

# Summer 2004

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## Letter from Rick Doblin

### MAPS president

Ten postage stamps for general operating expenses and \$250,000 for MDMA research—these were the endpoints in the range of donations that MAPS has received within the last several months. Despite the vast disparity in amount, each donation represents a similarly profound investment of hopes in MAPS and its mission.

The stamps were donated by Harry Eldridge, a federal prisoner who gave generously of what very little he has to help MAPS in “lifting the veil of fear” surrounding illegal drugs. Though small in financial terms, this gift brought huge inspiration to MAPS staff. The \$250,000 was donated by Peter Lewis, a philanthropist whose vision of a better world includes legal access to the healing potential, and freedom of thought and experience, provided by the wise use of marijuana and psychedelics. Peter’s donation brings us halfway to our goal of \$500,000 for our MDMA research agenda for the next two years.

It’s a new world for MAPS, in that our castles in the air now have more solid foundations underneath. Peter’s donation was in response to MAPS’ success in obtaining, after 18 years of struggle, all the necessary approvals for our first U.S. study of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, in this case for the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (see page 3). My request to Peter also mentioned MAPS’ growing ability to counteract anti-drug propaganda by replacing fear with facts. By way of example, we hope you saw Peter Jennings’ remarkably balanced April 1, 2004, ABC prime-time documentary on Ecstasy for which MAPS provided information and contacts throughout the production process (see page 34).

MAPS stands on the verge of a series of additional historic accomplishments. In Israel, the Ministry of Health is seriously considering MAPS’ proposed pilot study of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in subjects with war- and terrorism-related PTSD (see page 5). MAPS is making progress in designing a study to investigate the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in advanced cancer patients with anxiety, and has received a \$50,000 donation from David and Marsha Weil for a study of the use of LSD and psilocybin in treating cluster headaches (see page 6). We are seeking approval to conduct these last two studies at Harvard, where many people think psychedelic research went off the track with Timothy Leary. There has been no psychedelic research at Harvard since 1965 and virtually no clinical research with LSD anywhere in the world since the 1970s.

MAPS is still seeking to start the first privately funded facility to produce marijuana for government-approved clinical research in over fifty years, and to continue research with marijuana vaporizers. At present, both efforts are being obstructed by NIDA and the DEA (see page 12).

MAPS is benefiting from, and contributing to, a seismic cultural shift away from the simplistic, fundamentalist policies of “Just Say No” toward a more nuanced view of drugs. In this view, the relationship between the person and the drug is the key factor in determining the mix of costs and benefits. Drugs are not inherently good or evil, neither magic bullets nor a one-way ticket to depravity.

In order for MAPS to navigate successfully through these turbulent times, we must become the trusted experts on both the risks and benefits of the drugs we research. We must not fall prey to the temptation to be as willfully blind about the risks as the drug warriors are about the benefits. MAPS’ support of Dr. Halpern’s methodologically rigorous study of the neurocognitive consequences of Ecstasy use is an example of research MAPS is proud to have helped start. Similarly, MAPS’ outcome study of the use of ibogaine in the treatment of substance abuse acknowledges the reality of drug abuse while investigating the therapeutic potential of a psychedelic drug (see page 7).

There are many struggles ahead. FDA’s disturbing refusal to approve over-the-counter sales of the morning after pill/contraceptive (Plan B) is a rare example of FDA seemingly placing politics over scientific analysis. We are prepared for the path before us to include the mires of bureaucratic delay and the thorns and brambles of political opposition. Nevertheless, with the ongoing support of a growing MAPS community, we can successfully work together to blaze a trail towards a healthier world.

—  **Rick Doblin, MAPS President**

# MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy in the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

## a fourth update on the approval process and first report on study progress

by Michael Mithoefer, MD • [mmmit@bellsouth.net](mailto:mmmit@bellsouth.net)



**It has been  
a long  
process  
since  
I submitted  
my DEA  
application  
in early  
July 2002,  
but  
persistence  
finally  
paid off.**

I said in my last update that one of these times my optimistic prediction was going to be right, and this is the time! I received my Schedule I Research Registration from the DEA on February 24, and have since received the MDMA. We have already created the MDMA and placebo capsules, as you may have seen on the ABC's *World News Tonight* feature story on our study that ran on the first of April. The DEA provided the final approval we needed to start the study. The other approvals have been the FDA approval (received in November 2001), the IRB approval (received in September 2003), and the South Carolina Drug Control approval (received in November 2003).

It has been a long process since I submitted my DEA application in early July 2002, but persistence finally paid off. Why it took so long for the DEA to process my application is not a trivial question. Whether from inefficiency or motivated by some agenda, inappropriate bureaucratic delay of legitimate research constitutes a serious interference with scientific inquiry. And this inquiry is, after all, directed at potentially relieving human suffering. In a free society, we should ideally be able to get an answer to this question. We may never have that answer; however, the regulatory system did work in the end, and for that I am grateful.

We have sent out letters to psychiatrists, psychologists, and other therapists in the area asking them to refer patients whom they think may qualify for the study. We have also had several inquiries from people who live in other areas and are willing to travel to Charleston to participate. We are finally under way!

Many of the final details have been completed. We have: assembled all the emergency drugs and medical equipment we need; furnished the room the subjects will stay in to make it a comfortable, welcoming, and aesthetically-pleasing place to be after an MDMA session; met with and trained the nurses who will act as attendants during the night after the experimental sessions; met with and oriented the emergency physicians and nurses who will be on duty for the first five hours of each session; and we will be meeting again with Amy Emerson who, as a volunteer, has helped us design the more than 50 different forms necessary for record keeping, and who will be coming to town periodically to monitor our compliance with documentation.

We've had a good response to our recruitment letters and from people who are either self-referred or referred by therapists from other parts of the country after hearing about the study in the media. As of this writing, we've done phone screening on over twenty people, many of whom are interested in participating.

## THE FIRST SUBJECTS

Two subjects have been through the full medical and psychological screening process and have been enrolled in the study. They have both had their first experimental session during which they received either MDMA or placebo, with me and Annie present for eight hours. They subsequently had outcome measures repeated by the study psychologist (who is not involved in any of the treatment sessions and does not see the records from those sessions) four to five days after their experimental sessions. They also have been coming for weekly follow-up non-drug psychotherapy sessions with us as required in the protocol. Their second experimental session, during which they will receive the same substance they received in the first session (MDMA or placebo), will have occurred by the time this *Bulletin* is published. We have a third subject tentatively scheduled to start later this month, and several others who may participate but cannot start yet for various logistical reasons.

Because this is a double-blind study and because it is far too early to draw any conclusions from the data, I have nothing to report about the specifics of the sessions or the results of outcome measures. I can say that things are going smoothly with the study, and that the Data Safety Monitoring Board (two psychiatrists and a psychologist not otherwise involved in the study) met on April 28 to review the records of the first two subjects. The Board did not have any concerns about the safety of the subjects.

I am very pleased with the staff we've been able to assemble. The nurses are all people with high levels of compassion and experience. In particular, Amy has worked incredibly hard to bring her skills and experience from the pharmaceutical industry to bear on our study. Her participation has resulted in a level of documentation and monitoring exceeding that of much of the research done in academic centers. I have to admit that the number of forms boggled my mind at first, but now that we've gotten the hang of it they're extremely useful. And, of course, the MAPS staff is as tireless, dedicated, and effective as ever. I also want to acknowledge the people who volunteer for the study. I appreciate their willingness to go through the rigors of the evaluation process and all the other visits, knowing that it may or may not be helpful to them personally. Several have expressed their desire to contribute to research that could possibly help other people with PTSD in the future, regardless of the results for themselves.

Annie and I are very glad finally to have gotten started. There's still plenty of paper work and many logistical challenges involved, but now it all pertains to the experiences of actual people who are working to heal. The opportunity to support their efforts and to objectively evaluate a tool that may help us do that more effectively is a great privilege. •

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# MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy in the Treatment of War- and Terrorism-Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

## the Israeli pilot study update

by Rick Doblin, PhD • rick@maps.org

Shortly after MAPS' U.S. MDMA/PTSD study was fully approved and underway, I scheduled several meetings with Israeli Ministry of Health officials to work on starting in earnest the protocol design and approval process for MAPS' proposed Israeli MDMA/PTSD pilot study, for which MAPS has budgeted \$75,000.

On April 30, 2004, I met with Israeli psychiatrist Dr. Moshe Kotler, the Principal Investigator of MAPS' proposed study which will include subjects with war- and terrorism-related PTSD (subjects with war-related PTSD are excluded from the U.S. MDMA/PTSD study). Dr. Kotler has previously been the chief psychiatrist for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Dr. Kotler indicated a strong interest in seeing the study conducted and suggested we use a dose-escalation design. He stressed the need for patience and outlined a timetable that will hopefully result in the study being reviewed and approved by an IRB (called Helsinki Committees in Israel) by fall 2004. Review and approval by the Ministry of Health would occur sometime after that.

On May 2, 2004, I met in Jerusalem with Ministry of Health official Dr. Miki Reiter, who also expressed support for the study. We discussed practical issues such as obtaining an Israeli translation of our primary outcome measure, the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS).

While in Jerusalem, I also had the very moving experience of meeting with an Israeli dentist who contacted MAPS in April 2004 after he conducted an Internet search on MDMA and PTSD. He had PTSD as a result of a suicide bombing in a cafe in March 2002 that killed eleven people. He has permanent hearing damage but no other serious persisting physical injuries.

After the bombing, he had been treated for PTSD with psychotherapy and SSRI drugs with limited benefits. He subsequently used Ecstasy (MDMA) in a recreational setting and found that it helped reduce his PTSD symptoms. He spoke to his therapists about this and they had never heard of MDMA being used to treat PTSD.

I found him to be sincere and emotionally open. He was able to laugh at times and talk clearly about what happened and about the consequences in terms of nightmares, hyperarousal, and other symptoms. When we were getting ready to leave our meeting place, he asked if I had realized that it was the same cafe in which the explosion took place. I hadn't and immediately saw the entire conversation in a more vivid light.

On a walk to his office a few blocks away, he pointed out where a more recent explosion had taken place in a bus, killing several people. He heard the explosion, rushed out and was among the first on the scene. Due to his medical training, he decided to go inside the bus. He carried people out and, until the rescue squad arrived, helped provide medical care to some of the people still alive inside. He was initially retraumatized but shortly afterwards felt that helping others and being in control of his actions, as contrasted to his loss of control over his personal safety when he was in the cafe explosion, was an important part of his healing process.

I returned home from Israel with renewed hope for the eventual approval of MAPS' Israeli MDMA/PTSD pilot study. I felt a greater sense of the contribution that this research can make toward developing new methods to heal the terrible trauma of war- and terrorism-related PTSD suffered by people on all sides of numerous violent conflicts around the world. •

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# MDMA for Cancer-Related Anxiety and LSD/Psilocybin for Cluster Headaches

## proposed new research

by **John Halpern, MD**, Instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School • [john\\_halpern@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:john_halpern@hms.harvard.edu)



**Most people  
know of tension  
headache  
and migraine;  
cluster headache  
is more rare  
and can be  
extremely severe,  
lasting weeks  
to even months  
at a time!**

Progress to-date is bringing us closer to realizing active clinical research with MDMA, psilocybin and LSD to be sponsored by MAPS. If all continues according to plan, 2004 will bring us to that exciting turning-point, and I very much look forward to offering MAPS members a more detailed report in the ensuing months.

MAPS support has enabled us to draft and complete a protocol for exploring whether MDMA is clinically beneficial to subjects with advanced cancer who are suffering from anxiety associated with their diagnosis. As currently designed, eight subjects will receive MDMA-assisted psychotherapy and four will receive placebo. Final revisions to this first pilot Phase II protocol are currently being made; we hope to have submitted the protocol for its first IRB review by June. Our ambition is to expand this research work beyond the initially proposed small-N pilot study, but first we need to refine our therapeutic approach, determine appropriate dosing, and gather preliminary information about the safety and efficacy of our treatment in advanced cancer patients.

Our other exciting news to report is the addition of a post-doc fellow in our laboratory: Dr. Andrew Sewell, who will start work this fall. Dr. Sewell is one of only about 100 physicians in the U.S. to complete a dual-residency in psychiatry and neurology. Dr. Sewell and I have an important opportunity to explore whether or not LSD and/or psilocybin offers prophylaxis against cluster headache. There are some medications that do help stop this type of headaches, but they are not fully effective for many and there are no medications on the market that can actually prevent the cycling course of cluster-type headaches. Most people know of tension headache and migraine; cluster headache is more rare and can be extremely severe, lasting weeks to even months at a time! Recently, MAPS was approached by a cluster headache patient advocate who has collected anecdotal information on dozens of individuals reporting very positive results from their personal experimentation with LSD and psilocybin. Furthermore, MAPS has received a donation of \$50,000 from David and Marsha Weil toward clinical research into this reported treatment.

Over this summer, Dr. Sewell and I plan to write up a case series for publication in a medical journal to call greater attention to what these individuals report. We plan to start the protocol design and drafting process for a study on cluster headache later this fall, as well. Success on all these fronts will mean that we are finally able to perform clinical research that will investigate, over a five to ten year period, whether MDMA, LSD, and psilocybin have an important and credible role in the current pharmacopeia for the specific issues that we are investigating.

While officially no research has been approved yet at my institution, these projects are actively in the works. Especially with your help, we could soon convert these efforts into clinical research. On behalf of everyone involved in these projects, I cannot thank the MAPS membership enough. •

# Developing An Outcome Study of ibogaine therapy

by Valerie Mojeiko • [valerie@maps.org](mailto:valerie@maps.org)

In conjunction with the Iboga Therapy House and the Ibogaine Association, MAPS is creating a protocol for a new study on the efficacy of ibogaine therapy in the treatment of drug addiction. In addition to membership and sales coordination, my duties at MAPS have grown to include actual psychedelic research, as I begin this project with fellow researchers: program director Randy Hencken and follow-up coordinator Jill Stammer from the Ibogaine Association, and director Sandra Karpetas and follow-up coordinator Ainsley Krone from the Iboga Therapy House. For the first phase of this study, I traveled to both of these clinics in January of 2004 to observe their operations, become acquainted with clinic staff, and coordinate the development of a follow-up protocol to gather data on the outcomes of these treatments. Ibogaine is legal in Canada and Mexico, where these clinics are located, although it is scheduled in the U.S.

## IBOGAINE ASSOCIATION

Randy Hencken manages the Ibogaine Association from an office in San Diego. The clients, who are mostly from the U.S., meet with Randy before they are bused to the clinic itself, located in a beautiful gated community overlooking a rocky beach twenty minutes south of the U.S./Mexico border, near Rosarito. Caretakers often take clients for walks on the beach during their recovery stay. Just down the street from the clinic is the residence of Dr. Martin Polanco, who administers the ibogaine treatment and remains on call throughout the client's three-to seven-day stay. The clinic houses the patients during their recovery stay, after they've received the ibogaine treatment at a local hospital.

Most treatments at the Ibogaine Association cost \$3,300, except for treatments of methadone addicts and physically-dependent alcoholics, which take longer and cost \$4,500. The clinic primarily treats people with opiate addictions, but has also seen clients with alcohol and stimulant problems. While ibogaine therapy is not specifically approved in Mexico, Mexican law allows



The ocean is just a short walk down a cobblestone road  
from the Ibogaine Association's clinic.





The staff's Feng Shui mastery is apparent in their transformation of a sterile apartment on the eighth floor of an upscale condo building into a peaceful spiritual retreat, complete with psychedelic art...

Dr. Polanco to use this experimental procedure to treat the life-threatening condition of substance addiction.

#### **IBOGA THERAPY HOUSE**

The Iboga Therapy House (ITH) is a hidden sanctuary amid the hustle of downtown Vancouver. The staff's Feng Shui mastery is apparent in their transformation of a sterile apartment on the eighth floor of an upscale condo building into a peaceful spiritual retreat, complete with psychedelic art (like that shown above), African masks, and other wall-hangings. The apartment is temporary; they are looking to move to a more natural setting—a larger house with a garden away from the noise of the city—hopefully in the next few months.

Abusers of a more even distribution of substances—opiates, cocaine/crack, alcohol, methamphetamine—are seen at the ITH, where there is no fee charged for treatment. Rather, the ITH operates solely on charitable contributions from *Cannabis* seed entrepreneur and marijuana activist Marc Emery. The clinic is currently seeking funding from additional donors. The ITH is not a licensed facility, as a license is not necessary in Canada.

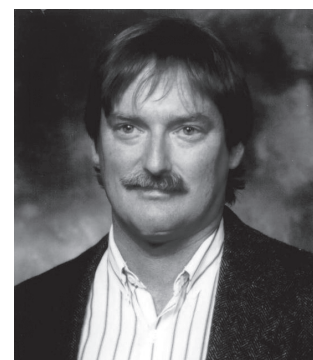
Both clinics primarily administer ibogaine for the treatment of substance

addiction, though a few clients have come in for personal or spiritual growth. For the purposes of this study, we will only be tracking the people who come in for substance-related problems. We will study clients who complete treatment sequentially at either of the clinics. The protocol includes a one-year series of basic follow-up questionnaires with surveys on substance use patterns, quality of life, and mental health, as well as an initial assessment of the depth of experience (using the *Addiction Severity Index*, *Beck Depression Inventory*, *Beck Anxiety Inventory*, and the *Peak Experience Profile*). To verify information, we will periodically check-in with a significant other associated with the client. The end product will be a formal research paper to submit for publication in a scientific journal.

#### **BREAKING NEW GROUND FOR SCIENCE**

This will be the first scientific study of the efficacy of ibogaine therapy. Ibogaine offers a unique inroad to studying the therapeutic applications of psychedelics for two reasons: it is relatively obscure and lacks the stigma of other more recognized psychedelics, and it has the potential to gain approval from both opponents and sympathizers of psychedelic therapy because of its application as a treatment for drug addiction. Another similar study is being conducted by a research team at the Free University of Amsterdam, using an online questionnaire to reach those who have had ibogaine treatment, at [www.med.vu.nl/ibogaine](http://www.med.vu.nl/ibogaine). Hopefully both studies will generate new data and new questions about the efficacy of ibogaine therapy.

Ibogaine is acceptable as a treatment for drug addiction because of its pharmacological mechanisms of relieving opiate withdrawal. What makes it exceptional is that this efficacy is related in part to its potential to catalyze a powerful mental experience. In this way, ibogaine therapy may create a paradigm shift that would allow mainstream medicine to consider altered states as therapeutic opportunities. We hope that this project will inspire more research into the psychotherapeutic uses of ibogaine, as well as research into the similar applications of other psychedelics. •



# A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Values, Beliefs, and Sense of Coherence in Psychedelic Drug Users

summary of findings from a MAPS-funded study

by Michael Lerner, BA • [micha1@bigpond.com](mailto:micha1@bigpond.com)

and Michael Lyvers, PhD • [mlyvers@staff.bond.edu.au](mailto:mlyvers@staff.bond.edu.au)

## INTRODUCTION

Past research has linked the use of psychedelic substances to profound spiritual change (Pahnke 1966; Doblin 1991). In a high-dose psychedelic experience, users may claim to encounter God, to merge with the cosmos or undergo death and rebirth. Reports from many users resemble Buddhist or Hindu descriptions of self-realization, *satori* or enlightenment. This mystical experience is said to have a universal aspect that transcends cultural context. If psychedelic drugs can produce mystical experiences, then the values and beliefs of psychedelic users should differ in crucial respects from those expressed by users of other illicit drugs such as cocaine or heroin. Further, the values and beliefs of psychedelic users should be similar across different cultures. The present study tested these hypotheses by examining different types of drug users in Israel and Australia, specifically comparing the values, beliefs and sense of coherence (an index of physical and mental well-being) of users of psychedelic drugs with users of non-psychedelic illicit drugs (marijuana, heroin, cocaine, etc.), and with non-users of illegal drugs.

## METHOD & SUBJECTS

Participants were considered to have had a psychedelic experience if they reported at least one high-dose "trip" or "overwhelming experience" on a psychedelic drug. A total of 183 subjects participated in the study. Participants included 41 Israeli psychedelic users and 47 Australian psychedelic users (a total of 88). Other illegal drug users included 18 Israelis and 11 Australians (a total of 29). The non-users of illegal drugs were 51 Israelis and 15 Australians (a total of 66). Groups were divided on the basis of the *Drug Use Questionnaire* (DUQ) responses indicating history of substance use.

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## MATERIALS

*Life Values Inventory* (LVI; Crace & Brown 1996): measures 14 core life values, or global orientations that influence behavior and decision making.

*Sense of Coherence Scale* (SOCs; Antonovsky 1987): measures the health-related ability to cope with life stress in terms of the cognitive dimensions of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness.

*Mystical Beliefs Questionnaire* (MBQ; derived from Pahnke 1966): uses 4-point Likert scales (a measurement method that allows answers ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") to rate mystical beliefs such as a universal soul, a spiritual or transcendental dimension to existence, and oneness with God, nature, and the universe.

*Emotional Empathic Tendency Scale* (EETS; Mehrabian 1994): measures one's ability to feel and identify another's emotions.

*Drug Use Questionnaire*: assesses use of illegal drugs such as marijuana, MDMA, cocaine, amphetamine, heroin/opiates, and psychedelics (LSD, mushrooms/psilocybin, peyote/mescaline, etc.) as well as demographic information.

## PROCEDURE

Participants were recruited by notices posted in areas frequented by drug users, and by word of mouth (snowball method), in Israel (Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem) and Australia (Nimbin, Byron Bay, Melbourne, Gold Coast). Interested drug users contacted the researchers, who sent them a questionnaire packet and a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of the completed forms. Any incomplete forms that were received were discarded.



## DISCUSSION

Findings were largely consistent with predictions. The main finding was that regardless of culture of origin, users of psychedelic drugs had higher scores than users of other illegal drugs and non-users of illegal drugs on the *MBQ*, a measure of mystical beliefs such as “oneness with the cosmos” and a belief in the “divine within.” Effect size in this analysis was high (.46) suggesting a strong degree of association between psychedelic use and *MBQ* scores. These results are consistent with the findings of Pahnke (1966) and Doblin (1991) of a profound and lasting spiritual influence of the psychedelic experience. Users of psychedelics also scored higher than other illegal drug users on life values thought to be associated with spiritual or mystical beliefs, such as concern for environment, concern for others, creativity, and spirituality. In addition, psychedelic drug users scored significantly lower on financial prosperity than both control groups. Surprisingly, none of the measures differentiated Israelis from Australians.

Additional support was reflected in the empathy questionnaire (*EETS*) findings that psychedelic drug users reported significantly higher levels of empathetic tendencies than both other illegal drug users and non-users of illegal drugs. Interestingly, data analysis revealed that both illegal drug user groups were more empathetic than non-users of illegal drugs. The present results suggest that the effects of psychedelic drugs may be more important than the cultural differences between Israel and Australia in influencing the life values and spiritual beliefs of drug users in these two countries. Contemporary research has suggested that psychedelic experiences can modify one’s worldview, produce long-lasting changes in personal beliefs, and can be responsible for personal transformations that alter the future conduct of one’s life (Shanon 2003).

If the psychedelic mystical experience does induce lasting positive changes in attitude and behavior, it was hypothesized that differences would be evident in the psychedelic drug user’s subjective sense of health and well-being. Evidence of such differences was obtained in the present study. A score on the *SOC* scale is assumed by Antonovsky (1987) to reflect one’s position on the health-illness continuum in terms of both physical and mental health. The higher a subjects’ *SOC* score, the more available are resources to deal with life stressors that can affect our physical and mental health (Antonovsky 1987). Psychedelic users were characterized by significantly higher levels of meaningfulness (one of the three *SOC* sub-scales) than both the other illegal drug user group and

the non-user group. In addition, psychedelic drug users exhibited significantly higher scores on manageability and on the total scale than the other illegal drug user group. The findings suggest that psychedelic users perceive life as more meaningful than other illegal drug users and non-users of illegal drugs, consistent with the assumption of a profound mystical experience.

There are two competing explanations for such profound differences in life values and beliefs between groups in the present study. It is possible that the higher levels of spirituality and associated values in psychedelic

the effects of  
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may be more important  
than the cultural  
differences between  
Israel and Australia  
in influencing the life  
values and spiritual  
beliefs of drug users  
in these two countries.

users were due to inherent pre-drug spiritual tendencies. If psychedelic users were more spiritually inclined to begin with (that is, pre-drug), then psychedelic drug use may be seen as a by-product of such an orientation rather than the cause of a change in values. Alternatively, previous experimental findings suggest that the psychedelic experience itself can reshape values and beliefs (Doblin 1991; Pahnke 1966; Shanon 2003). According to this view, such changes in values and beliefs stem from a subjectively real, vivid, and transformative experience. The “God within,” cosmic unity, and other concepts associated with such states of mind are often dismissed as sub-cultural slogans that have nothing to do with reality. Yet the similarity in values and understanding between people from vastly different backgrounds who have entered extreme altered states of consciousness is often striking, whether they are yogis, psychedelic drug users, Zen Buddhists, or mystics

from different religions. Different metaphors are used to describe what may be the same inner journey of the soul. Accordingly, many religious figures and psychedelic seekers who experienced those realms of consciousness may speak the same inner truth. •

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# Paranormal Experiences and Psychoactive Drugs

## a literature review project

by **David Luke** • david.luke@northampton.ac.uk



For thousands of years shamanic cultures have worked with plant entheogens to activate psychic capabilities. These sacred archaic traditions have consistently used psychoactive compounds for the diagnosis and treatment of illness, prediction of future events, clairvoyance, communication with other intelligences, and the integration of magic with reality. Harmine, the first psychoactive principle isolated from ayahuasca decoctions, was initially called "telepathine" by Zerda Bayon in 1912, because of its apparently psychical properties.

It has been suggested that all paranormal and mystical phenomena are accompanied by an altered state of being, and the use of drugs to induce such a state is probably one of the primary drives behind most psychedelic exploration. An abundance of psychonauts' trip reports on web sites such as [www.erowid.org](http://www.erowid.org) and [www.lycaeum.com](http://www.lycaeum.com) testify to these apparently psychic episodes that seem to occur with most types of mind-expanding substances.

During the psychedelic research boom of the 1950s and 1960s, several controlled experiments explored the relationship of these substances to the occurrence of psychic ability, termed *psi*. Since that time, such research has been largely restricted to psychiatric reports and surveys of paranormal experience in relation to drug use, although recently in Holland there has been a return to conducting some experimental work. In addition, many valuable experiential reports have been accumulated by psychedelic users' groups. However, aside from work with marijuana (Tart 1993), there has been no concentrated effort to access, document, and evaluate this mass of research literature since Krippner and Davidson published their last review in 1974.

In the past thirty years many advances have been made in methods of investigation within the field of parapsychology studies. As well, the literature on psychoactive drugs has steadily grown, reflecting an expanded knowledge of such substances, which have themselves

With the generous assistance of a \$1000 research grant from MAPS, a project is underway to review the literature on parapsychology and psychedelics...

increased in variety and number. With the generous assistance of a \$1000 research grant from MAPS, a project is underway to review the literature on parapsychology and psychedelics and evaluate the contributions of such research to our understanding of psychedelic drug use, psychiatry, transpersonal psychology, and parapsychology. Aside from summarizing and evaluating the results of previous investigations, this research will draw on over a hundred years of insights and make recommendations for future research methodology in the field of parapsycho-pharmacology. Clinicians or researchers who have made any observations of this nature in the course of their work, or who have relevant unpublished or obscure material, are urged to contact the author.

In conjunction with the review, a second research project is underway to survey this psi-chedelic landscape. A confidential web-based questionnaire has been created to gather information on drug use and paranormal experiences and anyone falling into either or both categories is encouraged to complete it at [www.dmtech.co.uk/survey](http://www.dmtech.co.uk/survey). In an area of research that is so dogged by experimental restriction, yet which has such spiritual significance, personal reports should not be devalued. Those wishing to describe any exceptional paranormal experiences on drugs can e-mail their stories to [psychicdeli@happyhippie.com](mailto:psychicdeli@happyhippie.com) for anonymous inclusion in a richer phenomenological report. •

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# MAPS Medical Marijuana Research Projects

continued federal obstruction of vaporizer research and UMass Amherst production facility

by Rick Doblin, PhD • [rick@maps.org](mailto:rick@maps.org)

Both the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) are pursuing the classic bureaucratic strategy of unreasonable delay and inaction in response to MAPS' efforts to mount a serious research program aimed at developing marijuana into an FDA-approved prescription medicine. The Bush Administration's rhetoric that the issue of the medical use of marijuana should be decided by scientific research rather than state initiatives, legislative actions, or lawsuits, rings increasingly hollow in the face of prolonged obstruction of research.

## VAPORIZER RESEARCH

Chemic Labs has conducted over \$75,000 of MAPS and California NORML-funded research into the chemical constituents of the vapors produced by marijuana vaporizers (for more details, see [www.maps.org/mmj/vaporizer.html](http://www.maps.org/mmj/vaporizer.html)). On June 24, 2003, Chemic formally applied to NIDA to purchase ten grams of marijuana at cost to continue its research, and applied to DEA to import ten grams from the Dutch Office of Medicinal Cannabis of higher potency marijuana not available from NIDA. NIDA claimed it needed to determine if the submitted protocol was "scientifically meritorious" before determining if Chemic would be permitted to purchase ten grams of its material. DEA stated it wouldn't even bother to review the import permit application until after NIDA had determined the protocol was "scientifically meritorious."

Almost a year later, the protocol has not yet been reviewed. Furthermore, the person Chemic was most recently told was in charge of the review, Rear Admiral Dr. Arthur J. Lawrence, Assistant Surgeon General, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health (Operations), informed Chemic on March 17, 2004, that "the responsibility for conducting the reviews is in the process of being transferred to a different unit of the Department. At the moment, I don't have the ability to specify where this particular protocol is in the process." As of May 12, 2004, repeated efforts to determine where the protocol is in the review process have met with no reply.

Meanwhile, Dr. Donald Abrams' FDA-approved clinical study comparing cannabinoid blood levels, carbon monoxide levels, and subjective effects in subjects (who at different times smoke marijuana or inhale the vapors from a vaporizer), currently awaits NIDA marijuana.

## UMASS AMHERST MARIJUANA PRODUCTION FACILITY

In June 2001 Prof. Lyle Craker, Director of the Medicinal Plant Program at the UMass Amherst Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, submitted an application to DEA for a license to establish a facility to produce high-potency marijuana for use exclusively in federally-approved protocols (for more information, see [www.maps.org/mmj/mmjfacility.html](http://www.maps.org/mmj/mmjfacility.html)). After years of ignoring the application, DEA finally followed federal regulations and posted a notice of the application in the *Federal Register*, with a public comment period that ended September 23, 2003. DEA has yet to issue a ruling, despite receiving an October 23, 2003 letter from Massachusetts Senators Kennedy and Kerry supporting the licensing of the UMass Amherst facility.

## CONCLUSION

The Bush Administration is clearly frightened of objective scientific research into the risks and benefits of the medical uses of marijuana. MAPS' challenge is to raise the costs of federal obstruction of research, so that researchers are no longer locked out of their labs and patients are no longer locked into prison. •

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# Marijuana Litigation in Alaska

by **Bill Satterberg Jr.**, Counsel to **David Noy**  
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With funding provided by the Marijuana Policy Project (MPP), MAPS has donated \$34,500 to William Satterberg Jr. for working on the litigation he discusses in this article.

...the  
re-criminalization  
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On July 28, 2001, two zealous North Pole, Alaska, police officers decided that they could smell marijuana growing in David Noy's residence. At the time, the officers were located approximately three hundred feet away. There was a 15 mph wind blowing, bulldozers had been working on the street outside of David's house tearing up vegetation, David was barbecuing salmon and ribs on the grill, there was a trailer full of trash in the front yard, and his house was wrapped in a Visquene vapor barrier. Notwithstanding what many would interpret as an unlikely olfactory event, the officers nevertheless arrived at David's house and declared the location a crime scene. Approximately ten guests who were visiting were ordered to remain on premises and were physically searched in front of their children. Nobody was allowed to leave or enter the house unless David consented to a search of the residence. Ultimately, to avoid further embarrassment to his guests, David consented to a search.

Inside the house, the officers went through a closed door and down a set of steps into the basement. They passed through another closed door and then, behind a curtain in the hot water heater room, they found five six-inch tall marijuana plants. These plants, the officers testified, were the source of their olfactory delight.

David was charged with marijuana possession as a Misdemeanor in the Fifth Degree, a Class A misdemeanor. At trial, David was acquitted of the Misdemeanor in the Fifth Degree, but was convicted of Misdemeanor in the Sixth Degree, a Class B misdemeanor. Because Misdemeanor in the Sixth Degree fell completely within the guidelines set forth in *Ravin vs. State of Alaska*, a 1975 case legalizing marijuana in Alaska, David chose to appeal the decision.

It should be noted that, after *Ravin* was decided in 1975, the voters eventually re-criminalized marijuana by means of a voter initiative, which was subsequently enacted into law by the Legislature in 1990. At no time whatsoever had the Alaska *Constitution* been amended, however. As such, David Noy's argument was that the re-criminalization of marijuana was an illegal act and unconstitutional, under the *Ravin* Decision and given Alaska's right to privacy as set forth in Article 1, Section 22 of the Alaska *Constitution*.

Upon appeal, David also argued that he had a medical right of necessity to use the marijuana to control medical conditions.



The Court of Appeals decided in August of 2003 that David Noy's position was correct, and that *Ravin* was still good constitutional law in Alaska and the re-criminalization of marijuana was unconstitutional. The Court of Appeals disagreed with David, however, regarding his common law right of medical necessity, and denied that portion of the appeal.

Subsequently, the State of Alaska sought a review of the Court of Appeals Decision on what is known as a Petition for Rehearing. In a nine page Opinion, the Court of Appeals again denied the State's motion, and made it quite clear that *Ravin* was still good law in Alaska and that the re-criminalization of marijuana was unconstitutional.

The State of Alaska now seeks review from the Alaska Superior Court under a Petition for Hearing. The Alaska Supreme Court has the ability to decide to either accept or reject the State of Alaska's Petition for Hearing.

In the case currently before the Alaska Supreme Court, the State of Alaska is once again attacking marijuana, claiming that it is a dangerous drug, leads to criminal behavior and further drug use, and is physically and psychologically harmful. In essence, the State of Alaska is seeking to reopen the underpinnings of the *Ravin* decision with respect to the effects of marijuana.

Noy's Opposition to the State's Petition for Hearing was filed in January, and argues that review is not necessary. Noy's Cross-Petition for Hearing was also filed in January. In the Cross-Petition, Noy has asked the Alaska Supreme Court to consider the medical necessity as a defense to the possession of marijuana, and has furthermore asked to have the amount of marijuana that is legal within the home raised from four ounces to eight ounces, which was the threshold level which existed prior to the re-criminalization of marijuana. It should be noted in this regard that the Court of Appeals decided that the break-over point for legal versus illegal possession of marijuana

in the home would be at four ounces, based upon subsequent legislative enactments.

The Supreme Court can decide to either accept or reject the Petitions for Hearing. If the Supreme Court chooses to deny the Petitions for Hearing, the decision of the Alaska Court of Appeals will stand. On the other hand, if the Supreme Court grants one or both Petitions for Hearing, it is likely that additional briefing will

be ordered and, ultimately, the Supreme Court will once again address the issue. As of May 12, 2004, the Alaska Supreme Court has yet to reach any decision on the issues raised in either of the Petitions which have been submitted, nor has there been any indication of when a decision will be forthcoming.

MPP/MAPS is substantially assisting in these appellate proceedings by providing grant funding to the case. This funding enables Noy's counsel (my firm) to devote the significant time and resources to the case which has been necessitated by the State of Alaska's Opposition, which is attempting to overturn the underlying *Ravin* decision in the process of addressing the issues of Alaska's constitutional right to privacy raised in *Noy*. The ultimate outcome of the appeal will depend upon whether or not the Alaska Supreme Court decides to revisit *Ravin*. We are hopeful for a decision on whether or not the case will be accepted for full review by the middle of summer 2004. •

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# Ayahuasca in the Amazon

## a father and daughter journey together

by Jack Lieberman • jackl@znet.com and Chloe Lieberman • chloewis@hotmail.com

As part of MAPS' effort to spark discussion on more balanced and effective drug education, we are publishing this story of a father and daughter's ayahuasca experience. For more on psychedelics as rites of passage, go to [www.maps.org/ritesofpassage](http://www.maps.org/ritesofpassage), and see the next special issue of the *MAPS Bulletin* on the theme of "kids and psychedelics."

### FATHER'S PERSPECTIVE

It can be a real dilemma for parents who have benefited greatly from plant medicines to know how to communicate about these experiences with their children. My 20-year-old daughter Chloe and I had the chance to participate in a ten-day experiential Ayahuasca Healing Seminar in the Brazilian Amazon this summer. This was my third seminar in this location. I went on a solo pilgrimage to the first seminar in July 2000, and my wife and I returned for the second one six months later. I returned this time because Chloe asked me if I would take her. The first two seminars were jointly led by Silvia Polivoy and Luis Eduardo Luna. This seminar, in July 2003, was led by Silvia alone.

Silvia is an Argentinian woman who is a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in Buenos Aires. She also has extensive shamanic training using various plant

medicines. She first started giving ayahuasca to groups in Peru in 1997, and soon thereafter began her search for an appropriate place to hold a seminar in Brazil, where ayahuasca ceremonies are legal. Silvia found the perfect *pousada*, or inn, two hours outside of Manaus, Brazil. She was looking for a beautiful and comfortable place in the jungle, which was not too primitive. She felt that the ayahuasca experience could be difficult at times and depriving people of creature comforts in addition seemed like too much hardship for participants.

The *pousada* is very comfortable with safe water, electricity, air conditioning, a swimming pool and hot showers. Sleeping accommodations are simple but adequate cabin rooms with beds. Most rooms are doubles but some singles are available. Food is served buffet style and is quite good, even without salt. (A special diet of bland food without salt is followed during the seminar, along with a request for sexual abstinence.) The staff is extremely friendly and supportive of the participants. In fact, several of them participated in at least one ayahuasca session along with us.

The focus of Silvia's seminars is on healing, inner exploration, and personal growth. This was important to me in deciding to bring my daughter. I wanted her experience to be about something sacred, not just a "psychedelic trip," and I hoped that she would receive the deep insights that sometimes come during an ayahuasca journey. The seminar consists of four ayahuasca journeys, a time for group sharing the day after each journey, wonderful excursions into nature, art workshops, as well as talks by guest speakers. Future seminars will possibly include yoga, massage, and optional private sessions with Silvia for those participants who want to go deeper. All activities are completely voluntary.

Chloe and I ended a 17-hour flight from northern California and arrived in Manaus, a city located where the Rio Negro and the Rio Solimões flow together to form the Amazon. We had two days to familiarize ourselves with the new surroundings and get over the time difference before the start of the seminar. I wanted to show Chloe the market on the river in Manaus, which is modeled after the old Les Halles in Paris, and the decaying colonial architecture of the city. Two days later all fifteen participants and the seminar staff left for the two-hour trip into the jungle. We traveled by bus, ferry, and motorized canoe to our destination.

As I stepped onto the *pousada* dock I felt a quiver of inner familiarity rush through me. So many changes had happened to me there, so many miracles of personal transformation. It felt so right to bring my daughter to



experience the magic of ayahuasca healing. Although I felt some nervousness and fear about the upcoming journeys, I realized how much I had learned and how much my behavior had actually changed because of ayahuasca. From my prior experiences with her as group facilitator, I trusted Silvia completely to take care of my daughter and myself if necessary. The anxiety I felt was more like healthy respect for such a powerful plant teacher, one who I could not deceive and who always showed me the truth.

The leader of the seminar sets the tone for the entire event, and Silvia is the perfect facilitator. She has impeccable integrity which is vital for the person “holding the space” for a ceremony. One can sense her experience and skill in dealing with participants’ vulnerabilities and the occasional crisis that might arise. There is no ego involvement in her work; she is committed to the therapeutic and spiritual aspects of the plant medicine. She is also ultimately practical and takes care of all business at the seminar so that the participants are free of outside concerns and can fully explore their inner worlds.

There are few rules during the sessions, but they are important and Silvia makes sure they are followed. No one is allowed to leave the building where the sessions take place. Each participant has his or her own mattress and is expected to

stay alone for the duration of the session, except of course if help is needed. Interaction among the participants during the session is not permitted. Excessive noise is gently discouraged. The ayahuasca session is clearly a time for an inward journey and it is suggested that participants keep their eyes closed even though the room is very dark. The session is not in any sense a party or a place to have a good time; it is a time to be with oneself and learn from the plants. Silvia’s choices of recorded music and sometimes just the sounds of the jungle provide an important background for the sessions.

What is the ayahuasca experience like? Each person has his or her own flavor of experience, therefore I can only accurately write about my own. I often feel an intelligent female presence acting as a life teacher. I have no vision of a form for this intelligence—perhaps it is part of my own unconscious or really some spirit being. Whatever it is, it seems to know everything about me and lovingly acts as a kind of divine therapist—not so much by talking to me as by giving me actual experiences that point out ways that I can live my life more skillfully and actually change my behavior to solve specific problems.

One such experience during this summer’s seminar had to do with my relationship with Chloe. For the first two days of our trip to South America,

things were somewhat tense between us. Although Chloe and I have a good relationship, being with a family member for 24 hours a day can be challenging. During the first ayahuasca journey, I understood clearly what this tension was about. I had an experience of what it feels like to be the object of someone else’s attempt to control me, and it did not feel very good. I realized that on some kind of psychic level I was in the habit of trying to control my daughter. This wasn’t a malevolent control, I wanted to protect her and shape her environment—which was very appropriate when she was a small child and totally inappropriate now at age 20. I promised myself at that moment that I would stop

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trying to control Chloe and trust her with her own life. I shared this insight with her after the session and she acknowledged that she felt my attempt to control her and welcomed my promise to stop. I felt free of this unconscious need to control her life and our relationship took a healthy leap forward. This is an example of how ayahuasca works as a therapist for me. It doesn't just talk to me, it provides an experience that brings great insight. I have found that *experience*, rather than just words, is a powerful incentive for change.

My ayahuasca journeys are much more than practical lessons leading to insights and changes in behavior. The more I work with this medicine, the more experiences I have of the divine. Poets have for centuries tried to describe this in words, and religions preach about having faith in God or some divine energy. There is nothing like an actual experience of divine presence to wake me up to the fact that I am not in control of very much that happens to me. I have been struggling with a compulsion to control things for my entire 58 years. During an ayahuasca journey it became clear to me that this need to control comes from a lack of faith in the cosmic plan. It comes from fear and the desire for self-protection from huge forces that are beyond my control. During one of my journeys I actually started laughing when I saw the futility of attempting to control my environment and my circumstances. After one session I realized what I often do in life: I build huge sand dikes on a beach hoping to keep the tide back. What a waste of energy! After experiences like these, it is much easier to short circuit my tendency to control, by recognizing this destructive pattern when it begins.

The plant teacher "spoke" to me during a journey after I asked about how to handle fear. She said that the antidote to fear was faith and trust in the cosmic drama taking place around me. Having faith does not come easily for me. However, if I can see this cosmic drama taking place, it is so much easier to trust in the flow of the great river of the cosmos. It is absolutely clear that there is no other alternative.

Another very important teaching I received from the plant concerned an addiction I have to thinking. I have been plagued by over-thinking most of my life, but until this recent journey I never framed it as an "addiction to thinking." The ayahuasca presence "spoke" to me about this addiction and

suggested tactics to use to deal with it. I was given the experience of how over-thinking feels, how debilitating it is, and that its first symptom is worry. By simply labeling worry as a symptom of an addiction that I want to be rid of, I have been able to make progress in not falling into what is essentially a bad habit.

Silvia's seminar provided the perfect environment to introduce my daughter to something that has been so important to me. Experiencing ayahuasca together in a safe, supportive and legal setting was a very special and unforgettable experience for both of us. I feel that the seminar was a tremendous success for father and daughter. I would recommend these Ayahuasca Healing Seminars to anyone seriously committed to self-exploration and inner transformation.

#### DAUGHTER'S PERSPECTIVE

My dad gave me a trip into my consciousness as a twentieth birthday present. He had already attended Ayahuasca Healing Seminars in the Brazilian Amazon two times, and he decided to share the experience with me. He felt that it would be a unique and valuable opportunity for us. While some people are disturbed or confused by the idea of parents giving their children mind-altering substances, I have never doubted the correctness of the choice my dad made to introduce me to his most praised teacher.

Throughout my life, my parents have been open and honest about their therapeutic use of entheogens. They have initiated conversations with me about consciousness exploration, and have always been available for questions



and feedback. I had their stories and advice in mind as I began my own experimentation, and I maintained respect and reverence for drugs. Consciousness-expanding substances have provided them with guidance, humility, wisdom, and bliss, and I understand that those were the things my dad wanted to share with me when he offered me the opportunity to attend the Ayahuasca Healing Seminar with him.

While we have shared stories of our individual experiences with each other, until last July I had not entered a psychedelic mind state with either of my parents. My dad and I were both excited and a little nervous moving closer to the mysteries of the jungle and ayahuasca. When we arrived at the seminar, my nervousness turned into curiosity and excitement.

The location, about an hour and half outside of Manaus on the banks of the Rio Arou, is mind-blowing on its own. The *pousada* where we stayed was simple and comfortable with double occupancy rooms and private bathrooms. Along with the facilitator and speakers, the fifteen seminar participants ate a salt-free, wholesome shaman's diet together in a dining room overlooking the river and the awesome jungle. We were there for ten days and drank ayahuasca every other night in a womblike cosmic spaceship made of palm leaves and native woods (that during the rest of the year doubles as a game room). The days after the ceremonies were spent resting, creating artwork, and sharing our journeys with one another. On the other days we explored the jungle with a warm, intelligent native guide and could attend presentations given by the various guest speakers. Throughout the seminar there was a lot of communication among the participants that forged a strong bond between us, and allowed me to really develop my interpretation of the completely overwhelming ayahuasca experience.

For me, the seminar was a transcendent mingling of historic, contemporary, and futuristic worlds. It created a context in which an ancient medicine could be used by non-indigenous people in a way that was not separate or alien from our lives in the current world. The nature of the sacrament induces a feeling of unification with the human experience across the ages, and the power of the jungle reminded me of geologic time and the newness of the human species. The basic themes of the seminar—healing, growth, connection with divinity, and self-discovery—as well as the ceremonial atmosphere we created, respectfully connected us with the ancient use of the plant. Building on this traditional basis, the discussions we had as a group, the structure of the ceremony, and the lectures and activities provided were decidedly modern. We discussed astrophysics, the Internet, relativ-

ity theory, drug policy in the United States, shamanism, the Mayan calendar, extraterrestrial life, time travel, our inner children, our psychological struggles, our experiences of joy, and more.

Drinking ayahuasca in this fusion of past, present, and futuristic planes of reality, near my twentieth birthday and along with my dad, felt like a rite of passage. Rituals to acknowledge the beginnings and endings of stages in life are markedly absent from modern North American culture, and I didn't even realize the value of such a ritual until I was given the opportunity to experience one that

was so appropriate for my own frame of reference. It was not religious or dogmatic and was not even described as a rite of passage. It was individualistic, yet connected with the earth and with spiritual healing traditions. I didn't drink ayahuasca to acknowledge my passage from childhood to adulthood, rather the ayahuasca showed me the significance of this passage. It let me in on some secrets of the universe that as a child I could not have fully understood.

With the help of ayahuasca, I observed the transfer of roles that is taking place in my father's life and in my own. Once I was a helpless infant, relying completely on my parents. Now we live independently, and in the future my dad will return to an infantile state and I, fully grown, will care for him.

This is intellectually obvious, but with ayahuasca I did not simply know it, I *experienced* it. I felt myself in all of the stages of life, and connected the process to the comforting cyclical nature of everything. After the first session I interacted with my father as though we both fulfilled parent *and* child roles. The experience established us as two sovereign individuals, separate spiritual peers. It became easier to get along because I understood where he was coming from more deeply, and was able to interact with more honesty and less attachment.

Each night built upon the last, allowing me to really explore some of the basic messages the ayahuasca was sending me. Something that is unique about ayahuasca is its seeming intelligence. I have experimented with other entheogenic drugs and never felt such a distinct intelligent presence that was apart from my mind and was using the entheogen as a sort of cosmic translator. With ayahuasca there is almost a dialogue. It did not simply throw information and feelings at me, but gave me what I needed and what I was ready for.

One of the most intense and memorable moments of the seminar was the morning after the second session when I returned to the room that my dad and I shared. I woke up in the ceremony room and dilated my pupils to let in the light of the Amazonian sunrise. I felt clear-headed and as though I had 360-degree vision into both the spiritual and physical worlds. I got up and felt life

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vibrating through my body as I shakily walked out onto the mosaic steps toward our room. I felt a little dizzy and very light as my consciousness completed its return into my body.

The night before I had thrown up within an hour of drinking the brew—following about forty seconds of falling through a multidimensional fractal world that was the most overpowering psychedelic experience I have had. After throwing up so early (the other nights I threw up at least a few hours after drinking the brew), I felt the ayahuasca much more subtly for the rest of the session. I had few optical visions and did not journey anywhere physical, but instead was right there, in the circular ceremony building with only mosquito netting separating me from the jungle. I felt incredibly connected with the group and with Mother Earth, and was cradled by something that felt like God.

When I walked into our room in the morning, my dad got up from his bed and without taking the blinders off of his eyes he hugged me. After hugging and expressing our love for each other we lay down in our beds and recounted our experiences. I found it important to share with my dad in the early mornings at the very ends of our journeys. Communicating helped to organize and make sense of the knowledge that had been given to me; painting, being with the rainforest, and doing yoga helped me to retain the non-intellectual elements of the experience.

Both my dad and I mentioned an overwhelming feeling of unity among the group the previous night. Very few people had thrown up, and there were no sounds of pain or struggle; the session had started off with one participant singing and joyfully chattering. My dad looked at me with clear, sparkling eyes and said, “I feel like there’s no more to learn.” I laughed.

“I know, it’s just love.” And I felt certain of that.

He smiled and said, “I felt like I was going to explode with love for you. It was actually painful.” We discussed a mutual encounter with what appeared to be the ultimate source, something that we could incorporate into our lives as unquestionable truth. The ayahuasca had chosen to saturate our group in divine universal love.

I think that part of what enabled my dad and me to access this source was our familial love and fondness for each other. We are good friends and enjoy one another, *and* we have one of the most primal love relationships in nature. This natural love was magnified by the fusion of very positive energies in our group, and energized by the facilitator, Silvia Polivoy, and guest instructor Pablo Amaringo, a Peruvian ex-shaman and artist.

Drinking ayahuasca was like getting glasses after years of not knowing that my vision wasn’t complete. The spiritual and psychic expansion that took place in the jungle was not just a glimpse or a temporary revelation, but a clear message from the divine. Truth is love, and if I trust the truth it will help me float above myself to a place where the right direction is everywhere. I don’t think that using ayahuasca is the only way that I could have accessed this knowledge, but I don’t know if I would have had the faith and discipline to find it through other means.

I feel as though I have been initiated into some universal covenant of transparent reality and cosmic understanding. Since returning from my ayahuasca journeys I have not felt any overwhelming distress. I have been sad, and struggled through difficult situations, and felt fear and anger and frustration, but have been able to look through those mental functions and experience the calm oneness of love. Along with the fundamental message of love, the ayahuasca shared with me many more personal, practical insights. I chose to open myself to them, to trust my dad, the universe, and myself. And, I now consciously choose to apply what I have been shown in every moment.

I feel incredibly grateful to my mom and dad. They both broke away from dogmatic religious backgrounds seeking personal spiritual truth, and they have the love, trust, and respect for me as an adult to share one of the most valuable spiritual tools they have found.

I don’t think of ayahuasca itself, the Ayahuasca Healing Seminar, or any entheogenic experience as a miracle cure or ultimate spiritual practice. Ayahuasca is a tool, and the Ayahuasca Healing Seminar a

safe and guided opportunity to learn how to use that tool to its full potential. To live in a mindful, honest way is a choice, and many tools exist that can help us do this with less fear and more love. Entheogens are unique in that they temporarily quiet the mind and highlight the higher levels of consciousness that are difficult to access in our daily lives. I hope that my words will encourage parents and children to open their minds to the healing potential of these incredible plants. Every young person will encounter drugs, and parents have the opportunity to shape the nature of that encounter to help their children experience some of their benefits, while learning respect and humility for their remarkable power. •

For more information about the Ayahuasca Healing Retreats described in this account, see [www.ayahuasca-healing.net](http://www.ayahuasca-healing.net). For more about the MAPS Rites of Passage Project, which compiles and shares stories such as the one above, see [www.maps.org/ritesofpassage](http://www.maps.org/ritesofpassage).

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# Toward a Science of Consciousness VI

## maps members' views on consciousness and psychedelics

Editor's note: While MAPS usually does not devote so much space to a conference report, we have chosen to include the following pieces that are primarily inspired by, rather than written about, the "Toward a Science of Consciousness" conference, held in Tucson, Arizona, April 7–11, 2004. Alex Gamma writes about the philosophical debates surrounding consciousness, while Dan Potthast and Tim Butcher focus on the role of psychedelics in consciousness research.

### THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by **Alex Gamma** • gamma@bli.unizh.ch

Different people mean different things when they talk about consciousness. This is the first thing to realize if you're going to have a minimally fruitful discussion about the topic. Those friendly, spiritually-oriented folks from the "psychedelic community" probably have something different in mind when they talk about expanding consciousness than philosophers or scientists talking about the C-word. In fact, the former are using the word in a loose sense, probably referring to the mind

as a whole, including one's sensory experiences, emotional feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and so on. Philosophers make finer distinctions. David Chalmers, head of the Center for Consciousness Studies in Tucson and one of the leading figures in the philosophy of mind, distinguishes between a core notion of consciousness, and a cluster of functions (e.g. visual discrimination, memory, learning, speech production, etc.) associated with it. The core notion is consciousness in the sense of qualitative, phenomenal experience: the fact that your conscious experiences *feel* a certain way, or that it is *like something* to have them. If you think of the blueness of the sky (so different from the redness of a ripe tomato), or the particular way a certain pain feels (a bee sting—ouch!), you know what I'm talking about. These phenomenal qualities of consciousness have been given the name "qualia."

Chalmers argues that the core notion of consciousness, qualia, constitute the "hard problem" of consciousness, while the associated functions constitute (relatively) "easy problems." The associated functions present "easy

problems because they are, in principle, easy to explain. How is information memorized? Or how is it learned? How can it be verbally expressed? We can give entirely satisfying scientific explanations for these functions by specifying causal brain mechanisms that perform the functions. Consider verbal report, for example. You look at a tree and tell me it's blooming. We can give an account of how light waves travel from the tree to your eyes, stimulate the photoreceptors in your retina, where neural impulses are generated and propagated along the optical nerve to the visual cortex in the back of your brain. There, the visual scene of the tree in front of you is analyzed, and features such as size, shape, and color of the various elements in the scene are extracted. This information is passed on to more frontal parts of the brain where the elements of the scene are identified as particular objects ("that's a branch," "those are blossoms"). This information, in turn, will be passed on to the speech production center in your left brain hemisphere, where it is transformed into motor commands that appropriately stimulate the muscles in your voice box, making you utter the words, "This tree is blooming." Of course, the full story would include many more details, but we have no doubts that these could be supplied, once enough research has been performed.

All of this can be explained purely in terms of physics, neurobiology, and information-processing. Nowhere in this account is there a need to refer to qualia, to the phenomenal quality of the visual scene you experience. And that's the hard problem of consciousness: to explain why and how phenomenal consciousness enters the picture. Why are qualia associated with the various information-processing functions of the brain? How are they generated in the brain? It seems kind of surprising and strangely unnecessary that, over and above the causal flow of information in the brain, there is also an associated experience, a way that having the information *feels*.

In recent years, neuroscientists have started taking the qualia issue seriously—or at least addressing it. The larger enterprise of that segment of neuroscience oriented towards consciousness has become the search for the neural correlates of consciousness (the so-called NCCs). These are the neural processes or states that underlie conscious, phenomenal states, which occur whenever we have a certain kind of phenomenal experience. Hunting NCCs is an important and respectable goal, and will tell us a lot about the way the brain works and what states might possibly generate qualia. But will it bring us closer to the solution of the hard problem of finding out how brain processes relate to or generate qualia? I can't see how it would. No matter how much we know about which brain

processes underlie qualia, it will still seem arbitrary that these processes are associated with any qualia at all, or with exactly *these* and not *those* qualia. (For example, why is a given brain state associated with the experience of redness and not blueness?)

### MAKING THE PROBLEM DISAPPEAR

Some speakers at the Tucson conference seemed to be untroubled by worries about the hard problem, and their presentations dealt with scientific details of neural or mental processes that are related to conscious experience, without entering into discussions of the hard problem. Others, however, offered their takes on the hard problem. Susan Blackmore, a lecturer, writer and colorful figure in the field (literally, look at the first picture on <http://jamaica.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/pics/tucson6.html>) emphatically argued that we are mistaken in our everyday beliefs about consciousness. She says that consciousness understood as a “continuous stream of rich and detailed experiences, happening one after the other to a conscious person” is an illusion. She does not deny that there is some sort of consciousness, she only claims that it is not the way it seems to us. However, I’ve never heard her say just what she thinks consciousness really is like—i.e., what’s behind the illusion. She was quite clear on one thing, however: she answered the question whether there are qualia with a blunt “no.”

A similar stance is taken by the influential American philosopher Daniel Dennett. He flatly denies the existence of qualia and thinks we all need some kind of psychotherapy to exorcize the intuitions behind them. His usual strategy, which he also applied to the audience in Tucson, is to devise thought experiments to “pump” our intuitions away from qualia. Dennett states that the belief in qualia is the one persistent, but misguided, background assumption that has made the problem of consciousness seem intractable for centuries. If we can finally be cured of our belief, the problem will simply disappear.

Now if qualia are taken to be the phenomenal, qualitative aspects of consciousness, I don’t really know how to make sense of such pronouncements. Phenomenal consciousness is neither a belief, intuition, nor an assumption, it is simply an empirical fact of nature. All of us, at every moment of our waking lives, can confirm to ourselves that we are conscious, that it is *like something* for us to have sensory experiences, feelings,

pains, and thoughts. So do Blackmore and Dennett deny that they have phenomenal experiences? I can’t really believe that’s what they want to say (after all, they’re human beings and I strongly suspect that they are indeed conscious).

Blackmore urges that if we patiently practice to look harder into ourselves—using meditation as one technique to do so—we become less and less sure about what’s in our consciousness at any given moment, until we finally realize that there are neither contents nor a stream of consciousness. There are at least two problems with this

argument. First, it is certainly true that we can thin out the steady buzz of thoughts and sensations in our minds by practicing meditation, and that we might become unsure about aspects of the nature and timing of our conscious states. But this is a far cry from showing that whatever mental activity remains does not have any phenomenal, qualitative character. Do monks who have practiced meditation for decades cease to have some kind of phenomenal experience? If not, then there are still qualia. Second, even if meditation eventually leads to a loss of qualia, it remains the case that at least I—as I am here now, not yet driven to unconsciousness by years of meditation—clearly have qualia.

### NEXT EXIT: DUALISM

Qualia won’t go away easily, it seems, and so we’re still faced with the hard problem. Chalmers’ own solution, though not presented explicitly in this conference, was a ghostly background presence in every corner of the conference locale. Chalmers argues that materialism/physicalism about consciousness (the view that phenomenal consciousness is a physical phenomenon, and that facts about phenomenal consciousness are entailed by physical facts) is false, and we need to expand the very basis of physics by adding consciousness as a new fundamental property to the universe, alongside known physical properties such as mass, charge and space-time. In this new scheme of things, we will have two primary kinds of stuff: physical stuff and phenomenal stuff. This is a form of dualism, which

is despised by most scientists, but which I assume not few of the readers of this article will find appealing. One implication of this view is that phenomenal properties are everywhere, not only in living beings with sophisticated nervous systems, but also in rocks, trees, and even atoms. These things don’t necessarily have full-blown consciousness as we experience it, but maybe some more basic,

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primitive, undifferentiated form of phenomenal experience. This idea is not new, by the way. Under the name of “panpsychism” or “pan-experientialism” it has been floating around in philosophy throughout the ages. Dualism in this sense would solve the hard problem because it makes it unnecessary to explain how we can get from purely physical neural processes in the brain to phenomenal consciousness. Instead we put phenomenal consciousness into the picture from the very start, accepting it as a fundamental and irreducible part of reality. Of course, we still need an account of how these basic phenomenal properties get structured and organized into full-blown phenomenal experience, but there is little doubt that the story can be told, just as in the physical case, where we can tell a similar story. For example, the high-level biological structure or functions of the brain are built from interacting neurons, these in turn are built from proteins coded for by strands of DNA, these in turn are built from interacting bio-molecules, which in turn are built from interacting atoms, and so on. It’s an extremely complicated story, but we know that it can be told in principle.

#### BLISSFUL IGNORANCE

Stephen Pinker, a Harvard psychologist and popular science writer, was invited to Tucson for a keynote address. Looking at consciousness from an evolutionary perspective, he made a distinction, very much in agreement with Chalmers’, between the causally describable functions associated with consciousness and its phenomenal core. He argued that all those functions of consciousness, for which we can in principle specify underlying causal brain mechanisms, might well be evolutionary adaptations, but its phenomenal core—the qualia—cannot be because it has no causal effect. Only what is causally effective can be selected for by evolution, but qualia are not. So Pinker regards consciousness as an epiphenomenon without causal influence on the physical world. This view might seem to put him into immediate trouble, since it makes it look impossible that we could ever know about and report on our conscious experience, if consciousness cannot affect the physical brain processes underlying knowledge formation and verbal report. However, Pinker thinks that our abilities to know and report our conscious experience are not based on causality, but on some other relation, which might be unique to consciousness.

Interestingly, the distinction between phenomenal consciousness and its associated causally describable functions does not lead Pinker to embrace dualism. Instead, he follows along the lines of the philosopher Colin McGinn who believes that consciousness is a perfectly normal physical phenomenon, but that we humans do not have the cognitive capacities to understand how it relates to the rest of the world. This thesis is known under the name of “cognitive closure.” It is based on the observation that all other animals have cognitive limitations that preclude them from ever understanding certain concepts. Your dog, for example, will never understand the principles of thermodynamics. So why should we humans be the only creatures without cognitive limitations? Like for other animals, there must exist concepts that are beyond our grasp, and McGinn argues that consciousness is one of these concepts. Some philosophers consider this stance defeatist and overly pessimistic, others have called it “mysterianism.” It seems like premature surrender. Indeed, there is a certain danger in extrapolating from a present failure to understand consciousness to an in-principle inability to do so. Dennett, for example, argued that the unique human ability to use language to entertain and evaluate a potentially infinite number of thoughts is the decisive difference that might untie us from the cognitive limitations other animals have. Still, given that so little progress has been made on the hard problem, I consider the cognitive closure hypothesis at least a respectable philosophical position. •

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So why should  
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## PSYCHEDELICS AS FIRST PERSON TECHNOLOGY IN THE STUDY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by **Dan Potthast** (shown left) • dpotthast@hotmail.com  
and **Tim Butcher** (shown right) • tim2cb@aol.com

A fundamental assumption in the field of neuropsychology can be simply stated in the phrase “brain equals mind.” A fundamental question is: “How?” This insidiously simple inquiry is a truly difficult matter for those toiling at the workbench of consciousness research. In order to answer it, philosophers and neuroscientists must unite two languages, or rather, two perspectives: that of the first person and that of the third person.

We are all familiar with examples of both. A reasonable first person account of a mental event could be something as mundane as “I see the color green.” The third person account of this event would be a long description of how a group of photons with collective wavelengths of 530 nanometers is processed by your eye and then your brain, a story usually reserved for psychology textbooks.

Mapping this flow of visual information has been one of the great accomplishments of modern neuropsychology. Yet we can still only hypothesize how observable brain activity turns into the experience of vision. In other words, nowhere in the entire story of visual perception is there an adequate formulation of how this hunk of photons becomes the awareness of “green.” At the moment, there is no way neuropsychology can answer the first person question, “How do I see green?” Asking this question in third person terms is like opening a Pandora’s box from which mountains of brain imaging data, a plethora of educated guesses, and several graphing calculators burst forth. Indeed, the brain imaging and stimulation techniques that are in the hands of today’s experimental researchers offer both blessings and curses. Noninvasive body imaging is a fortuitous invention for the third person pioneers. However, untangling numerous contradictory findings from a wide array of experimental tasks and participants is the bane of a cognitive neuroscientist wanting to paint a coherent picture of the mind.

With this dilemma in mind, what if we ask the first person questions: “Why does MDMA make me love *everything*?” Or, “How did taking that dose of LSD make the flowers sing?” There are certainly no fast and easy third person answers. Nevertheless, a growing contingency of researchers are concerned with cataloging and organizing the consistently reported subjective effects of drug-induced mind states and attempting to correlate them with measurements of brain activity. After all, the brain’s response to a drug can also be realized in the language of the receptors they influence, how strong their

effects are at these sites, and how the subtle work of single neurons creates the pattern of activation observed in larger networks.

### TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

An obvious starting point in this task would be defining how an altered brain differs from a sober one. Accomplishing this work requires such technologies as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to observe the metabolism of groups of brain cells in “real time,” as well as positron emission tomography (PET) hardware to detect the metabolism of specific radioactive substances introduced into the body by the experimenter. Pharmacological developments have produced rapidly growing catalogues of psychoactive compounds that have meshed well with the application of biological imaging systems. A prolific amount of information is being gained from the dynamic interaction of drugs and imaging technologies.

Fitting the data within a flexible framework that is compatible with preexisting theories on altered states of consciousness (ASC) is the work of many scientists. At this year’s conference in Tucson, Franz Vollenweider, PhD, of the University of Zurich and Thomas Ray, PhD, of the University of Oklahoma, offered both experimental results and theoretical ruminations about psychedelics and the nature of consciousness as it can be understood in physical terms.

Vollenweider cites three qualities that characterize psychedelic experience and other altered states: Oceanic Boundlessness, Dread of Ego-Dissolution, and Visionary Restructuralisation. The first of these, Oceanic Boundlessness, refers to the phenomena of unity, transcendence, and mystical encounter. The Dread of Ego-Dissolution is the experience of paranoia or milder forms of mental turbulence associated with the fear of loss of the ego and its boundaries. Finally, Visionary Restructuralisation refers to the sensory aberrations and distortions (a.k.a. visuals, hallucinations, etc.) that give hallucinogenic experiences their name. An altered state of consciousness questionnaire known as the APZ, developed by Adolph Dittrich in 1975, allows scientists to obtain self-reports of these independent and parallel aspects of the psychedelic experience. The APZ is one of several indices concerned with the subjective and physiological manifestations of ASCs, whether induced by drugs, other technologies like trance or meditation, or as a result of clinical psychosis.

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Vollenweider's work is concerned with outlining the anatomical circuitry that may subserve these states of consciousness and the influence of pharmacological drug technologies on their functioning. Specifically, Vollenweider cites five feedback loops between the thalamus, cortex, and subcortical limbic structures that control the "gating" of information flow to the prefrontal cortex. For instance, PET scan studies on the brains of subjects under the effects of psilocybin and ketamine reveal a higher level of activity in the frontal cortex than normal (hyperfrontality). Many drugs that influence dopamine or glutamate receptors will alter the way the thalamus filters incoming sensory stimuli, causing an "overload" of the prefrontal cortex accompanied by psychotic symptoms such as paranoia and loss of ego. Understanding the loss of self/non-self boundaries in neurological terms might allow insight into the way the self is constructed.

This concept might be best illustrated by somebody "having a bad trip." The loss of one's feeling of connection to external reality that often accompanies a difficult experience is precisely what Vollenweider predicts as one of the psychological effects of increased activity in the frontal regions of the brain, brought on by a kind of sensory overload. And perhaps not surprisingly, it is that very same activity that he proposes as also being related to feelings of transcendence, timelessness, and the hallucinatory effects of psychedelics (though he did not oversimplify this for editorial purposes as we are doing now). It seems here that the psychedelic journey through the subjectively "bad" feelings (of ego loss) might be exactly how we get the subjectively "good" feelings (of boundlessness), and vice versa.

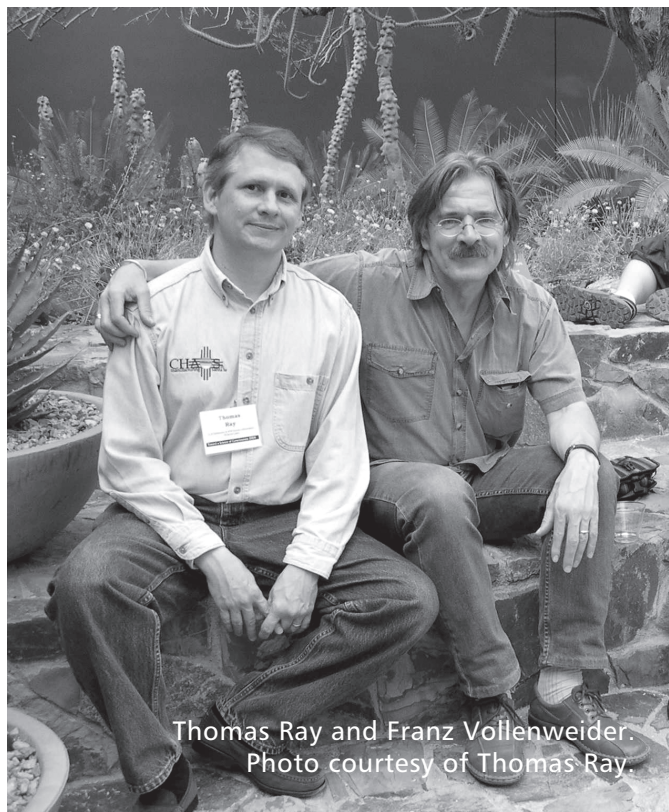
Thomas Ray, PhD, challenged the way most pharmacological literature classifies drugs. He explained that the most common type of outgoing transmitter involved in most psychedelic drug reactions is the chemical serotonin (5HT). Likewise, the most common sites in the brain on which psychedelics exert their effects are a subset of receptors classified as 5HT-2. In fact, most medical and psychopharmacology literature classifies various drugs according to the sites to which they bind or have the most effect upon.

It is this "one receptor" orthodoxy with which Ray takes strong exception. He argued that it is vastly oversimplified to think of any drug in terms of only one receptor site on which it has some effect. A more sophisticated view would include not only the secondary and tertiary sites to which a drug binds, but also to the many different sets of receptors that undergo some alteration as a result of a drug's binding to the "main" receptor (substituting the drug molecule for its endogenous analogue).

#### **MAPPING THE HIGH**

Relating first person questionnaires to third person brain measures permits us to map internal mind states to their neurological underpinnings. Ray proposed a way that this may be done. He argued that with as much as we now know about the brain and the drugs that affect it, we may gain a more complex idea of those effects by combining our knowledge of the various receptors in the brain with our knowledge of various subjective states known to be related to those receptors. Ray hopes that with this expanded vision of the brain and mind, we may eventually construct models of brain regions that relate to given behavioral functions, and how those affected functions relate to our internal states of consciousness.

Ray recommends the development of an abstract "receptor space," which would have coordinate axes comprised of psychological scales such as those of the APZ



Thomas Ray and Franz Vollenweider.  
Photo courtesy of Thomas Ray.



running perpendicular to physiological dimensions, like the strength with which psychoactive substances bind to the receptors they influence. His project involves applying the work conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health Psychoactive Drug Screening Program (NIMH-PDSP) on chemicals such as psilocin, MDMA, MDA, 2C-B, DMT, mescaline, and others. The PDSP began in 1998 and was designed as a large scale survey of several classes of psychedelic compounds across a wide array of the receptors they influence.

Within Ray's dynamic systems framework, an average brain at a sober baseline could be understood in relation to brains under the influence of psychedelics or commonly-prescribed prescription medication, as well as minds with pathological disturbances. The potential therapeutic application of a model such as this is invaluable. In addition, it is representative of the expanding trend of researchers uniting first and third person perspectives through growing technologies. Ray noted an analogous relationship between the 18 month doubling of the computing capacity of microprocessors and a 50 year doubling of the psychoactive substances being synthesized. The current pharmacological explosion coupled with new ways to stimulate and view intact brains offers consciousness researchers a massive library of tools to help bridge the explanatory gap between subjective phenomena and objective brain measures.

#### THE FLAW IN THE FIRST PERSON

In addition to work on psychedelics and visual awareness, Olivia Carter, a PhD student at the University of Queensland in Australia, presented several studies dealing with attention and short-term memory in subjects who were given psilocybin. Subjects in these experiments exhibited behavioral effects also seen in patients diagnosed with schizophrenia. Specifically, people given psilocybin had the subjective feeling that they were performing quite well on memory-attention tasks, when in fact their performance was well below that of normal subjects. In fact, even though one experiment presented the subjects with an audible "beep" sound when they made a mistake at the task, one subject insisted that the computerized beep was wrong and that he was in fact performing flawlessly. Perhaps some readers have seen this very same effect in a friend or colleague under the effects of a psychedelic drug. We hate to break the bad news here, but when looking for verifiable increases in memory and attention under a psychedelic, the only factor that is really increased is the subject's illusion that he/she is performing flawlessly!

#### PSYCHEDELICS AS TOOLS OF STUDY

While psychedelic research is often marginalized in scientific communities, in Tucson, discussion of psychedelics was integrated throughout the conference. In addition to the plenary panelists, several others presented on topics related to psychedelics, including ketamine expert Karl Jansen, MD, PhD, and anthropologist Michael Winkelman, PhD. Ayahuasca was a popular topic, with a number of lectures on the effects and anthropology of its use. Researchers at the Tucson conference were actively studying the mechanism of psychedelic drugs with the tools of consciousness research, and using these drugs themselves as tools of consciousness research.

The biennial "Toward a Science of Consciousness" conferences are a rich and fertile backdrop for the discussion of the connection between mind and brain, and the infinitely complex implications of these connections. It is the view of the authors that these questions should not be left merely up to the above specialists, but will also benefit from the input of those with experience in the various aspects of consciousness that are only illuminated by the psychedelic experience. •

Specifically,  
people given  
psilocybin  
had the  
subjective feeling  
that they were  
performing  
quite well on  
memory-attention  
tasks,  
when in fact  
their performance  
was well below  
that of  
normal subjects.

# Demystifying the Mystical

## the association for transpersonal psychology 2004 conference

by Valerie Mojeiko • [valerie@maps.org](mailto:valerie@maps.org)

**Transpersonal psychologists gather in Palo Alto  
to scientifically explore new frontiers  
of psychological research,  
and revisit some that  
mainstream psychology has left behind.**



Transpersonal psychology, a field proud of its openness to inquiry and acceptance of change, is the only branch of psychology that lacks a clear definition of itself. It has traditionally embraced psychedelic therapy along with other marginalized aspects of psychological research: spirituality, peak experience, and paranormal phenomena. In return, the psychedelic experience has been a valuable tool in the field of transpersonal psychology, adding insight into peak experience, pre- and perinatal matrices, ego death, spiritual emergency, and archetypes.

MAPS staff attended "Transpersonal Psychology 2004, a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference," held in Palo Alto, California on Valentine's Day weekend, to further reinforce the already strong bond between transpersonal psychology and psychedelics. The event drew psychologists, therapists, educators, health professionals, researchers, scholars, writers, students, and others interested in the transpersonal field.

A large crowd assembled to hear Dr. June May Ruse, lead author of MAPS' manual for MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Dr. Ruse presented the treatment procedures with the confidence of being only weeks from final DEA approval. The audience, which contained not only attendees, but also a majority of the conference organizers, expressed a supportive attitude and hopefulness for the reinstatement of psychedelic research in the U.S.

In a keynote speech, father of psychedelic therapy Dr. Stanislav Grof passed on his theories developed from a lifetime of working with holotropic states of consciousness. Grof gave a call to action for all of the psychologists in attendance: it is time for the field of psychology to break free from the 17<sup>th</sup> century postnatal view of the psyche and extend studies and practice to the prenatal, perinatal, archetypal/mythical, and transpersonal realms.

Other keynote speakers included Charles Tart, PhD and Jeanne Achterberg, PhD. Tart examined several topics in parapsychology that deserve more research based on preliminary evidence in his presentation titled, "Flaky California nonsense in a scientific age: Is there any scientific support for Transpersonal Psychology?" Achterberg reviewed imagery and healing studies by her students and others in the field.

A special event was held on Saturday night for the film *Making the Invisible Visible: The Life and Work of Stanley Krippner*. A discussion panel featuring Tart, Ralph Metzner, PhD, Stanley Krippner, PhD, and others followed the film.

The conference was held in the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology's William James Center for Consciousness Studies. The center's namesake, pioneer of altered consciousness William James, was mentioned often in the lectures, and even featured as the main topic of discussion in others. Cognitive liberty and entheogen law specialist Richard Glen Boire's mock trial, "In Defense of William James and Other

Users of Psychoactive Consciousness Tools” was one provocative example. When challenged by an audience member with the possibility that freedom of mind will allow people to legally partake in potentially dangerous activities such as glue-sniffing, Boire likened cognitive liberty to freedom of speech: We allow people with racist or other socially-inappropriate beliefs to speak their minds in the practice of allowing free speech for all.

The Institute for Transpersonal Psychology ([www.itp.edu](http://www.itp.edu)) and the Association for Transpersonal Psychology ([www.atpweb.org](http://www.atpweb.org)) jointly sponsored this gathering of consciousness explorers. The Association was originally founded to investigate ultimate states—peak, mystical, being—and enhance these states to change personal and cultural perspectives. The Institute, a graduate school dedicated to exploring the mind, body, and spirit, operates from the unlikely location of a Silicon Valley corporate office park. A large number of students were in attendance both from the Institute itself and from nearby transpersonal psychology programs at California Institute of Integral Studies and Saybrook Graduate School.

From my view of this conference, transpersonal psychology still has some work left to do on changing its image if it will be accepted by mainstream psychology. Its lack of definition, willingness to embrace fields of study that most others deny existence of, and tendency to attract “non-mainstream” people all contribute to a slight air of flakiness. On the other hand, mainstream psychology desperately needs adventurous researchers who are willing to explore these risky areas in order to provide fresh ideas and open new areas of inquiry. By sticking more rigidly to the scientific method, and speaking the language of the traditional psychologists, transpersonal psychologists can earn the respect they deserve as psychology’s brave explorers, pioneering new frontiers in therapy and research. •

“...mainstream psychology

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and open

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of inquiry.”

## **Sixteenth International Transpersonal Association Conference**

**“Mythic Imagination and Modern Society: Search for Re-Enchantment of the World”**

**JUNE 11–18, 2004**

**At the fabulous Riviera Resort in Palm Springs, CA**

This conference will focus on the importance of myth in modern society. We will explore how the new understanding of the nature and function of myth revealed by the work of C. G. Jung, Joseph Campbell, James Hillman, Mircea Eliade, and their followers has revolutionized the thinking in many areas of modern life. Like previous ITA events, the format of this meeting will combine lectures, experiential sessions, rituals, music, dance, and visual arts. The conference coincides with the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Joseph Campbell, the greatest mythologist of the twentieth century. For more information, see:

• **[www.itaconferences.org](http://www.itaconferences.org)** •



## Heaven and Hell

### the entheogenesis conference in downtown vancouver

by Valerie Mojeiko (with contributions from Brandy Doyle) • [valerie@maps.org](mailto:valerie@maps.org)



marc emery

Sandwiched between Vancouver's Amsterdam Café and the Blunt Brothers Café, the B.C. Marijuana Party Bookstore is the official headquarters for the political organization founded by self-declared Prince of Pot, Marc Emery. Emery's gray-market empire was built on his *Cannabis* seed business, and the store—located on the marijuana tourism block of Hastings Street in downtown Vancouver—sells seeds, books, and smoking accessories. Emery's Internet-broadcast network, Pot-TV ([www.pot-tv.net](http://www.pot-tv.net)), hosted a convergence of entheogen enthusiasts from Canada and beyond. Attendees gathered in the bookstore's basement to share ideas about the application of these substances in spiritual, religious, and therapeutic contexts, on January 31 and February 1, 2004. (A few months later, on April 25, a suspicious fire ravaged the block, destroying several businesses and temporarily closing Emery's bookstore and seed shop. They are now again open for business.)

*Entheogenesis* was the word created for the occasion. Carl Ruck, PhD—one of the folks who coined the term *entheogen*—defined this new word-spin as “experiencing divine inspiration from the use of [psychoactive] plants.” The term seems to reflect the tastes of those who choose to use the word *entheogen*—literally translated as something that “generates God within.” The tone of those gathered was decidedly spiritual, and many in attendance seemed partial to plant teachers over synthetics. *Cannabis*, mushrooms, ayahuasca, and peyote were all popular topics of conversation.

Editor of the *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics*, Dr. Ethan Russo presented two lectures, the first of which, “Bhang, Ganja, and Charas: Ancient *Cannabis* Claims and their Scientific Rationale,” opened the conference. Russo's impressively-detailed presentation verified the folkloric therapeutic uses of marijuana with modern-day research. Shortly after Russo's presentation, several conference attendees, including myself, were incapacitated from the thick cloud of marijuana smoke that had settled in the room. While we were

recovering upstairs, conference organizer and Pot-TV manager Chris Bennett explained *Cannabis* references in the Bible to the select group of people who had passed the test of marijuana tolerance.

In our red-eyed, contact-high mind states, a friend and I journeyed outside of the basement, browsed the legal entheobotanicals for sale in the Urban Shaman, and ventured out along Hastings Street to explore a beautiful yet poverty-stricken urban setting—Vancouver's downtown east side. As my companion that this area has extraordinarily high rates of addiction, prostitution, and crime, we passed a man in a wheelchair preparing a syringe, then maneuvered between two cops in conversation on one half of the sidewalk, and two people not-so-clandestinely conducting a drug deal on the other. Further still, we came upon the modest storefront of Insite, a newly-opened clinic that provides IV drug users with clean needles and a safe place to use them.

In this setting of hard drug use and liberal harm reduction responses, an exploration of entheogens was hardly controversial. Back inside, Buddhist scholar Mike Crowley's presentation, “The Secret Drugs of Buddhism” explored the possibility that psychedelic mushrooms may have been *soma*, the ancient drug-god of the East. Ruck and Blaise Staples, PhD referenced fungi again when they traced similarities of Christianity and Mithraism, and the entheogenic (possibly mushroom-based) roots of Christianity.

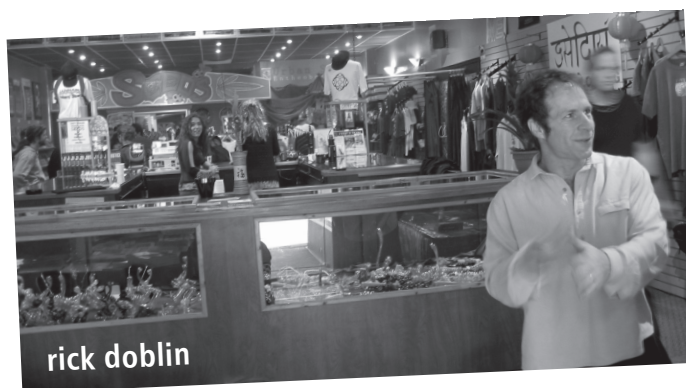
One of Marc Emery's many projects is the Iboga Therapy House ([www.ibogatherapy.org](http://www.ibogatherapy.org)). Sandra Karpetas, director of this clinic (which uses a compound isolated from the West African shrub *Tabernanthe iboga* in the treatment of drug addiction), spoke eloquently about this project. In the coming months, I will be working with Sandra and the Iboga

Therapy House, as well as Randy Hencken from the Ibogaine Association clinic in Mexico, to conduct a MAPS-funded outcome study on the efficacy of ibogaine-assisted therapy in treating substance addiction (see page 7).

MAPS' president, Rick Doblin, PhD, outlined MAPS' strategy and goals as a non-profit pharmaceutical company, explaining why FDA-approved research is our chosen route for making these drugs available for beneficial use. As regulatory agencies begin to approve the studies which MAPS has been advancing, we move toward what Rick called "a contingency plan in case of success;" that is, the actual strategies involved in developing these drugs into prescription medicines.

Jon Hanna, author and organizer of the Mind States conferences ([www.mindstates.org](http://www.mindstates.org)), visually and aurally-stimulated the audience with a slideshow of contemporary psychedelic art from the past 40 years, titled "Psychedelics, Altered Consciousness, and Visionary Art." The slides were accompanied by an explanation of common symbols and themes in psychedelic art, ambient music, and a convincing Terence McKenna impression.

Filmmaker and parapsychologist Jean Millay, PhD, presented a 1965 peyote-inspired film she co-created with Allen Willis, *The Psychedelic Experience*. The abstract imagery, accompanied by the voices of Tim Leary and Ralph Metzner, set the tone for her talk. Describing personal accounts of psi (telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis), parties with the Grateful Dead, and other early explorations with LSD, she painted the audience a picture of the days before LSD prohibition.



rick doblin

Perhaps one of the most dynamic speakers was saved for last. Attorney David Aaron, a Canadian version of cognitive liberty advocate Richard Glen Boire, presented a mock trial in which he painstakingly outlined the defense of a mushroom user based on the Canadian constitution, civil

liberties, and ideas borrowed from Boire, Rick Doblin, and Terence McKenna.

While the atmosphere was generally engaging and intentional, the conference could have benefited from a larger space and better ventilation. The cavalier and on-stage use of psychedelic drugs—political theater disguised as psychedelic experimentation—seemed to violate every rule I know about set and setting. It did, however, illustrate how far this might go without generating a police counterattack under the protection of Emery's empire: very far. After two days of intellectually and experientially exploring the spiritual import of God-manifesting substances, we emerged from the Marijuana Party Bookstore back into the downtown east side, known by some residents as "hell." The contrast—between heaven and hell—was sharp.

Transpersonal psychologists Stanislav and Christina Grof have pointed out that drug dependency, for many people, is a form of spiritual emergency. The journey of the addict to the bottom and back up into recovery is often an ego death-and-rebirth process. While from the surface these worlds look quite different, I realized that the meth, heroin, and crack addicts of the downtown east side and the entheogen-using spiritual seekers are, in some ways, on the same quest for wholeness. In the midst of an inner city in spiritual crisis, people are open to creating new and less harmful cultural models for seeking spirituality and meaning. Likewise, the liberal harm reduction policies and low penalties for casual drug use that made open exploration of entheogens possible at Entheogenesis exist in response to the failures of prohibition that are evident just outside. A visit to Vancouver and this conference showed the interconnection of the highs and lows of human experience. It also offered the hope that, personally and politically, the most troubled times are often those that open us to new possibilities and greater healing. •



ethan russo

Video of all of the presentations from the Entheogenesis conference is available at [www.pot-tv.net](http://www.pot-tv.net). Also see [www.entheogenesis.ca](http://www.entheogenesis.ca).

# When the Ordinary Becomes Addictive: Conference Report

## mainstream psychologists in new york adopt the harm reduction model

by Valerie Mojeiko • [valerie@maps.org](mailto:valerie@maps.org)

While addiction  
is a lesser  
problem  
in the psychedelic  
community  
than in  
some other  
communities  
of drug users,  
the issue of  
drug addiction  
influences the  
moral and legal  
classification  
of all drugs.

The definitions of use and abuse, dependence and addiction can be blurry, whether debated by treatment providers or a user's concerned peers. Questioning the meaning of addiction as a diagnostic term was the purpose of a conference sponsored by the New York State Psychological Association (NYSPA) at New School University in Manhattan, April 23, 2004. "Going Too Far: When the Ordinary Becomes Addictive" drew students, clinicians, and researchers from New York and the surrounding New England areas to examine the question.

The harm reduction paradigm was not only accepted at this mainstream psychology conference, it actually seemed to be considered the ideal. Leading harm reduction psychotherapist Andrew Tatarsky, PhD, was at the top of the speaker lineup, setting a tone for the rest of the day. He challenged the "drug war mentality" that blames society's drug problems on drugs, and outlined the harm reduction approach, which emphasizes the user's relationship with, motives for, and methods of drug use.

Stanton Peele, PhD, J.D., whose once radical ideas about substance abuse and addiction have now become the norm, challenged the audience with still more controversial insights about the relative ineffectiveness of substance abuse treatment compared to no treatment at all. Also on the recreational drug panel was social worker Sippio Michael Small, C.S.W., who offered a racial perspective on drug use with observations from his work with children of color. A mostly educated, white-collar, Caucasian audience remained transfixed as Small explained how it is illegal in his hometown of Harlem to pass around a brown-bagged bottle of liquor in the park, while a few blocks away fancy street cafes serve wine and beer on the sidewalk to people of a different socio-economic background.

Psychiatric medications earned their own panel, classified separately from illegal drugs in the conference (just like in the federal government regulatory systems). President of the NYSPA Division of Addictions Julie Barnes, PhD, presented several scenarios in which patients "tricked" their doctors into prescribing a medications for recreational or otherwise illicit reasons. Robert Forman, PhD, of the Treatment Research Institute, gave an illuminating lecture on the availability of drugs on the Internet. Addictions psychiatrist Mark Green, MD, explained how heroin use has been replaced by use of prescription opioids such as oxycodone among teenagers.

Other panels at the conference addressed addictive patterns of eating and sex. This further served to lessen the stigma on addicts and take the emphasis off of the objects of their addictive behaviors. The therapists themselves could all accept and relate to the pleasures of eating and sex, even though many of them may have been inexperienced with the pleasures of drug use.

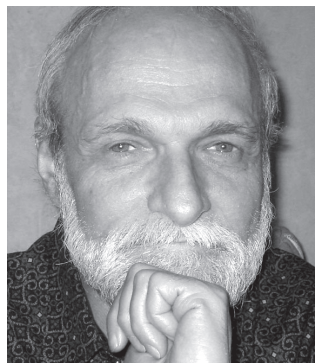
Changing views on addiction reflect a step forward in our society's understanding of drugs. While addiction is a lesser problem in the psychedelic community than in some other communities of drug users, the issue of drug addiction influences the moral and legal classification of all drugs. At this conference, I saw mainstream psychologists embracing the harm reduction model—yet another sign that the prohibitionist paradigms are changing. As the harm reduction model switches the responsibility to the user, and not the substance used, psychologists and the rest of the public may re-evaluate psychedelics and marijuana, noting the often beneficial ways these substances are used. By switching the control, and the blame, away from the drugs themselves—we come one step closer to changing outdated drug prohibitory laws. •



# Ibogaine at the Invitational Drug User Activism Conference

## a historical perspective of opiate using and scientific communities

by Howard S. Lotsof • dwf123@earthlink.net



Another  
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### OPIATE USING COMMUNITIES

Since 1996, drug user activists have observed International Drug Users Day (IDUD) each November 1. On October 31, and November 1, 2003, the Danish Drug Users Union (BrugerForeningen) in cooperation with the Dutch National Interest Group of Drug Users held the Invitational Conference on Drug User Activism in Copenhagen, Denmark.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Having a significant history in drug user advocacy, harm reduction, and chemical dependence issues, I sought participation in the conference. I was delighted to be asked to present on ibogaine by Joergen Kjaer, President of BrugerForeningen (BF). Conference participants were from the U.S., U.K., Denmark, Netherlands, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Macedonia.

The Copenhagen conference was of particular interest as it was comprised of active drug users, a group that has principally been responsible for the initial interest in ibogaine's anti-addictive effects in the U.S. and the Netherlands. I was also curious about how ibogaine is now viewed by drug user activists, as at a Berlin conference circa 1990–91, interest in ibogaine had been rejected out of concern that it would interfere with the availability of heroin maintenance programs. The proposal in support of ibogaine at that event was made by members of Dutch Addict Self-Help (DASH), an organization responsible for providing ibogaine treatments in the Netherlands and petitioning the Dutch government to back ibogaine availability in the late 1980s through the early 1990s.

The situation at the 2003 Copenhagen conference had completely changed. I was invited to present on ibogaine and did not have to raise the issue from the floor. Though my presentation was late in the day, it was attended by sixty of the seventy participants in the conference. Especially interesting was the presence of three persons who had taken

ibogaine, one from Denmark, one from the Netherlands, and one from Croatia. Very specific questions concerning dose, safety, outcome, and availability were asked and answered. This situation is fascinating; the Danish users group (BF) is well organized, and the largest source of *Tabernanthe iboga* extracts that have been field tested by users and providers in recent years (in Europe, Mexico, and Canada) comes from a Danish supplier.<sup>4</sup>

### SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITIES

As MAPS is an organization directed towards social and scientific understanding of psychoactive substances, it is appropriate that some discussion be given to the scientific community's response to ibogaine, as well as that of the drug user community. While preparing presentations on ibogaine, methadone, and buprenorphine for the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence<sup>5</sup> and the New York City Forum on Iboga and Ibogaine,<sup>6</sup> I found that a retrospective analysis of concurrent pharmacotherapy development in the U.S. and Europe helped explain why ibogaine has not been developed as a medicine despite its potential.

In the mid 1980s, when ibogaine was first considered for regulatory development by the FDA and Ministry of Health, researchers expected the normal resistance to the development of a new technology. Another predictable resistance came from what one National Institute on Drug Abuse insider called the NIH syndrome: “not invented here.”

However, ibogaine's development faced more than these usual obstacles. It became common to hear ibogaine proponents state that the “methadone community” was blocking ibogaine development, but this isn't entirely accurate. By 1988 there were approximately 100,000 methadone patients in the U.S.,<sup>7</sup> and use of the drug for maintenance in the treatment of chemical dependence had gone on for over twenty years.<sup>8</sup> While it may be true

that some core methadone researchers were opposed to ibogaine research, methadone maintenance originator Dr. Vincent Dole supported clinical studies with ibogaine.

The problem lay not with the researchers but with the funders. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) funds 85% of the world's drug addiction research.<sup>9</sup> A review of the drugs that NIDA has developed or collaborated in developing that are specific to the treatment of chemical dependence provides important information. These drugs include naltrexone, methadone, LAAM, and buprenorphine. All of these substances are either opiate agonists, opiate antagonists, or in the case of buprenorphine, a mixed agonist/antagonist. In the simplest terms, opiate agonists mimic the effects of narcotics and opiate antagonists reverse the effects of narcotics. With a vested interest in these drugs, NIDA has little motivation to fund studies on other dependence treatment options. And because ibogaine cannot be patented, for-profit pharmaceutical companies show no interest.

Ibogaine is also outside the model created by these types of drug treatments. It is not a maintenance drug, as it is used only once or twice. In addition to its anti-addictive properties, it produces a powerful psychedelic experience, which creates greater resistance from the mainstream research and drug treatment communities.

This leaves us with the question of whether iboga alkaloid researchers Deborah C. Mash at the University of Miami School of Medicine<sup>10</sup> and Stanley D. Glick, Chairman of the Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience at Albany Medical Center<sup>11</sup> can convince the research community and a new generation of pharmacologists and medicinal chemists to take an interest in the structure and utility of ibogaine-like medications. Or, is this responsibility to remain in the hands of drug user activists? •

NOTE: Thirty days after Lotsof's presentation on ibogaine, the conservative Danish government restricted ibogaine concurrently with their police actions against Christiania's marijuana trade. See page 7 for Valerie Mojeiko's report on a MAPS-funded outcome study of ibogaine treatment clinics. This project advances the state of ibogaine research with the efforts of drug user and harm reduction activists, joining these two communities.

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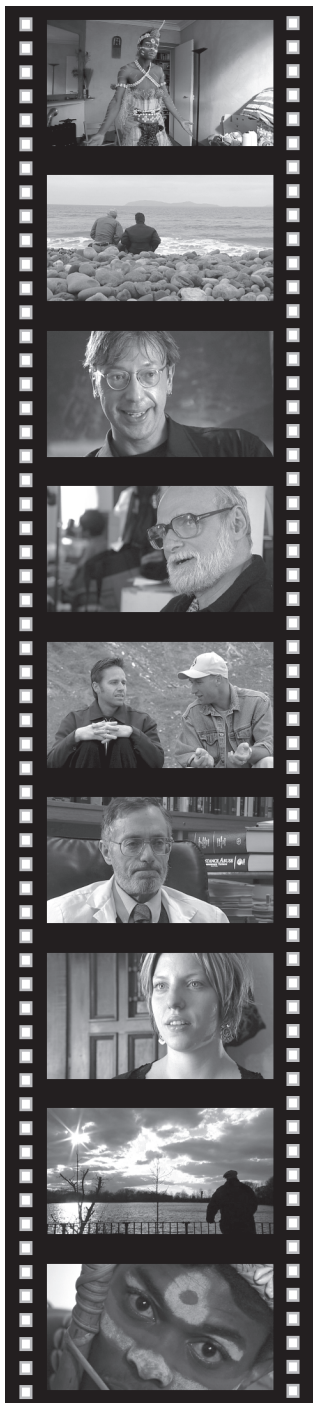
Correspondence: Howard S. Lotsof, President, Dora Weiner Foundation, 46 Oxford Place, Staten Island, NY 10301.

Ibogaine  
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It is not  
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or twice.  
In addition to  
its anti-addictive  
properties,  
it produces  
a powerful  
psychedelic  
experience...



## New Ibogaine Documentary an appeal for funds

by Ben de Loenan • daluna@mindvox.com



Derived from the root of the African plant *Tabernanthe iboga*, which grows in Gabon, ibogaine was originally used during initiations of the Bwiti culture. In the 1960s, the anti-addictive properties of this psychoactive substance were discovered by Howard Lotsof. Since then, ibogaine has been surrounded by controversy. The decisions about the use of ibogaine in the treatment of addiction appear to have been made on a political and economical, rather than rational basis.

I have always been very interested in addiction and other social problems. I started researching ibogaine two years ago, and developed a concept for a documentary—Retrospection on the Future—for my final exam project for the Utrecht School of the Arts in Holland. Since then the project has grown significantly, to the point where it has become a professional production. During these two years of hard work, it became clear to me that ibogaine is something people should know about. In the media, ibogaine has so far been portrayed as either a miracle cure or a dangerous hallucinogen. By showing the different aspects related to ibogaine I want to invite the viewer to form his or her own opinion on the subject.

This film project will visualize the diversity of ibogaine uses by showing personal experiences from the Iboga Therapy House in Vancouver, the Ibogaine Association in Mexico, and Sara's House in Holland, as well as the traditional initiations in Gabon. The film includes interviews with scientists, treatment providers, ex-addicts, parents and the Bwiti community. It offers an intriguing, personal insight into the lives of different addicts during their life-transforming process. Even more unique, we will show the opinion of the Bwiti people on the use of ibogaine in the Western world, something that has never been brought into the discussion around the subject.

Of the three shooting periods for the film—one in Holland and France, one in Mexico, Canada, and the U.S., and one in Africa—the first two are complete. During the first shooting period we filmed a treatment at Sara's House, close to Amsterdam. We also interviewed several people, including Howard Lotsof and the Dutch addiction expert Peter Cohen. In Paris we interviewed a famous Gabonese *Nganga* (shaman) called Mallendi, who has initiated about a thousand people so far. During the second shooting period we filmed one treatment in Mexico at the Ibogaine Association and one in Vancouver at the Iboga Therapy House. We also conducted interviews—in San Diego, Vancouver, New York, Albany, Miami, Gainesville and Sarasota—with the treatment providers Randy Hencken, Sandra Karpetas, and Eric Taub; scientists such as Stanley Glick and Kenneth Alper; ex-addicts; the father of an ex-addict; and a psychotherapist.

The shooting period in Africa is planned for July, but a lot of production work still needs to be done, and the most urgent issue is funding. We already have the cooperation of the local people; they are proud of their culture and have a lot to say to the Western world. There is a young African woman who has agreed on being filmed during her initiation. Now we need to obtain the funding to make this possible. To do that we still need about \$3500 to pay for the flights, the equipment rentals, food, and permits.

The film has become very important to addicts who want to change their lives, the people that conduct research and treatment with ibogaine, and of course myself. My goal is to distribute the film internationally, so as many people as possible will learn about this substance. Tax-deductible donations to MAPS can be made for this project. •



## Ecstasy Rising

Peter Jennings's astonishing  
prime-time documentary

by **Brandy Doyle** • [brandy@maps.org](mailto:brandy@maps.org)



The Peter Jennings documentary "Ecstasy Rising," which aired April 1, 2004, on ABC, left me wanting to watch it again with my mother.

In what was surely the first time on major network television, the hour-long special discussed the beneficial uses of MDMA and the harms inherent in government misinformation about drugs. Those interviewed included Rick Doblin, Sasha Shulgin, Ralph Metzner, Steve Kish, and MDMA researcher Dr. Charles Grob. Most poignantly, the show included interviews with a woman expressing her gratitude for an MDMA experience 20 years ago that helped her cope with the trauma of rape.

A major focus in the documentary was the ineffectiveness of government warnings about drugs when based on exaggerated and/or unreliable information, like that taken from the flawed research conducted by Dr. George Ricaurte. Jennings discussed Dr. Ricaurte's retracted dopaminergic neurotoxicity study claiming that MDMA caused Parkinson's disease, and interviewed researchers who questioned his previous work on serotonin (that formed the basis of NIDA's anti-Ecstasy educational campaign, which gave the false impression that MDMA causes holes in the brain).

Marsha Rosenbaum of the Drug Policy Alliance wrote, "In all the years I've been watching networks of all kinds doing shows about drugs of all kinds, never have I seen such a factual, honest, balanced program. The producers truly 'got it' and they had the guts to run a show that seriously counters the governments' line."

Dale Gieringer, of California NORML, said, "Peter Jennings' Primetime Special 'Ecstasy Rising' was truly epochal. This is the first time since the Sixties I can remember a drug portrayed in so positive a light... This could mark the start of a monumental shift in the public perception of illegal drugs!"

Unsurprisingly, Drug Czar John Walters, the Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, complained to ABC about the program. U.S. Congressman Mark Souder (R-IN) condemned it as well, saying that Peter Jennings was lacking a "moral compass." In response to these criticisms, MAPS and the Drug Policy Alliance organized letter-writing campaigns to thank ABC for their honest and balanced coverage. The show's co-producer, Jordan Kronick, wrote MAPS, saying, "The quantity and quality of positive letters has been outstanding. Thanks very, very much."

According to the producers, over ten million people tuned in to this historic show. MAPS members organized viewings of the documentary in eleven cities, from San Francisco to Spokane to Brooklyn! On ABC's website message boards, viewers held a lively discussion about the show, with most comments quite favorable.

If you would also like to watch the special with your mother (or your kids), MAPS has copies available, along with the ABC *World News Tonight* two-minute feature story on MAPS' MDMA/PTSD study which also aired on April 1, and Peter Jennings' April 1 interview on *Larry King Live*, in which he expressed his surprise at the misinformation about Ecstasy put forth by NIDA and other government officials.

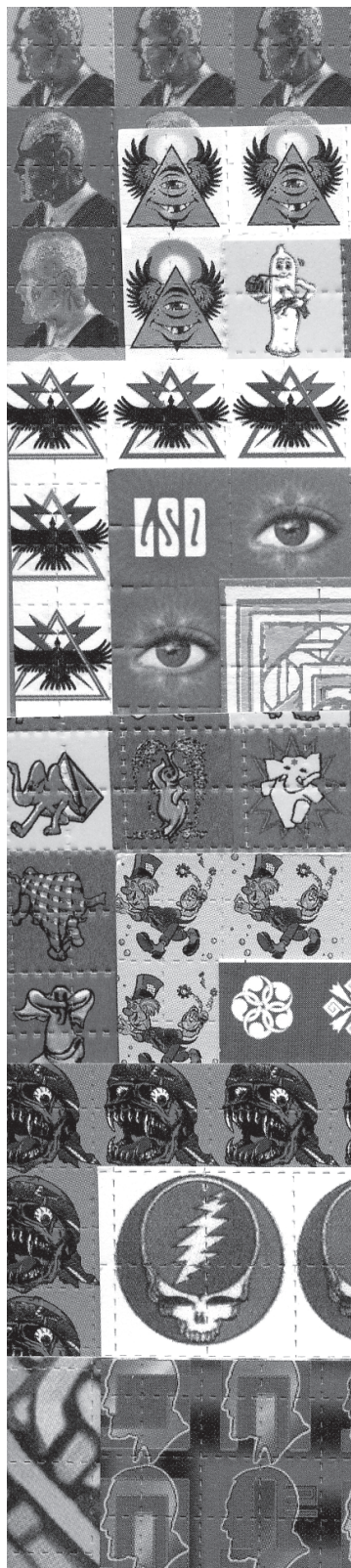
You can purchase a copy in one of two ways: 1) Make a \$15.00 donation on the MAPS website and write "for Ecstasy Rising documentary" in the "Notes" section, or 2) Mail a \$15.00 check or money order to: MAPS, 2105 Robinson Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34232. Please specify whether you would like VHS or DVD.

The "Ecstasy Rising" documentary is yet another piece of evidence that a cultural shift is underway, one that MAPS is both benefiting from and helping to create. •

**"In all the years I've been watching networks of all kinds  
doing shows about drugs of all kinds, never have I seen such a factual,  
honest, balanced program." — Marsha Rosenbaum**

## LSD Blotter Art

by **Thomas Lyttle** • [thomlyttle@aol.com](mailto:thomlyttle@aol.com)



MAPS has recently received nearly \$20,000 due to the sale of signed blotter art that was donated by Tom Lyttle and Jon Hanna. This story is about the origins and development of blotter as an art form.

## THE EARLY DAYS

Early on in the underground trade of illegal LSD, it was distributed in pills or capsules, or sometimes dropped onto sugar cubes. Around 1970, LSD first began to appear on sheets of perforated blotter paper. This trend has continued, and even today, most street LSD is still distributed on perforated or unperforated blotter paper, often covered with logos or art, and sometimes sold under “brand names.” In the past, blotter art was printed fairly secretly, with underground producers perforating it using hand-cranked machines, feeding in a single sheet and cutting it in one direction at a time, before flipping the sheet 90 degrees to crank the completing set of perf lines. These days, the art is usually printed via the four-color separation process. One blotter art producer recently even went so far to print his design on a hemp-blend paper with soy-based edible inks. Perforations for blotter are nowadays primarily done by professionals in the print industry, quickly stamped out by the thousands via automated die-cutting machines.

As LSD entered our cultural consciousness, it affected a generation of artists. In the late 1960s, “fantastic realist” painters like Mati Klarwein and Robert Venosa were heavily influenced by LSD. The album cover art that they produced for Santana’s *Abraxas* reflected this new style. (This cover later appeared in miniature on LSD blotter art.) In San Francisco, underground comic and rock-and-roll poster artists like R. Crumb and Stanley Mouse soon saw their images appropriated for use on LSD art, which featured the likes of “Mr. Natural” and “Flying Eyeballs.” In more recent years, work from contemporary psychedelic artists has also appeared on blotter, such as “Carbon Jesus” (aka “Purple Jesus”) by Alex Grey, “Lucifer” by Reverend Samuel, and “Tribute to Preston Blair” by Frank Kozik.

Eventually, satirical blotter art started showing up; one sheet depicted the “FBI Emblems,” while another featured the mug of former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev—the popular “Gorby” acid. Every variety of pop art and ideology became fair game, as LSD blotter art spread like wild fire. LSD is a powerful spiritual experience for many, and for some this experience has political overtones. It also seems to enhance the creative process. Occult or religious symbols, moiré patterns, and fractal designs have been exploited on blotter art. Examples include: “Chinese Dragons,” “Pentagrams,” “Tetragrammatons,” “Eye of Horus,” “Knights of Malta Crests,” and so on. But one of the most consistently popular inspirations for blotter imagery has remained the lowly comic or animated character. Over the years, examples of appropriated cartoons have included Otto Messmer’s “Felix the Cat” and Walt Disney’s “Goofy” and “Mickey Mouse Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” as well as the more contemporary “Beavis and Butt-head,” “Bart Simpson,” and “South Park.”

## FROM THE STREETS TO SOHO

The original collector and scene maker of blotter art is Mark McCloud, a San Francisco artist and former art professor. McCloud's collection covered everything from the late 1970s up to today: several hundred types of LSD blotter art. In the early days this art could only be obtained with LSD already on it. He bought these sheets, matted and framed them, and hung them like fine art. Ironically, it was initially quite difficult for McCloud to collect the undipped (and hence legal) sheets of art, making him both an art collector and a potential outlaw due to his interest in this unique form of folk art. But soon McCloud began to produce his own images—



as well as make connections to other such artists in the community—and the bulk of his collection shifted to completely legal, undipped blotter. (The older pieces from his collection have been purposefully exposed to ultraviolet light, to destroy any LSD that might have been on them.) McCloud promoted his collection at galleries, and he won second place at the 1987 San Francisco County Fair for his “unusual but timely” art exhibition. National Public Radio gave McCloud exposure, and he won grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and others.

The year 2000 saw McCloud busted by the federal government for “conspiracy to manufacture and distribute LSD.” In a highly-publicized trial, the DEA claimed that he was supplying chemists and wholesalers with perforated sheets of undipped blotter art, as 30,000 of these had been found in his possession. This was the second such arrest for McCloud—having been busted on similar charges in 1992—and in 2001 he obtained his second acquittal. It is estimated that McCloud spent over half a million dollars on his defense, and the prosecution spent *unknown* amounts of money on a year-long stake out of his home-based businesses.

McCloud, along with New England art and antiques dealer Adam Stanhope, has recently published a key piece of the prosecution’s evidence from his trial: a large binder filled with a collection of blotter obtained from busts across the United States spanning the ten years previous to his arrest, compared side-by-side to art that was seized from McCloud’s home. *The Bust Book* acts as a history of the art of blotter as compiled by the federal government, making it a unique offering in the world of art. It is only available in a limited edition of 250 numbered and autographed copies for \$500, or a special edition of 10 that also include an actual sample of the vintage (undipped) “Eye of Horus” blotter art—the oldest piece of blotter art still in existence—for \$1000. (See [www.acidartz.com](http://www.acidartz.com) for more details on this book.)

### SIGNATURE PIECES

Back when I was publishing my journal *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays*, a friend introduced me to Mark McCloud. With Mark’s encouragement, I started my own collection of undipped blotter art. After I had been collecting for a while, I had an idea. I approached psychedelic luminaries, like Albert Hofmann, Timothy Leary,

Ken Kesey, John Lilly, Robert Anton Wilson, Laura Huxley, Alexander Shulgin, and many others, and asked them to sign limited edition, hand-numbered blotter art prints. These then were matted and framed per museum display specs, and sold to galleries, art catalogs, nostalgia buffs, autograph stores, and 1960s memorabilia brokers. This was the beginning of what has been termed “vanity” blotter art. That is, blotter art which has been produced solely for art’s sake as a collectible, and which was never intended to be dipped with any drugs. Indeed, in rare cases, including a signature on these pieces made them

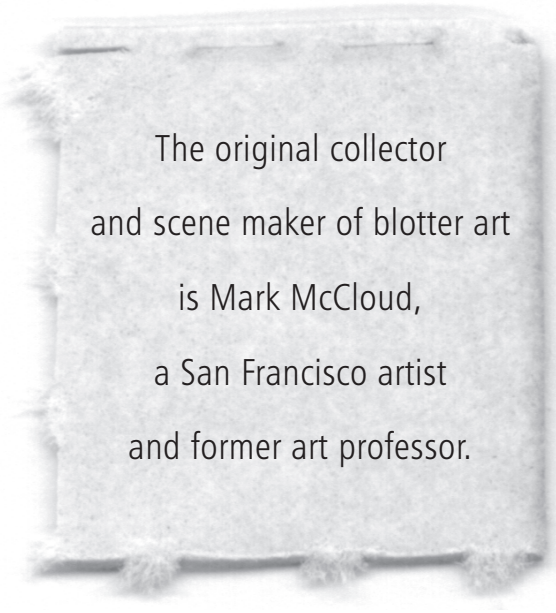
more valuable to collectors than if they had been dipped with LSD and sold on the streets. (Autographed vanity blotter art has been advertised for prices ranging from \$65 to \$4000!) Soon I was making decent money from the sale of my autographed blotter art, and in a few years was actually able to quit my job working as a chef, which I had done for 25 years. I spent more time at home, pursuing my true loves of art, writing, and research.

One of the first projects I collaborated on with Mark McCloud and Robert Demarest was getting Timothy Leary to sign some of our undipped blotter art. As the figurehead for the LSD movement, Leary

was even more famous than the man who discovered LSD himself, Albert Hofmann. Through Leary’s archivist Michael Horowitz (who I was doing book business with), I contacted Tim and was pleased to hear that he agreed wholeheartedly with my idea of creating signed blotter. The first sheets he signed were called “Roses,” featuring art produced by Stanley Mouse and Anton Kelley, well known to Grateful Dead fans. All 250 of the “Roses” sold out in less than a month!

We then contacted Albert Hofmann in Switzerland, and in 1994 he signed about 15 “Knights of Malta Shields” blotter art sheets. We sent a few of these “Shields” sheets to Tim Leary, and he included his signature alongside Albert Hofmann’s—a powerful artistic statement to be sure. [Editors note: Those pieces with autographs from both Leary and Hofmann have sold for the highest prices to motivated collectors.]

The blotter that I’ve produced has appeared in art catalogs such as ArtRock, Key-Z Productions, and Vroom. Through third-party brokers, my blotter appears all over the world, in rare book catalogs like Flashback Books and Red Snapper. The major auction houses Christie’s and Harrods UK have even taken an interest, and my



The original collector  
and scene maker of blotter art  
is Mark McCloud,  
a San Francisco artist  
and former art professor.





Swiss artist H.R. Giger, famous for his work on the *Alien* movies, signs blotter art for Thomas Lyttle.

**Finally,  
blotter art  
has come  
“full circle”  
in recent years,  
acting as a  
fantastic  
support vehicle  
for the  
psychedelic  
community.**

autographed blotter designs continue to increase in worth and collectibility. I've even sold blotter art to police departments, drug counselors, DEA officials, and universities. It's somewhat surreal to see law enforcement agents buy my blotter art for display in their offices.

Timothy Leary signed many sheets of blotter; by doing so he helped to raise LSD's image into the world of fine art. The very week of his death, Leary was signing blotter art sheets for myself and others—Ram Dass was even sitting next to him during one such signing. More recently I contracted with porn star/director/sex educator Annie Sprinkle, PhD, to do a limited edition of “tit prints:” her breasts were dipped in paints and pressed onto blotter art sheets, which were then autographed. A 2002 project included a new blotter image, this time in collaboration with digital art guru Laurence Gartel, featuring his cybernetic *Fetish* imagery.

Signed and unsigned “vanity” blotter art is now available from web sites such as [lsdblotterart.com](http://lsdblotterart.com), [blotterart.co.uk](http://blotterart.co.uk), [tripatourium.com](http://tripatourium.com), and my own

[thomlyttle.com](http://thomlyttle.com), as well as half-a-dozen other sites. E-Bay regularly holds 50 to 75 “live” auctions where legitimate dealers and those interested in collecting converge. Art galleries around the world, such as Luna Star Café (Miami), the Fuse (NYC), and Galerie Macabre (Fort Lauderdale) regularly showcase blotter art. Blotter art collecting has gotten so popular that counterfeiting occasionally occurs. For example, images from Mark McCloud's original underground collection, such as “Red Lightning Bolts” and “Japanese Crests,” have been unethically reprinted. H.R. Giger's “Illuminatus I,” a signed and numbered limited edition blotter art that was originally produced by myself in cooperation with Giger and his agent Leslie Barany, has been counterfeited; fakes of poor quality were sold at Phish and Other Ones concerts, as well as being hocked on E-Bay. Another potentially questionable approach taken by many underground blotter art producers is the appropriation of images from famous contemporary artists, such as Alex Grey, without paying royalties. Underground blotter producers may justify borrowing the imagery that appears on their work, due to a concern that they don't want to implicate the artist by directly involving him or her in the process. And, they themselves quite reasonably wish to remain anonymous. Producers of vanity blotter have a harder time defending such an approach, now that this form of folk art is an above-ground cottage industry.

Aside from Mark McCloud's two busts, the legal issues surrounding blotter art have mostly been minimal. I recently went to British Columbia carrying about 50 sheets of signed and unsigned blotter art, and I was stopped by Customs. They immediately knew what it was (or what it was *supposed* to be). After a lecture that lasted about an hour—one of my funniest—a crowd of Customs officials were drawn into the conversation. They eventually recognized that this *was* only art, albeit controversial and creative. They seemed amused enough, but at no time did they make any tests or remove anything from my collection for review. I walked right into B.C., Canada with my perforated sheets of blotter art, selling to several collectors there, with a great new story to boot.

Finally, blotter art has come “full circle” in recent years, acting as a fantastic support vehicle for the psychedelic community. In 2003, Dr. Albert Hofmann signed blotter art designed by visionary artist Stevee Postman (see the inside back cover of this *Bulletin*)—a piece conceived of by Jon Hanna to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the discovery of LSD's effects and to act as a fund-raiser for MAPS and Erowid. [*Editor's note: In fact, this article was edited on a computer purchased with funds raised from Hanna's blotter art donation.*] MAPS has recently obtained nearly \$20,000 due to the sale of blotter art. In this way, blotter art not only has raised LSD to a culturally valued art form, it has also contributed back to the community that generated it. •

# LSD, Spirituality, and the Creative Process

## by Marlene Dobkin De Rios and Oscar Janiger

reviewed by **Brandy Doyle** • [brandy@maps.org](mailto:brandy@maps.org)

MAPS sponsored a forty year follow-up study to Dr. Janiger's LSD research which was published in the Spring 1999 issue of the *MAPS Bulletin*. See: [www.maps.org/news-letters/v09n1/09107jan.html](http://www.maps.org/news-letters/v09n1/09107jan.html).

Ah, the good old days. As scientists face hurdle after hurdle to obtain approval for research with psychedelics, it's worthwhile to look back at a time before the War on Drugs, when studying the actions and even benefits of these substances was much easier. Marlene Dobkin De Rios's new book, *LSD, Spirituality, and the Creative Process*, tells the story of Oscar Janiger's pioneering research, in which over 900 people were administered LSD.

Last year I had the opportunity to speak with De Rios about the story of Dr. Janiger's work and her views on psychedelics and culture. A therapist as well as a medical anthropologist, Marlene Dobkin De Rios met Dr. Janiger in the 1960s and remained close to him until he passed away in 2001. For six months before his death, she visited with him to work on this book, and after his death she inherited the files from his research, which had never before been comprehensively published.

### THE WORK OF OSCAR JANIGER

Janiger, a psychiatrist at UC Irvine, engaged in a study of the subjective effects of LSD on a broad range of people. He hoped to discover some essential characteristics of the LSD experience. Unlike most researchers, Janiger wanted to create a "natural" setting, reasoning that there was nothing especially neutral about a laboratory or hospital room. He rented a house outside of LA, in which his subjects could have a relatively non-directed experience in a supportive environment.

Janiger's study began in 1954 and continued until it was shut down in 1962. About six years later he conducted a follow-up that analyzed questionnaires from about 200 participants. MAPS conducted another follow-up after 40 years, reaching 45 individuals. In both follow-ups, most people found the experience pleasant overall; however, there was wide variation within each group when people were asked if the experience had lasting benefits. Janiger's follow-up noted that those in therapy had a high rate of positive response, and they felt that the experience was beneficial overall, but they found the experience much less pleasant than other participants who were not in therapy. (Many of Janiger's subjects had been referred by their therapists to the study.) In the 40-year follow-up, one-third reported persisting beneficial changes, and interestingly, those who had been in therapy when they began the study were much more likely to report lasting benefits.

### THE CREATIVE PROCESS

In one of the most interesting sections of the book, De Rios discusses the question of LSD and creativity. Early in Janiger's project, an art professor in the study made a drawing of a Hopi kachina doll that was in the house. The artist found that LSD had a profound influence on his style, and suggested that Janiger invite other artists to explore this change. Janiger began a separate sub-study on creativity, turning one room of the house into a studio. He invited professional artists, writers, and musicians to participate, eventually including about 100 people. De Rios's book includes a section of color images of the kachina doll, which was painted by many of the artists before and during their LSD sessions.

In 1971, art historian Carl Hertel examined 250 "before" and "after" drawings and paintings created during Janiger's project. While he didn't find the LSD-inspired art to be either superior or inferior to the artists' typical work, he did note a pattern in the changed styles. According to De Rios, Hertel felt that the paintings created under the influence of LSD were "more abstract, symbolic, brighter, more emotional and aesthetically adventuresome, and non-representational, and they tended to use all available space on the canvas."

De Rios offers a thoughtful discussion of the implications of these changes, pointing out that Janiger did not feel that LSD enhanced creativity specifically, but rather gave people access to parts of their brain normally unavailable, offering a new perspective. He didn't believe that LSD would make an artist out of someone who was not. Rather, it offered the artists an exploratory tool.

In addition to the color plates, De Rios includes a number of other materials from Janiger's files, including an appendix of subjects' poetry and a case study of identical twins. While the poetry isn't especially illuminating, the numerous volunteer narratives (both throughout the text and in a separate appendix) are useful in illustrating the breadth of possible LSD experiences.

De Rios does an excellent job in separating out her views from those of Janiger, offering both his views and her own perspective as an anthropologist and therapist. In the chapter on spirituality, for example, she notes that Janiger did not believe LSD is essentially spiritual. He considered the 24% of participants who reported having a spiritual experience as an *anomaly* in the data. She differs, however, arguing that with low doses, 24% is *remarkably high* for participants who were in a neutral setting and not prepared for a spiritual experience.

## CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

In my talk with De Rios I had the chance to learn more about her views on the cross-cultural use of psychedelics. She has focused on psychedelic experience in her work both as an anthropologist and a psychologist. She wrote her anthropology dissertation on ayahuasca and traditional folk healing in Peru in the 1960s, before much work on ayahuasca had been done. In the 1990s, she did quantitative and qualitative research on teens and ayahuasca in Brazil, funded by the Heffter Institute. She has worked with altered states in her psychology practice using biofeedback, hypnosis, and meditation. She has also been a prolific writer, publishing four books and almost 300 papers.

De Rios describes herself as a “psychedelic anthropologist,” though she has had just two psychedelic experiences—one with ayahuasca and one with LSD. She jokingly calls herself a voyeur, someone who has spent her career watching others take drugs. From her perspective, it is the ritual structure and the social context that make psychedelics a valuable part of other cultures. “Psychedelic experiences in American society are highly idiosyncratic,” she explained, saying that she sees the only universals in American psychedelic experience as “pains, aches, and complaints.” In other words, she finds that without ritual structure, psychedelic use is unlikely to be beneficial.

De Rios described one use of psychedelics in traditional cultures as a rite of passage for a community's young people. As children become adults, sharing a structured psychedelic experience allows a group of young people to bond together, making them more firmly a part of the society.

I asked De Rios if she could imagine psychedelics more integrated into our own society, in a future in which

these substances were no longer criminalized. She agreed, saying, “If these substances weren't illegal, shamans would emerge.” She did not, however, believe that this beneficial integration could take place without the inclusion of a sanctioned leader. In her words, “My studies in cross-cultural perspectives always show the role of a guide.”

## RESEARCH

This guide, however, need not be a shaman. De Rios believes strongly in the therapeutic value of psychedelics, and the sanctioned use she envisions could occur in this context. From Oscar Janiger's broad study and others, she concludes that substances like LSD can reliably be beneficial. “The implication is that you control the environment, select the subjects carefully, monitor their behavior, and prepare them, and you'll see very positive outcomes.”

Psychedelic drugs could be helpful for a number of conditions, she continued, “especially things I find so hard to treat, like addiction, alcoholism, personality disorders.” However, she also sees psychedelics as not only treating illnesses, but even enhancing life. LSD, she said, “opens new realms of experience, new knowledge, aesthetic inspiration, and religious and revelatory insights.” These benefits would help not only the individual, but the scientific world as well. “There is a real role for LSD in medicine and cognitive science,” she said.

As we discussed these possibilities for the future of research with LSD and other psychedelics, De Rios told me, “I hope it happens in my lifetime.” So do we. •

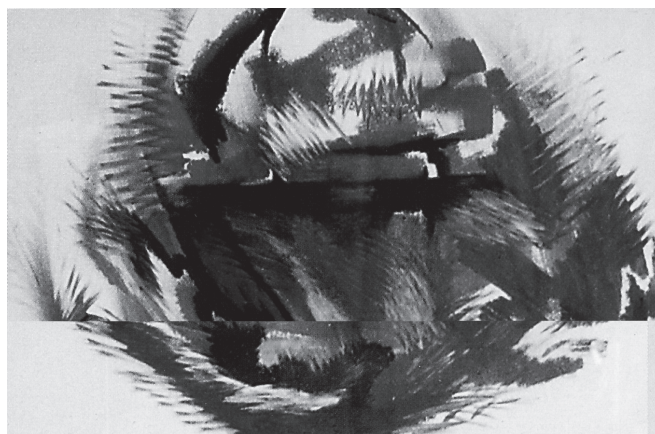
Marlene De Rios and Roger Rumrill are writing a book on drug tourism in the Amazon. If you have any experiences with this that you would like to share, please contact Marlene de Rios at [septrion@aol.com](mailto:septrion@aol.com). For more information, see [www.MarleneDobkinDeRios.com](http://www.MarleneDobkinDeRios.com) (case sensitive URL).



Images from  
*LSD, Spirituality,  
and the Creative Process*  
by Marlene Dobkin De Rios  
and Oscar Janiger

LEFT:  
An artist's first rendition of  
the deer kachina doll,  
produced prior to  
ingesting LSD.

RIGHT:  
The same artist's rendering  
of the doll while under the  
influence of LSD.





# Exploring Holotropic Breathwork

by Kylea Taylor, editor

reviewed by Chris M. Bache • cmbache@cc.ysu.edu



What I enjoyed  
most was the  
opportunity to  
enter the  
community of  
Breathwork  
practitioners and  
“listen in” to their  
conversations as  
they processed  
their experiences  
and pushed the  
boundaries of  
their disciplines.

*Exploring Holotropic Breathwork* is an excellent book on the theory and practice of Holotropic Breathwork and represents an important contribution to the literature. In addition, it addresses many challenging aspects of spiritual practice not often discussed outside circles of committed practitioners. Thus, there is a “hands on” quality to this volume that is both refreshing and inspiring.

Since 1988, more than 800 persons from 36 countries have completed Stanislav and Christina Grof's training program in Holotropic Breathwork, a widespread, non-drug psycho-spiritual practice that the Grofs developed after therapeutic work with psychedelics was no longer legally sanctioned by our culture. Holotropic Breathwork employs evocative music, deepened and accelerated breathing, and focused bodywork to enter powerful non-ordinary states of consciousness.

This volume contains 144 articles published in the training program's in-house journal, *The Inner Door*, between 1991 and 2002. Most of the 85 authors are professionals in medical, academic, therapeutic, and spiritual fields who are sharing their insights and experiences with other practitioners. The articles are predominantly short (three to four pages) and therefore efficient in their delivery of information. They cover a wide variety of personal and professional topics that emerge from the Holotropic Breathwork process.

The pertinence of this collection to psychedelic studies hinges on the fact that Grof has demonstrated that the experiences evoked through Holotropic Breathwork overlap significantly with the experiences evoked through various psychedelic agents. Thus, there is much in this volume that is immediately relevant to psychedelic research and therapy.

Anthologies as large as this one (600 pages) all too often are ponderous tomes, unwieldy and tedious to use. Not so here. Kylea Taylor has done an excellent job of shaping her material into a well-organized and easily accessible reference work. Each article is usefully annotated in the Table of Contents and collected into categories that are well aimed. The reader will find articles on Holotropic Breathwork and shamanism, trauma, addiction recovery, kundalini, astrology, other breathwork systems, and more. The result is a rich compendium of information written by insiders about the nuts and bolts of Holotropic Breathwork, with many anecdotes of physical, psychological, and spiritual healing, which places Holotropic Breathwork in dialogue with other systems of healing.

As valuable as the individual contributions are, what I enjoyed most about this book was the opportunity to enter the community of Breathwork practitioners and “listen in” to their conversations as they processed their experiences and pushed the boundaries of their disciplines. One gets the sense that one is following a social movement that is consciously breaking new ground, watching them take risks, and listening as they learn from each other's experiences.

There are too many excellent articles to pick and choose favorites, but for its historical significance alone I would draw attention to the articles discussing the role of natal and transit astrology in deep therapeutic work (many written by Matthew Stelzner). This is truly paradigm breaking work. As well, Richard Tarnas' discussion of Stan Grof's natal chart is not to be missed.

*Exploring Holotropic Breathwork* is an essential volume for libraries, schools, and serious collectors of transpersonal and clinical theory. •

*Exploring Holotropic Breathwork* is \$69.95, available online at [www.hanfordmead.com](http://www.hanfordmead.com) (or from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). Those who order ten or more books directly from the publisher receive a 40% discount. Also available are books on Holotropic Breathwork, ethics, and SoulCollage™. Contact Hanford Mead Publishers by phone at (888) 727-7310 or e-mail at [info@hanfordmead.com](mailto:info@hanfordmead.com) for more information.

# LETTERS TO MAPS...

To MAPS,

GHB an entheogen? Surely you jest! I think you could use a little more reading. The literature is extensive, and GHB is not present. True, it can induce euphoria, but it is addictive, therefore disqualified as a true psychedelic. Plus, why take a substance whose main characteristic is so similar to alcohol? Is alcohol a entheogen? Why not just kill yourself with alcohol? Go back to drug school before you do someone a great disservice.

MAPS and GHB. Who would have guessed? Are you trying to lose credibility? An unrousable coma sounds good to me. It'll really get the creative juices flowing.

Let me know what you think.  
— KT

Dear KT,

Thank you for calling this to our attention and granting permission to publish your letter. You are not the only MAPS member to reproach me about reporting on a GHB conference in the *MAPS Bulletin*. I agree with you that GHB is not usually regarded as an entheogen or a psychedelic. It does not produce the classic psychoptic effects or the unveiling of the subconscious. Nevertheless, many GHB users find it valuable for the other traditionally "mind-manifesting" effects they experience from it—increased empathy, sensuality, tactile sensitivity, and appreciation of the senses (hence its nickname "liquid Ecstasy").

GHB's GABA action in the brain does make it similar to alcohol in effect, as you point out. And yet when considering whether or not one might call it an "entheogen" or a "psychedelic," it is interesting to note what William James had to say about alcohol:

*The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to Earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates, and says no; drunkenness expands, unites, and says yes. It is in fact the great exciter of the Yes function in man. It brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth... The drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystic consciousness, and our total opinion of it must find its place in our opinion of that larger whole.*

James certainly appears to be describing something that could be considered an entheogen or a psychedelic.

Perhaps because of its similarity to alcohol, anecdotal evidence indicates that GHB may have potential as a treatment for alcoholism. Some find it to be a healthy substitute for alcohol, allowing the user to stimulate his/her GABA receptors without a hangover and without getting drunk. I've seen the same person who becomes violent, self-centered, and destructive on alcohol become happy, loving, and caring on GHB. Some users of psychedelics report that GHB can relieve physical tension when used with LSD or MDMA, and some find it helpful in breaking through emotional barriers in conjunction with these drugs. Others find it helpful as a sleep aid, following the use of a longer-lasting psychedelic. Even if GHB is not itself considered by most to be a psychedelic, its usefulness as an adjunct to psychedelics makes it worth discussing.

With every drug there are unique risks. GHB can be deadly when taken in combination with alcohol. In its undyed liquid form, GHB appears similar to water, which may create the potential for someone to unwittingly dose him- or herself. But the most common concern related to GHB use is probably overdose, as there is a fine line between a nice high and passing out.

GHB can indeed be addictive, as you state. Ketamine can be addictive too, and a few people find their Ecstasy use hard to manage. GHB is capable of inducing an unrousable state of consciousness (although this is *not* technically a "coma"). However, ketamine can also produce an unrousable state of consciousness. Neither the potential for addiction, nor the potential to produce an unrousable state, disqualify a drug from being termed an entheogen or a psychedelic, or from being reported on in the pages of the *Bulletin*.

Labeling a substance as addictive and/or dangerous, and therefore unsuitable for discussion, leaves out part of the story. It's important to remember that misuse, abuse, and addiction are not possible without the user. It is necessary to take personal responsibility and make informed decisions about substance use. Arguing that GHB's risks justify denying its benefits is no different than drug warriors claiming potential risk as reason to criminalize substances like LSD or marijuana.

Hopefully, by presenting information about GHB in the *MAPS Bulletin*, other curious consciousness explorers will be inspired to discover its potentials, debate its psychedelic and therapeutic merit, and expand this ever-growing body of knowledge.

Sincerely,  
— Valerie Mojeiko, MAPS

P.S. I would love to go to drug school. Let me know when you find one!

# LETTERS TO MAPS...

Dear Rick,

Thank you for your most welcome letter stating your upcoming profile on the ABC evening news, as well as a special later that night. I shall be watching, and I'm sure I'll be enjoying myself.

Since I'm in prison and have no way to earn money, nor will I anytime soon, I'm not able to send you any money. I'm sending you ten U.S. postage stamps to help how I can. I'm sorry that I can send no more.

Your research is yet another positive action that society is often kept in the dark about due to the "taboo" mind-set surrounding drugs that, in reality, can be a very positive addition to aid people in the world. Hopefully, there will be an opening of minds, lifting the veil of fear that all drugs seem to have, unless they are from Eli Lilly, etc. Keep up the good work.

Respectfully,  
— Harry Eldridge  
a prisoner in the California state penal system



Dear Harry,

Your letter was very moving and your donation of ten stamps was touching, since you have so little and yet are still willing to donate something.

Gratefully,  
— Rick Doblin



Hey MAPS,

Great news about the MDMA/PTSD study! Congratulations. What a long battle for something that should be so easy. You are doing an important job. Keep your focus on legalization of marijuana in addition to the other tasks you have assigned yourself. Hope to see you in Mexico at the Mind States conference in September.

— Jerry Dincin, PhD



Dear Rick,

Congratulations! I've been particularly impressed with the reports in the mainstream media about this research and, despite my familiarity with the subject, I've been deeply moved by the reports of MDMA's potential to help treat PTSD. I am very critical and concerned about MDMA's recreational use. However I have the highest regard for your attempts to get past the unreasonable restrictions regarding research and development of MDMA's therapeutic potential. You are performing an important public service and you have my utmost respect and appreciation for your efforts.

Thank you.  
— Jon Gettman



Dear MAPS,

I just wanted to write to say thanks for all of your excellent work. I became a MAPS donor when I bought a used copy of Julie Holland's book on MDMA and read in her forward that proceeds of the book were to go to MAPS. I have been tremendously impressed by the depth and breadth of your work on behalf of honesty, scientific integrity, and public health. Please do send me a reminder to donate again in 2004, as I will most certainly do so to the best of my ability. Many thanks.

Best,  
— Steven Klein

P.S. Excellent appearance on the Jennings' special as well!



## **MAPS: THE ANTI-DRUG? (from a note sent by a new MAPS member)**

Another week rolls by, and my financial situation takes a turn for the better (paycheck). I have decided to forego personal exploration, and instead join MAPS. The money I am donating to MAPS, was going to fund a purchase of San Pedro cactus (I am sure you know of this cactus). Instead of buying San Pedro, I will get back into meditation this week.

— Anonymous





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## YES, I would like to join MAPS and receive the quarterly Bulletin!

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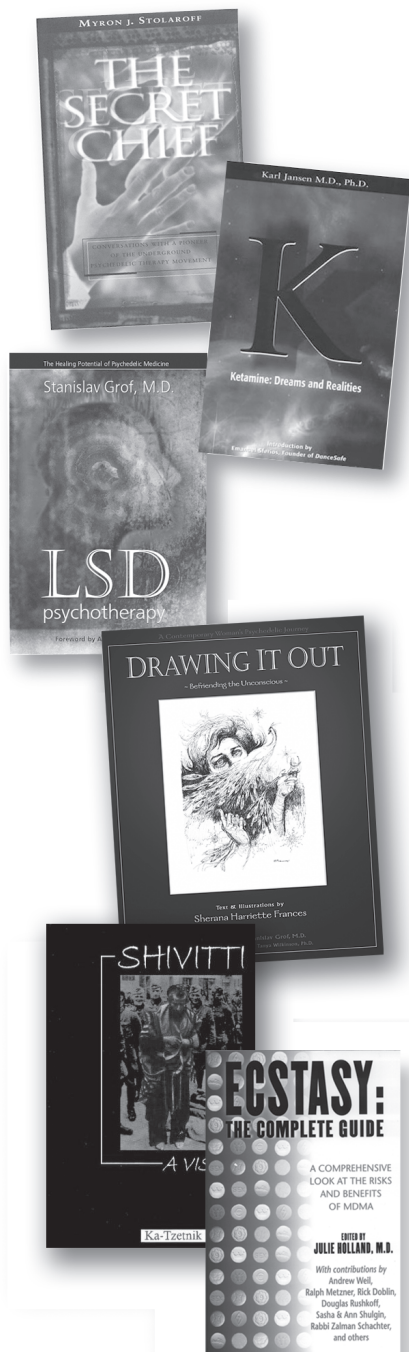
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### ALSO AVAILABLE FROM MAPS

1. *The Secret Chief: Conversations with a Pioneer of the Underground Psychedelic Therapy Movement* by Myron Stolaroff; new edition forthcoming, check web site for details: [www.maps.org](http://www.maps.org)
2. *Ketamine: Dreams and Realities* by Karl Jansen, MD, PhD • 355 pp, \$14.95
3. *LSD Psychotherapy* by Stanislav Grof, MD • 352 pp, \$12.95
4. *Drawing It Out: Befriending the Unconscious (A Contemporary Woman's Psychedelic Journey)* by Sherana Harriette Frances • 128 pp, \$19.95
5. *Ecstasy: The Complete Guide* by Julie Holland, MD • 281 pp, \$15.00
6. *Shivitti: A Vision* by Ka-Tzetnik 135633 • 144 pp, \$15.95

**SHIPPING FOR BOOKS:** U.S. and Canada – Priority mail (3–7 days): **\$4.00**, add \$1.50 per additional book. Overseas airmail rates (7–10 days): **\$12.00**, add \$10.00 per additional book. Overseas surface mail rates (4–6 weeks): **\$5.00** per book.



## MAPS MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

MAPS IS A MEMBERSHIP-BASED ORGANIZATION working to assist researchers worldwide to design, fund, conduct, obtain governmental approval for, and report on psychedelic research in humans. Founded in 1986, MAPS is an IRS approved 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation funded by tax-deductible donations from members.

MAPS has previously funded basic scientific research in both humans and animals into the safety of MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, Ecstasy) and has opened a Drug Master File for MDMA at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. MAPS is now focused primarily on assisting scientists to conduct human studies to generate essential information about the risks and psychotherapeutic benefits of MDMA, other psychedelics, and marijuana, with the goal of eventually gaining governmental approval for their medical uses.

ALBERT EINSTEIN WROTE: "Imagination is more important than knowledge." If you can even faintly imagine a cultural reintegration of the use of psychedelics and the states of mind they engender, please join MAPS in supporting the expansion of scientific knowledge in this area. Progress is possible with the support of those who care enough to take individual and collective action.

## THE MAPS BULLETIN

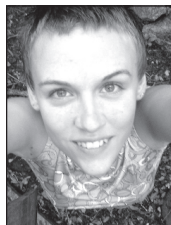
Each *Bulletin* will report on MAPS research in progress. In addition to reporting on research both in the United States and abroad, the *Bulletin* may include feature articles, reports on conferences, book reviews, Heffter Research Institute updates, and the Hofmann Report. Issues raised in letters, calls, and e-mail from MAPS members may also be addressed, as may political developments that affect psychedelic research and use.



**Rick Doblin**, MAPS' founder and President, earned his PhD in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Doblin was also in Stan and Christina Grof's first training group to receive certification as a Holotropic Breathwork practitioner.



**Brandy Doyle**, Communications and Projects Director, edits the *MAPS Bulletin*, writes website and e-mail updates, and coordinates educational projects. Her interests include drug policy reform, healing, and ecstatic experience. She graduated from New College of Florida in 2001 with a degree in cultural anthropology.



**Valerie Mojeiko**, Membership and Sales Coordinator, enjoys building and corresponding with the MAPS community. She is an aspiring drug researcher and has recently begun working on a MAPS-sponsored study of ibogaine therapy in the treatment of drug addiction. Other interests include GHB and MDMA.



**Nicole Tavernier**, Director of Operations, has a background in various fields of business and is currently working on her degree in Business Administration.

"There is an almost sensual longing for communion  
with others who have a larger vision.  
The immense fulfillment of the friendships  
between those engaged in furthering the evolution of consciousness  
has a quality almost impossible to describe."

— Teilhard de Chardin