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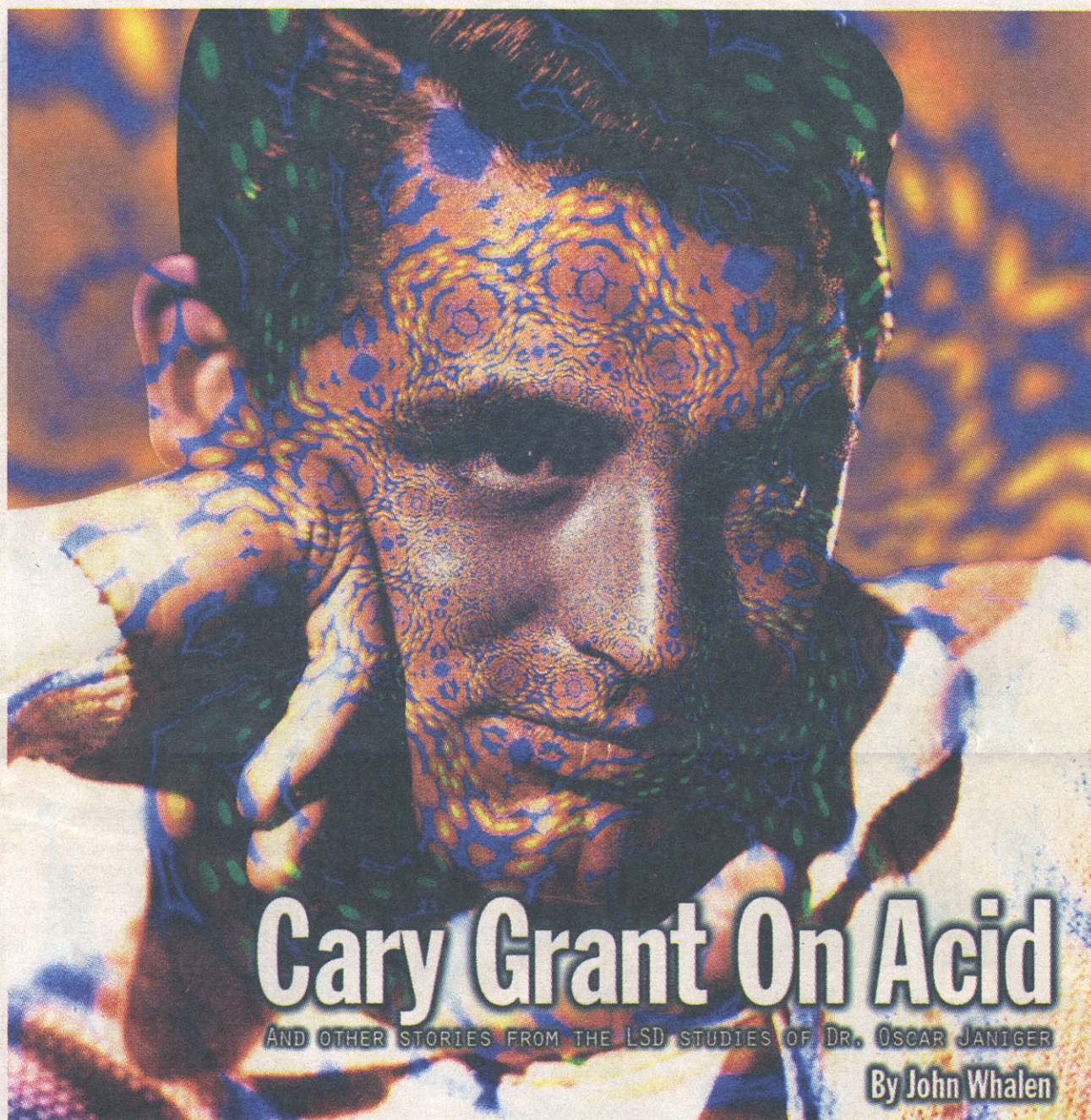
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Cary Grant On Acid

AND OTHER STORIES FROM THE LSD STUDIES OF DR. OSCAR JANIGER

By John Whalen



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One morning in April 1962, Cary Grant swallowed four tiny blue pills of lysergic acid diethylamide — LSD. Incredibly, it was the 58-year-old actor's 72nd acid trip under the supervision of a psychiatrist. Grant relaxed on a plush couch and sipped coffee as the drug began to take effect. During the five-hour session, his running commentary was captured on a small tape recorder for later transcription: "I was noting the growing intensity of light in the room," he recalled at one point, "and at short intervals as I shut my eyes, visions appeared to me. I seemed to be in a world of healthy, chubby little babies' legs and diapers, and smeared blood, a sort of general menstrual activity taking place. It did not repel me as such thoughts used to."

Hardly the suave repartee associated with the star of *His Girl Friday* and *North by Northwest*. But as the aging movie idol had already stated in bold public endorsements of the experimental drug, LSD had a way of stripping away cultivated veneers and forcing one to confront unguarded, often unpleasant, emotions. Grant was grateful for his LSD "therapy" — over the course of a decade, he'd drop acid more than 100 times. Among other benefits, he credited LSD with helping him control his drinking and come to terms with unresolved conflicts about his parents.

"When I first began experimentation," he said on that sunny spring morning, "the drug seemed to loosen deeper fears, as sleep does a nightmare. I had horrifying experiences as participant and spectator, but, with each session, became happier, both while experiencing the drug and in periods between. . . I feel better and feel certain there is curative power in the drug

itself."

Grant was just one of hundreds of citizens in the Los Angeles region who participated during the 1950s and early 1960s in unprecedented academic studies of the then-novel pharmaceutical. In just a few short years, of course, LSD would become a chemical taboo, the notorious "hippie psychedelic" vilified by the media,

the mysteries of the human brain. What's more, they say, the drug's startling, if underappreciated, efficacy in the treatment of alcoholism, drug addiction and a whole range of psychiatric disorders begs for renewed research. Yet after decades in legal limbo, LSD remains a sociopolitical pariah. Though research on animals has continued, little more than a dozen human sub-

Charlotte-based Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies is conducting a follow-up study of people who took part in legal LSD studies 35 years ago.

criminalized in every state, classified by the FDA as a Schedule I drug of no medical value and banned globally by international treaty. But before most Americans had heard of lysergic acid diethylamide, students, professionals, clergymen, writers, artists and celebrities enthusiastically turned on, tuned in and didn't drop out.

"It was a time when scientific research with psychedelic drugs was perfectly acceptable," recalls Dr. Oscar Janiger, the psychiatrist who administered LSD to Cary Grant and more than 900 others in the longest ongoing experiment with LSD on human subjects in a nonclinical environment.

Flash forward 35 years to a very different time in a very different world: In many ways, science has finally caught up with LSD. Given recent advances in our understanding of neurochemistry — the complex chemical pathways that drive human thought, emotions and behavior — many researchers believe that LSD could become a valuable tool in further unraveling

the mysteries of the human brain. What's more, they say, the drug's startling, if underappreciated, efficacy in the treatment of alcoholism, drug addiction and a whole range of psychiatric disorders begs for renewed research. Yet after decades in legal limbo, LSD remains a sociopolitical pariah. Though research on animals has continued, little more than a dozen human sub-

jects have participated in studies since the late 60s, and no new research has been published since the early 70s.

Some of LSD's latter-day defenders now believe that for "acid science" to move forward, LSD must first be rehabilitated in the public mind. And they're pinning their hopes on a new follow-up study of Janiger's classic experiments, conducted between 1954 and 1962. By interviewing the people who participated in the original study (many of whom are now in their 60s, 70s and 80s), researchers hope to show that, by and large, few of the original human guinea pigs suffered negative longterm effects as a result of their LSD dosings. And — shocking as it may sound — many may have benefited from the experience.

The prime force behind the follow-up study, to be completed later this year, is the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), a nonprofit research and

advocacy group based in Mecklenburg County, that has lobbied the FDA to approve medical studies of marijuana, MDMA and LSD. Funded via academic grants and the support of its 1,600 members, who include a number of prominent research scientists, the organization describes its purpose as "working to assist psychedelic researchers around the world [to] design, obtain governmental approval, fund, conduct and report on psychedelic research in humans."

"Janiger's study was crucially important," says Rick Doblin, a Harvard-trained social scientist and founder of MAPS, "because it was work trying to describe what LSD does in a neutral, non-controversial context, in relatively healthy non-patients."

Other studies conducted worldwide before the ban tended to focus on the use of LSD in treating disorders such as chronic alcoholism, sexual neuroses, criminal psychopathology, phobias, depressive states and compulsive syndromes. But Janiger's subjects were average, middle-to-upper-class, healthy adults with no pre-existing mental or physical problems. As Doblin puts it: "The subjects of Janiger's experiment break all the stereotypes about LSD users, since they are now in their 60s or older and took LSD before it was controversial. So the followup study is like a time capsule back to an era before the drug war. And it gives us a view of what LSD research could be again, if we can get past the biases and just see this drug more unemotionally, as a tool."

In those days, long before the acid underground surfaced in San Francisco as the vanguard of the hippie movement, LA was an intellectual hub for psychedelic research, and its acid salons drew adventurous celebrities from Anais Nin to Jack Nicholson, Aldous Huxley to Andre Previn. Those were heady days, in more than one sense. Cary Grant rhapsodized about LSD's revolutionary potential that spring morning in Janiger's office that everyone could benefit from a good dosing. "Just a few healthy magnums of LSD in the Beverly Hills reservoir . . ."

[The doctor] had suggested that I listen to some music while the drug was still effective. I am a composer and pianist, and I have never before or since been so strongly affected by music . . . I then played the piano for approximately 40 minutes. I felt that I played extremely well and possibly with more musical insight than before. I played among other things a Chopin Fantasia which I had not looked at since my student days, and remembered it perfectly and without flaws. A few days after the experiment I again attempted to play this piece and found that I had retained it completely. I would sometime be interested in repeating the experiment and recording some improvisations while under the influence of the pills. — Andre Previn

This afternoon Dr. Oscar Janiger and his wife, Kathleen Delaney, are lunching in their comfortable book-lined home in Santa Monica Canyon with a clutch of Hollywood screenwriters who hope to parlay the social history of LSD into a feature film. (In fact, the annals of acid contain all the dramatic convolutions of an Oliver Stone production, from hallucinatory visions to throbbing acid rock to a surfeit of government conspiracy, including the CIA's infamous, illegal attempts to use LSD as a mind-control drug on unsuspecting US citizens.) After dessert, the Hollywood hopefuls take their leave, and Janiger retires to his study, where he sketches the broad outlines of his famous research.

To ensure the comfort of his subjects during their LSD excursions, Janiger had rented a small house. In one room he set up his regular psychiatric practice. In an adjacent room, furnished with a couch, a bed and a swanky hi-fi system, he conducted his LSD study. In the

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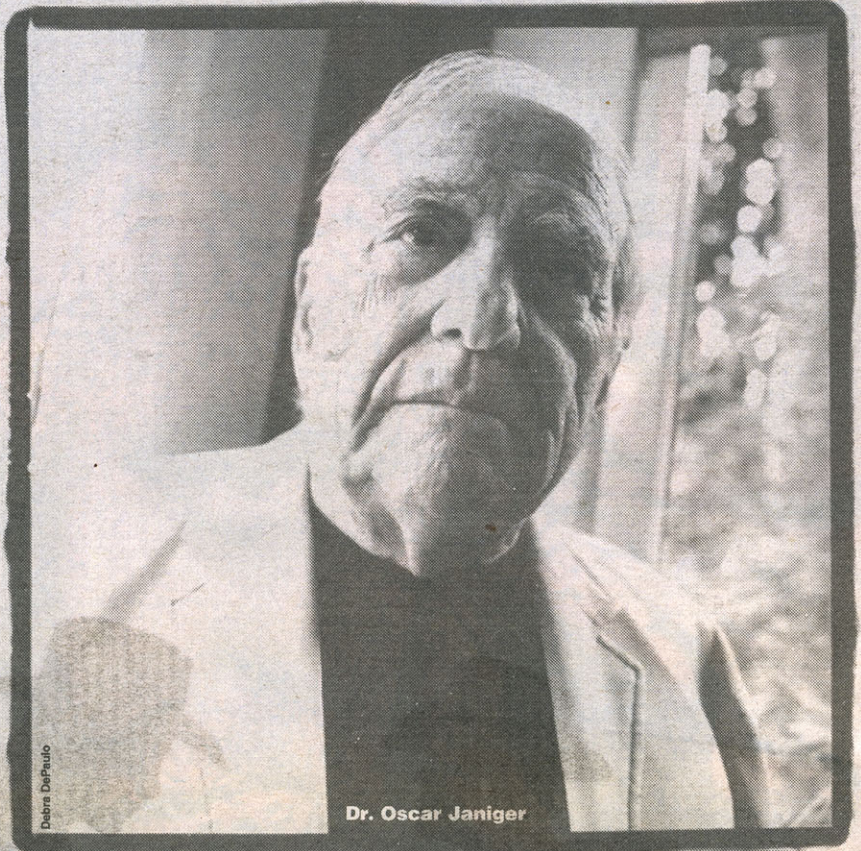
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Dr. Oscar Janiger

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enclosed backyard, he installed a garden, to give his experimental trippers a safe outdoor haven to explore.

"So many of the studies prior to mine were done in hospital rooms, restricted environments," Janiger recalls, "and I thought that my study might be benefited by a naturalistic environment."

Though Janiger held an associate professorship in the Psychology Department at the California College of Medicine (now UC-Irvine), he funded the study himself by charging a \$20 fee for the experience. Sandoz Laboratories, the Swiss pharmaceutical company that "discovered" LSD, supplied the drug free of charge. In return, Janiger agreed to keep Sandoz informed about the results of his experiments. Unlike many other researchers and major universities, he never accepted funding — covert or overt — from the CIA or the military.

"My goal was simply to find out what LSD does to people under uniform conditions," Janiger says, especially how it changes perception and personality. Over the course of a decade, he would also study a number of related issues, including the drug's effect on artistic creativity.

Janiger's approach to LSD research was influenced by his own experience with the drug. It was in early 1954 that he had first tried acid, procured legally from Sandoz Laboratories by a friend. "That first experience shook me up completely," Janiger recalls. "It was extraordinary — so powerful and so interesting. I was of course struck by how LSD works to change your reality around. From a psychiatric point of view, it was a marvelous instrument to learn more about the mind."

Each of Janiger's volunteers was pre-screened for obvious mental or physical disturbances. If they passed, they were given LSD in the morning and allowed to do whatever they wanted for the rest of the day — listen to music, walk in the garden, draw or paint, etc. A designated "babysitter" was a constant but unobtrusive presence, there to see to a subject's physical comfort.

At the end of the experience — and sometimes during — Janiger's subjects were provided with a tape recorder or stenographer so that they could record their impressions while the images were still fresh in their minds. Later, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire that

contained queries such as "What single event or insight, if any, during the LSD experience would you consider to have been of the greatest meaning to you?" and "What changes, if any, have taken place in your sense of values. . ."

Janiger broke these reports down into a series of descriptive statements about the experience. By the end of the study, Janiger was able to distill the quintessential LSD experience: The drug altered the user's perception of time; it came in waves; it made colors seem more intense; it induced the sensation that all elements of the world were organically connected in some way.

Says Janiger, "That . . . clarified a great many things in my own mind. I began to see what I think is the core of the LSD experience — the state of the experience as opposed to the content of the experience. Up until then, that distinction had never been made with LSD. Some people said LSD was a religious experience, or a birth experience. But that was the content of their experience. For others it might not be either of those things."

Lysergic acid diethylamide had been around since 1938, when Dr. Albert Hofmann formulated the first dose at Sandoz. Hofmann was experimenting with derivatives of ergot, a rye fungus, in an attempt to develop a circulatory stimulant. Instead, what he discovered in his 25th attempt (the official name of the drug would become LSD-25) was a substance of extremely peculiar qualities.

The story of the first acid trip ever is now famous: Hofmann unknowingly absorbed the experimental compound through his fingers. "As I lay in a dazed condition with eyes closed," he would recall, "there surged up from me a succession of fantastic, rapidly changing imagery of a striking reality and depth, alternating with a vivid, kaleidoscopic display of colors." Two days later, Hofmann deliberately swallowed a miniscule 250 micrograms (a millionth of an ounce), which launched him on an even more dramatic head trip. "I had great difficulty in speaking coherently," he'd later say of that session. He managed to ride his bicycle home, but was soon enduring the world's first bad trip, wondering if he was going insane: "I thought I had died. My 'ego' was suspended somewhere in space, and I saw my body lying dead on the sofa."

Hofmann survived the ordeal, and soon

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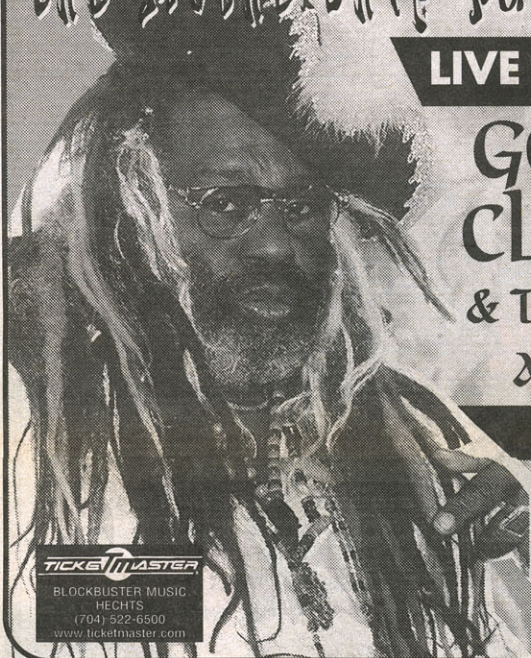
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returned to the realm of pleasant hallucinations. So began the era of academic experimentation with the unusual compound.

By 1965, researchers had published more than 2,000 papers describing the treatment of 30,000 to 40,000 patients with psychedelic drugs, including mescaline and psilocybin, but mostly with LSD. Among the more stunning results were studies in which LSD was given in high doses to children suffering from schizophrenia and autism. One study reported that for a group of young autistic children, "the vocabularies of several of the children increased after LSD." What's more, "several seemed to be attempting to form words or watched adults carefully as they spoke; many seemed to comprehend speech for the first time." The autistic children all "appeared flushed, bright-eyed and unusually interested in the environment."

Even more dramatic were the successes during the 1950s and 1960s in treating chronic alcoholics at Hollywood Hospital in British Columbia and at Spring Grove State Hospital in Baltimore. After ingesting relatively large doses of LSD (up to 800 micrograms, in some cases) and undergoing directed therapy, about half of all patients "were able to remain sober or to drink much less," according to pioneers Bernard Aaronson and Humphry Osmond. Often after only one dose patients remained totally abstinent. "This seems to be a universal statistic for LSD therapy," they reported.

Exactly how LSD worked for alcoholics, heroin addicts and schizophrenic children remains something of a mystery. In fact, to this day scientists know little about how LSD interacts with the human brain on a neurological level. The ban on human research with LSD is partly to blame. But beyond that, LSD operates in mysterious ways. The drug remains in the brain for a relatively short period, disappearing at about the time the mental light show begins. This short half-life of the drug suggests that the hours of hallucinations and consciousness-warping experienced by acid eaters is due not to the drug itself, but to some little-understood neurochemical chain of events unleashed by LSD.

Research on animals has suggested that LSD stimulates the serotonin receptors of the brain — the same neurological connections that Prozac and other new antidepressant drugs zero in on. "Why a drug that stimulates a serotonin receptor should effect changes in consciousness and perception is the thing that we don't actually know," says David Nichols, founder of the Heffter Research Institute, a nonprofit group that funds and conducts clinical studies of psychedelic substances.

After decades of experimentation — clinical and otherwise — it's clear that LSD's effect on individuals varies hugely. A person's response depends not only on his or her mental state or "set," but also on a multitude of other factors, including the setting in which the drug is taken, the influence of others in the room and even the prevailing cultural climate. For instance, during the late 1960s, after the frenzy of hyperbolic media reports on the dangers of LSD, the numbers of illegal users experiencing the proverbial "bad trip" multiplied. Many observers suspected a direct relationship between the upswing in "bummers" and the surge of acid scare stories. (The fact that the doses available then were often more than twice as high as today's street-grade doses may also account for the higher incidence of bad trips.)

Undoubtedly, LSD's mercurial nature has a lot to do with why it became so controversial so quickly, and why it was never fully accepted as a worthy addition to the store of mainstream pharmacopoeia.

I thought I was the quickest the quickest the quickest mind alive and the quickest with words but words cannot catch up with these changes, these changes are beyond words, beyond words, beyond words. While I repeated these words I felt the waves of pleasure like those of the most acute pleasure of lovemaking ... I felt

the impossibility to tell the secret of life because the secret of life was metamorphosis, transmutation, and it happened too quickly, too subtly. — Anais Nin

I never saw my work as being therapeutic," Janiger says, "but in the course of the study we made some ancillary discoveries." One such discovery involved a painfully shy firefighter. "Although he was a very pleasant, intelligent man," says Janiger, "he was extremely shy and sort of a shut-in personality. He could never mix with people because [of] . . . an inhibition about being in spontaneous social gatherings." Janiger gave the man "minimal doses" of LSD for a period of several months. By the end of that period, "his personality had changed markedly." Says Janiger, "He became very affable and quite a man of public affairs, going out and talking to people." Even after he stopped taking LSD, he remained extroverted.

Janiger also experimented with LSD's effects on pain dissociation, a common symptom of mental illness. Would LSD produce in users a similar state? "We did an experiment where a fellow had his tooth pulled while under LSD, but without any other anesthetic," Janiger recalls. "A dentist at UCLA pulled the tooth and the subject didn't flinch, didn't protest, didn't so much as blink."

"I had the choice of doing a lot of little experiments like that," says Janiger. "I knew that the days of LSD research would eventually come to an end. The burden of riches was so great, I wanted to open up as many new possibilities as I could."

Perhaps the most interesting side experiment evolved from the fact that Janiger's volunteers tended to reflect the cultural foment of Los Angeles. After artists began to ask for drawing materials during their sessions, he decided to launch a special study of LSD's influence on creativity. He gave 70 professional artists LSD and asked each of them to create two renderings of a common reference object, a Hopi Indian kachina doll that he had in his office. The first rendering would be done before taking LSD, the second while under acid's influence. The results were dramatic.

"To the artist," says Janiger, "the drawings done under the influence of LSD were very important. Who knows if they were better or worse? But I couldn't deny the artists their own experience. They'd say, 'This is something I've been trying to do for years' . . . there wasn't a single artist who didn't think they had had some kind of revelation."

The data from the art study are particularly rich, says Janiger. "It remains for someone highly gifted as an artistic critic and interpreter to take that material and develop a theory in terms of perception and the creative and artistic processes. And that opens up the whole issue of whether or not drugs fire up your imagination in terms of writing and poetry."

After taking LSD at Janiger's office, the writer Anais Nin developed her own theory about the drug's effect on the creative impulse. She later incorporated her rough notes, which Janiger has saved in his plenary files, into an essay included in *The Diary of Anais Nin*. "I could find correlations [to the LSD imagery] all through my writing," she wrote, "find the sources of the images in past dreams, in reading, in memories of travel, in actual experience, such as the one I had once in Paris when I was so exalted by life that I felt I was not touching the ground, I felt I was sliding a few inches away from the sidewalk. Therefore, I felt, the chemical did not reveal an unknown world. What it did was to shut out the quotidian world as an interference and leave you alone with your dreams and fantasies and memories. In this way it made it easier to gain access to the subconscious life."

Though she never admitted it publicly, Nin's access to her inner life was dramatically augmented by LSD. According to author and

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screenwriter Gavin Lambert — who was referred to Janiger by Nin — she privately confessed that her acid trip was traumatic. "For Anais," says Lambert, "it was a disaster. On LSD the world seemed to her terrifying. This, to me, was extremely interesting, because Anais Nin's life was a high-wire act of lies. She had two husbands — was bigamously married — and neither of them knew about the other. And I think that her whole high-wire act became very naked to her under LSD, and she couldn't take it. She was a creature of such artifice, and then suddenly the artifice was stripped away."

Many of Janiger's subjects were interested in using LSD to catalyze the kind of mystical experience that Aldous Huxley, Hollywood's most famous British literary expatriate, had written about in *The Doors of Perception*. But as Janiger and so many others would discover, LSD was difficult to control. At one point, Janiger invited a group of Unitarian ministers to drop acid. Several were disappointed when the drug produced peculiar aural and visual effects, but nothing of deeper spiritual significance.

In the wake of his first session with LSD in Janiger's office, philosopher Alan Watts compared his trip unfavorably to the mystical experiences he had undergone earlier in his life. Those events, which weren't catalyzed by drugs, "...were very much more convincing. They changed the meaning of experience rather than experience, and although modification of pure meaning was so much a part of LSD, it didn't happen in the same way. LSD seemed to complicate meaning rather than simplify it. It gave the sense of indescribable complexity rather than indescribable simplicity. For this reason it did not seem to be a particularly liberating experience. It was fascinating rather than illuminating, and felt more like the statement of a complex problem than its solution."

I began to experience very strong feelings of sensuality in and around my belly and the inside of my thighs. Needless to say, the feelings were extremely pleasurable, but unlike the usual sexual excitement, I didn't feel the need for gratification... During this period, I decided that, since I was feeling so sensual, I should fabricate sexual fantasies to synchronize with my feelings but was not very successful. When I tried to imagine Doctor K. [in a sexual situation]... he looked about one foot tall and his body appeared to be in the form of a square with round corners! ... As he went to kiss me, his tongue started to grow until it seemed to be eight feet long. I tried to stop this unpleasant image but couldn't do so. — Rita Moreno

Soon after Janiger opened his office to experimental trippers, word of mouth prompted an unending stream of volunteers. Many of those eagerly rapping on Janiger's door had already read *The Doors of Perception*, which dealt with Huxley's experiences with another hallucinogen, mescaline. Others had fallen under the spell of acid proselyte Timothy Leary, who was rapidly becoming LSD's loudest and most reckless cheerleader, urging a new generation of hipsters to "turn on, tune in and drop out." Still other seekers had picked up on the Beat poets' positive writings about psychotropic drugs. And the Hollywood grapevine had informed the show-biz community of the location of Janiger's office.

Janiger, though, wasn't the only researcher dispensing experimental acid in the LA region. Some professional shrinks were already using LSD in their practices; Cary Grant took his first five dozen or so trips in the offices of Drs. Arthur Chandler and Mortimer Hartmann. At UCLA, psychiatrist Sydney Cohen was conducting his own LSD studies. It was Cohen who turned on Henry Luce, the consummate Cold Warrior and president of Time-Life. Cohen also gave LSD to Luce's gadabout wife, Claire Boothe Luce. The Luces took half a dozen trips during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and Henry claimed that on one such magical mys-

tery tour he had chatted up God on a golf course.

By the late 1950s, a salon of psychedelic dilettantes had sprung up around Oscar Janiger. Everyone called him Oz, and as the custodian of this fantastic and surreal drug, he was a bit of a wizard. Janiger referred to the group, which met informally to talk about their acid experiences, as the "consciousness clan." Among the regulars were British expatriates Huxley, philosopher Gerald Heard and novelist Christopher Isherwood; Cohen and other UCLA faculty members; Anais Nin, Alan Watts and the occasional Hollywood celebrity. The evenings, Janiger says, were "rife with accounts and stories of what this substance was doing and what it could do."

Southern California was rapidly becoming a locus of the psychedelic movement, matched in energy only by academic enclaves in British Columbia and along the East Coast, where Leary, with the backing of Billy Hitchcock, an heir of the Mellon fortune, had established a boisterous colony of self-dosing higher-consciousness seekers at a posh New York estate. Janiger kept a much lower profile, and worried — correctly, it would turn out — that Leary's brand of in-your-face publicity would spur the government to move against LSD. Still, he welcomed a number of high-profile personages into his hi-fi trip room.

James Coburn took 200 micrograms of LSD on December 10, 1959 — his first trip. Now 69 and still acting, Coburn looks back fondly on his session with Janiger. "It was phenomenal," he says. "I loved it. LSD really woke me up to seeing the world with a depth of objectivity. Even though it was a subjective experience, it opened your mind to seeing things in new ways, in a new depth." Coburn also credits his LSD session with helping him occupationally. "One of the great things about LSD is that it does stimulate your imagination. And it frees you from fears of certain kinds."

Another celeb who tried LSD as part of Janiger's experiment was a 25-year-old Jack Nicholson, who listed his occupation as "actor" and took his first trip (a dose of 150 micrograms) in Janiger's office on May 29, 1962. Nicholson would later incorporate his experiences into his script for *The Trip*, a 1967 low-budget film about an intense LSD session starring Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper, another volunteer in Janiger's study. Hopper, Fonda and Nicholson, of course, would team up again in 1969 on *Easy Rider*, with Hopper directing.

Celebrities notwithstanding, the vast majority of Janiger's volunteers were average citizens. Which has made tracking them down for the followup study a challenge — complicated by the fact that many have already died. With the help of a private detective and lots of Internet searching, MAPS has to date located and interviewed 40 of Janiger's original subjects who are still living in the Los Angeles area. Janiger would like to double that number before next fall.

According to Kate Chapman, the MAPS researcher who conducted the interviews, most of the subjects "had a positive experience, with no long-term harm." One exception was a man who had "a bad, bad, bad trip, and would even say that it was psychologically damaging."

"In a way," says Rick Doblin of MAPS, "you hope to find nobody like that, but the fact that we did find something negative and are willing to report it will hopefully add credibility to the study. We're trying to develop guidelines for future research, so what this tells us is that LSD shouldn't be given in research unless there is someone with therapeutic skill present."

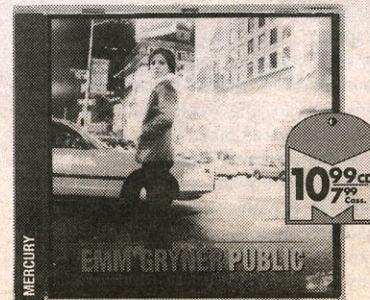
The volunteers I spoke to all had good things, or at least neutral things, to say about their LSD experiences. Zale Parry is a 65-year-old woman who played a major role in LA's early acid days. She now lives in the San Fernando Valley, and jokes that her neighbors would probably be shocked to learn that she

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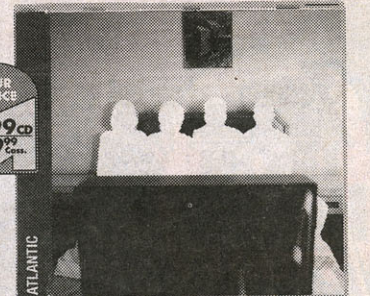
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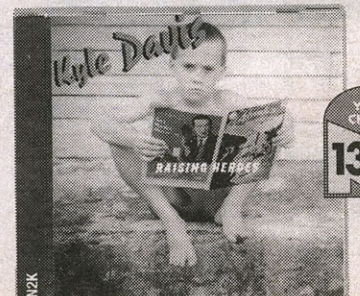
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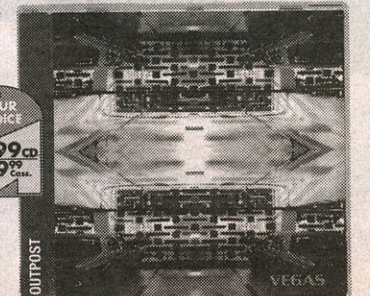
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was once something of an acid queen.

Parry's late husband, Parry Bivens, a pioneer scuba diver, inventor, medical doctor, chemist and drug experimenter, is the man who introduced Janiger to LSD, after obtaining a mail-order supply from Sandoz Laboratories.

An accomplished pioneer diver in her own right, Parry graced the cover of *Sports Illustrated* in 1955 and worked as an actress and underwater stunt double in Hollywood, standing in for Sophia Loren and co-starring with Lloyd Bridges in TV's *Sea Hunt*. She describes her two dozen acid sessions of the mid-1950s as "happy trips — joyful." She credits LSD with helping her to appreciate the intricacies and interconnectedness and beauty of life in the "underwater world." After her first several sessions, she became a volunteer babysitter for Janiger's subjects. She hasn't taken any drugs since then, and feels no need to try LSD again.

Sixty-nine-year-old Loring Ware says that his six to eight doses of LSD in Janiger's office opened his eyes to "the world around me, but with some of the veils taken away that I didn't even know were there." Before those experiences, Ware was following what he felt to be an uninspiring career path as a technical illustrator. "LSD made me less happy with my job," he says. "I recognized the essential meaninglessness of my job." Subsequently, Ware switched careers and became a radio announcer. Though he hasn't had much experience with other drugs — other than "a little pot in the 1960s" — he believes that LSD "should be incorporated into some kind of rite of passage for young people, so they enter into adulthood with an understanding of the broadness of life, instead of becoming little cogs in a machine."

Ernest Pipes, 71, was one of eight Unitarian ministers who dropped acid in Janiger's office in the late 1950s. Now retired, Pipes says he was disappointed with his trip only because it wasn't a transcendent experience. "As it turned

out," he recalls, "each of us had a very different experience — some went very deeply into a state of transcendent ecstasy, others did not. I had an intensified aural and visual experience, but I was unable to surrender fully to the effects of the drug in that setting." Pausing a moment, he adds, "But I have always regretted that I was not transported more effectively into altered states of consciousness, and thus enabled to be in touch with other dimensions of reality."

An inclination to "break wind" was inhibited by the fear that it might turn into a multi-dimensional faux pas, reverberating uncontrollably through the cosmos! — Philosopher Alan Watts

By the early 1960s, it was apparent that the era of inward journeys — or at least legal ones — was fast approaching an end. LSD had seeped into the underground youth culture, and the forces of prohibition were already in play. Long before LSD was outlawed, Sandoz, under international pressure, cut off researchers' access to the drug.

And what of LSD's reputed perils? "A lot of the so-called dangers were hyperbole exaggerated by the press and misunderstood by science," says Ronald Siegel, who has studied psychopharmacological agents at UCLA for nearly 30 years. The claim that LSD causes genetic damage, for one, turned out to be inaccurate. "In fact," Siegel continues, "the drug doesn't present a lot of toxic dangers to individuals, simply because the dose that turns them on and the dose that kills them are so far apart."

According to Janiger, researchers themselves are partly responsible for the drug's fall from grace. "LSD didn't pan out as an acceptable therapeutic drug for one reason," he says. "Researchers didn't realize the explosive nature of the drug. You can't manipulate it as skillfully as you would like. It's like atomic energy — it's relatively easy to make a bomb with it, but much harder to safely drive an engine and make

light with it. And with LSD, we didn't have the chance to experiment and fully establish how to make it do positive, useful things."

So acid has continued to hang in limbo. Says Siegel: "Because LSD carries with it so much political baggage, it has become extremely difficult to generate approval for new studies."

For researchers hoping to resume LSD studies with human subjects, progress on the regulatory front has been excruciatingly slow. Since the early 1970s, only a dozen or so people have participated in FDA-sanctioned studies, and those were continuations of projects approved before the ban. Last year, Richard Yensen, a pioneering LSD researcher and psychologist in Baltimore, was ready to administer 499 doses of LSD to down-and-out alcoholics and drug addicts in a resumption of his work begun in the early 60s at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center. But early this year, the FDA put the study on "clinical hold," demanding that Yensen revise his research and safety protocols. Yensen says he has no idea why the FDA suddenly hit the brakes, but he suspects that a recent *Esquire* magazine story publicizing his obscure research spooked government regulators.

Other planned research projects with hallucinogens have hit similar regulatory obstacles. For now, at least, says Siegel, "Psychedelics are more useful as a basic research tool than as an applied medical tool. And because of that, hallucinogens have very limited appeal to government agencies to foster further research."

Some critics of psychedelic science argue that LSD's would-be rehabilitators are really mounting a crypto-legalization campaign. Rick Doblin of MAPS denies that charge, at least in the sense that he's lobbying for LSD to be sold over the counter like cigarettes and alcohol. Yet he asserts that "the ultimate goal is to have legal access to LSD, more likely than not in specially licensed centers to specially licensed therapists."

Janiger also envisions a place for LSD in our culture. He would like to see studies of LSD and other psychedelics "become fair-minded and at parity with other kinds of research," and the fruits of such research applied to "acceptable social and medical uses." He cites the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece as a model for LSD's potential place in our own society. For nearly 2,000 years, the Greeks participated in an annual ritual in the city of Eleusis, 22 kilometers west of Athens. In the secret ceremony, participants from all walks of life (Plato and Aristophanes, as well as slaves) imbibed a sacred drink called "kykeon" and then proceeded to experience what one ancient author described as "ineffable visions" that were "new, astonishing, inaccessible to rational cognition." Says Janiger, "Those who underwent the mysteries came out at the other side, the sages tell us, as changed people who saw the world differently." In short, the Golden Age of Greece may have also been a very psychedelic age.

Clearly, Janiger isn't advocating "legalization" in a simplistic sense. He is talking about the kind of self-transformation that leads to larger cultural transformations. And for that reason, his vision may ultimately be even more radical than the notion of over-the-counter psychedelics. But what a long, strange trip it was for about 2,000 years in ancient Greece. And what a short, strange trip it was for about a decade in Los Angeles.

MAPS is still searching for people who participated in Dr. Oscar Janiger's LSD study. The MAPS contact number is (704) 334-1798. You can find more information about MAPS on its Internet Web site, <http://www.maps.org>

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How Long & How Strange A Trip?

By Sam Boykin



MAPS founder Rick Doblin

During an eight-year period just prior to the emergence of the turn on, tune in, and drop out era of the drug-infused 60s, Los Angeles psychiatrist Oscar Janiger conducted a series of experiments to observe the effects that the mind altering drug lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) had on approximately 900 volunteers. See the accompanying cover story for more details of Janiger's experiments.

Now, some 40 years later, in a development that would make Timothy Leary proud, the Mecklenburg County-based organization Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), founded by one-time Charlotte resident Rick Doblin, has tracked down 47 of the "patients" who participated in the study to determine just how long and strange of a trip it's been.

Based on the subjects' original notes describing their experiences — most of whom are now in their 70s and 80s — as well as a series of lengthy interviews conducted by MAPS employee Kate Chapman, the findings of the 18-month study are scheduled to be released sometime in January, 1999 in a special issue of the organization's publication, the *MAPS Bulletin*. Doblin said his goal is for the study to be used as a guideline for future research on psychedelic drugs and ultimately pave the way in establishing the therapeutic value of hallucinatory drugs such as LSD.

"This was a group of people who broke all stereotypes of who would be using LSD," Doblin said from his home near Cambridge, MA where he is working on his Phd in Public Policy at Harvard University. "The vast majority were middle-class professionals (as well as such notable celebrities as Cary Grant, Jack Nicholson and James Coburn), now they're elderly grandparents who span the spectrum from actors and professionals to housewives."

Doblin said that Janiger's exhaustive and in-depth study of the effects of LSD was cut short because of the political issues that arose from the 60s' burgeoning drug culture.

"In the second half of the 60s, psychedelic research had been shut down. A cultural turmoil had developed and what our society did was turn against the cultural struggle and criminalize all these drugs. From that we got the war on drugs, and in the excesses and zeal

of all that, they shut down all the research."

Doblin posits that because of the governmental intervention in psychedelic drug research, scientists, therapists and researchers were all prevented from gaining invaluable insight into the therapeutic properties of psychedelics, as well as a greater understanding of how the mind works, an assertion Doblin said was made all the more apparent from the MAPS research project.

In addition to having full access to Janiger's original files documenting each subject's experience, Doblin said Chapman conducted one-on-one interviews with each of the 47 participants they tracked down.

"She would identify what the subjects had learned, explore what kind of person they were, and ask them to describe what they remember from the experience, and what, if any, negative consequences they may have suffered," Doblin said of the interview

process. "She concluded the interview by talking about what suggestions they had about how society should handle these drugs and if they should be available for research."

"One of the remarkable things is that all the subjects vividly remembered the experience," Doblin continued. "The majority felt it was a positive, beneficial experience and that they learned something about themselves. A few even talked of it being a transformative experience that affected the choices they made later on about their life and careers."

If one trend emerged from the interviews conducted by Chapman, Doblin said it was the participants' firm belief that people should have the freedom to experience psychedelic drugs if they so choose.

"How do you deal with the amount of people who want to learn about themselves in this way? Shouldn't they have the right to do so in a safe environment?" Doblin asked. "Most of the people we interviewed felt there should be some context for people, and not just patients, but for all people to have the

opportunity to experience psychedelics in a legal and controlled manner."

Doblin said he first heard of Janiger's study in the mid-70s while studying psychology and psychotherapy as an undergraduate student in Florida. "It really peaked my interest in psychedelic research," Doblin said of his discovery of Janiger's study.

A decade later in 1986, Doblin founded MAPS in response to the fact that the therapeutic use of psychedelic drugs, specifically methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, com-

monly known as Ecstasy), was being outlawed by the FDA.

"There were and are a network of therapists throughout the country that felt like these drugs were extremely helpful as therapeutic tools. They were disgusted at the way the laws limited scientific freedom. Psychedelics are like a telescope into the mind, and the laws were preventing their use."

Doblin said MAPS, at least initially, is focused on the medical use of psychedelic drugs, acting as an adjunct to psychotherapy where it can be used to treat a host of mental illnesses and afflictions.

"It would be used in the context of a longterm therapeutic relationship," Doblin said. "There would be a series of non-drug sessions in which a therapeutic alliance would be set up. Therapists and patients first learn to trust each other and talk about issues that would normally be discussed in talk therapy. Several days would then be set aside for an LSD session, one day for the session and the next to recover and really think about it. Another series of non-drug sessions would then

be set up to work with the material and emotions that were brought to the surface by the LSD."

Doblin said psychedelic therapy is especially effective in treating mental disorders that are characterized by "stuck energy," such as depression, anxiety and addiction.

"With psychedelics, the basic insight is that these afflictions are energies within ourselves; they are kept alive by our own psyche," Doblin said. "The key to working with those internal energies is to realize they're coming from within. Psychedelics work really excellently in instances of post-traumatic stress because you're carrying alive the memory traces of a prior experience that colors your judgment; you can't escape from it. It's with people who are willing to make that crucial leap of acknowledging they have to deal with these emotions within themselves that psychedelics are most effective."

Addiction is also an excellent candidate to be treated with psychedelic therapy," Doblin added. "Addiction is essentially massive denial. The combination of stripping away the denial and providing subjects with the traditional psychedelic 'peak' experience gives patients a sense of connection which is truly empowering."

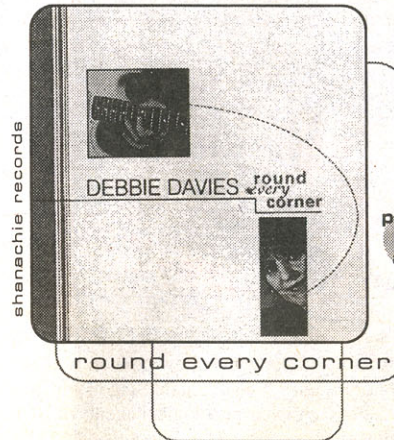
Doblin said he's hoping that the input from Janiger's original subjects, along with the findings of the MAPS research project, will help open the door to the possibility of, if not legalizing psychedelic drugs, at least changing peoples' attitudes.

"I think it will happen eventually, but cultural prejudices must change in a dramatic way," Doblin said. "As we move into the future, technology will continue to provide all these incredible ways of understanding what's going on with brain function and human consciousness. Psychedelics are just part of that exploration. There's no way we can stop the clock on scientific research into the mind, that's really the last frontier left." ■

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