose and optimism. The residents saw themselves as a vanguard of a psychic revolution that would transform the entire society” (Lee and Shlain 1985:99). While living at Millbrook Leary married a Swedish model, Nena Schlebrugge. In addition to this he was arrested twice for marihuana offenses—once in Texas and once again when the Millbrook estate was raided by local police. Leary was soon convicted in the Texas case sentenced to 30 years in prison and given a \$30,000 fine. In December of 1968 Leary was arrested a third time on marihuana charges, this time in California.

In 1969 Leary's conviction in the Texas case was thrown out by the U.S. Supreme Court and the law that was used to convict him was overturned. However, in 1970 Leary was convicted on marihuana charges stemming from both the Texas and the California case. He received 10 years for the Texas case and 1-10 years for the California case. A few months later Leary escaped from his minimum-security California facility. Leary and his wife Rosemary were soon living in Algeria and Leary was given political asylum by the government there. Leary would spend time in Europe, Asia and Africa before he was finally forced to return to the U.S. while in Afghanistan. Upon his return Leary was sentenced to 5 years for the escape from prison. He was paroled after three years and died less than 20 years later at age 75. Leary spent the last 20 or so years of his life lecturing to college students.

Although Alpert clearly enjoyed his experiences with hallucinogenic drugs he became disillusioned by the temporary nature of their effects. Looking for a better way to expand his consciousness he traveled to India in 1967. There he met a Guru, and returned to the U.S. a convert. When he returned Alpert had changed his name to Ram Dass and had drastically altered his appearance.

In 1971 Ram Dass published a well known book titled *Be Here Now, Remember* that was based on some of the religious ideas that he had learned in India and by the mid 1970's he had become a highly sought after religious speaker. Although their names were once synonymous with one another it is clear that by the early 1970s Leary and Alpert had gone their separate ways. After returning from his second trip to India Ram Dass "was a genuine hero of the counterculture in his own right, no longer just Tim Leary's sidekick" (Levine 1976:82). Even given the increasing fame of Ram Dass a 1976 *Rolling*

*Stone* magazine article titled “The Pizza and the Path: Ram Dass’s USA” is tellingly as much about Leary as Ram Dass.

## Chapter 3

### Media Construction (1957-1968)

America's experience with hallucinogenic drugs began with the mundane curiosity of a New York investment banker, Robert Gordon Wasson, and his physician wife, Valentina P. Wasson, M.D. Indeed, in 1952 while examining the texts of early European explorers the Wasson's discovered that the "Indian cultures of Mexico" prized specific types of mushrooms which, in turn, held a "divine" status within their religion (Wasson 1963:7). Eager to learn more about these mushrooms the Wasson's traveled to Southern Mexico in the early 1950s. On the night of June 29-30, 1955 in rural Mexico Wasson and a friend Alan Richardson used "divine mushrooms" (Wasson 1957:101). In reflecting on the experience Wasson (1957:8) writes "So far as we know, we were the first outsiders to eat the mushrooms, the first to be invited to partake in the agape of the sacred mushroom". He was the first white man in history to eat this particular type of fungus which, at the time, was unknown to everyone except "certain Indian peoples living far from the great world in southern Mexico" (Wasson 1957:101). Wasson reported in *Life* magazine that they tasted bad and had a rancid odor. However, they produced visions of "mountains" and "rivers" (Wasson 1957:109). Later his wife and 18 year old daughter ate the mushrooms and saw "brilliant colors" (Wasson 1957:110). This substance totally "destroyed the sense of time" (Wasson 1957:120). This article in this mainstream magazine was the first and last report of Wasson on this substance. When reading Wasson's article one gets the impression that he enjoyed his experiences with the mushrooms. He describes their "effects" as "astonishing" and claims that the



“experience” left him and his friend “awestruck” (Wasson 1957:101). In describing the “visions” that the mushrooms produced Wasson (1957:109) contends that they:

were not blurred or uncertain. They were sharply focused, the lines and colors being so sharp that they seemed more real than anything I had ever seen with my own eyes. I felt I was now seeing plain, whereas ordinary vision gives us an imperfect view; I was seeing the archetypes, the Platonic ideas, that underlie the imperfect images of everyday life.

All of this is very interesting in light of Wasson’s position in society as well as the reputation of the magazine in which his account was published. At this time *Life Magazine*, as a part of the American establishment, was not ready to condemn the drug. Moreover, Gordon Wasson, another part of the establishment was not either. This vice president of J.P. Morgan simply wrote a straight-forward article telling of his personal visions and other experiences with what later became known as psilocybin mushrooms. In the article Wasson (1957:118) argues that the mushrooms do not appear to be addictive and that they may have potential benefits: “The mushrooms sharpen...the memory”. He claimed that their effects seem to be temporary and he hinted at the potential medical applications of this newly “discovered” phenomena by asking the reader “Will it [the psilocybin mushroom] also prove of help in coping with psychic disturbances” (Wasson 1957:120)? Based on this article one could not have predicted what would develop within a decade.

In 1958 psilocybin, a hallucinogenic compound in the mushrooms was isolated. Then, in the summer of 1960 a Harvard psychologist named Timothy Leary tried psilocybin mushrooms while visiting Cuernavaca, Mexico. The experience left him awestruck. Leary described the effects that the mushrooms had on him in a 1966 interview with *Playboy* magazine:

I was 39 when I had my first psychedelic experience. At that time, I was a middle aged man involved in the middle-aged process of dying. My joy in life, my sensual openness, my creativity were all sliding downhill. Since that time, six years ago, my life has been renewed in almost every dimension (95).

When Leary returned from Mexico, both he and Professor Richard Alpert obtained a batch of psilocybin from Sandoz Pharmaceuticals. Richard Alpert had been appointed to the Departments of Clinical Psychology and Education at Harvard in 1958. The two researchers intended to study the psychological effects that the drug would have on human subjects. Because they were conducting research the psilocybin was given to them free of charge. When they began the experiments Leary and Alpert were affiliated with Harvard's Department of Social Relations. The study was to be sponsored by the university's Center for Research in Personality, a legitimate research organization (Weil 1963; See also Mayer 1963).

In addition to being competent psychologists and the offspring of well respected Massachusetts families, Leary and Alpert had a good reputation with other faculty in the Center. They gave others the impression that the Psilocybin Project would test the therapeutic applications of the drug. Before they began their study Leary and Alpert were told by the National Institute of Mental Health that prior research using hallucinogens had faltered because the investigators themselves had become addicted to the substances.

Although they had not studied the effects of the drug, Leary and Alpert believed that psilocybin had the potential to psychologically benefit the user and therefore solve many of society's problems. In addition to being useful in psychotherapy, they believed that psilocybin would enhance people's creativity. They even pictured it becoming part of a graduate seminar. Leary and Alpert believed that previous cases of people having bad experiences with the drug were largely due to the conditions under which it was

administered. Bad experiences could be avoided altogether, they thought, if only people took psilocybin in the right environment and with the right mindset. The hallucinogenic effects of psilocybin, a drug that is commonly swallowed, were said to last about “four to six” hours (Weil 1963:43).

When Leary and Alpert began their research there was no evidence showing that psilocybin was addictive or “physically dangerous” (Weil 1963:43). These findings, however, were offset by documented instances of “...temporary acute mental damage...and hints that unsupervised use of [psilocybin]...could lead to permanent adverse psychological changes” (Weil 1963:43). Moreover, some people expressed concerns that a study of this type would spark the public’s interest in psilocybin causing some to experiment with the drug themselves.

Leary and Alpert began the Psilocybin Project by giving the drug to 38 subjects the majority of whom claimed to have enjoyed the experience. The subject pool expanded and they had soon given psilocybin to a total of 167 subjects. When the additional subjects were tested the percentage of favorable responses increased. In 1961 Leary and Alpert began an additional round of experiments where they attempted to “rehabilitate” prison inmates with the drug (Weil 1963:44). By mid 1964 Alpert and Leary had, by their own account, (1964:42) “administered over four thousand doses of psychedelic drugs”. In addition to the prisoners Leary and Alpert had tested hallucinogens on “creative persons”, alcohol and drug addicts and members of the clergy (Alpert and Leary 1964:42).

Prior to his arrival at Harvard Leary had adopted an unorthodox approach to conducting drug research arguing that it “should be conducted *with* subjects rather than *on* subjects and that standard research techniques in which the researcher does not share

in the experience of the experiment are essentially undemocratic” (Gordon 1963:36; See also Mayer 1963:141). Thus Leary and Alpert often took psilocybin along with the subjects while conducting the experiments. They believed that this tactic would allow them to observe the “nonverbal” forms of communication that were a vital aspect of the drug experience (Mayer 1963:141). This, however, combined with the fact that the experiments were often conducted in informal settings was probably the reason why other faculty members complained that Leary and Alpert’s experiments were similar to “cocktail parties” (Weil 1963:44). The critics argued that Leary and Alpert could not possibly collect data while under the influence of psilocybin. In response to these criticisms the researchers argued that they would be unable to interpret the responses of their subjects unless they themselves were undergoing a similar experience. When dealing with the Harvard administration Leary and Alpert tried to put a positive spin on their research by arguing that they were studying “unorthodox” subject matter and, therefore, they needed to utilize “unorthodox” techniques for collecting data (Weil 1963:44).

### **Downhill Slide**

In the fall of 1961 Leary and Alpert taught a graduate course in psychology. At the same time a number of graduate students requested and were given psilocybin. At that point, according to Alpert, “the faculty became more and more hostile” (Gordon 1963:36).

By late 1961 Dean Monro and the director of the Harvard University Health Services—Dr. Dana L Farnsworth— had demanded that Leary and Alpert to agree to stop

using undergraduates as research subjects. Leary and Alpert were irritated by this new rule and, according to Weil (1963:44) they “ridiculed the stuffiness of regulations that restrained their ‘applied mysticism’”. That same fall, the director of the Center for Research in Personality, David C. McLelland expressed concern that users of psilocybin had exhibited symptoms of “social withdrawal, insensitivity, impulsivity, and an unrealistic sense of omniscience” (Mayer 1963:141).

In February, 1962 *The Harvard Crimson* published an account of Leary and Alpert’s work that mentioned their fascination with psilocybin. This drew even more attention to the issues involved. The researchers responded by mailing a letter to the newspaper explaining their own position regarding psilocybin as well as giving a more detailed account of their research. Soon afterwards Dana Farnsworth sent a letter to the newspaper explaining the dangers of another drug, mescaline. These events triggered a wave of criticism that stressed the dangers of Leary and Alpert’s work. In early 1962 one of the faculty members at the Center—Herbert Kelman—insisted during a meeting that Leary and Alpert change their research tactics or else abandon the Psilocybin Project altogether. Unknown to the faculty a reporter from *The Crimson*, (a Harvard student newspaper) was present during the meeting and an account of the event was published on the front page the following day. In addition to pointing out the “unscientific” aspects of the Psilocybin Project critics were arguing that the techniques used for selecting subjects had a divisive effect on the student body (Weil 1963:44). Moreover Leary and Alpert were criticized because they did not adequately consider the potential for “permanent psychological damage to subjects” (Weil 1963:44). Unlike prior investigators who studied hallucinogens Leary and Alpert did not require medical and psychological

screening of their subjects. Highly clinical procedures they argued, would frighten the subjects. In addition they soon began referring to psilocybin as a “consciousness expanding material” (Weil 1963:44). This strategy, according to Weil (1963:44), was a calculated attempt to avoid the negative connotations associated with the term “drug”.

The bickering soon drew the attention of local newspapers. At the same time a state health official indicated that there should be at least one person present during the psilocybin experiments who had not taken the drug. Eventually state food and drug officials began investigating the Psilocybin Project. Upon completing the investigation, however, the agency merely stated that a licensed physician should monitor the experiments.

Despite these developments several people were frustrated because of their inability to control Leary and Alpert. A state health official, for example, complained that the Harvard faculty had attempted to shield Leary and Alpert from an investigation that he had organized. In May of 1962, a group of faculty members were assembled to monitor the Project. They too were frustrated. As it turned out, this group did not present much of an obstacle to Leary and Alpert’s research. After an unsuccessful attempt to convince Alpert to give the rest of his psilocybin to the university Health Services the group disbanded.

The Psilocybin Project, however, faced additional obstacles. A Harvard undergraduate claimed that Alpert had coerced him to consume psilocybin at his (Alpert’s) apartment. In addition to this there were rumors circulating that students were using hallucinogens to facilitate sexual liaisons. Farnsworth eventually ordered Alpert to hand over the rest of his psilocybin so that it could be kept by the university. Even though

Alpert gave most of the psilocybin to Farnsworth he secretly saved some of the drug for his own use. To make matters worse Alpert covertly provided psilocybin to an “outside institution” and it appeared as if Leary had contacted Sandoz pharmaceuticals and ordered an additional shipment of the drug using university letterhead (Weil 1963:46).

Leary and Alpert seemed to believe that hallucinogens offered a solution to any and every crisis imaginable. If Harvard ignored them, they reasoned, perhaps society would hear them out. Thus, in the fall of 1962, they began to spread the word that hallucinogenic drugs had the power to transform society. Moreover Leary and Alpert had, by this time, “made themselves the center of a cult which may [have] include[d] as many as thirty or forty undergraduates and perhaps a hundred others” (Mayer 1963:142).

Although the number of students who followed Leary and Alpert’s lead was relatively small the Harvard administration was troubled by the symbolic import of this development. As Dean Monro stated ““It isn’t a quantitative problem....If we had a quantitative thing we’d be on top of it and through it by now”” (Mayer 1963:142).

Despite the potential benefits of hallucinogens there were many people who wanted to keep the public from accessing the drugs themselves as well as information about them. What was at stake, Leary and Alpert contended, was the right to “experience...the ecstasy of consciousness expansion” (Weil 1963:46; See also Alpert and Leary 1964:42). In more general terms Leary and Alpert saw the struggle as one which would decide whether or not people would be allowed to control their own brains. They cited the clamp down on their research as evidence that the medical establishment was overstepping its authority—Farnsworth being one of the culprits (Alpert and Leary 1964).

Leary, Alpert and several others attempted to further the cause by starting an organization called the “International Federation for Internal Freedom” (IFIF) [Weil 1963:46]. They pointed their recruiting efforts at Harvard undergraduates. Students were asked to join the group and start their own “research cells” (Weil 1963:46) Doing so would allow them to acquire and consume hallucinogenic compounds. The organization began publishing a journal called *The Psychedelic Review*.

In the fall of 1962 Farnsworth and John U. Monro, the Dean of Harvard College, alerted students to the dangers of hallucinogens. They equated the use of these substances to playing “Russian roulette” (Mayer 1963:142). Monro released an additional statement arguing that the substances presented ““a serious psychiatric hazard”” to those who used them (Weil 1963:46). He also stated his opposition to individuals who encouraged Harvard undergraduates to take hallucinogens. These statements were printed in the student newspaper. In addition to the above criticisms a number of individuals including at least one faculty member—Dr. Herbert C. Kelman—argued that those who participated in the Project had formed a “cult” (Gordon 1963:37). The complaint was echoed by a writer from *Esquire* magazine (Mayer 1963).

The first mention of psilocybin in the *New York Times* is found on November 29, 1962 when the dean of Harvard College, John Monro and Dr. Dana Farnsworth, director of the university Health Services released a joint statement to the *Harvard Crimson*, the undergraduate newspaper. In this they noted that many undergraduates were becoming interested in both psilocybin and LSD and that these drugs ““may result in serious hazards to the mental health and stability even of apparently normal persons”” (*New York Times* 1962). Dean Monro soon noted that the university’s leaders ““had heard persistent



rumors of ‘private psilocybin parties’ involving students” (Hechinger 1962a). In December of 1962 Dean Monro alerted students to the dangers of a variety of “‘mind-distorting drugs’” including psilocybin (*Times* 1963a). He criticized the promotion of these substances on university campuses and argued that there is “‘unanimity among our doctors that these drugs are dangerous’ and might lead to serious mental illness” (*Times* 1963a). Within days Harvard psychologists Drs. Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary rebutted these claims as “‘reckless and inaccurate’” (Hechinger 1962b). They questioned the scientific merit of Monro’s position. Hallucinogens, they argued, were essentially harmless. They also stated that Harvard students should assess the evidence themselves instead of letting Dean Monro make their decisions for them. Leary and Alpert attacked the university for hindering what they considered to be important research and for “‘creating a ‘scientific underground’ for the first time since the middle ages” (Mayer 1963:142). On the day that these statements were published the FDA began an investigation to determine whether or not there were illegal transactions involving hallucinogens in Cambridge.

Meanwhile Leary continued his work with the IFIF by setting up a “Freedom Center” in Mexico and helping to organize a communal living arrangement in Newton, MA (Weil 1963:48). Alpert helped out by supervising one of the houses in Newton. The neighbors became irritated often complaining that residents of the commune would “‘come and go” at all hours (Mayer 1963:73). One neighbor remarked:

“Some weekends their house is like a motel. They all wear a beatnik uniform—tight pants and jerseys, no shoes or stockings. One young man in his twenties is letting his blond hair grow down to his shoulders; every time I look at him I want to vomit” (Gordon 1963:37).

The Harvard psilocybin studies were attracting a great deal of attention and the campus was abuzz with talk about “consciousness expansion” (Weil 1963:46). Clearly the controversy and the experiments themselves did not go unnoticed by Harvard’s students. In fact, upon hearing about the experiments many students asked to participate and many were turned down. At the same time students were obtaining hallucinogens through mail order and from a black market that had formed near the campus. To make matters worse these activities were reported in *The Crimson*. According to Weil (1963:48) “Couriers were now bringing drugs to Harvard each weekend, and more and more students were experimenting themselves to see if Alpert and Leary had the right idea”. Needless to say these developments did not please the Harvard administration.

The Harvard establishment began to worry. The Department of Social Relations, in particular, was concerned about its image. According to Mayer (1963:73) the university began to “peel...layer after layer of apparent intellectual respectability from this spiritual Disneyland”. Then, in April of 1963 Leary went to California without notifying the university. When the Administration found out about this he was promptly dismissed for neglecting his teaching duties and was removed from the payroll on May 5, 1963.

Prior to Leary’s dismissal, however, the Harvard Administration had begun interviewing undergraduates to build a case against both him and Alpert. One student in particular admitted that he had accepted psilocybin from Alpert in 1962. Under questioning Alpert confessed that he had indeed given the student psilocybin but that he had done so in a non-university setting and thus had not violated the terms of his agreement with the Harvard administration. This did not go over well. Alpert contacted

the administration and pointed out the necessity for conducting the type of research in which he was engaged. His efforts were futile. Richard Alpert was dismissed from Harvard on May 27, 1963 for giving psilocybin to undergraduates. In addition to the fact that Alpert was publicly dismissed by President Nathan M. Pusey the event marked the first time in the twentieth century that a Harvard Professor had been terminated for moral turpitude. Alpert responded by breaking open a container of psilocybin near the university and giving the drug to interested students. By this time Leary and Alpert were known for encouraging the use of hallucinogens both through their writings as well as the various lectures that they had been giving on the Harvard campus. In fact, they had been advocating the unrestricted use of hallucinogens since 1960. Andrew Weil recounted how during his Freshman year at Harvard Leary had talked to him about the virtues of hallucinogens saying that within a few years everyone would be using them (Mayer 1963).

During the summer of 1963 the IFIF moved its operations to a hotel that the group had rented in the seaside town of Zihuatanejo, Mexico. Having visited there the previous summer Leary and Alpert intended to further the cause of the IFIF by training participants in the art of “consciousness expansion” (Mayer 1963:73). However, fearing a public outcry the Mexican government expelled them from the country after only a few weeks.

The group soon found itself living in a large estate in the small town of Millbrook, New York. The Millbrook estate was a rambling mansion on a 4,000-acre plot that had been turned over to Leary for his experiments with hallucinogens by a New York

millionaire named William Hitchcock. Not surprisingly many of the town's residents did not like their new neighbors.

While living at Millbrook in December of 1965 Leary (along with several acquaintances and his teenage son and daughter) was arrested for possession of marihuana at the Texas border with Mexico. In March of 1966 he was put on trial with his 18 year old daughter, Susan in Laredo Texas and charged with several offenses related to the incident. After being convicted of "illegally transporting...marijuana and of failure to pay a tax on it" Leary received a 30 year prison sentence, a \$30,000 fine and was ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment (Zion 1966). Then, on April 16, 1966 while Leary was appealing his conviction from Texas the Millbrook estate was raided by local police and he was arrested for another marihuana offense. Approximately fifty officers raided the estate and they found a "minute quantity of marihuana" (*Playboy* 1966:95). The raid took place at 1:30am while 29 adults and 12 children were in the residence. After a five-hour search the police arrested Leary and three other people. No claim was made that Leary actually possessed marihuana but that as the director of the house he was allegedly responsible. The maximum penalty was a heavy fine and six years in prison.

In 1966 Leary founded a new religion called The League of Spiritual Discovery which involved the "sacramental" use of LSD, marihuana, and peyote (Dallos 1966; See also Blumenthal 1967; *America* 1966:440). He did not intend for the League to replace existing religions, rather, he saw it as a belief system that was compatible with all of them. In addition to claiming that the religion would transform society Leary stated that those who joined the League would not be asked to give up their existing religious commitments. Regarding the League's belief system, Leary stated "Like every great

religion of the past...we seek to find the divinity within and to express this revelation in a life of glorification and worship of God”” (*America* 1966:440). But there was more trouble back at Millbrook when after four years of residence in early 1968 the group was forced to vacate the estate.

All of the information contained in this chapter is available in the mass media. There is some variety in these sources, from the highbrow *New York Times* to *Life Magazine*. Whatever their differences we will see how they created a much different picture of the drug and its users than found in the specialty sources such as speeches by Leary and Alpert.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Specialty Sources Involving Magic Mushrooms and its Practitioners**

#### **The Historic Origins of Psilocybin Mushrooms**

Psilocybin mushrooms have been used by Native Americans for perhaps thousands of years. It wasn't until R. Gordon Wasson's 1957 *Life* magazine article was published that the mushrooms became a part of popular Western culture. Soon afterwards large numbers of people began taking them and they were eventually outlawed. A documentary traces this development (See *Magic Trip: The Documentary*).

#### **Beginning at the Top: Leary and Alpert at Harvard**

The Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann isolated the psychoactive component in Mexican mushrooms in 1958. In 1960 Leary and Alpert secured this substance called psilocybin from Sandoz Pharmaceuticals and began research on the drug's potential for expanding human consciousness. At this time it was a "thoroughly respectable inquiry" (Benson and Smith 1967:117). Moreover, mind altering substances were seen as possible aides in psychotherapy for addicts, alcoholics and law violators. The only hope was that Leary and Alpert would have been more restrained in their research activities. In the fall of 1961 Harvard reached an agreement with Leary and Alpert that they would not use undergraduates in their research. In March of 1962 the Massachusetts Public Health Department investigated the project (Benson and Smith 1967) and determined that the research could continue if a physician was present during the administration of the drug. Then the controversy surrounding the research seemed to diminish for a time. After

returning from Mexico in the fall of 1962 Leary and Alpert formed the International Foundation for Internal Freedom to fund and promote research in this area. The problem reemerged when some critics alleged that the psychologists were primarily interested in attempting to produce a mystical experience (Benson and Smith 1967) in a party-like atmosphere rather than scientific discovery.

Richard Alpert, the youngest of three brothers, grew up in a well-known Jewish family in Boston. Richard's brother George indicated that Richard was well liked by their family and that their father, George Sr. was a renowned attorney, former railroad president, and founder of Brandeis University. The family owned a large estate in New Hampshire complete with a barn and a golf course. Ram Dass recounted how he lived a life of luxury as Richard Alpert the Harvard Professor. By his own account he fit the image perfectly and was doing quite well for himself. He stated: "I was completely spit and polish Harvard Professor" (*Fierce Grace*). His office was next to that of a rebellious instructor named Timothy Leary.

### **Tim Leary as a Bull in Harvard's China Shop**

Richard's brother, George, knew Tim Leary and seemed to blame him for much of what happened to Richard. George Alpert believed that Leary liked to create conflict. He stated: "I thought Tim was a nut in that he provoked situations which didn't have to be put on the table. He seemed to get some pleasure out of sticking his finger in an electric light socket" (*Fierce Grace*).

### **Richard Alpert finds a New World through Modern Chemistry and Tim Leary**

Richard Alpert got to know Leary and to know about him. This would change Alpert's life in a dramatic fashion, especially after Leary introduced him to the world of hallucinogens. Alpert's own experience with these substances convinced him that they were a type of sacrament. He stated: "I bugged Tim so that I could have some psychedelics and that experience freed me. I became identified with the spiritual being inside of myself" (*Fierce Grace*).

Alpert discussed the psilocybin experience in psychological terms referring to it as a "dissociative experience" that opened up new levels of awareness (*How to Go out of Your Mind*). Hallucinogens had a major impact on his thinking. He described his own transformation as follows:

So you start to have this dissociative experience of where all that you become is awareness, that's all that's left. And I remember the first time this happened to me. I got this terrible panic because indeed I was going to cease to exist and I got the panic that precedes the psychological death because Richard Alpert was dying at that point and the panic was 'stop' I've got to hold on to something so I'll know who I am (*How to Go out of Your Mind*).

This experience taught him to make decisions based on his own feelings. Forty years later he referred to his initial experience with psilocybin by pointing to his chest and stating "From then on in here is the cue" (*Fierce Grace*).

In 1971 Ram Dass discussed the various points in his life at which he reflected on the direction in which he was headed. He stated that before he discovered hallucinogens he was consumed with acquiring power, prestige, popularity, and possessions. A sense of fulfillment, however, had eluded his grasp:

Each thing was going to be the thing. Maybe karate will do it, maybe if I went scuba diving that would do it, maybe a motorcycle would do it, maybe if I get into important government posts, that'll do it. Maybe if my mother looks in my eye and says "Richard you've made it", maybe that'll do it (*One Man's Journey to the East*).



Although he was very successful and people praised him, Alpert's accomplishments came at the price of a great deal of stress. In addition it appeared as if he felt a constant sense of inadequacy. This was a problem that really seemed to bother him. He said: "It's horrible, everybody is telling you it's enough and somewhere in you lurks that little voice that says 'not quite enough'" (*One Man's Journey to the East*).

Alpert came to believe that society's focus on achievement and acquisition constituted a warped notion of success. While working at Harvard he became disillusioned with academic life when he noticed that the Professors there had not obtained the sense of enlightenment that he himself so desperately sought. This sense of dissatisfaction occurred in spite of all of the perks that went along with his position (*One Man's Journey to the East*).

Tim Leary had an office in the same building with Alpert. Although Leary was well liked he had not achieved the same level of academic success that Alpert had. Nevertheless, they soon became friends. Alpert first took psilocybin in early 1961 at Timothy Leary's home. He was initially frightened by the experience but he soon felt a sense of fulfillment that he had never experienced through academic life. He described in great detail the experience as bringing profound and playful peace.

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1961 Timothy invited me to his home in Newton to ingest psilocybin. The first part of the session that we had started around the kitchen table with a group of people was kind of melodramatic tragicomic. The dog had been out in the snow and we thought the dog was dying cause it was it seemed to be gasping for breath and to our timeless minds it went on much too long. Of course, we didn't know it was midnight during a big snowstorm and we were going to carry the dog four miles to a vet since the roads were all closed but we weren't quite sure whether the dog was sick or whether we were just drugged out of our heads. So we called Tim's twelve-year-old son down from upstairs where he was watching television. When he came down the dog jumped up and ran to

him born again, brought back by the spirit. I had gone off and into the living room to be by myself. I sat alone in the semi-darkness in the living room of Tim's huge rented house in Newton. The only light in the room came through the window from the porch. I watched the huge snowflakes dancing to the tune of the wind as they swept through the arc of light and on into the darkness beyond. It was March 7<sup>th</sup>, Sunday morning 2 a.m. The biggest snow of the year was falling and earlier in the evening I had walked a few blocks through knee deep drifts from my parent's home which was a few blocks away. I had taken some psilocybin, a synthetic of the Mexican mushroom that was gentle and mild and the dose was small (*One Man's Journey to the East*).

Now I was in the living room. A deep calm pervaded my being. The rug crawled and the pictures smiled all of which delighted me. Then I saw a figure standing about eight feet away where a moment before there had been no one. I peered into the semi-darkness and recognized none other than myself in cap and gown and hood as a professor. It was as if that part of me which was professor-ness had separated or dissociated itself from me. Well, I thought, I worked hard to get that status but I don't really need it so I settled back into that cushion but at that moment the figure changed. Again I leaned forward straining to see. Ah me again. But now it was that aspect of me that was the social cosmopolite. Again and again the figure changed and I recognized all the different aspects I knew to be me; cellist, pilot, lover, and son. With each new presentation I again and again reassured myself I didn't need that anyway. Then I saw that figure become that in me which was Richard Alpert. Now I learned that one very early in my life and heard "Richard come inside," "Richard go to bed," "Richard you're cold," "Richard eat your food," "Richard you're a good boy," "you're growing up". It's that guy you somehow identify with all the way from way back to six months old and there he was over there. It's hard to tell you how he looked but it was that guy. Sweat broke out on my forehead (*One Man's Journey to the East*).

I wasn't sure I could do without being Richard Alpert. Did that mean I'd have amnesia? Was that what this drug was going to do? Would it be permanent? Was that what this Timothy Leary had done to me? What the hell, I'll give up being Richard Alpert, so I'll have amnesia and it'll be interesting. And then I'll have to develop a new identity. That's cool. But I spoke too soon because I had thought at least I have my body and as I looked down suddenly I could see nothing beneath my kneecaps and slowly, to my horror, I saw the progressive disappearance of limbs and then torso until all there was were my eyes. A scream formed in my throat whatever that was, it's hard to tell you, my non-existent throat. I felt that I was dying since there was nothing in my universe that led me to believe in life after leaving the body. Man, the body goes baby that's it (*One Man's Journey to the East*).

Doing without professor-ness or lover-ness or even Richard Alpert-ness that's cool, but I needed the body. Panic mounted adrenaline shot through my system. My mouth became dry but along with this a voice sounded inside, inside what? I don't know but a voice sounded inside and in a rather jocular manner, said, "but who's minding the store"? I realized that though every thing by which I knew myself, the body even, was gone. Still I was fully aware. Not only that but

the aware eye was watching the entire drama including the panic with calm compassion. “Wow, look at him get uptight about not being in his body.” Instantly, with this recognition I felt a new kind of calmness, one of a profundity never before experienced. I had just found a point, a soul, an essence, I didn’t know how to label it. It meant that I existed independent of physical and social identity. I heard a voice inside that spoke truth. I recognized it, was one with it, and felt as if my entire life of looking to the outside world for that reassurance was over. Fear turned to exaltation (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

I ran out into the snow laughing as the huge flakes swirled about me. In a moment the house was lost from view but it was alright because inside I knew. At about 5:30 I walked through the silent virgin land a few blocks, my heart full to overflowing with the joy of my new found self. At the folks house I felt the urge to clear the walk as any good young tribal buck might. Happily I set about the task. Then the upstairs window flew open and there were my parents. “Come to bed you idiot, nobody shovels snow in the middle of the night”. Ah, there was that external voice to which I had always listened. But what did the voice inside say? It said “It’s ok to shovel snow, and it’s ok to be happy” I laughed up at them, danced a bit of a jig and returned to shoveling. When I looked again they had closed the window and behind it, too, they were smiling. That was my first contact high (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

Alpert felt that words alone were insufficient for describing the subtleties of the psilocybin experience. As he continued to take the drug it became more difficult for him to relate to others who had not had the same experience. As a result he began spending much of his time with people who, like himself, had taken psilocybin. Unable to understand what was happening, a number of Leary and Alpert’s colleagues accused them of forming a “cult” (*One Man’s Journey to the East*). Nevertheless, these men continued to take psilocybin. In reflecting on his experiences with the drug Ram Dass referred to them as a “good fortune” even though he initially had his doubts (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

In discussing his feelings about being fired from Harvard Ram Dass stated that, at the time, he, like others around him, questioned his own sanity. While he was at a press conference to discuss his termination from the university Alpert felt that others in the

room judged him to be a bad person and they felt sorry for him. Despite the atmosphere of disapproval he had a feeling that he was doing the right thing. He stated:

I stood up and everybody around me looked at me like I was bad, and like they felt sorry for me and inside of me that little voice said “ahh its ok to shovel snow, and it’s ok to be happy, see?” And I thought “boy that little voice must be crazy, because psychosis is defined as what everybody doesn’t agree to (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

Alpert eventually came to the conclusion that he had made the right decision to continue experimenting with psilocybin. As he, himself, put it:

So, in operational terms I was crazy. But it sure felt good. It felt right and true and honest and there was something in me that couldn’t deny that place in me that said “go, baby, go, it’s alright, it’s cool, it’s alright” (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

While debating the LSD researcher Sidney Cohen Alpert even questioned his own position regarding hallucinogens. He eventually became obsessed with the effects that these substances had on his mind. He stated: “I was addicted to that inner place because it felt absolutely right. I wasn’t addicted to the method that was the only method I knew of was to get to the place, I was addicted to the experience” (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

Although Ram Dass did not seem to regret the decision to turn his back on the university he claimed, in a conversation with Leary, that Leary’s influence was the reason why he did this (*Fierce Grace*). Alpert’s parents were devastated after their son had been publicly fired from Harvard. In 1973 Ram Dass stated: “My parents were sitting Shiva. That’s what Jews do when one of their children dies and when you get thrown out of Harvard in a Jewish family from Boston, you’ve died, that’s the way it is” (*Baba Ram Dass at Stephens College*). Nevertheless Alpert was comfortable with the decision to give up his professorship in order to explore the world of hallucinogens. This, even though he

sensed that others around him thought he was insane. While reflecting on his life as Richard Alpert the psychologist Ram Dass stated that he had become someone whom Alpert would consider to be crazy. In retrospect, however, he felt as if Professor Alpert had been the crazy person (*Baba Ram Dass at Stephens College*).

### **Research History with Psilocybin**

When Leary first took psilocybin mushrooms he was so impressed with their effects that he set about studying them intensively. In 1965 he stated: “I learned more about my brain and its possibilities. I learned more about psychology in the five hours after taking these mushrooms than I had in the preceding fifteen years of studying doing research in psychology” (*How to Go out of Your Mind*).

Leary and Alpert soon began testing psilocybin in a manner that would allow them to observe the various possibilities that the drug may hold. According to Leary:

We deliberately tried not to impose any kind of session programs or any models or metaphors or theories on the psychedelic experience. During the first few years of our research we concentrated on making the experience pleasant and educational and safe (*How to Go out of Your Mind*).

Ram Dass pointed out how the Psilocybin Project was designed to help people. With the prison experiment, for example, the goal was to demonstrate how psilocybin can help people to “reorient” their lives (*Fierce Grace*). Nevertheless, Ram Dass pointed out how the university was so opposed to this line of research that he became the first Harvard Professor in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be fired (*Fierce Grace*).

Ralph Metzner described how in their search for a way to study the effects of hallucinogens Leary and Alpert decided to conduct a double blind experiment to test whether or not psilocybin could produce a religious experience for divinity students

inside a chapel on Good Friday. According to Metzner: “It was the first and to this day really the only attempt to experimentally demonstrate or induce and evaluate a religious experience from a psychological experiment” (*Fierce Grace*). This later became known as the “Good Friday experiment” (*Fierce Grace*). They might have predicted that this research would cause great conflict. Taking on Christianity by equating the presence of God with a chemical substance was very risky behavior.

Metzner claimed that people were skeptical of the religious value of psilocybin. However, when the substance was outlawed the debate was pushed aside (*Fierce Grace*). Leary was not surprised by the university’s refusal to support the Psilocybin Project. According to Metzner: “Leary used the analogy saying expecting a university like Harvard to sponsor research in consciousness expanding drugs would be like expecting the Vatican to sponsor research in aphrodisiacs” (*Fierce Grace*).

Even though Leary was enamored with the possibilities of psilocybin he was nevertheless aware of the potentially hostile reactions that could be generated as more people become aware of its effects. In his own words: “The doctors wouldn't like that because it would be throwing their game of medicine into a dramatic religion. The ministers and priests wouldn't like it because there's a new conception of divine process that's not in the Bible” (*The Drug Years: Break on Through Part 2*).

### **Research with Prisoners: The Recruitment and Conversion of Ralph Metzner**

Metzner became curious about psilocybin after listening to his graduate student colleagues discuss their own experiences with the drug. He described how their discussions piqued his interest in the effects of this substance. Metzner claimed:

I remember this feeling of listening to them talk and there was a quality and tone of voice in the way they talked about these experiences that was very different than the kind of conversations graduate students usually have with one another, joking, kidding and cynical, and that really intrigued me (*Timothy Leary, LSD Science and Experience*).

Even though Metzner was skeptical about taking drugs, when he heard about Leary's work with prisoners he became interested in the empirical aspects of these experiments. Soon afterwards Leary explained his philosophy of drug research to Metzner and told him that if he wanted to participate he would have to take the drug himself. Metzner agreed to the proposal (*Timothy Leary, LSD Science and Experience*).

Metzner had his first psilocybin experience at Leary's home and soon afterwards he became involved with the prison experiment. During the course of the experiment Metzner and the other researchers would take psilocybin along with the inmates. He described the procedure as follows: "Half the convicts and half the graduate students would take the drug in the morning and the other half would sit and assist, and then in the afternoon we would switch roles" (*Timothy Leary, LSD Science and Experience*).

### **Metzner, Meaning and Psilocybin**

Metzner's first dose of psilocybin taught him about the artificial constraints that society had placed on his awareness. He had a profound and enjoyable experience while looking at garbage and throwing snow, activities that under different circumstances would seem mundane. He described the experience as follows:

It was a winter's day and I went out through the front door and I passed the garbage can and found myself thinking "there's the garbage can. I'll just keep going" and I said "wait a minute, I don't have to do that. I could look at the garbage can and could even look inside it." I realized I just automatically go in this kind of conditioned way and didn't have to do that. I could be totally present at the moment and choose to attend to whatever there was to look at, even things

that you normally don't look at like garbage. I was looking inside the house and I saw Timothy and the others inside the room and there was snow lying around outside so I picked up a snowball and threw it against the window and Timothy saw me and he picked up a little pillow and he threw it against the window from the inside. That was a kind of a symbolic recognition of how the inside and the outside come together and meet each other. And so it was really a beautiful experience (*Timothy Leary, LSD Science and Experience*).

### **Psilocybin Respectability and Organized Religion**

The “Good Friday Experiment” was conducted in 1962 and it involved Leary and Alpert testing psilocybin on students from the Andover Newton Theological Seminary (*Power & Control—Part 2*). Prior to conducting the experiment Leary talked to the divinity students about psilocybin describing it as a tool that would allow them to explore unfamiliar territory. He stressed the fact that this substance could ultimately benefit humanity. Ben Thornberg, one of the subjects in the experiment described Leary's presentation as follows: “I remember him saying this is sort of like Columbus, we're going on a voyage to a new country that we have never been to before and felt that this would be a new breakthrough for humanity” (*Power & Control—Part 2*). Twenty students were involved in the experiment and it took place at the Marsh Chapel on the Boston University Campus. Half of the students were given psilocybin and the other half were given a placebo (*Power & Control—Part 2*). Thornberg claimed that taking hallucinogens was, at least at that time, a respectable activity especially when compared to getting drunk. Furthermore, Timothy Leary was a highly regarded psychologist (*Power & Control—Part 3*).

At the beginning of the experiment Thornberg thought that he had been given the psilocybin. However, the behavior of some of his fellow students soon convinced him that he was in the control group. He stated: “I remember one [student] went up to the altar



stared very carefully at the cross on the altar” (*Power & Control—Part 3*). Thornberg claimed that those of his fellow students who received the drug were amazed at its effects. Even decades later they viewed their experience with the drug as a profound event, even within the context of their entire lives (*Power & Control—Part 3*). One of the students who received the psilocybin, Randall Laakko, described the first part of his experience as follows:

I had a real struggle with the chemical and at one point I thought in fact I had died and I was in hell. I began saying the Bible verse “For God so loves the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life” and I kept repeating that over and over again and then I came to the awareness that this wasn’t helping me at all (*The Marsh Chapel Experiment*).

Laakko ran outside and Leary chased after him. Once he left the chapel he calmed down:

It was a glorious sunny day I remember seeing an elderly couple walking down the sidewalk hand in hand and that was the most profound and beautiful experience to me....Everything in the world just seemed to glow inwardly with life. Everything was alive and I don’t mean just living things but even inanimate things they just lived and I was seeing things like I had never seen them before (*The Marsh Chapel Experiment*).

In reflecting on his psilocybin experience Laakko stated:

I would say...it did change my life. The experience...demonstrated to me the reality of God’s presence in all the world and in all experience. If our eyes are opened and we are able to perceive and take that in by “eyes” I mean our spiritual inner awarenesses [sic] (*The Marsh Chapel Experiment*).

The philosopher Huston Smith had a profound experience with psilocybin. He stated: “For me it was the strongest experience I have had of the personal God” (*Fierce Grace*). Some may have seen this as striking at the core beliefs of Christianity. Larry Brilliant stated that hallucinogens can engender “profound religious and mystical experiences” (*Fierce Grace*). He claimed that taking these substances allowed him to

have experiences that he would not have otherwise encountered given his conventional lifestyle. He stated:

For me it opened up a new world that my very conventional, very middle class upbringing in Detroit, Michigan wouldn't have opened for me that my training in Medical School would have if anything forbidden me to see so I'm very grateful for those times and those experiments (*Fierce Grace*).

### **Living High at Millbrook**

After Leary and Alpert were dismissed from Harvard and after the IFIF was expelled from Mexico they arrived at Millbrook, New York. The brothers of Peggy Hitchcock, a member of the IFIF, had acquired a large plot of land that contained a large house. Because they did not need the house they allowed the IFIF to use it for the purpose of engaging in recreational and scientific pursuits. While living at Millbrook this group (which now called itself "the Castalia Foundation") was somewhat isolated from the rest of society (*Fierce Grace*).

For some the Millbrook project was an enjoyable experience even though it did not last long. Rosemary Woodruff Leary, Timothy Leary's ex-wife and a former resident of the estate described their time as follows:

Just about everything was going on at Millbrook. It was an incredible place and had 64 rooms. It hasn't existed anywhere else in the world and probably never exist again. But for a very brief time it was a fairyland. It was an interesting endeavor, short lived and sometimes almost perfect (*Fierce Grace*).

The activities at Millbrook attracted a variety of artists and musicians including Alan Ginsberg, Aldous Huxley, Huston Smith, and Maynard Ferguson who lived at the estate for a time (*Fierce Grace*). In addition to exploring alternative forms of consciousness Ram Dass felt as if the residents of the Millbrook estate were trying to

change society. Of their time at Millbrook he said: “It was a very creative moment in history. We were experimenting with consciousness, we were prodding the culture” (*Fierce Grace*).

### **Branching Out to LSD**

While living at Millbrook Alpert and some of the other residents took large amounts of LSD. At one point Alpert and several others took the drug as part of an experiment and they began to grow intolerant of each other’s company (*Fierce Grace*). Alpert took LSD for therapeutic purposes. He made a conscious effort to absorb every aspect of the experience. He eventually decided that his LSD sessions were helping him to move toward his goals but that he would ultimately be unsuccessful using this particular method. Alpert described some of these LSD sessions as follows:

I tried programming sessions. I’d take huge doses standing in the ocean in the middle of the night. I’d take acid standing on my head. I’d go through a session to understand my sexual things with women as I was coming out of a long sexual hang-up period, all kinds of perversities. And I’d have big slides of the Mona Lisa and Venus and all of my women in my life and I’d shine these slides on with thousands of micrograms of acid and I’d go into their pores. And there were horrible sessions and beautiful sessions and there were ten thousand horrible demons and ten thousand beautiful demons and I was trying to embrace every one of them. And I felt I was getting very old and wise, but not old and wise enough, fast enough. And I saw that I was in some kind of an acid tonic curve that no matter how hard I got I wasn’t gonna get there (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

Alpert eventually became disillusioned by the temporary effects of LSD and found himself looking for a way to expand his consciousness indefinitely. He stated: “By 1967 I appreciated the fact that I didn’t know enough to stay high with this method and I looked about me at all my colleagues and I realized that they did not know enough either” (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

## **The Post-Post Graduate Education of Professor Alpert or Richard Alpert becomes Ram Dass**

Alpert traveled to India in 1967 where he met people who “recognized spirit” and were familiar with extraordinary forms of human consciousness even though they themselves had never taken LSD (*Fierce Grace*). He soon began seeking the hallucinogenic experience through meditation (*Fierce Grace*). Ram Dass pointed out how phenomena which create “intense emotional experiences” such as drugs and sex are, for this reason, addictive (*Baba Ram Dass at KOPN*). He described them as a “trap” in the sense that people become addicted to the experience alone (*Baba Ram Dass at KOPN*). With certain drugs this becomes problematic because if they are illegal their illegality can create a sense of paranoia. Ram Dass claimed that he had become interested in meditation and more “gentle methods” for creating emotional experiences (*Baba Ram Dass at KOPN*).

In 1973 Ram Dass remarked that hallucinogens are best used for spiritual purposes and, like Leary he believed that they should be regarded as sacraments. Nevertheless most people do not treat them this way (*Baba Ram Dass at KOPN*). When Alpert gave lectures on hallucinogens a variety of people attended his lectures including people who were unfamiliar with these substances. He found this to be surprising. (*One Man’s Journey to the East*).

When Alpert was a psychologist he taught, conducted research, wrote books, and practiced therapy. When he and Leary began studying the properties of hallucinogens in 1961 they encountered political opposition. Their research drew media attention and according to Ram Dass started to “develop a degree of notoriety” (*Evolution of a Yogi*).

Despite these obstacles the researchers continued with their work because they felt based on their own experiences with the drugs that they were engaging in an important pursuit.

Regarding his own experiences with hallucinogens Ram Dass claimed that:

Through them I touched a place inside myself that had been up to that moment covered over. It was a place behind all my social roles. Even behind my own body or life or death. It was like pure eternal consciousness (*Evolution of a Yogi*).

Even though he took a fair amount of hallucinogens Alpert eventually became disillusioned with the temporary nature of their effects. Nevertheless he conceded that these drugs had introduced him to the possibility of expanding his consciousness (*Evolution of a Yogi*).

In 1967 Ram Dass (then Richard Alpert) traveled to India to learn about the different levels of human consciousness. After studying in India for a while Ram Dass felt obligated to return to the United States and teach people what he had learned. When he returned he started his work alone and then, gradually, more and more people came to visit him. He discussed his spiritual growth with people who visited him at his family's estate. He soon realized that there were many people who, just like him, wished to explore their own consciousness. He said: "I came to realize the extraordinarily intense seeking that exists by large numbers of Americans for discipline that would help them to purify themselves in order to find a deeper state of consciousness" (*Evolution of a Yogi*).

Many of these people wanted to learn from Ram Dass and while visiting him they camped at his family's estate. Ram Dass's family had difficulty adjusting to the large number of visitors. Nevertheless they tolerated it because they felt that Ram Dass was making a contribution to society. According to his brother George Alpert:

When Richard came back from India and he would come to visit us in Franklin, New Hampshire hundreds of hippies came to visit us....The family felt that to

some extent it was an invasion of our privacy on the other hand we realized that Richard was doing a very good thing here (*Fierce Grace*).

When Alpert returned to the United States from India his father picked him up at the airport. Alpert's father was a prominent businessman who wore fancy clothing. This may be part of the reason why he was surprised and confused when he saw how Richard (now Ram Dass) had changed his appearance. Richard's brother George described the situation as follows:

He [George Sr.] went up to the gate to see Richard coming off the plane with a sheet on, barefooted and a big long beard and he said "Oh my God" and he jumped back into his car and Richard finally made his way to the car...my father was probably confused for two weeks trying to figure out what had happened (*Fierce Grace*).

His father later referred to him as "Rum Dumb" (*One Man's Journey to the East*). Other people, as well, were taken aback by Ram Dass's unusual appearance. He stated:

I'd go into the bank in this little town of Franklin, New Hampshire and I'd go to the teller at the window and she'd be this corseted, tight-lipped, New Englander looking at this guy with the beard, hippie and she'd be like "I'll touch his money but I won't enjoy it" (*One Man's Journey to the East*)

### **Ram Dass on Education**

Ram Dass claimed that inpatient psychiatric care is often necessary to help people improve their lives. He claimed:

I'm not sure I can tell you that 2 years in a mental hospital isn't much more advantageous in one's growth than 4 years of a college education and maybe 6 months in prison could be comparable to a post graduate education (*Responsibility and Psychosis*).

Even though he acknowledged the value of modern psychotherapy Ram Dass, like Leary, disputed the value of formal education and stated that practical experience is the key to

learning (*Responsibility and Psychosis*). For this reason a term in prison may be more enlightening than graduate school.

Ram Dass argued that schools often provide students with useless information. He referred to them as “babysitting institutions” (*Responsibility and Psychosis*). In addition, he referred to “Western education” as an “initiation rite” and stated that educational institutions do not appreciate the complexity of the learning process (*Responsibility and Psychosis*). Drawing on his own experience as an educator Ram Dass stated: “I began to see that we don’t learn like rats” (*Responsibility and Psychosis*).

### **Drugs, Sex and Ram Dass**

In 1973 Ram Dass openly discussed his bisexuality and his compulsive attitude toward sex. He also implied that his experiences with LSD began to steer him away from heterosexuality. He stated:

I have been involved with homosexuality for about 15 years. In the course of my using LSD I had been through psychoanalysis and I was making it with both sexes and groups. I was very preoccupied with sex for years and years and when in the course of my taking LSD I began to experience the exquisiteness of the design of the way men and women were made and the kind of obviousness of heterosexuality and I began to see that there was still my homosexuality (*Q&A at Stephens College*).

Now he became more conscious and therefore had less anxiety about sexual relations with women, which is one of the reasons he felt forced into homosexuality in the first place. He stated “I’m getting tremendous gratification from both sexes” (*Q&A at Stephens College*).

Ram Dass discussed “sexual tantra” which he described as the use of sexual energy “to come to God” (*Q&A at Stephens College*). He stated that the process is very

difficult because people wish to act on their sexual impulses. He pointed to Mahatma Gandhi's statement that "ultimately a person would only have sex to reproduce" (*Q&A at Stephens College*). Ram Dass admitted that, for a long time, he had been unable to grasp this idea because of the sexual permissiveness of Western society. He stated:

I couldn't hear it for a long time because the sexual freedom model was that beautiful, loving beings will be making it with each other all the time and there'd be a sort of a free play of bodies and mind and heart (*Q&A at Stephens College*).

Ram Dass admitted that he was obsessed with tactile stimulation referring to himself as "a super sensualist" (*Q&A at Stephens College*). In 1973 he stated that he was sexually active with both men and women and that he had no regrets about his bisexuality. In his own words: "I have no problem about it, I'm not uptight about it and I'm not busy being anything, I'm just being busy being as honest as I know how to be with every movement" (*Q&A at Stephens College*).

### **Tim Leary's Philosophy of Education: Dealing with the Young**

Leary recalled that he had a record as a troublemaker in high school and that it took his great uncle's influence with the Vatican to get him into Holy Cross College (*Paul Krassner Interviews Timothy Leary 1995 Part 5*). Not making it there he later became a "master sharpshooter" when at West Point (*Paul Krassner Interviews Timothy Leary 1995 Part 3*). Even later he said "I'm insulted when people call me a rebel. Fuck you. I'm smarter, I'm better educated, better looking than most of those stabbing me" (*Paul Krassner Interviews Timothy Leary 1995 Part 6*). Years earlier Leary had rejected other people's criticism of his actions and ideas stating: "I think I'm the strongest, sanest person around" (*The Weather Underground Part 6*).



Leary stressed the idea that people need to reconsider many of the thoughts and ideas that they take for granted. Consciousness expansion, he seemed to believe, had the potential to help people reach this goal. During an interview he stated:

We teach the science and art of ecstasy. We teach people how to turn on or how to go out of their minds. The point is you have to go out of your mind, you have to go out of all ways the in which you think, experience (*How to Go out of Your Mind*).

Although there are many forms of reality Leary stated that we experience only one form. He criticized the educational system saying that it is simply a tool used to brainwash people so that they work to keep the existing social institutions intact. He stated: “All of the educational institutions are set up to drug you, to put you asleep so that you leave here and walk out into the bigger game and take your place in the line” (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary pointed out how college students are given the opportunity to rebel and are made to think that they can be original. Nevertheless they are being groomed by society to behave in the same way as adults. In 1963 he told a group of students: “You’ll be doing all the things the grown ups are doing because that’s what they’re training you to do” (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary argued that the educational system prevents people from directly experiencing events and, by extension, stifles personal growth. Rather than helping people to improve their lives the educational system, he argued, teaches people how to play the education “game” (*Individual in the College Community*). Leary described the educational process as an “addictive” experience that inhibits people’s awareness to the point of causing “direct physiological damage” (*Individual in the College Community*). He told a group of college students that the educational process places: “a series of filters

over your awareness so that year by year, step by step you experience less and less and less” (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary encouraged people to refrain from voting. In addition he compared the modern education system to a dangerous narcotic arguing that: “school as education today is the worst narcotic drug of all” (*The Drug Years: Feed Your Head Part 2*). He described how the educational process causes physiological changes in the brain which take the form of habits. In 1963, the same year that Leary was fired from Harvard, he encouraged college students to quit school. He said that young people are often told that their life is going to improve but the reality is that it will probably get worse. He told an audience of college students to put themselves in a position where they can directly experience important events. He told them to: “Go out closer to reality to direct experience. Go out where things are really happening. Go out to the frontiers to those focal points where important issues are being played out” (*Individual in the College Community*).

### **Leary on Looking for Graduate Education**

In 1963 Leary warned, however, that dropping out of school would stall the plans of those who wished to follow a traditional career path. He also made it clear that he does not oppose people who wish to have a traditional career. In fact he even recounted giving advice to students who wanted to pursue graduate degrees in psychology (*Individual in the College Community*).

## Direct Experience

Leary first read about psilocybin mushrooms in a 1957 Life magazine article. Since he was bored and suffering a midlife crisis he decided to try them. This was a profound and deeply religious experience that redirected his life. Leary said “The effect is somewhat like looking through a microscope. . . . You discover there’s an invisible world around you” (*Getting High*).

Leary emphasized the notion that learning from direct experience is more valuable than formal education. He proposed the idea that knowledge about institutions can only come through direct experience with the phenomena much as did Ram Dass. Thus if one wants to learn about mental illness spending time as a patient in a mental hospital may be more valuable than learning about it through books. He stated “There’s no problem that can’t be best solved and best learned about at this stage by getting right into the reality!” (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary conceded that books do have their place, in that in many cases they contain the knowledge that is necessary for solving practical problems. Nevertheless he stated that books and even libraries themselves are “dangerous, addictive substances” (*Individual in the College Community*). Reading, Leary argued, should not be done for the sole purpose of acquiring knowledge. He expressed this viewpoint while he was on the faculty at Harvard. Leary even suggested that the university regulate students’ use of books in a manner similar to the way in which prescription drugs are controlled. In his own words:

I made the suggestion . . . at Harvard University that they lock up Widener Library, put chains on the doors and have little holes in the wall like bank teller’s windows and if a student wanted to get a book he’d have to come with a little slip made out showing that he had some existential, practical reason not because he wanted to

stuff a lot of facts in his mind so he could impress a teacher or be one up on the other students in the intellectual game. If he had an existential problem then the library would help him get all the information that would be brought to bear on that problem (*Individual in the College Community*).

### **Meditation and Sensory Deprivation**

Leary also stressed the importance of meditation which he argued is an important means of expanding one's consciousness and is vital to human progress. He stated that "Every one of our great visionaries who really changed the course of human history came out of a meditative experience" (*Individual in the College Community*).

Sensory deprivation, Leary argued, is a strange and often frightening experience for most Americans because they are accustomed to receiving verbal feedback from others as well as stimulation from other sources. Leary compared the need for verbal feedback and stimulation to a drug habit and argued that this feedback allows people to confirm their own version of reality. He claimed: "You have to have feedback all the time. You have to have people around you reminding you that you're you" (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary pointed out how we depend on others to help us define reality. Sensory deprivation, although a frightening experience, helps people to grasp a different form of reality. He claimed that being put in jail can be a valuable experience because it is a type of sensory deprivation. Moreover, a number of society's visionaries obtained their insights from sensory deprivation and from being isolated from society. Ironically the same technology that limits our perception of reality has given us new ways to expand our consciousness. These achievements include: "electrical stimulation of the brain which can change consciousness and control consciousness...and the new drugs which...allow

for dramatic changes in consciousness and controlling consciousness” (*Individual in the College Community*). Leary also stated that the next major step in the evolution of society will be brought about through consciousness expansion (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary argued that the government’s efforts to crack down on hallucinogens will, in the long run, be futile. These drugs, Leary argued, have the potential to expand people’s minds which, in turn, will help to reduce conflict between people as well as between humans and the environment. He stated:

The use of chemicals which open up the mind and put us in touch with our ancient wisdom which is inside are gonna leave man to be to be more harmonious with other men. We’re going to learn to be more harmonious with the other forms of energy, plants and vegetables and air and animals around us. (*Timothy Leary at Millbrook Part One*).

In 1963 Leary pointed out how many of the researchers who study hallucinogenic drugs have had to work in uncertain legal territory. Indeed many have been forced to purchase the drugs illegally. He claimed that this pattern of harassment is a good sign because history has shown that evolutionary developments are initially rejected by society but attempts to outlaw hallucinogens will ultimately be useless. In his own words: “These potentialities and these promises aren’t going go away. You can’t repress electrical stimulation and chemical expansion of the nervous process. It’s here” (*Individual in the College Community*). Leary pointed out that people who have discovered “new forms of energy” have been persecuted by society even though the value of these discoveries is eventually recognized. Although he thought of himself as a “pioneer” Leary conceded that he may be a “crank” (*Timothy Leary at Millbrook Part 4*).

Leary claimed that the turbulence of the 1960s can only be dealt with through “tolerance” and “patience” (*Timothy Leary at Millbrook Part 4*). He stated “we’re not going to solve these problems by shouting at other people and not listening. We’re not going to solve this misunderstanding by passing laws or by putting young people in jail” (*Timothy Leary at Millbrook Part 4*). He seemed to think that much of the turbulence of the 1960s was the result of a conflict between generations. He thought of himself as a link between the young people of the 1960s and members of the middle aged generation, the group with which they had come into conflict. In his own words: “I see myself as a bridge between the middle age generation of whisky drinking book readers and this new generation who have been brought up on new forms of energy like television, [and] psychedelic drugs” (*Timothy Leary at Millbrook Part 3*).

Leary pointed out that the mass media does not provide an accurate picture of reality. In referring to these sources of information he stated “they’re all telling you what they want you to know for their own benefit” (*Fried Shoes, Cooked Diamonds*). He described himself, therefore, as someone who had the ability and the desire to tell people what is actually happening in the world. He called himself an “evolutionary agent” (*Fried Shoes, Cooked Diamonds*).

Leary argued that Albert Hoffmann’s invention of LSD introduced society to hallucinogens. He described the presence of these substances as both a “challenge” and a “dilemma” (*Individual in the College Community*). Even though hallucinogens are non-addictive and non-toxic Leary stated that many people are afraid of them. He claimed that: “We have incontrovertible evidence that these drugs cause panic, poor judgment, and irrational behavior on the part of certain college deans, psychiatrists, and government

administrators who have not taken them” (*Individual in the College Community*). He stated that he had taken LSD on numerous occasions: “I’ve probably pushed my nervous system as much as any human being living, I’ve taken LSD over 500 times” (*The Weather Underground Part 6*). He believed that people should be licensed to use hallucinogens in the same way that they are licensed to drive a car. Leary claimed: “I am not in favor of indiscriminate use of LSD or of any form of energy.... I’m in favor of strict licensing by government agencies the way the automobile and the airplane is licensed” (*Tim Leary at Millbrook Part 1*). He discussed his efforts to provide training for those who wished to become proficient in this area (*Individual in the College Community*). Even after being terminated by Harvard Leary was incredibly optimistic about the future of hallucinogens.

Leary believed that a licensing system for hallucinogens was on the horizon. In order to earn the right to ingest these substances, he argued, people should be able to show that they can use them without endangering themselves or others. Leary equated the right to use hallucinogens with the right to control one’s own nervous system. He referred to the right to control one’s own nervous system as “the fifth freedom” (*Individual in the College Community*). The fifth freedom he argued may be the most important freedom of all. He announced plans to open training centers which would help people to make the most of their hallucinogenic experiences. These centers would allow: “serious minded people...[to] form groups to study and to apply the potentialities of the expanded nervous system” (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary described how our language and our educational system will need to adjust to the dynamic nature of our environment. He also stated that we will soon have a

language that will allow us to adapt to these changing circumstances. Our present language is, for these purposes, crude and unsophisticated. In addition Leary stated that we can expect our goals and values to change as we discover the direction in which we should be moving (*Individual in the College Community*).

Leary helped to conduct experiments that were designed to determine whether or not “consciousness expansion” could help people learn faster (*Individual in the College Community*). He described how, as we age, the concepts and ideas that we acquire tend to narrow our awareness and inhibit our ability to learn. Leary described how, in one instance, he gave LSD to a woman who had difficulty learning language. During the LSD session she listened to a Spanish language record and, after a few hours, she had learned many of the Spanish words and their corresponding pronunciations. Taking hallucinogens, he argued, may be the only possible way to expand one’s consciousness. He stated:

All of us in this room, adults, students have been so censored the filters have been applied for so long the neuro-physiological processes are so grooved in that if we want to expand our consciousness in our lives we’re probably have to use chemical means” (*Individual in the College Community*).

As a show of faith he pointed to his own decision to separate himself from the educational system (*Individual in the College Community*).

In 1963 Leary equated consciousness expansion with the discovery and exploration of new frontiers. He warned his audience, however, that people will try to use new developments in this area (e.g. hallucinogens) as an opportunity to benefit themselves at the expense of others. He told his audience that they will need to take control of their own brains or somebody else will do it for them (*Individual in the College Community*).



Leary felt that through the use of consciousness expansion he could help people change their behavior as well as the way that their brains work (*Hofmann's Potion*). Over a decade later he argued that society is insane and encouraged people to “drop out” en masse.

You cannot drop out externally until you have detached yourself internally. You must leave your job. You must leave your school. You must leave the city. You must leave all of your social connections that do not make sense to your sense organs. You cannot do this alone in acts of isolated rebellion. Detaching yourself from the insanity of society requires group action. No man can escape the prison of robot society by himself. Once you have tuned in by turning on you will see that it is easy to leave the game. You have been born into an insane asylum and it is simple and obvious to take advantage of the insanity around you to make your escape (*Timothy Leary KPFA*).

Leary had high hopes for the religious movement that he had started in 1966. He stated:

Our aim like the aims of any religious group just beginning is to transform American society, it's an insane asylum over here and it's our goal to lift the spiritual level of the American people, we're going to try to bring about a religious renaissance and a spiritual revolution (*The Drug Years: Break on Through Part 2*).

This religion was based on the idea that people should drop out of society. As he put it:

The motto of our religion is what we advise of all Americans is turn on, tune in, and drop out. Now this may sound rather shocking. Actually it's the oldest, religious metaphor and statement which teachers have passed on for thousands of years (*The Drug Years: Break on Through Part 3*).

### **Leary Fought the Law and the Law Won**

Leary and Alpert went their separate ways in late 1964. Leary ended up with a succession of legal troubles while Alpert (under the name Ram Dass) became a spiritual icon. At one point Leary said to Ram Dass: “‘from a cultural social point of view’ ... ‘I’m getting badder and badder and badder and you’re getting gooder and gooder and gooder’

and he said ‘I have 5,000,000 dollars on my head and you’re practically Billy Graham’” (*Ram Dass at KOPN*).

After they went their separate ways it became clear that Leary and Alpert had different goals and different philosophies. In speaking of Leary Ram Dass stated that “his models of the universe aren’t mine. I’m much more into mysticism” (*Ram Dass at KOPN*). At one point Alpert served as a witness at one of Leary’s trials (*Ram Dass at KOPN*).

As we saw in chapter 3 Leary was arrested on marihuana charges at the Texas border with Mexico in 1965. Soon afterwards he was convicted and subsequently given a 30 year prison term, a \$30,000 fine and ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment. In discussing the reasons for the harsh sentence that he received for possessing marihuana in Texas, Leary argued that his political and social beliefs were decisive. He stated that he was judged on his idea that people should have the right to ingest consciousness expanding substances such as marihuana and LSD. Leary also felt that he was being held responsible for the increased use of these substances among young people. During his trial Leary stated that he told his children that he would prefer they smoke marihuana rather than consume alcohol or smoke tobacco. By his own account he felt as if these ideas may explain the harsh sentence that he received (*Timothy Leary KDNA Interview*).

While Leary was on trial in Texas the prosecutor pointed out how Leary openly acknowledged that he broke the law. Leary later argued that the prohibition of marihuana and other “sacred substances” was unconstitutional and by this standard their use was not illegal (*Timothy Leary KDNA Interview*). He believed that marihuana and hallucinogens are religious sacraments and, as such, the right to use them is constitutionally protected.

He described a sacrament as “a visible object which is a key to the inner divinity, something which helps you find God” (*Drugs & LSD*).

Leary encouraged people to protest unjust laws especially if they violate fundamental human rights. He even stated that people have an obligation to do this. He encouraged people to engage in peaceful protests and to draw society’s attention to these types of issues. Leary pointed out that over 200 million people smoke marihuana. The prohibition of marihuana and hallucinogens, he argued, oppresses young people and minority groups. He stated: “We clearly have in the marihuana laws and in the psychedelic control laws a middle age, middle class, middle brow bureaucracy which is imprisoning young people, as well as racial and economic minority groups” (*Timothy Leary KDNA Interview*).

As we mentioned earlier Leary was arrested on marihuana charges at the Texas border with Mexico and was convicted soon afterwards. At one point the conviction was thrown out by the United States Supreme Court but, after the government appealed the ruling, Leary was convicted of transporting marihuana and given a 1-10 year prison sentence. In the meantime he had been arrested on marihuana charges in California and, for this reason, soon found himself in prison. According to the author Martin Torgoff while Leary was on trial in California the judge referred to him as “the most dangerous man in America” (*The Drug Years: Feed Your Head Part 2*).

Soon after Leary went to prison a group of people who were fascinated with LSD and thought of themselves as followers of Leary paid members of the Weather Underground Organization to help him escape and leave the country. Over two dozen members of the Weather Underground helped in the effort (*The Weather Underground*

part 7). Leary quickly escaped from prison and traveled to Algeria with his wife Rosemary (*Timothy Leary KPFA*). After arriving in Algeria Leary stayed with Eldridge Cleaver, a prominent figure in the Black Panther movement. Leary was soon claiming that he was involved in a revolutionary movement. He stated:

We want to tell the people of the United States the third world war has begun to join us in the fight for freedom because we are everywhere and we're happy and we're free and we're gonna make the world free (*The Weather Underground Part 7*).

Later, after Leary was returned to the United States and sent back to prison, he claimed that he was illegally apprehended by the U.S. government while in Afghanistan. He also indicated that he was framed by the police for marihuana possession. At his trial Leary was denied bail and he claimed that the judge sentenced him to prison because of his radical ideas. He stated that this is a dangerous trend. In his own words:

I'm in prison now because one evening I was in a parked car and the policeman came up to the car and opened the door against my wishes and made a pass at the ashtray and said "you're under arrest" I said "for what?" He said "for marihuana" I said "what marihuana?" He reached in his pocket he pulled out two joints that I'd never seen before, half joints and said "you're under arrest". Now then the judge, instead of giving me bail as I was entitled to for appeal, held up a book that I had been writing and said "you're ideas are dangerous, we're not gonna give you bail and we're going to put you in prison to keep you quiet". I think that a society that imprisons its philosophers is playing with very bad magic, you just can't imprison ideas (*Timothy Leary Prison Interview*).

Leary was finally released from prison in April of 1976 (*Timothy Leary KPFA*).

### **A Final Evaluation of Timothy Leary by Ralph Metzner and Ram Dass**

Ralph Metzner claimed that Leary sought as much attention as possible and tried to create controversy. He felt that Leary spent a lot of time worrying about his public image and was influenced by the media portrayals of him and his activities. Metzner

claimed that even though Leary encouraged others to “drop out”, he was unwilling to do this himself (*LSD Science and Experience*).

Ram Dass claimed that Leary provoked society by telling people to “drop out” (*LSD Science and Experience*). He felt that Leary was inviting a negative reaction and that most people would have been better off trying to change society rather than separating themselves from it. He stated: “It was really time to turn on, tune in and then bring your creative forces into your life whatever they are” (*LSD Science and Experience*).

### **Summary of Specialty Data Involving Psilocybin and its Practitioners**

1. Psilocybin initially had considerable legitimacy. It was welcome in prisons and in seminaries.
2. In 1962 on Good Friday Leary led a research team studying this drug’s impact on the religious experience among divinity students at Boston University
3. At approximately the same time Leary was studying the impact of this drug on prison inmates.
4. In 1963 Leary was predicting licensed hallucinogenic education centers across the nation.
5. What happened? Leary left Harvard without permission and since he was on a non-tenure track the university could simply stop paying him. But Alpert was terminated from a tenure track position. Even his family money and family position could not protect him. This was a major step for Harvard but once it began moving in this direction all the weight of its reputation was thrown into the

fray against both Leary and Alpert. The influence of America's greatest institution of higher education cannot be underestimated.

6. Taking the drug with subjects was part of the problem. Additional problems included the fact that the experiments were conducted in non-clinical settings and the subjects were not screened beforehand. Using the drug for recreation was another problem.
7. The association of LSD with psilocybin was also harmful.
8. Focus or concentration was greatly increased with mushrooms. The Christian cross, snow, one's own body and even garbage and garbage cans could be seen in a new light while under the influence of this drug. The specialty sources demonstrate that use of the drug was a beautiful, playful, non-addictive, and non-hedonistic experience.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter will discuss the differences between the information provided by the specialty sources and the information provided by the specialty sources. This dissertation is an attempt to outline the ways in which a drug problem was created where one did not previously exist. Hopefully the dissertation can be used as a model for analyzing the prohibition of a variety of other substances.

### **Summary of Media Construction Chapter**

Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of R. Gordon Wasson and the article which he published in *Life Magazine* detailing his experience with psilocybin mushrooms in Mexico. Wasson, a New York investment banker traveled to Mexico in the mid 1950s along with his wife, his daughter, and a friend, Allan Richardson. While visiting Mexico the four of them ingested the so-called “divine mushrooms”. By his own account Wasson was one of the first white men to ingest the sacred mushroom. Wasson reported his “magic mushroom” experience in *Life magazine* in a straight forward and non-sensational manner. He even pointed to the potential therapeutic applications that this fungus may have. In 1958, “psilocybin”, a hallucinogenic compound in the mushrooms was isolated. Timothy Leary, an up and coming behavioral psychologist and lecturer at Harvard Universtiy ventured to Mexico in 1960 and tried the mushrooms himself. For Leary this was a dramatic and life changing experience. Upon his return to Cambridge Leary and Professor Richard Alpert obtained a supply of synthetic psilocybin and began

testing the drug's therapeutic potential under the auspices of Harvard's Center for Research in Personality. Alpert, the son of New Haven Railroad president George Alpert, had been a Professor at Harvard since 1958. Even though some expressed concern that psilocybin might be dangerous Leary and Alpert believed that the drug had great potential and began testing it on human subjects in a research program that later became known as the Harvard Psilocybin Project. They tested the psilocybin on a large number of subjects including prisoners, drug addicts, and members of the clergy. Because of the nature of the drug itself as well as Leary's more general approach to conducting research, both he and Alpert often took the drug along with the subjects—a practice which drew criticism. The administration soon ordered the researchers to refrain from testing psilocybin on undergraduates. Soon afterwards Alpert was forced to give most of his and Leary's psilocybin supply to the university for safe-keeping. The Psilocybin Project eventually became a magnet for criticism some of which was published in newspaper accounts.

Perhaps sensing the growing hostility toward their work Leary and Alpert founded an organization that they called the International Foundation for Internal Freedom or IFIF which they hoped would allow them to continue their research in this area. Meanwhile criticism of the Project continued and university officials began publishing warnings about the apparent dangers of psilocybin. Leary and Alpert, however, rebutted this criticism and chastised the university for blocking their research. The IFIF proceeded to set up a communal living arrangement in Newton, Massachusetts which angered some of the neighbors there. Soon, much of the campus was talking about “consciousness expansion” and students began obtaining various hallucinogens from mail



order sources as well as from a black market that had formed near the Harvard campus. In response, the university stepped up its efforts to put an end to the Psilocybin Project. Both researchers were eventually fired from their university positions, Leary for not showing up to his classes, Alpert for giving psilocybin to undergraduates.

After losing their faculty positions Leary and Alpert began focusing their energy on the IFIF, eventually moving the groups' operations to Mexico. Soon afterwards the Mexican government asked the group to leave the country. The IFIF moved to a large estate in Millbrook, New York and changed its name to the Castalia Foundation. While living at Millbrook members of the Castalia Foundation published their own journal (*The Psychedelic Review*), members took large amounts of hallucinogenic drugs, and entertained a variety of well known visitors. In essence they created a party atmosphere that angered the local residents.

In 1966 Leary founded a religion based on the sacramental use of LSD. While living at Millbrook Leary was arrested on marihuana charges in Texas. He was subsequently convicted of "transporting...marijuana and of failure to pay a tax on it", sentenced to 30 years in prison, given a large fine, and ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment (Zion 1966). While appealing his sentence Leary was arrested on an additional marihuana charge when the police raided the Millbrook estate. The Millbrook project ended in 1968 when the group was forced to vacate the estate.

### **Specialty Sources**

According to his friends Leary unnecessarily provoked situations even during his early days at Harvard. Using drugs with subjects really caused a stir, as did providing

drugs to divinity students on Good Friday. Leary agreed. Later he strived to create publicity for himself and enjoyed his celebrity status according to his friends. Yet this was counterproductive in achieving sensible drug policy. Once he became a symbol as a counterculture leader this made him a target for law enforcement in Millbrook, NY, Texas (where he was given a draconian sentence) and in California where he was apparently framed in a drug case. In spite of this Leary predicted a system of licensing and regulation of hallucinogens would quickly develop. Leary was bored while at Harvard. He argued that colleges and libraries created closed minds. Instead people needed direct experience such as commitment to a psychiatric hospital. This could create the sensory deprivation necessary for the spawning of great ideas.

Leary needed more action in his life. And he found a way to get it. There were parties at Millbrook with jazz musicians. For his part Ram Dass also considered more education was possible in prisons than in graduate school. He was deeply unhappy at Harvard and thus being fired at Harvard was perfectly acceptable, even though he was considered by many others to have lost his mind. He came out of the closet after leaving Harvard. Both Ralph Metzner and Ram Dass found playful, beautiful bliss in the snow while under the influence of psilocybin and Ram Dass felt distanced from the rest of society after using this drug. The psilocybin experiences described by Leary, Alpert, Metzner, and others stand in stark contrast to the way that this substance has typically been portrayed by the mass media. Thus it is not surprising that Leary and Alpert insisted on referring to psilocybin and other hallucinogens as “consciousness expanding materials” rather than “drugs” (Weil 1963:44). It does not appear as if any of them had a bad experience with the drug nor did they pose a danger to themselves or others while

under its influence. Moreover, the psilocybin did not appear to have negative psychological or physiological effects, nor did it appear to be addictive. In fact, the reader may recall that, despite his initial doubts, Ram Dass later characterized his own experiences with psilocybin as a “good fortune” (see page 54). It would not be fair to simply say that these men had “fun” or “enjoyed” their psilocybin experiences. The experiences that they described were life changing, if not life defining events.

The popular media provides a different picture in part because of its inability to address these issues in depth. The specialty sources provide a detailed description of the drug consumption experience. This dissertation is an attempt to explain how psilocybin (the primary active compound in the psilocybin mushroom) was turned into a threatening menace in less than a decade. The dissertation tracks the changing views of psilocybin that occurred between the publication of Wasson’s article in 1957 and the passage of the United States Federal law in October of 1968.

**What does the difference between the specialty sources and the mass media sources mean theoretically?**

This thesis shows the importance of moral entrepreneurs, especially Farnsworth, Pusey, and Monro. This threesome was the team of self-appointed medical and educational experts on what was true of psilocybin and Harvard students. Harvard undergraduates were seen as victims. Benson and Smith (1967) argue that the Harvard Administration took the role of surrogate parents in their efforts to shield the university’s undergraduates from harm. The Harvard Administration did not want to see undergraduates ruined by this drug, especially if they were expected to be the future

leaders of America. The initial users of psilocybin are very different than the drug users discussed by Musto. Young, white wealthy males are more important than other groups in society. The Psilocybin Project flips Musto on his head in the sense that there were no threatening minorities involved.

Benson and Smith (1967) describe how the Psilocybin Project put the Harvard Administration in a three fold bind. On the one hand the Administration was obligated to protect the university's undergraduates. However, they also needed to preserve academic freedom as well as protect the university's image. Their solution, these authors claim, was to warn undergraduates of the dangers of hallucinogens while simultaneously attempting to put safeguards on the Psilocybin Project without criticizing Leary and Alpert's research directly. This strategy allowed them to minimize accusations that they were chipping away at academic freedom. Dana Farnsworth, for example, published an editorial in a medical journal that warned readers of the dangers of hallucinogens. However, he neglected to mention Leary and Alpert's research. In addition members of the administration spoke out against "intellectual promotion of the hallucinogens" even though, once again, the formal aspects of Leary and Alpert's research were never criticized (Benson and Smith 1967:129).

The symbolism of psilocybin was very powerful. There was a desire to protect the students from Leary and Alpert who created a party-like atmosphere and who were advocating the use of hallucinogens. The Psilocybin Project may not have been as controversial if Leary and Alpert had only tested the substance on prisoners. These studies did not receive the same scrutiny as the experiments that involved testing the drug on students. According to Benson and Smith (1967:134) "the manipulation of

hospitalized, institutionalized, or otherwise disenfranchised subjects is less likely to occasion controversy than is the manipulation of ‘normals’”. The Good Friday experiments were a bad idea because of the implications that religion could be replaced by a drug. Christians may have been offended by giving the drug to seminary students in a chapel on a holy day. Millbrook was more of a recreational than a scientific and/or clinical context.

Psilocybin is often associated with LSD. Moreover, both of these substances are linked to Leary. Ram Dass also helped the public to confuse psilocybin with LSD. In the mass media psilocybin was often compared to if not equated with other hallucinogenic compounds such as LSD, LSA, mescaline, and DMT. Thus the bad press surrounding some of these other substances (particularly LSD) may have had a negative impact on people’s perception of psilocybin.

By starting a religion based on the idea that people should use LSD as well as detach themselves from society Leary may have encouraged people to equate the use of hallucinogenic compounds with “dropping out” or detaching one’s self from mainstream society. On at least one occasion he directly linked these two behaviors to one another when he stated that: “The kids who take LSD aren't gonna fight your wars for middle class, middle age whisky drinking generals. They're not going to join your corporations, for middle class, middle age whisky drinking corporation presidents” (*The Drug Years Feed Your Head Part 2*).

The non-sensationalized discussions of the impact of psilocybin consumption compared with the mass media coverage help us explain how this substance became criminalized. The mass media sources are not as powerful as the specialty sources in

telling the reader what actually occurred with regard to the prohibition of psilocybin. The specialty sources are a more sensitive indicator in that they provide explanations that are much more in depth than those provided by the mass media sources. Thus the specialty sources give the reader a better sense of what the psilocybin experience is like and what actually occurred in Leary and Alpert's lives.

### **Application of the existing theoretical alternatives in the sociology of law**

Becker's theory of moral entrepreneurs can be applied to the prohibition of psilocybin if we consider the attempts by Dana Farnsworth, John Monro, and Nathan Pusey to warn the Harvard community as well as the larger society about the supposed dangers of hallucinogens. These actions started in 1962 and they coincided with attempts by the university as well as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to place restrictions on Leary and Alpert's research with the intention of bringing the "problem" of psilocybin under control. These early attempts by the Harvard administration to call people's attention to the possible dangers of psilocybin were likely decisive in shaping many of the mass media accounts and therefore society's perception of this substance.

In the early 1960s Harvard administrators and Massachusetts health officials were interested in local administrative issues. They were not really moral entrepreneurs. They were concerned with the image of Harvard, safety of their undergraduate students and research methods of faculty. And Leary and Alpert were both seemingly committed to testing the limits at Harvard. When nothing else seemed to work Leary simply walked away from his appointment. At most the Harvard and Massachusetts administrators were attempting what Gusfield (1963) referred to as "assimilative reform".

From the beginning psilocybin was used by Leary and Alpert at parties, for therapy and Leary felt that it could be dangerous and thus should be licensed. Remember that Alpert's body disappeared before his very eyes.

The theory of Musto is inadequate for explaining the negative press of psilocybin in large part because in 1962 and 1963 when this drug was first being demonized in the mass media it was not yet associated with a "threatening" minority group. Nor did it symbolize a particular lifestyle. At this time the drug was linked to Leary and Alpert and wealthy young white men at Harvard University.

Gusfield's notion of "disinterested reform" can be applied to the prohibition of psilocybin. To the extent that Harvard men were using psilocybin the prohibition of this substance was indeed a "reform measure" in the sense that it was the result of efforts by one group to correct the lifestyle habits of another group. In particular it was the product of attempts by older members of the Establishment (namely Harvard administrators) to prevent younger members of the Establishment (Harvard undergraduates) from using psilocybin and from buying into the radical ideas of Leary and Alpert who promoted the use of this drug. If Harvard undergraduates were free to use this substance how would they fulfill their rightful roles as leaders of the future? At this point, unlike Gusfield's take on alcohol prohibition, the criminalization of psilocybin was not the product of efforts by a group who felt that its status was declining to improve its status by publicly taking prestige away from another group.

This measure did not involve an attempt by one group to gain prestige by taking prestige away from another group. Therefore, unlike with alcohol prohibition the criminalization of psilocybin was not a "disinterested" reform measure in the same way

that Gusfield used the term. In essence the prohibition of psilocybin was an attempt by members of the Establishment, most notably the Harvard administration, to protect its youngest and most impressionable members from the effects of both mind altering drugs and the radical ideas and lifestyles of some of the people (most notably Leary and Alpert) who promoted the use of these drugs.

In 1968 when the federal law prohibiting psilocybin was passed the “dominance” and “prestige” of the conventional middle class lifestyle was clearly in jeopardy and was beginning to deteriorate due to the prominence of the youth counterculture movement. Moreover it is likely that members of the Establishment viewed their own lifestyle as superior to that of members of the youth counterculture. However, in the early 1960s, when warnings about the potential dangers of psilocybin first appeared in the mass media this had not yet occurred. That came on with a vengeance in the late 1960’s. Unlike with Gusfield’s analysis of alcohol prohibition the criminalization of psilocybin was ultimately the result of a “morally superior” group’s attempts to change the “immoral” lifestyle habits of another group. Similar to the case of alcohol prohibition the criminalization of psilocybin had a symbolic value for the reformers because it was a visible reaction to what Leary and Alpert represented.

### **Theory and demonization of Leary, marginalization of Alpert and hallucinogens**

The events of the early 1960s became part of a process that culminated in 1968. While Leary and Alpert went their separate ways they both converge in the late 1960s. Becker’s idea of moral entrepreneurs appears to apply to a small degree in 1962, but later applies to Leary and Alpert’s activities and their increasingly radical ideas. They were



clearly moral entrepreneurs, Leary the anarchist and Ram Dass the Guru. Musto (1973) and Gusfield (1963) apply once Leary and Alpert got rolling into the drug and anti-war movement of the late 1960s. People using these drugs were now considered dangerous and a clear threat to American society. Here is where LSD and marihuana become linked to psilocybin mushrooms and opposition to the war and alternative life styles.

By October of 1968 the use of psilocybin (primarily in the form of the psilocybin mushroom) was linked to the youth counterculture and may have indeed (as Musto's analysis has shown) symbolized the difference between this group and the rest of American society. As mentioned earlier, however, this substance was being demonized in the mass media in 1962 and 1963, a time when the youth counterculture had not yet achieved prominence in American society. At this time the only people that were linked to psilocybin were the privileged young men at Harvard. Unlike the "threatening" minority groups that Musto describes there was no social crisis between this group and the rest of American society.

For Musto another catalyst for drug prohibition efforts is the fear that members of a racial or ethnic minority group that is already associated with a particular substance will encourage white people to use the substance as well. This notion, however, cannot be applied to the criminalization of psilocybin because when this substance was first being demonized in the mass media it was not associated with a racial or ethnic minority group.

It is interesting to think of what may have happened with psilocybin if it had never been classified by the United States government as a schedule I substance. If this had not occurred it is possible that, by now, we may have had a better idea of the potential therapeutic applications of this drug and, in addition, it is possible that it may be

widely used for these purposes. In any event, our society may be moving in this direction. Indeed, during the last few years a handful of studies (conducted in both the United States and abroad) have analyzed the effects of psilocybin on human subjects. For example a December 11, 2006 BBC news article detailed how psilocybin was recently used by researchers at the University of Arizona to determine its potential effectiveness in treating patients with obsessive compulsive disorder (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6210694.stm>). The results of this study were published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* (See Moreno et.al. 2006). In addition a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Brown 2006) discusses this study as well as two additional psilocybin studies that were conducted in the United States over the last several years. For additional information about studies using psilocybin the reader may wish to visit the website of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies: <http://www.maps.org/>.

POSTSCRIPT FROM LEARY:

My profession in the past would be known as an outcast storyteller. You can never find out what's happening from the company newspaper or from the adult press, the Pope's bulletins, or the king's messengers. They're all telling you what they want you to know for their own benefit. The function of all government is to keep people stupid isn't it? The big news in Washington is that there's no news that there's not one person has an idea, a clue, a vision, a plan as to what to do, that's the news. (Timothy Leary from *Fried Shoes, Cooked Diamonds*).

Narrator: "Leary brought the psilocybin from Harvard down to New York and gave it to Kerouac who looked up at the ceiling and out of the window and said 'walking on water wasn't built in a day'" (*Fried Shoes, Cooked Diamonds*).

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4. *Baba Ram Dass Q&A at Stephens College* (1973). Columbia, MO. (compact disc).
5. *Baba Ram Dass: Responsibility and Psychosis*. n.d. (compact disc).
6. *Evolution of a Yogi* (1969). Producers: Irving Hartley and Elda Hartley (VHS tape).
7. *Fried Shoes, Cooked Diamonds* Documentary 1978 Carmina Cinematografica. Directed by: Constanzo Allione. (VHS tape).  
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12. *Paul Krassner Interviews Timothy Leary 1995* (Part 3). From Nancy Cain's Video Archives. URL: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=AQcMIYchNgY>
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## Appendix

When I analyzed the Proquest articles I noticed that there were discussions of the FDA regulations that were used to control psilocybin. There were also discussions of a resolution passed in New York State as well as a law that was passed in Great Britain to ban psilocybin. Interestingly, however, there was no discussion of the U.S. federal law that banned psilocybin.

In my initial search of the Proquest database I conducted a keyword search of the Historical *New York Times* database using the terms “Timothy Leary OR Timothy F. Leary OR Tim Leary OR Richard Alpert OR Ram Dass”. I set the date range as 01/01/1958 to present and I instructed the database to look for the search terms in: “Citation and document text”. The “Document type” was listed as “Article”. This search returned a total of 817 results on 01/24/07. Out of these I found a total of 168 results that appeared as if they may be relevant to my research. However, 2 of the results were inaccessible at the time that I conducted the search. I then conducted a search that was identical to the one above except that under the “Document type” heading I listed “Editorial articles” rather than “Article”. This search returned a total of 4 results on 01/24/07. The first result, however, was a duplicate of one of the results from the previous search. The third search that I conducted was identical to the previous two except that under the “Document type” heading I selected “Letter to editor”. This search returned 20 results on 01/24/07. Although five of the results appeared to be irrelevant to the topic none of the results of this search overlapped with those returned by the previous searches. Finally I conducted a keyword search of the Historical *Wall Street Journal* that was identical to the search described above except that the “Document type” field was set

as “Any document type” and the “Date range” field was set as “None”. This search returned 24 results on 05/24/07. However, only 4 of these articles appeared to be relevant to my topic. Moreover, one of the relevant results was a duplicate from the previous *Wall Street Journal* search.

I also conducted a search of the “Historical *Wall Street Journal*” database using the keywords “Psilocybin OR Psilocybyn OR Psilocin OR Psilocyn”. (The second term and the fourth term are common misspellings of the first and third term respectively.) The “Date range” field was set as “None”. As with the previous searches I instructed the database to “Look for terms in” “Citation and document text”. For the “Document Type” field I selected “Any document type”. This search returned 1 result on 01/24/07. I then conducted a search that was identical to one above except that I used “The Historical *New York Times*” rather than the “*Wall Street Journal*” database. This search produced a total of 77 results on 03/23/07. Of these there were a total of 59 results that appeared to be relevant to my research. Moreover a total of 13 results overlapped with the initial database search. (This may be indicative of the extent to which Leary and/or Alpert were connected to psilocybin in the mainstream media.) Finally, I conducted a keyword search of “Multiple databases” using the term “Psilocybe”. For the “Date range” I selected “None” and, as with the previous searches, I directed the database to “Look for terms in” “Citation and document text” This search returned a total of 8 results on 03/23/07. Only two of these results appeared to be relevant to my research. One of these results overlapped with the initial (Historical *New York Times*) “Psilocybin...” search.

In my search of the *Readers Guide* I used the following terms: “Hallucinogens”; “Leary, Timothy”; “Mushrooms”; “Psilocybin”; “Psychedelic”. I then compiled a list of

articles that were related to my topic. I also listed the titles of articles that were categorized under the each of the search terms used but were nevertheless, unrelated to my topic. Many of the entries in the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* were listed under variations of these terms and/or closely related terms. For example some of the *Readers Guide* entries are listed under “Hallucinogenic Drugs” rather than “Hallucinogens”. Likewise another entry was listed under the keywords “mushroom ceremony” rather than “mushrooms”.

I began my search for specialty source material by looking at the OCLC WorldCat database. I searched the WorldCat because it is a comprehensive database that contains materials from libraries across the United States. I performed an “author” search using the terms “Ram Dass”. Even though I limited my search to “visual materials”, “sound recordings” and “archival materials”, the database retrieved 235 results, 225 of which were categorized as English language. Out of the 235 results 174 were categorized as “sound recordings”, 60 were categorized as “visual materials”, and 1 was categorized as “archival materials”. With the help of the Interlibrary loan (ILL) I obtained two videos—a DVD titled *Ram Dass: Fierce Grace* and a VHS tape titled *Evolution of a Yogi*. I also obtained a series of cassette tapes that were titled *Baba Ram Dass: One Man’s Journey to the East*.

After speaking with several librarians at the University of Missouri about my research I searched the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) database using the terms “Ram Dass” and “Timothy Leary.” Because the NUCMC database contains two separate catalogs I obtained four sets of results. The search of the first catalog, the RLG Union Catalog, produced 24 results for Timothy Leary and 1 result

for Ram Dass. The search of the second catalog, the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), returned 6 results for Timothy Leary and 1 result for Ram Dass.

In addition to using the library databases I also retrieved a number of videos by searching the youtube.com website. The videos were obtained by conducting two separate searches one using the terms “Ram Dass” and another using the terms “Timothy Leary.” One of the OCLC results was titled “Timothy Leary audiotaped lectures 1963 and 1967: Central Washington University Archives”. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 I e-mailed Dieter Ullrich the library archivist at Central Washington University (CWU) to inquire about these materials. Dieter responded by indicating that the CWU archives contained five reel to reel tapes which include Timothy Leary lecturing or sitting on a panel. He listed their titles and said that there were no transcripts available. However, he told me that it would be possible to have the tapes dubbed to cassettes if I agreed to pay for the cassettes themselves as well as the labor of the student who would perform the dubbing. I then told him that I would indeed like to have the tapes dubbed to cassettes and, if possible, sent to my home. Dieter agreed to do this and I received the recordings on compact disc about 6 weeks later. There were 4 CD’s in all. Two of the CD’s contained a 1963 lecture and Symposium series titled “Individual in the College Community: His Commitments and his Works”. The other two CD’s were titled “Timothy Leary Forum on LSD May 1967”. Although I received a total of 4 CD’s the only material that I transcribed for the purposes of this research was a section of the first part of the “Individual in the College Community...” series. The speaker was Timothy Leary.

Early in the summer of 2006 I told one of my graduate student colleagues—Diane Rodgers—that I was looking for information about Ram Dass and Timothy Leary. When

I mentioned this she indicated that there were taped interviews with both of these men at a local (Columbia, MO) radio station called KOPN. She told me that the interviews were recorded in the early 1970's on reel-to-reel tapes and that she would try to get more information about them. Diane further stated that if the sound quality was judged by a sound technician to be adequate I would be given the opportunity to pay for the tapes to be reformatted to compact discs and in doing so I would receive a copy of each of the recordings. Soon after our conversation Diane sent me an e-mail listing the titles, some of the dates, and the approximate length of each of the reel to reel tapes. She also told me that the tapes needed to be reformatted. After agreeing to pay for the reformatting process I asked if it would be possible to reformat only those tapes that included information about psilocybin, psilocybin mushrooms, and/or the time that Leary and Alpert spent at Harvard. She told me that this would not be possible because of the way that the reformatting process works. Diane then sent the tapes to an audio technician who assessed their quality and reported that they were in mostly good condition. I told her that I would still be willing to pay for the reformatting process and, soon afterwards, I received the cd's. There were 6 CD's in all: 1) "Baba Ram Dass at KOPN" 2) Baba Ram Dass at Stephens College" 3) Baba Ram Dass Q&A at Stephens College" 4) "Responsibility and Psychosis" 5) "Timothy Leary Interview" 6) "Timothy Leary: 1976 Adi Gevins of KPFA: Discussion of Timothy Leary by Writer Robert Anton Wilson, Comments from William Buckley". I eventually transcribed portions of all of the CD's and used some of the material in the dissertation.

As I listened to the tapes and watched the videos I looked for and noted the sections that might be relevant to my research. When this was done I reviewed the

relevant sections and, with the help of a word processing program, I attempted to write down every word that was said. I also listed the names of the speakers. As I finished writing each of the transcripts I sent them in an e-mail to the chair of my dissertation committee John Galliher who, in turn, edited each of the transcripts and sent them back to me.



## VITA

Colin Wark graduated from Seattle Pacific University in 1996 with a B.A. in sociology. He took his M.A. in sociology at Idaho State University in 2001 and his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2007.