



LABY RINTH

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COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO • THE WRITERS' PROJECT

ISSUE 4

MAY 2016



LABYRINTH



Sunset by
Michelle
Seubert
pg. 6



pg. 17



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The Writers' Project and Labyrinth staff would like to extend our sincere thanks to –

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champion of the arts, Rebecca Alex,

and

the students who submitted their work to be considered for this publication.

Keep writing. Keep creating. Keep learning.

Labyrinth Issue 4

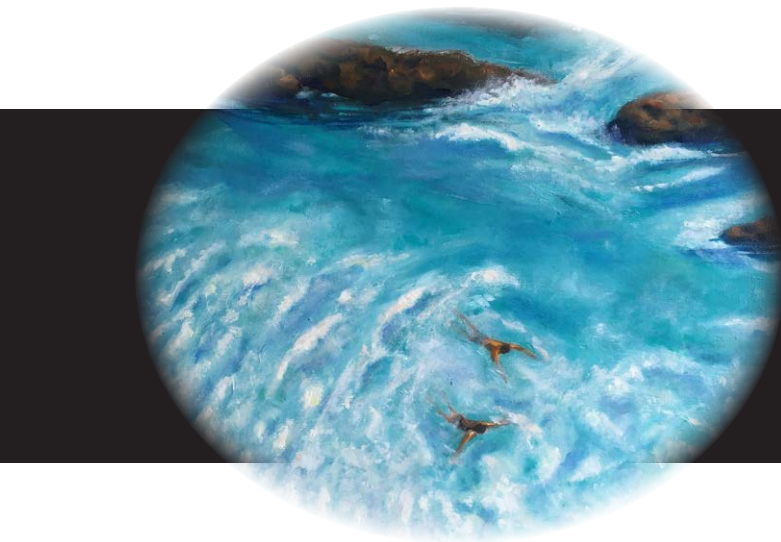
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Letter from the Editor

There was a moment last year when the significance of our little publication hit me. I was in Chicago for the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference representing College of San Mateo. In November of 2014, our original publication *The Labyrinth* had been awarded First Place for "Best Printed Honors Newsletter." So, a year later, they asked a member of our editorial team to be on a panel to discuss "What Makes a Winning Honors Newsletter?" I was honored to represent CSM but was worried that I wouldn't know what advice to give because we weren't a newsletter anymore. Our club and our publication had been reborn since then, expanding from the honors community to feature and collaborate with all students across the SMCCD (including Skyline and Cañada). We decided to showcase the written work and art of our diverse community that, as you will see, has so much to offer. As I introduced myself to editors in chief of honors newsletters across the entire country, I started to feel a little intimidated. Thankfully, our always supportive honors coordinator, David Laderman, shared some words of encouragement that calmed me down.

Then, as I showed the second edition of our journal that I had brought along with me to fellow honors students, I was surprised. The interest and support astounded me. They were so impressed with the changes we had made to our publication and wanted to hear about what made us choose to go in this direction. Their eyes lit up when I handed them copies, the vibrant orange fish on the cover staring straight back at them. Not only was I learning about different honors communities but I was also passing out a piece of our community to students all

over the U.S. And it felt like that piece was something unique and important that made our community stand out, as it should.

It is with this spirit of appreciation that *Labyrinth's* staff is privileged to offer you the newest piece of our community. We are grateful to you, the readers, who continue to support the creativity and courage it takes for authors and artists to share the fruits of their labor and talent which is brimming over the SMCCD campuses.



Kelly Gulbrandson
Editor in Chief

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DESIGN

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CREATIVE



Lands End Lookout EMMA GRYNGE

Logan's Logs

by JEFF RAMOS

Entry 1

Everything is temporary. These are the words that echo repeatedly inside my head. Like a constant alarm at hourly intervals that leaves me paralyzed inside my room as if I'm a terminally ill patient strapped to their bed. I want to go out today. But it's already late. I'll try again tomorrow.

I probably should check myself into the hospital to get help, but then I remember I'm too prideful. I don't like accepting help from others. Besides, I'm not in that bad of a place yet. I feel it'd be too much of a burden for someone to give me their time of day to help. Depression is depressing, and I wouldn't wish it upon anyone. Maybe I'll treat myself today and go eat somewhere to take my mind off it.

But, what's the point? I don't have anything decent to wear, my hair looks like it was groomed by a troll doll, and I don't want to go out by myself. It's too pathetic eating alone somewhere. I don't understand

how other people do it. Maybe it's better to cook whatever's in the fridge, but, then again, I've walked into the kitchen and opened it multiple times already: nothing but crippling debt on the top shelf, expired hopes and dreams in the drawers below, and half a bowl of self respect that went bad months ago.

Stop. Don't do that. Stop thinking that. I have to be positive. Tomorrow, I'll try again tomorrow.

Entry 2

I cleaned my closet today. I found my box of memories, filled with cards I've been given from close friends and family. Reading them makes me feel again; it's like having temporary emotions to replace the numbness inside. The most recent was the suicide letter I found in my mailbox a year ago. I miss her. She claimed it was her ticket to absolute freedom. Shit happens—but is there really such a thing as “enough” to say goodbye? I'll leave it at that. Tomorrow, maybe I'll visit her tomorrow.

Entry 3

Isn't it funny how this new generation is a lot more welcoming and accepting than older generations? Isn't it also funny how much more medicated and depressed the newer generation has become? I'd like to thank the baby boomer generation, AKA my dad who doesn't seem to believe that living in an apartment counts as an accomplishment. Maybe tomorrow he'll realize the world is a different kind of tough from what his generation experienced.

My mind never seems to stop daydreaming. It's the only thing that keeps me distracted from the negatives—negatives being the shit stained world we live in. Sometimes I like to daydream about finding a summer romance, or drinking hot chocolate during the winter with someone special. I like to imagine my

life as a movie with an amazing soundtrack, instead of a world filled with death and hatred and misery. Maybe something good will happen tomorrow, I can feel it.

Nothing. I feel nothing. That is all I'm ever going to feel and I should just accept it.

Entry 4

The park is filled with families and friends, and a few couples holding hands, smiling at each other and laughing. Kids are running around chasing each other in a game of tag. There's an old lady walking her golden retriever, his fur as bright as her yellow jacket. All I have to do is go out and cross the street to the park. But something's stopping me. I remember. I remember that I don't have anybody to share this adventure with.

I sit back down in the kitchen, and stay there until midnight, lost in thought. Tomorrow, I'll definitely try tomorrow.

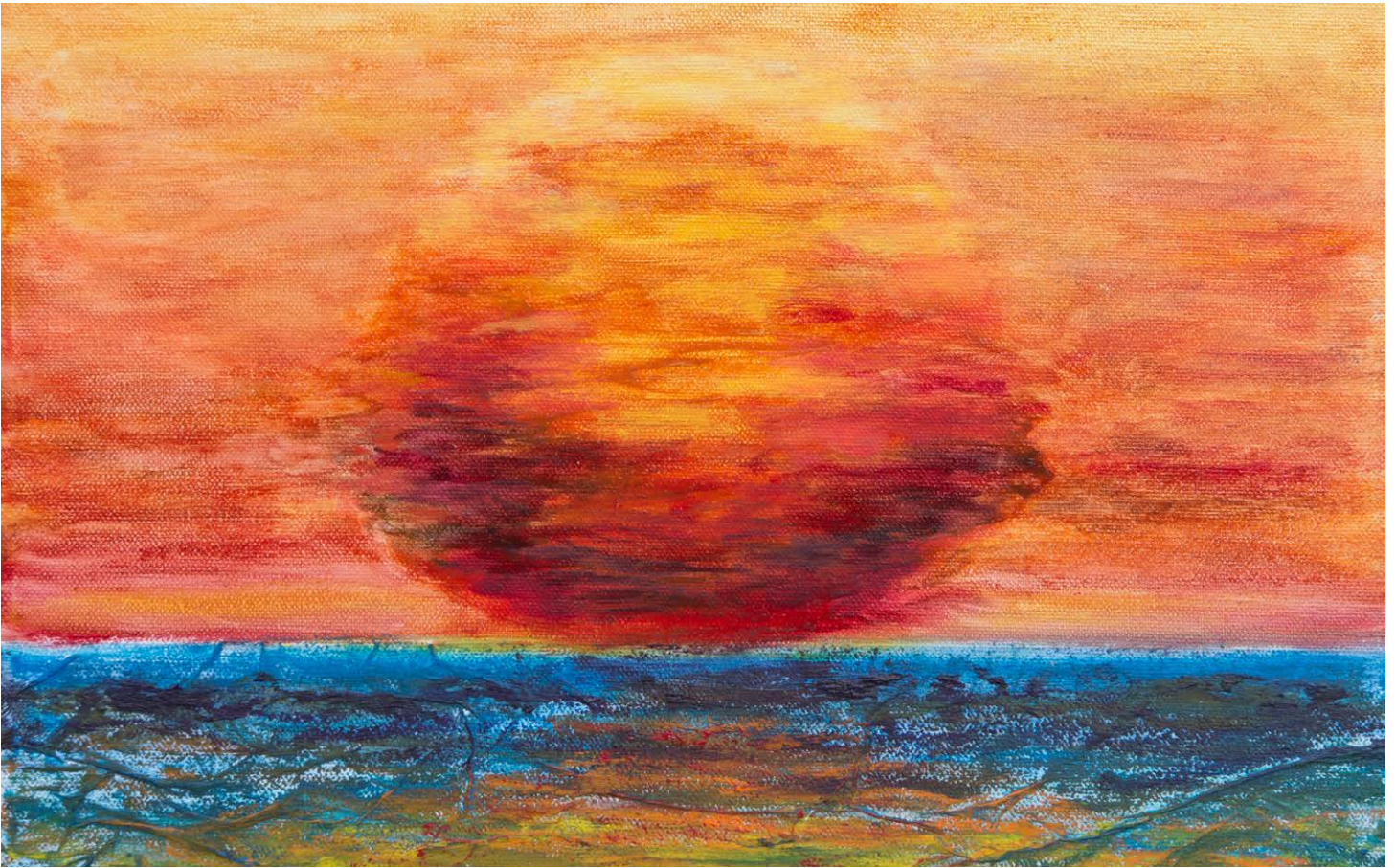
Why should I feel this way about my life? Why can't I be normal, or at least not feel how I feel? Better yet, why can't I fall asleep for once instead of losing myself to the voices in my head? Constantly drained and unable to lift myself up to do anything. I don't want to just lie here and feel the tears trickle down the sides of my face. I don't want any of this. Somebody, please just take it all away.

Entry 5

There's a storm outside. I grab myself a bowl of cereal and just sit in my kitchen. There's something tranquil about hearing the heavy rain. It's like the earth gathers all the sadness in people's hearts and lets it all out through storms. I'm sure I caused this. Nothing can convince me otherwise. Weather man says it'll be the same tomorrow.

It probably always will be. ■





Sunset MICHELLE SEUBERT

The Tower of Babel

by ALINA OSTROVSKY

The Tower of Babel stood for mankind attempting to become equal with God. The people attempted to build a temple into heaven. God did not like the direction He saw man headed in, so He made them speak in different languages. This led to a dispersion of mankind across the Earth. (Tower of Babel, 1)

As I reminisce, I start to realize how the events of my life have interwoven together, as if each were a block that contributed to the construction of a huge Tower of Babel. These blocks create the invincibility of my character, with a godly motive to sustain myself for what lies ahead. However, even the sturdy, spacious, and superb Tower of Babel had a weakness. This weakness shattered and splintered its stature by a simple brush of God's hand. And so, like that ancient construction, my invincibility is prone to brittleness. Nevertheless, the weakness is not ingrained in the faultiness of the tower. The tower was built perfectly, with angles and measures designed to support those spiral compartments, for thousands of years, outreaching the endless extension

and loftiness of the sky. The weakness, though, lay in the hands of the people, the tower's creators, in the overconfidence that possessed their minds into believing their abysmal, human hands could be superior to the hand of God.

I view myself to be the creation of that Tower of Babel, for my perfect resilience, created by my family members, contains the most imperfect and destructive elements of my character. I wonder, occasionally, what the essence of my existence is. Is it to pose my imperfection as an example not to be repeated, just as God had allowed His people to build their tower to a point of magnitude destined for obliteration? Indulging an everlasting punishment of incomprehension among human beings, the tower separated people who used to be friends, who used to be brothers and sisters, mothers and daughters, and so on.

In all factuality, the tower was the cause of the separation of humankind, up to this day continuing to elicit war and hostility. Similarly, *I* am the reason for the dispersion of *my* family members throughout the globe. My mother is living in New York and my father lives in Israel. My grandfather lives in the Ukraine, and there are many more family members that I can name that reside in far off points of the Earth, far away from me.

My imperfection is the result of a lack of parental guidance. The thirst for my mother's love

since childhood still gnaws my entrails. There's a hole in my subconscious, a bare vulnerability never to be enclosed. Just as the open wound of a soldier or any physically inflicted human being (if not bandaged or patched over) would be susceptible to contracting any worldly infections, the permanence of my subconscious aperture absorbs all worldly defectiveness. It skews my perception of events and of myself, leaving me exceedingly dependent and needy. Although my character is strong like the Tower of Babel, the absence of that one block weakens my fundament inasmuch as to necessitate additional support.

• • •

I was brought into this world only to later on be asked, "Why didn't I abort you?" This was the question posed by my mother when I was twelve. The words stung me like a blazed iron. To an extent they were healed, even forgotten the next day, but the words stayed unanswered. Father used to tell me that Mother didn't really want kids, but was encouraged by my grandmother to have me; I was Mother's first child and

aborting a first child risked leaving the mother infertile. Despite this, over time, the childish befuddlement left by my mother's words had crept up through my system to create a sort of clog inside my nerves, preventing the smooth registration of information of my situation into a comprehensive form, irrespective of how much effort I put in. It took many years for me to come to this conclusion, of which I am still in heartrending denial.

• • •

My mother appeared and disappeared throughout my life, creating in myself the illusion of a far off light, reflected by the sun's rays, and always seeming to be almost within my reach. When I was young, I was always hoping to grasp that light, hoping that Mom would come and be with me. She would promise that she would stay with me and my grandma permanently, but a couple of months later she would disappear, instead coming occasionally to visit. When I was in second grade, she left for the United States to live with her sister for seven months. I was in Israel, falsely thinking that she was somewhere in the country, and that she'd

Lusty IAN BERGSTROM



come to visit me shortly. I would often ask my grandmother where my mom was and my grandmother would tell me that she'd come back soon. And then the word "soon" extended into months, until my mother was forced to come back in order to fight over her custody of me against my father.

After my mother returned, she told me she had been in the U.S. arranging for a place for us to live; but now when I look back on it, I hold what she said to be false. Immigration to the U.S. had long been a goal for my family on my mother's side. Soon my grandmother left for the U.S., leaving me with my mother for half a year. I somewhat treasured that period of time. Although my mother did not hold me as a first priority, it seemed to me that we were really close. She was humorous, entertaining, energetic, and sometimes seemed to be loving, when nobody (like her boyfriends) was in our way. During that period, I didn't really care about that statement of her regret about not aborting me. I didn't begrudge her for inflicting upon me, or for throwing my head against the wall when I expressed my strong dislike for her boyfriends right in front of their face. I would always forgive her and I wouldn't tell anyone about our altercations. I have never figured out why I was so faithful, with such persistent endurance, like a dog that would never betray its master.

Eventually, my mother decided to send me on a "vacation" to United States. Father was persuaded to sign papers for my release. When I was younger, he had blocked such a release, foreseeing my mother's family's plans. However, if he hadn't released me this time, I would have been filled with contempt against him. Realizing this, he let me experiment with my chances. Naively, I thought that it was a vacation, and I told him so. "Dad, what's your problem? I'll come back after summer is over," I stated. To my later amazement, my father had correctly prophesied my Huckleberry-Finn-like adventures that followed as if they were written in a script.

• • •

In the airport of Ben Gurion in Tel Aviv, excited and unsuspecting of my mother's plans, I was nervous about getting to my destination on my own. Mother was able to accompany me to the door but not able to go beyond that point. She kissed me as though she would never see me again. At that moment, I felt as if my legs had been amputated, leaving me screwed to that spot on the floor. My heart was pumping anxiously as if it had fallen down to my feet and



Eye of the Dragon ABIGAIL MENDE

was so heavy that I couldn't place it back into my rib cage. *This is very weird*, my brain processed the words. *Mom usually doesn't kiss me with such finality of motion when she knows I am coming back anyway.* Mom saw that I was rooted to that square tile on the floor, so she prompted me, saying, "You can go now."

To delay, I sheepishly asked her, "Mom, I forgot the instructions that the lady at the checkpoint told me about how to get to my gate. Can you repeat it to me please?" In all honesty, the prospect of the ride alone was so scary that I registered every word and turn that that lady had told me, but I was so hesitant to go through that door that I felt the urge to ask my mother. Annoyed, she replied, "Don't you know Hebrew better than me?" I was silent. She sighed and explained every single detail of what I needed to do as if I were so slow that I didn't understand common sense. She made it sound so humorous, saying, "You go up the stairs, by picking up your little feet, you cast your eyes on the signs where the gates are, and hunt for gate number 31." It amused me. I still didn't want to budge, but I had to, because I would have agitated my mother even more. So I greedily embraced her as if someone would take her away from me, and kissed her as though I would never see her again – I was still convincing myself that my father had been wrong.

The airport door was heavy, but I pulled it all the way and went through it with purpose. It closed very slowly and as I waited for it to shut completely, the image of my mother was blocked gradually from my sight. Mother thought that I had promptly walked up the stairs after I went through that door, so she turned her back to me. However, she was wrong; I was watching every step that she was taking. At that point, I truly wished I had the power of telepathy to communicate with her, but unfortunately, I was no

goddess.

The door finally shut completely and made a final thump. I stood there for couple of seconds, thinking, *Why am I such a baby? She promised me that I would come back. That means I will.* So I pushed worry aside and went to catch my flight.



After we parted at the airport of Ben Gurion, I didn't see my mother for three years. She, like a little girl hungry for adventure, announced that she was going back to the Ukraine, so I was persuaded to remain in the U.S. during that time. In the course of those three years, I changed my residence three times; I was kicked from one place to another. I couldn't adapt to my family members style of life in the U.S. I was different, and they were different. I was the Tower of Babel whose existence instilled into people a variety of languages and cultures so that they couldn't live in harmony. We had conflicts within and outside the family, because we couldn't fit together our needs and purposes. Although we had a common language—Russian— it seemed

like we all spoke to each other in foreign languages. Thus, just like the exasperation of the people who were building the Tower of Babel grew from their inability to communicate, everyone's own selfish desires hindered the familial communication, growing toward an explosion.

In the year of 2006, my mother's new husband got a green card for the U.S. and she was included in its privileges. The ashes of anger still existed in my state of being, but at that point they no longer glowed as embers—it had been three years after all. I didn't really know whether I should or shouldn't be happy about the news. All I knew was that I did not intend to move in with Mom because I already greatly distrusted her, and rightfully so. I preferred some stability in my unstable life; my grandma's small household was my comfort zone.

Of all the men and boyfriends that my mother used to have, I actually grew to adore my stepfather. He was exquisitely polite and gentlemanly. My mother typically takes everything good for granted and clings like a tick in the process of sucking the blood on to everything that's considered garbage. On a Friday during the month of June, she had a superfluous fight with my stepfather and he was fed up. Mom refused to admit that she was at fault and blamed everything on him, true and untrue. She came by to spend the night at my grandmother's house. She was upset, alright – I realized it was the most imperfect time to disturb her. The next day, on a Saturday morning, she started

complaining loudly about him. She didn't care that I was sleeping. Vexed, I said nothing. I knew that I'd better not intervene, that I'd better stay out of it. I went to eat the breakfast that my grandmother had fixed and my mother went to take a shower. The phone rang, and, ironically, I picked it up. That call was the turning point of my relationship with my mother; it eventually brought it to an abrupt end just like that door in the airport that shut finitely, separating my mother and me for three years. It was my stepfather; he said that my mother had stolen thirty-one dollars that he had been collecting as coins for a long period of time. I was morbidly disgusted and simultaneously ashamed of my mother. I felt my eyebrows uncontrollably squeeze together, and my forehead creased up intensely. *Where are my mother's morals?* I demanded to know.

I informed my grandmother of the fact, because she believed my mother's stream of lies, flowing out of her contaminated mouth. My mother overheard my conversation with my grandmother, and she proudly stated, "I did take that money, but he had stolen a thousand dollars from me!" I was in the kitchen and she was in the living room. What separated us was the

wall that had an open passage in a form of a window through which we talked. I angrily and daringly said, "Mother, I do not believe you anymore!" For a second it seemed as if I could see steam coming out of her ears. She was determined to beat me, and she let my grandmother and I know that. My

I was the Tower of Babel whose existence
instilled into people a variety of languages and
cultures so that they couldn't live in harmony.

grandmother was in the kitchen, so she blocked the way. Unfortunately though, eventually my grandmother thought that my mother had cooled off, and cleared the way for her. I was eating, expectant of what was going to happen. I should have gone out of the house in my night-gown at that moment, but I was too hungry to do that.

My mother came at me, yanking my hair to the point that I thought my scalp would be torn off of my head, exposing my brain tissue. I tried to defend myself, attempting to yank *her* hair. But no matter how hard I tried, she seemed to be insensitive to any pain. I found myself on the floor and she was on top of me. Her being on top of me already hurt—after all, she's a 190 lb. lady. But not only was she on top of me, she was choking me. I couldn't do anything because I was wedged to the floor with her weight on me. My grandmother reacted and tried to cover half of my body from my mother. My grandmother's weight put even more pressure on my rib cage so that I began to think that I would be smashed like a sandwich and finally die. Meanwhile, Mother kept her hands tightly around my throat and looked me over for an area of bare flesh. My right knee was exposed, and while keeping her hands on my throat, she went

towards my knee and monstrosly pulled the tight flesh by squeezing her teeth together. I thought that the pain and suffocation would never end. I was simultaneously counting the seconds and praying to God for her to kill me. I was imagining what heaven or hell would look like, and whatever it would be, I would accept God's verdict. But at last, she ripped my night gown and released my throat and knee. I hated her so much that I wanted her to kill me and go to jail for eternity. However, I was still alive, and I gasped for air as if I had been living in a vacuum for years.

That fateful day was when I officially lost my

mother. I haven't approached her or seen her since then. I've had hallucinations of her being everywhere. Her voice haunted me after the altercation. I was treated and she was arrested. She had to pay a fine of \$2,000 and got a restraining order against me, which is still under effect.

Today, 2008, my junior year of high school, I live with my friend's mother. Sometimes watching their precious mother-daughter interactions fills me up with jealousy. Although I know the answer to my question, I process the words, *Why don't I deserve such a mother as Hannah's?* Even when I push that reality out to

Masai Mara EMMA GRYNGE



my subconscious—that I will never get to enjoy the “motherly love” that I yearned for as a child—the truth is revived into my consciousness whenever I observe Hannah and her mother. Each day, when I go downstairs and see a note addressed to Hannah on our dinner table, I want to be destroyed. It reads:

Hannah,

Here is some toothpaste, shampoo/conditioner to pack—leave on my bed if you have others you are taking. Remind me to check the blue skirt with candy and give me info on any changes—please.

Enjoy the cool day :)
Bunches of love,
Mom

When I see that note, I want the ground to open up and swallow me, ravenously munching on my body until my limbs are broken. But the ground stays still and reality stays the same. I ponder even more about that letter—about that infinite expression of care and love, and I realize that parents cannot be chosen by their children. And children cannot control the acts of their parents. The only way I can prevent that familial cycle of ignorance is by taking Hannah’s mother as a role model for the mother that I wish to be to *my* children. I have finally come into a realization after experiencing all of this, about how valuable a mother figure is in the life of a child. Therefore, I will never let my children experience the unchangeable pang that I have and will be experiencing for the rest of my life. Although the absence of a mother figure in my life is the “weakness” that breaks *my* Tower of Babel, I look forward to strengthening it once I am given the chance to be the parent that I’ve always dreamt of having... ■

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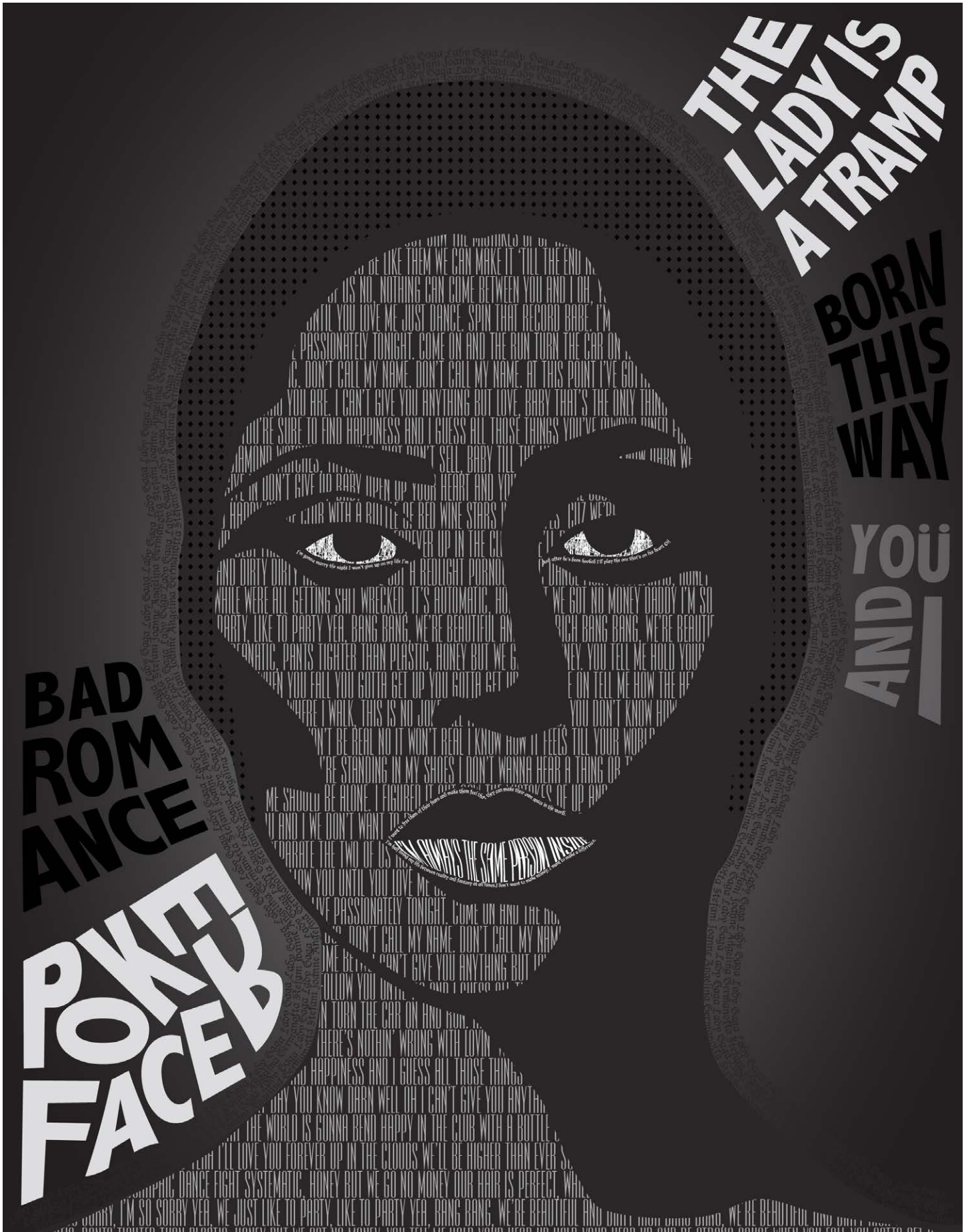
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You can read more of Alina’s story in her published memoir Everything is Married to Its Own Reason by Smiley Face.

Frida Kahlo ROSE ANN CRISTOBAL A.K.A MITSUKOCHING



Gaga ANGELA KIM



**THE
LADY IS
A TRAMP**

**BORN
THIS
WAY**

**YOU
AND I**

**BAD
ROM
ANCE**

**POKE
FACE**

It Took A Long Time To Get Here

Failing

Then refining

Favoring grasp and growth

Falling with purpose and intent

To learn.

by JEFFREY CHIN





White Magnolia MICHELLE SEUBERT



To My Brother

by ELENA ENIOUKOVA

Pulsing through without permission
Involves fighting strange addictions.

When it happened all before,
Love cannot be an open door.

Counting critically is the end,
For it leaves a body without a friend.
Still, traps are hiding everywhere.
They're meant to cripple and ensnare.

All who wander have once been lost.
They, too, don't know what hurts the most.

Neither one will fully give
And allow its host to sanely live.

So dear brother, we beg, we pray:

Depart right now. Go far away.
It's getting hard to keep these demons at bay.

ACADEMIC



Jazz Men MARK SAUNDERS

Critical Methodologies in Filmmaking: Women in Cinema

by MS. GERELLE WENDAEE WEEKES

One of the main catalysts in the development of feminism as a critical methodology was the women's liberation movement of the American 1960's and 1970's (Kaplan 1). This liberation movement beginning in the early 20th century was ignited by unrest over the social,

political, and intellectual marginalizing and silencing of women in patriarchal cultures (1). This drove Lois Weber—a prominent female film director—to admonish young women at the beginning of the sound era to avoid filmmaking careers, saying: "Don't try it, you'll never get away with it" (Mahar 2-3). This silencing of women caused scholars, historians, and writers to critically examine and in many ways contextualize women's experience in the film industry and also every aspect of women in American business (2-3). Critiques of the dominant male ideology from the time of the women's liberation movement include Claire Johnston's

“Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema” essay, which dealt with over-politicizing views, iconography and how women have been used in cinema via mythical speech and form to reinforce patriarchal ideologies (24); Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” discusses how psychoanalytic theory has been utilized to address the politics of an unconscious patriarchal society in the production of film (34); E. Ann Kaplan’s discussion in *Feminism and Film* on female representation as mediations of art in the dominant ideology (and how psychoanalysis, semiology, and structuralism theory was important in the pursuit of feminism) (119). Kaplan also addresses the implications of dominant cinema at the mercy of unconscious patriarchal phallogentrism, as well as Freudian concepts of voyeurism and fetishism (through the eyes of male spectators) (120). Another critique of male-dominant ideology in filmmaking was the essay “Women’s Stake: Filming the Female Body” by Mary Ann Doane, which further addressed the idea of women as spectacle suggesting critiques via concepts of essentialism and anti-essentialism (96). Lastly, bell hooks’ “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators” addresses the oppressing politics of slavery, a slave’s denial to the right of the gaze, and how that kind of power of domination reproduced itself in the form of control in the film industry (307).

Claire Johnston focuses on myth as a type of speech or discourse, how women have been stereotyped in film, and the connection to the altering of women’s image in mainstream cinema being more challenging than that of in the art cinema. She also makes a great connection between sexist patriarchal ideology and how women are presented as objects fashioned from conceptions of women taken from male-minded mythology (24). This sentiment is seen in the film *Reassemblage* (Trinh T. Minh-ha 1982, US). Johnston describes the situation with this statement: “If we view the image of woman as sign within the sexist ideology, we see that the portrayal of women is merely one item subject to the law of verisimilitude; [...] (that which determines the impression of realism) in the cinema is precisely responsible for the repression of the image of woman as woman and the celebration of her non-existence” (25).



The Rock PEGGY DEAN

Similarly, Mulvey addresses the desires of women being subverted to a male-dominant image, as well as how women are limited in patriarchal culture: “She can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it. She turns her child into the signifier of her own desire to possess a penis (the condition she imagines, of entry into the symbolic)” (35). Mulvey argues that the political use of psychoanalysis is essential to exposing the castration and phallogentric concept of women at the hands of an unconscious patriarchal film culture. A good film example of Johnston’s essay is *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Chantal Akerman 1975, Belgium) and *Duel in the Sun* (King Vidor 1946, US).

E. Ann Kaplan also uses the unconscious patriarchal mindset in her essay “Is the Gaze Male?” to

closely examine how women's sexuality is represented in terms of voyeurism and fetishism by the male spectator, as well as his subsequent arousal from viewing this image of women. She articulates this further by showcasing how eroticization of women on the screen is portrayed from a male's perspective. She further articulates: "[the male] gaze carries with it the power of action and possession that is lacking in the female gaze....men endeavor to find the penis in women by fear of castration and the denial of the existence of the sinister female genital" (Kaplan 121). This essay's sentiment is identified in the film, *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock 1958, US).

Anti-essentialism and essentialism became concepts of critical methodology analyzed by Mary Ann Doane in "Woman's Stake: Filming the Female Body". Here, Doane articulates these concepts as somewhat interchangeable with one another, being that essentialism defines woman as unchangeable, not yet disfigured, mystified, or patriarchally defined, thus presenting the male gaze as a type of sickness. Simultaneously, essentialism is also a kind of female independence from patriarchal approval via their naturalness. Anti-essentialism addresses the requiring of woman's body as a spectacle to support their sexuality, yet distinguishes between body and psyche (Schulz Lesson7 Transcript). Doane believes that for the sake of feminism, these two concepts should be accepted in unison and not as opposites (98). A film example which expresses this essay's sentiment is *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren 1943, US).

In her essay "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," bell hooks addresses the poor treatment and misrepresentation of African Americans, both men and women, in films. She relates Hollywood's system of domination to how slaves grew up being taught to fear looking at their Caucasian slave owners and how that domination affected people of color in the film industry: "Most Black people looked at film and television fully aware that mass media was a system of knowledge and power reproducing and maintaining white supremacy...it was the oppositional Black gaze that responded to these looking relations by developing black cinema" (hooks 308). A film example which expresses this essay's sentiment is *Daughters of the Dust* (Julie Dash 1991, US).

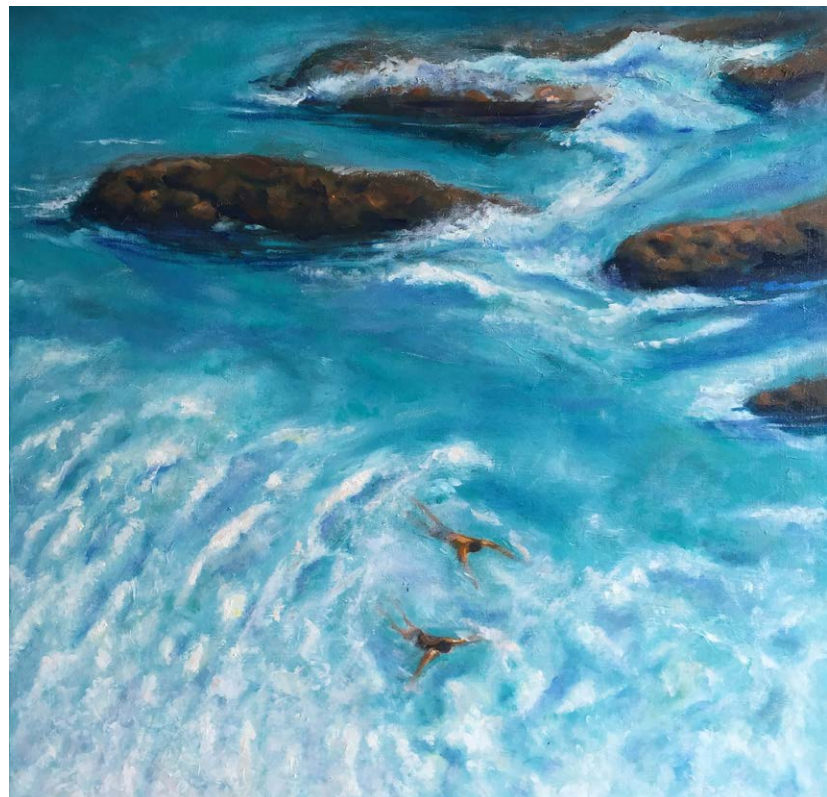
Post-structuralism of the 1970s (both European and American) helped catapult and influence the research and conceptualization behind the women's liberation movement. This movement gave special attention to pioneering female and male writers of feminist theory and critical methodologies influenced by Sigmund Freud, Claude Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Christian Metz, Julian Kristeva, and many more (Kaplan 119). Those pioneering writers collectively understood the importance of the study of women in the film industry. They employed a variety of research methods, political methodologies, and perspectives towards answering scholars' questions about how to think about women's lives and roles

within film production, the predominance of Caucasian biases in early film, and how patriarchal myths and symbolic representations of women have been assimilated, interrelated, and evolved over time. The women's liberation movement brought about a greater awareness of gender stereotypes and helped keep the theories originating in the feminist movement active and alive today. ■

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Bracing the Waves YA-FONG LEE



Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds:

A Comprehensive Analysis of the Prohibition of LSD and the New Science of LSD Therapy

EXCERPT

by SAMANTHA TRUMP

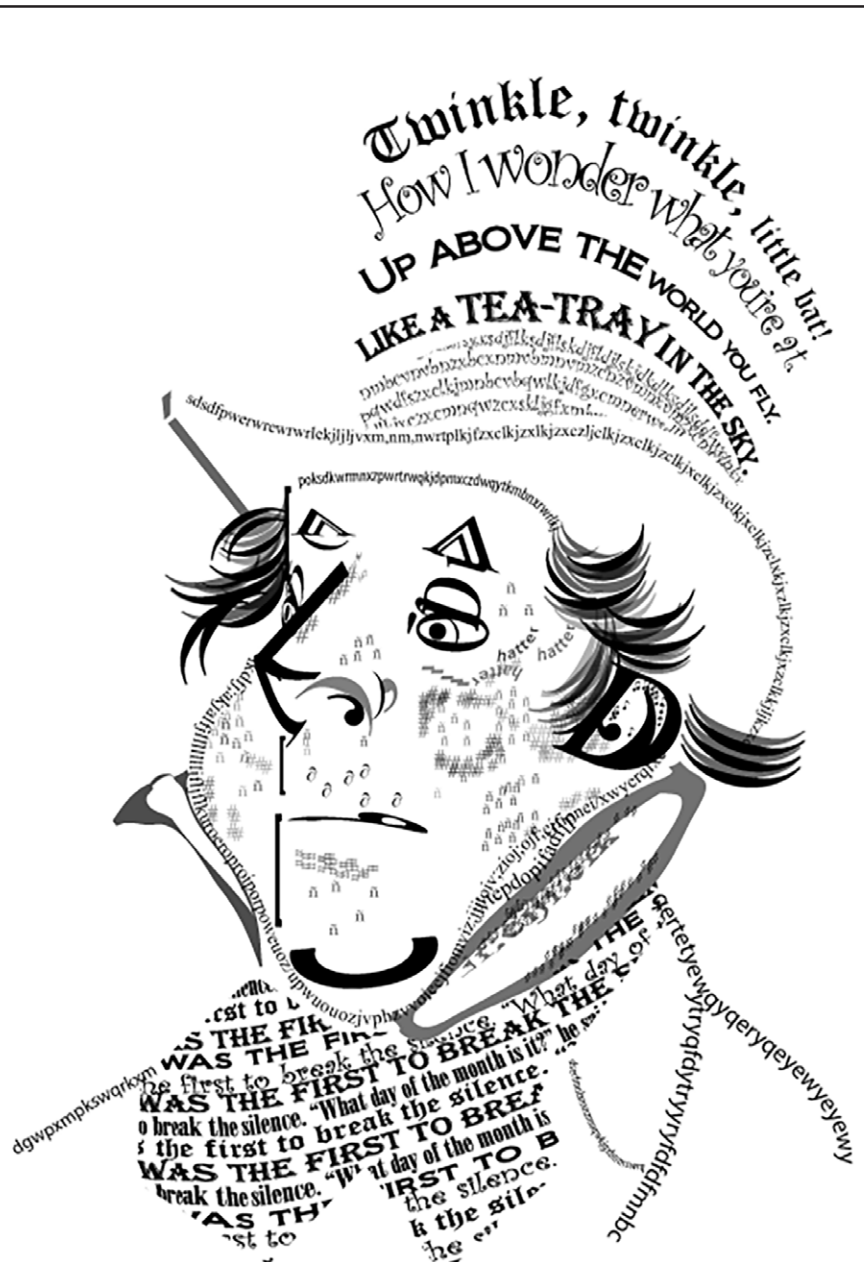
Throughout the past six decades psychedelic drugs have been one of the most controversial topics amongst modern society. Psychedelic substances are classified as psychoactive drugs, a chemical substance that affects the central nervous system and alters cognition. Before psychedelics were thrown into the same classification as “hard drugs” or “Schedule 1” drugs, meaning they have the potential to be physically addicting, they were not only used for centuries by different cultures for a multitude of reasons, but they also showed promising medical benefits in the early days of psychoactive drug research.

Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, also known as LSD, was one amongst many psychoactive drugs that showed potential medical benefits. LSD was synthesized during a time when scientists did psychiatric research with experimental drugs, thus introducing “psycholytic” or “psychedelic” therapy to the scientific community. LSD is a semisynthetic product of lysergic acid, a natural substance from the parasitic rye fungus *Claviceps Purpurea* (Ergot).¹ Albert Hofmann, a natural product chemist who at the time worked for Sandoz Pharmaceutical Laboratories in Basel, Switzerland, first synthesized LSD in 1938. Hofmann was investigating the therapeutic potential of ergot, a fungus that parasites cereal grains and was mainly searching for vasoactive compounds, which have the potential to either increase or decrease blood pressure and heart rate.²

LSD's effects on brain functioning are complex and not fully understood. LSD influences diverse neurotransmitter systems,³ but its psycho sensory effects are mainly mediated by activation of the 5-HT_{2A} receptors, with significant modulation by 5-HT_{2C} and 5-HT_{1A} receptors.³ No neuroimaging studies have been conducted with LSD, whereas neuroimaging studies with LSD-related substances such as psilocybin and dimethyltryptamine have yielded inconclusive results, most likely because of methodological challenges.³

In the 1960's, a counter culture began to form around psychedelic drugs. Not only was the drug being used for recreational purposes, but also the CIA and U.S. government were conducting their own experiments with LSD. In the early 1960's, the U.S. government was studying LSD not for therapeutic purposes, but for mind control. The government hoped to develop a method that would allow them to create an exploitable alteration of personality in potential agents, defectors, refugees, POWs, and in an unidentified group of others.⁶ Though the U.S. government did not find LSD useful for mind control, psychologists and scientists continued to build evidence supporting the therapeutic efficacy of LSD. By the end of the 1960's, despite all of the

Mad Hatter PAT WILLARD



supporting evidence, LSD was declared a “Schedule 1” drug and research came to a halt.

Bicycle Day

On April 16, 1943, while finalizing the synthesis of LSD, Albert Hofmann discovered the true effects of the drug. In his report to Professor Stoll he writes, “*Last Friday, April 16, 1943, I was forced to interrupt my work in the laboratory in the middle of the afternoon and proceed home, being affected by a remarkable restlessness, combined with a slight dizziness. At home I lay down and sank into a not unpleasant, intoxicated-like condition characterized by an extremely stimulated imagination. In a dreamlike state, with eyes closed (I found the daylight to be unpleasantly glaring), I perceived an uninterrupted stream of fantastic pictures, extraordinary shapes with intense, kaleidoscopic play of colors. After some two hours this condition faded away*”.⁵

Hofmann began to self-experiment with LSD on April 19, 1943, which is the date of the first recorded and intentional acid trip also known as Bicycle Day. It’s named Bicycle Day because after Hofmann began to feel the effects of the LSD, he asked his colleague to escort him home, but due to wartime restrictions on automobiles they could only get home by bicycle. Hofmann documents his experience for only a short time during this experiment due to the intense effects: “*4/19/43 16:20: 0.5 cc of 1/2 promil aqueous solution of diethylamide tartrate orally = 0.25 mg tartrate. Taken diluted with about 10 cc water. Tasteless. 17:00: Beginning dizziness, feeling of anxiety, visual distortions, symptoms of paralysis, desire to laugh. Supplement of 4/21: Home by bicycle. From 18:00- ca.20:00 most severe crisis*”.⁵

Hofmann reflects on his experiences from this day further in his book *LSD: My Problem Child*. He notes that he was unable to continue writing how the drug was affecting him, and that he had hurried home on his bicycle in a bewildered condition. But in the bewildered, insane condition were brief moments of clarity and effective thinking. After the climax of his LSD trip had dwindled, Hofmann states that he was able to enjoy the colors and plays of shape that appeared to him as well as the acoustics; a door handle or an automobile passing became transformed into optical perceptions. The next day after a good night’s rest, he noted that although he felt physically tired, he awoke refreshed with a clear head and had a sensation of well being and renewed life. According to Hofmann, “*This self-experiment showed that LSD-25 behaved as a psychoactive substance with extraordinary properties and potency. There was to my knowledge no other known substance that evoked such profound psychic effects in such extremely low doses, that caused such dramatic changes in human consciousness and our experience of the inner and outer world.*

What seemed even more significant was that I could remember the experience of LSD inebriation in every detail. This could only mean that the conscious recording function was not interrupted, even in the climax of the LSD experience, despite the profound breakdown of the normal worldview. For the entire duration of the experiment, I had even been

aware of participating in an experiment, but despite this recognition of my condition, I could not, with every exertion of my will, shake off the LSD world. Everything was experienced as completely real, as alarming reality; alarming, because the picture of the other, familiar everyday reality was still fully preserved in the memory for comparison.

Another surprising aspect of LSD was its ability to produce such a far-reaching, powerful state of inebriation without leaving a hangover. Quite the contrary, on the day after the LSD experiment I felt myself to be, as already described, in excellent physical and mental condition”.⁵ Hofmann knew that LSD would have great use in pharmacology, neurology, and psychiatry, but failed to foresee the uses of LSD as an inebriant amongst the drug scene.

The New Science of LSD Therapy

LSD medical research, until recently, was at a halt for 40 years. In 2007, a German scientist named Dr. Peter Gasser submitted a protocol that would guide the study of LSD-assisted psychotherapy in persons suffering from anxiety associated with advanced stage life-threatening diseases. The objective of the study was:

1. “To determine if LSD can be safely administered to participants with anxiety associated with advanced-stage illnesses, without serious adverse events related to the investigational product.
2. To measure if participants receiving LSD-assisted psychotherapy will experience dose-dependent decreases in anxiety after each experimental session and at two months after the second LSD session.
3. To measure if participants receiving LSD-assisted psychotherapy will experience dose-dependent improvements in quality of life extending to the follow-ups two months after the second LSD session.”³

Study visits were conducted from 2008 to 2012 and the findings of the study were later published in the article, “Safety and Efficacy of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide-Assisted Psychotherapy for Anxiety Associated With Life-threatening Diseases”, which was released in 2014. For the trial, patients stopped taking any anti-anxiety or antidepressant medications and avoided alcohol for 24 hours prior to the study. One group was administered 200 micrograms of LSD and the other group 20 micrograms (a barely noticeable dosing). Each individual underwent two dosing sessions separated by a few weeks and were assisted by therapists, who walked them through their experiences with the psychedelic’s effects. No prolonged negative effects of the drug were reported. The low-dosage group reported that their anxiety got worse, while the higher-dosage group said their drug-therapy sessions had profound positive effects on their anxiety; a clinical indication that psychedelic therapy may have potential as a medical treatment. In follow-up sessions, patients reported their reduced anxiety levels were maintained. The findings of this controlled study showed that LSD paired with psychotherapy alleviated end-of-life anxiety in patients suffering from terminal illnesses. The transcripts

of the results of the study are as follows:

“A double-blind, randomized, active placebo-controlled pilot study was conducted to examine safety and efficacy of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)-assisted psychotherapy in 12 patients with anxiety associated with life threatening diseases. Treatment included drug-free psychotherapy sessions supplemented by two LSD-assisted psychotherapy sessions 2 to 3 weeks apart. The participants received either 200 Kg of LSD (n = 8) or 20 Kg of LSD with an open-label crossover to 200 Kg of LSD after the initial blinded treatment was unmasked (n = 4). At the 2-month follow-up, positive trends were found via the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) in reductions in trait anxiety ($p = 0.033$) with an effect size of 1.1, and state anxiety was significantly reduced ($p = 0.021$) with an effect size of 1.2, with no acute or chronic adverse effects persisting beyond 1 day after treatment or treatment-related serious adverse events. STAI reductions were sustained for 12 months. These results indicate that when administered safely in a methodologically rigorous medically supervised psychotherapeutic setting, LSD can reduce anxiety, suggesting that larger controlled studies are warranted.”³

A 50 year old terminally ill patient named Peter, who was involved in the study, recounts his experience, “I had what you would call a mystical experience, I guess, lasting for some time, and the major part was pure distress at all these memories I had successfully forgotten for decades. These painful feelings, regrets, this fear of death.” According to Dr. Gasser, all of his patients had felt better and relieved, in terms of their anxiety, about their fear of death since they were all terminally ill patients. Dr. Gasser



The Visitor WEIYI RINGO YANG

reported that this improvement on the patient’s outlook, in regards to their limited time in this world, improved for at least twelve months after the therapy.

As the FDA continues to loosen the restrictions on researching the therapeutic possibilities of psychedelics, more and more studies are emerging from major university medical research communities. These studies are not only conducting research with LSD assisted therapy, but also MDMA, psilocybin (the active ingredient in magic mushrooms), marijuana, and ketamine. These studies are all being aimed to treat diseases such as anxiety, depression, alcoholism, OCD, and PTSD. Hopefully the stigma that has haunted psychedelic research will finally be at rest now that we have a new generation of scientists who are not afraid to unveil the mysterious medicinal benefit these plants contain. If it wasn’t for Albert Hofmann’s discovery of the effects of the drug in 1943, LSD-25 might still be sitting on a shelf in Switzerland at Sandoz Laboratories today.

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