psychologist

author

Cult figure
Early life

born October 22, 1920 in springfield, ma
  irish-catholic household
  father abandoned him
west point - first brush with authority
university of Alabama 1943
  doctorate in psychology -
  1950 university of California berkeley
The budding psychologist (1950’s)

- Lectured UC-Berkeley
  - Interpersonal psychoanalytics
- Kaiser hospital
  - Doctors relate to patients as equals
  - Spend more time “in the field”
- Nuclear psychology
  - Theory that humans should be observed much like atomic particles
- Interpersonal circumplex
  - Understand social interactions by placing themselves on a chart
- The interpersonal diagnosis of personality
  - Book; self-esteem over social adjustment
- Current wife Marianne
  - Committed suicide
  - Talk of the town - their open marriage, blamed leary
Timothy Leary’s first trip

- Psilocybin - psychedelic mushrooms
- August 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1960 in Mexico
- Poolside
- visions of “Nile Palaces, Bedouin pleasure tents, mosaics of flaming color, jewel encrusted reptiles, mosaics lit from within.”
- he re-experienced all of evolution; floating “down through snake time, fish time, giant jungle-palm-time, green lacy fern leaf-time” until “hello, I am the first living thing.”
- Leary famously said about his first psychedelic trip, “I learned more about psychology in the five hours after taking these mushrooms than in the preceding 15 years of studying and doing research in psychology.”
Leary’s first LSD trip

- It took 2 months of convincing to get Leary to do it
- Keep in mind he would later be called the “LSD guru” by the media
- Influenced by his friends
- Had an ‘awakening’

- Tumbling and spinning down the soft fibrous avenues to some central point which was just light. Just light... but not just light. It was the center of life – a burning, dazzling, throbbing, radiant core, pure pulsing exulting light. An endless flame that contained everything... sound, touch, cell, seed, sense, soul, glory. God, the hard eye of God. Merged with this pulsing flame it was possible to look out and see and participate in the entire cosmic drama. Past and future. All forms, all structures, all organisms, all events, were illusory, television productions pulsing out from the central eye.

- Everything that I had ever experienced and read about was bubble-dancing before me like a nineteenth century vaudeville show. My illusions, the comic costumes, the strange ever-changing stage props of trees and bodies and theater sets. All spinning out from the momentary parts of the central God - eye - heart - penis - light.
The Harvard Psilocybin Project

- Richard Alpert, Gunther Weil, Walter Pahnke, Ralph Metzner
- 1960-1962
- Graduate students only
- Take psychedelic drugs then write reports on the experience
- Get together to discuss
- Other professors were concerned about legitimacy and safety
- Article in *The Harvard Crimson*
- Publicity brought attention to Massachusetts Dept of Public Health
- Leary and Alpert fired
- Concord prison experiment
  - ‘61-’63
  - Psychedelics combined with psychotherapy reform prisoners to leave antisocial behaviors behind upon release
The 60s

- **Aldous Huxley**
  - Famous writer
  - Advised Leary to act conservatively spreading the word about psychedelics
  - Share with artists & intellectuals first

- **Allen Ginsberg**
  - Beat poet
  - Very influential of forerunners to the hippies
  - Offered to be the guinea pig for Leary’s experiments

- **1968**
  - Vietnam war escalating
  - America’s youth opposed
  - Leary encouraged youth to turn their backs
  - Leary ridiculed America’s military-industrial machine and mentality
  - Planned a “counter-convention”
The Hippie Counterculture

- In a way evolved from the research that was being done by Leary and Alpert on LSD & also the sheer amount of influential people Leary shared psychedelic drugs with.
- Leary and the youth who experimented with LSD and other psychedelics ‘hippies’ influenced each other.
- Encouraged youth to “turn on, tune in and drop out”
- By mid-1960s psychedelic drug use at its highest.
- Psychedelic counterculture began influencing rock and other musical genres.
Politics

- Spur of the moment decided to run for Governor of California
- Campaign views mostly libertarian
- Eliminate state income tax and enact a “frivolity fee”
- Legalize everything
- Leary and Lennon - “bed in for peace”
  - Reaction to the Vietnam War
- The following day Leary asked Lennon to record a song for his campaign giving him the slogan “Come Together. Join the Party.” to which Lennon wrote the song Come Together
- Politics ended when he got arrested for possession ... again
Jail Time

- The Laredo Bust - Family trip to Mexico
- Fall of 1966 sentenced to 30 years in prison
  - Essentially got out of it but would serve 10 years for it later
- Possession 1965 and 1968
- Ten years both accounts
- Escape - Weather underground
- Traveled out of necessity
- Seized 1973 - back to Cali & prison
- Got out 1976
Exile and the Black Panthers

- Escape from prison
- Paris
- Weather Underground
- Algeria to check out Eldridge Cleaver
- Algerian government didn’t want to give sanctuary to Leary
- They hid him under a cover story but the Algerian government inevitably found out
- They kicked him and his current wife Rosemary out, but with passports with their real names
- Spent time moving around - Switzerland, Austria, Afghanistan
- Inside DEA agent tricked him into going to Afghanistan - where he was immediately caught
Folsom Prison Blues

- Neighbor Charles Manson
- Talked a lot - philosophy
- Started a band together
- Comet Kahoutek
  - Inspired his advocacy of space migration and immortality

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5prNB4Ke3Qk
Interest in outer space & other hobbies

- Starseed
- Acted
  - The Death of the mind
- Tv
- Radio
- Performed in night clubs
- Disc jockey
- Comedy clubs
- SMILE “space migration, increased intelligence, life extension”
- Author - *flashbacks, chaos and cyber culture*
  - among many many more
- Mind mirror & mind movie
“Good news! I’m dying.”

- Prostate cancer - inoperable
- Stayed true to his roots, ever the experimental psychology & scientist he openly reported his experiences and thoughts while dying
  - Wanted to go out with everyone laughing, not sad
  - Raced younger friends in wheelchairs around downtown Beverly Hills
- Leary.com
  - Documented his condition, drug intake, visitors
- Wanted to be cryogenically frozen
- Buried in space
  - April 21st, 1997
  - With Gerard K. O’Neill and Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry
- Last words - “why? why not” repeatedly and then “beautiful”
If LSD hadn’t become illegal and Leary could have experimented with them legally, how do you think things would have ended up? Do you think his distaste for authority would have interfered even if it was legal for him to experiment with them?

Former President Richard Nixon once called Leary the “most dangerous man in America” - do you agree that Leary was dangerous? If yes, why? If no, why?