

Timothy Leary:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Leary, Timothy, 1920-1996
Title	Timothy Leary Collection
Dates:	1963-1973
Extent:	.5 box
Abstract:	This collection includes correspondence, manuscript fragments, and legal documents related primarily to the publication of Leary's writings, especially <i>The Politics of Ecstasy</i> . Other items include several letters written in Algeria and Switzerland after Leary's 1970 escape from prison.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-02416
Language:	English.
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchase, 1983 (R9973)
Processed by	Elizabeth A. Lanthier-Welch, 1997
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Timothy Francis Leary was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, on October 22, 1920, and grew up as an only child in an Irish Catholic household. His father Timothy was a U.S. Army captain and his mother Abigail was a teacher.

Leary attended a number of educational institutions, including Holy Cross College (1938-39), the U.S. Military Academy (1940-41), and the University of Alabama where he earned his B.A. in 1943 while serving in the Army. He received his M.S. degree from Washington State University in 1946. Leary continued his intellectual pursuits at the University of California at Berkeley where, in 1950, he received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

After graduating from Berkeley, Leary stayed on as an assistant professor from 1950-55. He left this position to become director of clinical research and psychology at the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Oakland, California, where he stayed until 1958. In 1959, Leary was appointed as a lecturer at Harvard University. During this period Leary introduced psilocybin to a number of the Beats, including Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, Peter Orlovsky, and Williams S. Burroughs. He also administered psilocybin to colleagues, students, and inmate volunteers finding that it was useful in the treatment of alcoholism, schizophrenia, and other psycho-physiological disorders. By 1963 Harvard, faced with controversy as a result of Leary's activities, dismissed him along with his colleague Richard Alpert.

After their dismissal from Harvard, Leary and Alpert founded a privately-financed research group in Mexico, called the International Foundation for Internal Freedom, to study and promote the use of LSD. However, the Mexican government soon closed them down and in August 1963, Leary moved his operation to a donated four-thousand-acre estate with a sixty-four-room mansion in Millbrook, near Poughkeepsie, New York.

From as early as 1962 until 1970, Leary had been arrested and incarcerated on drug-related charges in Mexico, British West Indies, Texas, New York, Michigan, and California. In April 1966, the Millbrook estate was raided by local police, led by G. Gordon Liddy then of the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department, and four people, including Leary, were arrested for possession of drugs. Following his arrest, Leary, to avoid constant harassment, founded the League for Spiritual Discovery which was a religious movement that sought constitutional protection for the right to take LSD as a sacramental substance.

In 1970, after being sentenced to ten years imprisonment in California to be served consecutively, not concurrently, with a Texas sentence, Leary was immediately sent to a minimum security prison near San Luis Obispo, California. However, by mid-September, Leary's third wife Rosemary, in conjunction with the radical Weathermen group, arranged for Leary's escape from prison. He was spirited to Algeria with his wife by the Weathermen, where they were granted political asylum; he details this experience in his book *Jailnotes* (1970). He and Rosemary took up residence in Algiers with fugitive Eldridge Cleaver and Cleaver's exiled Black Panther Party. By February 1971, a rift had developed between Cleaver and Leary, supposedly engineered

by the FBI, so Leary left Algeria for Switzerland where he spent eighteen months before eventually arriving in Afghanistan.

In early 1973, Leary was kidnapped at gun point in Afghanistan by American agents. They brought him to California where he was found guilty of prison escape. He spent three more years in twenty nine jails in California's prison system. He was released on April 21, 1976, by Governor Jerry Brown.

Once Leary was released from prison in 1976, he spent most of his time at his home in Beverly Hills and on the campus lecture circuit where he took on a new role as a promoter of space colonization and life extension through scientific research to retard the aging process. Leary's activities during the late seventies included the formation of a cooperative to colonize space called Starseed and in 1982 he toured on a debate circuit with his former nemesis G. Gordon Liddy.

In 1995 Leary learned that he had inoperable cancer. He died amongst friends on May 31, 1996 at his home in Beverly Hills. On April 22, 1997, Leary's ashes were launched into space along with the ashes of 23 others, from Grand Canary Island off the Moroccan coast.

Ditlea, Steve. "Leary's Final Trip, the Web, Realized Multimedia Vision," *The New York Times CyberTimes*, <http://www.nytimes.com> (originally published 1996 June 1).

Dupuis, Diane L. and Ross, Jean W. "Timothy (Francis) Leary," *Contemporary Authors*, v.107, p.278-84.

Lee, Martin A. and Shlain, Bruce. "Timothy Leary," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v.16, p.344-51.

Mansnerus, Laura. "Timothy Leary Takes Final Trip: 'Turn-On, Tune-In, Drop-Out' Guru Dies at 75," *The New York Times CyberTimes*, <http://www.nytimes.com> (originally published 1996 June 1).

Simons, Marlise. "Maspalomas Journal; A Final Turn-On Lifts Timothy Leary Off," *The New York Times*, 1997 April 22, Section A, p.1, column 2.

Timothy Leary's World Wide Web site: <http://www.leary.com>

Scope and Contents

The Timothy Leary Collection documents Leary's relationship with his editor William Targ as it developed around *The Politics of Ecstasy*, Leary's editing style as illustrated by his annotation of previously published articles and lectures he was preparing as chapters in *The Politics of Ecstasy*, and Leary's attitudes towards a variety of issues, including the use of psychedelic drugs as a means for expanding one's consciousness, articulated through interviews.

The collection consists of correspondence, manuscripts, printed material, galley proofs, illustrations, notes, and contracts relating to Leary's publication *The Politics of Ecstasy* in addition to other works dating 1963-1973. The material is organized into two series: I. *The Politics of Ecstasy*, 1967-68, 1971 (.25 box) which includes correspondence, published articles, notes, unpublished remarks, illustrations, a press release, and a contract all related to Leary's publication of the same name, and II. Other Writings, Correspondence, and Interviews, 1963-64, 1966, 1971, 1973 (.25 box) which includes galley proofs, published and unpublished works, interviews with Leary, correspondence, and contracts related to works other than *The Politics of Ecstasy*.

Correspondence in *The Politics of Ecstasy* series is arranged into outgoing and incoming files; all outgoing correspondence was authored by Leary and all incoming correspondence was authored by Leary's editor William Targ. Manuscript material includes annotated chapters, working chapter titles, unpublished remarks by Allen Ginsberg, and illustrations with captions supplied by Leary. The chapter numbers supplied by Leary do not reflect the numbering used in the final version of the *Politics of Ecstasy*. These chapters include articles, lectures, and interviews Leary reworked for his book. A photocopy of unpublished prefatory remarks by Allen Ginsberg, dated September 12, 1968, were too late for use in *The Politics of Ecstasy* according to a comment written in pencil on the first page in an unidentified hand; these remarks are annotated and signed by Ginsberg (also photocopied). The illustrations are annotated by Leary and appear as part of Chapter 1, "The Seven Tongues of God." The G.P. Putnam's Sons press release contains quotes about *The Politics of Ecstasy* supplied by Viva and Allen Ginsberg, and the contract is between Leary and G.P. Putnam's Sons for Ex-Static Essays, later renamed *The Politics of Ecstasy*.

The Other Writings, Correspondence, and Interviews series contains materials related to other works Leary was involved with, correspondence unrelated to *The Politics of Ecstasy*, published interviews in which Leary was the interviewee, and contracts. Works include the galley proofs for *Confessions of a Hope Fiend*, an annotated introduction and subject headings for David Solomon's *LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug*, a copy of an article Leary wrote with Walter Houston Clark, and a typed manuscript titled "Footnote for Chapter 1" which outlines the legal troubles that Leary, his third wife Rosemary, and his daughter Susan and son Jack from his first marriage, experienced beginning in 1962. Correspondence contains one letter Leary wrote from Millbrook, New York while heading up the Castalia Foundation, and several letters from Algeria and Switzerland after his escape from prison in California. Interviews with Leary include a 1966 interview which appeared in *Ave Maria*. This interview explores Leary's formation of a new religion, the League for Spiritual Discovery (L.S.D.), the faith's credo "turn on, tune in, drop out," and the issues involved in using LSD as a sacrament. Also included is a fragment of an interview, from an unidentified source, which took place at the Millbrook estate; according to the foreword, the house was closed because Leary and members of the League for Spiritual Discovery were living in the woods and a portion of this interview seeks to clarify why Leary, and others, made this lifestyle choice. The two contracts seek permission to reprint Leary's works in two publications by David Solomon.

Index Terms

Document Types

Galley proofs.

Interviews.

Legal documents.

Series I. *Politics of Ecstasy*, 1967-68, 1971

Correspondence

Outgoing, 1967-68, 1971, n.d.

box 1 folder 1

Incoming, 1968

folder 2

Manuscript Material, 1968, n.d.

Chapters, incomplete, 1968

box 1 folder 3

Chapter titles, n.d.

folder 4

Unpublished prefatory remarks by Allen Ginsberg, photocopy, 1968

folder 5

Illustrations with autograph annotations and captions, n.d.

folder 6

Press release

folder 7

Contract

folder 8

Series II. Other Writings, Correspondence, and Interviews, 1963-73, n.d.

<i>Confessions of a Hope Fiend</i> , galley proofs with photocopied editor's note, 1973	box 1 folder 9
Annotated introduction and subject headings for David Solomon's <i>LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug</i> , 1964	folder 10
"Religious Implications of Consciousness Expanding Drugs" with Walter Houston Clark in <i>Religious Education</i> , 1963	
Footnote for Chapter 1 [unidentified work], n.d.	
Outgoing Correspondence, 1964, 1971, n.d.	folder 11
Interviews, 1966, n.d.	
"God and Timothy Leary" by Joe O'Sullivan in <i>Ave Maria</i> , 1966	box 1 folder 12
Unidentified fragment, n.d.	
Contracts, 1964	folder 13