

Paddos

Our little brothers

Travel Guide to the Shroom Space

Starter for
Magic Mushroom
Psychonauts

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Maria Sabina

This Indian shaman woman from the highlands of South of Mexico, who shared her knowledge of mushrooms with the West had a clear vision:

There is a world beyond ours, a world that is far away, nearby, and invisible. And there is where God lives, where the dead live, the spirits and the saints, a world where everything



known. That world talks. It has a language of its own. I report what it says. The sacred mushroom takes me by the hand and brings me to the world where everything is known. It is they, the sacred mushrooms, that speak in a way I can understand. I ask them and they answer me. When I return from the trip that I have taken with them, I tell what they have told me and what they have shown me.

Maria Sabina

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Introduction

What do we know about mushrooms, those strange things that grow in the dark, a life form that doesn't need light? As kids we were already fascinated by the stories they told us, about gnomes making their little houses in a toadstool and about poisonous mushrooms that were picked by witches for their evil practices. In biology class, they warned us that the most colorful ones were the most poisonous. It feels as if our culture has not much appreciation for these useful, beautiful, nutritious and even psychedelic life forms.

We do eat some of them, that's about all, and even then just a few varieties. That scores of other edible mushrooms exist, is only



Xochipilli

known to connoisseurs. This varies of course from culture to culture. In Eastern Europe and Asia they are held in higher esteem, although this is usually because they can be eaten or are used for healing.

“Shrooms” or hallucinogenic mushrooms are also known as Magic Mushrooms, Liberty Caps, Psilos, Fungi, Little Mexicans, Hawaiians, Holy Children or Mushies. In the Netherlands they are now known as “Paddos”, which comes from Paddestoel, which means Toadstool. The word Paddo is quite nice, as it has its own cult-like flavor, so we will use it in this book, too.

Because of their chemical composition, the hallucinogenic mushrooms produce a sometimes slightly wobbly feeling, a tendency to giggle and with a stronger dose a view to a different - magical -

world. This effect is generally called 'psychedelic', it means to say that our perception and consciousness are altered in a strange, even bizarre but sometimes also delightful and delicious way. The German word Zauber-Pilz or magical mushroom is therefore quite appropriate. There is evidence that magic mushrooms were used since the dawn of humanity. In recent times they were more or less rediscovered and after a first wave of interest in the sixties they have now gained popularity in the house-scene and as a 'natural' eco-drug.

Paddo: a Dutch cult-word

In the Netherlands "Paddos" are clearly 'in' since about 1995, when Conscious Dreams in Amsterdam was one of the first shops to sell them. There are now many, many 'smart-shops', there is lots of media-coverage on the subject, people talk about them or share their experiences and it is quite easy to obtain them. The Dutch authorities have (so far) taken a relaxed view on the matter, so the use has spread. School kids use them, disco-goers like this treat, but what are the risks? Parents worry, while their teenage kid might be looking forward to their first try. Maybe a bit curious and insecure about it, but that spices up the adventure.

We can not and will not recommend a Paddo-trip to everyone. There are clear dangers, but on the other hand the magic mushroom has the potential to help you understand yourself and your perception of reality, a much needed commodity and it does that a lot gentler than alcohol or other drugs. Yet don't rush into it without some preparation, some scouting and some advice from more experienced psychonauts. What can be done if you lack the experience? This book can help, as there is a lot to say about magic mushrooms: how to use them and how to learn the most from these 'little brothers'.

We don't want to advocate the use of these or any other psychedelic chemicals, plants or compounds. They aren't just a recreational upper; this is about strong experiences and about substances that are not always harmless. Apart from the basic active ingredients like psilocybin these are nature products with additional alkaloids and substances that color every trip differently, although rarely harming the user. They can put you down and depress you, but they can also give you a strong psychological lift.

You can't really get (chemically) addicted to mushrooms, but you could start using them and keep on using them because of the kick, because you want something new each time or because you want to

escape from the ordinary world for a while. Some people do get stuck there and get caught in a downward spiral, loose track or become depressed. It is nonsense to guarantee that nothing can ever go wrong. On the other hand, it is often a very pleasant experience and you can retain something very positive from this inward journey. You can gain more insight in what reality is and some authority over your own experience of it, and it can be very helpful to know what lives deep inside you. Most people who used them treasure the feeling, that they reached inside and came a bit closer to the universe, the All, the God in themselves.

It is all up to you; you can leave the magic mushrooms in the woods, or just try them once, or you can really prepare for the trip, the 'inward journey'.

The best trip is a conscious trip!

If you really feel a strong need to try magic mushrooms, then this is the most intelligent approach and this book will at least give you some information about the history, background, sacredness, possibilities, and dangers of magic mushrooms. This book is intended to help you, so you'll be on more familiar grounds when you step behind the psychedelic curtain. If you have used Paddos already then we hope to make it easier for you to come to some understanding about your experiences and maybe to share them.

If you have a broader interest, then there is a list of literature and

Back to the beginning

One of my most impressive and beautiful experiences was going back to my origin, back along the evolution trail. It was like a movie, how I was as a baby, foetus, embryo and then further back. I felt like a reptile, like a fish and again further back, into the primordial soup of life. All of creation felt so natural, so logical; I was part of it, even more, I was it. There was no longer a separation between me and my surroundings, a feeling of total unity, is that how God feels?

video-information at the end of this book and we also provide a

number of Internet sites about this subject. There, you can also find more detailed information about the different varieties, how they can be recognized, what the chemical compounds are, and so forth. Much is known about the various kinds of magic mushrooms, but this booklet is mostly about the experience, the trip and how to handle the various aspects of that jump into your own magic kingdom. For growers, mycologists and shroom-seekers there is a choice of books in English and also in German.

In writing this book we don't have any (political) goal; we don't even want to promote the use of mushrooms.

We also don't want to foster any unnecessary fears. This book is an introduction manual, a travel guide and reference for those who want to experiment or those (parents/teachers) who have to deal with the paddo-phenomenon, nothing more.

The main message we want to convey is that this is about the sacred, not about something to just pop carelessly and unprepared into your mouth. The ingestion of magic mushrooms and the resulting trip is a step into an altered reality, and it will at least teach you, that everything which is experienced through the senses, is colored and distorted.

L. S.

The Basis forgotten

Why do I always forget it? Every time I take a trip it seems like I have to work through the same stuff, different every time and truly fantastic, but eventually I always reach this space in myself where I know everything is love. That I am love and so is everybody else. That we are not different but the same. That what we call love is also God and that you and me know this but forget it every time. Then I feel so immensely blissful, but also so stupid, because I forgot it again, and then I decide to hold on to it a little longer this time.

I am only different because I have not yet learned to be the same.

De basis vergeten

1. Magic Mushrooms: what are they?

To buy a bag of dried paddos, a dose of Shrooms, dried or fresh little Mexicans, thin Hawaiians, Liberty Caps or some exotic varieties from Bali or Thailand is relatively easy, but why on earth do we do this? Why do we now ingest something that was rumored to be poisonous before? Why this fascination for what officially is deemed an 'illicit drug'.

The image of the mushroom has changed since the Western world became aware of its hidden and exotic qualities, notably the very special and fantastic 'trips' that can be experienced ingesting them. This is a fairly recent development. It was only in the sixties that anything was published about them and although there undoubtedly existed traditions and rituals that were passed on, the magic mushroom was virtually unknown in the 'rational and modern' West. After their (re-)discovery in Mexico during the fifties by Gordon Wasson, the use spread over the world at large. Everywhere mushrooms with psychoactive qualities were discovered. Nowadays they are quite well known and very common. While on holidays you can find them in England, and in Thailand and on the Balinese beaches they are for sale. In many European countries, the Liberty caps grow freely in the fields, but also in Mexico the locals will willingly but secretly sell you a handful if you go visit the Maya-temples. The innocent visitor or tourist might try them, but often such a small dose is taken that the effect is not very different from a marihuana 'joint' and you might just feel a bit more relaxed and more sensitive.

Terence McKenna

Arguably the most active evangelist of the psychedelic movement, Terence McKenna is the guardian of a very special ethno-botanical preserve in Hawaii and travels, writes and speaks a lot. He is not only concerned with the effects of hallucinogenic plants but cares about the world as a whole. His Time Wave analysis indicates that things are going faster and faster on this planet and sometime around 2013 a singularity (crisis, quantum-jump) will happen.

This has led to the notion, that magic mushrooms are fairly harmless. In medical circles and from the government one sometimes hears this as an argument not to be too harsh about the paddos.

Even though that leads to a benevolent stance, it is not entirely true. Psilocybine and psilocine, the active components, are potentially strong psychedelics. The ingestion of a normal dose of mushrooms clearly leads to a whole different experience of reality, to a different scale of sensory perception and often to hallucinations, open and closed-eye visions of colors and patterns, the hearing of sounds and a greater sensitivity to light, forms, magnetism, electricity and touch. Such an experience can be quite a shock if for example you don't know that you have ingested or eaten something.

The health-risks are not very big and certainly less than those of heroin, cocaine or even tobacco or alcohol. But too much of anything can be dangerous and there are mushroom-species that are quite poisonous too. So be careful, better use magic mushrooms from a reliable source than going out into the fields to pick them without being very sure you can recognize the right kind.

The reaction to too much of the psychoactive ingredient psilocybine and other alkaloids in mushrooms is such, that usually the body reacts and gets spontaneously rid of the content of the stomach by throwing up.

Psilocybine is a psychedelic, but apart from some muscle cramps, some protest from the stomach and the bowels it is physically not very dangerous. One has to ingest really large portions to become seriously ill.

Real addiction has not been proven, although there is certainly a kind of socio-psychological addiction; subconsciously you remember the nice feeling, the feeling of belonging, of friendship and unity and this makes you long for your next dose. Recreational addiction, a little bit of magic mushrooms every day can have the effect of habitual marihuana use; as a result you could remain continuously in a dreamy mood; not really ideal for study or work. For that matter it is in some respects a pity that these substances became so 'publicly' known, there is a lot to say in favor of an institutional ritual in a more esoteric setting.

On these pages we find illustrations of the most common varieties, which are the bigger *Psilocybe cubensis* and the small *Psilocybe se-*

milanceata (Liberty caps). The denomination is not very clear, one throws beautiful names around, but of the psycho-active varieties that come into consideration (Psilocybe, Conocybe, Paneolus and Amanita) the cubensis and semilanceata are the ones that are easily available. The name Stropharia was used for Psilocybe, but is taxonomically incorrect, all Stropharia have been reclassified as Psilocybe.

These magic mushrooms come in bigger and smaller sizes, that depends a bit on the source and the season. Now they are often grown inside, so no longer there are only magic mushrooms in autumn. We will not elaborate too much on the different species and varieties, that we leave to the specialists, this book deals mainly with the experience of the inward journey, which since the sixties has been called 'the trip'.

Maybe it is good to mention that mushrooms are not plants, they don't contain chlorophyll (the substance that gives leaves their green color). In this they are quite different from plants as they don't need any direct sunshine.

Although the most active ingredients are listed as prohibited classified substances (illegal drugs), in many countries mushrooms containing these ingredients have an unclear legal status.

The teacher

We can learn a lot from magic mushrooms. Not only that reality (partly) resides in our awareness, but the little brothers are in some ways our teachers. Terence McKenna sees them as 'animate', they teach us during the trip. Sometimes it is as if a voice speaks to you, an entity that knows more than you. I often have the feeling that a teacher is addressing me. Looking into the mirror I see my face as that of a wise, Indian shaman. It feels as if a mysterious guide sits next to me or behind me. It gives me the feeling that I am wiser more complete and mature than normally.

A number of species can be found in nature and are in fact indigenous. That makes it difficult to label people as druggies, who - of course by accident - have gotten hold of a few mushrooms in a field or in the woods or in the park. In some countries therefore the possession of fresh mushrooms is not illegal, only when they are processed (preparation including drying) they become an illicit drug.

Flair

I usually do mushrooms with someone around, sometimes alone. I like it, as it is very playful. I see paddos as a nice toy, it makes you feel free and connected to nature, your body and art. It makes me creative and with a special person around you can experiment, with sex too. I see colors, not only with my eyes closed, but everywhere, around lights, in the air, around pictures and even sheet-music. Everything is different, you never know where you will end up. Magic mushrooms give me more flair, I feel more whole, more interesting, more self-assured and I know that others notice that too. Mushrooms are more gentle than XTC, you have less of a fall-back afterwards, not so tired and drained.

I have picked magic mushrooms in the wild too, the small ones, they were more gentle than the dried ones.

2. The history

The use of hallucinogenic mushrooms is probably as old as humanity. We find traces of them in many cultures and times. In the Tassili caves and in the Sahara pictures have been found of humanoids with their heads in the form of mushrooms. Shamen in Siberia would use Fly Aarics to find their path to the spirit world and in Central and South America the use of mushrooms was quite common.

This means until the `discovery' of America by the Conquistadores in the 15th century, who inflicted all kinds of prohibitions on the indigenous population. But fortunately part of this was being recorded by the priests of those days and one even had some esteem for the `codexes' of the Pre-Columbian civilizations, which were partly saved. A lot of information about those strange `Indians' was written down in those times and was preserved in libraries in Europe.

Through the first colonists it is known that the Aztecs knew several hallucinogenic drugs like tlapatl and peyote, the use of which went back to 300 BC in the North of Mexico. There was a certain acceptance of the use of hallucinogenic substances in these times, while the use of alcohol was subject to strict regulations. Drinking was restricted to older people (over 52), and youngsters who were drinking in public were severely punished.

Teo-nanacatl: Flesh of the Gods

The first clear (written) record comes from the Spanish priest Bernardo de Sahagun who around 1500 gives an account of Aztec `mushroom rituals': "After a night of fasting where only a bit of cacao was taken, they ate, still before sunrise, mushrooms with honey. When the first signs showed (which can be compared to drunkenness with hallucinations) everyone started dancing and singing, while others were weeping. At the end of the ritual everyone gathered to share their visions."

The Aztecs even had a kind of Drug's God, who was called Xochipilli, Prince of Flowers. He was the sacred protector of the `flowery-dream' as the Aztecs called their hallucinatory trance. The mushrooms they used were probably the *Psilocybe mexicana* or the *Psilocybe caerulescens*. The *Psilocybe* (previously *Stropharia*) *cubensis*, momentarily one of the more popular mushrooms, was introduced by the Europeans and their cattle in South-America. The Indian regard

this variety as inferior to the indigenous Psilocybes because they grow in dung.

But not only in America, also in Siberia and in other countries magic mushrooms were used. Not always recognizable, it remained part of the 'secret' rites, they appeared on special occasions and not everybody was told what was in the 'sacred' soup.

The Vikings - as told in Norway - used magic mushrooms (Amanita) before they went ashore and while intoxicated were stronger and wilder than usual. It is not always so easy to recognize the mushroom-influence. Pictures and cave-drawings of small people with mushroom-heads can also be interpreted as space travelers! But the archetypal picture exists in more cultures, we noted that the Turkish Sufis, particularly the dervishes, in their - zikhr - whirling meditation, with their dances and clothing (white hats) very much look like a dancing 'Brotherhood of Shrooms'.

The First

In the Western World it was only in this century that some interest was stirred in psycho-active mushrooms. Ethnologist Richard Evans Schultes and biologist Blasius Paul Reko traveled as far as Mexico in their search for mushrooms. There they discovered that the so-called Veladas, Indian mushroom-ceremonies, were still held in certain areas.

In the fifties it was particularly the American R. Gordon Wasson who 'freed the mushrooms from the dark'. This banker and his wife Valentina were fascinated by the differences in cultural appreciation of the mushroom in general, but only in 1954 did they come into contact with their use as psychedelic substance.

R. Gordon Wasson and his wife, accompanied by Alan Richardson, went to a small village called Huatla de Jimenez, in Oaxaca in the South of Mexico, the territory of the Mazatecs, where they participated in a so-called Velada with the famous curandera (healer/sorceress) Maria Sabina. There they experienced, as the first Westerners, a psychedelic mushroom-trip, in an impressive ritual with Christian as well as Indian influences. Their story hit the world at large, Gordon Wasson published an article in Life magazine that stirred up a huge response.

The timing was probably right because the popularity of mushrooms rocketed sky-high in the Western world in the sixties, in particular

amongst hippies and other alternative groups, using mushrooms partly as a 'natural' alternative for LSD.

Scientific investigations were launched; the active substances were analyzed (and synthesized), whereby Albert Hoffman - the discoverer of LSD - played an important role and soon became a part of the psychedelic movement of the sixties.

Hippies and sensation-seekers went en masse to Mexico, where poor Maria Sabina nearly collapsed under the attention. Her inspiration by the 'holy children' got endangered: she became quite famous to the mushroom-tourists but as a result more isolated from her own people. Afterwards she was possibly not so happy to have shared the secret of the Velada.

Eng of niet?

Je komt tijdens een trip soms enge dingen tegen. Zo werd ik tijdens een trip steeds belaagd door grote spinnen zodra ik mijn ogen dicht deed. In plaats van mijn ogen de hele tijd open te houden of in gedachten hard weg te rennen voor die beesten waar ik normaal bang voor ben, kon ik er bewust voor kiezen om de spinnen nou eens heel goed te bekijken. Ik werd getroffen door de schoonheid en symmetrie van hun behaarde lichamen en heb er gefascineerd naar zitten kijken. Deze 'overwinning' probeer ik vast te houden in mijn dagelijkse leven.

3. Sacred or fun

Did people ten thousands years ago pick mushrooms only for certain ceremonies or were they a kind of candy? Human history is not very clear on this subject. There are nevertheless enough indications that many religions used one form or another of psychedelic trance; like wine at the Dionysian mysteries, tobacco at the ceremonies of the Native Americans, the mysterious Soma of ancient India and possibly psychoactive fungi in wheat (ergot, from which later LSD got extracted) at the Greek Elysian mysteries.

The use of `drugs`, special herbs or potions to attain a religious peak-experience seems to have been widely spread. Thus the Hindu philosopher Patanjali mentions in the Yoga-sutra that magical plants are useful for the development of siddhis (special powers) like flying, and maybe the name `fly agaric` has something to do with the `flying` of witches.

R. Gordon Wasson stated that religions are the result of psychedelic mystical experiences under the influence of mushrooms and psychedelic writer and researcher Terence McKenna assumes that our consciousness started developing with apes eating hallucinogenic mushroom in the African savanna.

Nowadays magic mushrooms are used in rituals in Meso-america, for instance at the classical Maya ceremonial center Palenque and along the border between Chiapas in Mexico and Guatemala. However, it is not clear how many of these rituals really descend from ancient practices and how much was created later.

Although a lot is known and proof does exist about the use of psychoactive mushrooms in South-America in the past, it is momentarily not known if these ceremonies are still happening. Several indian tribes in the Amazon jungle use natural psychoactive plants and brews containing DMT (Dimethyltryptamine). Ayahuasca is worth mentioning, which is used in a kind of mixed religion of Catholicism and Indian jungle rituals during the services of the Brazilian Sante Daime church and the UDV.

Myths

Many traditional stories contain, sometimes as a metaphor, indications of substances with the magical quality to shapeshift, to enter another world or to go through a transformation. A potion here, a magical spell or a jump in a magical pond there, the crossing of a ri-

ver, falling asleep and awaking in a strange country; the well informed recognizes the indications.

Would Eve's apple not also be a metaphor for the psychedelic experience? Snakes show up quite frequently in trips.

And kissing frogs? It is known that certain toads (*Bufo*) discharge a substance (bufetonine), which is also psychoactive. It has been told that it can be ingested by licking a toad. If we care to look at the deeper meaning of gnomes living in their toadstools, then there also must be something to the story of the princess and the frog she had to kiss. Actually, a better recorded use of bufetonine is to dry the toad-venom and smoke it. It is, as many DMT-containing indoles, not orally active without MAO-inhibitors.

The themes of the myths don't seem to change much throughout the centuries: the transformation of villain to hero, from frog to prince, from beggar to king, from child to adult, from wild to wise, it seems an universal scenario.

Somewhere deep inside everyone resides the fascination that accompanies the stories we listened to as kids, the fairy-tales and the myths. Nowadays comics, Science Fiction adventures and computer games are filled with the same heroes, wizards, kings, fairies and gnomes, devilish opponents, quests, magical charms and bewitched brews. All these are archetypal images, scenarios, forms and figures, which according to Carl G. Jung are projections of our subconscious and the collective unconscious.

These images not only appear in the Gilgamesh epos, the Icelandic Edda and the Bible, but also in the legends around King Arthur, in *The Lord of the Ring* by J. Tolkien and even in *Star Wars*. And what was it the druid put into the soup in the *Asterix*-comics that made the Gauls so immensely strong that they became invincible?

Could it be that the psychedelic experience is at the root of many of these stories and myths?

The author Aldous Huxley pointed, in *'Doors of Perception'* at the similarities between art, architecture, tapestry and jewelry and the visions one experiences during a trip.

And it is a trip indeed, a fantastic voyage. Under the spell of the psychedelic one floats through doors and tunnels into enormous spaces with decorations and color-patterns, which look like temples or churches. The question is now what came first, the inner world or what was made and built in *'reality'*.

A trip to the mythic world of heraldic lore or ancient imagery with palaces, temples and strange surroundings is quite normal, but one also commonly reports a kind of mystic unity, a feeling of oneness. Many users experience the trip as a mystical, spiritual experience; they make contact with the Godhead, the unmentionable. This is often accompanied with a feeling of union with all, the 'unio mystica'. In this context one started calling certain substances as MDMA (XTC or ecstasy) and psilocybine 'entheogens'; a means to come closer to the experience of the "Divine".

The step from divine miracle to a ritual using a psychedelic substance is not that far-fetched. The psychedelic can easily be seen as a teacher, a sacrament of transformation. Myths, legends, holy books - fantasy or reality - maybe they all contain a meta-message, a message that may be more easily perceived if one has had some experience of traveling the shadow-regions of the mind.

Are we really certain that Jesus and his disciples were drinking ordinary wine and were eating ordinary bread? We use beautiful words, like transsubstantiation, for what believers see as the 'Body and the Blood of Christ' in the Communion. It all depends on the viewpoint; the psychedelic brew is a sacrament for the disciples of Sante Daime, but it is an illegal and dangerous potion for others.

The magic mushroom experience is felt, by many, as a somewhat guided tour to the magic wonderland inside. That's why we call the magic mushrooms 'our little brothers' in this book. This is a strong image, which pictures the magic mushrooms as benevolent, friendly and also suggest that they can be helpful, that we are in a union with them to explore the real as well as the unreal.

It is certainly true that all this can be experienced by other means than psychedelics. Deep meditation, fasting, yoga practice, a vision-quest in the desert, a lonely experience on a mountain top, the challenging of dangers or the encounter with a totem-animal can also bring you into contact with this 'other' world, which is so deep inside, but also weaves and shines through all if one cares to look for it or better, open up to it.

Carlos Castaneda wrote about this in an impressive way. His books about the sorcerer Don Juan provide a lot of information about the borderline between inner and outer reality.

The reality

It is a scary moment, when you realize, that you float into another state of being, a state of consciousness where you have a different experience of yourself.

Suddenly the world is no longer solid, known, stable; up and down, left and right, these divisions have no longer any significance. Inner and outer merge. You think about something and there you see it, you focus your attention on a detail and in turn that takes the whole scope of your vision and then suddenly you are it. Confusing, scaring at times, but also fascinating for the psychonaut, the inner space-cadet. You become aware of an ever-changing landscape where you, in a strange way, are both ruler and subject. You play a game and take a role, you know that it is a role, but you couldn't care less, as a young kitten chasing the tail of your own twisted thoughts.

And afterwards, when you look back, with both feet safely back on mother earth, then you may start doubting the solidity, the permanence, of what we perceive as the 'ordinary' reality.

Are there indeed more colors, and what about the energy-patterns you saw, the glimpse of consciousness that smiled at you out of a leaf or a flower; what about these endless repetitive, but oh so well known, patterns? And what is reality? Is there - and that is something you experience during a trip - apart from this limited reality another, or infinite other realities? Or are all of them pieces of a total, ultimate reality? Does this really exist, or is it just another illusion?

These of course are questions that have intrigued people of all times and we can assume that we will not now or ever find the answers.

We are human beings trapped in this reality, only with a lot of practice we may be able to lift this veil a bit, and then only to discover another cosmic egg to crack.

During a trip we can have a glimpse of other worlds, an oceanic feeling comes up, where you actually see things different, but what actually is true remains very personal. You may believe in UFOs, angels, gnomes or fairies or have some real exchanges with strange entities, but hopefully you realize that you superimposed your own filter over those perceptions.

You see what you want to see, what you already know. You easily cover the truly unknown and unusual with your own personal interpretation and projection. It is not without reason that nowadays many

people have encounters with extra-terrestrial and UFOs, while in the past they met with Gods, saints, holy men and religious figures and in a further past with fairies and nature-spirits.

Maybe these are the same contacts with an unknown, unfathomable and strange energy, and we give just them or it a fashionable color or projection so we can more easily assimilate and integrate it.

The wise old men from the East already knew this; according to them nothing can be learned that is not already known. That sounds unrealistic, but has to do with the distinction between data and information. There is a lot of data out there, but only what truly reaches you and moves you can be seen as information.

The Internet is a very good example of this, there you will only find what you are looking for and what you more or less know.

The whole process of how information comes to us, how it is invited and filtered by our perception, how sometimes essential bits of info pop up magically, this is largely uncharted.

Crisis; the control loop

Sometimes my trip doesn't really get going. There is a rigidity in me, a fear preventing me from letting go. Things don't move, I can feel some control, sometimes as if a person holds me back, maybe a father or teacher. There are blockages and upon concentrating I get into a kind of control-loop, banging my head against this door. I feel in limbo, not going where I by now know I want to go, the expanse of the inner space, but also not in normal reality. This can be a frightening place to be, and when the people around you don't understand you, you can get in a panic. You can't stop, can't get out of the trip, but this stage is not what you want either. It feels as if you go crazy, bordering on insanity. Remain calm, do 'normal' things like washing the dishes, taking a shower, and talk with others about 'normal' subjects, even over the phone. Centering yourself, connecting with things you know, music you like, a little herb-tea, an aspirin, my crisis has always passed. It feels that this fear and anxiety is the rubble and debris the mushroom tries to drive out of you. There is a paradise out there and eventually you will get there, it just takes a while sometimes.

The lack of deep understanding of how we internally make sense of this strange relationship between the inner and outer world is the true limit to 'information technology' as it now exists. It could be, that in the psychedelic experience the secrets of this essential link are revealed, but as long as science and the Law regard this as a dangerous aberration, we will not really progress.

True aha-erlebnissen, new insights, not colored by our own projection are like mercy, a gift from heaven. In this respect one could call all real innovation, all expansion of perceived reality, (divine) art. It's the artist who pushes the boundaries of reality, not the scientist.

Distorting Mirror

Do not go out to a busy place or wander into a crowd when on your first trip. You will need all your attention to see and experience what goes on inside, even crossing a street becomes difficult. Driving a car or being in traffic becomes dangerous, for yourself and others. Your sense of direction is distorted, you can trip over quite easily. Important information from the outside world doesn't reach you, you can easily get lost.

I noticed that when 'on mushrooms' I would attract dangerous situations. It seems that you get attracted to or attract the things you fear. My obsessions seem to materialize before my eyes. When wandering into a train station I often encounter people lying on the floor in very bad condition, I see accidents, get into trouble with dark figures, the police and such. During a paddo-trip I often fight with the darkest corners of myself and that is grotesquely mirrored in the world around. I see many people quarreling, fighting, and I am not even frightened, my inside and outside feel the same. But you can get in serious trouble, picking up the energy of the next bystander. I tend to feel super-macho and very strong in my trip, the reality is that I sometimes find myself beaten and half-conscious in a spot I don't recognize.

4. The first time

To just ingest fresh or dried mushrooms can be a strange, maybe enchanted, maybe an unpleasant experience. If you only take a few then the effects are usually (apart from some nausea) pleasurable and can be compared with the feeling you get from using marihuana. If you are unprepared then a higher dose can have confusing effects.

If all goes well, it can be a thrilling experience. For many it is the first time that they experience a different state of consciousness apart from wake, sleep and dream-state. Others have a feeling of recollection because they have had a similar kind of trip through an out of body experience (OBE), meditation-technique, yoga, sports or through another special encounter or experience.

The processes that are triggered in our brain by the mushrooms (but also by LSD, XTC, 2CB, DMT, etc.) are actually quite natural. The substances involved are also made by our own body, like serotonin. Except that during a trip the effects are stronger. One can have similar experiences without drugs. Fasting, meditation, sports or simply falling in love have essentially the same function: to take you to paradise.

It will be clear by now that it is something out of the ordinary, so it would be good to get some more information about the effects of the magic mushroom. Reading this book can help you, but what also helps is discussing it with more experienced people, asking for advice in a Paddo-shop, consulting some more books, searching on the Internet or asking others (friends, parents?) about their opinion. Unknown is unloved, open communication is much better and it really reduces the risk of an unpleasant experience, because by being well informed a large part of the fear will be taken away.

It is just like making love: there is only one first time and this experience never repeats itself.

Be prepared and don't waste your psychedelic 'virginity'.

The first time you see the world change, your perspective waver and your consciousness open up, you can feel very open and vulnerable. This view into what Dante called 'The Divine Comedy' might stay

with you for the rest of your life. So be aware, prepare yourself well, take the necessary time and space and, above all, don't let yourself be seduced into taking a trip too soon because you don't dare to say no or because you are afraid to feel excluded from the group.

Be conscious that your life can take a different turn through the psychedelic experience. Not only so-called psychedelici, like Tim Leary, but also musicians, scientists, doctors, priests and many spiritual people took a 'peek into the other world' with the help of magic mushrooms or other substances. They became interested in the 'altered' and it would be stupid to label people like Deepak Chopra, Philip Glass, Huston Smith, Ram Dass, Terence McKenna, Aldous Huxley, Robert Anton Wilson, Hans Plomp, Luc Sala, or Simon Vinkenoog, as druggies.

A death Trip

In an unusually heavy trip I got the feeling, this is too heavy, too burdensome, I can't take it any longer. After a while I gave up the fight, accepting that I would die. A bit of a mess for the people around, but they could cope. I gave up, death was welcome. I became very peaceful, very quiet, everything vanished. However, after a while, lucky or not, the sounds of the world began to reach me again, I was still there. I felt like reborn, fresh and clean. This experience has touched me deeply, I think I can accept death easier, when it really knocks on my door.

5. Set and Setting: purpose

Diving into the ocean of your subconscious is best done when in a good spirit, in good condition, in a nice atmosphere and with some nice people around. For minimal risks and the most beautiful and the best trip it is important to be in a good “Set and Setting”, as all the experts say. If you just swallow some mushrooms when you feel lousy and have nothing to do, then you may be asking for problems. You might encounter hidden corners of your mind, forgotten traumas or experience a frightening peek over the threshold between sanity and paranoia.

Apart from this it is important that you ask yourself why you want to make a mushroom-trip. The motives can range from a need for a change in your life to just pleasing your lover in going along. Are you just curious? Is it the first time? Haven't you got anything else to do or do you join because you don't want people to think that you are a square?

You will have to make some conscious choices, like why you trip on your own, or why together with this specific person or that group. Consider these and the following questions carefully.

Where, with whom, with what, why?

You can leave a note for the people that live in your house or ask a friend to call a few hours afterwards to check if everything is okay with you. Also take into account that strangers (police, FBI) may come by, because you don't want them to find you with a bunch of shrooms next to you. This is especially true outside of Holland, where the authorities are less tolerant and friendly.

Ask yourself, if you are in a group, if `sitters' are available, who don't take anything themselves and can watch over you. Are there some people in the group that take it a little sooner or a little later, do you help each other, do you choose a buddy before a trip, and how far are you prepared to go. Be clear! Don't let issues like sex hang in the air, they will very likely come up, and it is much better

to be clear about them beforehand. Later in this book we will write a little more about this subject.

Bonding

It might be important to discuss and become aware of the bonding-effects, an invisible tie with some of the people of the group. You will see them when they are vulnerable and that might move you to open your heart for them. Often they stay in your life; that can be wonderful, but maybe it is not exactly what you want. So be careful if you take a trip with people you don't know.

Purpose

Although you can take mushrooms for many reasons, and having some fun or the sheer lust for adventure are as good a reason as any, one should at least consider the purpose of the trip.

Don't do it to impress anybody, to get back at your parents, to escape the bad world. That might easily backfire and most psychiatrists we asked about this confirm that the amplification process of a psychedelic trip is not exactly what you need if you are ill, depressed, angry, unhappy or borderline schizoid. The bad trips and accidents can usually be traced back to a pre-existing situation or state of mind.

There are positive reasons to choose such an experience. Maybe at a time of indecision, to help you make up your mind about a relationship, a new job, or a career decision. Some even advice to take a psychedelic trip when checking out a guru or holy man, you can spot the impostors more clearly.

A celebration or anniversary might be a good reason, in the old days the seasons, special constellations of the sun and moon and celestial movements were often used for such endeavors and rituals.

6. Magic Mushrooms now: the Law

In ancient Greece each year, hundreds of people, sometimes thousands, participated in the rituals of the Elysian Mystery-school, but in most cultures the use of these substances remained restricted to an elite and was often a secret ritual for a small group of initiates.

This has changed now. You can buy magic mushrooms in many places, you can grow or pick them yourself, and there are also many other psychedelics like LSD, DMT etc. (by the way XTC is not really a psychedelic substance but an entheogen).

Magic mushrooms are clearly in fashion. It is estimated that nowadays about 10-15% of the high-school kids (12-18) in Holland have used mushrooms, often in the ambiance of discos and house-parties. This use is usually limited to a fairly mild portion, with effects similar to a good joint. The kids are a bit careful as they know that taking more will make them trip. Older users will go for the full psychedelic experience, the danger lies in first time users who do not expect the strong effects.

The effects of psilocybine and psilocine are well known for a long time and they are listed as prohibited (classified) substances. But because mushrooms themselves are not chemical and neither animals nor plants, they are not well defined in legal terms. One gets the feeling that the authorities don't really know what to do. The effect on national health doesn't seem to be a great worry, but we notice (as with marihuana) that the Dutch Government is very sensitive to what other countries want and need. In most countries the legislation around drugs, and in particular of alternative/natural drugs, is at least unclear and shifting.

The different national laws operate in a gray area with on the one hand the U.N. Convention of Psychotropic Substances which declares psilocybine and psilocine illegal and on the other hand the fact that these mushrooms grow freely in nature and can consequently not be prohibited.

The Dutch attitude about legal or illegal possession, growing and selling of magic mushrooms is unclear and a bit confusing at the moment. Points of discussion are:

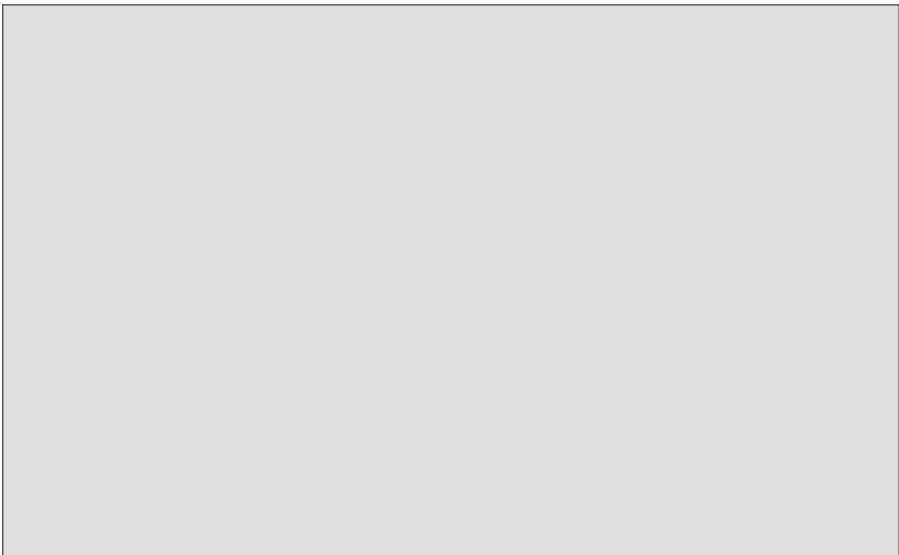
- * Possession of fresh and dried mushrooms

- * Possession of mushroom spores
- * Sales of fresh and dried mushrooms
- * Sales of products that contain mushrooms
- * Sales of mushroom spores
- * Sales of growkits
- * Growing of mycelium
- * Growing of mushrooms

We will have to see how this all will work out! Hopefully the legislators realize that repression doesn't really help and that for instance arresting people on a trip is potentially very damaging, in that state of mind one is very vulnerable and if one is arrested and thrown in jail it might just trigger a paranoia attack.

Testing

In the U.S.A. and some other countries it has now become a standard procedure to test whether people have been taking drugs. Marihuana and other common drugs leave traces in the urine. This testing is done by the Law, but also by employers. Now indole compounds like psilocybin or LSD leave no traces that are detected by the standard urine tests. In fact, the only way to test for them is through the



cerebro-spinal fluid and those tests will not be the order of the day, we hope.

7. Magic Mushrooms: how to get them?

How do we proceed if we want to get Shrooms? You can of course grow them or go on a hunt outdoors in the right season, but we will start with the simplest and probably safest method.

Buying

The mushrooms sold in the (Dutch) headshops, smartshops, Paddoshops or coffeeshops are usually *Psilocybe mexicana* or *Psilocybe cubensis*, in dried form and the small Liberty caps (*Psilocybe semilanceata*) which are sometimes fresh. They are also available from professional growers, people growing them at home, or fresh ones come in from England and Denmark. The shops deal with standard doses of 25-30 grams of fresh or 3-5 grams of dried mushrooms. The salesmen know about what each variety is supposed to 'do' and adjust the dose consequently. The mentioned quantities are sufficient for a strong trip for one person or for a light - marijuana-like - trip for two. The price to be paid is usually about Hfl. 25,-/\$ 15.

When you don't have any experience with this kind of substances, be smart and don't take too much, not everyone reacts in the same way and there is also a small chance of allergic reactions (to mushrooms in general).

Picking mushrooms

We are not going to elaborate on this topic, you can find enough literature about it. It is really more for hobbyists. A small piece of information: there are nearly 75 mushroom varieties that contain a higher or smaller amount of hallucinogenic substances. A number of these also grow in our climate like the pointed Liberty caps, the *Conocybe cyanopus*, the *Conocybe smityii*, the *Psilocybe foenicul* and many *Amanitas*, amongst which also the *Amanita muscaria* (the classic red toadstool with white warts on the top).

It seems far out, the psychedelics grow in the park, the forest and the fields and can be gathered freely.

A divine gift! Yes and no. This is all well in theory but the seeking and determination, especially for an untrained eye, are not that simple.

The greatest danger of the search of mushrooms is that one can pick the wrong kind, which can have life-endangering consequences. This is in particular the case with the *Amanitas* and the really rare *Conocybe*. So don't even try this! So make sure that when you set out for the first time, you take an experienced mycologist along. Apart from

the expertise one needs a good dose of patience. The search for the quite common, pointed Liberty caps, for example, is an endless story, especially because they are so very small. But it seems that once you have spotted a few, they suddenly appear everywhere. This is not so far-fetched; the larger part of the mushroom, the mycelium, is a thready texture under the ground that can spread out very far. The magic mushrooms above the ground are spore-forming sex-reproductive organs and like Terence McKenna said, this is how they take their sun bath.

Back to the practical. You can find them in the summer, but especially in autumn. Take clothing that keeps you warm and dry; it is a drag to end up with a flu after your picking and if you intend to eat while picking, be prepared. Take a container that breaths or baskets or paper bags and remember to a few extra containers to separate the different varieties, so it is possible to determine the different kinds undisturbed at home. Such a double-check is not redundant and a lot safer. Also remember to take big, as well as small, a few not fully grown mushrooms and a bit of mycelium (the roots), that will help to find out what kind you have, if you have any doubt. Of course, be respectful towards nature; cut the mushrooms with a sharp knife and touch the sub-soil as little as possible, don't leave any rubbish, close the fences and don't harass the animals. Yes, and mind not to step in the dung, the best places are well 'manured'. And if you are smart then take note of the spot where you found them and keep your mouth shut, otherwise next year there might be a big group of people busy picking.

Don't take all the Shrooms, leave a few for next harvest! The spores take care of the reproduction and the spreading to different locations.

Growing

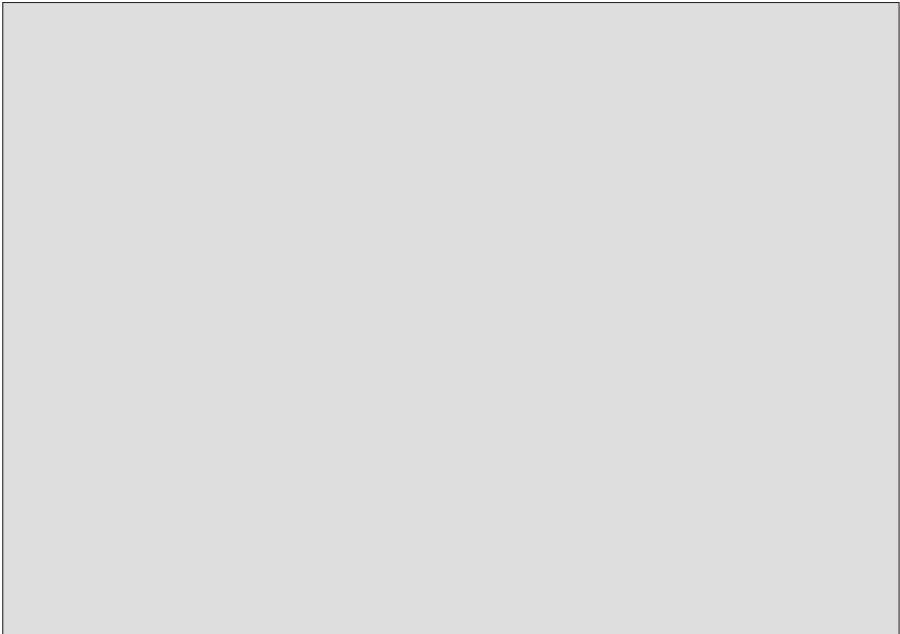
Maybe even more fun than hunting and seeking mushrooms is to grow them yourself and harvest the 'little brothers' from your windowsill. In reality this is not a simple procedure. Especially the growing of the mycelium, the part that is under the ground, is work for professionals. It is particularly important to work in a very sterile environment and to keep all diseases and vermin away. Apart from this, the growing of the spores into mycelium needs perfect and regular temperature and moisture, something which is not always that easy at home.

A friendly, relatively cheap and easy solution are the so-called grow-kits. With these a professional grower has done all the preparatory work and you can buy a ready-made box with pre-grown mycelium.

And if you take good care of it, the mushrooms must come out of the ground in a few weeks. We intentionally say `must', because in spite of loving care like described in the manual, we never really succeeded. Either they were ridden by strange insects, or they dried up in spite of frequent watering or the mycelium withered away under our eyes.

The growing of mushrooms looks easier than it really is ...

If you want to know more about this, then we refer you to the bibliography at the end of this book.



I am not that stupid as to equalize the effects of the use of any drug, found now or in the future, to the purpose and the eventual destiny of human life, namely Enlightenment, the unification with the Divine. I only suggest that these experiences constitute a `gift of grace', that doesn't directly lead to liberation, but can be helpful and for which we can be grateful if it crosses our path. To be woken up or to leave behind the wearing of the daily experiences, to contemplate during a few timeless hours, the inner and outer world, not out of an animalistic need of survival or the human obsession to contain everything in words or concepts, but as they are shown and seen through the Spirit of the Whole, this is for every one of us an experience of inestimable value...

Aldous Huxley
in "Doors of Perception" (1954)





Ayahuasca-ritual

You can take your own trip, but the structure of a formal ritual can help you through the dips and prevent accidents. The Ayahuasca-rituals in Brazil (and now here via the Santo Daime church and other organizations) use a psychedelic brew that contains the same basic hallucinogenic ingredient (DMT) as in mushrooms. The participants in the ritual take a sip of the Ayahuasca (Daime, Jage) in a ritual setting, a mix of jungle and Christian influences. They are grouped in a special circular mandala form, all dressed in white, sit or stand, dance and sing special hymns. These are mostly in Portuguese and have a strong Christian flavor. One sings and sings and dances, not moving from one's place in the row and making the same steps over and over again. At first this looks like a very rigid and tedious service, lasting for 4 to 8 hours. However, under the influence of the psycho-active potion, by the Santo Daime people seen as their sacrament, one slowly starts to enter a different state, in which the rhythm and movement is a kind of basic framework to anchor oneself with. As the purpose of the ritual is not to fall into one's own trance-world, but to stay present with the others and the ritual, slowly a strong group-feeling emerges. Sometimes, when the energy is getting lower and lower, the leader changes the rhythm to shake up the participants. The Ayahuasca is a bitter tasting brew, that for many people doesn't sit well in their stomach. So vomiting is a normal part of the scene and some people need to lie down for a while. In itself Ayahuasca, a combination of harmaline and DMT-containing plants, can lead to a very intense and visual trip, but the whole idea of the Santo Daime ritual is to keep you aware of the reality, of the people around you and your own emotional state. In the process one grinds away the ego, the frustrations and slowly begin to feel a deep connection with the people around and the universe. This is perceived as spiritual ecstasy. The results are not only religious, many participants with severe illnesses report miraculous healings from this 'work'. The Santo Daime communities in Brazil are known as very happy, quiet and healing places, reason why the government has allowed the use of Ayahuasca in their rituals.

Dried Cubensis



Spiders

In my trips there would often emerge large spiders as soon as I closed my eyes. After a while I decided not to run away from these creatures which frighten me normally, but to confront them. By careful looking at them

I became fascinated by their beauty and the symmetry of their bodies. That felt like a victory over my fear, something I try to hold on to in daily life.

Knowledge

How can it be found in the world
How can it not be found in the world

How can it be given
How can it be received
as it is!

Knowing wants to be free
a connection in the soul
no separation
no knowers, no known
just stillness
not of the mind

but of the heart of hearts
the stone one,
inscribed by the Gods we meet in others.

For wisdom is not knowing
not knowing is love
feeling the truth
I am only different
as I have not yet learnt
to be the same.

8. Recipes

Can you do better than just chew the mushies, accept the sometimes earthy and bitter taste and hope for the best?

We just assume for the moment that you use the 'common' psychoactive psilocybe mushrooms. Better stay away from the Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) and other less known varieties, it is too risky. You can easily make a mistake in determining the right variety and start out with very poisonous ones, take an unusual powerful lot etc.



Dried Liberty caps

The common paddos, like *Cubensis* or the smaller *semilanceata* or Liberty caps can be eaten either fresh or dried. According to Albert Hoffman, who also discovered LSD in 1943, an active dose varies from 4 to 20 mg. psilocybine per person, which is between 2 and 5 grams of dry mushroom. The amount of active ingredients is not easily determined and varies a lot, so often you will have to rely on what others tell you, what the mushroom seller or dealer said, and maybe you'll have to start out with a lower dose to determine how strong they are.



Semilanceata, small Psilo or Liberty cap

We can give you a general idea how many magic mushrooms you need to eat. And even then, the active substance varies from mushroom to mushroom. This depends on climate, age, and the general growing conditions. Wild mushrooms can have a total different strength than those that were grown in a controlled environment or grow-shop. In general it can be said that the dried varieties contain ten times as much active substances as the fresh ones, per gram.



How strong: active ingredients

For the two kinds of common mushrooms the content of the psilocybine (psn) and psilocine (ps) is as follows. (quantities are listed in mg. of active substance per gram of dried mushroom)

- * Psilocybe semilanceata. Liberty caps 10 (psn), 0 (ps)
- * Psilocybe cubensis 4-12 (psn), 1-6 (ps)

For fresh ones this amounts to 20 to 30 grams per person. However, the amount of active substance varies, in nature up to 10 times and even in indoor controlled growth up to 4 times.

In general we don't recommend experimenting with Amanita, they contain totally different substances (ibotenic acid) and lead to very different experiences. The trip with Amanita Muscaria or Amanita Pantherina is not always benign or friendly, preparation is cumbersome and unless you travel to Siberia or Mongolia or happen to be friends with Inuit (Eskimo) shamen, forget about it.

Also the Conocybe is a bit too far off, although a few of the hundreds of species of the Conocybe contain psilocybine but they are hard to spot.

Eating

The most efficient and simple way of mushroom ingestion is to put them in your mouth, chew well and swallow, done. Dried mushrooms usually taste better than fresh ones and you need less of them. Some people prefer the fresh Liberty Caps, they do have a particular taste.

Especially the Cubensis has a bit moldy, sometimes green outward appearance, and they are not really a treat, maybe it is better to disguise them by mixing them in. It is possible to prepare mushrooms like you do the common edible 'champignon' variety, use on a pizza, in an omelet, pasta, chili, etc. A mushroom soup is a popular way to eat them.



Dried cubensis

It is true that through heating or mixing with other food the effects can be less or that it takes longer before the active substances are absor-

bed. Notably the psilocine, which is more present in fresh Cubensis mushrooms, breaks easily down and the effect is weaker.

Drying

If you bought or hunted mushrooms and you don't want to use them right away then there are two possibilities for storage. You can keep them for about a week in the fridge. If you want to keep them longer than it is better to dry them. However, they lose their 'power' gradually, after a few months dried mushrooms become weaker.

The drying of the mushrooms is relatively simple. There are a few possibilities:

- * Smaller mushrooms, like the Liberty caps, can be put right away in a drawer on a few sheets of paper, they will dry in a day or two.
- * You can also put them in an oven for a few hours, but keep it at a low setting. Remember that at temperatures far above 40 C or 90 F the active substance psilocine in Cubensis is broken down.
- * There are special mushroom-dryers on the market: maybe a bit costly for a few magic mushrooms? There are even vegetable or herb-dryers that work with solar energy. Quite useful, but beware of too high a temperature!

You can also dry, grind and use the mushrooms in a cake, in soup or sauce. The problem is then how much everybody gets.

Drinks: mushroom tea

You can put the dried or fresh mushrooms in warm water and let them sit for a while like when making herbal tea. Do not boil. Again the Cubensis might lose some of its power, but the psilocine is usually gone with drying anyway. Then you can either just drink the liquid or eat the mushrooms as well. If you don't like the taste, put in a tea bag or some honey. It is not a bad idea to use a blender to grind fresh mushrooms and mix them with fruit juice.

Well ground mushrooms (powder) can be added to: honey, juice, soup, chocolate and tea. One suspects, but it has never been scientifically tested, that the combination with dairy products is less advisable as calcium is supposed to interfere with psilocybine. Red wine and cheese before mushrooms might upset your stomach and system more than is necessary.

Smoking

One can also smoke the dried mushrooms. This has a milder effect than eating them or taking them with tea, but you will need more. It works faster, the effect can be compared to a good joint or a marijuana-cigarette. Be aware: there is a theory that carcinogens are absor-

bed into the lungs when smoking mushrooms. The long term health effects of mushrooms are not deeply researched, but some Mexican shamen tend to favor peyote over mushrooms as it has less aging effects.

Combinations

Although we wouldn't advise this as a rule, as the combination of several drugs can have unsuspected and unpleasant effects, the magic mushrooms are quite compatible with other eco-drugs.

- * Smoking of grass or hash can lengthen and strengthen the effect of the mushroom-trip. This is particularly interesting when coming down, the end of a trip. Some people have experienced that the smoking of a little cannabis will sometimes end the trip or help when things are too tight, too heavy.
- * The combination with alcohol has many aspects (disorientation, traffic safety, delirium, violence) and will rarely work out well. If you are already drunk at the beginning of the trip you might get sick. By the way, don't hold back if you have to vomit. Your body might be wiser than you, indicating that something is not OK. Throwing up does not usually end the trip, but it reduces the intensity and the length.
- * Combinations with other psychedelics like LSD (acid), MDMA (Ecstasy), etc. are possible but the question remains if it does anything to improve a pure mushroom-trip. Sometimes MDMA helps to ease the early part of a trip.
- * Ketamine and magic mushrooms are a bad combination.
- * Combination with cocaine is like kicking the accelerator with one foot and braking with the other. It can lead to muscle pains and dangerously ignoring your body signals of fatigue, thirst.
- * If antidepressants like Prozac are being used, you'll need less mushrooms, so be careful. People using Fevarin should avoid every kind of drug.
- * Combinations with other herbs are possible, there are many like Guarana, Damiana, Kava, Kola Nut, Calamus, Catmint, Waterpepper. Some contain MAO-inhibitors like Passiflower, Syrian Rue (peganum), Johimbe which might enhance the mushroom effect. Be careful, if you don't react nicely to the herbs themselves, don't combine! Ephedra, which works fairly heavy as an upper, is not a good combination with mushrooms.

One could be tempted to use too many or too many different drugs in the "house-ambiance", but mushrooms have in this respect a regulating influence. They don't mix nicely with alcohol (red wine especially) or amphetamines (speed), you will feel your stomach protest. Be careful with combinations which contain so-called MOA-inhibitors (sometimes Syrian Rue or other Harmaline containing substances

are being smoked) as then you will often have an unexpected strong effect.

It is also better not to mix with substances like 2CB or mescaline, which heighten the body-sensitivity, with mushrooms, especially in combination with vigorous moving or dancing. Just as with XTC (MDMA) the water balance and the water regulation in the body can get out of order, thus drink some extra water or juice (but more than 2 liter can also be dangerous). So if you have taken a rather high dose, don't go to a sauna or take a (too) hot bath.

9. Tripping: the Journey to the Dream

To ingest magic mushrooms is not a kid's game, you will quickly learn what "tripping" means. The best trip is one where you are prepared a bit, where you make it a 'conscious trip', even though you have to expect the unexpected. Please see chapter 5: Set & Setting for some more advice. We will discuss here the different stages of a trip.

The preparation

A good preparation is no guaranty for a good trip, but it is certainly helpful. As mentioned earlier, it is important that you feel at ease in your body.

This is what the first preparation is about and it starts already a few days before. Rest, don't traumatize your body with things like bungee-jumping or heavy workouts. It is also beneficial to stick to a light diet a few days, or at least one day before. Some people stick to a total fast, others eat the previous day only light meals like fruits or vegetables.

Of course everybody has his own way to feel at ease, some like to be in nature, to take walks, some like to get inspiration from books, meditation or watch some television. It is particularly important to avoid stress.

The wisdom of the indigenous people is that after travelling (jet-lag) it is better to wait a few days. Taking a bath or shower before is a good thing, getting rid of the day's energy and dirt, feeling clean and ready.

Take your time; plan

Apart from a purpose (see chapter 5) some structure, maybe even planning is needed. This is helpful if you venture into the unknown or strange territory of the psychedelic experience and the reason why this is often done in the form of a ritual. You can provide this structure by making things clear for yourself - or better still - to put them in writing; to make a kind of agenda about what you want to do.

Do you want to direct your attention inside or outside, do you want to investigate your relationships with others or know more about certain physical aspects?

Are you interested in darkness, sound, silence, light-effects, sex; be sure to be clear about this in advance and share that with the others.

Set time apart, make sure you have at least a day to recover and don't take the mushrooms too late in the day, the experience will keep you (and others) awake well through the night, reckon with a 4 to 8 hour period and some to recover.

On the day itself, be especially attentive about the place where you are going to take the trip. If you do this outdoors, then select a spot where you feel safe and bring all the practical things you might need (blanket, water, food, music, writing- and drawing-material, etc.). Something to cover you is needed as you will at times feel cold, even in the summer.

Having a bag you can lock will maybe ease your mind, bicycle chain locks can be helpful to make sure your stuff stays in place and safe.

If you take it at home, do a thorough cleaning and add some things that will inspire you or give a nice feeling, like cushions, flowers and candles. Avoid visitors, disconnect the phone and wear loose clothing. Provide for some drinks like juice, water or herb tea and maybe a light snack (no cheese). You might want to take a shower or a bath, so be sure that you can reach this 'safely'.

Take into account that you might start worrying after taking the mushrooms and right before you really feel the effect. You might want to go through everything, do you know where your keys are, is the door locked? Better arrange for this now to feel sure everything is safe. Some insecurity at this stage is quite normal and healthy, so don't panic if you can't find the keys.

A contract

It maybe sounds a bit too serious, but if you have any doubts about your own deeper motives, maybe hidden suicidal tendencies, now is the time to come clear. When you are with other people it really helps to discuss the rules of the trip. What is acceptable, what not. Is sex part of the agenda or definitively not, is massage acceptable (quite a treat in the sensitive state you will be in), how loud can you be, are there limits to where you can go, can you take a bath or shower, would your kind of music be a traumatic downer for others (Gregorian chants are great for some, a nightmare for others). In general try to discuss the playing field and make some rules. You don't need a formal contract, but it sometimes makes things easier if you write something down. Especially if there is the slightest whiff of someone 'stepping out', being tired of life and its burden, do make a verbal contract that nobody will get lost in the inner wilder-

ness. By making this clear to one's normal consciousness there is less danger of someone actually giving up at a subconscious level. At many group-events this is a standard procedure, minimizing the risk for everybody involved. Even if one believes that one has full authority over one's own life, a bad trip or worse is not a nice thing to do to your friends and fellow-psychnauts.

Even if you trip by yourself, it helps to make this clear, write it down or say it out loud. "I will come back, sound and sane!"

Fear

Before the trip starts and sometimes at the onset of the actual trip, for many people there is a certain fear, a shivering uncertainty about this entering in what could be seen as a dark and forbidden realm. Such fear is not unhealthy, in fact one should be careful and a bit of fright is an honorable thing, only fools walk blindfolded into the unknown. So don't be ashamed, but share that fear with others. The ritual aspects, which are described in greater detail later, are important here.

Don't push others into joining the trip if they don't feel like it, maybe for them being with you as a 'sitter' is a valuable experience in itself. They will usually pick up a 'contact-high' anyway, the 'hitchhiking' effect is well known as one picks up a little bit of the energy of those being 'high'.

Sitters: designated helpers

It does make sense to have one or more 'sitters'. These are people who don't take anything and are there to help, assist, get you home safe afterwards, drive the group to some nature spot, answer the phone or doorbell etc. Sitters could be therapists or just someone with a little more experience or maybe someone who just wants to see how it all goes. It is an experience in itself to be with tripping people, one can learn a lot about human nature. It is fun to be a sounding board for all those crazy ideas, a reality check!

To start the trip

There are different ways to ingest the mushrooms: raw, cooked or as tea. In the previous chapter we listed a few.

Sometimes it is fun to prepare them together with the people that you'll be tripping with. To stir or mix well is important. First of all this takes care of an even division of the active substances in the different doses and secondly you put some of your own energy in the shrooms. In this way you can also make a meaningful ritual and add your own personal wishes and spells.

Eat the mushrooms slowly, careful, with respect and chew them well; that is better for an even absorption of the active substances. It may strengthen the group-feeling and ease the trip to sit together now and share things like possible fears, expectations or something else that might bother you.

Onset of the trip

In the beginning of the trip it is best to just relax, maybe lie down and wait for what is going to happen.

The sounds around you are very important. This can be silence, the usual noises of the surroundings or 'natural' music. You become very sensitive to music and the moods and the emotions that it can evoke. Look for music which is calm (ambient or new age), not too fast or too hectic and preferably not the music you listen to everyday. For deeper experiences by the so-called ethnic music of didgeridoo, Buddhist chanting or shamanistic drums can be very suitable. For some, drumming yourself can be wonderful, others will find it easily irritating.

Anyway, now is the time to relax. Ready for take off, you have ingested the magic mushrooms and are curious about what is going to happen. You might have been reading about the "Doors of Perception" and wonder if they will open.

Discomfort: let it be

About ten minutes to one hour after the ingestion of the mushrooms you will start noticing the effect (this depends on the dosage, how well you have chewed and how empty your stomach is). Maybe some funny, unexpected or strange thoughts will pop into your head. This stage is characterized by the question: "Do you already feel something?"

This often shows insecurity, you don't realize it yet, but your defense-system is under attack and so you may start worrying. Is the door locked? Do you still have your keys? and so on. You may get nervous tics, you smell the fear that has not yet surfaced.

If you now take your time and try to feel your body, as you listen to your breathing and your heartbeat, then you may notice how tense you are, maybe you jam your jaws together, your posture isn't correct, or you don't allow enough breathing space. Shake it all loose! Most people experience this stage, where the active substances must settle down in the body, as not particularly pleasurable.

Nausea

During this phase you become conscious of your body, you can feel cold or nauseous or have a stomach-ache. This can be a bummer, some people get really sick for a short time. But if you have only eaten a little and don't move around too much in this stage you'll get less sick and in most cases this won't last long. In rare cases people have to throw up. Let that happen, don't try to keep the mushrooms in, if they don't want to.

After about an hour the body will start feeling heavy, while you feel more free and happier and your ego (defense) will evaporate, become lighter and less noticeable.

Body-awareness

When the initial physical effects of uneasiness pass, the focus will usually shift. First you will experience your body in a slightly different way. Most people become aware of the tension in the muscles. That is a valuable experience, as you realize that in normal life your face, your neck and shoulders are held in an unnatural position all the time, that you wear a mask and a posture that are not relaxed. As the drug helps you to feel your normal defense system, you become aware of those tensions, shields, defenses and can let go of them. There is usually a moment, that you feel how tense you are and how your muscles hurt, how tight your back is, your normal grin puts strain on your face and neck. A good time to become aware of energy-points and blockades in your body.

Feeling is healing, notice this and try to remember later. Here a photograph or video-recording can help you. Looking at your face when it really did relax can help you do the same without the help of mushrooms.

Giggle

The paddo-trip is often referred to as the giggle-experience. Many people have spontaneous outburst of giggles and laughter, sometimes hardly controllable and in general are more sensitive to the ridicule of what 'normal' people take so serious. On a mushroom-trip you look at what others do, at the way something is arranged, at your own hands and find that irresistibly funny, hence the giggle.

Note that laughter or giggling is a very natural way to cope with something strange or frightening. If you don't want to accept it, ridicule it! So the humor of the trip is partly just that, an altered and maybe less inhibited view of the world, but it also prevents you from re-

ally feeling what is there. When you laugh about the funny way someone lights a cigarette, holds the phone, maybe that is because you recognize your own clumsiness, mask or tic. That becomes clearer when looking at a video of a trip, mostly boring shots of people's grimaces and giggles, although the deep understanding you feel in the trip is later mostly reduced to silly remarks. There is usually a core of truth there, so don't dismiss your discoveries too soon. Many of the poems in this book came forth from psychedelic experiences.

Clarity but sometimes control-loop

In the trip you will, after the physical phase, become more aware of the emotional and mental plane. You will slowly become more conscious of things which you took for granted; looking at your hand, a flower or a painting, seeing the form as fluid, less stable and more of a subtle energy; you get a new perspective on things.

This gradual process of sinking towards a more direct contact with your deeper senses, with your subconscious, can be accompanied by feelings of happiness, love, gratefulness or religious experiences but also by depression and despair.

Especially at high doses negative feelings can surface as 'what did I do to myself', a feeling of insecurity or a total loss of the concept of time. Here you can start to panic and end up in a repetitive chain of thoughts, a 'control-loop', a cyclic process where you don't dare to surrender and desperately try to keep things under control. This can last for hours and could be called a 'bad trip'. But in fact you are working on shifting of boundaries, and the more you invest in this, the more openings and solutions you will find.

Afterwards, bad trips often appear to have been good trips in retrospect; you learned something and you did not loose yourself in the rush.

Once you are in the roller coaster it is virtually impossible to get out. The best is to accept the journey and try to enjoy it, often fear is the cause of a bad trip for mind and body. If you really can't take it then the best is to start moving, or focus on ordinary things, like taking a shower, peeling potatoes, or cleaning. Try to stay in a pleasant environment, where you feel at ease. Going out and mix with people is not always a good idea. If you feel like throwing up, just do it, this will help you to get rid of the undigested alkaloids. Often your body knows best what is the right dose. Because magic mushrooms are very yin you can counteract the effect by taking some yang food, like some salted soup. An Aspirine can help too, it re-

laxes you and it is at least something, the placebo effect works great when tripping.

If you want to get out of the `control-loop`, relax, watch something beautiful like a flower, put on some music, call a good friend (or your mother, if you dare) and just admit that you are scared, that helps. And scream or cry, even if it was only because you realize that you have been the prisoner of your own fear for such a long time. Not daring to surrender in a trip is something which happens in real life too, only there you often hide it.

Sinking; hallucinations

You are now, slowly but surely, entering a magical world, noticing that things look different, that perspectives are shifting, the normal world gets distorted but in a interesting, fascinating way. You are out of the 'Snellian illusion', the way we have learned to see as if through an optical lens, you can have unlimited depth of field and even multiple focal points, so you can see your hand and something at a distance sharp at the same time.

The things that you perceive around you, images and sounds, get more intense and wonderful, often surrounded by colorful rainbows. If you wave your hands, you see a kind of trail, like a video-effect. The colors make you feel as if you are in a Gothic church, maybe those people knew a bit more than we give them credit for!

This is when the slightest turn, a bit of pressure here, focussing your attention on some minor detail will redirect your trip. What seemed fascinating a moment ago is now forgotten as you suddenly see the energy patterns of your hand, smell something that brings you back to childhood, this is wonderland.

You'll see - also with eyes closed - patterns that you recognize from Persian carpets or etched windows, but with colors that are way out of the normal range. That by the way might be how some birds or animals see the world all the time.

If you go and sit in the dark or close your eyes you might start hallucinating. You see or hear things that can't be there, a simple shadow is interpreted as a whole world, the painting you know so well is now a tridimensional portal to a strange world. You feel like Alice in Wonderland, in an enchanted world that is vaguely familiar but strange in its immediate changes, like a lucid dream but more sensuous, more vivid.

Your pupils have widened, this is also noticeable for others.

In this phase you can feel very emotional and it is easy to focus on problems, memories or feelings. You might realize things about the roots and underlying traumas of your emotions, about the way you live or would like to live and about your relation with others, which up till now you were not able to see in a clear perspective.

Be quiet for a bit

When in a disco or on a party, one can easily suppress and ignore the enhanced body-awareness, kind of cover it with frantic dancing or movement. This disregard of the signals of your body could be the cause of overexertion and muscle pains afterwards. Now dancing or expressing yourself otherwise during a trip is a good thing, but when you do not listen to your body's protest, you could end up with sore muscles or even worse, symptoms of dehydration or other physical problems. The feedback mechanism, that is so beautiful sensitized during a trip, is easily silenced, so take a break once in a while, find a chill-out spot and listen to the dance inside.

Peak

Then your ego, your stamp on what you perceive is no longer there, you can let go of the reality check. The world turns inwards and a moment comes that you see as much with eyes closed as with open eyes. Try to hold on to that, that moment where inside and outside are nearly identical. But then let go again!

Now the most beautiful phase of your trip is happening. You enter a world with doors, halls, patterns and images which you recognize from a church or a temple in Mexico, Egypt or Greece. Tunnels and doors, caves and spaces, portals and stairs; you fly from one color and sphere into another. Turn a bit and you fly from the one extravagant Indian palace to the next Arabian harem, from a rollercoaster to a beauty spot in nature.

The normal perspective is non-existent and it seems that your energy follows your attention. If you open your eyes you might think that they swapped the corners of the room; you feel estranged from the normal reality. But it is above all beautiful, fantastic, weird, fascinating, unusually colorful and vivid.

You find out where artists (consciously or unconsciously) get their inspiration, you experience that these archetypal symbols, from crosses and circles to mythological figures, are also part of your dream world.

Direction

Let the mushrooms guide you during the trip. You can trust the 'little brothers' as such, or maybe realize that these are natural processes and that the subtle consciousness is always more right than the more coarse reality on the surface. Thoughts and images come and go in a continuous movie you watch in awe, and you are watching as well as starring as well as directing it.

To enjoy the trip is the best, sometimes there are fears and scary images, but usually this passes quickly. See this as a magnifier of your mood, reactions and emotions. A slight stomach ache, because of some undigested food, might feel terrible. A pain here, a sore muscle there, your kidneys protesting, the system lets you know what's wrong. Try to understand that also in real life you get similar signals, which your body handles while you are not aware of it. Now you are really sitting front row in your own theatre. So watch closely, the show is yours!

It is possible to be your own guide, the helmsman of your trip. The only thing that you need to do is to concentrate strongly on something you encounter or to go into the direction that you choose in the beginning. This can be a question about the past, the present or the future, a strong fear that you want to know more about, or a shamanistic trance voyage. Usually something will remind you of your agenda, but why not write it down beforehand. Use your fantasy, everything is possible!

Remember, you have the choice between the inward voyage, to continue dreaming with closed eyes, or the outward experience, to stay present, to look around and maybe do something.

It may help to have certain objects nearby that inspire you. Depending on the purpose, these could be photos of people (alive or deceased), drawings, paintings, tarot cards, illustrated books (of other countries and cultures, animals or plants) or objects that have a symbolic or emotional value. Pick up a mirror, light some candles and take a good look at the one you see in the mirror; a lot of people and faces are part of you!

You can just concentrate on any object and watch your own thoughts. Maybe you'll get some inspiration. Allow it to happen... It is often fun to have some drawing or painting material nearby. Marvelous creations may happen!

Silence, on your own

Quiet rest is an essential ingredient of the set and setting. Take time for yourself, apart from the attention you have for others or for external things. Of course it is beautiful to be in nature and to discover the world in all this new attire of colors, forms, influences and awareness, but also turn inwards. With eyes closed and without music, noise or other disturbances, listen to the music playing within yourself, to your breathing and your heartbeat, take off on an inner voyage to the inner depths.

A solitary trip, totally on your own, can be very enriching, but some experience is needed. If this can be done outdoors, without interference from others, then you will rediscover nature, as it shows itself anew. Especially so-called power-spots (hills, vulcano's, a special creek, a well, a holy place) let you share in their exuberance and you will notice the diversity of forms and varieties at such locations.

Your body: healing

Often your sensitivity for physical sensations heightens. You are more aware of warmth, cold, a cool breeze, but also of the smell of your blankets or of the electric field of an apparatus. Your senses get magnified. Because often we are not very friendly towards the body, you can take advantage of the trip to get to know it a little better. This is possible by simply putting your attention on the different body parts.

A suggestive tape with energy- or chakra-meditation is helpful and also allows you to feel the chi-energy. With a little practice that can also be felt afterwards and used in your 'normal state'. This kind of tapes can be bought or you can make them yourself, just record some affirmations like "I am OK, I love myself, I have a place in this world".

Also try to listen to a tape with your parents' voice on a trip or watch a video of them, you may notice unsuspected messages, a caring tone of voice, bringing back memories from the past.

You can enjoy or at least experience your body through massage or body-work, this can be an unforgettable and very healing. In the special state of consciousness that you reach with psychedelics 'becoming whole' is a very interesting item to put on your agenda. When you have health problems that may be the main purpose of the trip. Many times you will discover that physical complaints are the anchors, the signals for emotional problems that you have to solve. We could write a book on this subject alone; how by visualization, the directing of your chi-energy and other exercises you can get in-

formation about the deeper causes of certain diseases or disabilities and if something can be done about them.

Personality-type

It is good to notice that the effect and direction of a trip may be quite different for different people. This is because of weight, digestion, sensitivity or simply because of one's mood. The active substances influence your own personal filters, your defense mechanisms and ego-barriers. This depends on your state of mind, but also on your disposition and your type.

Although everybody is unique and different, there are several ways to group and classify people. Here the idea of personality-types is useful.

There are a few such personality-typologies, some very detailed, but an easy one is to divide people in head-heart-body types, each with their own personality-traits.

This can help you to understand why others - also during a trip - behave differently.

If you happen to be a head-type, somebody who is always concerned (thinking) about what can happen, then the trip will help you to overcome this and it will feel like a great rest in your head; the fears and thoughts don't run rampant anymore.

If you are an emotional (heart) type and normally vulnerable to the (negative) emotions and projections of others - understandably defensive about them - then it will be easier to make contact, you feel more open, more concerned with others and the world around you without feeling threatened.

For body-types, who react from the body on instinctive and intuitive impulses, know anger and display a fight or flight-syndrome, the trip can smooth this out. They will easily get access to the very deep layers, where mystical experiences and the feeling of oneness, are possible.

It is not so simple to know what kind of type you are; someone who is active in sports is not necessarily a body-type, but can be a head-type, overcompensating the lack of contact with the body by jogging or aerobics.

The mystical

Many people experience a trip as a mystical experience. They feel a deep wordless contact between them and the world around, the universe in all its dimensions and manifestations. This is sometimes called the Unio Mystico, where the separation between inner and outer,

self and other, heaven and earth is resolved. Not as a concept, but as an experience in the realm, where words have little meaning.

Many scholars in this respect don't make a big distinction between a chemically induced trip and a meditative trance, yoga or rituals, drumming or chanting. Some people will - during a mushroom trip - remember that they have had similar experiences before, as a kid, during traumatic experiences, accidents or in what some describe as 'past lives'.

For others this is really a new and unknown thing, it can shock them severely as this is not something that you are taught in school. It can come as a revelation, suddenly one's whole concept of reality is changing.

If this happens and a feeling of loneliness evolves, it helps to go back to the books, poems and music of the real masters. This unitive state is what people like Rumi, Kabir, Meister Eckhardt, Blake, Ginsberg, Watts talked about, and for that matter, Jesus or Buddha.

Not from outside

What we experience during a trip comes from inside! Despite external stimuli and a greater sensitivity to the energy, colors, sounds of things, people or animals, we color the experience ourselves, with our own subconscious beliefs, symbols, images and projections.

The peaceful as well as the fearful images are creations of our own mind; what we experience during a trip is our own interpretation.

Of course there exist a relation with the deeper, true reality, but how real is that, and how does this present itself, is it the truth or only our truth? Nobody can answer this question, at best we can believe in a certain form of ultimate reality at the core of the universe.

During a trip it is possible to get the impression that the world is either hell or heaven, but realize that it is your own projection of reality, which can not easily overcome the duality of good or evil.

We have a different, more sensitive filter in the psychedelic state or maybe we don't have a filter anymore; we have come to our senses!

You can learn from a trip that inside and outside, heaven and hell, up and down can be very close to each other. Maybe then you will recognize one of the most important lessons of the little brothers, the sacrament of (self)-realisation: "Thou art That" (whatever you experience around you is what you yourself are), a teaching that has been written down, thousands of years ago, in the Vedas of ancient India. And maybe that was what Shakespeare really meant with 'to be or not to be *that*, is the question'.

What you remember mainly afterwards are not the images, although you will now recognize certain geometrical patterns, figures and art from the sixties (and historic buildings) as psychedelic art, but the sensation of clarity; your thoughts were direct, clear, undisturbed. The ego disappeared, the veil of projecting could be lifted, 'naked' reality perceived.

The end of the trip: coming down

The so-called peak can last from one to four hours. Afterwards you have the feeling of coming down. You will become, step by step, more conscious of 'normal reality'.

If you feel like getting up in a hurry, don't rush, try to remain calm and relaxed. Some think that this is the moment to eat or drink something or to talk with your fellow-travelers.

Maybe it is, maybe not, but maybe another person needs some more time, allow them a gradual re-entrance. That word is appropriate, as you really come back to earth from another world, as a psycho-naut from a strange planet.

In any case do it gently, coming down is as important for the integration of the experience as the peak of the trip. (See the chapter Coming down).

If you are in the company of others then it is fun to end the experience together in your some way. This can be done by sharing your experience or by silence, a ritual, a song, etc.

In about six to nine hours the effects will have disappeared and is it possible to sleep or to go home. Be careful driving for a while, your vision, sense of place and equilibrium are usually a bit distorted.

Don't drive while tripping, it is dangerous and illegal.

If you took the magic mushrooms in the morning (the best time is around noon) you might not feel like sleeping afterwards. Enjoy your 'clear' head. Be sure not to have any obligations for the rest of the day.

Bestow some tender loving care on yourself: take a nice shower or a bath, rest in the hammock, listen to music, write, read, walk, sauna, etc. Be sure to rinse off the sweat, it contains lots of toxins.

If you took the trip in the afternoon or evening then have a light snack at the end of the trip - you can be sure you'll get hungry if you have been fasting - and afterwards you'll probably get some sleep.

The next day you'll probably feel clear upon awakening and with less disturbing thoughts in your head. This is pleasant, but still, take it easy, you have borrowed energy from your body. Especially if you went dancing or so then it is easy to overstep your boundaries and to exhaust your reserves - energy that you need to replenish.

Apart from this your body won't give you much trouble, if you started out in a good physical condition.

With continuous heavy use of mushrooms, without a resting period in between, you might get bothered by redness in the eyes, your skin may start itching and you will need more sleep.

For some the trippie feeling comes back after a while or happens as a series of waves, the reason for this may be some undigested pieces of mushroom in the stomach, but there is also a possibility of a kind of flash-back.

The flash-back experience is not very well researched and some doubt it even exists for indole compounds such as LSD and psilocybin, but we do notice some after-effects that could be described as flash-back.

In general if you hold on to the experience of the trip, keep it alive in your memory banks, it will be easier to bend reality, for instance, if you look deep in someone's eyes. You'll notice that the psychedelic state is also naturally there, maybe you don't really need the chemistry of the magic mushrooms.

The after-effects

The chemical effects of a Paddo-trip can show up for about a week, but not in your urine. The Amanita does, in Siberia drinking of the urine of rich people taking the drug made the poor also enjoy it. The deeper - psychological - effect of the trip can still be felt after a few weeks and even after a few months. That what you saw and learned about yourself, others and the world can change your life.

There is the risk that you will feel depressed for some time when you discover what you have been doing wrong during your whole life. Give yourself some time to integrate this discovery and be grateful that you still have a life in front of you to do better.

Afterwards you will often think about these experiences and it is not always easy to deal with the overload; you'll easily get an overdose of insights that you can't really absorb. There is no need to deal with them immediately, it is good to let everything settle down.

Some of the insights and ideas that you got will fade slowly away and get lost again in your subconscious. Others will stick and be a more clear inspiration.

Undigested experiences (from the trip, or from your life) can linger on and be the cause of projections, therefore it is good to let go of them by writing them down, by working them out or by discussing them with others. Reliving past experiences helps, even if it sometimes painful, to get a new perspective on things. You get more or less rid of the problems and things you dealt with, they won't influence your emotions or thoughts anymore; you let go of the emotional deadweight.

10. Rituals

Rituals and ceremonies, maybe you believe that this is all nonsense and then you simply skip this chapter. We deal with this at some length in this book, because it might help you not only to place the mushroom-trip in context, but to also see the connection with other experiences, religions and even the disco-culture.

To transgress the border between the known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible, the conscious and the unconscious is a serious matter. You'll in fact come in contact with things inside yourself that you normally suppress, that you are not conscious of. To give an example: you smell something or you hear a particular sound and that takes you back to your childhood. Normally you don't always realize this, but this will happen more easily during a trip. This can be nice or not, you fling your memory doors wide open and make some vivid jumps in time too.

You can prepare yourself by selecting the right spot and the right environment, but is there something else that can be done so you won't feel overwhelmed by what you have hidden, suppressed or just never noticed?

The question we are touching upon here is how to safely reach the subconscious, the unconscious and the deeper layers of what Jung called the collective unconscious. Science has its own models and techniques for getting there, like Freud's psychoanalysis or Jung's work about archetypes. Psychologists may have very beautiful theories and will talk in terms of associations, hypnoses and deprogramming but since ancient times medicine-men, priests and shamen have their ceremonies and rituals. And those have proven their worth, otherwise they would have been abolished by now. There was, for centuries, a veil of ridicule and ignorance concerning the work of these healers, witches and helpers of old.

Things are changing; there is a growing understanding that many of the rituals of so-called primitive cultures are very effective and can for instance cure medical problems that we are stuck with in the West.

To think that these things are superstition and nonsense, is the total opposite of the experience of many people that report wonderful results.

With the help of certain mudras (gestures), visualization, special breathing, auto-suggestion, mantras (specific words that have a deeper significance), hypnosis, symbols, patterns, etc. priests and shamans developed a whole repertoire of what we would nowadays call: “The communication with your deeper self”.

Rituals are not linear, not logical, they work!

Rituals become important in connection with the psychedelic experience, because you need to kind of leave your ‘rational’ mind behind; in a trip you can’t trust your normal logic anymore, you surrender to the forces of chaos, to the wilderness of the subconscious. A strange territory, where some structure, some guideline to follow is welcome. Ceremonies provide that framework. That’s why in many cultures one dealt in a very respectful manner with the magic mushroom and other psychedelics in the rituals.

Of course we can’t force you, but we suggest every user to get more information and inspiration from the wisdom of the ancient cultures and the people.

The mushroom itself can also be a guide here. It is because of the valuable lessons we received that we call them our “little brothers” in this book. They have something of real value to contribute, maybe the brotherhood between mushrooms and people entails more than just eating and being eaten!

It is not a bad idea to learn from the old cultures if we deal with magic mushrooms or other psychedelics, they do have a long history. The funny part is that the so-called ‘modern’ scientists, often after lots of research, discover that these old and ‘barbaric’ methods are based on a very right understanding of the interaction between body and mind.

The subconscious is a system which is not easy to reach. It has been programmed over the course of your life and especially in your early youth by your experiences, often by the endless repetition of the behavior and remarks of your parents.

Of course there are many ways to contact the subconscious, some rituals are very specific to a special culture, others are more universal. All are intended as formalized ways to come into contact with the spirit world, inside and outside yourself. For that matter you can see a ritual either as a real contact with another reality (outside yourself) or as a support for your own subconscious (inside yourself). It does

help if you believe in the deeper meaning of the ritual, but even if you only view this as a programming of your subconscious, it can still have a beneficial effect.

Rites of passage: initiation

The traditional way to prepare for a trip is through a ritual of purification. Clean yourself, to make an easier contact with the spirit world, when you go there to ask for help or guidance.

Often the rituals connected to psychedelics have to do with initiations, which are then part of a rite of passage (for instance when youngsters become of age). A youngster becomes a man, a common water-carrier becomes a warrior, a servant a priest, an outsider an initiate. This is a step through a door, to a higher level of consciousness and a 'trip' is an appropriate way to do so.

These initiations usually deal with insights in the 'hidden' knowledge, to share in the 'knowing' or to be part of the group that 'knows'. It is important to do or experience something out of the ordinary, that impresses the initiate and makes him or her aware that they have reached a 'higher' level.

In many cultures initiations are very important, they define your life, where you live and what is your task. Often you are first sent in to the woods or the wilderness alone or with others initiates, to fast, and as a preparation. Then comes the trial, the vision-quest or the ordeal, they want to see if you can withstand the test of manhood, maybe you have to crawl through a narrow tunnel or through a dark crack in the rocks and generally submit to all kind of trials to be eventually accepted in the group. Usually at the end a certain sign is given, a totem or a tattoo, and then a big party is thrown; you became a man or a woman or a warrior.

In our society these rites of passage have slowly withered away. Only for religious people it still matters, for the Jews for instance Bar MitzWa is still a very important event and milestone. Some anthropologists believe that many of the problems that modern man encounters are due to the loss of these obvious milestones and passages in our life. We seem to need them to straighten out things with ourselves, to create a distance from the frustrations of our childhood and thus become 'wiser'. To cut through the programming, to realize who we are and why we are what we are.

The staging of a ritual

Many rituals contain the same elements. It is usually about a purification, a healing, the creation of a structure and making a link, a connection. This is symbolized by certain actions, which record it in the language of the subconscious (neurolinguistic programming is a modern term for this).

It usually starts by making an amendment, purification and cleansing. This is often in the form of a smudge with herbs like sage or incense (scents are very important during a trip too). One very often takes a bath, or a symbolic bath and likewise get rid of the influence of the past or of the environment. This spiritual purification is important to part with unfinished stuff of self and others.

The Huichol Indians, for instance, have a complex, mostly spiritual purification; before their collective peyote-ritual they confess publicly their wrong-doings.

In the further course of a ritual repetition plays a big part, often using the rhythm of drums or rattles.

One can sing, pray silently together or alone, move in a circle, make contact with the four directions (and with the above and the below) and one usually pays respect to the 'intelligence' one deals with (whether this is seen inside or outside oneself).

Concentration is essential and without calling this directly 'praying', there is a possibility that by using certain words you too can give direction to your trip.

The space where you take your trip is not only important, but also magical; it is possible to design this symbolically by putting an object in the four corners, a kind of watchtower. Native Americans also frequently make a circle or a medicine-wheel, this is also a kind of screen, meant to keep the 'good' energy inside and to lock out evil energy.

After the preparation you can concentrate and connect, like a link to the spirit world, animals, friends, ancestors, etc. by dancing, gestures, recitations, songs etc. Other cultures often use fascinating forms, masks, complex sacrifices to gods or spirits, invocations, prayers, chanting or special music. Just remember that a Holy Mass or a church service is often based on the same principles.

Contact - alignment

Don't only purify yourself, also align and connect. For instance with the others in a group and also with the magic mushrooms which you can pass around. This is a good way to ensure a fair mix and in this way everyone contributes their own energy. Hold hands, burn some incense, pass some water around, light a candle, choose a flower, sing together; it is all a question of tuning in. Repetition helps, everyone has their own energy, but if we make the same gestures together we come closer to the same energy level, and to the same brain wave frequency. The mushroom which magnifies and accelerates all emotions and experiences makes this even more intense.

To create links, to allow the energy of others or to invoke energy of the past or your own past; the invocation of Gods and Goddesses, Spirits or Forces of Nature is again a question of aligning with an archetypal energy which has been encoded deep inside by the image of some God, force or symbol.

Structure

Rituals can also be seen as a support to structure the chaos around you. This principle applies not only to the use of mushrooms or other psychedelics, but also to churches, societies and in politics. Even in front of the mirror in the morning or while making coffee in the office, specific rituals develop after a certain time. The way you dress for a funeral, marriage or party, the way you behave and the contacts you make, are in fact part of a ritual. For this matter there is not much difference between an African tribe feasting and today's house-parties. To have a party can be a good way to end a trip; to totally let go in a new realization, in an expanded consciousness. Notice that Mardi Grass is not only fun but also has a religious connotation and is part of a ritual.

Eternal pattern

It is good, when adjusting the trip in a larger ceremonial context, to recognize the age-old pattern of separation, initiation and return. Even Freud spoke about separation and individuation, the process of freeing oneself of some old patterns.

This structure is present in all kinds of myths, but according to psychiatrists like Stanislav Groff, who worked with psychedelics extensively, it is related to experiences at the time of birth. You experience this pattern in the trip itself but it is also possible to apply it in a ritual.

So first create a division between your daily routine and the place of the ritual, by marking it, but also by some extra rest, fasting or by seeking out a quiet place in nature, in company of a few friends or on your own.

Then before or after the trip there can be an initiation. It is also possible to give a tangible form to this initiation, which not only makes you or the initiated part of the psychedelic community, but which also allows you to reach a deeper level, especially if you do it in a rather big group.

For the return to the world, coming back in a new form is not so easy these days. Going out on the street singing and dancing might get you in trouble. However, why not dressing up, go out for dinner or to a party, that can be a manifesto of your change of heart too.

To copy or to create something yourself

So far you got a lot of suggestions concerning rituals, now it matters how you apply this and how you intend to apply it. One can rely on what, for instance, the shamen and the Native Americans do. We gave already several examples and a lot has been written about it, but you can also create something on your own. A basic outline may help:

- * A ritual is to use certain gestures, sounds, words, prayers, visualizations and likewise to work at the relation with something in the subconscious or in the spirit world.
- * You want to create a link, to bridge the boundaries between two worlds. That doesn't necessarily mean something esoteric; you can work on your relationships with others, on the separation that exist between the group members, between you and the people around you, but also between your conscious and your subconscious or between your mind and your body.

Invent your own rituals or let them happen spontaneously. Be creative, don't make it too heavy and remember that all that you do with a certain awareness already has an extra in value, whether it is reciting a poem or silence and concentration, holding hands in the beginning of the trip or by wishing each other a good trip.

Even a small ceremony or ritual is helpful, brings clarity and supports you on your voyage, which will always take place in a strange world.

11. Visualizing

For some people it is easy to visualize; they think about an apple, close their eyes and they can see one. For others it is more difficult. But it seems that magic mushrooms are helpful for nearly everyone; you imagine the most beautiful images and you really see what you think about. A shroom voyage can be a real discovery in this respect, you can watch and learn how to deal with it, and you can try it later without taking anything.

Visualization is an age-old technique, that we are slowly rediscovering. In ancient religions this has been used extensively and if you have a deeper interest in, for instance, Buddhism, you will come upon it in different exercises and meditations. Buddhas and complex but symmetric images, often painted on silk (Tangkhas), are used in meditation practice. Circular mandalas also appear in other cultures and it can be very insightful to draw something similar during a trip. To reproduce the images with the eyes closed is an exercise in visualizing and that can turn out to be a very magical experience; according to the ancient Masters it is possible to influence reality or to impose your will on the material world.

Maybe this sounds a bit weird, but during a trip you are definitely on magical grounds. You don't need to think about witches or similar, but there is little doubt that there is a very particular relation between that what you make up in your mind or visualize and the outside reality, even scientists now take that serious.

Religions and spiritual schools all over the world use these techniques, but so do the management-gurus and happiness-peddlers. There is always a deep core of 'visions' and inner experiences at the heart of a tradition. There still exist people that adhere to the old earth religions and work specifically with imagination and visualization. They call themselves Wicca or Craft and also Voodoo in South America. Apart from other techniques they use visualization to strengthen their will. They do work with objects and totems, but these are merely ritual supports for what they plot in their heads. In most cases there is no bad intention, in this way one effectively seeks a positive spiritual dimension.

You can either visualize spontaneously - which is also possible without magic mushrooms - or you can use an external support. This

can be a tape or a CD with suggestions (Egosoft Amsterdam has many). You can buy it or make it yourself, or you ask someone to help you. Some people are very good at that, they guide you, so to say, on the journey to the self. This is called 'guided visualizations'; someone who as a guide helps, gives directions and stimulates you. The intention and the duration of such a visualization is of course different. Everyone has different projects, problems, wishes. In general there is a relaxation phase (induction), in which you relax, listen to music, and with the suggestion that, for instance, you are lying on a comfortable bed in nature, you listen to your breathing and relax all your body-parts. A possible suggestion: feel a warm colored light radiating on your feet and going upwards.

The next phase is becoming active in your dream world. This can be a journey to the underworld, into your personal subconscious, via stairs to the basement, where you often encounter your parents or relatives, into a dark space where you can make peace with these deeper feelings, projections and thoughts.

If you fly upwards, - the name fly agaric for *Amanita muscaria* was not so far-fetched - then you go to the overworld.

Of course the guide can't see these worlds for you, but it is good to search for a safe spot, a secret cave and take a look at what you keep hidden there. You can also visit your parents and other people (perhaps through messengers or gifts). A whole repertoire of archetypal symbols exist. They appear in all kind of legends, the journey of the young hero through the woods, the grotesque opponents, the castle with the stairs, the strange animals that threaten him, and eventually the princess - sometimes there is a frog to be kissed - and the new role in the world. This pattern is the same in all cultures.

Building your dream castle

A special technique, also used by the Arica Institute, is the building of your own dream castle through visualization. You can build this step by step; you start with a case for the things that you want to get rid off, you imagine a chair, a cabin and you start enlarging it step by step; eventually you build a whole dream castle, counselors included. Without support you will need several sessions, but some psychedelic stimuli help you to build faster.

The idea behind this is that you can keep visiting your imaginary dream castle at a later time, to contact your deeper self. If this truly becomes part of you then you can ask for counsel or find solutions for problems. Although it requires some effort, it is a nice and powerful technique. It is not new, we know that St Augustin used a si-

milar approach as a tool to memorize things and so do Tibetan monks.

Remember to close off nicely at the end of each visualization; to consciously return to where you were, to thank your guide; you won't like to have some unfinished business haunting you. It is good to then get up for a while, do something different, have a drink and continue your trip.

12. Shamen - therapy

It is possible to see a trip as a kind of tuning and cleaning out of the mind. To have a good look in all nooks and crannies and corners, to embrace some lingering sadness, to track down frustrations and traumas and maybe handle some physical complaints or to find out more about their cause. Remember that to select change as a purpose doesn't really work. Real change is a consequence, you can only strive to achieve a total understanding, a total consciousness about what is and what will be, namely the unchangeable. Starting from there, if you deal with them, live or relive them, problems get solved spontaneously; not by working hard on them but by working your way through them.

Feeling is healing

One of the great lessons of the psychedelic experience is that we as humans have such a great capacity to feel. In our normal state we suppress that, most of the time we don't even feel our own body. In a psychedelic trip we become aware of so much more, so much detail and finesse in color, shape, smell, sounds and body sensations that we are overwhelmed.

We might feel for the first time how tense we are, how we hide all kinds of pain and fear and anger, deny our emotions and refuse to feel. But the truth is, that if we allow ourselves to really feel, then our system will most of the time take care of the problem by healing itself. That goes for others too, if we learn, through the psychedelic experience, to let them in, feel them, not separate ourselves from them we are already healing them (and ourselves) in the process. Feeling is healing, you don't have to do anything else. When you become aware of the real core problems, they disappear or are more easily accepted.

The guided trip

There are people who can assist you professionally on a mushroom-trip. They often call themselves shamen and they rely on age-old rituals and the approach of medicinemen and healers of foreign cultures. Sometimes real shamen from the jungle come here. This approach works well, but maybe it is a bit too much, for it is usually a whole commotion with singing, drumming and strange ceremonies, and maybe only afterwards will you understand their real value.

Also `real' psychotherapists or psychiatrists are sometimes willing to apply these substances so that deep traumas might surface. It is not for nothing that the eminent psychotherapist, psychiatrist and pioneer psychonaut, Stanislav Groff, talks about an `universal decoder', about the function of the trip to help associations and connections to surface and to get more clarity. In several countries there has been research about this. Also in the Netherlands psychedelic therapy was allowed for a long time to help people who were suffering from war-traumas. Unfortunately this has not been developed any further.

There are other drugs used too. The entheogen XTC, for instance, has been used for some time and with good results in psychotherapy, but unfortunately this is all prohibited by now (except in Switzerland).

Still it is possible to find people that can assist you, there are workshops and people who will function as `sitters'. This means that they don't take anything themselves, but take care of things, bring blankets, hold you if necessary and help you to feel safe. It is important that such a person stimulates you on the right moment and helps you with visualizations and breathing exercises. They need to be well grounded as a lot of sadness, anger and projection can come up. Because this is too risky for `official' therapists (their professional organizations reject this, because of legal problems) it may take a while before you find a good guide.

13. Coming down

Experienced trippers know it, and psychiatrist treating people with bad tripping experience will tell you, coming down in a gentle way is very important.

During the trip one lets go of the defense-mechanisms, part of the whole ego is disappearing. That in itself is a great experience, as the world can be seen and felt as fresh and new, reality is let in anew.

When the peak of the trip is over and normal awareness takes over again, the world assumes its former shape and color, but you are for a while quite unprotected. The normal armor of insensitivity, ego and masks is not yet in place. This can be a great feeling and you would probably like to stay in that state for as long as you can, but then the world moves in. The telephone starts to ring, you switch on the television, run to the shop to get some food before they close, you die for a cigarette, feel the need to share your experience with those that are close to you but are also the ones that push your buttons, in short reality knocks!

Try not to give in too soon. Many a bad trip wasn't a bad trip, but a badly managed coming down. In that sensitive, special state you are like a newborn baby, don't spoil that. Taking time to relax, to integrate the experience in a nice and gentle way is the best gift you can give yourself and others. That way the positive discoveries, the newly discovered feedback-loops, the sense of wonder you had during the trip stay with you longer and may even remain a permanent part of your personality. People are, in that coming down phase, usually very nice, sensitive and sympathetic.

You can recognize the really experienced trippers and psychonauts because they seem to have integrated those qualities. In that respect they resemble monks and spiritual people; those who, in different ways maybe, through meditation, isolation and exercise have wandered in the same space as the one you experience in a mushroom-trip. The process of gradual re-entering the normal perceptual state is, maybe even more than the trip itself, a chance to gently change your personality, alter your defense-mechanism, to let go of patterns that are no longer useful to you.

A good metaphore is to see a psychedelic trip as similar to putting a bar of iron in the fire. As it heats up, it become soft and pliable, it can be bent in any form. That is what a blacksmith does, and as he

takes it out of the fire he can use his hammer to form (and strengthen) it until it is cooled down and hard again.

The same with your personality, in the trip it is soft and even pliable. One can gently change it a bit. These changes however become crystallized and solid in the coming down stage and therefore one has to be extra careful. A too harsh exposure to the old patterns, having your buttons re-activated by people around you, phonecalls from parents, etc., is not so good. In this vulnerable state try to come down slowly and consciously. Ask yourself if your reactions to outside events really have to be as they were before.

The whole concept of chill-out rooms at parties is in this respect really very good. One has understood that people taking all kinds of substances need a safe, quiet and comfortable place to come down from their high, whether that is induced by drumming, dancing or chemicals.

14. Housing, Hitchhiking, Sex

The young like to go for it. Going berserk, dancing for hours, they use anything to feel at ease in a big, anonymous but synchronized crowd. The older generation might look upon disco and house as a senseless activity, but isn't that too prejudiced about the way the young express themselves. Not only as entertainment, but as before in a church choir or dance classes, as a kind of ritual, a way to make contact, to tune in to each other and feel part of the `tribe`.

This is very similar to what they did for ages in many other cultures, in Africa they danced for days and nights, long before they did this in Amsterdam. There they also used alcohol, herbs or mushrooms to get into the right mood and stay with it. For that matter there clearly is a revival of the `tribal`, a longing to return to the community.

Soft drugs are quite normal in some countries, but psychedelics, and mushroom are psychedelic, are not mainstream for the disco-scene. The mushrooms just don't mix well with the hyperactive house ambience, which made its reputation on speed and XTC, but some people get a body-kick out of it and for them dancing on mushrooms is far out.

The paddo-users are usually more in favor of a peaceful trip and in general, it is better to be an experienced user, if you want to take mushrooms amidst a group of people in a public place. It is easy to lose your balance, as there are so many impressions, emotions and energy from others that come your way.

Here set and settings have their impact too, if you are in the company of people that you know and trust and in a good mood, than this can be more fun than going out on a limb.

Hitchhiking

Every experienced tripper is familiar with the phenomenon of hitchhiking, to take off on someone else's trip without using mushrooms yourself. Drugs change your outflow, some talk about aura, the invisible energetic layers around the body and the people in your direct environment easily pick up on your energy. You function as a subtle energy source, people around you get into the same mood and that way you'll get back what you radiate.

Contact with nature

While LSD at times feels very synthetic, hard and analytic, the mushroom-trip is often softer and more natural. This is more obvious

when you are outdoors, it feels easier to communicate with trees, plants, and animals.

Often there will be a synchronicity with what happens in the environment: LSD as well as mushrooms often attract thunder. To take a trip with a group of people often leads to local changes in the weather, to storm and rain. It is not by accident that mushrooms were (or are) used by medicinemen, shamen, witches and wizards.

Sex: nice but also dark waters

Some indigenous tribes refer to mushrooms as the divine penis, and there certainly is a connection. Shrooms are not explicitly an aphrodisiac, but they for sure don't cause impotence and just as in daily life sensuality, sex and love often pop up in a psychedelic voyage. Therefore sex is a topic that can't be ignored. It is a bit repressed in our society, but lots of people like to experiment with sex and drugs, in all kinds of combinations and with all kinds of substances. This can be fun although the lust, the libido, on a trip will often come and go in waves, you'll get easily distracted.

Especially because we often have deep frustrations and wounds in this area, this can result in deep encounters and unexpected landscapes during a trip. It can be quite scary to see what lives deep inside you, what almost all of us keep secret, while we often condemn it in others. Unsuspected homosexual tendencies can easily startle you. Be reassured, everyone has similar feelings deep down, that doesn't necessarily mean that this will change your 'normal' behavior.

Kundalini: the inner snake

Mushroom trips can provoke energetic spasms, which are referred to as kundalini experiences. Kundalini is a well known concept in yoga and is represented as a Snake Goddess wrapped three and a half times around the first chakra (Muladara) at the coccyx. The East has developed certain physical exercises to have this snake, which is symbolic of a latent sleeping life energy, ascend to the higher chakras in order to unite at the crown chakra with the divine cosmic consciousness. This happens sometimes during a trip and is a strong experience, you might be in for a surprise.

15. Parents and Paddos

How to deal with kids that want to take mushrooms or have taken them? That question comes up as more and more parents, schoolteachers, doctors and counselors come across the paddo-phenomenon. Although taking paddos is certainly not restricted to any age group, it's mostly the young that will experiment a bit carelessly. Although in fact many people in their fifties and sixties or even older will try it for the first time with good results - like coming to peace with death and illness - it's the young that the authorities, parents and teachers are concerned with.

Should they ignore it, forbid it, accept it as a fact of life, or even stimulate it?

These questions are not so easy, as not only their personal opinion matters, but also how society, the Law, the System and the politically correct see it. An individual psychiatrist might see the use of psychedelics as beneficial in some cases, but he will be reluctant to utter that in public. As a parent you might really resent any experimentation in this direction, but the peer-pressure at school might force your kids to experiment nonetheless. Without openly discussing the matter, your kids might go from a little grass or hash to a little mushrooms, not feel much of a difference and then one day they do take the step to LSD or other drugs, some very addictive and dangerous. In fact one sometimes hears, that first time users should not take too small a portion, as that robs them of the true experience. Someone who knows how heavy a mushroom trip can be, will honor the magical properties the next time and not start to chew a few mushies casually at every party.

There are actually two schools among the psychiatrists that have worked with psychedelics, one that advocates the small dose, many time approach (psychedelitici) and one that aims at a break-through by using a one-time large dose. The idea is that breaking through the defense-mechanisms requires a strong effort.

How young

In primitive societies that use these kind of experiences, one is usually not very concerned about the age of the kids joining. In the Santo Daime groups one sees pregnant mothers and very young children taking the Ayahuasca and there are no reports of harm resulting from it.

On the other hand, there is a difference in the effect of certain drugs. It seems that for instance XTC for adolescent kids leads to a more active behavior, more dancing and excitement than for older users, who become more communicative, more open than hyper. This might have to do with what defense-systems is more needed at a certain age, for adolescents there might be a certain preoccupation with sex, while older people are more concerned with security, the need to connect to others and the world around.

In the view of some psychiatrist and therapists, notably Stan Groff, in the psychedelic experience one has to relive the birth-experience and certain stages of the 'birth-matrix' are clearly recognizable. In a series of psychedelic sessions one can see people 'work through' these stages. This therapeutic setting is, regrettably, not very common, most mushrooms are taken with a more or less recreational mindset.

Is it dangerous for my children?

The dangers of a paddo-trip are real, but compared to alcohol, cigarettes and marihuana they are not very dangerous. They don't normally lead to aggression, although a somewhat inflated ego-image is not uncommon, it is hardly -apart from the opening of the heart and an increased body-awareness - an aphrodisiac, it doesn't mix well with alcohol in the stomach and it has no known medical risks. Yes, if one has a serious heart-condition, tends to be borderline schizophrenic, has a weak liver, other diseases or is using medical drugs, then one has to be careful. But that goes for many things.

The government is, rightfully, a bit worried about the effects and it would be a good thing if more research into long term health effects, the influence on mental capabilities, school-results, etc., was to be approved, but the worst would be if this natural eco-drug would become criminalized as so many other substances are these days.

Will my kid tell me?

Many parents hear stories about the use of marihuana and paddos from their children. At school, they will tell you, everybody uses them! Sure, and your kids won't?

Without becoming too worried, realize that when your kids tell you about this, they will likely try it some time. They are maybe just testing your response. Peer pressure, the thirst for adventure, the mere fact that the parents or the school disapproves can be enough. Kids tend to share their adventures and if some of them don't want to join there is some pressure to be 'social'. That way many youngsters are talked into sex, drugs, and gangs. It doesn't make sense to deny this

peer pressure, but a good education about drugs and other things, in an open communication can at least help to get the message across that this could be dangerous.

If you really know what to look for you can spot if kids are using something. However, marijuana, grass, joints or hash has a more distinct effect if used regularly. The children tend to become a bit lethargic or lazy and their grades and school-results will go down. Mushroom and XTC-use will usually go together with late parties and if the children seem to need a lot of sleep to recover, have red eyes and are somewhat subdued in their communication the next days, be aware. Mushrooms are less dangerous than marijuana in so far as very few users take them every day, while many do have a regular joint.

Pusher-pressure

What certainly should not be tolerated is pusher-pressure, meaning that those who sell drugs can influence kids to try it. The dealers and pushers of course like to have a captive audience, but mushrooms are not really their line, as magic mushrooms and other psychedelics are not addictive.

But the experience with marijuana in many schools make clear that schools, youth-centers and such are active trading grounds. The notion that the bad guys are waiting outside the school with freebies to turn kids onto drugs is somewhat colored, many times it's the more entrepreneurial kids themselves that figure out that this is a way to make money or support their own habit.

The unexpected trip: What if something is put in a glass

For mushrooms this is not so easy, but it happens with tea. Slipping a drug in one's drink does happen, although it is quite irresponsible and could lead to serious problems. Sometimes XTC is put in a drink or given to someone as a harmless pill in order to lower their resistance to sexual approaches. With XTC one does not suffer so much from mental disorientation, so that does not lead to many problems apart from the fact that the innocent user is more easily persuaded.

The problem is, that sometimes the effects become noticed a bit later when nobody is around to indicate that this is an entheogen (XTC) or psychedelic drug state. The person feels the come-on and especially if one has never experienced this before, will be alarmed. What is happening? Is this an illness? One can easily panic. If the people around have no idea of what is happening, maybe doctors, the police, etc. will come, take someone to the hospital and in general do the

wrong thing. Of course one never knows and it could be an illness, a poisoning, a mental disorder and better safe than sorry, so it's off to the hospital or First Aid post.

Now these days people there know a bit more too and maybe deduct from the situation, the place and the company what might have happened, but it's not easy to test for indoles like psilocybin or LSD. So do warn children not to accept strange pills, strange liquids or smoke someone else's joint.

What scenes, discos, shops?

It is common knowledge, that there are drugs around in certain discos, coffeeshops, at festivals etc. and it really isn't that hard to find what you want. Usually at these 'in' places mushrooms are not the standard staple-drug, more likely that's marihuana, hash or XTC and other amphetamines. But it does happen that mushrooms have become part of a particular 'culture'. Usually then there are also chill-out rooms and one of the nice aspects of these drugs is that they make the atmosphere a bit more social.

In general things don't go wrong when a lot of people take the same substance. There is some social control, the organizers know what is happening and take care to have some people around that can spot casualties in time. Accidents are more likely to happen after one leaves the disco or club. In that respect one should plan in such a way, that going home doesn't involve waiting for busses in the cold for hours or having to cross unsafe neighborhoods.

16. Hazards

Yes, there are risks, but crossing a street is dangerous too. Maybe it is exactly because there is some adventure involved that one is inclined to try this. The unchallenged pioneer of the psychedelic movement, Dr. Timothy Leary asked on his death bed: Why? and gave the answer himself: Why Not!

Psychedelic substances, entheogens, hallucinogens, whatever you call them, they exist and nowadays it is easy to come upon them. Whether you use them or not, we cannot really tell you; this question everybody has to answer for themselves. And when we say: everybody, then we don't only mean the young people that would like to try it. Also older people get a chance to look at life from a different angle and can have much benefit from it. We met several older people, who got a new lust for life and creative impulse out of it. Many great thinkers and writers got only acquainted with psychedelics later in their life, often near the end and it almost seems that a good dose of life experience helps to get more out of a trip.

The system criminalises users

Still we can't ignore or deny the hazards, psychedelics remain commonly being referred to as 'drugs' and therefore as weird, dangerous and bad. This comes partly because of the system; the Law and Political Correctness made Acid, XTC and other psychedelics 'bad', if you use them than you are a criminal, druggie, or failure. The criminalization threatens every user, you can risk prison or worse if you are in the possession of magic mushrooms and the cops mean bad business. Likewise as with marihuana this can lead to a kind of underworld, which takes control over the trade. The danger of criminalisation is real, that's were real crime steps in, as it involves lots of money, payoffs, etc.

Shrooms are not without danger, some people got psychologically deranged because of them and we know about the stories of people that got stuck and made an end to their life, but fortunately this is very exceptional.

Psychiatrists tell us that these are usually cases of unstable people, but that is hardly a relief if it happened to your kid, friend or student. Of course this is sad, but the percentage of casualties is very small. Such risks are not unusual and caualties also happen with or-

dinary food through food poisoning or with other drugs like the much more harmful alcohol. Accidents with magic mushrooms are rare, but we don't want to ignore these risks.

Nearly everyone gets anxious, nauseous or uneasy when they dive in the subconsciousness. If you are well grounded or with someone who can distract your thoughts then you will usually be able to change the negative feelings towards a positive and instructive experience. We can't deny, it actually helps if you are curious, willing to go through your fears and take a good look at what frightens you. Often at the base of this are certain experiences in your youth and it can be healing to look at them from a different perspective.

As is the case with most drugs, the success of the trip strongly depends on the mood and the expectations of the user. If you are already not feeling well then there is a risk that by using magic mushrooms you will feel even worse, more depressed and worried; your mood becomes magnified. It ought to be clear that especially psychiatric patients or people with a psychiatric history (psychosis, paranoia, manic-depressive or schizophrenic) should not take mushrooms on their own account.

For that matter it is a shame that the scientific research into the effects of substances like LSD, PCP, Peyote, DMT, or even marihuana has been so abruptly stopped after the sixties. There are strong indications that for instance Ibogaine is helpful to overcome certain addictions and according to many psychotherapists, the psychedelics are very useful to clean out repressed traumas and other psychological problems.

But in general it is better not to start experimenting at random if you have problems with your heart, your stomach, liver, with your head or don't feel physically well.

Poisoning

Like other 'good' psychedelic substances, psilocybine and psilocine are not in itself poisonous, they contain a very low content of poisonous ingredients. From laboratory tests it is known that a person with a average weight of 130 pounds must ingest 13 grams of pure psilocybine in order to die from it, that means about a kilo of mushrooms or more. Poisoning through these mushrooms is therefore not likely, but there are other problems and dangers.

The biggest hazard with mushrooms is the possibility that you'll get the wrong kind in your stomach. Especially the so-called *Amanita phalloides* and the *Amanita virosa* are varieties that are lethal or at least cause permanent liver damage.

Apart from the errors mentioned above, the physical risks are, as far as known, not great. At high dosage a short mental confusion may happen, one might lose contact with reality that resembles a psychosis. An overdose is theoretically possible but then you need to eat an enormous amount of mushrooms, which will never happen in practice.

There can be some temptation to, so to speak, develop a habit eating mushrooms every day. But that doesn't work in as much as it wouldn't get you to trip. A mental / physical tolerance builds up quite fast and causes diminished effects. Even if you would trip once every week then the effects and the intensity of the trip would diminish considerably, so you would need more mushrooms. More than once a month seems unhealthy, in part because apart there are other and sometimes slightly poisonous ingredients in mushrooms. However, it is known that taking a very light dose of mushrooms, less than half a gram daily, seems to benefit the indigenous people in Mexico. It is reported that they are more healthy, cheerful and the women are able to carry a heavy load without problems.

Are they real?

Not all mushrooms are hallucinogenic and this can cause problems. Nowadays there are many experienced users who know about the right variety, but in the past sometimes mushrooms were sold which were made artificially psychoactive by lacing them with Acid (LSD). Then you make an enormous trip, but it is not a real mushroom-trip. Acid is more raw, a more direct step in the world of the subconscious and it lacks the flowery and natural ambiance of psilocybine. It is not impossible that the weaker kind of mushrooms are doped in this way.

17. Chemistry

We won't dazzle you with all kinds of chemical combinations and formulas; if you want to know more about it, you'll find the necessary references in the bibliography at the end of the book. We did however select some pieces of information.

Magic mushrooms contain the active substances **psilocine** and **psilocybine** with hallucinogenic qualities. About 75 kinds of mushrooms are known which contain psilocybine and/or psilocine. Psilocybine and psilocine belong to the so-called tryptamine family and their effect resembles the natural neurotransmitter serotonin, also known as the 'happiness hormone'.

The names come from the Greek 'psilos' (bald) and 'kubē' (head) and this is of course related to the outward appearance of the mushroom.

Psilocybine and psilocine are so-called alkaloids (nitrogenous substances which appear in nature). Apart from these two, we deal with a whole series of other substances which are less active or almost inactive, bacocystine and norbaeocystine are the best known. The Amanita contains totally different active substances like isoxazol and ibotenic acid, but because of possible errors and the danger of poisoning it is better to keep away from the Fly-Agaric.

The amounts of psilocybine and psilocine vary. The main difference is that psilocine is unstable and breaks down when the mushroom is dried or cooked, while psilocybine is much more resistant. Both substances are psychoactive, but because the molecular weight of psilocine is less, it is relatively stronger; about 1,4 times.

DMT

Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is the active substance on a somewhat deeper chemical level. Both psilocine and psilocybine contain DMT, in psilocybine the 4-phosphoryloxy N, N-dimethyltryptamine. DMT appears in many hallucinogenic plants and compounds, like in Ayahuasca, but it comes also be in a pure form as a powder. On its own, ingested DMT doesn't do a thing for you (smoking does), because your body renders it ineffective via the MAO (mono-amine-oxidase) mechanism. If you take a MAO-inhibitor first then you do feel the effect.

There is a lesson here. Do not to take any substances acting as MAO-inhibitor (some herbs like Passiflower, Peganum harmala, Jo-

himbe and some medical drugs) in combination with magic mushrooms if you don't want to be in for a surprise.

18. Future

The magic mushrooms are a product of nature and not only new varieties are regularly found and cultivated but one also experiments to produce 'stronger' magic mushrooms. As with marijuana one wants to grow them stronger, with more impact. Through the popularity of mushrooms and similar products as peyote (cactii) and Ayahuasca (from certain tropical jungle plants) the scientist started looking for more and there is a wave of new discoveries. New chemicals, but also new plants.

One went searching for other plants that produce similar effects, deep in the jungle but some were found in the backyard. It seems there are quite a bit of them, plants containing DMT in particular. There are now lots of herbs on the market which are slightly psychoactive and sometimes, when taken in combination with paddos, influence the effect. Here we refer to Guarana, Syrian Rue, Damiana, Kava, Kola Nut, Calamus, Catmint, Waterpepper and other herbs you will find in 'smart shops'.

Another trend is that more magic mushrooms are consumed now. There is a revival of mushroom worship, a bit like in the sixties. The whole mushroom thing is, certainly in Holland, no longer the business of a lonely grower in his basement; it becomes a small industry. Especially for growers of the normal "champignon" who have a hard time because of the low market prices, the growing of psychedelic varieties becomes an attractive alternative. This is positive on the one hand, because the product becomes more 'regular' and trustworthy, but there is a definite risk. As soon as a lot of money can be made with anything, a kind of mafia-situation easily develops.

Another possibility is that a whole series of products get developed, ranging from special honey with mushrooms, to psychedelic mushroom-cakes and who knows, canned Shrooms. After all, customizing products, branding, packaging, the marketing machinery will move in once there are enough customers, the same as happened with cannabis in the Netherlands. It is doubtful whether the authorities are very happy with this development.

Psilocybine, the active substance in Shrooms, has been made synthetically by the Swiss company Sandoz, that has a license to do so and

has also produced psilocybine-pills for research in the beginning of the sixties.

19. Want to know more?

Magazines

PanForum (dutch) editor Bres

Psychedelic Illuminations

Mondo 2000

Books:

Drugs in general

Psychedelische (r)evolutie (Dutch) (Bres)

Psychedelic Encyclopedia, Peter Stafford

Tihkal and Pihkal by Alexander Shulgin

Plants of the Gods, Richard Schultes and Albert Hoffman

Food of the Gods, Terence McKenna

Fiction

Books of a.o. Carlos Castaneda, Timothy Leary, Terence and Dennis McKenna, Andrew Weil, Robert Anton Wilson, etc.

Specific Magic Mushroom-books

Psilocybin Mushrooms of the World, Paul Stamets

All that the rain promises and More ... , David Arora

Blueing in in Conocybe, Psilocybe and a Stropharia Species and the

Detection of Psilocybin, R. G. Benedict, V. E. Tyler, R. Watling

Occurrences of Psilocybin and psilocin in Certain Conocybe and Psilocybine Species, R. G. Benedict

Mushrooms Demystified, D. N. Pegler

Psilocybin und andere Pilze, R. Martin Verlag

Psilocybin; Ein Handbuch für die Pilzucht, Oss & Oeric Voksverlag

Some publication by Der Grüne Zweig, Werner Pieper

Growing Mushrooms

The Mushroom Cultivator, Paul Stamets and J. S. Chilton

Psilocybin: Magic Mushroom Growers' Guide, O. T. Oss and O. N.

Oeric

How to Grow Psychedelic Mushrooms

Videos

There are a number of interviews and reports of conferences recorded on video. There are videos of interviews with the researchers and pioneers of the psychedelic movement like Tim Leary, Terence McKenna, Ram Dass, Bruce Eisner, Alexander Shulgin, Albert Hoffman, Christopher Hills, Huston Smith, Werner Pieper, Stephen

Gaskin and many others. The Amsterdam cybershop Egosoft has a catalog of these videos, which can also be found on Internet. See <http://www.euro.net/sala> and they are available in broadcast quality too.

Notice that Egosoft definitely doesn't sell mushrooms, it only provides information.

Internet-sites

<http://www.euro.net/sala/paddo>

http://www.erowid.com/entheogens/mushrooms/mushroom_effects.html

http://www.erowid.com/entheogens/mushrooms/_dose.html

http://www.erowid.com/entheogens/mushrooms/mushroom_mycology.html

<http://www.hyperreal.com/drugs/psychedelic/mushrooms>

<http://www.fsbookco.com/PSIMAG.html>

<http://www.lycaeum.org>

<http://www.nepenthes.com/Misc/ossoeric.html>

http://www.nepenthes.com/Plants/shrooms/field_guide.html

http://www.virtuallyreality.com/books/shrooms/shrooms_1.htm

<http://www.cnw.com/~neuro/gaz/teo/psilguid.txt>

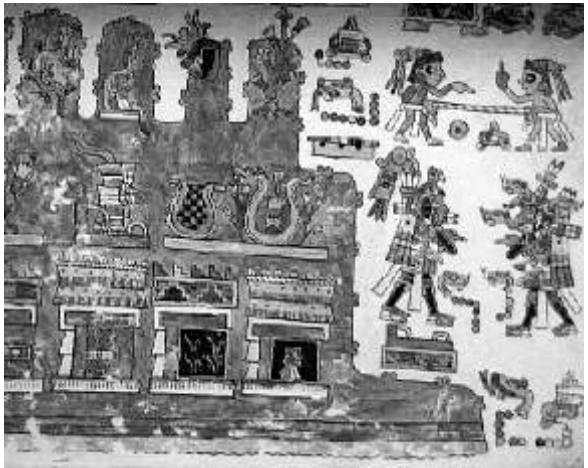
http://www.iuma.com/PIPE/drugsterms.m_z.html

<http://www.zapcom.net/~elliott/links/links.html>

<http://spider.netropolis.net/tz/tzamc/beefmstr/bmpr/bmpr.html>

<ftp.teleport.com/pub/users/ramold/mushroom/fungus>

Photographic material: the illustrations and pictures were mostly made in-house, in Mexico and in Sagarmatha.



A piece of a pre-Columbian Mexican Codex

Xochipilli: the God of Dreams



Different from XTC

Mushrooms are different from Ecstasy pills, I don't feel •
so crazy and energetic, so driven to meet other people, talk to them,
•
see them, dance amidst them. It is quieter, more colorful, more vivid
•
inside. But then I don't take too many, I don't like this feeling •
of entering a weird space, seeing faces change. Me and my friends •
just want to dance, feel life at its peak and mushrooms help us to •
get there. Going to discos and parties feels OK, going home late is •
a bit eerie sometimes.

Wounded Heart

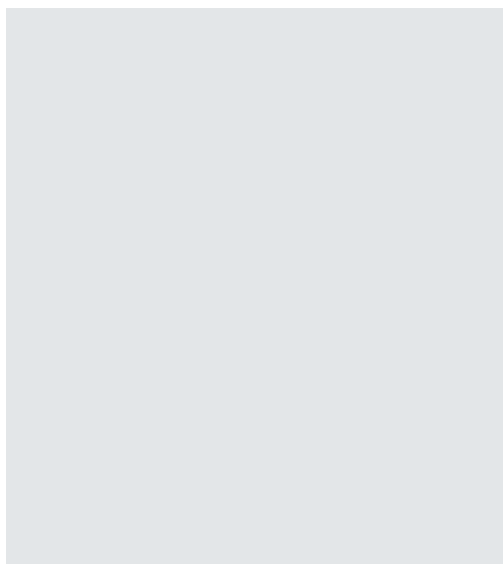
God, when I feel different
when I feel better
when I feel wiser
just know that then I need your grace
So remind me,
that the grass grows
and the sun shines
and my wounded heart fights dirty



Aztec Pyramid (Pyramid of the Moon)

Palenque





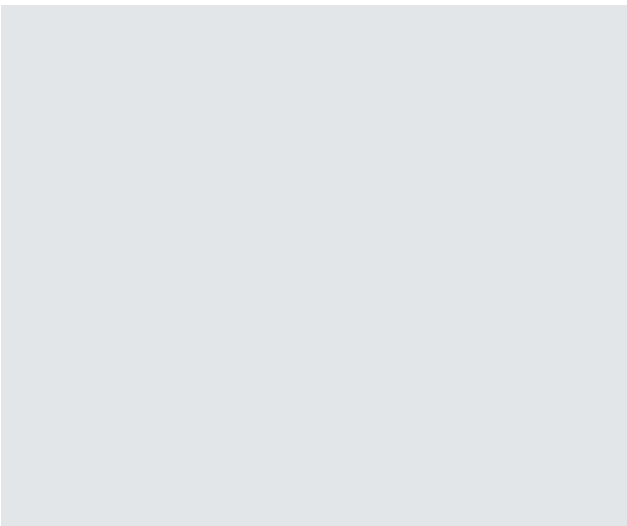


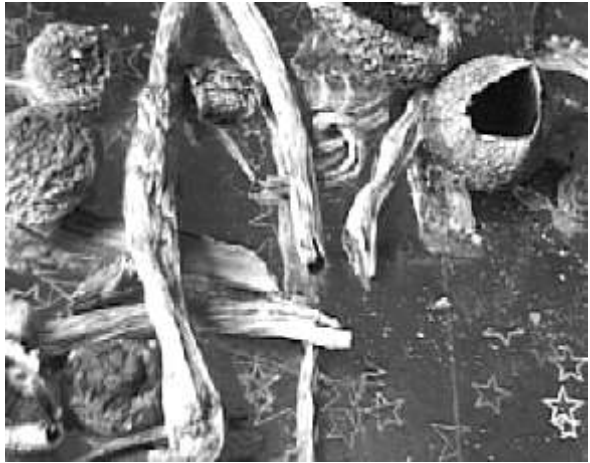


Doubt

Fighting the holy fight
loving the holy love
tripping the holy trip
How can we doubt
that there is direction
that our guidance is guided
that our struggle is worth it
even when
doubting the holy doubt
sinning the holy sin
and living the unholy life

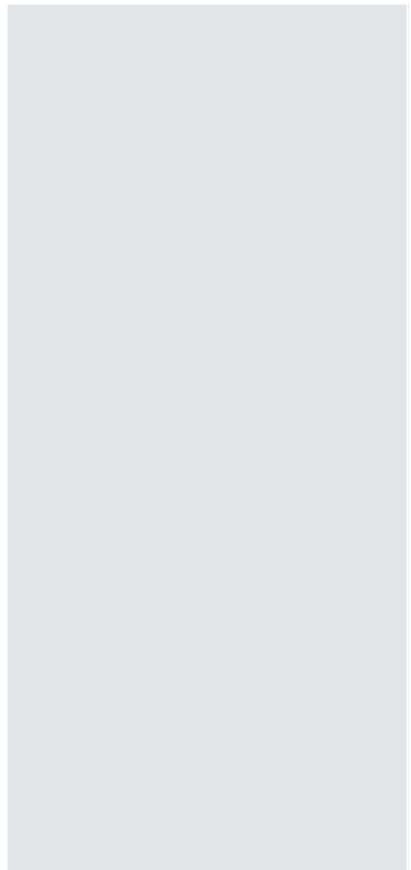






Tripping on Mount Tamalpais

Between me and the mountain
only God knows
how much I need him
The mountain is but another mirror
of the same longing
equally unable to express itself
but in the being, praising out loud, silently.
Between me and the mountain
only God to enjoy





Stillness

Is there a place to go,
a time to be,
a God to see
in us
Is there a song to sing,
a heart to feel,
a child to heal
in us
Being still to listen
to the world
in us
We can hear the echos
of the soul,
the heart,
the child,
the song,
the God
in us.



Dried Cubensis

intens gelukkig, maar ook zo dom, want ik was het weer vergeten, en dan neem ik me voor het deze keer wat langer vast te houden.

Waarom vergeet ik het toch steeds. Iedere keer als ik een trip maak, lijkt het wel of ik me door dezelfde brei moet heen werken, iedere keer anders en fantastisch, maar aan het eind kom ik toch weer bij die plek in mezelf, waar ik weet dat alles liefde is. Dat ik liefheb, maar ieder ander ook. Dat we niet verschillend zijn, maar gelijk. Dat wat we liefde noemen, ook God is en dat jij en ik dat ook wel weten, maar steeds vergeten. Ik voel me dan

I am only different, because I have not yet learned to be the same.

Aim

In stating the goals of life one can make endless lists about dreams of happiness and the pursuit of wisdom.

In the end one is only left with humbleness and the being in soul.

Nothing exceeds living in the shadow of God's love.

Amanita muscaria: do not touch!



Finding

O, God, how far do I have to go
to grasp the closeness of your heart in mine
How deep do I have to probe and search
to feel the perfection of your body in mine
How hard do I have to beat the drums
before I hear your music in my ears
Yet you are in the going, the searching and the drumming
so your grace is with me

Looking up

The clouds, so full with rain
play joyful with the sun
their game of light is not for me
but for itself
and thus for all of us.
I watch and feel
the tyranny of change

Change

Growing is more and less than change
Accept and see and feel the comfort
of perfection
in the evolving process,
taking away the stumbling blocks
by accepting what is.
Matching our real needs
making the enemy inside our dearest
friend

